The New Handbook of Political Sociology

Political sociology is a large and expanding field with many new developments and The New Handbook of Political Sociology supplies the knowledge necessary to keep up with this exciting field. Written by a distinguished group of leading scholars in sociology, this volume provides a survey of this vibrant and growing field in the new millennium. The handbook presents the field in six parts: theories of political sociology, the information and knowledge explosion, the state and political parties, civil society and citizenship, the varieties of state policies, and globalization and how it affects politics. Covering all subareas of the field with both theoretical orientations and empirical studies, it directly connects scholars with current research in the field. A total reconceptualization of the first edition, the new handbook features nine additional chapters and highlights the impact of the media and big data.

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The New Handbook of Political Sociology

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To Linda Klink, my inflator, deflator, and stabilizer throughout this journey through life – TJ

To all the “party people” who have helped me put political parties back on the map, especially Manali Desai, Barry Eidlin, Johnnie Lotesta, Stephanie Mudge, Josh Pacewicz, Adam Slez, and Cihan Tuğal – CdL

To Alex Hicks, Rick Rubinson, and the late Terry Boswell, who all made me into a political sociologist – JM

To Margaret Weir, master teacher – IWM
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Acknowledgments

The first *Handbook of Political Sociology* started out as a project in the Section on Political Sociology of the American Sociological Association (ASA). A section session organized by Thomas Janoski asked whether political sociology was in crisis. Opinions on the question varied but were hugely generative. Then Thomas Janoski, Robert Alford, Alexander Hicks, and Mildred Schwartz edited *The Handbook of Political Sociology* (2005). *The New Handbook* started with the Cambridge politics editor Robert Dressen suggesting that Janoski assemble a team to edit a new handbook as a follow-up to the successful first edition. Perhaps in this edition, Dressen added, the focus could be on new voices and directions with well-known senior scholars contributing heft in certain areas. Without Robert’s suggestion, this volume might never have been written. In a number of informal ways, *The New Handbook* was also developed when Isaac Martin and Thomas Janoski were chairs, and Cedric de Leon was secretary-treasurer of the ASA Political Sociology Section. The eventual result is 110 scholars contributing to the writing and reviewing of this *New Handbook of Political Sociology*.

While the first handbook was unique in the field of political sociology, by 2017 there were other handbooks or companions on politics or political sociology. In contrast to these other works, which tend to be descriptions of areas of inquiry within political sociology, *The New Handbook* asks authors to present their own angle on the field (i.e., their evaluation of where the field is and should be going). The chapters thus have an edge to them that chapters in other handbooks do not typically have. The *Handbook of Political Sociology* (2005) had 32 chapters that were 18 to 24 pages long with references at the end of the book, making them appear shorter than they actually were. The intent of each chapter was to cover developments in the field sometimes going back to the classics. *The New Handbook* has 41 chapters (more than the two previous handbooks and companions) but maintains the longer chapters of about 20 to
Authors appraise developments in their fields from 2000 onward, making only passing allusions to the canon. As such, the New Handbook is somewhat of a complementary addition to the first venture.

In terms of the division of labor in The New Handbook, Thomas Janoski covered Part I and Part II; Isaac Martin managed Part III; Cedric de Leon handled Part IV; and Joya Misra covered Part V. However, there was considerable overlap in duties concerning many chapters, especially in Part VI, and coeditors did not handle their own chapters. Joya Misra set up the timetable for authors and reviewers on Google Drive, which turned out to be extremely useful. We would like to thank Stephanie Mudge, who was an initial coeditor and recruited the authors of a number of chapters, but had to drop out early due to other demands.

We thank each of the authors of the chapters in The New Handbook for their expertise and willingness to contribute. For some chapters it was not always easy to get important scholars to take time out of their research schedules. Each chapter was reviewed by two scholars familiar with the area, and this helped to improve many of the chapters. We would especially like to thank the following uncompensated reviewers for their hard work:

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One may view the field of edited reference books as being composed of handbooks (chapters with 20 to 25 pages), companions (shorter chapters of 9–13 pages), encyclopedias (entries with 4–6 pages), and dictionaries (1–2 pages). The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Political Sociology (2012) by Edwin Amenta, Kate Nash, and Alan Scott has 42 much shorter chapters of 9 to 13 pages, and a relatively short reference section. The Handbook of Politics: State and Society in Global Perspective (2010) by sociologists Kevin Leicht and J. Craig Jenkins has 34 chapters with articles 18 to 27 pages long. Although chapter length may vary, we think that one needs at least 20 pages to adequately cover a topic. In 2018 while we were getting ready to submit our manuscript, William Outhwaite and Stephen Turner edited The Sage Handbook of Political Sociology with 63 chapters in two volumes. While there is some overlap with four authors, the Sage Handbook is much more oriented toward the library reference market and social or normative theory. This New Handbook, after the initial theory section, is more directed toward empirical research.
Barry Eidlin, McGill University  
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We thank them all for their time and contributions to this *New Handbook*. 
Introduction

New Directions in Political Sociology

Thomas Janoski, Cedric de Leon, Joya Misra, and Isaac William Martin

In 2029, the US is engaged in a bloodless world war that will wipe out the savings of millions of American families. Overnight, on the international currency exchange, the “almighty dollar” plummets in value, to be replaced by the new global currency, the bancor. In retaliation, the President declares that America will default on its loans. The government prints money to cover its bills. What little real currency remains for savers is rapidly eaten away by runaway inflation.

*The Mandibles, A Family, 2026–2047, Lionel Shriver, 2016*

Writing in 2016, Lionel Shriver described a future in which the decline of the American Empire would come at the hands of a global economic catastrophe. Her fictional account is not far from some social scientific predictions. More than a few scholars have projected that the United States will lose its hegemonic position by 2025 (IMF 2016) or 2034 (Mann 2012b) leaving a tri-polar world of the United States, the European Union, and China sharing 50 to 60 percent of world GDP (IMF 2018: 14; Erin and Chase-Dunn, this volume). On the military front, US defense expenditures adjusted for inflation may decrease over the next three decades, while China’s will surely continue to grow (Mann 2012b). The world faces multiple related crises. Economic inequality is increasing rapidly within many societies. The global climate is warming and bringing more extreme weather events. Floods of refugees are fleeing failed states and civil wars. Since the last edition of this handbook, the wave of revolutions known as the Arab Spring has come and gone, formerly democratic European governments have

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1 These percentages are based on GDP in 2017 with the United States having 24.25 percent of world GDP, China having 15 percent, and Western Europe 20.4 percent. These percentages will change for the countries over time as China’s rate of growth is 6.3–6.9 percent a year, the United States’ is 2.6–2.7 percent, and Europe’s 2.0–2.8 percent (IMF 2018; OECD 2018). However, the total of the three countries will stay in this range for the next decade or so. However, Hung (2017) sees reason to expect lower growth rates for China in the future.
fallen prey to antidemocratic regimes (e.g., Hungary and Poland), and powerful state and nonstate actors have actively sought to sabotage democratic elections around the world.

How will political sociology help us discern and analyze such changes now and in the next few decades? The future of politics is as uncertain as ever, but a brief overview of the history of political sociology may offer some clues to the theoretical challenges and opportunities ahead. For convenience, we divide the recent history of political sociology into three periods, suggesting that the field is now entering a fourth period with an expanding focus.

In the first period, from the 1950s to mid-1970s, mainstream political sociology was preoccupied with social class in the context of the Cold War. Political sociologists focused on the struggles of social groups – mostly classes, followed to a lesser extent by gender, racial, and ethnic groups – to influence the institutions of government through political parties, lobbies, voluntary associations, and social movements. In Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics (1963, 1981), arguably the canonical work of this era, Seymour Martin Lipset viewed political sociology as addressing the social struggle to win elections – what he called “the democratic class struggle.” What made sociology distinctive from political science, he held, was its attention to the “social bases” of politics, especially social classes (e.g., de Leon 2014).

Some scholars in this period, such as Floyd Hunter (1953) and C. Wright Mills (1959), sought to document the common class positions and overlapping social group memberships of elite decision-makers in the public and private sectors. Other scholars used survey methods to describe the complex processes by which status and class affected mass opinion. For example, Elihu Katz and Paul Lazarsfeld, in Personal Influence (1955) showed how opinion leaders propagated opinion in small groups, such as families and unions, that were largely segregated by class (Berelson, Lazarsfeld, and McPhee 1986 [1954]). By the 1960s, the sociological approach to voting and public opinion was supplanted by the more individualistic Michigan School, which emphasized party identification as the prime mover of political behavior (Campbell et al. 1960).

In the second period, many political sociologists shifted their attention from studies of the sources of political behavior to studies of the transformations of states and other political structures. A particularly influential early work in this vein was Barrington Moore’s magisterial Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy (1966), which transformed Lipset’s question about the social class bases of democratic behavior into a historical question about the social class struggles that first led to the creation of democratic regimes. From the 1970s to

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2 Despite Lipset’s sexist title, women played a critical role in this era. For instance, in survey research studies the interviewers and interviewees were most often women, which was acknowledged not so much by Lipset but by Katz and Lazarsfeld in Personal Influence (1955; Douglas 2006).
the mid-1990s, political sociologists influenced by Moore’s approach turned their attention to explaining other kinds of revolutions and transformations of the state. Some sought to explain the socialist and anticolonial revolutions of the mid-twentieth century with reference to relations of production and class power (e.g., Paige 1978). Others aimed to explain the emergence of welfare states in advanced industrial economies.

Gøsta Esping-Andersen’s The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism (1990) set an influential agenda for work in this vein by identifying three welfare regime types – liberal, conservative, and social democratic – associated with different patterns of allocating social rights. Whereas some scholars influenced by Moore retained his emphasis on class struggle, other political sociologists, influenced by the Weberian tradition, began to emphasize the independent contribution of state organizations themselves to the outcome of political processes. Theda Skocpol (1979) famously explained differences among revolutions as the result of variation in the state’s interactions with local and international actors. This was followed by Peter Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol’s comprehensive approach to the state in Bringing the State Back In (1985). Postcolonial, gendered and racial perspectives, influenced by earlier works of postcolonial theory (e.g., Fanon 1961), also became more influential in political sociology during this period (Balibar and Wallerstein 1991; Blauner 1972; Boserup 1970; Frank 1967; Wilson 1977; Zweigenhaft and Domhoff 1998). Methodological innovation in political sociology in this period emphasized methods for comparison over large sweeps of time and space, including large-scale historical analyses, qualitative comparative analysis (Ragin 1987), and cross-sectional and time series regression modeling.

The third period, which we may date roughly from the 1990s to about 2010, coincided with a tumultuous period in world history, including the fall of communism, the neoliberalization of China, and the spread of formally democratic institutions around the world. Some political sociologists reconfigured class models to address these new realities. Others turned to cultural models of politics to explain enduring continuities in the face of these sweeping changes. Rogers Brubaker’s Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany (1992), to take one influential example, traced differences in French and German citizenship policy to long-standing differences in understandings of national belonging. This was also the period in which feminist political sociology came into its own, building on earlier work by Ester Boserup (1970) and Elizabeth Wilson (1977). Ann Orloff (1993) and Ruth Lister (2003 [1998]), for example, criticized Esping-Andersen for ignoring the ways in which different welfare regimes commodify and de commodify men and women differently (Orloff 1993: 303).

One major exception is Craig Reinarman’s American States of Mind (1987), an excellent qualitative study of why some private delivery workers and public welfare employees voted for Ronald Reagan.
A particularly important synthesis was arguably Julia Adams, Elisabeth Clemens, and Ann Orloff’s edited volume, *Remaking Modernity* (2005), which held that comparative historical sociology had shifted from social structural to cultural explanations. There were many influences in this cultural turn. The French influence was particularly palpable, with scholars drawing increasingly on such theorists as Foucault and Bourdieu. In addition, some scholars embraced a neo-Gramscian cultural approach. Chantal Mouffe and Ernesto Laclau’s collaboration drew on Gramsci’s theoretical works to move beyond the Marxist preoccupation with class and to center the discursive dynamics of politics in an agonistic democracy (Laclau and Mouffe 1985; Mouffe 2013). Discourse analysis challenged the dominance of comparative and quantitative methods. Research on the public sphere shifted to identity processes, social movements, and global power structures (see Kate Nash 2010 for a good overview). Scholars influenced by Foucault began to place increasing emphasis on surveillance and governmentality.

In each period, the domain of political sociology expanded to encompass a broader range of political phenomena. The first *Handbook of Political Sociology* was written in the early 2000s, toward the end of this third period. Twenty years later, political sociology is on the cusp of a fourth period, in which political sociology is expanding yet again. Before addressing this new period in the conclusion, we pause to examine the definition of political sociology that will both encompass our precursors and speak to the cutting edge.

**WHAT IS POLITICAL SOCIOLGY?**

In *What Is Political Sociology?* Elisabeth Clemens defines the purpose of the subfield as the explanation of “the emergence, reproduction, and transformation of different forms of political ordering” (2016: 7–15). Implicit within Clemens’ synthetic view are two competing approaches to political sociology. Lewis Coser in *Political Sociology* expressed the first, institutional definition of political sociology as

> [the] branch of sociology which is concerned with the social causes and consequences of given power distributions within or between societies, and with the social and political conflicts that lead to changes in the allocation of power. *All study of political processes focuses attention on the state.* (1966: 1, emphasis added)

This focus on the state, understood as an institutional form, finds its way into much of political sociology (e.g., for a recent statement see Dobratz, Waldner, and Buzzell 2016 [2012]: 5). In Coser’s account, the connection to the state, defined in institutional terms, is the core of what is considered “political.”

The second view follows Antonio Gramsci, Michel Foucault, and other analysts who saw all of society as suffused with power relations. In contrast to Weber, who defined the state as a particular organization that monopolized the legitimate means of coercion, Gramsci (2011) expanded the definition of the
state, and with it the social scientific study of politics, to encompass all relations of class domination within society, even those that take place outside of governmental institutions, and even if they do not appear coercive on their face. As he wrote in his *Prison Notebooks*:

If political science means the science of the State, and the State is the entire complex of practical and theoretical activities with which the ruling class not only justifies and maintains its dominance, but manages to win the active consent of those over whom it rules, then it is obvious that all the essential questions of sociology are nothing other than the questions of political science. (2011: 504)

Later theorists relaxed Gramsci’s focus on class, and began to see all social relations as potentially implicated in relations of domination – and, therefore, as belonging to the proper domain of political sociology. As Claire Blencowe suggests, in a recent chapter on Foucault and political sociology, that “madness, psychiatric care and the ‘psy-disciplines,’ the human and the human sciences, criminality and its treatment, sexuality, public health, race and eugenics, liberal governance, ethics and political philosophy” are all proper objects of political sociology, because all of these domains involve relations of power (2017; Foucault 1980; Hindess 1996: 98–113). This broad definition of the domain of political sociology implicitly argues against fetishizing “the state” (Mitchell 1991) as a particular institution or set of institutions, and instead identifies relations of power anywhere that knowledge (and presumably suppressed knowledge) exists.

The strength of the first definition is that it focuses on what people generally consider to be politics: namely, those institutions of government that we commonly call “political.” This definition may be critiqued for its neglect of what Gramsci might call hegemonic power. The strength of the second definition is that it can focus on hegemonic relations wherever they occur. It may be critiqued in its turn for losing sight of what is most particular to state institutions, namely, their relationship to institutionalized coercion and violence.

In most contemporary research called “political sociology,” and in this *New Handbook*, there is some direct or indirect focus on the state and the concomitant attempts to maintain, change, or resist it. Jeff Manza (2011), for example, defines political sociology as “the study of power and the relationship between societies, states, and political conflict. It is a broad subfield that straddles political science and sociology, with ‘macro’ and ‘micro’ components.” The macro-focus here refers to “nation-states, political institutions and their development, and the sources of social and political change (especially those involving large-scale social movements and other forms of collective action).” The micro-focus “examines how social identities and groups influence individual political behavior, such as voting, attitudes, and political participation.” Though they differ in emphasis, many influential
attempts to define political sociology today would focus on the connection between the state and civil society.\(^4\)

At the same time, most contemporary political sociology – and many of the authors of this volume – bridge these traditions by emphasizing that the “state” comprises heterogenous, permeable, and sometimes partly incoherent congeries of organizations and arrangements rather than a single organization. The state has many faces or “many hands” (Morgan and Orloff 2017). It may take contradictory stances, as when state development agencies fund microenterprise at the same time that state security services sweep vendors off the streets (Karides 2005). Its precise contours are often unclear and constructed interactively. The boundaries between state and civil society are increasingly blurred.

The same may be said of the boundary between political sociology and political science. There is no hard and fast dividing line, and many scholars belong to both disciplines. To be sure, political sociologists and political scientists may exhibit some differences in their typical practice.\(^5\) A significant portion of research in political science, for example, tends to be anchored in individualistic traditions, whether psychological or rational choice perspectives, while political sociology more commonly focuses on the social bases of politics in groups, organizations with formal boundaries, and informal institutions.\(^6\) Nevertheless, a large subset of political science overlaps with political sociology and vice versa. For our purposes, trying to erect a clear boundary between sociology and political science is less useful than delineating the contours of the current movement in political sociology. Though this is easier to do in hindsight than in real time, it is evident, as we look forward from this moment, that there are major theoretical and substantive changes afoot.

We group contemporary political sociology into six topic areas that correspond to the sections of this handbook. Within each, we identify new directions. First, in the domain of theory, political sociologists have made increasing use of Bourdieu’s field theory, and along with it a definite reemphasis on the power of class. We also find increasing theoretical

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\(^4\) Cultural politics as formulated by Kate Nash (2010, 2017) takes this a step further and finds that cultural hegemonies determine power and that behavioral politics is superfluous; hence, there is almost no need for the subfield of political sociology. Often this approach is highly theoretical or polemic, and avoids empirical studies.

\(^5\) The 1960s differentiation of the two disciplines focused on how sociology looked at the influence of society on politics, while political science examined the impact of politics on society. The state-centric approach in sociology negates this distinction. Another view saw political science looking more directly at the state than political sociology. However, in practice political sociology and political science do both.

\(^6\) Textbooks and introductions to political sociology include: Clemens 2016; Dobratz et al. 2012; Domhoff 2013; Glasberg and Shannon 2011; Nash 2010; Neuman 2004; Orum and Dale 2008; and Faulks 2000.
emphasis on culture, empire, gender, and race and ethnicity. Second, theories of political sociology have become more alert to the politics of knowledge production, and the study of the politics of knowledge has exploded. We devote a whole section to the political sociology of knowledge, information, and expertise. Third, political sociology retains its focus on the state, but approaches to the state increasingly focus on disaggregating states. We review several recent bodies of literature on types of states and their transformations in Part III. Fourth, scholarship on civil society has taken a turn toward the study of global and transnational processes. Recent scholarship has renewed an older literature on political parties and populism, but has also drawn attention to fluid forms of civic and political engagement that are not always well bounded within national states. Fifth, political sociologists have continued to investigate the politics of particular policy domains, with especially active literatures on the political sociology of economic policy, migration, sexuality and gender, environment, and terrorism and securitization. Sixth, studies of globalization have continued, but have become more focused on race, populism, financialization, trade, and transnational movements. We review these sections in turn.

PART I: THEORIES OF POLITICAL SOCIOLOGY

Theories of political sociology have undergone considerable change. In the first section of this handbook, a comprehensive set of theoretical chapters show the complexity and new directions that theory in political sociology has taken. Prominent among these statements are Pierre Bourdieu’s theory of fields that is taken up by a number of chapters but especially so in three of them. Some chapters see a convergence of cultural and political economy approaches, while the chapters on race and gender have theoretical bases quite distinct from the other chapters but commonality with postcoloniality. The last chapter in this section provides us with a vision of where political sociology may be going in the next decade. These sometimes controversial statements about theory reflect the changes in it since the turn of the century, and also challenge us with the new directions that political sociology may take in the future.

In Chapter 1, Cedric de Leon and Andy Clarno address changes in conceptions of power, with particular attention to the influence of Foucault and Bourdieu. These thinkers drew attention to the pervasiveness of hegemonic or “soft” forms of power based on consent. However, de Leon and Clarno argue that theories of race recently have begun to renew our attention on the interdependence of hegemonic power with violence and domination in political life. Many of these new developments are influenced by postcolonial theory, which evolved in the context of countries subjected to empire in the past and present. De Leon and Clarno emphasize the contribution that studies of settler colonialism and racial domination can make to the sociology of power more
generally. In this way, postcolonial theories involving gender and race present major challenges for the next generation of political sociologists.

In Chapter 2 on class, elite, and conflict theories, Harland Prechel and Linzi Berkowitz defend the theoretical importance of class in the field of politics. Their focus is on the upper-class elites who, they argue, control the lower and middle classes quite effectively through financialization and neoliberalism. Capitalist class fractions mobilized through social networks in both the political and global economic arenas in the late twentieth century to overcome constraints on their power. Prechel and Berkowitz’s review focuses on the social networks of corporate and political leaders who sought to deregulate markets, and, they argue, created a hegemonic culture that is in firm control of working- and lower-class citizens. The result is increasing inequality within nation-states in the Western world, and a set of policies that keep developing countries subordinated. In effect, they argue, upper-class domination through processes of political economy persists in most nation-states.

In Chapter 3, Caleb Scoville and Neil Fligstein review field theory in political sociology. They use a spatial and relational approach to understanding how political actors negotiate, coalesce, or conflict with each other in a field of power. Actors “jockey” for position with shared and disputed meanings, rules, norms, and interpretive frames that guide their relationships. Scoville and Fligstein review several field theoretic approaches, including Bourdieu’s theory, institutional theory, and Fligstein and McAdam’s theory of strategic action fields. The latter, they argue, has the most to teach us about the emergence and transformation of field dynamics. While some change may come from internal field dynamics, the more common forces for change come from invading groups, large-scale macro-events, and interfield linkages; and these changes are often nested. Stable or settled fields are easier to examine but still challenging. They then apply field theory to environmental change and governance in Germany, China, and globally through international institutions.

In Chapter 4, Mabel Berezin, Emily Sandusky, and Thomas Davidson examine recent developments in the cultural sociology of politics. The cultural turn in political sociology is now several decades old, and Berezin, Sandusky, and Davidson argue that culture now merits a central place in any treatment of core questions in political sociology. The nation-state, they argue, is defined in terms of a putative national culture, and the attribution of meaning to the nation is central to ordinary political life. They also identify cultural processes implicit in sociological accounts of political participation—including studies of voting, civic associationalism, political discourse, and social movements. Finally, they argue for a turn toward cultural processes that transcend the boundaries of nation-states. Religion, understood as a set of discourses and practices, has tremendous political salience—and yet the most contentious political questions about religion in our time clearly concern transnational religious affiliations and cultural movements.
In Chapter 5, Julian Go discusses postcolonial theorizing as a multiplicity of perspectives rather than as a causal explanation. He emphasizes the importance of recognizing that knowledge, culture, and politics are all shaped by a history of global hierarchy and power. Moreover, throughout most of modern history, empire and colonialism matter for almost all phenomena of interest to present-day political sociology (i.e., immigration, terrorism, populism, etc.). Examining political sociology through a postcolonial lens allows scholars to identify biased assumptions and metrocentric theories that lead to misrecognition of the nature of politics both in the non-West or Global South, and in the Global North. Go presents postcolonial theory as an important lens for any working sociologist who wishes to study political processes on a transnational or global scale. Postcolonial relationalism would transform how we look at a wide variety of political issues.

In Chapter 6, Jeff Hearn and Barbara Hobson discuss the challenges of feminist theorizing in political sociology, with a particular focus on citizenship and intersectionality. Feminist theorizing attends to how gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, nationality, citizenship, and other statuses intersect to shape politics. Starting with T. H. Marshall, Hearn and Hobson consider how varied approaches to analyzing “citizenships” give political sociologists a deeper understanding of the differing relationships between society and the state. Hearn and Hobson widen understanding of participatory citizenship, to include a broader range of practices than are usually considered political. They also explore how discourses of difference, equality, and pluralism have framed debates about women’s citizenship claims. The chapter explores the varied terrain of feminist political theorizing around men and masculinities; postcolonial, decolonial, and critical race theories; migration; and transnational processes and actors. They close the chapter with a discussion of current challenges regarding nationalism, the undermining of gender/sexual citizenship, global and marketized citizenship, and growing inequalities.

In Chapter 7, Joe Feagin and Sean Elias consider the persistence of racial and ethnic discrimination and violence in the United States. The authors argue that the USA is a systematically racist state, by which they mean that the state plays a substantial role in reinforcing and even creating racism. While the hyperracist Jim Crow state ended in the mid-1970s, they argue, the modern racist state has maintained elements of institutionalized racism. Feagin and Elias argue that apparent advances in racial equality are subject to a “time-limitation principle”: such advances predictably produce a white backlash that restores American society to its default or equilibrium condition of racist oppression. Feagin and Elias argue that postracial optimism and the small effects of ameliorative policies pale in comparison to the continuous backlash tendencies of the dominant white order. It is most illuminating to conceptualize the United States as a constitutively racist state.

In Chapter 8, Thomas Janoski argues that the era of division between cultural and structural approaches to political sociology is over. Although this
division long marked the field – with “cultural” theories emphasizing the power of meanings, ideas, and symbols, while “structural” theories emphasized the power of coercion and economic incentives – political sociologists today are more likely to find culture in structure and vice versa. As evidence for this convergence, Janoski presents a side-by-side reading of Michael Mann’s four-volume *The Sources of Social Power* and a selection of late-career works by Pierre Bourdieu, including his lectures collected in the volume *On the State*. Despite their different starting points, these theorists converge on multicausal theories that recognize the independent influence of economic, military, cultural, and political power – and that treat the interplay of these types of power as a central problem for political sociology. Janoski concludes that even where Bourdieu and Mann differ, their macro-political theories point the way toward a promising synthetic approach to the field.

Finally, John Levi Martin and Nick Judd in Chapter 9 argue that the future of theory in political sociology is likely to require us to abandon an old-fashioned theory of action inherited from Talcott Parsons. They argue that it is no longer plausible to regard human action as the result of people deliberately applying means–ends reasoning to work out the course of action that will best reach their goals (or that will best comply with their normative commitments). Cognition relies on heuristics and is deeply imbricated with the social environment. For this reason, Martin and Judd argue that a key problem for political sociology is understanding the relationship between contexts or fields in which actors are embedded. A legislator acts in relation to her colleagues in the legislature, for example, but also in relation to a broader field – replete with interest groups, voting publics, and parties in the electorate. Political sociology needs a theory that addresses these dynamic relationships.

**PART II: MEDIA EXPLOSION, KNOWLEDGE AS POWER, AND DEMOGRAPHIC REVERSALS**

Political sociologists have focused increasingly on the politics of knowledge, broadly construed to include the production and circulation of information about the world. Although Karl Mannheim’s *Ideology and Utopia* (1936) was a founding document of political sociology and the sociology of knowledge, the two fields developed apart in the second half of the twentieth century. Their convergence today may result, in part, from renewed interest in transformations in the world of political communication – and in particular from the political salience of the Internet and communication technologies in our time. It also may result from the perceived politicization of claims to science and expertise. Moreover, the politically motivated contestation of journalistic expertise – associated with the slur “fake news” – raises afresh some very old questions about the place of information in political life. Nevertheless, the new cacophony of media from websites to expanding
television networks spouting political messages on an hourly basis is something new that is in the face of many citizens.

Michael Schudson and Gal Beckerman’s Chapter 10 on new and hybrid media examines changes that have come about in political participation through the media. While the Internet has lowered transaction costs for transmitting information, there is no evidence that it has produced an abrupt break in patterns of civic engagement. Most people now as before get their news about the world from a variety of sources. There is little evidence that the Internet has increased our tendency to isolate ourselves in ideological echo chambers. New media have hybridized with older forms of communication and engagement – citizens use Twitter to mobilize each other for demonstrations; legacy news magazines stream video on Facebook; organizations use email to reach members they may already have contacted via other means. Schudson and Beckerman argue that the attempt to isolate effects of a single new communication technology is a blind alley for political sociology, and that we need more research on how – and with what effect – organizations use these hybrid media practices.

In Chapter 11, Rebecca Jean Emigh, Dylan Riley, and Patricia Ahmed review advances in the sociology of information gathering. They review recent scholarship showing how the construction of official statistics may be influenced by social and historical conditions, and make four points: information is not neutral; it transforms reality; it is socially interactive; and it directly connects to technologies of power. They also present a new synthesis of Bourdieusian, Weberian, and Foucauldian positions on the power of official statistics. Official statistics can discipline society, but social groups and citizens can influence the construction of official information. Emigh, Riley, and Ahmed show how power has been exerted through four mechanisms: legibility of data and messages; centralization of data collection and judgment; classification and normalization of categories; and institutionalization of data collection and dissemination. They argue that political sociologists have considerably more work to do to document the conditions under which these mechanisms operate and the effects that they have.

J. Craig Jenkins shows in Chapter 12 how the advent of Big Data is having important effects on politics. States now have access to large volumes of privately produced data on people that go beyond the census and administrative data that existed previously. On one hand, the new data may empower citizens, as information communication technologies have lowered mobilization costs, allowing citizens to document problems and act collectively. New data also allow researchers access to different information and a wide variety of innovative techniques. On the other hand, state and nonstate actors may use Big Data to manipulate, monitor, repress, and police citizens. The availability of real-time data on social relations among people also allows states and corporations to monitor, influence, or sanction citizens without
their knowledge. The use of such data may offend widespread norms of privacy. How it is regulated is a serious question for the future of democracy.

Political knowledge is itself a consequential kind of information, and one that has its own experts. In Chapter 13, Stephanie Mudge examines the relationship between expertise and politics in the classical works of Machiavelli, Marx, Weber, Mannheim, and Merton. She then examines the increasing impact of network-relational thinking on the politics of expertise. She begins with social movement experts’ credibility and then moves to the articulations of political parties in the state. These political parties are sites of expert judgment and knowledge production. Mudge examines the tension between expertise and democracy as “knowledge structures” that determine what is discovered, accepted, and communicated, and by whom. Expert interventions in the Bourdieusian theory of political fields may dispossess citizens (i.e., nonexperts). In the end, she argues for the need for a greater sociological study of “politics–expertise dynamics” that may lead to a “sociology of interventions.”

Michael Rodríguez-Muñiz in Chapter 14 examines the politics of demographic knowledge. As the common root suggests, demo-cracy and demo-graphy have always been closely linked. He examines how political actors attempting to mobilize racial and ethnic groups make use of demographic claims. He describes projects of “demographic engineering” whereby groups are shaped by intentional and unintentional policies and politics. Population politics includes the construction of political rhetoric and knowledge about various demographic groups. The politics of racial threat is not a natural result of demographic change, but is instead actively constructed by knowledge entrepreneurs who provoke anxieties or raise hopes by projecting demographic futures. Such projections are political projects, rather than prophecies; the ethnoracial order of the future is nowhere written in stone, but will continue to evolve and change, as historical exigencies shape the growth of populations and the boundaries of groups. Rodríguez-Muñiz argues that the political uses of demographic knowledge are now a central topic for political sociology.

PART III: THE STATE AND ITS POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS

The state is a central concept in political sociology. It is also a contested concept. Many political sociologists today would rely on Max Weber’s definition of the state as an organization that monopolizes the legitimate means of coercion. However, recent work also suggests the limits of Weber’s conception of the state as a singular organization. Monopolizing legitimate violence may be one thing that states do, but it is only one: to know that an organization monopolizes legitimate means of coercion is not, ultimately, to know very much about its structure, its dynamics, or its effects on political and social life. Contemporary political sociology therefore is making progress by disaggregating states,
conceptualizing a state not as a single organization but as a conglomeration of relationships, organizations, or institutions. In place of “the state,” we may have executives, bureaucracies, legislatures, courts, the military, police, and even private voluntary associations and businesses to which officials have delegated some public or “state” functions (Morgan and Orloff 2017; Jessop 2016). Pierre Bourdieu famously distinguished between the “left hand” of the state – those agencies responsible for pensions, health care, and welfare – and “the right hand” of the state – those agencies responsible for maintaining order through budgetary discipline or violent repression. Political sociologists have radically pluralized this metaphor, referring to the state as a body with “many hands” (Morgan and Orloff 2017). This emphasis on the plurality or multiplicity of states runs through the recent work on the political sociology of states and their transformations reviewed in Part III.

In Chapter 15, Josh Pacewicz sees the political economy of the capitalist state as a comprehensive approach that treats polity, economy, and society as an interdependent whole. Recent work in this tradition has shed new light on the distinctively market-oriented variety of capitalism in the United States and on the financialization of the advanced capitalist economies. The best work in this area disaggregates the state and focuses on the politics of scale at the subnational level. Nevertheless, Pacewicz concludes that these theoretical interventions may have run their course. It is time to reconstruct the theoretical bridge between local, disaggregated state institutions and the worldwide, system-level transformations that preoccupied the classical thinkers of political economy. Pacewicz argues for a focus on how public policy structures politics, and on the “middle state” that stands between national legislation and local implementation. This is the road to the new political economy.

In Chapter 16, Elisabeth Clemens and Wan-Zi Lu argue that a state is best theorized as sets of interrelated institutions, each with its own unique effects on the political process. This internal plurality is a source of dynamism in the structure and organization of states. Clemens and Lu offer vivid examples from the recent sociology of empires, the political sociology of markets, and the sociology of developmental states, to illustrate how different institutions within the state can sometimes complement or counteract each other. Their conception of states as plural also opens up the understanding of de-institutionalization. States may include competing institutional orders or logics that may undermine one another. Actors who institutionalize social practices in the state may aim to remove those practices from the political realm altogether. However, the creation of multiple institutions within the state sometimes creates friction and opens up new zones of contention.

With Richard Lachmann, in Chapter 17, we turn our attention to a particular kind of state: the nation-state as it took shape in Western Europe after the fifteenth century. Lachmann argues that the consolidation of nation-states was an unintended consequence of competition among agrarian elites. Much as
Julian Go did in Chapter 5, Lachmann also emphasizes the simultaneity of nation-state formation with projects of imperial conquest outside of the putatively national territory. The exigencies of war and conquest created the conditions for mass citizenship, and then for projects of cultural and linguistic standardization that ultimately lent plausibility to the idea of a well-bounded nation and a national culture. Lachmann notes the interdependence of cultural, economic, military, and ideological power. The dynamic relationships among these forms of power, he argues, are a central theoretical topic for future scholars of nation-state formation.

Isaac William Martin’s Chapter 18 inquires into the effects of fiscal relations within nation-states. This chapter presents a brief for fiscal sociology, a research program that conceptualizes states as sets of dynamic fiscal relationships. Martin points out three contributions of fiscal sociology to political sociology. The first contribution is the theory that taxation contributes to democratization. The second contribution is an explanation of the persistent relationship between fiscal austerity and protest in democratic states. The third is an insight into the effects of fiscal relations on political parties: here, converging with Pacewicz’s Chapter 15, Martin argues that an important future direction for political sociology is the inquiry into how policies can make and remake political alignments. Fiscal sociology is described in this chapter as a theoretical program, but one that does not purport to be a comprehensive Weltanschauung, so much as a network of middle-range propositions with logical and empirical support.

In Chapter 19, Joachim Savelsberg and Amber Joy Powell turn our attention from fiscal to carceral relations within the modern nation-state. They define a carceral state as one that confines an exceptionally large share of its citizens. They focus their review on theories that might account for the emergence and persistence of a carceral state in the US. Savelsberg and Powell draw attention to crime rates, social conflicts, and the actions of political elites. They place special emphasis on the role played by institutional structures that mediate the production and circulation of knowledge about crime. The structure of contemporary knowledge markets in the United States – defined broadly to include mass media, polling firms, and both academic and nonacademic research organizations – has amplified perceptions of crime and demands for punitive solutions. They also suggest that future research should focus on policy feedbacks. A policy of large-scale incarceration can become entrenched by incapacitating or disenfranchising precisely those citizens who would be most skeptical of the policy – and by creating another class of citizens who have vested economic interests in carceral employment.

Jessica Kim and Kathleen Fallon, in Chapter 20, address what is arguably the classic question of political sociology: What are the social bases or origins of democratic politics? They argue that there is considerable organizational heterogeneity within any given state, even in democracies and dictatorships. States are multifaceted organizations, and a single state can become more
democratic in some areas, while simultaneously becoming more authoritarian in others. Moreover, they find that “democracy” itself is a moving target: many states considered democratic in the 1960s had not yet enfranchised all or even most of their adult citizens. Thus, more rewards can be reaped by shifting the focus from democracy to democratization including expanding access to rights of citizenship. This shift to democratization (as a process unfolding over time) also draws our attention to transnational influences ranging from geopolitical competition and war to the relatively peaceful diffusion of practices and ideas. Kim and Fallon argue that future work on democratization should focus on institutional designs for democracy and on groups that are still excluded.

Colin Beck, in Chapter 21, reviews the political sociology of revolutions, defined as situations in which two or more blocs make effective claims to be the legitimate state, and advance competing ideological visions of the social order. Beck argues that political sociologists have so far accumulated little valid knowledge of any generality about the causal dynamics of revolutions. He nevertheless identifies several promising future directions. One is a focus on transnational processes: although revolutions involve claims to be or control states, revolutionary processes are not well bounded by states. Nation-states should not be treated in revolution studies as independent observational units. Another future direction is a focus on contingency within the revolutionary episode. Those who experience revolutions often describe them as moments of unusual indeterminacy. Beck argues that more scholars should take seriously the ideas that a revolutionary situation has its own dynamics, and that small events in the course of an unfolding revolution may have large consequences.

**PART IV: CIVIL SOCIETY: THE ROOTS AND PROCESSES OF POLITICAL ACTION**

Previously, many areas of civil society such as citizenship and political parties were little studied in political sociology. However, research on the various components of civil society is undergoing a renaissance. Citizenship and legality have gone from a relatively nonsalient theory to a matter of life or death for many immigrants, and political parties are now seen as a shaper rather than a reflection of citizen opinions and public policies. Social movements now operate in framed arenas of contention, and political machines control some regions and countries. Populism, once thought to be confined to Latin America, is now at the forefront of the politics of Donald Trump in the United States, Viktor Orbán in Hungary, and in other countries, much to the distress of established elites and liberal democrats. In addition, nationalism plays a major role in such struggles, and the impact of public opinion on policy is increasingly called into question. Overall, civil society ends up being a rather complex field of power.

Thomas Janoski and Sara Compion in Chapter 22, “The Challenges of Citizenship in Civil Society,” document four overarching trends of citizenship. The first of these is the increasing tendency on the part of social movements to
frame their struggles in terms of citizenship. Second, this tendency has led scholars to give short shrift to established theoretical frameworks of citizenship, namely, the liberal, social democratic, and civic communitarian. Next, Janoski and Compion observe mounting interest in how asylum and undocumented immigration is transforming the ways in which we think about citizenship. So-called Western states have shifted their attention from producing citizens to preventing and punishing those who arrive and seek citizenship. Deportation, apprehension, and stigmatizing discourse all may produce a semi-permanent status of “noncitizenship.” Finally, as neoliberal globalization proceeds, there is a new tendency to examine global citizenship regimes with some strongly backed by institutions and others without such support and consequently being quite fragile.

In Chapter 23, James Jasper argues that the canonical structural approach to social movements placed very little stock in notions that movement actors and their grievances were the prime mover of mass mobilization. Instead, Mayer Zald, Doug McAdam, and others held that resources and political opportunities structured social movement emergence and success. Though Robert Benford and David Snow’s concept of framing was a move away from structuralism, Jasper points out that movement participants do not internalize movement messages in coherent frames or ideologies, but rather in discrete feelings and meanings. Accordingly, he argues, the most recent shift in social movement theory has been to specify how culture and emotion motivate participation and sacrifice. In addition, we are paying more attention to the fluid interaction of movements with other “players” like political parties. This becomes even more interesting in light of populist organizations like the Movimento 5 Stelle in Italy, which are antiparty movements and parties at the same time.

After a half-century hiatus, political sociologists have once again taken up parties as a central object of inquiry. Johnnie Lotesta and Cedric de Leon’s Chapter 24 explores the efflorescence of this body of work through the lens of an important theoretical framework in the field, “political articulation.” In contrast to the “cleavage” approach, which held that differences of class, race, and urban/rural residence conditioned political behavior, advocates of political articulation insist that the salience of these putative differences is largely the result of partisan struggle. Political parties naturalize cleavages in a bid to “articulate” otherwise disparate groups into would-be hegemonic coalitions. Analytical gaps have emerged, however, as more sociologists attempt to use the articulation framework. For example, some political sociologists emphasize the role of experts in articulating cleavages, while others are more interested in the social structural conditions that enable or constrain articulation.

Manali Desai and Rashmi Singh’s analysis in Chapter 25 of “Machine Politics and Clientelism” also returns to a classic topic in political sociology. In 1963, Edward Banfield and James Q. Wilson argued that political party systems in American cities were patronage machines rather than ideological coalitions
because of what Banfield and Wilson called the “private-regarding ethos” of immigrant workers. Although Banfield and Wilson’s account is now discredited, the central puzzle of machine politics remains. Desai and Singh describe two subsequent paradigmatic shifts in the study of patronage politics. The first of these is the sequential institutional approach, which traces the origins of machine politics to the timing of large-scale social transformations such as bureaucratization, urbanization, and working-class formation. The second is the advent of what the authors call an “anthropological” impulse to theorize the moral economy of political exchange in the Global South.

In Chapter 26, on volunteering and civic associations, and political participation, Sara Compion and Thomas Janoski show the varied effects of volunteering in promoting or hindering democratic politics. Volunteering and civic associations can be effectively controlled by the state, but they can also influence the state in effective ways. Compion and Janoski look at the optimistic Tocquevillian view of volunteering, in contrast with evidence that volunteering often has little impact on politics for good or ill. They then examine how corporations and the state can control volunteering within democracies. Transnational nongovernmental organizations that promote volunteering also sometimes have deleterious effects on poorer countries by imposing a so-called Western viewpoint that does not fit some local cultures. The second part of the chapter examines the presence of democratic volunteering in seven different forums from face-to-face assemblies to intra-party democracy. In the third part of the chapter, they provide a process model of how volunteering and civic associations may become important in the politics of democratic government.

In Chapter 27, Mario Giugni and Jasmine Lorenzini analyze the roles that social movements play in the renewed study of party politics. Giugni and Lorenzini ask a deceptively simple yet bedeviling question, namely, how do citizens respond to economic crises like the Great Recession? One answer is that citizens retreat from the public sphere, but the opposite might occur in that they become more politicized. Giugni and Lorenzini argue that research supports the latter conclusion, but they find that political sociologists tend to address these questions in two isolated literatures. Accordingly, Giugni and Lorenzini urge a synthesis of movement- and electoral-centered research anchored in what they see as a “crisis of representation” that takes hold amidst economic crisis. They argue for a focus on the rise of new political actors that are neither fully movements nor fully parties, such as new right-wing populist parties in Europe and “left of the left” party movements such as the Indignados in Spain. They focus, too, on the role of leadership as this intersects with new hybrid political forms.

Paul Burstein, in Chapter 28, reviews recent scholarship on the influence of public opinion on policy. He argues that some scholars take the relative influence of public opinion on democratic governance for granted, and seek to measure the extent to which the former does or does not affect the latter. Burstein suggests that the entire enterprise may be cast into doubt by the fact
that there is no public opinion or interest group advocacy on most issues. Burstein argues that knowledge about the effects of public opinion on policy is in its infancy, because most studies select on the dependent variable – by identifying policies that are sufficiently prominent to attract the attention of public opinion polling organizations. He proposes two remedies. One is research aimed at generalizability by devoting careful attention to sampling of political issues. The second is to use case studies to draw more modest conclusions about how public opinion and advocacy may succeed or fail to have an impact on policy, and when they operate in each direction.

Liah Greenfeld and Zeying Wu’s Chapter 29 reframes ethnic nationalism and populism as struggles for dignity. Neither modernist theories, which regard nationalism as a creation of the early modern era, nor primordialist theories, which treat nationalism as an expression of premodern group identities, give us adequate theoretical purchase on the myriad new nationalisms emerging across the globe today. They identify the birthplace of nationalism as sixteenth-century England, and they treat this case as the ideal type in order to illuminate causes of nationalist politics more generally. What binds the genesis of nationalism to its contemporary descendants, they argue, is a struggle for what they call “dignity capital.” Perceived differences in dignity between nations may encourage people to value national sovereignty, and may generate resentment among other nations. Working through these ideas with case studies from Europe and the United States, they then analyze how nationalism has spread to other regions, with a particular focus on China.

PART V: ESTABLISHED AND NEW STATE POLICIES AND INNOVATIONS

As in other areas of political sociology, research on policies in the twenty-first century reflects the tensions created by inequalities of class, gender, race, and nationality. Neoliberalism has wreaked havoc on welfare state policies and government spending. However, some policies have expanded in this period such as same-sex marriage, though abortion battles still rage. Immigration policy, once an issue of only moderate attention, is now front and center as countries try to keep asylum seekers and others out. On the other hand, military expenditures have increased, and agencies designed to protect the homeland from terrorism have gained in personnel and finances. The chapters in this section reflect how interconnected inequality and policies are, as state and global policies may attempt to mediate while also reinforcing and reinscribing inequalities. These inequalities also affect fiscal and monetary policy, welfare state and social policies, migration policy, human rights policy, and cosmopolitanism, reaching further into a world with continuing wars in the Middle East and terroristic threats in the West.
John Campbell in Chapter 30 considers how fiscal and monetary policy have developed over the last century, with an aim of facilitating economic growth, innovation, and employment through adjustments to spending, taxation, and the money supply. While the Keynesian approach to regulating the economy was popular in the mid-twentieth century, neoliberal approaches became predominant by its end. Yet neoliberal strategies generally did not lead to rapid economic growth, and Campbell shows how policies of the last few decades have tended to increase inequality. They also contributed to the 2008 financial crisis. While the crisis led to a brief return to Keynesian policies in some quarters of the globe, neoliberal austerity policies remain ascendant in many countries, leading to high levels of inequality – and increasing power for nationalist movements, as Greenfeld and Zeying noted in Chapter 29.

In Chapter 31, Stephanie Moller and Tengteng Cai focus on how political sociologists have shifted their attention from explaining the development of the welfare state to understanding its differential impacts. They begin by analyzing the role of citizenship in modern welfare states: consistent with Hearn and Hobson in Chapter 6, they argue that recent scholarship emphasizes the intersections of citizenship with factors such as gender, class, race, nationality, and family status. Even among wealthy countries, they identify remarkable cross-national variation in income inequality after considering welfare state policies. Moller and Cai point out that welfare states typically offer less support for less-valued groups, such as immigrants or families headed by single mothers. They also point to welfare state policies in Latin America, East Asia, and other regions as new sources of understandings of how states use social policies. Moller and Cai argue that welfare states cannot be understood as offering social citizenship to their members, instead offering differentiated citizenship in an unequal global order.

In Chapter 32 on sexuality, gender, and social policy, Joya Misra and Mary Bernstein argue that ideas about gender, gender identity, and sexuality permeate and structure political institutions and policies. These ideas are shaped by existing political institutions, social movements (on both the right and left), cultural and religious ideologies, historical legacies, and transnational political and economic forces. Misra and Bernstein consider three sets of policies: those concerning relationship recognition and reproduction, employment, and social welfare. In each of the three domains, policy has complex, sometimes contradictory effects. Rather than simply promoting equality, policies may reinforce existing inequalities by race, class, nationality, and colonial legacy (among others), as well as gender, sexuality, and gender identity. While twenty-first-century states are beginning to respond to the demands of women’s and LGBTQ movements, structural inequalities and cultural misrecognition remain powerful.

Irene Bloemraad and Rebecca Hamlin consider migration policies in Chapter 33. They begin by considering policies that affect entry into a state’s territory as a migrant or refugee, addressing the enormous challenges that refugees and
migrants face in the twenty-first century due to war, economic collapse, and climate change. As they note, while at one time and place a person may be conceptualized as a refugee deserving of asylum, at another time, the same person may be viewed as an undocumented “illegal” migrant. Bloemraad and Hamlin next explore policies that influence settlement, including integration and citizenship policies. Even as some countries make entry more open to migrants, they have created additional controls over migrants, reflecting racist and nationalist ideas about who deserves social citizenship. Echoing others in the volume, Bloemraad and Hamlin emphasize the multiplicity of legal statuses that migrants might hold and the complexity of claims for social rights and citizenship in the twenty-first century.

Mark Frezzo takes on the question of cosmopolitanism in Chapter 34. He considers how globalization may not only reflect inequality, but also promote world citizenship, global governance, and human rights. This approach focuses on creating peaceful relations between countries and eliminating structural inequalities. Seeing cosmopolitanism as an epistemic community, Frezzo lays out the organization of global justice movements, including how they map onto human rights. The rise of both far right nationalist movements and religious extremism has cut against cosmopolitan movements, but Frezzo argues that cosmopolitanism balances globally binding norms with the recognition of local cultures.

In Chapter 35, Gregory Hooks examines the changing relationship between states and war. He argues that globalization and technological change have resulted in a condition of “liquid modernity” that fundamentally transforms the relationships between states and their societies. States in the twentieth century could pretend to be walled gardens, in which rulers cultivated well-bounded economies and societies; states in the twenty-first century must struggle to manage cross-border flows of people, resources, and ideas. This condition has important consequences for the conduct of war and for its effects on social life. New technologies allow states of the Global North to conduct war at a distance – enabling them to transfer the risks of their conflicts to troops and populations from the Global South. War no longer has the effect of strengthening state institutions. Nor must states any longer grant rights of citizenship in exchange for military service. Instead of enriching citizenship, wars of our time create large displaced populations stripped of the rights of citizens.

PART VI: GLOBALIZATION AND NEW AND BIGGER SOURCES OF POWER AND RESISTANCE

The world has been “globalized” for a long time, as empires have encountered each other for two millennia from Rome to the British Empire, and subject countries submit to control. Globalization became a buzzword in the late twentieth century as transportation costs decreased, information technologies made global networks easier to maintain, the reach and power of certain nation-
states intensified, and new competitors arose to join the exclusive club of quasi-empires. Amidst international political and economic turmoil, the United States remains powerful, but its economic might is notably less dominant. As American economic growth has slowed, China’s economy has risen to the second largest in the world, and a tri-polar world of the United States, China and East Asia, and the European Union seems possible. The Communist bloc has crumbled since 1989, but Russia is once again exerting its influence internationally, most famously by destabilizing elections in liberal democratic states. Meanwhile, the Middle East has become home to new forms of political Islam, including Al-Qaeda and ISIS that have launched attacks around the world. Fears of terrorism in turn have provided the pretext for new and intensive security regimes. The United States has been the vanguard of providing military support to Israel, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia. Numerous actors have emerged to challenge the neoliberal policies promulgated by the International Monetary Fund and World Bank: social democratic parties, particularly in Latin America, offer progressive alternatives ranging from left populism (e.g., Venezuela) to socialism based on indigenous struggles (e.g., Bolivia). The chapters in this section all address these and other global challenges.

In Chapter 36, Şakin Erin and Christopher Chase-Dunn present an overview of world-systems theory that posits a hierarchical relationship between core, semi-peripheral, and peripheral states in the capitalist world economy, which is based on legacies of colonial exploitation. In its most recent incarnation, the Keynesian developmental project has been replaced by a neoliberal global governance project resulting in mounting inequality within countries. Trade globalization has increased from 12 percent in 1960 to 30 percent of world GDP in 2005. There is a New Global Right and Left, and political sociology, Erin and Chase-Dunn argue, must comprehend the long-term transition from territorial empire to trade-controlled empire. World-systems theory asks analysts to follow the money in terms of trade and investment, in order to identify the advantage that powerful core countries can exercise over the periphery. World-systems analysis is relational: Erin and Chase-Dunn stress the importance of network analysis, and the difference between structural and regular equivalence in comparing nations’ relative position in the world-system.

In Chapter 37 on trade globalization, Michael Dreiling examines the pressure of business in addition to conservative politicians in promoting trade, especially under a regime of financialization. He theorizes the linkages between institutional politics and the new economic sociology with its emphasis on financialization, stock markets, and trade. Dreiling describes trade liberalization with an emphasis on corporate political action and neoliberalism as an “upper-class” or elite project, implemented by the state and capitalists. Using the United States as an example, he focuses on forces that liberalized international markets and then built transnational trade institutions. He especially targets the role of big business from pursuing tariffs before the Trade Act of 1933, and their latter efforts in pushing for free markets
that allow their corporate powers to be exerted in the international marketplace. This began after the Second World War with GATT under President Kennedy and then a series of free trade deals under a number of presidents that leads to more and more global economic domination – the IMF, the World Bank, and the World Trade Organization, among many others.

Moon-Kie Jung and Yaejoon Kwon in Chapter 38 draw attention to another legacy of colonialism – the enduring racial hierarchy associated with white settler colonialism. Their intervention turns on Michael Omi and Howard Winant’s (1994) breakthrough concepts of a racialization project and a racial state. The racial state insulates itself against challengers by constantly absorbing new and unstable hegemonic racial orders. Jung and Kwon build on Omi and Winant by advancing the concept of the “empire-state.” The latter contains a hierarchically differentiated racial state. Thus, for example, the United States dominates Blacks, Asians, Latinos, and Native Americans, but it does so in different ways for each group: for instance, advancing a policy of assimilation for Native Americans that dispossesses indigenous people of land, even as it embraces a regime of social death, whether by slavery or mass incarceration, for many Black people.

In Chapter 39, Carlos de la Torre examines how populism has developed in the United States and Europe. De la Torre reviews political, ideational, and discursive theories of populism, and presents a synthetic view of populism as a strategy for polarizing society. Although populist ruptures put populist leaders in power, the latter cannot fulfill their claims to put the people in charge; as a result, nominally populist regimes typically reconfigure themselves into authoritarian regimes. De la Torre investigates alternative ideologies and organizations, especially Bolivarian Circles, Communal Councils, and Urban Land and Water Committees. However, these participatory forms of governance, he says, lack autonomy from the populist leader. While in power, populists confront competing political institutions from the judiciary to the media. Crises of national security promote populism. In effect, populism is an antiglobalization movement, but, at best, it is a refuge for the abandoned citizens, and ultimately it is a dead end.

In the last chapter, Peter Evans looks at transnational social movements that are trying to change politics and the economy. He sets out to explain the evolution of transnational social movements, including labor, environmental, feminist, and human rights movements that emerged in the last part of the twentieth century. Evans argues that particular conditions allowed these movements to flourish, including the increased globalization of the economy and the spread of new communication technologies – but also including, ironically, the spread of neoliberal ideology, which, despite its failures, created a discursive opening for assertions of universal principles that transcended national sovereignty. Although the growth of these movements has slowed, and some optimistic predictions about how they would transform the global order have gone unfulfilled, they have achieved some important
changes. Evans argues that the increasing interconnectedness of these movements suggests an important source of resilience. They may remain durable even as illiberal regimes seek to undermine them.

CONCLUSION

Political sociology encounters a different world today than the turn of the century captured in the first Handbook of Political Sociology in 2005. Globalization is now contested, and democracy is no longer taken for granted as a goal or an analytical object. Illiberal regimes have taken root in formerly democratic states. Alternative political projects such as political Islam, ethnic nationalism, and social democracy compete with neoliberalism for hegemony. Terrorism and the Internet are weapons that establish diverse battlegrounds. Both conventional measures of democracy and measures of civic engagement such as the frequency of volunteering reported by the US Bureau of Labor Statistics have gone down since 2012. At the beginning of this Introduction, we noted that observers are posing the question of whether the United States is in decline; but scholars have been claiming that the United States has been in decline since the 1950s. Rather than repeat these tropes of “declinism,” we see the future as posing many new and often unpredictable changes. We believe that the flexibility and willingness of political sociology to be open to new phenomena, theories, and methods will enable this field to deal with these changes in many ways.7

Political sociology has seven new directions to encounter these new challenges: (1) inequality, intersectionality, and citizenship; (2) new tools of articulation and various fields of power; (3) an emphasis on the role of the media, knowledge, and classification; (4) a redefining of the importance of race and postcoloniality; (5) a reinvigorated approach to gender and sexuality; (6) the processes of policy feedback and misrecognition in making citizen identities; and (7) a revised theory of social interaction and social psychology.

First, the “new gilded age” of massive inequality and threatened citizenship has prompted political sociology toward the increased study of the critically important relationships between politics and inequality. While inequality has always been important to political sociology, its massive increase since the mid-twentieth century has been astounding (Kenworthy and Smeeding 2013; Milanovic 2009). So much so that Thomas Piketty’s (2014) complex economic book – Capital in the Twenty-First Century – attacking inequality

7 Fettweis indicates that “Declinism first appeared in the late 1950s and has repeatedly re-emerged with metronomic regularity since” (2018: 166). The brief unipolar world that appeared after the fall of communism is now a multipolar world with the United States, a semi-united Europe, and China leading East Asia as a new world power dynamic. Despite dystopian forecasts for the West, moderate growth continues in the United States, and China’s high growth rates may significantly drop with rising wages and when the Chinese economy is no longer boosted by Western technology transfers.
and recommending a “global tax on wealth” reached the New York Times Best Sellers list. While elites and most politicians have ignored his recommendations, the public has taken notice of the rank unfairness of world incomes and wealth. Inequality rates in the United States are at a record level, but much less noticed are the enormous levels of inequality in China and India, countries that have had major economic growth and somewhat rising incomes. This increase in inequality has produced a twofold result of increasing polarization both between and within countries combined with the conspicuous consumption of the superrich and the subsequent political ruptures. This increase has largely been associated with neoliberal policies to promote business and decrease regulation, and at the same time to cut welfare states and create greater vulnerability around the globe.

While T. H. Marshall’s (1950) original framing of political, civil, and social citizenship has been criticized for not recognizing how “social citizenship” only accrued to certain people (e.g., white working-class men), the concept of citizenship becomes even more powerful as it claims to balance the excesses of the market with social citizenship that will benefit the less well off. In an era in which inequality is increasing by leaps and bounds, citizenship claims appear increasingly tenuous for many members of society and nearly impossible with attacks on so-called noncitizens. While immigrants and refugees face challenges, other groups, such as felons in the United States, can also find themselves without political citizenship rights. People may be increasingly denied or stripped of citizenship and left stateless. Many others, including Afro-diasporic descendants, transgender people, the disabled, and the poor can find themselves shut out of social citizenship in some ways even while they are included in others. As it ripples through race, class, gender, sexuality, and nationality the relationship between massive economic inequality and the institution of citizenship will remain a central problem for political sociological studies of countries and the globe.

Second, political sociologists also confront this world of increasing inequality with new conceptual and theoretical tools. The analytical core of political sociology is no longer the relationship between state and social classes, conceived as separate and coherent analytical objects. In place of the state, political sociologists today conceptualize states as differentiated and sometimes incoherent sets of institutions and relationships. Instead of assuming that the roots of politics lie in social cleavages of class, race, and gender, political sociologists today attend to the ways in which parties, social movements, and public policy themselves divide and redivide society. For example, a number of right-wing parties like the BJP in India, the AKP in Turkey, and ethnic nationalist parties in the United States and Europe forge hegemonic blocs by naturalizing religious and “native-born” peoples as victimized majorities. Older divisions between materialist and culturalist approaches no longer seem compelling as both approaches have become useful. Many political sociologists today are focusing on Pierre Bourdieu’s fields of political power that differ across the nation-state and the globe, and
often extend through economic value chains that link societies into unequal social networks of resources, discourses, and coercive mechanisms. Relational and reflexive approaches to social action have begun to supplant an older approach that assumed political interests and values as givens (Janoski 2017). These are the new and transformed directions for a vibrant but in many ways diverse future for political sociology.

Third, the complex area of media, data, and knowledge is impacted by classification, whether done by the state or private organizations in society. Big data has complicated and to some degree diffused this process, but it is brought together again by experts in society who shape, frame, and articulate these bare data. The salience of Russian hacking into the elections of many countries, and the posting of Hilary Clinton’s campaign emails on the web, are events we have not contemplated before. Cyberwarfare is in the offing, perhaps with power grids as the next targets. Then we have the slogan of “fake news,” attacks on the media, and polarization of pundits in the public sphere.

The media, data, and knowledge have rarely been fully integrated into political sociology, but they are now so intertwined and interactive with everyday life that they can no longer be mere sideline replacements to be called into analyses of politics when needed. Further, the shaping of knowledge by state actions, especially in the census, guides and even imprints the premises of action. Sociologists have previously neglected this area of study, but now scholars have made this central to the processes of politics (Emigh, Riley, and Ahmed 2015, Emigh and Riley 2016; Loveman 2014). Meanwhile, extreme polarization and charges of fake news have clouded over elite expertise, social networks, and many websites. Simultaneously, what private and state organizations know about citizens has exploded with big data. The media themselves have become a political battleground. Nevertheless, what is needed is more research on how political action committees, political parties, social movements, and politicians use these multiplying sites of communication.

Fourth, within sociology’s sharpening focus on inequality is a greater engagement with the sociology of race and postcoloniality. Although this engagement has begun, it remains unclear whether and how political sociology may change as a result. The intersection of institutional politics and race in the areas of immigration, civil rights, criminalization, education, and health is self-evident, but in practice there is little overlap among the communities of scholars engaged in each area of inquiry.

This is in part a matter of social distance among white and nonwhite scholars, as well as scholars located in the Global North and Global South, but it is also about the absence of a conceptual infrastructure that might facilitate greater engagement. Key chapters in this volume attempt to sketch out the ways in which sociologists of race and political sociologists could help each other. For example, because the general drift of power theory has been away from domination and toward hegemony, it is somewhat ill-equipped to explain the mounting violence and aggression that characterizes so much of
contemporary race relations the world over. De Leon and Clarno point to scholars of race, most famously Du Bois, who have long theorized liberal democracy as coercive and exclusionary. Likewise, whereas Omi and Winant (1994) understand the contemporary racialized state to function under conditions of “racial democracy” as opposed to the racial domination of segregation and apartheid, Jung and Kwon insist that the white settler colonial state continues to violently rearrange the lives of racialized others. Understanding the politics of migration and citizenship also requires considering race and colonialism.

Conceptualization of postcoloniality has the potential to reshape political sociology away from frameworks that privilege Eurocentric models of politics. A world-systems approach has long theorized how broader historical and global views provide new insights into the workings of political economy. More hopeful models of cosmopolitanism also involve a recognition of the influence of colonialism. In addition, scholarship recognizes the critical role colonialism has played in shaping gender and politics. Our hope is that this handbook generates lively conversation at the intersection of race and politics for years to come.

Fifth, feminist scholarship has reworked understandings of the state and politics in substantial ways. Scholars working from lenses focused on gender and sexuality have pointed to how the state is embedded in families and other institutions, calling into question the assumed boundaries between “public” and “private.” By showing the interconnections between families, markets, and states, these scholars have also emphasized the complexity of the state, and its many contradictions (Haney 1996; O’Connor, Orloff, and Shaver 1999; Orloff 1993).

A key frontier in analyzing politics that comes out of feminist scholarship is the development of intersectional frameworks, which identify how class, gender, sexuality, gender identity, race, ethnicity, nationality, and citizenship, as well as many other statuses, intersect to impact both political engagement and how the state recognizes and values (or devalues) its members. Legal and political structures work to shape opportunities as well as place limits on groups that differ by these statuses. Intersectionality also identifies the relationship between advantaged and disadvantaged groups. For example, the Social Security Act created opportunities for many groups, but disadvantaged farm workers and domestic workers – many of whom were Black or Latinx women (Gordon 1994; Mink 1996). Intersectional models require political sociologists to consider how politics and policies have uneven impacts, drawing our attention to how varied citizenship is in the twenty-first century.

Scholarship on sexuality has also provided examples of how states can criminalize, persecute, regulate, and provide opportunities to people based on their sexuality. In many countries, LGBTQ people have fewer rights, and in some countries their status may be criminalized. Even when governments may support LGBTQ people, for example, in legalizing same-sex marriage, the state
intrudes in ways that tend to discipline LGBTQ subjects, making them conform to “normalizing” approaches to organizing families. Such research continues to draw attention to the perils as well as protections the state affords.

A sixth major change in political sociology has been a focus on the cognitive effects of public policy. Early political sociologists treated public policies mainly as outcomes to be explained. Subsequent work by Theda Skocpol (1993) and Paul Pierson (1993) put policy feedback effects on the agenda for political sociology. Policies, which some citizens may not have previously wanted or cared about, became powerful enough in their effects to change citizen attitudes and values. This “policy feedback” approach, with roots in the classic work of E. E. Schattschneider (1935), became much more important in recent years (Campbell 2002). One example of policy feedback is the move from fixed pensions to 401(k) and 403(b) portable investment funds that made union-oriented workers into stock market investing fund managers. This change converted many workers into capitalists watching stock markets with avid interest. Similarly, citizens who may have been strong conservatives, as they age into senior status suddenly become advocates for expanded social security and Medicare programs (helped no doubt by the American Association for Retired Persons). As these examples suggest, much work on policy feedback has emphasized the role of vested interests.

Some of the most promising recent work, however, has turned toward the emotional and interpretive effects of public policies – as well as toward ideational processes that can impede policy feedbacks, a point that may be related to Bourdieus concept of “misrecognition” (Bourdieu 2014; Clemens 2006). Although some scholarship suggests, for example, that certain ways of raising taxes or delivering benefits may be more salient, other scholars find these processes “invisible” or “submerged” (Mayrl and Quinn 2016, 2017; Mettler 2011; Quinn and Mayrl 2018; Wilensky 2002). Much more remains to be learned about the conditions under which benefits become salient, and the conditions under which even highly salient benefits are sufficient to change public attitudes. The oft-quoted statement of a citizen at a 2009 congressional town hall meeting on the Affordable Care Act – “keep your government hands off my Medicare” – illustrates that even highly beneficial public policies may not change feelings about government in general. Much promising research can be made on the conditions under which public policy affects public opinion and strongly felt political identities.

Finally, the seventh promising future direction is the development of the social psychology of political action. Levi Martin and Judd point to the death of the GOFAT model – Good Old Fashioned Action Theory or the “Desires/Beliefs/Opportunities Model” – arguing that current theories do not think a person’s attitudes are caused simply by their membership in particular categories (class, occupation, race, gender, etc.). Political sociology emerged in dialogue with political psychology, as in the social networks approach of Lazarsfeld. This dialogue is now in a period of revival. Baldassarri’s (2012) use
of cognitive psychology in political science and behavioral economics is a promising development. Political scientists have been very active in this area (Baldassarri and Goldberg 2014; Druckman, Levandusky, and McLain 2017; Levendusky, Druckman, and McLain 2016; Zuckerman 2005). However, the cognitive approach is more oriented toward how positive heuristics are constructed, especially cognitive shortcuts rather than the more common negative approach of cognitive errors. Further, this approach exists within a more sociological one of social networks and opinion leaders, rather than attitudes or cleavages determining your opinions. A greater attention to the social psychology of politics might help to make sense of the politics of reseentiment and backlash that seems salient today (Grey and Janoski 2017). It might also shed light on the politics of redistribution on a global scale. Under what conditions are elites willing to share resources with the middle classes and poor, and under what conditions is the Global North willing to share resources with the Global South? Structural analyses are useful here, but an examination of the social psychology of elite behavior in context might complement our macro-level theories of political sociology.

To meet these analytical challenges—and others that we cannot yet anticipate—political sociologists will no doubt have to continue remaking their theories. Since the 1950s, political sociology has met the challenge of a changing world by continually broadening its scope. From early studies of electoral behavior, to studies of democratic regimes, and then to studies of transnational waves of democratization, the analytical movement has been one of expansion. This means the recognition of more societies, more diverse social forms, and more processes as belonging to the domain of political sociology. As a result, political sociologists have shown a salutary willingness to question their central theoretical concepts, and to draw on the best ideas available without policing the borders of the discipline. Politics around the world in the coming decades will no doubt bring events at least as surprising as those that have occurred since the first edition of this handbook.

The challenge for political sociologists will be to meet new events and changing structures with theories and methods adequate to explaining them. The task of editing this New Handbook of Political Sociology has made us optimistic that political sociology will meet these challenges in the future with the theoretical and substantive tools necessary to explain emerging political interactions, reformulating structures, and often surprising outcomes.

REFERENCES


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Introduction: New Directions in Political Sociology


Introduction: New Directions in Political Sociology


I

THEORIES OF POLITICAL SOCIOLOGY
If political sociology centers on relations between the state and civil society, then it is fair to say that those relations are now marked increasingly by state repression and racial and ethnic violence. The turn of the twenty-first century witnessed the rapid rise of antiglobalization protests around the world followed by even larger antiwar demonstrations as the United States prepared to invade Iraq. Yet these movements faced intense crackdowns from increasingly militarized police and state security forces. Similarly, the 2010s saw deadly clashes between police forces and authoritarian regimes on the one hand, and popular movements such as the Arab Spring, Occupy, and Black Lives Matter on the other. Ethnic nationalism is now in the ascendant and with it has come a permissive attitude toward official and unofficial violence. Consider, for example, the Islamist AKP’s crackdown against secularists and Kurds in Turkey, the BJP’s Hindu nationalist pogroms against Muslims and Christians in India, and the spate of racist attacks that have followed white ethnic nationalist victories in the United States, UK, and Europe.

Despite the clear and disturbing trajectory of state–society relations, the sociological literature on power is surprisingly ill-equipped to make sense of the present historical conjuncture. The general trend has been away from theorizing violence and coercion toward theorizing the dynamics of consent, of subtle or soft power, whether conceptualized as hegemony, governmentality, or racial democracy.

We therefore see this chapter as a threefold intervention. First, as a preliminary point, we seek to document the general drift of the canonical literature on power from coercion to consent. Second, we attempt to theorize why this drift has happened. We argue that the development of the power literature rests upon the assumption that power under liberal democracy does not operate on exclusion, suppression, and violence. Thus, it becomes necessary to explain how and why we participate in our own subordination, especially the
ways in which we internalize dominant discourses and then act against our own interests. Finally, we challenge this assumption by drawing on theorists who emphasize the violent and exclusionary underpinnings of liberal democracy. Older theoretical currents inspire this impulse: especially critical race theorists and postcolonial scholars. From there, we highlight two bodies of work that we believe comprise, but by no means exhaust, promising new directions in retheorizing power. The first comes from studies of elimination and death, the second from scholarship on exploitation and disposability.

Accordingly, the following chapter unfolds in four parts. The first centers on the power canon from Weber and Dahl to Lukes and Gramsci. The second addresses the contributions of Foucault and Bourdieu, who have influenced the drift away from coercion but are distinct from the power canon proper. Next, we sketch the theoretical clues left by critical scholars of race and colonialism who have long insisted that power under liberal democracy operates on the basis of exclusion, suppression, and violence. Finally, we explore in some detail exciting new work that builds upon these earlier interventions and thereby breaks with the general drift of the power literature.

THE CANON: FROM COERCION TO CONSENT

Though of course power is implicated in multiple and overlapping social relations (e.g., class power, patriarchy), a genealogy of power theory within political sociology as such must begin with Max Weber’s classical definition of power: “of the possibility of imposing one’s own will upon the behavior of other persons.” This more generalized form of power leads Weber to distinguish between two types of domination, namely, authority and the constellation of interests. Authority operates in ways prefigured by the general definition in the sense that it entails the “power to command and duty to obey.” Less obvious is domination that operates, for instance, in the way that a monopoly would in the context of a market. Small market actors (e.g., suppliers) are not duty-bound to obey the monopoly (e.g., Walmart), but they bend to the wholesale price demanded by the monopoly ($1.00 per unit of a commodity), because if they don’t, then they risk the possibility that the monopoly will choose other suppliers. It is in their interest to do so (Weber 1978: 941–948).

The classical definition of power was put to the test in the next major episode in the development of that literature: the debate between “power elite” theory inaugurated by sociologists C. Wright Mills (1957 [1956]) and Floyd Hunter (1963 [1953]) and the pluralist behavioral theory of Robert Dahl (1958, 1961) and his students. Dahl used Weber to undercut Mills’ and Hunter’s claim that a small, close-knit circle of elites ruled the United States at the expense of the many. To prove that such a cabal existed, analysts, Dahl said, must show that a competing set of preferences and that on key issues, C wins most of the time. Since advocates of the power elite model could produce no such evidence and
since on the contrary the data suggest civil society places considerable limits on elite power, the United States was a pluralist democracy – not a direct democracy but one in which the well-placed require the say-so of nonelites to stay in power.

As Steven Lukes (2007) points out, however, Dahl did not address the issue of domination as such, but rather the dynamics of “winning in decision-making.” That is, Dahl contemplates passing policy initiatives through city council, not repressive or persuasive means of bending others to one’s will. In *Power: A Radical View* Lukes (1974) famously transcended both Weber’s “one dimensional view” of power and Dahl’s “winning in decision-making” conception of power. In doing so, he introduced mainstream sociology to Antonio Gramsci’s concept of “hegemony,” according to which R consents to C’s rule, because R has come to believe that C is the rightful ruler. Here there is no requirement that the few face off against the many or that the few defeat the many over and over again in the full light of day. This is because elites may frame the agenda in such a way that nonelites willingly go along with elite plans. For example, in the run-up to the 2003 Iraq War, US President George W. Bush said before a joint session of Congress that “You are either with us, or you are with the terrorists.” Seen in this light, the choice between going and not going to war is an impossible one, for who would publicly side with the terrorists? The elite in this instance has effectively arranged or primed nonelite preferences so that no serious opposition on the scale of the Vietnam War era would take hold.

Though of course power may operate through coercion, for example via the military power of the state, for Gramsci that is not its only mode of operation. Intellectuals and party operatives may also infiltrate civil society institutions (e.g., the media) and cultivate mass consent for a given agenda through a coordinated campaign of persuasion. Power need only operate through violence when the masses withdraw their consent to be governed. Thus, Gramsci pointedly distinguishes between “The spontaneous consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group” and “The apparatus of state coercive power, which ‘legally’ enforces discipline on those groups who do not ‘consent’” (1971: 12). Crucially for our purposes, Gramsci distinguished between the forms of struggle necessary to undercut domination on the one hand and hegemony on the other. Where civil society is weak as it was in Czarist Russia, struggle entails a violent confrontation with state domination, a war of maneuver. Where civil society is strong and forms a protective outer ring of trenches around the state as in the liberal democracies of Western Europe, then struggle entails exposing and gradually dismantling the elaborate system of hegemony that conceals and mystifies inequality and exploitation. This is the war of position (Hoare and Smith 1971: lxii, lxvi; Katznelson 1981).

Gramsci appealed to those seeking to theorize power in liberal democratic contexts like the United States and UK, where outright revolution remained distant and elusive and where a war of position appeared to be the correct
political strategy. Accordingly, a spate of Gramscian analyses emerged alongside and in the wake of Lukes’ intervention, perhaps the most famous being Michael Burawoy’s (1979) *Manufacturing Consent*, John Gaventa’s (1980) *Power and Powerlessness*, and of course the Birmingham School of Cultural Studies including Stuart Hall’s opus (see e.g. Hall 1986) and Paul Willis’ (1975) *Learning to Labor*. Most important in the context of this chapter is Gramsci’s influence on the work of Omi and Winant (1986), who famously held that race relations in the United States have shifted from a regime of “racial domination” under Jim Crow segregation based on coercion and biological racism to one of “racial hegemony” in the post–Civil Rights era, anchored in mass consent and colorblind racism.

**FOUCAULT AND BOURDIEU: GOVERNMENTALITY AND SYMBOLIC POWER**

As some on the organized Left turned to the more “open Marxism” of Antonio Gramsci to theorize power under liberal democracy, others abandoned Marxism altogether, especially what they saw as a structuralist prejudice reducing all noneconomic forms of power (e.g., knowledge, institutional politics) and identity (e.g., race, gender, sexuality) to class power. Perhaps the most influential of the “post-structuralists” was Michel Foucault, who held that power depends in part upon the production of knowledge. Thus, he writes, “in a society such as ours … there are manifold relations of power which permeate, characterize and constitute the social body, and these relations of power cannot themselves be established, consolidated nor implemented without the production, accumulation, circulation and functioning of a discourse. There can be no possible exercise of power without a certain economy of discourses of truth,” adding (as a rejoinder to Marxism), “indeed we must produce truth in order to produce wealth” (Foucault 1986 [1976]: 229–230).

For Foucault, as for Gramsci, the analytical tendency is to highlight the more subtle forms of disciplinary power that coexist with coercive forms of power. We see this vividly in *Discipline and Punish* (1977), where Foucault documents the transformation of penalty from the violence of “the scaffold” (capital punishment including public hangings and beheadings) to the panopticism of the prison. Though the latter may appear more humane, in fact power merely functions differently and in a no less insidious way. Anchored in the overlapping discourses of military science, education, and psychology on the inculcation of docility, the modern prison was meant to create a relation of power within which inmates, fearing that they were being watched, police themselves and thus participate in their own subordination even (and perhaps especially) in the absence of a guard or actual violence. This he takes as a general paradigm of modern society, where putative truths prompt us to align our bodies and behavior to the arbitrary standards of normality. Thus, Foucault sought, at
least at first, to draw our attention away from the coercive power of the state, and toward “governmentality,” the management of the population by means of more subtle techniques of power such as the census (Foucault 1991 [1979]).

It would be a mistake, however, as it would be in an analysis of Gramsci, to suggest that Foucault had somehow abandoned an analysis of violence, for “biopolitics” entails power not just over the body, but also over life and death itself. Indeed, it was precisely the state’s attention to the birth rate, the mortality rate, and the equilibrium between the two that led to a fundamental shift in the state’s conception of sovereignty. Whereas the classical definition of the latter involved the prerogative to have people put to death or to let them live, the mounting concern with population as a political problem led the modern state to build security mechanisms around the life of masses of people. Sovereignty thus became increasingly about the prerogative to make live and let die. This is the point at which biopower in both its disciplinary and violent forms converge and become complementary, for war and genocide are anchored in the sovereign’s decision to make some live, while letting others die. Not surprisingly, Foucault argues that racism intensifies this double movement, for it differentiates among the population, facilitating the elimination not just of foreign powers but also of one’s own people. For Foucault, Nazi Germany is the ultimate case in point (Foucault 2003: 240–241, 246–247, 260).

Nevertheless, Foucault’s conception of power has been translated and employed almost exclusively in its nonviolent form. This is true of his impact on feminism, for instance in the work of Judith Butler (1990), on the study of race, gender, and colonialism as in the work of Sander Gilman (1985), and on the study of neoliberalism by scholars like Aihwa Ong (2006) and Nikolas Rose (1999). Rose (1999), for example, argues that neoliberal governance is made possible through the discourse and practice of freedom, for the latter entails a code of conduct that serves as a checklist of civility. In a process he calls “responsibilization,” people come to question, regulate, and adjust their behavior in relation to the code of conduct. This is meant to produce “an intense and continuous self-scrutiny, self-dissatisfaction and self-evaluation” (1999: 87–89, 91, 93).

Pierre Bourdieu’s intervention in the power literature is somewhat accidental in the sense that it centers on a different scholarly debate entirely, namely, the ongoing dispute between objectivist and subjectivist theories of class formation. Objectivists held that one’s social class is determined primarily by one’s structural position within the relations of production, whether as a worker, bourgeois, or petit bourgeois. Subjectivists countered that it makes little difference to insist that one occupies a structural position, say, as a worker, if the worker herself does not identify as a member of the working class; only once the cultural process of self-identification is complete (typically in the course of workplace struggle) does it make sense to claim that a working class exists. Bourdieu sought to overcome this divide by developing the concept of “symbolic power.”
Actors in a given social field engage in what Bourdieu calls “classification struggles,” that is a fight over the complexion of the social world, the various groups who inhabit it, and the relative prestige of each of these groups in terms of taste, judgment, and capacity for leadership. The group who prevails in classification struggles has more “symbolic power” than those who lose, such that the latter tend to define their subjectivity and worth within the social categories the dominant group imposes. Thus, Bourdieu writes, “symbolic power . . . is the power to make groups (groups that are already established and have to be consecrated or groups that have yet to be constituted such as the Marxian proletariat).” The power to do so rests on two conditions. First, “The power to impose upon other minds a vision, old or new, of social divisions depends on the social authority acquired in previous struggles.” This means that those with more symbolic power tend to have more social capital (i.e., more extensive and powerful social networks) and more cultural capital (e.g., credentials, objects of high cultural value). Second, symbolic efficacy “depends on the degree to which the vision proposed is founded in reality.” When this second condition prevails, the classification system approaches “doxa,” or what Gramsci would call “common sense”; in contrast, when the proposed vision clashes with reality, say, in an economic crisis, then its once dominant categories and divisions seem “orthodox,” and a new classification struggle begins. With this framework in hand, Bourdieu then splits the difference between objectivist and subjectivist theorists of class formation by suggesting that classification struggles shape both the subjective experience of class and create or consecrate the very structural positions that people inhabit (Bourdieu 1989: 23).

Within the field of institutional politics, classification struggles center on how the spokesperson comes “to be invested with the full power to act and speak in the name of the group which he or she produces by the magic of the slogan, the watchword, or the command, and by his mere existence as an incarnation of the collective.” Similar to fields of social distinction centered, say, on the consumption of art, the power to represent a group in the field of institutional politics entails “tracing out and stating the boundaries between groups and, thereby, of bringing them into existence as such.” In a monarchical context, this is exemplified in the proclamation of Louis XIV, “L’Etat c’est moi”; in a liberal democratic context, this power manifests itself in the claims of trade union leaders, politicians, and civil servants to speak on behalf of a class, a nation, or some other collective. The result is a counterintuitive double movement that Bourdieu calls “delegation,” in which the spokespersons both personify “the social fiction to which they give life . . . and from which they receive in return their power” (Bourdieu 1989: 23–24).

In sum, we detect within the canon a discernible analytical shift from a Weberian emphasis on coercive power to a Gramscian emphasis on consent. Related to, but distinct from, the overall drift of the canon is the work of Foucault and Bourdieu, whose conceptions of power turn on governmentality.
and classification struggles respectively. To the degree that violence in a Weberian sense takes hold, it is reframed, within Bourdieu for instance, as a “monopoly over legitimate symbolic violence which belongs to the state or its representatives” (Bourdieu 1989: 21, emphasis added). The underlying assumption appears to be that, as Foucault writes, “in a society such as ours,” power operates by way of an economy of discourses of truth, or, in Gramscian terms, the cultivation of mass consent in liberal democracies through the ideological infiltration of civil society. The power canon and the later interventions of Foucault and Bourdieu thus leave us somewhat bereft of the tools necessary to make sense of contemporary state–society relations, which evince a clear pattern of state repression and racial and ethnic violence. In the next section, we turn to marginal figures in the theory of power that understand force and exclusion to be endemic to liberal democracy, particularly as it pertains to race.

CLUES: CRITICAL RACE THEORY AND POSTCOLONIAL STUDIES

W. E. B. Du Bois’ (1935) Black Reconstruction in America was a stunning rebuttal to the dominant historiography of his time, which insisted that the immediate post–Civil War period and the ensuing era of segregation fulfilled the Northern promise of liberal democracy. In fact, he argued, the postbellum American south represented the restoration of white supremacy by other means, a movement “Back toward Slavery.” If America’s antebellum agrarian democracy was built on slave codes and a constitution which held that black people had “no rights which a white man was bound to respect,” then postbellum liberal democracy witnessed “a determined effort to reduce black labor as nearly as possible to a condition of unlimited exploitation” with the black worker “reduced to the level of bare subsistence by taxation, peonage, caste, and every method of discrimination.” Landless whites, in turn, policed this exploitative system. Where “the system of slavery demanded a special police force ... made possible and unusually effective by the presence of the poor whites” whose “vanity ... associated him with the masters,” Du Bois observed, after slavery “the white laborer joined the white landholder and capitalist and beat the black laborer into subjection” (1935: 10, 12, 670).

This therefore was the condition of liberal democracy in Du Bois’ time: a system of blind ignorance, violent subjection, and racial hatred. Nor was this an isolated case, for one could find similar violence and exclusion at the heart of democracies the world over, especially in their colonies. In fact, Du Bois argued, the abolition of slavery in the United States propelled the expansion of global capitalist imperialism and “a new industrial slavery of black and brown and yellow workers in Africa and Asia” (1935: 632).

In Du Bois we find an account of power under liberal democracy that is hardly one of consent, even in the critical sense of that word. On the contrary, his work provides a painful reminder that liberal democracies are built and
maintained through subjugation and death. “Immediately in Africa, a black back runs red with the blood of the lash,” he wrote, “in India, a brown girl is raped; in China, a coolie starves; in Alabama, seven darkies are more than lynched; while in London, the white limbs of a prostitute are hung with jewels and silk. Flames of jealous murder sweep the earth, while brains of little children smear the hills” (1935: 728). There is consent to the degree that, for instance, poor whites are bamboozled into believing that slavery, imperialism, and segregation were better safeguards to their economic security than a union with black workers, but even then the ideology of white supremacy is pressed into the service of what can only be described as racial domination.

More recent scholarship under the rubric of critical race theory (CRT) builds on Du Bois’ critique of racial domination under liberal democracy, but focuses on the role of the state – more specifically the law – as an instrument of white supremacy. Understanding the law as fundamentally political, CRT scholars such as Derrick Bell (1973) and Kimberlé Crenshaw (1988) point to the limitations of formal legal equality in the post–Civil Rights era. Equality under the law, they argued, provides ideological cover for racial domination by making the ongoing subordination of the black poor appear fair and neutral.

Likewise, Charles W. Mills’ (1997) Racial Contract famously turned the vaunted notion of the social contract on its head. The latter, which is a guiding principle of Western political philosophy, presupposes a state of nature in which individuals decide to found a state and set rules for its relationship to civil society. Mills points out, however, that in actuality it “is not a contract between everybody (‘we the people’), but between just the people who count, the people who really are people (‘we the white people’). So it is a Racial Contract” (Mills 1997: 3). Not party to the contracts that underpin the regimes that subjugate them, people of color do not genuinely consent to their subordination. As a result, Mills argues, white supremacy is the unnamed political system that underpins not only liberal democracy but the entire modern world. Far from being a system in which inclusion is possible, it is fundamentally – at its core – a system of exclusion and subordination.

These accounts find a strong echo in the feminist tradition and among scholars of intersectionality within CRT itself. Mills rightly points out that his approach “would correspond to feminist theorists’ articulation of the centrality of gender, patriarchy, and sexism to traditional moral and political theory” (Mills 1997: 3). Indeed, the inspiration for Mills’ own book was Carole Pateman’s (1988) Sexual Contract. Like Mills, she exposes the founding exclusion of women from the supposedly universalistic social contract and takes particular aim at progressive attempts to make more inclusive social contracts. That, she argues, is impossible, for “The original contract constitutes both freedom and domination. Men’s freedom and women’s subjection are created through the original contract – and the character of civil freedom cannot be understood without the missing half of the story that
reveals how men’s patriarchal right over women is established through contract” (Pateman 1988: 2).

Introducing the concept of intersectionality from within CRT, Kimberlé Crenshaw (1993) explained that race, class, and gender converge in the law to keep women in abusive domestic partnerships. Thus, under the marriage fraud provision of the 1990 Immigration and Nationality Act, a person who immigrated to the United States had to remain married to their partner for two years before applying for permanent resident status. This prompted poor immigrant women of color to stay in abusive partnerships in order to maintain “green card” eligibility. Here the law is fraught with exclusions that force women of certain means and background to choose between safety and deportation, thereby rendering them vulnerable to domestic violence (Crenshaw 1993: 1246–1247).

Postcolonial studies provides another framework for moving beyond the limitations of the sociological literature on power. As Frantz Fanon (1961) insists, colonial rule is structured by violence and domination. Unlike in advanced capitalist countries, where the organs of civil society “create around the exploited person an atmosphere of submission and of inhibition which lightens the task of policing,” the agents of government in the colonies “speak the language of pure force” (Fanon 1961: 38). Similarly, Ranajit Guha (1997) argued that colonial rule is defined by “dominance without hegemony.”

While analyzing the political and economic roots of colonial rule, postcolonial scholars also interrogate the role of culture and ideology in Western domination. Edward Said (1979), for example, traced the long history of Western knowledge production about the “Orient,” documenting the exclusionary logic that treats the non-West as fundamentally different from and inferior to the West. Indeed, he argued, Western bourgeois self-identification with notions of modernity, democracy, civility, and progress operates through the construction of a non-Western Other as traditional, authoritarian, barbaric, and unchanging. Like Critical Race Theorists, therefore, Said highlights the fundamentally exclusionary underpinnings of liberal democracy.

During the late 1980s and 1990s, postcolonial studies helped transform the humanities as well as disciplines such as anthropology and history. Sociologists working in Europe and the Global South joined the postcolonial turn, but most sociologists in North America either dismissed the critiques or simply refused to engage. Julian Go (2013) documents this refusal by comparing the relative absence of postcolonial themes in sociology journals, conference proceedings, and job advertisements when compared with literature and history.

As George Steinmetz points out, “Sociologists have analyzed empires throughout the entire history of their discipline” (2013: 1). The founders of American, British, French, and German sociology all engaged with questions of empire. Some served as agents of colonial rule while others challenged imperial power, yet the discipline as a whole came to reproduce the imperial standpoint
that Connell (2007) refers to as “northern theory.” From the 1970s onward disciplinary amnesia and methodological nationalism marginalized work on colonialism and empire even within the subfield of political sociology.

Over the last several years, however, an emerging body of scholarship points to the growing popularity of postcolonial theory within sociology. From special issues of journals to thematic conferences, the discipline is finally feeling the influence of postcolonial thought. According to Go (2013), postcolonial sociology demands a serious engagement with colonial discourses, a radical rethinking of concepts such as “tradition” and “modernity,” and a more sophisticated analysis of the relationship between culture and power.

Along with Connell and Go, scholars such as Gurminder Bhambra (2016), Zine Magubane (2003), and Claire Decoteau (2013) have been central to the reorientation of the discipline. Magubane (2003), for instance, traces the circulation of colonial notions of blackness between England and South Africa. English settlers brought to South Africa familiar categories of Otherness initially deployed against the Irish and other locally subordinate groups. Over time, however, ideas about blackness derived from the South African context circulated back to England and were deployed to uphold local hierarchies.

Similarly, Decoteau (2013) studies the ways that South Africans – from high-ranking officials to the poorest of the poor – navigate the politics of health care in a postcolonial context marked by a devastating HIV/AIDS epidemic. She demonstrates that people’s options are structured by an unequal contestation between Western biomedicine and indigenous knowledge produced by a history of colonialism and apartheid followed by neoliberal restructuring and the rise of a global pharmaceutical industry.

The emergence of postcolonial sociology has focused attention on global interconnections, the entanglements of culture and power, and the Eurocentric – or “metro-centric” – bias in the production of knowledge. While this scholarship has embraced the general shift within the discipline toward an emphasis on “soft” forms of power, postcolonial sociologists – like Said before them – analyze culture in the service of domination. And some, such as Decoteau, look beyond culture and knowledge to emphasize the ongoing centrality of violent exclusion and death within postcolonial states.

NEW DIRECTIONS

What has been lost in power theory’s trajectory from an emphasis on coercion to a focus on consent is a recombinant conception of power with violence at its center. We emphasize that the latter has been “lost” because domination was once a major preoccupation for sociologists. For example, alongside his emphasis on “legitimate domination,” which entailed nonviolent means of inculcating obedience, Weber offered the classic definition of the state as the institution that “claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force
within a given territory” (1946: 78). Similarly, for Gramsci, consent exists in dialectical tension with coercion. More recently, Michael Mann argued that power is organized via ideological, economic, political, and military networks that transform otherwise diffuse communities into a “social cage” (Mann 1986: 100; see also Clemens 2016). Yet we are not the first to insist that the study of power has mistakenly turned away from violence and coercion. In fact, research on hegemony, ideology, and discourse had become so widespread during the 1970s that both Perry Anderson (1976: 47) and Nicos Poulantzas (1978: 29) felt the need to remind us that force and violence are the basis of state power. Nevertheless, the sociological literature on power continues to treat coercive power as secondary. We therefore turn to recent bodies of interdisciplinary scholarship that theorize the violence and exclusion underpinning liberal democracy in different sociohistorical conjunctures and contexts. Rather than treating coercion in the abstract, this scholarship analyzes particular modes of violence that operate at the foundation of contemporary society. In particular, we highlight the contributions of scholars writing about elimination, death, exploitation, and disposability.

Elimination and Death

Several emerging analytical frameworks foreground elimination and death as forms of power that structure contemporary liberal societies. Settler colonial studies, for instance, has recently witnessed a major revival. Although settler colonialism was an object of study among Marxists and anticolonial scholar-activists during the 1960s and 1970s, it was sidelined during the 1980s and 1990s in favor of concepts more attentive to culture. Since the early 2000s, however, the field has once again become an important site for path-breaking studies of racial domination and violence (see Fenelon 2016; Glenn 2015).

Patrick Wolfe (2006) helped lay the foundations for this revival with two key insights into settler colonialism. First, he argued, settler colonialism is premised on the “logic of elimination.” Rather than the exploitation of indigenous labor, settler colonial projects prioritize the elimination of indigenous populations and their replacement by colonizing settlers. Elimination takes many forms, ranging from genocide to forced displacement to cultural erasure. The 2015 report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Canada, for instance, documented the role played by residential schools in the “cultural genocide” of indigenous First Nations populations.

Second, Wolfe argued that settler colonialism is “a structure not an event” (Wolfe 2006: 388). Rather than treating settler colonialism as a moment in the history of modern liberal societies, Wolfe urges scholars to recognize the ongoing structures of settler domination in places like the United States, Canada, Palestine/Israel, and Australia. State sovereignty and private land ownership are two of the most important structures that reproduce settler domination over indigenous populations.
Scholars such as Audra Simpson (2014), Glen Coulthard (2014), and Elizabeth Povinelli (2011) have traced an important shift in strategies of settler colonial rule during the late twentieth century. Whereas settler states such as Canada and Australia previously relied on overt domination to displace and eliminate indigenous populations, both states increasingly use “recognition” as a new strategy of settler colonial rule. Seeking to contain anticolonial struggles and calls for land redistribution, settler states offer official apologies for historical wrongs and grant indigenous communities limited self-governing authority. Rather than this representing a shift from domination to hegemony, however, these scholars point out that “recognition” merely reinforces the existing regime premised on elimination and dispossession.

Alongside settler colonial studies, emerging scholarship on racial domination also foregrounds the analysis of death. Ruth Wilson Gilmore (2007: 28), for instance, defines racism as the “group differentiated vulnerability to premature death.” Recognizing that residential segregation, environmental racism, discriminatory policing, and differential access to food and medicine make some populations more vulnerable to death, this framework demands a reckoning with the violence that grounds even the most subtle, structural forms of white supremacy.

In a similar vein, a growing body of race scholarship builds on Foucault’s (2003) analysis of “thanatopolitical” efforts to enhance the livelihood of a privileged population through the death of a racially despised Other. Achille Mbembe (2003) refers to these efforts as “necropolitical” projects. Scholars such as Alexander Weheliye (2014) have taken Foucault to task for using Nazi Germany rather than racial slavery or colonial rule as the archetype of thanatopolitical power. Rather than exceptional, they argue, necropolitics is foundational for liberal democratic states. Others, such as Nikhil Singh (2004), have built on the Foucauldian framework to define racism as social structures that “stigmatize and depreciate one form of humanity for the purposes of another’s health, development, safety, profit, or pleasure.”

Taking this analysis even further, scholars adopting an Afro-Pessimist perspective insist that vulnerability and death are the defining features of Black existence and that anti-Blackness is the primary structuring condition of the modern world. Building on the concept of “social death” developed by Orlando Patterson (1982), scholars like Frank Wilderson (2003) and Jared Sexton (2016) insist that Western modernity is premised on the death of the Black subject. Critiquing the centrality of Gramsci in recent studies of race, for instance, Wilderson argues that the death of the Black subject is the precondition for white civil society. Wilderson argues that rather than a response to resistance or a crisis of hegemony, violence toward Black bodies is primary, gratuitous, and a defining feature of Western modernity.
Overall, therefore, recent scholarship on racial domination, white supremacy, and settler colonialism provides important frameworks for understanding power. Rather than assuming that power operates primarily through consent, it highlights the role of elimination and death in the constitution and reproduction of even the most “liberal democratic” societies.

Exploitation and Disposability

Recent scholarship on the dynamics of exploitation and disposability – particularly under conditions of neoliberal capitalism – is also crucial for advancing our understanding of power in contemporary liberal societies. Arguing that coercion and dispossession are core processes of capital accumulation, much of this scholarship focuses on the relationship between racism and capitalism.

To begin with, scholars such as David Harvey (2005, 2014), Massimo de Angelis (2001), and Saskia Sassen (2014) have drawn attention to the fact that violent dispossession is an ongoing, normal strategy of capital accumulation. Rather than seeing “primitive accumulation” as a fleeting moment in the early history of capitalism, Harvey (2014) argues that “accumulation through dispossession” is an ordinary feature of capitalism. From wars and land grabs to home foreclosures and the privatization of public goods, the use of violence to accumulate wealth and extract resources from vulnerable populations is a key feature of contemporary capitalism. The current proliferation of these violent processes, according to Sassen (2014), marks the inauguration of an era of “predatory” capitalism in which corporate strategies rely less on exploitation than on the expulsion of people from their lands, their homes, their jobs, and their benefit packages.

Similarly, scholars increasingly recognize that coercive forms of labor exploitation such as slavery and indentured servitude are not aberrations but integral features of capitalism. Du Bois (1935) and C. L. R. James (1989 [1963]) provided the intellectual foundation for this scholarship by insisting that racial slavery in the Americas was constitutive – rather than a precursor – of modern capitalism. Contemporary scholars have built on this work by documenting the violence of sweatshop production; the coercion underpinning welfare reform and other neoliberal efforts to enforce dependence on low-wage work; and the brutality and harassment confronting domestic employees, day laborers, and other low-wage workers. Processes of racial and gender formations make some populations particularly vulnerable to coercive forms of exploitation. Yet neoliberal restructuring has intensified exploitation for all workers through attacks on unions, welfare, and affirmative action; cuts to public employment and public services; and the expansion of precarious, short-term, low-wage work.
Alongside the intensification of exploitation, neoliberal capitalism has also accelerated the production of surplus or disposable populations. As early as the 1960s, James Boggs (1968) argued that automation in Detroit was generating a population of “outsiders” who were permanently excluded from access to wage labor. In recent decades, the growth of surplus populations has expanded as a result of continued advances in automation along with shifts from productive to financial investment and a global crisis of subsistence farming. For Harvey (2014), the production of surplus populations is an acceleration of processes identified by Marx in his analysis of the industrial reserve army. Others suggest that the process today is qualitatively different than in the nineteenth century because billions of people have now been abandoned to a life of permanent unemployment and informal labor beyond the margins of the wage system. According to Mike Davis (2006), the combination of deindustrialization and urbanization has generated a planet of slums. Moreover, it is crucial to recognize that race shapes the production of populations whose lives and labor are considered redundant. Indeed, contemporary capitalism dovetails with white supremacy and settler colonialism to produce highly racialized surplus populations. And by reducing the demand for their labor, neoliberal restructuring has enabled the expansion of necropolitical projects to eliminate the racialized poor (Clarno 2017).

Finally, scholarship on mass incarceration, mass deportation, and securitization has uncovered the centrality of violence for efforts to manage and contain the racialized poor. The expansion of militarized policing and border security put an end to long-standing debates about whether the state remained relevant under conditions of neoliberal globalization. Indeed, security forces are the glaring exception to neoliberal demands for cuts to state funding. While rolling-back funds for education, social services, and welfare, neoliberal states have rapidly expanded funding for police, prisons, border patrols, militaries, and intelligence forces. Jamie Peck (2010) and Loïc Wacquant (2009) argue that mass incarceration is a response to the crisis of racialized poverty generated by neoliberal restructuring. Wacquant (2009), for instance, argues that mass incarceration in the United States is a technology for warehousing the “precarious and deproletarianised fractions of the black working class” (2009: xvi, xxii, 207, 208). Along with the expansion of state security forces, neoliberal restructuring has also led to the proliferation of private security companies, gated communities, private military contractors, and other privatized efforts to secure the powerful. Indeed, we are witnessing the emergence of dense networks of private and state security forces that work together to contain and manage the racialized poor (Clarno 2017).

Overall, therefore, recent scholarship has drawn attention to violent dispossession, coercive labor exploitation, and the production and management of surplus populations. All of these processes highlight forms of violence and coercion that structure contemporary liberal societies. Much like
the scholarship on elimination and death, studies of exploitation and disposability provide important new directions for developing our understanding of power.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, we have attempted to show that the literature on power has shifted over time from an emphasis on coercive power, to an emphasis on consent. In this, the development of the power literature aligned with a particular concern in the 1960s and 70s to theorize power under conditions of liberal democracy. We point out, however, that this overall trajectory has left us somewhat at a loss to make sense of our present historical conjuncture, which is so clearly marked by exclusion and violent suppression even in liberal polities, particularly as power relates to ethnoracial relations. We therefore make two analytical moves that we hope will enable political sociologists to rethink the concept of power—a concept that underlies so much of the work we do. First, we turn to what we see as the foundation for an alternative approach, namely, the work of W. E. B. Du Bois, Critical Race Theory, and postcolonial theory. From their inception, these lineages have understood liberal democracy and related concepts such as the social contract to be based fundamentally on exclusion and violence. Second, we outline two bodies of work that can aid in bringing coercive dynamics back into political sociology’s conception of power. These include, but are by no means limited to, the scholarship on settler colonialism, racial domination, and neoliberal capitalism.

REFERENCES


I. Theories of Political Sociology


Conflict Theories in Political Sociology

Class, Power, Inequality, and the Historical Transition to Financialization

Harland Prechel and Linzi Berkowitz

The social organization of capitalism in the twenty-first-century is radically different from in the middle decades of the twentieth century. Scholars from multiple disciplines and theoretical perspectives present this historical transition as a shift from a manufacturing to a finance-based economy. Although scholars from several disciplines examine dimensions of the transition to financialization, they tend to focus on outcomes and give limited attention to the political process of enacting policies and laws that made this transition possible. As a result, the transition to financialization is often assumed to be the outcome of an inevitable historical process moving toward economic equilibrium or the actions of an autonomous state. In contrast, conflict perspectives in political sociology focus on process and demonstrate how the emergent social structure is an outcome of conflict among different power holders. A core presupposition of conflict theory is that society consists of multiple overlapping and conflicting networks of interacting power relations. These complex and varied arrangements create different historical trajectories because multiple rationalities exist at a given point in time and it is unclear which one will prevail in a particular historical circumstance (Mann 2017).

Although the multiple rationalities are often manifested as conflict, no unified conflict theory exists that explains how conflict is created and resolved at various loci in the social structure. Conflict among groups was anticipated by the nineteenth-century philosopher Frederick Hegel (1977 [1910]), who was among the first to theorize how socially constructed mediative categories, which serve to organize human experiences and create a sense of selfhood, produce divisions that contribute to conflict among groups and undermine the political unity necessary to advance their mutual interest. While this focus on groups was elaborated by sociologists such as Simmel (1980 [1955]), other conflict theorists focus on how class conflict affects macro-level change in the social organization of capitalism. Conflict
perspectives reached a high point in the 1960s and 1970s when they sought to answer questions related to widespread political and social unrest. However, by 1990, conflict perspectives in political sociology had less influence in mainstream sociology compared to consensus perspectives.

In response to the transition to financialization, the 2008 financial crisis, and the subsequent Great Recession, conflict perspectives in political sociology underwent a resurgence. Conflict theorists that examine this transition to financialization tend to focus on the changes in class relations and organizational and institutional arrangements that enabled financialization to prosper, and either examine or acknowledge that the process entailed political conflict and power struggles among competing classes, class fractions, elites, and groups. Ironically, despite the spread of conflict in virtually all dimensions of the structure, this focus has been eclipsed in recent years by a focus on organizations’ cultural arrangements and institutional norms (Gray and Silbey 2014; Walker and Rae 2014).

This chapter examines the contribution of conflict theories in political sociology that focus on the new social frontier associated with the transition to financialization and the resulting consequences, which include the transformation of corporate–state relations, the pullback of social policies, and higher inequality. We specifically focus on class-based political conflict for two reasons. First, other chapters in this handbook address group conflict including ethnicity, race, and gender. Second, class cuts across other dimensions of inequality. Class provides a common ground for groups to unify politically and generate sufficient class-based power to reconfigure the political economy in a way that benefits members of the middle and working classes. Further, the basic causes of inequality across groups resemble one another (Tilly 1999). Although our primary task is to focus on conflict theories in political sociology since 2000, we contextualize contemporary scholarship in political sociology by summarizing central theoretical contributions of nineteenth- and twentieth-century scholarship.

THE ROOTS OF CONFLICT THEORY IN CLASSICAL SOCIAL THEORY

Conflict theory has its roots in classical social theory, especially in Karl Marx but also in Max Weber and Karl Polanyi. Marx (1977 [1867]) was among the first to articulate the relationship between three critically important social institutions: economic, ideological, and political. Marx conceptualized the economy as the structural base, and the state and ideology as critical components of the superstructure. Whereas prevailing ideology limits the development of working-class consciousness, the state intervenes in the economy to overcome crisis and mediate class conflict. However, conflict is not limited to the working and capitalist classes but also occurs within the capitalist class. Marx (1977 [1867]) demonstrates conflict among class fractions in his analysis of nineteenth-century England when the manufacturing capitalist-class fractions mobilized politically to eliminate the Corn Laws,
which facilitated capital accumulation among the landholding capitalists and undermined accumulation among manufacturing capitalists. Marx concludes that the capacity of manufacturing capital to unify politically and successfully pressure the state to repeal the Corn Laws represents a turning point in the ascendancy of manufacturing over landholding capitalists.

By the early twentieth century, the bureaucratic state had expanded substantially in response to state intervention to overcome periodic crises and regulate economic activity (Weber 1978 [1921]). Employing his comparative and historical method, Weber maintains that modernity is best characterized by rational capitalism compared to antiquity, which is best characterized by political capitalism. However, Weber did not restrict political capitalism to a single historical period, but instead viewed economic and political action as concepts that varied over time and place. For example, Weber observed that political capitalism emerged during the First World War (Swedberg 1998). Weber also maintained that capitalists mobilize politically in response to market competition by creating cartels and other organizations to mitigate the effects of markets. However, these arrangements are often irrational when evaluated in terms of long-term capitalist growth and development (e.g., undermining efficiency) (Weber 1978 [1921]: 106). Thus, rationalization is not equivalent to efficiency or rationality as markets are often unpredictable, inefficient, and irrational, in part because they are affected by conflicting rationalities (e.g., formal versus substantive rationality) (Antonio 1979) that may be manifested in political conflict.

Karl Polanyi (2001 [1944]) further elaborated the irrationality of capitalist markets by examining the conflict between national and international capital. Periodically, the conflicting logics of these forms of capital have adverse effects on domestic markets (e.g., inflation of national capital), which result in society retreating from the market. Polanyi identified irrationalities of modern capitalism that expose the flawed assumption in liberal economic thought that markets could be self-regulating. Polanyi demonstrates that nineteenth-century globalization of markets destroyed the social arrangements in local communities that domestic capitalist growth depended on. Self-regulating markets failed because the requirements of capitalist growth and development within nations are incompatible with the requirements of international finance capital. The outcome of this incompatibility was the early twentieth-century global financial crises. To protect themselves from the market, nation-states withdrew from the global market and implemented protectionist policies. The subsequent collapse of political legal arrangements among nation-states unleashed the market against society, which contributed to further economic decline of domestic markets. Subsequent isolationist policies led to the rise of nationalism and in some cases fascism, which created the conflicts between nation-states that initiated the Second World War (Polanyi 2001 [1994]: 209).

Polanyi concludes that due to these conflicting logics of capital accumulation there can never be a pure market society and modern capitalist societies must be
managed politically. The free market is a utopian idea that does not exist in modern society for two interrelated reasons: (1) fictitious commodities (i.e., land, labor, and money), which are core components of modern markets, are created politically, and (2) crises emerge when fictitious commodities are treated as real commodities. Resolution of crisis, which is necessary to protect society from the destructive forces of the market, can only be accomplished by further political intervention in markets. Polanyi characterizes this process as a double movement. The first movement emerges to eliminate regulation over land, labor, and money, which results in crisis. Resolution of this crisis requires a second movement to protect society from the market. To avoid the destruction of society, the supply and demand for fictitious commodities must be managed through the political process.

Although they approach conflict within capitalism from different perspectives, Marx, Weber, and Polanyi all expose inherent conflicts within capitalism and conclude that conflicts that emerge in the economic sphere are resolved in the political sphere.

**GRAMSCI AND CRITICAL THEORY: CLASS POLITICS AND SOCIAL CHANGE**

Conflict theories that focus on progressive social change have roots in Thorstein Veblen and Antonio Gramsci. While maintaining Marx’s distinction between the exploiting and exploited classes, Veblen (1979 [1899]) moves beyond Marx’s two-class model and broadens the conception of class to include multiple exploiting and exploited classes. Veblen also elaborates the relationship between the economic and cultural spheres to demonstrate how class conflict is mitigated by “habits of mind”: economic relationships that over time become understood as common-sense ways of thinking and acting that appear to be normal. Veblen’s connection between economic and cultural spheres paved the way for Gramsci’s (1971) elaboration of political and economic coercion and the perpetuation of hegemonic culture through values that become viewed as “common sense.”

Gramsci’s reformulation of Marx’s conditions for revolutionary change focus on two overlapping spheres of the capitalist state. On the one hand, “political society” is that component of the state that rules through force. On the other, “civil society” consists of the public sphere where ideas and norms are established creating rule through consent. Civil society is not simply the source of hegemony but consists of public spheres where alternative ideas are shaped. This “counterhegemonic struggle” legitimates alternative ideas and norms thereby manufacturing new forms of consent. By exposing the prevailing hegemonic ideology as socially constructed and demonstrating how it serves to manufacture consent, Gramsci’s theory provides a framework to contest hegemonic ideas and norms and pave the way for changing political society where economic
Corporatism, which is characterized by close ties between the state and the dominant exploiting classes, prevails.

Like the classical social theorists, Gramsci’s political writings are deeply historical. Gramsci maintains that variation in historical conditions affects both (1) the characteristics of organic intellectuals who articulate principles to unify the numerous ideological elements in society, and (2) how class consciousness among exploited (i.e., subaltern) classes emerges under different historical conditions. Thus, the conditions that generate organic intellectuals and class consciousness vary historically and across societies with different civil society regimes. For Gramsci, civil society includes a wide range of social institutions including families, education, religion, clubs, trade unions, and political groups, while political parties are considered part of the state (Patnaik 2004). Drawing from the Machiavellian idea of “those who are not in the know” as the basis of “power not yet realized,” Gramsci also formulated how counterhegemonic forces among subaltern classes create the potential for the emergence of class consciousness and empower revolutionary forces among the exploited classes (Gramsci 1971: 131–161; also see Heywood 1994; Howard 1977).

Gramsci breaks with core dimensions of Marx’s conception of conflict and revolutionary change. Gramsci’s theory adds flexibility to conceptions of the state, party, and social change by elaborating ideas developed by critical theories associated with the Frankfurt School. Gramsci expanded Horkheimer’s (1974) theory of the authoritarian state, the expansion of mass culture, and the decline of the individual. Gramsci also draws from Lukács’ (1971) conception of reification and class consciousness and Weber’s (1978 [1921]) conception of the political transformation of power into authority. Core to Gramsci’s theory is that power is translated into legitimate authority through consent mediated by cultural institutions (Arato and Gebhardt 1978: 6–7). This second phase of critical Marxism maintains that if progressive politics is to occur in the West it must abandon the orthodox two-class model of traditional Marxism and follow the path elaborated by Gramsci (Cohen and Arato 1994; Piccone 1983).

The conception of multiple exploited classes as the basis of revolutionary change has been reintroduced by scholars who focus on the white-collar middle class as leading the transition as they straddle between obtaining protection from financial markets and gaining full access to them (Therborn 2012). As the importance of class reemerges in the twenty-first century, Therborn foresees four class struggles: (1) the globalized consumer middle class, (2) the political rebellious middle class, (3) the industrial class struggle in East Asia, and (4) the mobilization of the white-collar middle class. Therborn predicts that the middle class of the North will emerge as the key social class and become a symbol of an alternative future. In his later article, Therborn (2014) reaffirms this formulation and maintains that the middle class is the pinnacle class for a
successful political transition. He argues that scholars must redirect their attention from anticapitalist forms of resistance to mass social formations that challenge the social system.

In a similar vein, drawing from Polanyi, Fraser (2013) theorizes that political liberation from financial capitalism, which has blurred class lines and dynamics, must now include a third movement: emancipation from financial markets. In contrast to the period when Polanyi was writing, when society retreated from the market, Fraser maintains that members of the working and middle classes are now organizing for market access. To achieve emancipation from the market, a triple movement must emerge in which supporters of marketization join forces with those seeking social protection.

While these perspectives present interesting and optimistic predictions, the question remains whether the contemporary middle class becomes a revolutionary class. Will “organic intellectuals” emerge within the middle class that recognize they have been duped by the exploitive hegemonic ideology of neoliberalism and financialization and form a political coalition with other exploited classes? Or, will the white-collar middle class continue to adopt the prevailing neoliberal ideology and continue to align politically with the capitalist class?

These questions are addressed by other political sociologists in the Gramscian tradition who theorize that new organic intellectuals, defined by “their activities as thinking and organizing elements of the class to which they organically belong,” may emerge (Galastri 2018; Hanappi and Hanappi-Egger 2013; Olsaretti 2014). This line of theorizing calls for conceptualizing class as historically contingent both structurally and culturally and shows how race and gender mediate class categories in ways that provide for new possibilities of political development and economic organization (Camfield 2004; Gibson-Graham 2006; also see Resnick and Wolff 1987; Wright 2010). For more detail on race and gender as an exploited class with political potential see the chapters on those topics in this volume. This antideterminism Gramscian and post-Gramscian conception of organic intellectuals and counterhegemonic ideologies is consistent with the emergence of variation in civil society regimes in contemporary capitalism (Janoski 1998), cooperatives that combine regional economic development with democracy (e.g., the Mondragon region in Spain), and economic organizations structured as mutuals and cooperatives in the US.

While Gramscian theory provides the intellectual foundations for optimism, it is not clear at this point in history the extent to which civil society is prepared to overcome the problem identified by Frederick Hegel where mediative categories are socially constructed in ways that separate groups and subaltern classes in society. In the contemporary era, these cultural categories include, but are not limited to, ethnicity, gender, race, and religion that in their current form tend to separate members of the same class. This problem is articulated by scholars outside of political sociology who maintain that “there is good reason that liberals focus extra attention on minorities, since they are most likely to be
disenfranchised” (Lilla 2017: 12). However, instead of pulling people together identity politics does the opposite. That is, “there can be no liberal politics without a sense of we – of what we are as citizens and what we owe each other” (Lilla 2017: 14). This form of liberal politics is precisely what Gramsci and neo-Gramscian theorists hoped to avoid. However, it is a trap that is easy to become ensnared in and difficult to extract from, in part because identity politics creates opportunities for the exploiting classes to take advantage of divisions within the exploited classes as demonstrated during the last presidential election and by the current Trump administration.

**INSTRUMENTAL AND ELITE THEORY: CAPITALIST-CLASS UNITY**

Instrumental theories of the state maintain that the capitalist class exercises control over the state through their capacity to exercise power in the election process and in their appointments as managers of critical government agencies. Miliband (1969: 54) maintains that state power is located in government agencies. Thus, the political appointment of members of the capitalist class to top government agencies provides capitalists with instrumental control over the state. Capitalist-class control of the state is further strengthened by their capacity to limit conflict by controlling public opinion and exercising power over the policy formation process. While some European scholars took instrumental theory seriously, it was relatively short-lived in American sociology. Although instrumental theory was criticized by a range of perspectives, the most effective critique came from French structuralism, especially Nicos Poulantzas (1978 [1974]), whose theory of the state criticized instrumental theories for overstating capitalist-class unity (see below).

In the aftermath of the Second World War, building on the Marx–Weber tradition, C. Wright Mills (1956) examined the emergence of the power elite in the US and the linkages among its members based on a common interest to ensure capitalist growth and development. Focusing on the organizational basis of power and agency, Mills maintains that through their appointments to core positions in the military, the executive branch of the government, and a few hundred giant corporations, members of the *power elite* “are in command of the major hierarchies and organizations in modern society” (Mills 1956: 4). The power of elites is further enhanced by rotating among the top-level positions in these organizations thereby placing a small network of power holders in positions to influence public policy.

During the same time that Miliband was advancing instrumental theory in England, William G. Domhoff elaborated Mills’ conception of the power elite with particular attention on organizations and agency. This perspective, which is also referred to as power structure theory, focuses on corporate political mobilization, capitalist-class unity, and elites’ control over the policy formation process (Domhoff 1978). Although Domhoff makes few explicit theoretical claims, his conception of a ruling elite contains a
“soft instrumentalism” in which an elaborate network produces a unified position among capitalists on major policy issues. This network includes organizations outside the state such as elite universities, think tanks, and other organizations that conduct research on issues of interest to the capitalist class. Members of these organizations produce research papers that move through various intermediate organizations where they are synthesized and used to provide the basis of policy positions that advance the general interests of the capitalist class. During this process most conflicts are resolved, which enables the ruling elite to present a unified political position to government officials. Upon completion, these policy positions or “white papers” are presented to members of Congress and different agencies within the Executive Branch.

Elite theory maintains that members of the capitalist class themselves rarely enter politics. Instead, an elaborate network of economic and cultural organizations recruit, train, and socialize individuals who come primarily from the ranks of corporate management. Those who move up through the process into the corporate elite represent the interests of the capitalist class. Cultural and economic socialization prepares these individuals to move beyond the narrow interests of the specific corporations and industries where they are employed and support policy agendas that advance the general interests of the capitalist class (Domhoff 1974, 1979; Useem 1982).

Elite theorists show that through organizational networks corporate elites cooperate to advance their mutual interests in both economic and social policy, which often conflict with the interests of working-class organizations (e.g., labor unions). One mechanism that provides management with an understanding of the general interests of the capitalist class is their membership on multiple corporate boards of directors.

Research shows that the political contributions of executives who are on multiple boards of directors are affected by membership in elite social clubs, enrollment in elite educational institutions, and their personal histories (Bond 2007). Elites also have a unified position on which political candidates to support, as demonstrated by their contributions to political action committees (PACs) (Boies 1989; Clawson and Neustadt 1989; Mizruchi 1989, 1992).

After the turn to the twenty-first century, elite theorists continue to focus on networks and corporate contributions to provide a more nuanced understanding of these dimensions of corporate political behavior. In his examination of characteristics that potentially influence corporate political behavior, Burris (2005) shows that membership in an interlocking directorate has more influence on the political behavior of the corporate elite than do geographic region or the industrial sector of the corporation. This analysis supports previous research that indirect interlocks influence PAC contributions (Mizruchi 1992) but extends it by demonstrating that direct interlocks also influence political activity. Burris (2005) also argues for future power structure research to focus on advancing a structural understanding of
the relationship between interlocking directorates and political behavior. In a separate article, Burris (2008) examines historical changes in the structure of interlocking directorates and networks among the governing boards of key US-based policy-planning organizations. The analysis shows that board interlocks remained relatively stable between 1973 and 2000, cohesion increased among policy-planning organizations in the 1970s and 1980s, and corporate liberals became more isolated in the 1980s and 1990s when the moderate policy-planning organizations (e.g., Business Roundtable) were replaced by conservative organizations. Whereas interlocking directorates strengthen political alliances among policy-planning organizations, political unity increased between big business and conservative policy-planning organizations, which is consistent with the shift to the right in government policy.

In his analysis of corporate political behavior Mizruchi (2013) maintains that political unity existed among corporate elites during the middle decades of the twentieth century when the dominant manufacturing sector played a pivotal role in maintaining political unity and influencing government policy. Throughout this period banks had little direct influence over policy issues and were limited to supplying capital to corporations when needed and mediating disputes among elites representing different economic sectors (Mizruchi 1992). However, with the decline in the manufacturing sector, political unity began to disintegrate in the late twentieth century. With political unity among corporate elites in decline, elites now exercise power to advance their narrow industry-based agendas. Similarly, other elite theorists maintain that interlocking directorates do not have the same strength as in the past. Specifically, when directors hold positions on three corporate boards they are less likely to be asked to sit on another corporate board than those who only serve on one board of directors (Chu and Davis 2016). As a result, interlocking directorates are less extensive than in the past, limiting elites’ influence on this stage of the policy formation process.

STRUCTURALIST THEORY

By the mid-twentieth century, the structure of the state in most advanced capitalist societies was large and complex, with many state agencies exercising substantial control over the economy and other spheres of society. In an effort to understand the relationship between class power and state power, structural Marxists reexamined the linkages among class, economy, and the state. They began with Marx’s initial insight that capitalists do not always agree on the form of state intervention because each branch of capital (economic sector) (e.g., agriculture, energy, finance, manufacturing) has unique capital accumulation requirements that must be fulfilled to facilitate their respective capital accumulation agendas (Baran and Sweezy 1966). As a result, capitalist-class fractions have specific political economic interests that may conflict with
those of others. The respective capital accumulation requirements of each branch of capital are manifested as conflict at the political level, as capitalist-class fractions attempt to advance policies that facilitate capital accumulation in their respective branches of capital. Further, because the economy is not dominated by a unified logic of capital accumulation, capitalists themselves are unable to resolve the contradictions that emerge in the economic sphere. Therefore, the state must mediate intra-class conflict.

In addition to the focus on conflict among branches of capital and how they organize to exercise control of the state apparatus, structuralist theory departs from instrumental and elite theories in other ways. Specifically, the state cannot exist autonomously from the capitalist class or society. States in capitalist society can only exist as relatively autonomous from the capitalist class because both are part of the mode of production. This structural relationship makes the capitalist class and the capitalist state dependent on one another to ensure political and economic stability (Levine 1988; Poulantzas 1978 [1974]). Further, capitalist-class unity is not necessary to ensure capitalist-class control over the state. Instead, capitalist-class control over the state requires capitalist-class fractions to establish sufficient class consciousness to form a “power bloc” consisting of the branches of capital that agree on a strategy for capitalist growth and development.

Capitalist-class consciousness is based on ideologies that unify the “power bloc” and legitimate the superiority of certain policy initiatives over others. Once established, the dominant power bloc is further solidified by the enactment and implementation of policies that advance their capital accumulation agenda. However, conflict emerges periodically within the dominant power bloc because policies that facilitate capital accumulation in one industry (i.e., steel) do not always facilitate accumulation in other industries (e.g., textile) (Prechel 1990). These conflicts are mediated at the political level through the enactment of new or revised policies, which reinforces the dominant power bloc. During some historical conditions, this dominant power bloc may include fractions of the working class whose economic interests are advanced by the prevailing capital accumulation strategy (e.g., the US capital–labor accord in the middle decades of the twentieth century).

Other perspectives in this tradition maintain that as state structures expand, the capitalist class and the state become increasingly dependent on the resources each control. Whereas capitalists are dependent on resources controlled by the state (e.g., tax breaks, protectionism), the state depends on revenues from taxes generated by the capital accumulation process because the state is not directly engaged in capital accumulation (O’Connor 1973; Offe and Ronge 1975). Further, because of its dependence on revenues generated outside the state, the state has an interest in facilitating capitalist growth and development. The state’s dependence on resources controlled by social actors outside the state that are vital to its own existence increase the dominant “power bloc’s” control over state policy. The states’ alignment with the dominant power bloc is enhanced in
contemporary society where ensuring capitalist growth and development has become increasingly defined as a goal of the organizational state. That is, to ensure its own legitimacy among the working and middle classes, the state must ensure and reinforce stable capitalist growth and development (O’Connor 1973).

In summary, structuralist theories of the state maintain that conflict among capitalist-class fractions is endemic to capitalist society because each branch of capital has a specific relationship to the economy with unique capital accumulation requirements that necessitate different political-legal arrangements (Poulantzas 1978 [1974]; Zeitlin, Neuman, and Ratcliff 1976). Because the economy does not have a unified logic of capital accumulation over the long term, a unified capitalist class does not dominate the political realm. The conflicting capital accumulation agendas result in political conflict within the state, where politicians are pressured to resolve conflict by implementing new policies. Conflict among competing capitalist-class fractions is manifested in the political realm because it is the only sphere of society with the capacity to resolve economic conflict among capitalist-class fractions and create institutional arrangements required to facilitate capitalist growth and development. The resolution of conflict among capitalist-class fractions is also affected by historical contingencies, which results in a degree of unpredictability as with the case of the transition to financialization (see below).

POWER RESOURCE THEORY AND SOCIAL POLICY

Power resource theory employs a two-class model to explain cross-national variation in the welfare state, especially the substantial differences between the US welfare state and social democracies such as Sweden (Korpi 1983). Whereas capitalist-class power is derived from economic resources, working-class power derives from organizations, particularly unions and leftist political parties. The theory suggests that a more expansive welfare state emerged in Europe where unions are strong and a wide range of political parties exist, especially on the left. Both kinds of organizations contribute to the creation and dissemination of ideologies that appeal to the working class and provide the basis of collective action. Thus, the balance of power in society is affected by the capacity of leftist unions to advance an ideology that solidifies the working class, farmers, and other underrepresented and exploited segments of society including racial, ethnic, and gender groups that offset the economic resources of elites (Hicks and Misra 1993; Janoski 1998). Once formed, coalitions exercise their collective political power and pressure politicians to advance their interests (Akard 1992, 2005; Esping-Andersen 1990; Esping-Andersen and Korpi 1987; Korpi 1983; Myles and Quadagno 2002).

This perspective also theorizes change in the class structure brought about by fluctuating tax policies and economic markets. Policies contributing to the rise in the contemporary top 1 percent were initiated with a congressional
Republican majority in the 1980s, which occurred when a large segment of the white working class migrated to the Republican Party and voted on moral rather than economic issues. This ideological shift gave the Republican Party an opportunity to lower the top tax rate, create new financial products, and weaken organized labor’s influence on wages (Volscho and Kelly 2012). Moral issues continued to empower the Republican Party as a large portion of the working class failed to understand that the 2004 Bush tax cuts benefited the wealthiest segment of the class structure (Prasad et al. 2009; Pressman and Scott 2009). Political and economic elites legitimated their control over power resources by appearing to care about the electorate (Caputo 2007; Hacker and Pierson 2005), thereby securing the position of the top 1 percent politically, economically, and ideologically.

Although power resource theory remains primarily a two-class model, the focus on alternative coalitions may provide the foundation to generate resistance against the expanding power of financial capital and the pullback of social policies in the contemporary era. Specifically, the ageing population creates a greater need for the welfare state, which generates the historical conditions for coalition building. However, these coalitions have limited success against elites who organized politically to dismantle the welfare state in Europe and in the US. The capitalist class mobilized in the US during the Carter administration, gained momentum in the Reagan era, and continued through the Trump administration to weaken state policies responsible for ensuring social well-being including health, education, and environmental protection. The dominant class also succeeded in weakening unions and limiting industry regulation (Jacobs and Dirlam 2016; Jacobs and Myers 2014).

STATE AUTONOMY THEORY AND HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONALISM

Drawing from Polanyi, early conceptions of state autonomy maintain that to protect society the state must have the power to pursue policies that impinge on corporate property rights. This formulation maintains that autonomous state power reaches its highest levels during wars, depressions, and postreconstruction (Block 1977). By the 1980s, this perspective took the state autonomy argument further and generated a lively debate by challenging the two-class model of Marxist theories as too simplistic. This state-centered theory maintains that states have a high degree of autonomy and the development of the welfare state is affected by conflict and power struggles inside the state. Thus, states are power holders in their own right and state managers exercise a significant degree of autonomy over policy formation and implementation (Skocpol, Evans, and Rueschemeyer 1985).

State autonomy theorists maintain that although European societies experience fiscal crisis at approximately the same rate as in the US, social programs are vigorously attacked in the US compared to Europe. This perspective explains this difference by focusing on institutional political
processes and suggests that the more bureaucratic European states make social welfare policy more resistant to attacks. In contrast, the federalist structure of the US state delegates responsibility for social welfare policy to the states where the debate focuses on developing measures to deal with the financial problems supposedly caused by social programs. State autonomy concludes that policy alternatives depend on the nations’ political arrangements, and how existing policies influence political alliances and debates over further policy choices (Weir, Orloff, and Skocpol 1988).

More recently, this perspective broadened its conceptual framework. Drawing on Tilly’s (1980) metatheoretical foundations to understand large-scale political and social change, historical institutionalism identifies sequences of events that explain macro-level changes in the social structure. A core concept in historical institutionalism is path dependence, which suggests that events at critical historical junctures trigger feedback mechanisms that reinforce the pattern of behavior. That is, “once actors have ventured far down a particular path, they are likely to find it very difficult to reverse course” and certain political alternatives are no longer viable (Skocpol and Pierson 2002). While acknowledging forces external to the state such as competition among states and economic crisis, states with a high degree of autonomy from classes are less likely to deviate from the path.

THE TURN TO NEOLIBERALISM

Several conflict perspectives in political sociology focus on the effects of the shift to neoliberal ideology. Like theories, ideologies entail a set of interrelated concepts. However, ideologies are not held to the same standard as theory. The power of ideology rests on its ability to present the “ideal” as the “real” in order to legitimate a worldview that advances the interest of a group or class. That is, advocates of ideologies claim to explain empirical events, but rarely engage in rigorous empirical research. In contrast, conflict theorists in the critical theory tradition employ the methodology of immanent critique to distinguish between the “ideal” and the “real” to expose the false claims of ideology (Antonio 1981). Ideologies can also serve a positive function by advancing new ways of thinking that can liberate people from existing constraints. In fact, most social theories contain an ideological component (Ashley and Orenstein 2005). This connection between ideology and theory is apparent in Marx and neo-Marxist theories that are guided by emancipatory ideology while explaining exploitation, oppression, and inequality in capitalist society.

Karl Mannheim’s formulation of ideology consists of two components. **Particular** ideologies entail the conscious disguise or denial of one’s personal interests and pursuit of power. These distortions include conscious lies, half-conscious disguises, calculated attempts to dupe others, and even self-deception (Mannheim 1936: 53–59). Particular ideologies often emerge from a group or
class who are attempting to advance a set of ideas that justify their goals and agendas. In contrast, total ideology refers to the Weltanschauung or worldview of a class or epoch and includes the ideas and categories of thought that are bound up with the historical conditions (Mannheim 1936; Zeitlin 1968). Total ideology includes specific concepts and ideas that are shared, which become a lens through which individuals perceive events. In some instances, particular ideologies are transformed into total ideologies, as is the case with neoliberalism.

The last 150 years of Western capitalism consist of three major transitions in total ideology: classical liberalism, embedded liberalism, and neoliberalism. Neoliberal thinking is grounded in the classical liberal tradition expressed by Adam Smith. In *The Wealth of Nations*, Smith (1978 [1776]) explained how markets, when unfettered from mercantilist state interventions, most efficiently coordinate the production and distribution of goods. If individuals were freed from government restrictions (laissez faire) and allowed to pursue their self-interests in the market, the wealth of nations would be enhanced.

The shift to embedded liberalism (Ruggie 1982) of the middle decades of the twentieth century protected society from the market by placing limits on the outside parameters of corporate behavior and creating a social safety net. Embedded liberalism in the US was first manifested in subnational state (i.e., unemployment insurance) and later New Deal policies that contributed to the reduction of inequality.

Neoliberalism adopts classical liberalism’s equation of free markets and individual freedom, and its distrust of state intervention in the economy. However, neoliberalism goes beyond classical liberalism by embracing market fundamentalism, the belief in the moral superiority of organizing all dimensions of social life according to market principles and the religion-like certitude that all social problems can be resolved by market forces (Somers and Block 2005; Stiglitz 2002). For classical liberals like Smith, markets were efficient means for producing and distributing goods. In contrast, neoliberals assume that markets are morally good in themselves, and thus should be applied to all aspects of life and guide public policy. Thus, the value of markets is not confined to their capacity to efficiently produce and distribute goods in the commodity form, but the inherent value of markets to provide multiple benefits for individuals and society.

While Smith admired entrepreneurs and their economic role, he also recognized the need for other institutions such as governments, churches, and schools (Prechel and Harms 2007). In contrast, neoliberals maintain that since all of society is a market “every human being is an entrepreneur managing their own life, and should act as such” (Treanor 2005: 10). Social institutions and policies that interfere with or replace market mechanisms are thus morally wrong. That is, although both liberalism and neoliberalism emphasize individualism, classical liberalism involves individual freedom in market transactions and recognizes other forms of social relations and responsibilities.
In contrast, neoliberals maintain that individuals are free to choose and must be responsible for the consequences of their choices, just like entrepreneurs are responsible for their investment decisions. In short, neoliberalism denies the presence of social structures and the limits they place on individuals’ choices and opportunities.

Although the adoption of liberal ideology by middle managers has a long history, the neoliberal emphasis on individual achievement and antigovernment sentiment accelerated the adoption of capitalist-class ideology across the class spectrum. This change is most apparent in the shift toward financialization that included a rapid increase in income and wealth of the working rich. This trend is most apparent among mutual and pension fund managers who adhere to capitalist-class interests because their careers are dependent on advancing the interests of large investors (Dumenil and Levy 2004). These occupations have more interest in making business deals than representing small investors whose personal retirements are dependent on the successful management of these funds (Blackburn 2002). However, neoliberal expansion of pension funds also creates an opportunity to shift it into socially beneficial investments (Blackburn 2004). The prospects of success will likely vary among the varieties of capitalism. Whereas the working class has achieved a degree of control over their pension funds in some European democracies, the prospects of developing the political mechanism necessary for the US middle and working classes to regain control over their retirement and pension funds from corporations has not yet emerged.

ORGANIZATIONAL POLITICAL ECONOMY

By focusing on the relationship between meso-organizational and macro-political levels of the social structure, organizational political economy situates organizations as power holders in the broader political economy to explain the shift to financialization and the increased inequality associated with this historical transition. As Perrow (1986: 12) maintains, “the power of the rich lies not in their ability to buy goods and services, but in their capacity to control the ends toward which the vast resources of large organizations are directed” (also see Mills 1956). Although countervailing organizations such as social movement organizations prevail in some cases, they rarely have the resources and organizational power of large organizations, especially large corporations.

Organizational political economy focuses on historical transitions and the historical contingencies that contribute to them. During periods of declining profits, competing capitalist-class fractions become more politically active, challenge the dominant power bloc, and pressure the state to implement policies that restore capitalist growth and development in their respective economic sectors (Poulantzas 1978 [1974]). However, capitalist-class fractions typically do not have sufficient power to pressure government
officials to restructure corporate–state relations in a way that facilitates their respective capital accumulation agendas, which vary by economic sector. Thus, the emergence of new organizational and political-legal arrangements to restore capitalist growth and development is dependent on the capacity of capitalist-class fractions to unify politically and create a new power bloc with adequate power to pressure the state to enact policies that advance their mutual capital accumulation agendas.

The capacity to create a new power bloc is affected by interrelated dimensions of organizational power. Whereas structural power is a component of the social structure and includes the resources held in organizations, instrumental power is the ability to use the vast sums of capital held in organizations to enact policies that facilitate corporations’ capital accumulation agendas (Levy and Egan 1998). Both entail political capitalism: the utilization of political outlets by business interests to attain conditions of economic stability and predictability that facilitate capitalist growth and development (Kolko 1963). In contemporary society, political capitalism encompasses the exercise of power outside the state where capitalists attempt to control political discourse and debate, in the legislative process where broad policy parameters are established, and in state agencies that have authority over policy implementation and enforcement (Prechel 2000, 2015, 2016). In addition to corporations, which spend vast sums of capital on lobbyists and PACs to support candidates favorable to their economic and ideological interests, other types of organizations advance capitalist-class interests in the policy formation process (e.g., think tanks and industry-based trade associations).

The historical logic driving changes in corporate–state relations is affected by the contradiction between state structures that are relatively stable, and the dynamics of the capital accumulation process that changes over time. When the prevailing political-legal arrangements are incapable of ensuring stable capitalist growth and development, conflict emerges among capitalist-class fractions, which initiates a new cycle of business policies that become congealed in state structures that create the basis of a new contradiction in the future.

During the early stages of recent historical transition to financialization, the dominant manufacturing power bloc in the US had sufficient power to pressure the state to redefine corporate political embeddedness to make the multilayer-subsidiary form viable (Prechel 1997, 2000). This restructuring entailed redefining corporate property rights in ways that permitted corporations to organize their divisions as legally independent subsidiary corporations organized under a legally independent parent company. This corporate structure has many of the high-risk characteristics of the early twentieth-century holding company described by Berle and Means (1932) and Roy (1997) (Prechel 2000: 263–265). The property rights of this multilayer-subsidiary form include the right to establish ownership control of subsidiary corporations by holding just over 50 percent of their stock. During this same
period, the Reagan administration redefined the criteria to initiate an antitrust violation. Although these organizational and political-legal arrangements permitted one of the largest merger waves in US history (Stearns and Allen 1996), they did not restore the rate of capital accumulation in the manufacturing sector to an acceptable level.

However, these organizational and political-legal arrangements paved the way for the formation of a new political coalition by consolidating the banking, insurance, and real estate class fractions into a new power bloc now widely known as the FIRE sector. After resolving conflicts among these previously competing capitalist-class fractions, they formed a power bloc with sufficient instrumental power to redefine corporate–state relations in ways that advance their mutual capital accumulation agendas (Prechel and Hou 2016). Once established, this power bloc continued to increase its structural power through mergers and acquisitions that, in turn, boosted their instrumental power manifested as historical high capital expenditures to influence elections and policies. This historical transition also included the expanded use of stock options as a form of executive compensation (Useem 1996), which contributed to the expansion of the managerial class: corporate managers who also own a large amount of corporate securities (Prechel 2015). The increased size, market power, and organizational and financial flexibility of the multilayer-subsidiary form is a core component of the emergent social structure contributing to higher and durable inequality. As Tilly (1999) argues, inequalities become embedded in organizational structures. Thus, historical variation in organizational form can increase or decrease inequality. Although the relationship between the multilayer-subsidiary form and the current high and durable inequality has not been examined quantitatively, inequality began to increase in the US soon after the multilayer-subsidiary form became viable in the mid-1980s. To illustrate, the incomes of high-level managers and large-business owners has increased 60 percent since the 1980s while the incomes of workers and small-business owners remained stagnant (Wodtke 2016).

In contrast to that in the middle decades of the twentieth century, the contemporary organizational state is more prominent in advancing capitalist interests and less autonomous in doing so. The more prominent state emerged from policies designed to ensure capitalist growth and development manifested as expanded state structures to implement and enforce such policies. Once established, the expanding organizational structures of the state becomes the loci of political pressure from capitalists because decisions made in them affect capital accumulation. These state structures are also difficult to dismantle because class interests become congealed in them. Whereas capitalists have an interest in maintaining state structures because they facilitate their capital accumulation agendas, state managers have an interest in maintaining state structures because their employment and career ladders are dependent on them. After class interests are congealed inside it, the state becomes less autonomous in creating, implementing, and enforcing business policy.
Further, state autonomy declines over time in capitalist society because larger and more complex state structures create additional opportunities for capitalists to access and influence state managers in charge of implementing policy (Prechel 1990, 2000: 172–174).

Explicit in organizational political economy is Gramsci’s (1971: 427–430) call for a nondeterministic theory of conflict, history, and politics, which acknowledges that outcomes are not always predictable. During the historical transition to financialization, conflicts and power struggles among capitalist-class fractions resulted in a realignment of organizational and institutional arrangements that shifted markets and corporations toward the politically disembedded end of the embedded–disembedded continuum (Prechel 2003). This realignment transformed banks from market enablers that provide capital to market participants that create and sell financial products (Prechel and Hou 2016), which contributed to the shift from risk associated with nature to humanly created risk (Beck 2007). Neoliberal organizational and political-legal arrangements created incentives and opportunities for managers to engage in high-risk financial transactions that are perfectly legal (Prechel and Morris 2010) and shifted the risk to the middle working classes as became apparent in the 2007–2008 financial crisis. This contrasts sharply with organizational and political-legal arrangements during the era of embedded liberalism when public corporations invited or historical conditions required governments to provide a higher degree of regulation and coordination of corporations and markets (Brick 2006).

DEMOCRATIC CAPITALISM: ITS CONFLICTS AND CONTRADICTIONS

Focusing on conflict between the two core social institutions associated with modernity – democracy and capitalism – democratic capitalism perspectives maintain that the decline of class conflict and success of neoliberal politics threatens capitalism.¹ Some contend that the US two-party system facilitated the increase of capitalist-class power in relationship to working-class power, which eroded working-class representation in Congress (Carnes 2012; Hacker and Pierson 2005) and undermined the state’s capacity and willingness to control the economy (Couch 2011). Specifically, policies implemented by the Carter and Reagan administrations that weakened unions created the perfect environment for corporations to increase their political power; the absence of a southern labor movement and historic high levels of corporate spending on lobbying and PACs expanded the capacity of the southern Republican right to introduce pro-corporatism ideals into American politics (Brenner 2007). To

¹ Some of the authors in this section do not neatly fit into this theoretical framework. They were included in this section because their argument is consistent with the theoretical logic of democratic capitalism.
compete with the Republicans, the Democratic Party also vied for corporate
resources, which ultimately allowed corporations to manipulate both political
parties and gain control of the American state (Couch 2011; Petras and
Veltmeyer 2012).

Others attribute the decline of class conflict to policy initiatives that
transitioned politics from class-based to status-based cultural politics. This
perspective maintains class and status do not exist symbiotically, as status-
based politics promotes cultural unity and decreases unionization (Hechter
2004). Other political sociologists who focus on culture agree that a shift
away from class conflict occurred, but do not accept the status-based
perspective. Instead, they maintain that the movement is to occupational-
based stratification involving large economic class groupings (van der Waal,
Achterberg, and Houtman 2007). This line of theorizing maintains that
occupational-based stratification contrasts with the claim that we now live
in a postclass or post-big-class society and criticizes cultural theorists for
failing to recognize that it is normal for classes to periodically realign
politically, which revitalizes classes and makes them politically relevant
(Goldthorpe 2006). Ironically, status-based politics played a key role in the
expansion of the US welfare state at an earlier stage of history. However,
status-based politics in the contemporary neoliberal era is dismantling the
welfare state it helped establish. As status-based politics advance and class-
based politics recede, there is limited capacity to create a working- and middle-
class coalition with sufficient power to reverse the neoliberal trajectory. The
contradiction between democracy and capitalism is further exacerbated by
political-legal arrangements permitting corporations and oligarchs to use
wealth defense strategies to avoid taxes (Winters 2011), which undermines
the capacity of the state to maintain the welfare state. Even high-tax countries
such as Sweden, Denmark, and Finland rely heavily on consumption taxes
because of the ability of large corporations and wealthy individuals to oppose
taxation (Kenworthy 2009: 29).

Contradictions in capitalism are rapidly reaching a point where democracy
and capitalism are in such deep conflict that they are now ill-suited partners,
driving capitalism toward self-destruction (Streeck 2017). This contradiction is
the outcome of the collapse of regulatory institutions, the increased
concentration of capital in the largest corporations, and the rapid acceleration
of income and wealth controlled or held by the managerial and ownership
classes. The rollback of social policies, higher public and individual debt,
lower taxes for corporations, and increased inequality (Brenner 2004; Keister
2000; Pressman and Scott 2009) represent a direct challenge to democratic
capitalism. Although the drive to accumulate capital always existed in
capitalist society and big business mobilized politically to limit government
intervention in markets, until recently political opposition always rallied to
keep this drive in check (Polanyi 2001 [1944]). However, after the balance of
power shifted toward corporations, opposing political forces do not have
sufficient power to limit market expansion. If left to the market, labor, nature, and money will be fully commodified and eventually destroyed (Streeck 2017).

With regard to labor, the contradiction contributing to the demise of capitalism is manifested in two interrelated historical processes (Streeck 2017). First, the gradual destruction of organized labor undermines the capacity of workers to maintain a wage level necessary to support the required consumption on which capitalism depends. By slowly defeating their opposition, the managerial and ownership classes accumulate a large share of income and wealth, further eroding workers’ capacity to consume. This historical trajectory is accelerated by the preference to invest in the financial sector, which exacerbates the unemployment problem by slowing the rate of capital accumulation in other economic sectors with more viable sources of employment (Janoski, Luke, and Oliver 2014). Second, the erosion of an adequate wage level undermines the family and community structures necessary to reproduce the working classes. Specifically, high unemployment or the necessity to work multiple jobs limits the resources (e.g., finances, time) required to sustain working-class institutions. In the absence of political forces to place checks on the concentration and centralization of capital, and the extraction of surplus by the managerial and ownership classes, less competition exists to create incentives to increase the innovation necessary to sustain capitalism.

CONCLUSION

Building on presuppositions in classical sociological theory, contemporary conflict theories in political sociology focus on explaining the transition to neoliberalism and financialization and the consequences. Although variation exists in the level of analysis among conflict perspectives in political sociology, they share a fundamental characteristic: identifying social actors who mobilize politically and exercise power to advance their interests. These perspectives focus on two core questions. First, to what extent are the new organizational and institutional arrangements an outcome of class conflict and power struggles? Second, what are the implications of the new organizational and institutional arrangements for individuals and societies?

Conflict theorists challenge the assertion of universally available benefits from neoliberalism by showing that the prevailing organizational political-legal arrangements created greater class inequality and deeper political divisions within the working and middle classes stemming, in part, from exploitation of status groupings for political purposes. By focusing on the exercise of power by classes, corporations, and other organizations, conflict theories show how the neoliberal reconfiguration of parts of the social structure reversed the central project of modernity to democratize society and more equally distribute income and wealth. However, conflict theorists are not in agreement on the current historical trajectory. Some conflict theorists maintain
that the neoliberal historical trajectory deepens the contradiction between democracy and capitalism, which contributes to the demise of capitalism. Others focus on the emergence of “organic intellectuals” to advance public discourse in ways that reinvigorate the middle and working classes and build a political coalition capable of reversing the current historical trajectory.

REFERENCES


I. Theories of Political Sociology


INTRODUCTION: BEYOND THE SOCIOLOGY OF THE STATE

Field theory is a promising and flexible framework for understanding social order and change with broad applicability to the concerns of political sociologists. While many in the subfield are rightly concerned with the relationship between “the state” and civil society, the implicit definition of political sociology as “the sociology of the state” has foreclosed opportunities for understanding how states, markets, firms, nonprofit organizations, and uninstitutionalized politics that include social movements are connected. This chapter presents field theory as a generative approach to understanding political phenomena that moves beyond the limitations of state-based approaches to political sociology, providing opportunities for sharing theoretical insights across subfield boundaries. We do so by laying out the basic conceptual rudiments of the approach, discussing its relevance to political sociology, and then providing some examples from the recent empirical research that puts field theory to work to understand environmental politics.

Traditional political sociology’s central analytic focus emerged out of a debate between previously dominant Marxist class-based approaches and a Weberian response, which claimed the “relative” or “embedded autonomy” of the state (Evans 1995; Evans, Rueschemeyer, and Skocpol 1985). The criticism of the neo-Marxist view is neatly summarized in Skocpol’s (1985: 5) claim that by leaving unquestioned the theoretical assumption that “at base, states are inherently shaped by classes or class struggles and function to preserve and expand the modes of production . . . . Many possible forms of autonomous state action are thus ruled out by fiat.” According to proponents of “bringing

* We would also like to thank the reviewers for comments on an earlier draft of this chapter.
the state back in,” the animating question of political sociology should be: What is the relationship between “state” and “nonstate” actors?

While this has been a productive approach, political sociology has increasingly become defined as the sociology of the state. This has several drawbacks. First, the state-centered approach has meant that states are frequently conceived as unitary actors who act upon society. This tends to hide the complex relations between the actors in the various fields of the state and actors in the fields of society. Second, by focusing primarily on the activities of organized state actors, scholars have missed the many ways in which politics pervade society. For example, political sociology generally ignores social movements that are not directly engaged with the state (e.g., McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 2001). Instead the focus is on institutionalized politics like existing political parties and organized interest groups. Even if social movements operate outside of the state, and often target nonstate actors like corporations, there is no reasonable basis for claiming that they are somehow not political in their orientation toward the state. This has created an artificial separation between the study of institutionalized politics, the main subject of political sociology, and the study of uninstitutionalized politics, the main subject of social movement theory. This has meant that at the level of constituting research programs, political sociology has lost opportunities to understand more broadly how politics and society interact.

Field theory displaces the debate about the degree of autonomy of the state without rejecting the underlying interest in studying the relationship between actors, state and nonstate, as they contribute to political order and change. It does this by first of all viewing the state as a set of fields or policy domains (Bourdieu, Wacquant, and Farage 1994; Fligstein and McAdam 2012). It views the construction of these fields as a historical project resulting in the layering of a state that contains domains with very different logics that reflect their history. It connects the building of these fields to actors outside of the state, mostly organizations that populate markets, the nonprofit sector, and less-institutionalized fields that contain social movements which themselves contain organizations. It is an integrated approach for understanding the processes by which state and nonstate actors meet. One of the key insights of field theory is that it is the relations between fields that are the source of both stability and change. By focusing on socially circumscribed arenas where actors orient action to one another, one can study how these relations figure into the emergence, stability, and transformation of fields.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an introduction to field theory and to demonstrate its applicability to the study of political phenomena. We do so in several steps. The second section introduces the overarching concerns that all field theoretic approaches share, focusing on Bourdieu’s theory of fields, the neo-institutional approach to organizational fields, and the theory of strategic action fields proposed by Fligstein and McAdam (2012). The third section considers how these theories connect state actors to societal actors. We offer a
brief introduction to the idea that a state is a set of fields that make the claim to have sovereignty over society.

The fourth section demonstrates the applicability of the theory of strategic action fields by reviewing research that puts it to work in a single empirical domain: environmental politics. There is a significant body of work in this area that deploys field theory as its analytic framework. The choice of environmental politics as an empirical focus is also justified by the fact that it is a growth area in political sociology, and, as we will show, it involves an array of state actors, social movements, and private firms/organizations that might not traditionally be considered the object of study in political sociology, yet we suggest are crucial to understanding political order and change.

FIELD THEORY

Field theory is a very general approach to the problem of the creation of social order. It begins with the radical premise that social order is the product of how a set of actors orienting their actions to one another can work to create a meso-level social order. Its key insight is that order does not emanate from abstract elements like “society” or “law” or “norms” or the “state” but instead from the interactions that occur within a particular meso-level social order. A meso-level social order is a theoretically or empirically defined social arena in which actors take each other into account when framing actions, under a set of rules, and for certain ends. The idea of an order being “meso” refers to the construction of contexts where actors face off, not the size of the organization or group. Actors in fields can be individuals, groups, subunits of organizations, organizations, firms, or states. Examples of meso-level social orders include groups of individuals who work in an office and cooperate over a task, subunits of organizations that vie for organizational resources, firms that compete with one another to dominate a market, ongoing politics between social movement organizations and existing state policy domains, and states that come together to negotiate treaties.

Field theorists share a spatial, relational approach to understanding how actors interact with one another. Fields are the social spaces where the sociological game of jockeying for position constantly plays out and are characterized by shared meanings, rules, and norms that guide interactions. Fields structure actors’ interests and influence them to think and act in accordance with the rules and expectations of the field. Nevertheless, field actors have the agentic capacity to accumulate resources and/or seek advantages vis-à-vis others. As an explanatory construct, the purpose of the field concept is to make sense of how and why social orders are reproduced, and how they emerge and are transformed. This section provides a brief overview

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1 We direct the reader to Kluttz and Fligstein (2016) for a more sustained discussion of these three major theoretical statements, which includes an analysis of how they address field emergence, reproduction and change, and the status of agency and actors.
of three versions of field theory articulated in contemporary sociology: Pierre Bourdieu’s theory of fields, the neo-institutional approach to “organizational fields” (DiMaggio and Powell 1983), and the model of “strategic action fields” recently proposed by Fligstein and McAdam (2012). While these theories share an interest in the idea of fields, they also offer us different ways to think about field construction and the mechanisms by which fields are structured.

Pierre Bourdieu is the sociologist most often associated with field theory. For Bourdieu fields are arenas of struggle with their own logic and history. Players compete for resources, status, and, most fundamentally, over the very definition of the “rules of the game” that govern field relations. According to this view, dominant actors impose their power over dominated groups as a result of their ability to control the field, what is at stake, and what counts as rules and resources. The main source of actors’ power is the capital (economic, cultural, and social) that they bring to the field (Bourdieu 1986, 1989: 17). Habitus is the “strategy-generating principle” that enables actors to apprehend, navigate, and act in the social world (Bourdieu 1977: 78, see also 1990: 53). It is a highly structured system of dispositions that actors have that is the internalized product of one’s conditions of existence. It is developed over the course of one’s life trajectory, but especially in early phases of socialization (in the household and education system) (Bourdieu 1977: 72). Habitus is an enabling condition of practical action, so it is both constituted by and constitutive of the structure of the field.

A second field theoretic approach is neo-institutionalism. DiMaggio and Powell, the primary carriers of this approach, define an “organizational field” as “those organizations that, in the aggregate, constitute a recognized area of institutional life: key suppliers, resource and product consumers, regulatory agencies, and other organizations that produce similar services or products” (DiMaggio and Powell 1983: 148). As a field undergoes structuration (Giddens 1979), organizations within the field tend to become isomorphic because of the imperative of appearing legitimate in

2 There are, of course, other theoretical statements not associated with the field concept that are similarly concerned with the relationship between social stability and change. One important perspective is historical institutionalism in political science (Mahoney and Thelen 2010, 2015). Historical institutionalism views incremental change in what they call “political contexts” as an ongoing process structured by the interaction of agents in that context. While many aspects of their thinking are compatible with the field approach, they never specify a theoretical conception of political context. This makes it hard for historical institutionalism to be analytical about how to think about political context. The idea of a field helps specify not just the relationships between a set of actors in a field, but the linkages between fields. See Fligstein and McAdam (2012: 3–8) for a discussion of the relationship between field theory and several other research programs in sociology and cognate disciplines.

3 For detailed accounts of the classical foundations of field theory, see Mey (1972) and Martin (2003, 2011: 159–181). Martin’s (2011: 159–181) critical discussion of field theory’s philosophical scaffolding, and the common virtues and limitations of its use in social explanation, is an especially rich introduction to the topic.
the eyes of others. Mechanisms of isomorphism include coercive force from authorities or resource dependencies, normative sanctioning from experts or professional associations, and mimetic pressure to copy what others are doing, particularly during times of uncertainty (DiMaggio and Powell 1983; Scott 2013). As something becomes increasingly institutionalized, it takes on an increasingly rule-like or taken-for-granted status. Thus, it becomes increasingly legitimate in the eyes of the field actors, which serves to reinforce and accelerate its being followed and reproduced by organizations in the field.

A third and most recent elaboration of field theory is the theory of strategic action fields proposed by Fligstein and McAdam (2012, 2011; see also Fligstein 2001a, 2008, 2013). This approach synthesizes some of the core ideas of the two aforementioned approaches while providing a more sustained discussion of the mechanisms of field emergence and transformation. Fligstein and McAdam (2012: 9) define a “strategic action field” (hereinafter SAF) as “a constructed meso-level social order in which actors (who can be individual or collective) are attuned to and interact with one another on the basis of shared (which is not to say consensual) understandings about the purposes of the field, relationships to others in the field (including who has power and why), and the rules governing legitimate action in the field.”

There are four kinds of shared understandings. First, actors share a sense of what is at stake in the field (a shared sense of what actors are vying for or the central issue around which the field revolves). Second, actors have a shared sense of the positions of others in the SAF (a recognition of which actors in the field have more or less power and who occupies which roles). Third, they have a shared understanding of the “rules” that guide what is considered legitimate action in the field. Finally, actors in certain positions within the field share interpretive frames (these frames vary within the field but are shared by actors in similar locations).

Similar to Bourdieu’s vision, SAF membership is structured along incumbent–challenger dynamics, with actors possessing varying resource endowments and vying for advantage. Incumbents claim a disproportionate share of the material and symbolic resources in the field, and their interests and views tend to be disproportionately reflected in the rules and organization of the field. Challengers sometimes conform to the prevailing order of the field by taking what the system gives them, but they often articulate an alternative vision of the field. Contra Bourdieu, Fligstein and McAdam argue that SAFs are not necessarily marked by extreme hierarchy and conflict but can also contain coalitions and cooperation.

For the purposes of political sociology, the most important contribution of the theory of SAFs is Fligstein and McAdam’s focus on field dynamics and the relationships between fields. They argue that the degree of consensus and contention internal to a field is constantly changing. Contention is highest when SAFs are unsettled, most often when a field is emerging or when a field
undergoes crisis. Whereas the other two approaches focus primarily on the internal dynamics of fields, Fligstein and McAdam conceive of fields as embedded in complex, multidimensional webs of dependence with other fields.

Fligstein and McAdam (2012) explicitly theorize emergence and transformation, offering the most fluid and political view of field dynamics. They suggest that even stable fields are constantly undergoing change, as contestation over all aspects of the field is part of the ongoing field project. Fligstein and McAdam advance the idea that fields are embedded in systems of fields that greatly influence the ability of actors to create and reproduce stable worlds. They also provide insight into field emergence and transformation by viewing these as situations in which all aspects of field formation are up for grabs. Finally, they develop the concept of social skill to explain how actors influence, dominate, or cooperate with others to produce and sustain meso-level social order.

SAFs emerge through a process akin to a social movement. An emerging field is a socially constructed arena in which two or more actors orient their actions toward one another but have not yet constructed a stable order with routinized patterns of relations and commonly shared rules for interaction. SAFs form at the interstices of other fields and often in response to some kind of exogenous change, more often than not in proximate fields. This happens through “emergent mobilization,” a social movement-like process in which actors begin fashioning new lines of interaction and shared understandings after (1) collectively attributing a threat or opportunity, (2) appropriating organizational resources needed to mobilize and sustain resources, and (3) collectively engaging in innovative action that leads to sustained interaction in previously unorganized social space (McAdam 1999; McAdam et al. 2001).

“Social skill” is an important component to field emergence. Fligstein and McAdam conceive of social skill as a cognitive capacity for reading people and environments, framing lines of action, and mobilizing people in the service of broader conceptions of the world and of themselves (Fligstein and McAdam 2012: 17). Institutional entrepreneurs are skilled social actors who can play an important role in unorganized social space to help produce a field (Fligstein and McAdam 2012: 109–110). They do so by convincing others to accept their own cultural conception of what is important, fashioning political coalitions of disparate groups, and establishing new institutions around which a field is ordered. If a field is in a more settled state, incumbents, who set the rules of the game and exert their power to reproduce the social order, are more likely to thwart attempts by an institutional entrepreneur to usurp the established field order. That said, actors even in settled SAFs are able to construct alternative understandings of the dominant field order and can act strategically to identify with others and engage in collective action.

A field becomes settled when its actors have a general consensus regarding field rules and cultural norms. Incumbents in such a settled field will have an interest in maintaining field stability. They will also have the resources to
exercise power over challengers and will enjoy the benefit of the rules of the field, which they likely constructed, being slanted in their favor. Perhaps even more importantly, because actors in settled fields are more likely than those in unsettled fields to share common understandings and have similar conceptions of possible alternatives, new entrants to these fields usually will not mount serious challenges to the social order absent an exogenous shock to the field. Settlement, however, is a matter of degree. As the degree of settlement decreases, SAFs become increasingly subject to change. SAFs are subject to two distinct kinds of field-level change: (1) continuous piecemeal change, the more common situation in which change is gradual and due to internal struggles and jockeying for position, and (2) revolutionary change, in which a new field emerges in unorganized social space and/or displaces another field. Both kinds of change occur, but under different conditions.

Change is constantly occurring within SAFs because actors constantly jockey for position within fields, whether through cooperation with allies or conflict with adversaries. Actors can occasionally shift strategies, forge subtle new alliances, and make small gains or losses in their position relative to others. However, from a field-wide perspective, these are usually piecemeal changes because incumbent field actors, who have access to relatively more resources and control the “rules of the game” in an SAF, can usually reinforce their positions and therefore reproduce the field order. These gradual incremental changes, even if they usually result in overall field reproduction, can have aggregate effects. Eventually, they can undermine the social order to a “tipping point” and begin the process of emergent mobilization discussed above or to “episodes of contention,” in which the shared understandings on which fields are based become in flux and result in periods of sustained contentious interaction among field actors (Fligstein and McAdam 2012: 103).

The more common sources of transformative field change, however, come from outside of the field. First, fields may be transformed by invading groups that had not previously been active players in the focal field. These outsiders will not be as bound by the conventional rules and understandings of the field as challengers who had already been field players. The success of outsiders at altering the field order may depend on many factors, including their strength prior to invasion, the proximity (in social space) of their former field to the target field, and their social skill in forging allies and mobilizing defectors. Second, transformative change can be due to large-scale, macro-level events that disrupt numerous field linkages and lead to crises. These often, but not always, involve the state. Examples include economic depressions, wars, and regime change.

The third and final exogenous source of transformative change for SAFs emanates from Fligstein and McAdam’s emphasis on various forms of interfield linkages. First, like a Russian doll, fields can be nested hierarchically within broader fields, meaning that the nested field is highly dependent on the broader field. Second, fields can also be linked via interdependencies, meaning
that the fields are roughly equally dependent. Third, fields can be tied to any number of other fields. Destabilizing change in one field can influence another field, making a field particularly susceptible to change when there is rupture or crisis in the field on which it depends. But in other circumstances, interdependent field relations can also buffer against change to the focal field (Fligstein and McAdam 2012: 59–61). This is because that field can count on the reciprocal legitimacy benefits and resource flows that it shares with related fields to resist change from within.

UNDERSTANDING THE DYNAMICS OF STATE AND NONSTATE ACTORS FROM A FIELD PERSPECTIVE

Field theory can be traced back to Weber’s notion of “orders” (1978: 926–940). Weber thought there was a political, economic, legal, religious, and social order in all societies. What distinguished these orders was that there was something different at stake in each of them. In the political order, the struggle was over power, while in the economic order, it was capital, and in the social order, social status. Weber viewed the construction of orders as implying the creation of rules and understandings that would form the basis of the legitimacy of that order. He viewed conflict as a natural condition of the order as groups within an order would vie for whatever was at stake. Weber also was focused on the links between orders in a particular society. He thought that these links were the outcome of historical processes by which one order came to dominate other orders. So, in feudal society the social order, which specified who was nobility and who was not, structured the political and economic orders (1978: 1070–1111).

Field theory is also concerned with order, but introduces the idea that within a larger order, there is not a single integrated order, but instead the larger order would be made up of a large number of fields that contained different agents operating under different rules and understandings who struggled over “local” goals consistent with what was at stake in the larger order. So, for example, in the economic order in capitalism, every market can be viewed as a field (i.e., a place where firms vie for position around a particular product). This means that the number of economic fields is as large as the number of markets.

Bourdieu accepts Weber’s definition of the state as the organization that successfully claims to control the means of violence in a territory, but, consistent with field theory, adds the idea that the state is itself an “ensemble of fields” (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 112). This means that the construction of any state is a historical project that results in a set of organized policy domains or fields where state and nonstate actors have varying amounts of power and operate according to rules (Bourdieu et al. 1994; Laumann and Knoke 1987).4

4 Here we use the idea of a policy domain and a policy field interchangeably.
An existing state historically adds policy fields when political contestation in nonstate orders successfully results in collective problems being taken up by the state in the form of new administrative and organizational capacity, that is, a new policy field or domain. The existing rules of the political order will have a large effect on what kinds of new fields can be constructed as they provide tools for actors within the state and outside of it to produce new fields.

At the center of contemporary theories of the state is the idea that states claim to have sovereignty over all of society, that is, the claim to be able to make rules for all other fields. This claim, of course, is never fully realized and the existing fields of any given state reflect the historical and ongoing struggles of both state and nonstate fields. Because of its ability to provide legitimacy and stability to ongoing field projects, the state will be one main source of attention for nonstate actors in many fields. An existing political order will provide both a constraint but also an opportunity for actors in nonstate fields.

Seeing the state as a field construction and paying attention to its links to nonstate fields that are either emerging or in crisis gives us conceptual tools that make understanding the political dynamics of a given national state more comprehensible. Nonstate actors can lobby state agencies of varying kinds. Field theory is agnostic about who occupies dominant and dominated positions in these conflicts and suggests it is an empirical question as to the relative power of the regulated and the regulators. Sometimes state agencies might rule, in others, powerful actors in the field being regulated might capture the policy field and use that power to further their interests. Sometimes the dominated may rise up to change both.

The fields of the state are only part of the story. Nonstate fields depend on their relationship to the state to provide legitimacy and stability for their actions. Newly emerging fields, particularly markets, but also groups of civil society actors, exist outside of the state. The relations between existing domains of the state and existing nonstate fields and their dynamics help create the possibility of both stability and change. Existing fields outside of the state (usually dominant actors, but not always) can appeal to state actors to help them. Newly emerging fields often include actors whose goal is to gain influence over the state. Social movement organizations, for example, frequently have as their goal the attempt to create a new political arena that builds the state up by involving it with some new political project. But just as frequently nonstate actors work to build their own field and work to have it buttressed by existing state domains.

State actors in fields are not just the object of actors in fields outside of the state, but play important roles in creating the possibility for new fields to emerge by intentionally or unintentionally provoking crises in existing fields. These form exogenous shocks that can produce the transformation of existing orders or even the opening of the possibility for new fields to emerge. Not everything that happens in fields outside of states occurs because of politics in existing state
domains. The dynamics of those fields have internal sources as well as the links between fields outside of the state. This is particularly true in capitalist societies where market dynamics depend on the organization of markets as fields but also the interdependence of markets (Fligstein 2001b). But even here, when such crises hit, powerful incumbent firms frequently turn to governments to help produce a political solution to their problems.

Field theory operates first and foremost as a set of organizing concepts to aid in the analysis of the interaction among state and nonstate actors. It problematizes the role of the dominant and the dominated. It allows for change and dynamics where both sides might win out under the right resource experiences. By doing so, it makes the project of understanding those links empirical.

**PUTTING FIELD THEORY TO WORK IN THE STUDY OF ENVIRONMENTAL POLITICS**

In this section we turn to existing research that puts field theory to work. We emphasize research that draws on the theory of SAFs to explain political change, and delimit our review to work in a single empirical domain: environmental politics. By choosing this domain, we illustrate how field theory can be applied to widely varying scales of analysis from the suborganizational to the global. Here we highlight two cases that center primarily on fields that are geographically bounded within a single country, and two that are international in scope. We also demonstrate the diversity of phenomena that field theory can be used to explain by taking up cases of the emergence of new fields as well as the transformation of existing ones. In each case we show how state and nonstate fields are connected. Table 3.1 describes how the cases fit into this analysis (subsection numbers accompany case descriptions in each cell).

**Table 3.1 Existing field theoretical research on environmental politics**

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<tr>
<th>Phenomenon</th>
<th>Field Emergence</th>
<th>Field Transformation</th>
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<td>Empirical Setting</td>
<td>National/Subnational</td>
<td>The Emergence of the Field of Environmental NGOs in China</td>
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<td>Transnational/International</td>
<td>The Emergence of Private Transnational Environmental Governance</td>
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The Emergence of a National Field: The Rise of Environmental Nongovernmental Organizations in China

Prior to 1967 there were no environmental nongovernmental organizations (ENGOs) in China. As late as 1985 the only ENGOs in the country were student-run groups, two of them to be precise. Yet by 2002 China could boast 184 student ENGOs and 74 nonstudent ENGOs (Yang 2005: 53). Here we see the emergence of a nonstate field occupied by social movement actors. One interesting feature of this story is how astonishing it is that any such field could develop so autonomously of the intrusive Chinese state. Traditional political sociological approaches would identify the state and the market “as the two interlocking factors of civil society development in China” (Yang 2005: 47). Positioning his argument against such explanations, Yang (2005) deploys the theory of SAFs to the emergence of the field of ENGOs in China, by emphasizing how organizations can grow at the interstices of multiple fields including but not limited to the domains of the state and market. Specifically, the Chinese ENGO field emerged at the intersection of four other fields: politics, the media, the Internet, and international NGOs. In this interfield context, its emergence was facilitated by organizational entrepreneurs who skillfully mobilized cultural, social, economic, and political resources as they built their individual organizations.

The Chinese political field offered both opportunities and constraints for the emergence of the ENGO field. One opportunity was the policy program of “greening of the state,” a process that began in the late 1970s with the establishment of environmental agencies at the national, provincial, and local levels. Second was the Chinese government’s encouragement of the development of a “third force” composed of social and nonprofit organizations to deal with social problems including the environment. At the same time, these enabling factors came with constraints. The NGO sector in China is highly regulated. All NGOs must register with the government, and in order to do so they must have a sponsoring institution. Further, quotas stipulate that there will be no overlap in the issue area (e.g., environmental protection) for any two organizations in a single geographically defined administrative area. ENGOs have adapted to these political conditions by adopting diverse organizational forms. Some register as nonprofit enterprises (a designation distinct from NGOs). Others operate without registering at all, demonstrating the state’s tolerance for organizing around environmental issues at the edges of legality.

The media have also been supportive of the rise of the Chinese ENGO field, a phenomenon Yang associates with the “structural homology” of the two fields.⁵ Chinese media professionals must take into account the same kinds of

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⁵ This notion of a structural homology between fields is present in Bourdieu’s field theory. While Yang (2005) draws most heavily on the theory of SAFs, his adoption of this concept demonstrates that much of the empirical work on fields uses concepts and ideas from multiple varieties of field theory.
political and economic constraints as ENGOs when they seek to assert their professional autonomy. More substantively, the specific concerns of ENGOs align with the media’s interest in asserting their autonomy and generating interest from the public, without running afoul of the party’s authority. Yang elaborates on this point, arguing that “Environmental issues are news-worthy, loaded with moral and political meaning and policy implications, yet politically safe because they fall in line with the state policy of sustainable development” (2005: 56). ENGOs have also taken to producing their own “alternative” green media, and borrowing from the repertoires of official media, generally avoiding radical messages to maintain legitimacy (Yang and Calhoun 2007: 222–223). In general, the strategies of actors in the ENGO and media fields help to reinforce the interdependencies between the two, thereby helping both maintain their stability in relation to the government.

The increasing prevalence of international NGOs (INGOs) since the 1980s has supported the growth of the ENGO field in China, primarily through partnerships. INGOs support Chinese ENGOs in several ways. They provide expertise and training, direct financial support, and connections to transnational advocacy networks. These external resources offer ways to direct actors strategically as well as materially. The growth of the Internet in China has also facilitated the rise of ENGOs. Web-based organizations have provided a forum for discussing environmental issues and disseminating information. The Internet has also allowed ENGOs to coordinate offline activities at a lower economic cost and with fewer regulatory hurdles, thus providing opportunities for ENGOs to coordinate collective action in a way that circumvents political constraints in a nonconfrontational manner (Yang and Calhoun 2007: 224–225).

The reason that the government has generally been tolerant of this environmental field is that Chinese ENGOs avoid confrontational tactics, instead resorting to “boundary-spanning contention,” taking advantage of the ambiguous political grey zones between “prescribed politics and politics by other means” (Yang 2005: 53). They resist such tactics as organizing mass demonstrations. Instead, they participate in officially recognized channels while incrementally pushing at their boundaries. The legal system is one such channel, and ENGOs use it to defend pollution victims, and to hold violators of environmental regulations accountable. More generally, when extracting concessions from the government, they do so by using the government’s own stated commitments against them (claims are often couched in the rhetoric of sustainable development and democratic citizen participation), as opposed to defending radical new claims. Further, as Yang and Calhoun (2007: 216) argue, the proliferation of “green speak” (a publicly shared environmental vernacular)

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6 See Lei (2016) for an in-depth analysis of the journalistic field in China that deploys SAF theory, focusing on the relationship between critical news reporting, the legal field, and local field environments.
has provided “a veiled way of talking about many other things, including making criticisms of government policies.”

Organizational entrepreneurs have played a crucial role within the field, as they skillfully “mobilize resources through interactions with players in their own field as well as in other fields” (Yang 2005: 60). They seek to take advantage of issue-specific political opportunities including emergencies, disasters, or epidemics, strategically mobilizing unequally distributed resources under social and political constraints (Yang 2010; Deng and Yang 2013). Within the ENGO field, Yang (2005) identifies three types of organizational entrepreneurs defined by different combinations of characteristics: those who mobilize their cultural capital and political prestige; those with professional expertise and international connections; and younger institutional entrepreneurs who mobilize technical skills to transpose skills learned in the context of well-established NGOs. As the greater political and technological environments have shifted over time at the regional, national, and international levels, these different types of organizational entrepreneurship have been symbiotically deployed, culminating in a diverse ecology of ENGOs that reinforce each other’s positions, gradually opening up the political field and expanding the field of civil society (Yang 2005: 65).

The Transformation of a National Field: Germany’s Energy Transition

The German energy field has been transformed in the past 15 years from one dependent on coal and nuclear power to one focused on using renewable energy resources. When the German term Energiewende, meaning “growth and prosperity without petroleum and uranium,” was coined in 1980, it was a mere dream of fringe political groups in a country heavily reliant on nuclear and fossil fuel. Just over three decades later, it would become a regulative ideal of Germany’s energy policy, which includes a target of generating 80 percent of its electricity from renewable energy sources (hereinafter RES) by 2050 and a complete phaseout of nuclear power by 2022. Perhaps most striking is that the actually existing Energiewende was championed by a conservative government, the same government that had opposed such measures only a few years before (Strunz 2014: 150). What explains this dramatic turn of events?

Germany’s energy transition is an exemplary case of the transformation of a set of national fields. Several articles deploy the theory of strategic action fields to explain various facets of the phenomenon: the overall transformation of the field of Germany’s energy supply system and its relationship with other fields (Fuchs and Hinderer 2014; Schmid, Knopf, and Pechan 2016; Strunz 2014), and more specifically, the role of incumbents (Kungl 2015) and challengers (Fuchs and Hinderer 2016; Neukirch 2016) in the field.

The concrete effects of the energy transition in Germany can be measured in terms of the change in the composition of the country’s energy mix. “Since 1998, the share of renewable energies in the German energy mix has been on a constant rise,” and more specifically, “gross electricity generation from renewables rose from
26.3 TWh [terawatt hours] in 1998 to 152.4 TWh in 2013, which constitutes a share of 4.7% in 1998 and 24.1% in 2013” (Kungl 2015: 16). Changes in the energy mix are a reflection not merely of government policies, technological changes, or consumer preferences but of changes in the structure of the field of German energy generation. The transformation of the field was caused by a shift in the balance of power between an oligopolistic set of incumbent firms, and challengers, a coalition of heterogeneous actors seeking to transform the energy system. The successes of challengers, which are mostly small or medium-sized local or regional players, have resulted in an overall decentralization of the energy system in Germany.

Understanding how this transition unfolded requires looking at the interaction of proximate fields from the local all the way to the global level. Prior to the late 1990s, the field of German energy generation was dominated by regional and local monopolies. These actors lost their dominance after a 1998 revision of the Energy Industry Act, which liberalized energy markets in accordance with a European Union market directive (Fuchs and Hinderer 2014: 360). The upshot of this policy change was the rapid centralization of the field of German energy generation. Between 1998 and 2005, a wave of mergers resulted in the consolidation of “the Big Four,” Germany’s largest energy companies, E.On, RWE, Vattenfall, and EnBW. They asserted their dominance in the national field and expanded their reach into the broader EU energy market, selling off holdings in other industries so they could focus more narrowly on expanding their core energy supply business (Kungl 2015: 16–17).

However, this period of economic ascendancy and consolidation was paired with political obstacles. The Big Four primarily invested in fossil fuel and nuclear power generation, something that drew criticism from increasingly environmentally conscious constituents (Schmid et al. 2016: 267). In response to these criticisms, the Big Four took advantage of the EU-wide emissions trading scheme, mainly by developing carbon capture and storage (CCS). They did not, however, invest significantly in renewable energy production because doing so would have increased competition for their own conventional power plants. Instead, in the period from 2005 to 2011, the incumbent Big Four supplemented their CCS investments (and the public relations campaigns promoting these efforts) by lobbying against regulations that promoted RES. Their expansion into foreign markets proved disappointing, and the financial crisis of 2008 resulted in downward pressures on the demand for electricity. In the lead-up to 2011, the Big Four pursued an increasingly defensive strategy to maintain their dominance in the field (Kungl 2015: 17–19).

The groundwork for the rise of the challengers began most notably with the first feed-in law for RES in 1990. At this point renewables made up only 3 percent of electricity generation (Schmid et al. 2016: 264) and were mainly composed of “individuals or small groups of people experimenting with new forms of electricity generation and distribution” (Fuchs and Hinderer 2014: 361).
Incumbent utilities did not mobilize to stop these efforts at the time, “likely because they underestimated the importance of the law and because they were absorbed in taking over the East German electricity sector” (Schmid et al. 2016: 264).

While a segment of the nascent challenger group of RES producers was already organized under the auspices of environmental groups, the inauguration of a regulatory framework for decentralized energy generation and distribution brought their movement into the mainstream. Market forces also catalyzed their ascendancy as traditional energy prices increased and the price of self-generation declined (Fuchs and Hinderer 2016: 101). The Renewable Energy Sources Act (EEG) of 2000 included “incentives for investment in renewable energy generation by obliging grid operators to give priority to renewable energy facilities and by stipulating advantageous feed-in tariffs” (Kungl 2015: 16). Incumbent actors viewed this as a threat, but, as aforementioned, chose to organize in the political field instead of directly competing with RES suppliers. This gave the small, decentralized, and heterogeneous subfield of challengers a space to grow, professionalize, and experiment with various organizational forms (Kungl 2015: 15).

The expansions of RES was driven primarily by new actors, with established energy companies only producing 6.5 percent of RES supply in 2010 (Kungl 2015: 13). Where did these new actors come from? First is the aforementioned movement of individuals and small groups experimenting with alternative energy (Fuchs and Hinderer 2014: 361). These small and medium-scale renewable infrastructures include solar, wind, biomass, and small-scale hydro power and are owned by individual citizens, cooperatives, and “minority or interregional citizen participation models” (Schmid et al. 2016: 265–266). The second form of decentralized initiative is “100% bioregions,” which consist of localities seeking to “become independent from energy generated outside of the respective region and intend to use only renewable energies for electricity generation” (Fuchs and Hinderer 2014: 362). Third was the renegotiation of network concessions at the local and regional levels. This meant a return to older models of regional and local monopolies, bringing in outside investors, or, as in the case of Berlin, attempts to buy back the urban network at the municipal level (Fuchs and Hinderer 2014: 361).

But even with the rapid ascendancy of a decentralized group of challengers, as late as 2010, nuclear power was not viewed as antithetical to the Energiewende narrative, which had at that point gained some political currency at the national level. Instead nuclear power was “praised as an indispensable bridging technology, which would pave the way toward an RES-based energy system: RES and nuclear were claimed to be ‘two sides of the same coin’” (Strunz 2014: 153).

This would change in March 11, 2011. With the incumbent Big Four stagnating and a heterogeneous group of challengers mobilizing at the local and regional levels, the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster on March 11, 2011 proved to be the exogenous shock that marked a radical shift in the status of nuclear power in Germany, and, crucially, the federal government’s
commitment to Energiewende. Although the German parliament passed an ambitious plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in 2010 (an 80–95 percent reduction by 2050), it relied heavily on nuclear power as a bridging technology (Schmid et al. 2016: 263). Fukushima changed this once and for all, constituting a shock to the national political field that shifted the balance of power away from incumbents to challengers in the proximate German energy field.

Strunz argues that Fukushima precipitated a swift change in German public discourse about nuclear energy, pointing to recent opinion polls showing 80–90 percent of the population supporting Energiewende. He summarizes this change in public discourse as follows. Before Fukushima, the question was, “should Germany phase out fossil and nuclear energy?” After, the question became, “how does Germany best achieve full RES energy supply?” (Strunz 2014: 154). In the words of German chancellor Angela Merkel, “Fukushima has forever changed the way we define risk in Germany” (quoted in Strunz 2014: 153). Three days after Fukushima Merkel ordered that the seven oldest nuclear plants in Germany be immediately shut down, followed by the government’s decision in May to order “the old reactors not to be ramped up again and decided that the remaining German nuclear power plants will have to shut down by 2022” (Strunz 2014: 153).

Although conventional power plants will continue to play a role in Germany’s energy mix even while pursuing the Energiewende targets (in particular to fill the need of compensating for the fluctuations inherent in wind and solar energy generation), the incumbents’ dominant framing of the situation is a pessimistic outlook of “de-growth.” The Big Four began increasing their investments in RES after 2011, but it is unclear how successful these efforts will be given their late entry onto the market (Kungl 2015: 19). The increasing prevalence of large-scale renewable projects in Germany (e.g., offshore wind and biomass projects) primarily reflects an influx in capital from institutional and strategic investors (for the most part, not utilities) to the RES sector, who have been attracted by new technological developments, Energiewende policies, and the successes of smaller and medium-scale RES projects (Schmid et al. 2016: 266–267).

While the future of the field of German energy generation remains uncertain, it is divided between actors seeking to continue to push in the direction of decentralization, and those that would seek to push in the direction of centralized RES generation. Proponents of a decentralized approach are exemplified by “100% bioregions,” which engage in a heterogeneous set of strategies to achieve regional energy independence (Fuchs and Hinderer 2014). Proponents of a centralized vision prefer uniform market-based solutions that favor “the most efficient use of generation capacities where the potential is most favorable” (Schmid et al. 2016: 272). Both routes are technically compatible with the Energiewende, but require different infrastructural investments, in particular different approaches to expanding the power grid. Accordingly, the transmission grid has itself become the object of significant contestation at the local and regional levels (Neukirch 2016), suggesting that the future of the German
energy transmission field may be determined by the outcome of struggles at the interstices of the national and local levels. The case of the Energiewende shows how attention to the structural relationship to fields – in particular, fields nested inside one another (like Fligstein and McAdam’s analogy to “Russian dolls”) – can reveal dynamics of transformation. It also exemplifies the role that exogenous shocks can play in facilitating rapid field transformation.

Transnational Field Emergence: The Rise of Global Environmental Governance

Field analysis is highly applicable to understanding the organization of various kinds of international arrangements that govern particular economic or social domains. The emergence of these kinds of arenas can reflect cooperation between states to create international governmental organizations. They can also be the result of cooperation between nonstate actors. Obviously, in such negotiations, both state and nonstate actors could participate. One of the fascinating aspects of the creation of these kinds of fields is that they are almost entirely virtual without any ties to a particular place or state.

Recent decades have seen the rise of transnational private regulation as a new form of global governance. Here we consider the case of the emergence of a transnational field that creates standards and certification for the forestry products, which culminated in the founding of the first global certification association, the Forest Stewardship Council (hereinafter FSC). Bartley (2007) motivates his study of this phenomenon with the following empirical puzzle: “Why have controversies over sweatshops and deforestation produced transnational private regulation through certification instead of other possibilities – such as intergovernmental agreements or purely symbolic commitments?” Further, “why did the controversies generate any system of governance when they could have very easily devolved into short-lived, ad hoc responses?” (Bartley 2007: 298, emphasis in original). Bartley shows that at crucial stages of uncertainty, different types of actors (e.g., NGOs, governments, and for-profit firms) moved in to shape the emergence of this new transnational field in line with their organizational interests and culturally constituted goals, ultimately culminating in the establishment of the FSC, which would become a model for future global private governance efforts.

The initial impetus for the global environmental governance of the timber industry was the globalization of supply chains in the 1980s and 1990s. This fueled concerns about the environmental costs associated with timber production and the veracity of environmental claims made by companies importing and exporting products across national lines. In this context, environmental activists waged boycotts against tropical timber. Importers and exporters responded by making claims about their commitment to the environment, efforts that would ultimately prove ineffective. This context of upheaval produced an opportunity for small specialty woodworking firms to distinguish themselves as ecologically sound.
They convened in 1989 to establish the Woodworkers’ Alliance for Rainforest Protection (WARP). Out of this forum, a dominant proposal emerged “for an international organization that could monitor forest conditions, validate credible claims, expose opportunists, and assist in what one worker called a ‘propaganda battle with the timber trade’” (Bartley 2007: 318).

The proposal for an intergovernmental approach, however, ultimately proved controversial, given that it was in tension with existing free trade rules. After the failure to produce a binding international forest convention at the 1992 UN “Earth Summit” in Rio de Janeiro, NGOs like the World Wildlife Fund shifted their focus away from such approaches to a nongovernmental certification solution. On the governmental side, the early 1990s saw a wave of unilateral bans on the import of ecologically unsound timber. These came from European and American municipalities, and several American states and European countries. In line with prior concerns about an intergovernmental solution, the most capacious of these bans clashed with the global neoliberal trade regime. Notably, the ban passed by Austria’s parliament in 1992, which was rescinded the following year after challenges pursuant to GATT, had a direct impact on the shape global environmental governance of timber would take. “In a fascinating turn,” Bartley writes of this episode, “the Austrian government took the money allocated for the implementation of the law and funneled it into a private program – the emerging FSC, to which it gave approximately $1.2 million (U.S.) just as the program was being founded” (2007: 321, emphasis in original). Several other European countries soon followed suit. As it became increasingly apparent that direct state action, unilateral or intergovernmental, was not likely to be reconciled with free trade rules, governments followed NGOs in their support for a private certification solution to a policy dilemma.

With NGOs and governments providing the emerging FSC with an important source of initial funding and legitimacy, charitable foundations supported its expansion, contributing approximately $40 million in order to expand the FSC between 1993 and 2001. They viewed this effort as an opportunity to pursue their cultural and political project of building “private sector alternatives to governmental regimes” (Bartley 2007: 322).

Next came retailers. Green consumerism was in its infancy in the early 1990s and there is little evidence that whatever niche demand there was for ecologically sound timber was sufficient to motivate large companies like Home Depot in the US or B&Q in the UK to voluntarily participate in certification programs. Nonetheless, retailers made significant commitments to the project of forest certification beginning in the early 1990s. Bartley argues that rather than consumer demand, it was the skilled maneuvering of NGOs and foundations that brought home improvement retailers into the fold. On the one hand, NGOs and foundations cooperated to create buyers’ groups for ecologically sound wood products. On the other hand, they leveraged the credible threat of more protests and boycotts, which come at an obvious public relations cost and can even foment support for state intervention.
In the process of carefully analyzing this chain of events, Bartley distinguishes his field theoretic approach from market- and state-based theories of institutional emergence. In particular, he argues that viewing certification as a solution to a collective action problem among firms would lead one to expect a greater role for consumers demanding green products in spurring competition between firms trying to protect their reputations. Instead, he shows that the construction of demand for green products came as part of a concerted political strategy carried out by NGOs and foundations to bring firms on board with their vision for the emergent field. “Conspicuously absent from the story of forest certification’s emergence,” he writes, “are the bulk of forest product firms and their trade associations” (Bartley 2007: 324). Further, instead of posing the question of the degree of autonomy of the state, Bartley’s field theoretic approach attunes him to concrete tactics of competition and collaboration at key moments in time, showing how different types of actors (state and nonstate) jockeyed for control over the form of an emerging transnational field.

International Field Transformation: The “Greening” of International Institutions

In this subsection, we present a case of the transformation of existing international political fields where state and nonstate actors are involved. We discuss Evans and Kay’s (2008) study of how environmentalists skillfully navigated the structure of interfield relations during the negotiation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) to exact significant concessions. The result of these actions produced a “greening” of international institutions.

Despite considerable political weakness, environmentalists managed to win substantial concessions during the negotiation of NAFTA. Evans and Kay (2008) explain this pioneering case of the “greening” of international trade policy by focusing on how actors strategically navigated the “architecture of field overlap.” As such they not only demonstrate the utility of the theory of SAFs in empirical sociology: they also extend the theory by identifying several mechanisms “that enable political activities to strategically leverage advantages across fields” (Evans and Kay 2008: 971). Field overlap facilitates transformation “because of the bounded ways fields interlock and through networked actors operating in multiple fields” (2008: 974). In the case of NAFTA, environmentalists had to strategically navigate four key fields: the US trade policy field, the US legislative field, the transnational trade negotiating field, and the grassroots politics field. These fields overlapped by way of several different mechanisms that had to be leveraged in order to influence the outcome of negotiations.

First was framing. It was necessary to establish a conceptual linkage between environmental degradation and trade liberalization. Prior to NAFTA negotiations, environmental organizations were not active in the US trade policy field. In order to establish an oppositional frame, environmentalists formed an alliance with labor unions, who were already an active opposition party in the trade policy field. They
then lobbied the US Congress to address their concerns together before trade negotiations began. This linkage was mutually beneficial for both parties. It allowed environmentalists to “piggyback on labor’s influence” while labor activists could point to environmental concerns in order to “expand the authority of their oppositional position and blunt criticisms of protectionism” (Evans and Kay 2008: 979).

With a labor-environmental standards oppositional frame in place, environmentalists took advantage of the intersecting networks of the legislative and US trade policy fields. One important moment was a forum held by members of the Working Group on Trade and Environmentally Sustainable Development in 1991 that helped environmentalists garner sufficient alliances in Congress to provide a credible threat to throw the fast-track authorization of the agreement into jeopardy. With a coalition of challengers in place, environmentalists were able to take advantage of a rule linkage between the US legislative and trade policy fields to get an official seat during the NAFTA talks and to gain specific concessions from trade negotiators (Evans and Kay 2008: 980–982).

When negotiations began, however, environmentalists found themselves in a marginalized position. They thus shifted their attention to the final congressional vote on NAFTA, zeroing in on “the overlap between the legislative and grassroots politics fields resulting from Congress members’ dependence on key political resources: votes, money, and organizational support” (Evans and Kay 2008: 982). By fomenting public hostility to NAFTA they were able to influence legislators who would rather appear conciliatory to the demands of their constituents than throw the entire agreement into jeopardy. Specifically, they used a “three-pronged strategy” to take advantage of the resource brokerage between the grassroots politics and US legislative fields: “(1) educate local interest group members to increase opposition, (2) threaten legislators with loss of votes by increasing general voter antagonism to the agreement, and (3) mobilize pressure on legislators by convening lobbying efforts in home regions” (Evans and Kay 2008: 982). After successful grassroots mobilization by environmental groups that swayed public opinion away from NAFTA, environmentalists were in a stronger bargaining position. US legislators’ authority over the agreement’s fate constituted a rule linkage between the legislative field and the transnational trade negotiating field, which proved a decisive mechanism for “greening” the final agreement during supplemental negotiations. The policy outcome was the environmental side agreement to NAFTA, the North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation (NAAEC). More broadly, environmentalists had successfully

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7 Kay and Evans acknowledge that most environmental activists would agree that NAAEC was not strong enough. Nonetheless they argue that the establishment of new transnational adjudicatory institutions and mechanisms of enforcement was an important accomplishment given that there was no significant linkage between environmental politics and international trade policy before the NAAEC (Kay and Evans 2008: 970–971).
forged a multidimensional linkage between grassroots environmental organizing and international trade policy.

CONCLUSION

All of the case studies featured in this chapter demonstrate the usefulness of field theory. They illustrate how state and nonstate fields interact. They show how field theory can position analysts to understand the construction of political institutions. Both state and nonstate actors participate in the construction of new fields, which can impact politics at the national and transnational levels. Finally, we have shown how field theory is useful for understanding the emergence of new meso-level social orders and the transformation of existing ones.

In this chapter, we have presented field theory as a promising approach for political sociology. Field theory is amenable to the concerns of political sociologists of varying persuasions and interests, but encourages them to broaden their view of which actors are relevant to the study of politics. Instead of centering on the question of the relative autonomy of the state, field theory focuses on the reproduction, emergence, and transformation of meso-level social orders that are engaged with the state and with other domains of society. We hope to have demonstrated that in the case of political sociology, field theory is a generative approach which provides scholars with a set of theoretical tools for more clearly examining the links between state and nonstate actors in order to address pressing questions about political order and change.

REFERENCES


I. Theories of Political Sociology


In the 1990s, the idea that culture had a role to play in political sociology was relatively novel. Identifying sociologists who fit this emerging interdisciplinary subfield posed a challenge. Today, it is difficult to imagine a sociologist, or even a political scientist, who would argue against the importance of culture to politics. It has become de rigueur to acknowledge culture in political analysis. If anything, the field of politics and culture borders on oversubscription. Methodological issues that dominated early syntheses (Berezin 1994, 1997b) remain salient. These include epistemological discussions of culture as an explanatory factor in social analysis (e.g., Berezin 2014a; Wagner-Paciﬁci 2017) distinctions between qualitative and quantitative methodology (Goertz and Mahoney 2012).

Boundaries (Lamont and Molnár 2002) are intrinsic to politics and culture. A range of sociological subﬁelds – inequality studies (Lamont, Beljean, and Clair 2014), comparative historical sociology (Adams, Clemens, and Orloff 2005), and political sociology itself (Steensland 2009; Hall 2003) – fall within the analytic purview of politics and culture, even if they do not always employ the label. History (Bonnell and Hunt 1999; Sewell 2005), anthropology (Herzfeld 2005; Nugent and Vincent 2004; Paley 2002), and political science (Bowen and Petersen 1999) also fall under the rubric of politics and culture, underlining the interdisciplinary character of the subﬁeld.

This chapter proposes a framework based upon territoriarity and varieties of political space that aims for analytic coherence while capturing the empirical diversity that falls within the arena of politics and culture. As a conceptual lens, territory is simultaneously empirical and analytic; it is coterminous with national borders and suggestive of boundary-making (Berezin 2003). In earlier work, Berezin and Sandusky (2017) develop a descriptive map of the empirical and theoretical landscape. This chapter works as a synthesis, aiming for breadth in a discussion of territory, political institutions, and practices, and
signals topics that other chapters in this handbook will cover in more detail. As
the interest in politics and culture has grown, certain substantive areas have
dominated the field. Even a cursory review of the extant literature reveals two
distinct areas: first, the study of nationalism and national identity; and second,
the theory and practice of democratic politics. Within each of these areas, nodal
contributions set the research agenda within the field. In addition to these two
broad areas, there are subareas in distinct spheres of analysis that can be
recalibrated within the space of politics and culture. These include religion,
human rights, civilization, and security.

Territoriality, the political division of material space, is the underlying
conceptual frame that allows us to speak of the national and the transnational
as political and cultural arenas (Berezin 2003; Maier 2016; Sassen 2006).
Geographical borders and physical boundaries are crucial (Sack 1986).
Territory demarcates who is in and who is out. It is the core of nations and
states as well as the physical spaces that serve as arenas of political practice.
Territory and spatiality govern the organization of this chapter, which begins
with the major political form of modernity – the nation-state. From that starting
point, the chapter moves to constitutive topics: nationalism, citizenship, legal
belonging in the national state, and inclusion and exclusion; practices of
democracy from the civil sphere to social capital; and political cultural forms
across national boundaries. While scholars usually consider nationalism,
political practice, and transborder processes separately, this chapter shows
how they interconnect conceptually and analytically to form the nexus of any
understanding of the intersection of the cultural and the political. Nations,
political practices, and transnations bear a material relation to space and
place: the physical locales where cultural and political practices occur.

The chapter proceeds as follows. The first section identifies keywords –
culture, nation, state, identity – that form a vocabulary of politics and culture.
This section views the nation as a collection of cultural institutions that imbue
the state with political and cultural power. Political institutions embed the
nation in lived experience. An arsenal of political symbols (Cerulo 1995;
Ozouf 1988), practices (Schwartz 2008), and discourses (Smith 2005; Wedeen
2015) develops around the nation-state that reinforce collective and individual
national identities.

The second section “Nation-States: Culture in Politics” engages the concepts
laid out in the first section to approach issues of nationalism, citizenship,
belonging, and multiculturalism. This section explores issues of the nation
and the state, citizenship as a legal and social entity, the tension between
inclusion and exclusion in modern nation states, and how different national
states adjudicate that tension. Underlying this analysis is the assumption that
institutions pattern meaning for collectivities and are thus cultural as well as
organizational entities (Fourcade and Schofer 2016; Schmidt 2008).

The third section, “Politics in Culture: Arenas of Political Practice,” explores
modes of political engagement (i.e., pluralism, association, discourse, social
movements, and social media) as cultural processes. The fourth and last section “Political Culture beyond the Nation-State,” turns the concept of territoriality on its head. It examines cultural and political entities that are genuinely global and transnational, such as religion, human rights, and security. It discusses their status outside of national institutional spaces. The section asks how culture that is not embedded in a national state travels and becomes embedded in a broader global framework.

**VOCABULARIES OF POLITICS AND CULTURE**

Dynamic vocabularies provide the concepts and analytic distinctions that serve as heuristic devices for thinking about politics and culture. Rather than reifications, vocabularies are historically and geographically contingent. This section parses the keywords culture, nation-state, and identity.

**From Culture to “Deep Culture”**

Meaning is constitutive of culture and cultural analysis. The political imposes an additional layer of complexity upon cultural analysis as it requires that we add the regularities of politics to the variabilities of culture. The conception of culture that informs this chapter acknowledges and reworks a body of theorizing in the sociology of culture that has evolved over 30 years. Early theoretical engagements (Swidler 1986; Griswold 1987) aimed at creating a science of culture and focused on falsifiability. As the field developed, cognition (DiMaggio 1997) and process became more of a focus (Patterson 2014). Lamont and her collaborators (2017) argue for the importance of developing a bridge between cultural sociology and cognitive psychology. This chapter relies on the processual and the historical to excavate the analytic dimensions of political meaning.

In the well-known introductory chapter to *The Interpretation of Cultures*, anthropologist Clifford Geertz describes culture as a “web of significance” that we ourselves have spun (1973: 5) and elaborates his description by pointing to the difference between a twitch and a wink. The interpretations of this neurological movement of the eye are vastly different depending on the culture space where one is located. A twitch may signal a medical condition or intense nervousness. A wink in Western culture is often considered an invitation to shared knowledge or a flirtatious gesture. To the uninformed observer both appear the same, but understanding the meaning of this eye movement is important to the interpretation of a situation.

Geertz’s twitch/wink example points to characteristics of culture that social actors take for granted. First, culture is collective. Actors usually know the difference between the twitch and the wink depending upon their social context. This means that they can engage in conversation without translation. Shared culture is akin to shared language (Sewell 1996). Second, culture is public – it is
not a hidden dimension of social life. Berezin (2012) compares it to an “invisible brick wall” – when we crash into it, we know it. These characteristics of culture point to its “meaning” dimension; but culture also has performative (Alexander 2004, 2010), practice (Wedeen 2002), and material dimensions. Practices – what people do together and how they behave – provide a form of social glue. The material dimension of culture is embedded in recognizable objects (Miller-Idriss 2017; Zubrzycki 2016a, 2017) or even engineering projects (Mukerji 2009). These characteristics and manifestations of culture that are analytically separable are in reality melded together. Definitions of culture, no matter how diverse, invariably end in the concept of community and shared meaning.

This leads to the question of how we know what we mean (Berezin 2014a) in the realm of social and political life. In his posthumously published memoir Defying Hitler, written as a youth observing the rise of Hitler in pre-Nazi Germany, Sebastian Haffner argued that successful political communication captures “what every 7-year-old thinks that he knows” (2002: 31). In other words, as a community of shared meaning, “deep culture” does not require explanation. Group members, by virtue of belonging to the group, understand immediately. “Deep culture” suggests emotional recognition as well as cognitive reasoning and bears a kinship relation to Durkheim’s concept of “social facts” or collectively instituted external constraints on individuals’ beliefs, emotions, and behavior (1982: 31). “Deep culture” also suggests a dynamic form of collective understanding that is embedded in the social and political structure. Collective recognition or what Schudson (1989) describes as “resonance” is a core feature of “deep culture.” McDonnell, Bail, and Tavory speak to the issue of “deep culture” in their description of resonance as an emergent experience that arises when cultural objects are used to make sense of “the ways in which people encounter their world – from the most mundane to the deeply existential – as situations that need to be worked through and overcome” (2017: 3). This chapter uses these concepts to explore how political institutions calibrate and recalibrate culture (culture-in-politics) and how political practices are inextricable from cultural practices (politics-in-culture). A cultural approach to institutions ties these concepts together.

In earlier work, Berezin conceptualized political culture as “the matrix of meanings embodied in expressive symbols, practices and beliefs that constitute ordinary politics in a bounded collectivity” (Berezin 1997b: 364). This current chapter works with a more refined definition that identifies institutions as powerful conduits of cultural meaning and constitutive of multiple forms of political arrangements (Clemens and Cook 1999; Hall and Taylor 1996; March and Olsen 1989). The new definition draws on Parsons’ definition of institutions as structures that pattern expectations: “the primary focus of institutions is the definition of expectations with respect to actions in concrete human social relationships” (1954: 147). Expectations are constitutive of futurity and meaning, both of which are central components of culture (Tavory and Eliasoph 2013). Reformulating Parsons, an institution may be
conceived as culture that is not left to chance, the embedding of practices and symbols in formal organizations with repeating rules and values that are guaranteed frequently by laws. This definition of institutions incorporates political culture, which we reformulate as the matrix of meanings embodied in expressive symbols, practices, and beliefs that constitute ordinary politics in a bounded collectivity and regulated by political and legal institutions (Berezin and Sandusky 2017).

**Nation-States**

The nation-state is the second vocabulary term that requires development. The nation-state is a modern (post-1789) and durable form of political development and organization (Weber 1978). As a thought experiment, separating the cultural from the political lends analytic purchase to the dynamic process by which politics enters culture and vice versa. The nation represents the community of shared meaning or “deep culture.” While there is a large literature on the development of the modern state (e.g., Loveman 2005; Poggi 1978), for current purposes the state can be simply defined as representing the technology of political rule – laws and bureaucracies. The nation-state as a political and material entity represents the territorial division of geographical space.

Four political possibilities emerge from the analytic distinction between nation and state. These possibilities serve as a template for discussion in the next three sections. First, the nation-state, where culture and organization are in synchrony with each other, is the paradigmatic model of modern political organization. Separating the nation and state analytically makes us aware of three other possibilities. A state may exist without a nation. The former Yugoslavia is an example of an instance where a national culture never developed – the consequences of which became apparent when the regime dissolved in 1989. Empires, while not strictly states, may be a subform of this category. A third possibility is a nation without a state – the stateless people that Hannah Arendt (1973 [1951]) identified in *The Origins of Totalitarianism* provides the extreme example. But, contemporary history provides numerous examples, such as the Kurds, Palestinians, the Rohingya. Finally, nonmodern forms of political organization (e.g., feudal or traditional) are neither states nor nations.

**Identity**

Identity is a concept that unites culture and structure. Berezin (2010) lays out a political cultural approach to identity that incorporates sociological theories (Brubaker and Cooper 2000; Calhoun 1994) and draws contrasts to social psychological approaches. Identity theory often answers the question “who am I?” on an individual level and “who are we?” on a collective level. Identity
is a twofold concept with ontological and epistemological dimensions. The ontological dimension relates to how social actors emotionally define themselves, individually and/or collectively. Epistemology refers to the legal and institutional categories within which we are individually and collectively inscribed. Citizenship law, for example, demarcates individuals as member of a national space whether they ontologically identify with it or not. Family law sets up a series of legal relations among kin that hold whether we are fond of our relatives or not (Beckert 2008). Politics focuses upon the epistemological or categorical dimensions of identity, which precede emotional or psychological identification in most iterations. The landscape of individual or collective meanings is embedded in territorially defined national states through legal and institutional means.

NATION-STATES: CULTURE IN POLITICS

Nationalism, Identity, and State Structure

Nation-states are the political and cultural projects that characterized the nineteenth- and twentieth-century polity. As they flourished in post-1789 Europe, nation-state projects are modern and Western. The term “project” signals the dynamic nature of the process that governed political development. First, the modern nation-state is the result of two processes – nation building and state building – which developed along separate and only sometimes parallel trajectories. With the exception of Italy and Germany, state building primarily took place in the eighteenth century and culture building in the nineteenth century. The modern nation-state is a marriage of culture and structure. Second, modern nation-states are not always democratic. As scholars of democracy (Lipset 1994; Schmitter and Karl 1991) and political regime type (e.g., Linz 2000) have argued, there is no necessary correlation between the form of the state and type of governance. In addition, procedurally democratic nation-states can engage in practices that might not ordinarily be associated with democracy – what Zakaria (2003) labeled “illiberal democracy.” In short, democratic institutions do not always align with democratic sentiments. And democratic institutions are not inviolable as Levitsky and Ziblatt (2018) demonstrate in their recent work on the fragility of Western institutions in the onslaught of authoritarian leaders and populist politics.

The nation-state is the primary vehicle that inserts cultural meaning into politics. Nationalism is a necessary but not sufficient condition of nation-state formation. Nationalism is an ideology about belonging to a particular nation or nation-state. Ideologies are often coherent and sometimes independent narratives that inform sociopolitical reality. But nationalism is more than ideology. As Calhoun (2007) suggests, nationalism is, first, a felt emotion; second, the basis of political mobilization of both ontological and epistemological identity, and,
third, a form of public moral evaluation – a discourse about how a collectivity ought to live.

Primordialism and constructivism capture competing conceptions of the nation. A primordialist account views the nation as a “natural” community of peoples who share blood, race, and kinship (Geertz 1963; Suny 2001). The history of interwar Europe suggests that primordialism does not end well. The second view of nationalism is as a historically grounded construction. This idea is at the core of Ernst Renan’s classic essay “What Is a Nation?,” in which he argues that the shared experience of living on a territory over time imbues a people with a feeling of nationality. Renan defines the nation as “a large-scale solidarity, constituted by the feeling of the sacrifices that one has made in the past and of those that one is prepared to make in the future” (1996 [1882]: 53). He argues that a nation’s existence is “a daily plebiscite, just as an individual’s existence is a perpetual affirmation of life” (Renan 1996: 53). In short, national experience is a committed and committing phenomenon, a part of the “deep culture” that lies dormant within the collective and individual national consciousness until an exogenous event triggers nationalist emotion. In contrast to Renan, Weber’s (1978) conception of political community places a stronger emphasis upon the territoriality of nationhood and the sentiments of prestige or pride in national belonging.

In postwar political sociology and political science, modernization theory (e.g., Almond and Verba 1963; Apter 1965) eclipsed nationalism as a favored analytic concept in the realm of theory and practice. Kohn’s The Idea of Nationalism (1944) and Deutsch’s Nationalism and Social Communication (1953) were the last comprehensive accounts in the mid-twentieth century. In 1983, nationalism (e.g., Anderson 2006 [1983]; Gellner 1983) reemerged in the academy. Anderson’s (2006 [1983]) constructivist formulation of a nation as “imagined community” had the greatest influence. Anderson argued that it is impossible for citizens to know each and every one, or even some portion, of their co-nationals. Therefore, they have to imagine what they have in common. The “style” of national imaginings defines the bounds of nationality. A technological advance – the invention of the printing press – provided a fixity to common language and geographical representation. Linguistic consolidation and the establishment of a vernacular facilitated a common national culture. Material objects such as maps and museums strengthened national imaginings.

Anderson’s book predated and helped give rise to the “cultural turn” (Bonnell and Hunt 1999; Steinmetz 1999) in historical and political sociology. In addition, events such as the fall of the Eastern European bloc and the Soviet Union, the burgeoning of the European Union, and increased immigration flows encouraged scholars to turn their attention to issues of nationality and nationalism. In an influential collection of essays, Brubaker (1996) claimed that nationalism was a “contingent event.” The political theorist Miller (1995) pointed to the sentimental dimension of nationality. A distinction began to emerge in the literature between “ethnic nationalism” – a form of
nationalism which was blood based, inherited, and the kind of nationalism that leads to ethnic cleansing, and civic nationalism that was legally inclusive, chosen, and a characteristic of the democratic nation-state (Brubaker 1992; Ignatieff 1994).

Practicing National Identity through Memory and Institutions

A constitutive element of the discussion of nationalism was a burgeoning literature within history and sociology on national identity (Fox and Miller-Idriss 2008; Kumar 2003; Rivera 2008; Spillman 1997) and on memory studies (Jansen 2007; Olick and Robbins 1998; Wagner-Pacifici and Schwartz 1991). The literature on memory illustrates how the past is made and remade to align with present context. The “memory” literature ranges widely in the American and European variants. American scholars tend to focus on events that analyze and commemorate past injustices – Armstrong and Crage’s (2006) analysis of the Stonewall riots as well as Wagner-Pacifici and Schwartz’s (1991) discussion of the Vietnam War Memorial fall in this category. The European cases tend to focus upon rewriting and reinterpreting the events of the Second World War and the Communist period. Zubrzycki’s work on Poland (2006) and the occupation is one example of this – work that she has extended to include the recent movement of young Poles to assume Jewish identity in a way to combat a resurgent Polish nationalism (Zubrzycki 2016b). Molnár (2005) shows how memory influenced building style and urban design in Germany and Hungary. Alexander’s (2009) analysis of the invention of the Holocaust through trials and popular culture is an example of history not only being remade but also being named and invented.

In contrast to memory studies, which are firmly grounded in temporal and spatial analysis, identity studies do not uniformly distinguish between the categorical and the ontological dimensions of identity. Nation-ness is as institutionally dependent as state-ness. The literature on nation-making is somewhat underdeveloped when compared to the literature on state-making. Exceptions include Berezin (1997a) on fascist public culture, Laitin (1998) on language transition, Loveman (2014) on racial categories, and Steinmetz (2007) on colonialism. Institutions regulate cultural practices as they do practices more typically associated with state structures. In this view, culture is institutionally embedded. Weber, in his classic work Peasants into Frenchmen (1976), captures the institutional dimension of nation building and creation of national culture. In order to become French, or Italian, or German, one needs to participate in institutions that contribute to a sense of common or national purpose. Weber identifies the education system and the military.

In the same mode, Kastoryano’s (2002) study of the “negotiated” character of identities illustrates how legal categories intersect with “feelings” of identity. Díez Medrano (2003) analyzes national identities as they confront the supranational legal structure of the European Union. Secularization is another
aspect of modern nation-stateness. Gorski (2003) describes a bottom-up regime of soft coercion in the Netherlands maintained through networks of local Dutch Reformed Church clerics whose discipline and surveillance activities created a strong social infrastructure. While these are participatory institutions, the legal framework of constitutions is another place where national identity is located. Preambles to national constitutions often begin with narratives of national and political belonging that the entire document reinforces (Dahl 1998; Norton 1993).

National Identity as Agency
Recent work by Wimmer (2013, 2017, 2018) and Bonikowski (2016, 2017; Bonikowski and DiMaggio 2016) exemplifies innovative directions in studies of nationalism. These scholars attempt to incorporate issues of agency and structure into the study of nationalism that lend dynamism to the concept of identity. Hiers, Soehl, and Wimmer (2017) introduce the idea of shared national history using the concept of “national trauma” to articulate how xenophobia, or anti-immigrant sentiment operates. “Anti-immigrant sentiment” is a proxy for nationalism. The authors quantify geopolitical threat in 33 European countries and find that citizens of nation-states that have experienced war or invasion with substantive losses (i.e., territory) are more likely to express xenophobic sentiment.

Wimmer (2013) develops a model of political closure that focuses on agency and contributes to the *culture-in-politics* argument that this chapter advances. According to Wimmer, the nation-state, unlike more traditional or feudal forms of political organization, is a contract among competing groups of elites that emerge as states begin to centralize. Nation-states, and political organizations more generally, represent a negotiated equilibrium between elites and masses with room for variation depending upon how that negotiation plays out. The modern nation-state is the product of institutionalized exchange among all potential political actors. Wimmer’s model is process oriented and answers *how* nation-states came to be. But, it also provides a novel answer to the *why* question: nation-states spread because subordinate elites (e.g., intellectuals, culture producers of various sorts) within diverse political spaces observe that nation-states work, and take on the role of *legitimacy entrepreneurs* to promulgate the new political form.

Reworking Wimmer’s argument, networks of *legitimacy entrepreneurs* who promoted the modern state understood that cultural consolidation was a necessity for political consolidation. Communities of people who were like each other (or who thought that they were like each other) were essential to providing the emotional identification that encouraged individuals to pay taxes and to go to war in the name of the state. The cultural community of the nation provided the collective rationale for self-sacrifice.
Bonikowski’s (2016, 2017) studies of nationalism lay firmly in the realm of politics and culture. He locates cultural change in collective mental states that vary among individuals, rather than in external events impinging upon some national whole that moves everyone in a similar direction. Bonikowski (2016) argues that scholars who study nationalism in terms of crisis know little of ordinary “everyday” nationalism and how and when it comes into play. Bonikowski and DiMaggio (2016) conduct an empirical test of this position. Using the United States as a case, they identify four categories of national dispositions – creedal, restrictive, ardent, and disengaged – that map onto different social groups with different class practices and ideological commitments. Their findings indicate that there is more coherence to American popular nationalism than the literature suggests. Using cross-national public opinion data Bonikowski (2017) finds, first, that national styles are relatively stable across a wide range of national states; and, second, that restrictive nationalism can be more right wing than ardent nationalism.

Boundaries of National Belonging

No matter what conflicts they cause, nations and nation-states are a resilient form of political organization. Calhoun (2007), echoing Renan, argues that nation-states matter not because they have intrinsic merit as a form of political organization, but because they are constituted as moral ontologies, collectively defined ways of being in the world, as well as political categories. Moral ontology is a shorthand term for the body of unspoken assumptions that nation-states deploy to address the normative issues that they regularly encounter as they organize political and social security for their members.

Citizenship law is the principal legal mechanism that locates an individual epistemologically or categorically, as well as institutionally, within a national state. Citizenship law is often embedded within national constitutions, and defines and limits membership in the nation-state and confers rights as well as obligations on members. It reinforces the territorial dimension of national space because it firmly delineates who is in and who is out, who has rights and who does not. Citizenship law speaks to issues of membership and incorporation and underscores the collective meaning behind the feeling of and the fact of belonging to a national state.

In T. H. Marshall’s classic essay “Citizenship and Social Class,” he famously describes citizenship as a “status” that signals “who are full members of a community” (1998 [1949]: 92–93) and associates the beginning of citizenship rights as the beginning of “modern national consciousness” (1998: 105). Contemporary scholars have challenged some dimensions of Marshall’s theory. Somers (1993) argues that more beyond its operation as a status, citizenship is an active engagement space. Brubaker (1992) emphasizes the boundary devices embedded within citizenship law that determine the parameters of exclusion and inclusion. He signals “deep culture” when he
describes the manner in which “cultural idioms” determined the design of citizenship law in France and Germany. Soysal (1994) argues that modernity demands the abandonment of territorial notions of citizenship and that citizenship should be a-territorial, postnational, and based upon universal norms of personhood embodied in human rights accords and transnational organizations.

But, territory and the materiality of space are hard to theorize away. Citizenship law and the protections that it accords to individuals is located within nation-states (Weil 2008). The inescapability of territory contributes to the dilemmas of multiculturalism. Kymlicka (1995, 2007) defines a concept of “multicultural citizenship.” Group culture is the core component of multiculturalism. From the perspective of groups, a core question is how to live in a national state that is not a state of origin and maintain the group’s collective cultural integrity? From the point of view of the host nation, the question is how do we accommodate and include groups who wish to live on our territory but do not necessarily wish to claim our culture? This question is less strident in the United States, which was founded on the notion of cultural pluralism.

POLITICS IN CULTURE: ARENAS OF POLITICAL PRACTICE

The nation-state is an arena for nationally and locally bounded political practices. Geographers refer to this spatial multivocality as the problem of scale (Jones 2017). Social science literature on political practice typically assumes democracy as well as the nation-state. This section explores how politics intervenes in culture to shape political participation which is sometimes democratic and sometimes not.

This section identifies four different theories of political participation: pluralist, associative, discursive, and social movement, each of which foregrounds different arenas of political practice and behavior and affords different possibilities for meaningful participation. The section ends by considering how social media technologies have reshaped political participation and how these theories can be deployed to understand these developments.

Pluralism

Pluralist theories of democracy focus on how the interests of citizens become represented in government via the practice of voting (Dahl 1961). However, these theories have been strongly critiqued due to the unequal influence of elites, who are able to capture government and have it work in their interests (Schattschneider 1960). The pluralist perspective tends to eschew culture in favor of the analysis of individual preferences from a rational choice perspective. Such studies not only neglect culture but they also do little to
explain the decline in voting that has occurred in Western democracies in the last twenty years (Mair 2013). Moreover, voting requires citizenship and is often subject to particular local rulings that raise barriers to participation (Hajnal, Lajevardi, and Nielson 2017).

**Associationalism**

In contrast to the methodological individualism of pluralism theories, associative theories of democracy emphasize the importance of social relations and organization. These gained traction in political sociology in response to Robert Putnam’s (Putnam, Leonardi, and Nanetti 1993) seminal study of democracy in Italy. Putnam derived his central insight in *Making Democracy Work* from Alexis de Tocqueville’s *Democracy in America* (2004 [1835–1840]). De Tocqueville pointed to the importance of mediating institutions in the formation of a democratic culture. Mediating institutions, such as the nineteenth-century New England town hall, enable ordinary citizens to debate and give voice to political concerns at a level below the administrative state. De Tocqueville argued that these institutions allow citizens to cultivate civic “mores,” the values and dispositions necessary to engage in democratic political life.

Putnam applied this insight to his study of reform of regional-level governments in Italy and the question of why Northern Italy appeared to be much more “democratic” than the South. Putnam and his research team recorded the number of associations across Italy, ranging from choral groups to bird-watching societies and observed that the North was richer in these associations. Borrowing from the theories of social capital developed by Bourdieu (1977) and Coleman (1988), Putnam argues that participating in associations enables citizens to develop trust in their fellow citizens. This trust generates social capital, as citizens form stronger bonds with each other and form bridges that unite diverse groups of citizens together. From this premise, Putnam makes the analytic leap that relations of trust and association bolster democratic practice at the national level and enhance broad-minded solidarity at the local level.

Association captures the multiple dimensions of the empirical studies that Putnam’s theory generated, and also underscores its limitations as a conduit of democracy. Association is both a cultural and political entity with potential to exclude as well as to include. It also accounts for nondemocratic as well as democratic politics and practices. The empirical test of this theory is grounded in communities and local practices, making the question of who belongs and who does not especially salient.

Scholars have pointed out that the link between association and democratic and solidaristic outcomes is not straightforward (Kaufman 2002). For example, groups in Weimar Germany (Berman 1997), the American Ku Klux Klan (McVeigh 2009), and the Italian Mafia (Gambetta 1996) rely on social capital
and networks of association, but they are not democratic. Putnam’s own empirical evidence suggests that democratic procedure does not ensure democratic sentiments or moral discourse. The regions that Putnam targets as most democratic in Italy gave birth to Communism and Fascism—neither ideology known for its affinities to liberal democracy. Putnam’s *Bowling Alone* (Putnam 2000) tested his argument in the postwar United States. Many scholars entered in dialogue with Putnam (Lichterman 2005; Perrin 2014; Portes 1998; Skocpol 2013).

Culture is the strength and weakness of association as an indicator of the richness of democratic practice. Culture at the local level emphasizes similarity and points to exclusion rather than inclusion. Associative theories are based upon group membership and, often, the locale of participation is the community. The social capital that one develops is based upon relations of trust with others that are like you and live in the same place. Putnam went on to develop the concept of “bridging social capital” that solves this problem in theory, but the empirical evidence points toward homophily (McPherson, Smith-Lovin, and Cook 2001). Eckstein (2001) analyzed the localism of political participation in her study of volunteerism in an old, working-class suburb of Boston. Her study suggests that association is particular, not universal.

Association has a constitutive feature that leads to the potential for nondemocratic practice. A younger generation of scholars, focusing mostly on European cases, are exploring the negative and nondemocratic practices that association can generate (Molnár 2016; Riley 2010; Stamatov 2000). Recent research on the populist politics in the United States illustrates how the culture of association is not always benign (Skocpol and Williamson 2012).

**Discursive Participation**

The downside of associative theories of democracy and its constitutive term “social capital” is that it takes quantities of ties or associations (whether local or national) as a proxy for the prevalence of engaged, public-spirited qualities and practices that de Tocqueville identified as American civic mores (Lichterman 2006). The least restrictive approach to democracy is the discursive theories that are associated with German political philosopher Jurgen Habermas (Habermas 1989 [1962]). According to Habermas, democratic practice is the coming together of individuals in the public sphere, which can be either literally public space, such as coffee shops, or in the media, for example in letters to the editor, to discuss pressing issues, share information, and collectively make decisions (see essays in seminal collection, Calhoun 1992). This view of democracy is completely open and individuals or groups only need to be concerned with the issue to have access to the discussion.

The Habermasian approach had its greatest influence in European political theory and empirical research (e.g., Koopmans and Statham 2010). It also
contributed to the development of a strand of American social science that focused upon discourse around collective action and social issues. Eliasoph’s (1998) book Avoiding Politics is a classic work on how groups “fail” to talk and be involved in political issues. Polletta (1998), who has called for the importance of narrative in politics, uses this model of “talk” and “discussion” in her work on the American Civil Rights movement and more recently in the discussion on how to rebuild the area around the World Trade Center in New York City through discursive democratic participation (Polletta and Wood 2005). Mische’s (2008) research on Brazilian student activism also contributes to this line of work, by studying how different styles of communication mediated how different activist groups deployed their political partisanship to engage in civic life. We return to the topic of social movements and collective action in the following section.

Social Movements and Civic Participation

The fourth form of participation we consider is the social movement. Movements emerge when formal political channels and associations are unable to translate popular demands into political action. They tend to be a form of voluntary association that like-minded individuals can join, although the criteria for membership can vary greatly. A thorough review of this literature is beyond the scope of this chapter, but the general contours are worth outlining. The social movement theory that developed in the early 1970s (e.g., Gurr 1970) viewed mobilization as the consequence of people’s emotional responses to purported grievances that formal institutions could not satisfy. This work was strongly criticized by McCarthy and Zald (1977), who argued that grievances are almost omnipresent in society but rarely result in collective action. Building upon the rational choice theories of Mancur Olson (2003 [1965]), they argued that movements are not irrational emotional responses, but organized structures. Later scholars working in the political process model argued for the importance of the relationship between social movement organizations and actors including the state, the media, and elites (Kriesi 2004; McAdam 1999).

By the 1980s a constructivist perspective began to emerge in response to the development of values-based and lifestyle-based movements that organized around women’s rights, peace, and environmental issues, issues that political scientist Ronald Inglehart (1981) has called “postmaterialist” values. Philosopher Jean Cohen (1985) termed these “new social movements” in a breakthrough issue of essays in Social Research, and in the same issue, Offe (1985) argued that in contrast to “old” social movements that were anchored in preexisting political institutions and labor politics, these identity movements lacked institutional buttresses and were therefore likely to experience greater challenges in achieving their political objectives. Social movement theory underwent a cultural turn as theorists sought to understand these movements,
beginning with Snow and colleagues’ (1986) seminal article on framing, which used a reading of Goffman’s frame analysis to study how movements strategically deploy “interpretative schemas” to articulate their grievance. Constructivist scholars of social movements have also emphasized the role of identities in mobilization and how movements develop a sense of collective identity (Polletta and Jasper 2001). Moreover, we have also seen a return to the role of emotions in mobilization, which play a central part in the construction and articulation of meanings and identities (Jasper 2011). Empirical studies such as Kane’s (1997) of the Irish Revolution, Stamatov’s (2002) study of the political uses of Verdi’s operas, and Gould’s study of AIDS activism (2001) also show the significance of mobilizing in the cultural arena to movement success, each providing a vivid illustration of Swidler’s (1986) dictum that culture provides a “toolkit” for social action.

The relation between civil society and democracy is the analytic space where the Habermasian concerns intersect with the Tocquevillian concern for relationships between citizens and the cultural understandings that empower those relationships. The concept of civil society classic to nineteenth-century social theory gained traction in contemporary theory in the 1990s (Cohen and Arato 1994; Calhoun 1995). This was in part due to the role that civil society actors were thought to have played in the fall of the Eastern Bloc. Alexander’s (2006) *The Civil Sphere* is a major attempt to recalibrate the concept of civil society both theoretically and empirically. Alexander’s book is 500 plus pages and it ranges widely over social theory and political movements and events from Civil Rights in the United States to anti-Semitism and Holocaust studies. Kivisto and Sciortino (2015) summarize the theory in a brief introduction to a volume of essays on Alexander’s book. In short, solidarity, the belief in the possibility and necessity of a common membership in society, is the core conceptual frame of the book. Solidarity takes many forms and exists in various locales outside of the purely economic sphere and the purely private or familial sphere. For example, Ikegami (2005) has shown variation between the East and West in civil association. There is a kind of equilibrium to civil society, which has the capacity to break down as groups begin to understand that they lack full membership in society. It is at this point that social movements such as the Civil Rights movement come into the story as they are the principal vehicle of “civic repair,” the attempt to recalibrate civil society to be more inclusive and to incorporate the excluded. The key mechanism here is the discursive element of social movements which both perform and aim to overcome the cultural trauma of exclusion, as well as create horizontal solidarity by renarrating difference as a legitimate dimension of common membership. Alexander’s example is the Jewish community and its response to anti-Semitism, but the approach also applies to claims of multicultural incorporation.

While for Alexander, “civic” is a realm of societal solidarity slowly expanded by social movements, for Lichterman and Eliasoph (2014) “civic” is a kind of public action. They critique the neo-Tocquevillian view and define “civic” as
collective, social problem solving one might find in governmental or commercial settings as well as citizen associations. Drawing on cases of community volunteering, social movement, and social service activity, they argue that different “scene styles” produce different kinds of civic action with different political and social capacities. Scene style is a way of performing good membership and coordinating action in a distinct scene. The “community of interest” is a short-term, competitive, issue-focused style; the “community of identity” is a long-term style focusing participants on defending a social category from external threats. The same complex organization may host different styles in different scenes. What all variations of social movement theory suggest is the openness of public space and the relatively low barriers to participation in extra-parliamentary forms of democratic process.

Political Participation in the Age of Social Media

While social media technologies have altered the political landscape the theoretical toolkits outlined above can prove useful to understanding these changes. The traditional model of media and democracy in the United States is firmly embedded in the First Amendment to the Constitution, which champions a free press and freedom of expression. The underlying assumption was that informed citizens would contribute to democratic practice (Schudson 2008), based on the assumption that journalists provided citizens with “objective” facts which could be used to arrive at an informed opinion. However, we have known since the 1930s, with the beginning of the science of public opinion and propaganda regimes in Europe, that the media can also misinform and manipulate publics (Stanley 2015). Whether informing or misinforming, media intellectuals constitute an important part of the public sphere (Jacobs and Townsley 2011). Furthermore, Bail’s (2012) work shows how a small set of organizations was able to exert its influence on the media to shape contemporary narratives about Islam. While studies of the media have often looked at the top-down effects of the media on citizens, a number of studies have shown that citizens are also involved in media discourse. Zaret (2000) charts the emergence of a “dialogic culture” in seventeenth-century England, as citizens responded to articles published by the press, developing and diffusing a democratic culture. Perrin and Vaisey (2008) showed how citizens engaged with the media through writing letters to the editor to express their opinions and discontents.

In the past decade, the emergence of online social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter has reshaped the media landscape and enabled new forms of political engagement. Castells (2012) argues that social media enables “mass self-communication, based on horizontal networks of interactive, multidirectional communication,” breaking the traditional media hierarchy and enabling citizens to form new associations almost
instantaneously, transcending the bounds of locality. These technologies have been lauded for enabling new social movements like the Arab Spring, Occupy, and the Indignados (e.g., Gerbaudo 2012; Mason 2013), although the role of social media in these movements has been called into question (Gladwell 2010; Morozov 2011). Interventions on these platforms have also been shown to improve traditional participation like election turnout (Bond et al. 2012). But this early optimism has recently given way to skepticism, as social media have been used by terrorist groups to recruit new members and by the Russian state-led misinformation campaigns intended to influence the results of elections in the US and Europe (Tucker et al. 2017). Like the associations of de Tocqueville and Putnam, social media technologies can be used to promote both democratic and undemocratic ends.

These technologies have promised a radical expansion of the public sphere into digital space, as citizens can access an unprecedented amount of information and engage with one another en masse. However, a growing body of empirical work has documented the presence of online “echo chambers” (Garrett 2009; Sunstein 2018), as politically and culturally similar people congregate in spaces that reinforce their own beliefs and identities, rather than challenging them, although these concerns may be overstated (Bakshy, Messing, and Adamic 2015). As social media continue to become a central component of the public sphere, it is increasingly important for scholars to understand the conditions under which these technologies can foster democratic political participation and when they may pose threats to democracy (Davidson and Berezin 2018).

Political Culture Beyond the Nation State

The nation-state is the unit of analysis in the first sections of this chapter. The analytic unit is spatially and territorially bounded by the borders of national states whether the focus is culture-in-politics or politics-in-culture. This section shifts to public and collective phenomena that exist beyond the traditional borders of national states and are political in practice. Globalization is the rubric that often covers the process of transnational phenomena. Scholars who study globalization often reference findings that John Meyer and his students disseminated in a series of research articles on cultural diffusion (e.g., Meyer et al. 1997). Theories of globalization (Archibugi 2000; Held and McGrew 2007) as well as empirical research (Appadurai 1996) often focus on economic issues – namely, the homogenization of production and consumption practices (Kaufman and Patterson 2005). But, markets and goods are not the only entities that cross global borders. Environmental issues endemic to climate change are global. Natural phenomena such as microbes and disease in the form of epidemics (Baldwin 1999) cross borders. However, natural phenomena are beyond the scope of this chapter. Social movements also cross borders (Keck and Sikkink 1998; Tarrow 2005). They rarely become institutionally embedded and, if and when they do, they can no longer be labelled movements.
Religion and human rights are cultural and political phenomena that are global in scope. Religions are mental repositories of deep culture (Geertz 1968). The meaning of personhood is constitutive of human rights, making it a cultural phenomenon (Beitz 2001). Religion and human rights are political because extra-territorial or transnational institutions govern them.

Religion and human rights transcend national borders in different ways. Religion creates a community of shared meaning that transcends nationalism yet religious groups and institutions reside in national states. Doctrinal beliefs tend to be otherworldly whether one practices a religion or not. Human rights are based upon a secular community of shared meanings that valorize personhood. The ontology of universal humanity transcends national identity (Moyn 2015). The institutional bases of religion and human rights differ from those of the nation-state. Legal codes (e.g., Canon law) undergird religion and the organizational bases of world religions are older than the institutional framework of nation-states (Herzog 2018). The legal structure of human rights lies in international treaties (Koskenniemi 2001) and accords. Human rights governance and enforcement lies within international institutions such as the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg and the United Nations International Court of Justice in the Hague.

In the “Social Psychology of World Religions,” Weber (1958) analogizes religion to a railway switchman that sets a society on a “deep cultural” path. Weber’s Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism (1992 [1904–1905]) reinforces the “deep culture” of religion as it demonstrates how ascetic Protestantism is the core cultural assumption behind modern capitalism. The key point that Weber illuminates is that one does not need to either practice a religion or believe in its doctrines for religious framing to give meaning to social, economic, and political life. Huntington (1993) reframed Weber’s thesis as an interplay between civilization and religion which he described as a “clash of civilizations.” Huntington’s basic argument is that in the post–Cold War period territorial conflict will recede and cultural conflict embedded in transterritorial cultural systems will become the norm.

Huntington defines civilization as the “totality” of cultural practices, which even transcends common language. According to Huntington, religion is a prime mover of “civilizational consciousness” and future geopolitical clashes will not only be over territory and economic power but also over the promulgation of values. Huntington argues that the notion of universalism – ironically, the type of idea that humans rights is predicated upon – is a peculiarly Western idea that he claims is “directly at odds with the particularism of most Asian societies and their emphasis on what distinguishes one people from another” (1993: 40).

When Huntington’s Foreign Affairs article on this subject was published, his ideas were described as reactionary and discriminatory. Citizen struggles over democracy in the Middle East, the rise of terrorism, Al-Qaeda, and ISIS have forced a reevaluation of Huntington. In 1993, secularism was an undebated
component of Western national political practice. In both Europe and the United States, the separation of church and state is a hallmark of modern political organization. In Europe, nation-state formation was secular and it aimed to break the moral authority of religion and replace it with the moral and legal authority of the state. In practice, this meant controlling the power of the Catholic Church. Grzymała-Busse (2015) suggests that the marginalization of churches through law in some national instances enabled them to wield “soft power.” In European secular societies, state religions, for example in England or in Sweden, coexisted with laws that carved out a specific place for religion, such as the 1905 French law on laïcité.

The European strategy of religious incorporation through law underscores the challenge that multiculturalism poses to European national cultures (Chin 2017; Joppke and Torpey 2013). Since the advent of the millennium, struggles over incorporation of non-Western religions, particularly Islam, have dominated European political practice and public discourse. Controversies around the headscarf in France (Bowen 2007), Danish cartoons (Klausen 2010), and murder of Theo van Gogh (Buruma 2006) underscore not only the fraught nature of cultural diversity but also its capacity to generate violence. The full story of the terror events of the last few years in Europe has not yet been written but scholars are beginning to address the political cultural impact of these events (e.g., Faucher and Boussaguet 2018; Todd 2015).

In contrast to Europe, the First Amendment to the United States Constitution guarantees that there will be no established or state church. This enshrined legal separation of church and state contributes to what Bellah (2006 [1967]) describes as “civil religion” and American religious exceptionalism. Civil religion created an American commitment to “religion in general” and a “genuine vehicle of national religious self-understanding” (2006: 233). American politicians are unique in their constant invoking of the deity. America is the only nation-state that has never elected an atheist as president. In short, “civil religion” is a part of the “deep culture” of American political life. Gorski (2017) has recently extended Bellah’s ideas in his discussion of what he terms an “American covenant.”

Historians have written extensively on human rights (e.g., Hunt 2007), as have political theorists (Benhabib 2008). Political sociologists while slower to enter this area have produced a number of empirical studies – among them Heger Boyle (2002) on female genital cutting, Kurasawa (2007) on global justice movements, Stamatov (2013) on religion and empire, and Bhabha (2014) on child migration. Human rights and religion come together in the concept of security. Rothschild (1995) explores the nature of transnational security and asks how we might understand safety in a world that transcends territory. Global terrorist attacks highlight the transterritoriality of security. Kastoryano (2015) brings together religion, human rights, and security in her work on the burial of Jihadis. Studying terrorist events from the 2001 World Trade Center bombing to the Friday night attack in Paris in 2015, Kastoryano
explores the question of who has the right to claim a terrorist’s body. Her research shows that the claim to the body raises issues of religious practice, national identity, and the human right to burial.

CONCLUSION

The territorial and legal dimensions of the nation-state as a location of collective meaning are the organizational frame of this chapter. Going forward, there are multiple research streams that political and cultural sociologists might pursue. First, is the nation-state really an obsolete form of political arrangement? What would be the location and meaning of culture and politics if the world becomes truly global and the nation-state is transcended? New studies on the sociology of empire (Kumar 2017; Steinmetz 2014) might give us purchase on that question. The current resurgence of nationalism and populism in Europe and the United States as well as the political authoritarianism that accompanies them suggest a research avenue in which to consider questions of nationalism and collective identity. Second, political practices are becoming more creative and extending beyond the voting booth. Movements such as Occupy in the United States and a range of insurgent movements in Europe suggest that political voice is increasingly being practiced in a range of arenas that sociologists should explore. Lastly, political cultural sociology needs to harness a whole range of “big data” techniques such as web scraping, machine learning, and natural language processing to bring new evidence to provide the kinds of understandings that we seek.

Politics and culture are interdisciplinary and cover multiple topics, methodologies, and subareas. This chapter has developed an analytic framework that aims to pull together a range of topics. Now that scholars acknowledge the importance of culture to political analysis, the challenge that we face is how to provide theoretically sound and empirically rich studies that explore the intersection of the political and the cultural in a variety of fields. Political sociologists have accomplished much in the last 20 years, but there certainly remains more to do.

REFERENCES


I. Theories of Political Sociology


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What can postcolonial theory teach us about politics and society? Part of that depends upon what “postcolonial theory” is. First and foremost, it must be clarified that postcolonial theory is not reducible to a singular “theory” in the conventional sense. It is not a set of ordered hypotheses about the social world or a “singular logically integrated causal explanation” (Calhoun 1995: 5). It is not concerned with meeting Homans’ requirement that “causal explanation” constitutes theory (Homans 1964). While it might include certain causal statements, postcolonial theory is not restricted to them. Postcolonial theory is better thought of as a perspective or worldview. To draw from Abend’s definition of theory, it is a “Weltanschauung, that is, an overall perspective from which one sees and interprets the world” (Abend 2008). From this perspective, one might derive hypothetical causal statements. But postcolonial social theory is more akin to Marxist theory, feminist theory, post-structuralism or queer theory: a particular way among others of looking at the social world. This way of looking is one that sees the world in terms of colonial relations and their legacies, much in the same way that Marxist theory sees the world in terms of capitalism, feminist theory in terms of gender, or queer theory in terms of sexuality. It is a way of looking at the world that recognizes that social forms, relations, social knowledge, and culture generally are embedded within and shaped by a history and structure of global hierarchy and relations of power. Postcolonial theory, in short, helps us recognize that empire and colonialism matter.

In this sense, we can already begin to foresee how postcolonial theory might speak to the concerns of political sociology. As it stresses the importance of empire and colonialism, it would likewise urge us to think about politics as involving more than domestic electoral politics or social movements within any given country but rather the wider imperial relations that have historically shaped those processes – relations whose imprint upon politics persists today. Yet, postcolonial theory invites us to do more than this. Postcolonial theory is
also an epistemic critique, and here is where its insights are potentially more disturbing. While it invites us to recognize that societies are embedded in and shaped by wider imperial and colonial relations, by the same token postcolonial theory urges us to recognize that formations of knowledge – including knowledge produced by the social sciences – are also embedded in and shaped by empire. At its most extreme, postcolonial theory would have us critique sociology itself for its imperial origins and worldview.

To better understand this, I begin below with a discussion of the lineage of postcolonial theory and outline its key points. I show that postcolonial theory has come in two main “waves” of thinking and writing in the twentieth century. I also highlight its main contributions to the academic intellectual landscape. I proceed to chart the lessons of postcolonial theory for political sociology. Broadly speaking, the lessons are twofold. First, postcolonial theory highlights some of the analytic blind spots of existing theory and research in political sociology – foremost, its latent Orientalism, its “analytic bifurcations,” and its “metrocentrism.” Second, postcolonial theory offers concepts, or categories, for developing a political sociology that is sensitive to the postcolonial critique, thereby overcoming these analytic limitations.

UNDERSTANDING “POSTCOLONIAL THEORY”

The scholarly work in North America that goes under the sign “postcolonial theory” (aka “postcolonial studies” or “postcolonial thought”) today partly originates in the academic humanities. It has been a major intellectual trend in English departments, adjacent disciplines, and political philosophy and history, led by such writers as Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak, Homi Bhabha, the Subaltern Studies school and proponents like Dipesh Chakrabarty, among many others. A related version, albeit with somewhat different foci and inflections, is the “decolonial” approach to knowledge that has come from critical philosophy and Latin American studies. This is seen in the work of such key figures as Aníbal Quijano (2000), Walter Mignolo (2009), and Santos (2014). But it has an earlier and seminal incarnation in the anticolonial thought of such writers as Frantz Fanon (1925–1961), Aimé Césaire (1913–2008), Amílcar Cabral (1924–1973), C. L. R. James (1901–1989), and W. E. B. Du Bois (1868–1963) among others. This “first wave” then set the basis for the later “second wave” of postcolonial theory in the humanities that emerged in the North American academy.¹

First-wave postcolonial theory is different from the second wave in several respects. First-wave writers were mostly anticolonial activists who moved in and out of the academy (or did not enter the academy at all). Part of the rising

¹ For purposes of this chapter I will discuss the North American literature wing of postcolonial theory rather than the “decolonial” school in philosophy and Latin American studies. For further discussion of the latter in relation to sociology, see Bortoluci and Jansen (2013).
anticolonial nationalist movements of the twentieth century, some even took prominent leading roles in those movements. Amilcar Cabral, until his assassination in 1973, led the guerrilla movement in Portuguese Guinea against Portuguese rule in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Frantz Fanon was a member of the Algerian National Liberation Front. By stark contrast, the second wave was mostly academic. Though inspired by first-wave thinkers, it was confined to battles in universities. Whereas the first wave’s immediate goal was political overthrow, the second wave’s immediate goal was academic overthrow, posing a challenge to certain intellectual trends in the academic humanities.

But what is all of this thinking and writing about? What did these waves share such that they constitute a single lineage? Despite the differences between the two waves, there are indeed common themes, underlying concerns, and shared coordinates. The very term “postcolonial” is suggestive of these similarities. The term “postcolonial” not only refers to the historical phase or period after decolonization. It also refers to a relational position or stance against colonialism and beyond it Lazarus (2011: 11). Leela Gandhi (1998: 4) characterizes postcolonial studies as “a disciplinary project devoted to the academic task of revising, remembering and, crucially, interrogating the colonial past” in order to transcend the legacies of that colonial past. In “its therapeutic retrieval of the colonial past, postcolonialism needs to define itself as an area of study which is willing not only to make, but also to gain, theoretical sense out of that past” (Gandhi 1998: 5).

The premises of postcolonial theory must therefore be clear. First, empire, and related processes of colonialism and imperialism, have been central to the making of modern societies. By the early twentieth century, nine-tenths of the globe had been occupied by imperial powers and their colonies (Young 2001: 2). Nearly every society in the world today is either a former colony of another society or a former imperial power. And modernity itself is the product of imperial relations. It is not only that the industrial wealth of Anglo-European societies was made possible through imperial expansion and accumulation overseas; it is also the case that other crucial aspects of the “modern” – techniques of value extraction, labor control, discipline, policing, and surveillance, modern systems of sanitation, health, and imprisonment, and the very idea of the “modern” itself – were initially deployed and developed (if not invented) in overseas colonies or through imperial relations.3

The second related premise is that while the modern empires were finally dismantled by the 1960s, their legacies remain. Global inequalities reflect the inequalities first forged by colonialism: the countries that were comparably the wealthiest 200 years ago are still at the top, while those who were colonized

3 For debates about the term “postcolonial” in the humanities see Shohat (1992).
3 The literature on this is large, but early insights came from Rabinow (1989) and Mintz (1986).
remain at the bottom. And in metropoles around the world, from the sunny streets of Los Angeles to the arid lands of central Spain, or the damp recesses of London, immigrants from the metropole’s former colonies remain in abject subjection. Full citizenship rights remain out of their reach just as it had been for many of their great-grandparents when they were subjects, not citizens, of empire. Meanwhile, other legacies persist. Separatist movements from the Southern Philippines to Quebec, calls for regional autonomy from Hawaii or Catalonia, and antiracist struggles in Copenhagen and Brooklyn continue, all fighting the remains of prior colonial divisions. And everywhere, indigenous peoples proclaim rights upon postcolonial states, sharing an identity of prior colonization and dispossession, even as the nativist stances they adopt are partly legacies of colonial discourse. In any case, imperialistic aggression has not subsided; neo-imperial formations are forged and reproduced in the present moment.

Postcolonial theory is a body of thought that attempts to take these imperial processes and patterns into account: to recognize their importance, examine their making and unmaking, and uncover their legacies. This, of course, is a task that some strands of Marxist thought had also set its sights on, as it has generated important analyses of imperialism and colonialism too (Brewer 1990). Marxist theories of imperialism since Lenin, the Latin American dependency school, and Wallerstein’s world-systems analysis (1974, 1980, 2004) all come to mind as forerunners in the critical analysis of imperialism, colonialism, and their legacies. And postcolonial thinkers were heavily influenced by Marxist thought. Du Bois, Fanon, Césaire, Cabral, and others: they all read Marx or Marxist writers, deployed Marxist ideas in their writings, and they affiliated with communist or socialist political parties.

So what is different about postcolonial theory? Postcolonial theory’s focus is not the same as that of Marxist critiques of imperialism. The focus, broadly speaking, is upon the “culture” of empire or the “imperial episteme”: the entire discursive, ideological, and psychological processes and forms that emerged with, facilitated, and perpetuated imperialism. For instance, while Frantz Fanon wrote of colonialism’s economic exploitation, he also uniquely highlighted the role of colonial ethnographies and psychiatry, along with their racial categories, in shaping and aiding French colonialism. He also theorized the psychological impact of colonialism upon both colonizer and colonized (Fanon 1967 [1952], 1968 [1961]). Second-wave postcolonial theorists took up similar interests. Edward Said’s Orientalism, one of the founding texts of the second wave of postcolonial theory, manifests this. Said argued that Marxist stories of imperialism overlooked “the privileged role of culture in the modern imperial experience” (1993: 5). Orientalism accordingly unearthed how epistemic structures representing the Orient (as regressive, static, singular) served to support Western imperialism (Said 1979). Rather than epiphenomenal or a

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4 The rising wealth of India is an exception that proves the rule.
sideshow to imperialism, such Orientalist knowledge facilitated and enabled it in the first place.

Other lines of second-wave theory continued along the exact same vein, yielding a subfield of study known as “colonial discourse analysis.” This subfield extended Said’s initial interest in representation and meaning, cataloging how colonizers or imperialists constructed and classified colonized groups, identifying the multiple tropes involved in such representations, and theorizing colonial discourse’s “ambivalent” or “hybrid” character, and their multifarious effects (Bhabha 1994: 82; Parry 1987; Williams and Chrisman 1994). And all of these and other works emphasized how racial difference was crucial for colonialism and how traditional Marxist analyses downplayed race and overlooked the experiences of racialized subjugation. Aimé Césaire’s resignation from the French Communist Party in 1956 was motivated exactly by this critique of traditional Marxism. In his resignation letter, Césaire wrote that, because he was “a man of color,” he occupied a particular subject-position reflecting a “situation in the world that cannot be confused with any other . . . problems that cannot be reduced to any other problem . . . [and] of a history constructed out of terrible misadventures that belong to no other” (Césaire 2010 [1956]: 147). In other words, the Marxist theory embodied in the Communist Party was problematically reluctant to deal with the specificity of the colonial situation, instead absorbing it into its homogenizing categories:

The colonial question cannot be treated as a subsidiary part of some more important global matter, as part over which deals can be arranged or upon which others patch up compromises they think they have a right to seek in the name of an overall situation which they retain the exclusive right to interpret . . . our colonialism, the struggle of coloured people against racism, is much more complex, indeed, it is of a totally different nature than the struggle of the French workers against French capitalism, and cannot in any case be considered a part, as a fragment, of that struggle. (Césaire 2010 [1956]: 147)

In sum, what distinguishes postcolonial thought from conventional Marxism is its focus upon the multidimensional aspects of imperialism, including the role of racism, culture, and knowledge in general. Postcolonial theory uniquely inaugurates the analysis of empire and colonialism not just as an economic project as involving discursive, ideological, and epistemic processes as well as economic exploitation – a matter of racism, meanings, identities, and symbols or signs as well as logics of primitive accumulation or direct political domination. It is exactly such a focus that Marxist thought would be reluctant to countenance, as Marxist criticisms of postcolonial theory reveal (Ahmad 1994; Chibber 2013).

The analytic and critical target of postcolonial theory, however, is in fact wider than Orientalist representations or racialized discourses. It includes not only official imperial discourses or knowledge, but also novels or art forms wherein the imperial unconscious is inscribed almost imperceptibly. It includes all types of discourses, cultural schemas, representations, and ideologies that are part and
parcel of Western imperialism – whether embodied in everyday discourse, novels, works of art, scientific tracts, or ethnographies. This includes “knowledge” itself; for, related to its premise that empire is constitutive of modernity is its recognition that empire is also constitutive of the ways we perceive and understand the world. Therefore, from the perspective of postcolonial theory, the culture of empire penetrates deep, constituting an entire imperial episteme encompassing even seemingly “objective” forms of knowledge, like science. First-wave postcolonial writers like W. E. B. Du Bois and Amilcar Cabral were the first to point out this, long before Edward Said (or Foucault before him). They highlighted that social scientific knowledge and various streams of European philosophy had been essential for imperial domination (Cabral 1974: 58–59; Du Bois 1944). As Robert Young puts it, postcolonial studies here joins in the postmodern claim “that all knowledge may be variously contaminated, implicated in its very formal or ‘objective’ structures” (1990: 11). Therefore, postcolonial theory is not only about understanding the material effects of empire upon the present; it also mounts a “radical challenge to the political and conceptual structures of the systems on which [imperial] domination had been based” (Young 2001: 60, emphasis added).

But what exactly characterizes this imperial episteme? On the one hand, postcolonial writers target racialized and “Orientalist” modes of thought or representations that aided and authorized imperial domination. These, which often had to do with race or cultural essentialization, are the obvious elements of the culture of empire targeted by postcolonial theory. But there are other elements and epistemic operations that have attracted attention too.

One is what Said calls the “law of division,” a form of binary thought that effaces the role of the margins in constituting the core, that is, overlooks the relationality of social objects, identities, and social processes. This is part of Orientalist discourse but its more specific operation – in Said’s words – is to construct “an ‘us’ and a ‘them’” whereby each side is presumably “settled, clear, unassailably self-evident” (1979: xxviii). In other words, the law of division fails to recognize mutual constitution. First-wave writers like Césaire noticed this too, criticizing Europe’s self-conception as a self-contained agent untouched by its imperial peripheries. Césaire traced instead how colonizer and colonized, East and West, metropole and periphery were mutually implicated and socially constituted in relation to each other (Césaire 2000 [1955]). Fanon thus theorized colonialism as a mutually constitutive social

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5 In Said’s words, Orientalism includes “all those practices, like the arts of description, communication and representation” that are relatively autonomous from the “economic, social and political realms” and which thereby include “the popular stock of lore about distant parts of the world and specialized knowledge available in such learned disciplines as ethnography, historiography, philology, sociology, and literary history” and with it cultural forms like the novel (Said 1993: xii).
force that shaped the identities and self-understandings of the colonizer as well as the colonized – including their very notion of racial difference. Blackness is only the product of whiteness and vice versa (Fanon 1967 [1952]: 110, 1968 [1961]). Later, Said argued similarly that it was through Orientalist discourses that “Europe” or the “West” was also invented. “The Orient is not only adjacent to Europe, the Orient has helped to define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience” (1979: 2, emphasis added). The problem is that the culture of empire denies these mutually constitutive relationships. It instead inscribes and naturalizes social divisions between Us and Them, colonizer and colonized, East and West. The “law of division,” Said laments, “has become the hallmark of imperialist cultures” and, more disturbingly, has even penetrated the colonized’s consciousness too (Said 1993: xxviii, 36).

Another aspect of the imperial episteme pinpointed by postcolonial studies is the occlusion of subaltern agency. Du Bois criticized mainstream historiography for writing Africa out of world history (Du Bois 1915). C. L. R. James opined the way in which Africans were mischaracterized in conventional historical texts. “The only place where Negroes did not revolt,” he wrote, “is in the pages of capitalist historians” (James 1989 [1963]: 77). First-wave writers thus sought to remedy this by capturing the colonized people’s own voice, disclosing how colonialism – with all of its brutality, racism, and exploitation – was actually experienced by those subjected to its palpable and pernicious power (Young 2001: 274). As W. E. B. Du Bois (1994 [1903]) queried in The Souls of Black Folk: “How does it feel to be a problem?” Similarly, Frantz Fanon bore witness to the racial experiences of imperial subjecthood. Fanon’s first major and largely autobiographical work, Black Skin, White Masks, offered up the standpoint of a Caribbean colonial subject traveling to France and his experience of racism (Fanon 1965, 1967 [1952], 1968 [1961]). The Subaltern Studies variant of postcolonial theory also addressed the problem of agency, challenging conventional histories of India for effacing the role of peasants and other marginalized groups from their narratives. The very rationale of the Subaltern Studies project was to overcome this problem. “We are indeed opposed,” wrote Ranajit Guha, “to much of the prevailing academic practice in historiography . . . for its failure to acknowledge the subaltern as the maker of his own destiny. This critique lies at the very heart of our project” (Guha 1984: vii). Just as first-wave writers sought to capture the colonized’s experiences, so did Subaltern Studies seek to recapture the agency of the repressed.6

Related to this occlusion of subaltern agency is a third aspect of imperial culture targeted by postcolonial theory: Eurocentric universalism or metrocentrism. This is the transposition of narratives and categories derived

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6 Similarly, though Said’s work started out as an analysis of Orientalist discourse, his later work (like Culture and Imperialism) examined anti-imperial resistance (Said 1993).
from the standpoint of Anglo-European metropoles to the rest of the world. Dipesh Chakrabarty questions “historicism” in the dominant historiography of India by which historical narratives based upon European modernity are universalized to other societies. By this operation, India figures as lacking, as inferior, mired in “tradition” and “superstition” as opposed to European Reason and Progress: a “backwards” culture and “incomplete” modernity (Chakrabarty 2000: 8). By such moves, historical narratives are not only homologous but also complicit with imperial power, occluding Indians’ agency and experiences and instead inviting imperialism – or at least intervention, improvement, or the intercession of the modern while heralding moderns and metropolitans (read: “Westerners”) as superior (Chakrabarty 2002: 24). And Chakrabarty does not excuse Marxist thought. Here we see again where postcolonial theory diverges from Marxism. Starting out as a labor historian, Chakrabarty came to see that transposing Marx’s categories to India was problematic because, just like standard historiographies of India, they rely upon categories like “premodern” and “modern” or “precapitalist” and “capitalist,” which inserts Indian history into a presumed universal template of European history (Chakrabarty 2002: 14–15).

In sum, whether questioning Orientalism, Eurocentrism, or binary thinking postcolonial theory aims to interrogate all the “impressive ideological formations” and “forms of knowledge affiliated with [colonial domination]” (Said 1993: 9). Still, the point of critiquing the imperial episteme is not to just denounce past wrongs. Postcolonial theory examines colonialism’s multifaceted character – its epistemic bases, discursive operations, and cultural effects – “only to the extent that [colonial] history has determined the configurations and power structures of the present” (Young 2001: 4). The premise is this: while political decolonization indeed happened, it did not bring equality between metropolitan and ex-colonial countries, nor did it bring a decolonization of consciousness or culture. The culture of imperialism persists. Hence postcolonial theory’s overriding and pressing charge: to seek out if not produce new and different sorts of knowledge to help decolonize consciousness. Postcolonial theory grapples with colonialism’s legacies and seeks alternative representations or knowledge that do not fall prey to colonialist knowledge’s misrepresentations and epistemic violence. This is why it is labeled post-colonial theory: it seeks theories (knowledges), ways of representing the world, and histories that critique rather than authorize or sustain imperialisitc ways of knowing. Postcolonial theory seeks to elaborate “theoretical structures that contest the previous dominant western ways of seeing things” (Young 2003: 4).

Postcolonial theory’s emphasis upon culture, knowledge, and representation partially explains the theory’s growth within the humanities. If imperialism is also about culture, then cultural expertise is necessary for critiquing it.
POLITICAL SOCIOLOGY THROUGH A POSTCOLONIAL LENS

What does any of this mean for the sociological study of politics and society? To be clear, postcolonial theory’s implication is not just that sociologists should study empire and colonialism. One can still study empire and colonialism from the standpoint of the imperial episteme. Nor is it just about race or culture – both of which can also be easily examined from a colonialist perspective. The implications are different. First, postcolonial theory offers a way to reconsider if not critique extant sociological theory and research for how it reproduces rather than contests the imperial episteme. That is, it can highlight analytic blind spots or tendencies in sociological thinking on politics that are legacies of imperial culture. Second, postcolonial theory can help us develop analyses of politics and society that transcend these limits of the imperial episteme, thereby contributing to a postcolonial political sociology.

The first analytic tendency in political sociology which postcolonial theory would alert us to is persistent Orientalism. Just as Said’s *Orientalism* unpacked the stereotypes of backwardness and stagnation produced by the West of the East, so would postcolonial social theory question sociological theory for similar stereotypes. By now, it is well known that the canonical sociological theorists of Marx, Weber, and Durkheim operated from Orientalist assumptions. They portrayed non-Western societies as static and backward, hence reserving dynamism, social creativity and energy, and enlightenment for European societies alone – for example the common term Weber used to describe India is “absence” (Magubane 2005: 94).8

Said (1979: 153–156, 259) himself discussed these strands of thought in Marx’s work and in Weber’s work (see also Howe 2007). But in more recent analyses of politics by political sociologists and political scientists, Orientalist tendencies are evident too. One example among others is the discourse on “failed states.” This discourse is remarkably akin to Weberian classifications of India as little else than an “absence.” It classifies states that do not meet the valorized and historically constructed standard of some Western-based ideal as inferior, backward, and retrograde. This language of “failed states” of course carries an often unnoticed normativity. The classification of a state as “failed” invites foreign intervention that might “civilize” the backward state. But more importantly, the category “failed state” is an analytic failure, for it prevents us recognizing other forms of politics and state organization in those societies, such as local organizations or parties that take on the features of states in the absence of Western-styled states, or local forms of tribal leadership that mobilize resources just as states might (but which relatedly often get analytically reduced to “war-lordism”). All such practices, processes, or political forms are automatically occluded by the declarative and homogenizing category “failed state.”

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The second set of analytic tendencies in political sociology which postcolonial theory would alert us to can be described as “analytic bifurcation.” This is what Said calls the “law of division” but as it operates in sociological accounts. It is the tendency to separate, or explode into binaries, social relations that are not in fact separated. Note, for instance, that Durkheim’s (1984) theory of social solidarity was dependent upon colonialism: it was through data on so-called “primitive peoples” that he differentiated between organic and mechanical solidarity. But he never incorporated colonial societies as social types into his analysis – even though, in his time, most of the world’s societies were either imperial societies or colonized societies. Nor did he recognize how those very societies were interconnected: how, for instance, those societies that he called “organic” were actually industrial imperial societies whose very existence was shaped by if not dependent upon the colonial societies they ruled and whose so-called “mechanical” solidarity was kept intact deliberately for the purposes of colonial rule (e.g., through “indirect rule”). Durkheim instead sees “mechanical” societies as isolated spatially from colonialism, and temporally relegates them to the past. He bifurcates into two societies that were inextricably connected; hence cutting off vital social relations across space.

This same sort of bifurcation is evident in sociological works that overlook empire when discussing modern state formation; or rather, sociological works that do not overlook empire but nonetheless operate from questionable binaries. Take Charles Tilly’s magisterial work on state formation, Coercion, Capital, and European States (Tilly 1990). Tilly’s work is notable because he stands as one of the vanguards of historical sociology. Coercion, Capital, and European States is exemplary. As the best historical sociology does, it aims to explain key aspects of modernity; in this case, the formation of the nation-state or, as he calls them, “national states.” How did national states come to dominate the political imagination in the contemporary world? How did national states become the dominant form over other possible sociopolitical forms such as city-states and – yes indeed – empires? But from the postcolonial perspective, this promising start ends in disappointment. Some have criticized Tilly’s work for falling short because it focuses upon “European” states rather than other states, but this is really not the problem. The problem is how those so-called European states are conceptualized in the first place.

Tilly defines national states as “states governing contiguous regions and their cities by means of centralized, differentiated, and autonomous structures” (1990: 2). We anticipate, given this conceptual scheme, that Tilly will tell a story of how, around the mid-twentieth century, national states in Europe emerged from the ashes of European empire. After all, for most of the historical period Tilly covers, European states like Britain and France (which Tilly refers to as exemplary of national states) were not coercion-wielding organizations “governing contiguous regions and their cities by means of centralized, differentiated and autonomous structures.”
They were *empire-states*; coercion-wielding organizations governing expansive regions and cities with a hierarchy of citizen/subject at the core of the system. In the 1920s and 1930s, the British empire-state was at its territorial highpoint, encompassing more than 33 million miles of territory around the world, structured by various hierarchical political divisions and fragmented sovereignties. The French Empire encompassed over 12 million miles around the same time. These states only became truly national states later, after the Second World War.

Yet remarkably, this is not Tilly’s story. Tilly instead sees the “national state” winning out over “city-states, empires, theocracies, and many other forms of government” a century earlier, in the nineteenth century (1990: 23). How can this be? The problem lies in the bifurcation effected by Tilly’s understanding of states. He notes, for instance, that just as national states in Europe were emerging, they were also “creating empires beyond Europe, in the Americas, Africa, Asia and the Pacific” (1990: 167). He refers to these as “external empires” (1990: 167). In other words, Tilly’s theory posits an “internal” national state “inside” Europe and its “external” empire “outside Europe.” In Tilly’s model, there is a “European” national state and then there is imperialism and an overseas “empire.” There is a national state in Europe, exerting sovereignty over parts of Europe, and then there is, *over there*, an “empire” – as if the latter were an appendage irrelevant to the constitution of the former, as if the model of sovereignty had not been already forged in and by interactions with the periphery *out there*; as if there could realistically be such an easy distinction between “inside” and “outside.” But of course national states did not develop their ideas and practices about sovereignty first in Europe and then transpose them outward; they developed first amidst sixteenth-century colonial claims and disputes between empires about overseas territory (Branch 2012). And the so-called “external” colonies of Britain were not “outside” Britain: they were British. They were declared subject to the sovereignty of Britain – hence fully inside it. This is why the English crown fought, so hard and so often, to keep colonies within itself, suppressing the American Revolution in the 1770s or, for that matter, violently suppressing the Mau Mau Rebellion in the 1950s. And France’s colonies likewise were not “outside” of France: they were French. Hence France fought the bloody Algerian War in the 1950s to “keep Algeria French.” That was the mantra after all. Tilly’s model thus analytically bifurcates into distinct domains the “national state” and “empire” – “internal” and “external,” “inside” and ‘outside” – that were never really separated in practice.\(^\text{10}\)

\(^9\) An alternative sociological account of how the nation-state is born from empires, see Wimmer and Feinstein (2010).

\(^{10}\) And while Tilly places much emphasis on the role of “war-making” for state-making, most of the wars he pinpoints as critical were imperial wars or wars of conquest overseas, occurring either outside “Europe” or as wars for territory outside “Europe” (see Tilly 1990: 165–181).
This is just example of analytic bifurcation. And the point is not that such operations overlook a “truer” history. It is that they render questionable the very theoretical categories that we deploy in our sociological analyses. In Durkheim’s theory, are the colonial societies by which he theorized “mechanical solidarity” included in the “organic solidarity” presumably felt by the imperial metropole ruling them? In Tilly’s analysis, is the “national state” even a useful category when it is always also an “imperial” state? The pernicious persistence of the “law of division” lamented by Said in his critique of Orientalism exacts a high cost. It threatens to devalue and debilitate the analytic power of our analyses of politics and society.

The third analytic tendency that postcolonial theory alerts us to is metrocentrism. Metrocentrism here is akin to what Connell (2007) calls the “Northernness” of social theory. Connell argues that sociology is “Northern” in that it “embeds the viewpoints, perspectives and problems of metropolitan society, while presenting itself as universal knowledge” (2007: vii–viii). This universal pretension comes in the form of social theory’s abstraction or “context-free generalization,” where the source of generalization is provincial (2007: 196). Northern theory, Connell stresses, is generated within and for the metropole. It reflects the concerns and categories of a particular type of society – a metropolitan imperial society that has repeatedly ruled weaker societies.

Early sociological theories clearly suffered from this limitation: they posited a presumably universal template of development and theoretical categories based upon the experience of European metropoles and used them to understand everyone and everywhere else. The metropolitan West became the dominant “model system” for the entire world (Krause 2014). Had not Marx based his entire theory of capitalism upon the experience of white workers in England, who confront their employers in a situation of free wage labor? Marx developed his theory of value not from looking at slave labor on the colonial plantation but instead by looking behind the hidden abode of the English factory door. Cedric Robinson thus points out the provinciality of Marx’s theory: “The ‘masses’ whom Marx presumed would be ‘seized’ by theory were European male wage laborers and artisans in the metropoles of Western Europe, Britain and the United States” (Robinson 2000: xxviii). Automatically applying Marx’s categories and theory to other societies is a metrocentric analytic practice, ironically falling prey to the fetishism of which Marx had accused Adam Smith.11

More recent examples of metrocentrism include “state theory.” The “state” has been one of the dominant concerns of Anglo-European social science,

[11] Recall that, in Marx’s view, Adam Smith carried out a form of fetishism because he transposed the categories and theories specific to one society, capitalist society – such as those relating to rational actor-hood and Homo economicus or supply and demand – to all societies in the world, extending them back to precapitalist societies. Yet, it is also telling that Marx’s term “fetishism” derived from Europeans’ colonial encounters with Africans.
particularly in the subfields of historical sociology and comparative politics, at least since the 1970s and 1980s. Sociologists working in the Marxist tradition debated whether or not the state was an instrument of class rule or a structural complex representing, as Nicos Poulantzas (1978) argued, different class fractions. Peter Evans, Theda Skocpol, and their collaborators “brought the state back in” for understanding revolutions, welfare regimes, and economic development (Evans, Rueschemeyer, and Skocpol 1985); while various others focused upon state formation and war, culture, and religion and took the “state” to the study of all regions of the world, questioning its “autonomy” or its “capture.” All of this work thus looked outward from the North American and European metropoles to conceptualize “weak states” and “failed states.” All of social science, it seems, has ended up thinking about the state if not “seeing like a state” (Scott 1999).

But why? Does the “state” really warrant such attention? An argument can be made that while the state is surely an important aspect of modern social life, it has been overemphasized as an object of analysis in some sectors, if not fetishized; something that is not actually there except as an effect (Mitchell 1991). It is not even obvious why political scientists should theorize and study the “state.” Political scientists might instead focus upon “the government,” elections, or politics. These are all related to what has gone under the category “the state” but they are different analytic objects that arguably require alternative conceptual lenses. Surely they are no less important for modern political life than “the state.”

Yet, the focus on the state does make sense as the product of situated “Northern” knowledge: the product of distinct concerns among Anglo-European leftish scholars since the 1970s. Weber himself made the “state” a concern of course. And the “state” was a question in the Marxian political and intellectual tradition. But all of this so-called classical thinking on the state was summoned amidst and for particular purposes and projects. For instance, during the seemingly revolutionary tumult of the 1960s in the American and European metropoles, activists and scholars began taking an interest in the state as a problematic worthy of scholarly attention. Is it necessary to seize “the state” in order to effect a proper anticapitalist revolution? Or is the modern state an intrinsic part of capitalist modernity such that it too must be abolished entirely?12

Questions about the state also connected with questions about structure and agency that Anglo-European theorists were worried about: the latter partly embedded further questions about the individuals’ relationship to the state in modern societies (Giddens 1976). Meanwhile, liberals lamented the demise of the “welfare state” in the 1980s while accordingly seeking to understand how and why it emerged historically – or did not emerge – in the first place (Evans et al. 1985; Skocpol and Amenta 1986). The study of the state then became connected to the global development project that was formulated

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12 See Jessop’s account of the theoretical interest in the “state” in Jessop (1990: 2–3; 24).
in neo-imperial metropoles and their international organizational arms. If the “state” is “autonomous” enough to impact economic development, then maybe neoliberal policies should be rethought, and instead the “developmental state” should be promoted by the IMF or World Bank (at least to use as ideological fodder for the Cold War).

The concern of 1970s leftists reeling from the disappointment of ’68; the focus of liberals longing for new social policies; the worry of court historians and social scientists seeking the best policies to promote economic “development” in the then “Third World”: the state as an object of social scientific labor has a particular history, rooted in a specific Euro-American metropolitan context. Meanwhile, the peoples and societies of the Global South were visited by other things, other processes, other forces. In the wake of decolonization, they were faced with transnational corporations seeking to penetrate new fertile fields or otherwise dispossess them. They faced financiers from the Global North creating new transnational banks to whom they increasingly had to turn. The World Bank and the IMF first foisted infrastructural projects upon them and later demanded structural adjustment. Dictators propped up by the United States were maneuvering to fill the vacuum left behind by colonial regimes. The Nestlé corporation was busy selling baby formula to peasants. Nike began outsourcing to Asia. Food shortages and food riots in the wake of the “green revolution” proliferated. Debt accrued.

To be sure, an analysis of “the state” and the use of related concepts and theories peddled by metropolitan social science was and is useful for analyzing these forces, dynamics, and processes. They are all related to state functions and policies. But the issue is twofold.

First, even if we take “the state” to be a necessary concern for understanding dynamics and processes in colonial and postcolonial contexts, clearly the types of theories and related concepts generated by focusing upon Euro-American contexts would need to be problematized. The distinction between “civil society,” the “state,” and the “economy” (and the concept “state autonomy”) upon which theories of the state rely is itself provincial (Santos 2012). It is here ironic that some sociologists have leveled criticisms of Bourdieu’s theory of “the state nobility” (1996). In their critique, Bourdieu’s theory of the state is problematic because it is derived from the French experience only; and therefore not applicable to the United States or other European countries. But we hear less from these critics about how social science transposes state theory to the rest of the world.

Second, would not entirely different objects of analysis, and hence different concepts and theoretical problematics, be required, than “the state”? Why not alternative concepts capturing different social processes? As historical sociologists studied the historical development of the autonomy of the state, and as they drew upon Weberian concepts of rationalization and bureaucracy to do so, they did not examine state formation from the bottom-up as opposed to the top down. Focusing upon the dilemmas of state-making faced by state elites,
this work reproduced the standpoint of power, and so the viewpoint of those subjected to state power was left out of the picture (as was an entire range of social processes in the Global South to which the categories of state theory paid little mind). This is the sort of political sociology that W. E. B. Du Bois or Fanon would have lamented.

BEYOND THE LIMITS

Postcolonial theory is not only about critique. It can also be a springboard for formulating distinct approaches that might help us transcend these limitations. So how to proceed?

A number of sociologists have already begun the work of exploring imperial politics, empires, and the dynamics of colonialism (for a review, see Lachmann 2013: 56–71 and Steinmetz 2014). Some of this work, relatedly, has examined how imperialism and colonialism structure racialization (Jung 2015). While this work is rich and promising, it should be clear that studying empire is not necessarily the same thing as adopting a postcolonial approach to the study of empire. A postcolonial perspective means more than just “bringing empire in.” So what sorts of approaches inspired by postcolonial theory can reorient political sociology? Here I note different possibilities, each offering different solutions and addressing different issues. Below I briefly discuss two: postcolonial relationalism and the subaltern standpoint.

As for postcolonial relationalism, the idea here is straightforward enough: if one of the limits of conventional sociology is that it analytically bifurcates social relations and reproduces the imperial “law of division,” a postcolonial sociology should seek to better conceptualize and analytically reconnect those relations which have been covered up in standard sociological accounts. Edward Said’s insistence that postcolonial studies should attend to “overlapping territories” and “intertwined histories” offers initial insight into this strategy. Rather than assuming separation as the “law of division” does, Said suggests that we should construct narratives that are “common to men and women, whites and non-whites, dwellers in the metropolis and the peripheries, past as well as present and future.” It means recognizing that the “experiences of ruler and ruled [colonizer and colonized] were not so easily disentangled” (Said 2003, 1993: 20). This strategy also relates partly to the idea of “contrapuntal” analysis, which goes back to the Cuban writer Fernando

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13 Historians were more likely to engage in studies of the state that took local agency into account. See for instance Joseph and Nugent (1994). As for work on slavery, one exception is Orlando Patterson’s (1991) work on slavery, but too often this work is not considered part of historical sociology’s canon. Instead, the key scholars behind historical sociology are taken to be Skocpol, Mann, and Tilly.

14 Said noted that Fanon’s and Césaire’s work set the groundwork for this strategy (Said 2003).
Ortiz. For Ortiz, cultures are connected through mutually constitutive interactions rather than autonomous and separated (Ortiz 1995).

In analytic practice, deploying postcolonial relationalism would mean attention to the expansive relations in which any object of analysis is embedded. It also likewise recognizes that, often, those relations are *imperial* relations or legacies of colonialism. We would not, for instance, assume that the “states” we analyze in the nineteenth century are nation-states but recognize their imperial dimensions and reconfigure our concepts – and hence our research – accordingly. This relational principle would also apply to the study of “post-imperial” or “post-colonial” states or politics in such societies too. For example, if we insist upon studying “failed states,” we would need to reconsider that those presumably “failed” states are not isolated. They are typically embedded in wider relations that contribute to their “failure.” And many of these relations have to do with the history of colonialism and empire. Furthermore, we might consider how the discourse of “failed states” functions to impact the self-image of other states; how, for instance, classifying other states as “failed” perpetuates dichotomies between “success” and “failure.”

Or, take another example, when we inquire into the militarization of the police in the United States, postcolonial relationalism would insist that we should not presume that such militarization has happened only due to endogenous factors. We would bring to the forefront of our analysis the transnational or even imperial relations that have enabled such militarization in the first place. The Special Weapons and Tactics Teams (SWAT) that began in Los Angeles in 1967 and then spread throughout the rest of the United States, for instance, did not happen in a vacuum. It was a response to the Watts riots and the proliferation of urban “insurgencies” in African-American communities across the country. And one of the key innovators and proponents of such militarized police units in Los Angeles was John Nelson, a former marine, who had served in the elite Force Recon unit in Vietnam. Nelson modeled SWAT units after these military units concurrently operating in America’s war in Vietnam. Seeing the riots in Watts as a form of domestic “insurgency” akin to anticolonial revolutions in Africa or Vietnam, and hence requiring “counterinsurgency” operations, police officials like Nelson used imperial tactics against populations at home.

The point of recognizing the relations between militarization at home and imperial wars abroad is not only to orient us to new empirical data. That surely is important, but the larger point is that, with such an empirical reorientation, we can also begin to reconceptualize and retheorize. Given that the technologies, tactics, and techniques used to suppress Vietnamese anticolonialists are also deployed by police to suppress possible dissent in African-American communities, should we not reconceptualize what we mean by “policing” in the first place? And should we not also rethink the “state” itself, perhaps recognizing that the current American state still does not follow the theoretical
model of an isolated nation-state but rather is an imperial state that seeks to manage, control, or otherwise repress populations simultaneously at home and abroad (e.g., Go 2011; Jung 2015)? And should this not also help us to rethink how we conceptualize politics of protest and dissent against such a state, and the cross-ethnic, transnational alliances (e.g., between African Americans and populations abroad) that might be formed as a result? The principles of postcolonial relationalism applied to political sociology open up new analytic, and political, possibilities.

The other approach to help us reorient political sociology along postcolonial lines is what I call “the subaltern standpoint.” This approach is meant to overcome the problem of metrocentrism. The idea here is to start our sociological investigations not with categories and theories developed in, from, and for the standpoint of imperial power but to begin with analyses of the concerns and experiences of subjugated groups: to start “from below” rather than from the top.15 This is in fact how much of the first-wave postcolonial writers innovated. Consider the innovations of Frantz Fanon. One of them was to critically assess colonialism as a social system of racial exploitation and violence that impacted colonizer and colonized (Fanon 1968 [1961]). This was an innovation indeed: at the time of his writing, “colonialism” was not seen as an internal system in its own right; it had not been fully theorized as an object of social analysis. Understandings of colonialism had been mired in colonial ethnologies and administrative discourse that either occluded colonialism as a social object or only thought of it as a neutral expression of governance. But Fanon innovated. He theorized colonialism as a system in its own right that directly impacted social identities. This in turn enabled him to see the relational constructedness of racial categories and the colonizer and colonized’s own racial identities.

But how did Fanon begin? What was Fanon’s analytic entry? Fanon did not begin by transposing categories like “structure-agency” onto the colonial site. Nor did he begin by starting with the category of “the proletariat” based upon European experience. Fanon first drew from his own experiences and observations as a black subject of the French colonial empire. He famously describes his experience as a young man in France from Martinique when, on the train, a white boy looks at him and says to mother “Look, a Negro!” Throughout, Fanon indeed engaged with Marxist categories as well as those of Freud. He also referred to Sartre and other Parisian writers. But he did not begin analytically with these categories. He instead started from the standpoint of the racialized colonial subject: their activities, experiences, and perceptions: “What does the black man want?” (Fanon 1967 [1952]: xii). Just as feminist standpoint ethnographers, such as Dorothy Smith, begin with “people’s

15 The postcolonial approach to standpoint does not fall prey to charges of essentialism. It is about situated knowledges not essentialized identities. For more see Go (2016).
experience” and the “issues, concerns, or problems that are real for [them]” (Smith 1997: 32, 129), so does Fanon start with the lives of colonized subjects.16

This same approach can reorient our current studies of politics and society. If we do, in fact, want to analyze states or state policies, why not begin with how states impact the lives of dominated groups? How do peasants in the Global South, for instance, experience the state? Connell’s discussion of Australian Aboriginal peoples is useful here (2007: 206–207). For studying Australian aboriginal peoples, a subaltern standpoint approach would suggest that we should not start with questions of structure and agency, or with other concepts such as the “state.” We should start first with concrete examinations of life on the ground. In so doing, we might find that one of the things that characterizes the aboriginals’ experiences is dispossession from the land; a social process of removal and displacement that has often entailed violence. Indeed, for indigenous peoples around the world, whether First Nations people in Canada or Aborigines in Australia, being displaced from the land is probably one of the main modalities of engagement with the state. And their politics have followed directly: whereas subjugated groups like African Americans in the United States had mobilized around rights, partly because their subjugation has been rooted in the extraction of their labor (as slaves), indigenous peoples have mobilized around land issues. Yet, if we start with our conventional state categories – the “autonomy” of the state, the seizure of the state by the bourgeoisie, bureaucratization, etc. – these experiences and politics of dispossession might not appear on our analytic radar. According to Connell, this is probably why dispossession is “one of the most under-theorised concepts in social science” (2007: 206–207). It marks a subaltern experience that has been repressed and excluded by metrocentric sociology.

These approaches and examples are only one among other ways in which postcolonial theory can inform political sociology. Future work might pursue them through a variety of different cases. Future work might also develop different approaches for meeting the postcolonial critique. But in any event, the point would be to continuously question rather than take for granted the sociological categories, concerns, and theories bequeathed to us from social science’s imperial origins. The point would be to seek, and produce, alternative research and theory which can help untether the sociological imagination from the imperial episteme. In this way postcolonial theory urges us to shift our initial attention from political sociology per se to the politics of sociology; that is, to the politics of sociology’s own knowledge – and to do something about it.

16 As Young (2001) notes, Fanon’s analysis of colonialism and race from the subjective standpoint can be thought of as a larger movement in the colonial world of anticolonial thinkers to represent the colonized’s experiences. But note that Fanon’s standpoint approach does not relegate Fanon’s analysis to the realm of subjectivism. Starting with local experiences, Fanon worked analytically upward to theorize larger institutions and systems of colonial power, to theorize colonialism as a whole system.
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The concept of citizenships, in the plural, reflects different research traditions in citizenship theorizing: citizenship as legal status in a sovereign state, as a bearer of rights and obligations; citizenship as participation (civic republicanism); and citizenship as social membership. Each of these enhances the capabilities of individuals to become participants in political, economic, and social spheres of life. Citizennships as a concept also embraces practices: how these aspects of citizenship are experienced in everyday encounters and the relationships of power— in families, workplaces, welfare offices, social movements—and their variations in institutional contexts.

We focus on how gender has become more salient in theorizing across these citizenship domains, extending the boundaries of social membership and inclusion (Hobson and Lister 2002; Lister 2003). Implicit in the pluralizing of citizenships is the recognition of the need for a dynamic concept that engages with multidimensional aspects of gender, citizenships, and social memberships within, below, and beyond the state. This approach allows us to capture both the diversity in locations and situations of individuals and groups and the multiscalar structures of governance: by national and transnational institutions and actors, as well as the opportunities and constraints for social movements to transform them. Finally, this chapter engages with the theoretical terrain of intersectionalities, viewing gender through the lens of complex inequalities across age, citizenship/migrant status, class, ethnicity/race, region, religion, and their intersections. Throughout we engage with the dilemmas and challenges in theorizing gender, citizenships, and social memberships: if and how gender matters in the framing of citizenship and what processes shape social divisions and citizenship identities.

This chapter comprises two main sections and a concluding discussion. The first focuses on feminist theorizing within two main research traditions in citizenship theorizing. The first is social membership: T. H. Marshall’s
framework, its legacy in the welfare regime paradigm, and the dialogues on
gender, states, and citizenship that arose from them; second, civic republicanism
and participatory citizenship, addressing agency (citizenship in practice). In the
second section, we focus on the changing landscape of feminist theorizing on
citizenships emerging from critical analysis of men and masculinities,
postcolonial critical race theory, intersectionality, migration, and
transnationalism. We conclude with “Challenges, Dilemmas, and Debates,”
addressing the implications of these complexities and dilemmas and challenges
in gendered citizenships, in particular, the fragmentation in solidarities reflected
in the widening gap in capabilities and inequalities and polarization across
citizenship identities expressed in new forms of nationhood, nationalism, and
populism.

GENDERING THE MAIN FRAMES IN CITIZENSHIP THEORIZING

In this section, we outline some of the most important frames that have been
developed in gendering more mainstream approaches to citizenship. We
consider the gendering of social membership, welfare regimes, participatory
citizenship, before ending this part with three specific forms of claims and
frames, namely, those based on gender difference, universalism, and pluralism.

Gendering Social Membership and Citizenship

Because of the centrality of his work in citizenship dialogues, we begin with T. H
Marshall. His framework has offered conceptual space to incorporate gender
dimensions in a gender-neutral framework. Marshall defined social citizenship
“as a status bestowed on those who are full members of a community. All who
possess the status are equal with respect to the rights and duties with which the
status is endowed” (1950: 28–29). This gender-neutral formula did not explicitly
exclude women, but in an era when full membership in community assumed a
male breadwinner wage earner able to support a wife, social citizenship rights
were constructed around male citizens. In Marshall’s historical analysis of the
emergence of social citizenship, the working-class man armed with the right to
vote and mobilized in trade unions was a new category of citizen who required
new types of rights (Marshall 1950: 106). This account of the worker-citizen did
not embrace the rise of a new woman citizen and the gendered social rights being
claimed around widows’ pensions, maternal health, and aid to dependent
children, as well as protections against dismissal for employed married women
(Hobson and Lindholm 1997; Skocpol 1995). Nor did Marshall’s sequencing of
rights – evolving from civil, political, and social rights – recognize that for women
in many Western societies, access to social rights preceded the right to vote (Fraser
and Gordon 1994; Walby 1994).

Despite these androcentric assumptions, rooted in the Beveridge postwar era,
feminist theorists found that Marshall’s framework could provide fertile
ground for confronting histories of gendered exclusions and for redefining the borders of what it meant to have full membership in a community. First, Marshall’s concept of the active state was welcomed by some feminist scholars of gender, states and citizenship as an antidote to the negative state and negative rights in classical liberal theory and neoliberalism (Dietz 1992; Glendon 1991). Implicit in the notion of the active state was a recognition of the ways in which social rights were enabling for women’s greater participation in economic and political spheres. This aspect of Marshall’s framework spawned gender research on the women-friendly welfare state, a term coined by the political scientist Helga Hernes (1987), which underscored the linkages between the existence of social rights and a feminist politics from above and below that created opportunities for later extensions in social citizenship rights through participatory rights (Dahlerup 2003; Siim 2000).

Marshall’s holistic definition of citizenship as inclusion and membership propelled citizenship frameworks that Marshall could not have imagined: for instance, for sexual/intimate citizenships that embrace sexual orientations, body integrity, and reproductive rights (Plummer 2001; Shaver 1994). Here, the rights to have rights (Isin and Wood 1999: 4) can be the lynchpin in the exercise of rights. Without the social right to abortion, the civil right to abortion is attenuated, and access becomes stratified (Shaver 1994). To be accorded full membership, gay couples not only have sought civil rights of partnership and marriage, but also access to the entitlements of heterosexual couples: for example, pensions, parental leave benefits, and care leave. From this perspective, Marshall’s concept of social rights and membership is elastic and dynamic (Lister 2003), reworked and reinvigorated in struggles to extend the boundaries of citizenship for greater inclusion and justice.

Gendering Welfare Regimes

The gendering of welfare states coincided with a revival of Marshall’s legacy of social citizenship by the power resource school that reshaped welfare state theorizing and led to the emergence of a new paradigm: welfare regimes (Esping-Andersen 1990; Korpi 1989; see also Moller and Cai Chapter 31 in this volume). As was true in Marshall’s framework of citizenship rights, a male subject was assumed and class was privileged; however, in the power resource school, although gender was conspicuously absent from the concepts and clustering of regimes, feminist scholars recognized that there was an opening for dialogues on gender, state, and citizenships. The basic framework of the power resource theory elaborated in the welfare regime paradigm assumes that: (1) the state acts as a system of (class) stratification, and (2) the distribution of welfare reflects power resources among different actors governing the relations

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¹ With women’s greater participation in politics and policy in many countries, scholars have employed the concept of State Feminism to reveal these linkages (Mazur and McBride 2007).
between states and markets and families (the institutional triangle) (Esping-Andersen 1990), as this did not address differences within families.

The core concept in the welfare regime paradigm was decommodification (Esping-Andersen 1990): how social rights could free individuals from dependence on the market for his livelihood. This provoked a feminist response, but, more importantly, it produced a flowering of feminist research on the gendering of the welfare state. Even in 1990, when Esping-Andersen’s *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism* was published, the majority of women in the Western welfare states analyzed were not in the labor force. Feminist researchers argued that for many women, commodification could have a beneficial liberating effect by weakening women’s dependence on a male breadwinner wage (Lewis 1992; Orloff 1993), enhancing women’s civil rights by enabling them to exit untenable marriages (Hobson 1990). Feminist theorizing introduced a gender-sensitive dimension of social citizenship: the capacity to form an autonomous independent household (Orloff 1993: 319), extended in Lister’s concept of defamilialization as “The degree to which individuals can uphold a decent standard of living independently of family relationships, either through paid or social provisions” (1994: 37). This concept, elaborated further by feminist scholars, for example, O’Connor (1993; Saraceno and Keck 2011), who have offered alternatives to decommodification for evaluating social rights.

Feminist scholars challenged the assumption that states not only play a role in stratification by class by regulating markets and redistributing resources to families, but also that states stratify gender, redistributing resources within families around paid and unpaid work. A burgeoning of gendered regime typologies appeared in which women’s unpaid work in the family and the social rights for care work were at the forefront. These insights were incorporated into Lewis’ (1992) formulation of Gender Regimes, which revolved around the degree to which gendered policy logics and discourse could weaken or strengthen the male breadwinner, as ideal regime types that addressed how policy frameworks could mitigate or sustain lone mother poverty (Hobson 1994; Kilkey and Bradshaw 1999); Korpi (2000) incorporated a gender/class dimension with respect to how institutional configurations of welfare states shape women’s capabilities for employment and economic independence. In the book, *Making Men into Fathers*, Hobson and Morgan (2002) introduced a fatherhood regime typology, based upon variations in institutional arrangements across countries that shape the degree of tension between fathers’ obligations as economic providers, and fathers’ right to care. Fatherhood practices are embedded in power relations within the family, welfare state, and labor market institution. Sainsbury (1996) offered another typology for gendering of welfare state regimes, considering the degree of individualization in social citizenship rights, which implicitly challenged the notion of the family as a unit of shared interests (Hobson 1990).

Through feminist scholarship care has become a central category in welfare state analysis, revealing the dynamic relationships in the intersections of the state,
market, and family. How care is organized and financed (the private and public mix of care) formed the basis for care regime typologies (Anttonen and Sipilä 1990; Boje and Leira 2000). In their concept of social care, Daly and Lewis (2000) address the tensions and fragmentation in these relationships, often dichotomized in welfare regime literature: public and private, formal and informal, paid and unpaid, types of provision, cash and care services, all of which shape citizenship rights. The borders demarcating differences in care regimes have become less distinct in retrenched welfare states, as reflected in two processes signaling a weakening of social citizenship rights. First, the expansion of private markets in care services, sustained by low-waged migrant labor that has been occurring across welfare regime types (Hobson, Hellgren, and Serrano 2018; Shire 2015; Williams 2017). The second is the shifting of care obligations back to family members (more often women), particularly for caring for the elderly (van den Broek and Dykstra 2016), generating a new concept in gendering of the welfare state lexicon, refamilialization (Sareceno and Keck 2011).

Lister’s concept of defamilialization has accrued new meanings in a changing social landscape of women’s increased labor force, the declining level of male jobs (Hobson and Fahlén 2012), and the continuing importance of unpaid work in the family (Leon 2014). However, the class/gender dimension is missing in this discussion with respect to the types of jobs that will be created in the service sector (Kershaw 2012), since many of these jobs lack social rights, are part-time and precarious (Hobson et al. 2018; Lutz 2008; Shire 2015). Defamilialization has been mapped onto instrumental EU discourse for greater productivity through women’s employment, encapsulated in Lewis’ formulation of the adult worker model (1992), which denies gender differences in care responsibilities. This adaptation of Lister’s original meaning of defamilialization shades out a crucial attribute in the gendering of welfare regimes: that caregiving and social care represent a crucial dimension of citizenship, an activity to be valued itself, which has a profound impact on how we define citizenship rights (Deacon and Williams 2004; Knijn and Kremer 1997). The example of care, emotionality, and (inter)dependency in redefining citizenship is particularly instructive here, in alerting to the need for a reformulation of men’s relations to and of care (Scambor, Wojnicka, and Bergmann 2013).

Gendering the welfare regime paradigm has had an impact on theoretical and empirical research on the dimensions of social citizenship (Hobson and Lister 2002; Lewis 2009; Orloff 2009: 331). However, there has been growing skepticism among gender scholars on the value of this endeavor, in light of the changes in welfare states and convergences in neoliberal tendencies (Korpi, Ferrarini, and Englund 2013; Orloff 2009). Even the relevance of the welfare regime paradigm as a heuristic device has been disputed, with its grounding in the nation-state in an era of global

2 Along with many other scholars, Jenson (2015), analyzing the neoliberal shifts in economics and politics, argues that boundaries between public and private, and state, market, and community-based forms of welfare have become blurred.
capitalism and transnational institutions, delimiting the scope of states to defend the borders of social rights or the possibilities of individuals to claim them (Bonoli and Natalie 2012; Lewis 2009). Furthermore, the gendering of welfare states was focused on capitalist Western societies. For instance, one component of the concept of defamilialization – being able to live independently without relying on family members (or welfare provisioning) – has had little resonance in countries where the family has been a site of resistance to authoritarian regimes (Ferree 2000), as well as for black families in the racialized US welfare state (Mink 1999).

From the perspective of developing countries, scholars have questioned the applicability of the concepts in welfare regime theorizing of decommodification and defamilialization. Razavi and Staab (2018) argue that these concepts do not capture the complex ways in which family and work are organized in rural societies. Nor does the institutional triangle – that is, the interactions between state, market, and family – provide theoretical space for alternative sources of welfare beyond nation-states, for instance from global companies and actors. States with weak capacities for providing welfare may be dependent upon corporate contributions, particularly from global firms, and in some cases, this is mandatory (Backlund-Rambaree 2017). Also, the extensive outsourcing of services from Western welfare states to developing countries has made available employment for substantial numbers of women. Often these firms, both public and private, offer higher salaries than average in these countries, though with minimal benefits and few social protections in employment. Using the case of Indian women in the call center sector, Abraham (2010: 41) refers to this as an example of the transfiguration from social to market-oriented citizenship.

Participatory Citizenship

Moving from the structures shaping social membership and inclusion, we turn to theorizing participatory citizenship with its roots in civic republicanism. Though dating back to ancient Greece and the ideal of civic duty and the political obligations of the polity, its resurgence in twentieth-century democratic theories and frameworks, such as communitarianism and deliberative democracy, was a response to the need for creating a more active mobilized citizenry.

Some feminist scholars have expressed reservations about civic republicanism as a framework because of its emphasis on obligations, the duty to participate, as an aspect of communitarianism (Sevenhuijsen 1998). This aspect of civic participation opened the gates for attacks on welfare mothers as passive dependent citizens, which reflects a failure to understand that their caring work is work (Levitas 1998; Mink 1999). Participatory citizenship, the duty to participate embodied in civicness, should be understood in terms of women’s lack of resources, including time (since they bear the brunt of unpaid care work, money, and social networks) (Lister 2003; Stolle and Lewis 2002).
Along these same lines, feminist scholars have challenged Habermas’ (1990) formulation of deliberative democracy from the perspective of social and economic inequalities in societies. More privileged groups dominate this sphere, men more often than women, whose viewpoints may not be taken into account (Fraser 1997a; Young 2000). The barriers limiting participatory citizenship can cut across gender: the less educated often lack skills, experience, confidence, and capabilities to participate in deliberative democratic forums (Benhabib 1992; Bonvin, Laruffa, and Rosenstein 2018; Meehan 1995; Phillips 1995). Iris Young claims that subordinated groups, minorities, poor people, and women historically created “subaltern counter publics,” associational life that provides forums for its members to raise issues among themselves (Young 2000: 171–172). As Fraser has argued, “political democracy requires substantive social equality” (Fraser 1997b: 80).

Despite these caveats about the limits of civic republicanism as a framework for activating participatory citizenship, nevertheless it offered conceptual space for building women’s agency into theories of citizenship (Hobson and Lister 2002; Jones 1990; Siim 2000). In valorizing citizenship from below, politics with a small p, the notion of participatory citizenship broadened the meaning of the political, allowing for the incorporation of women’s politics (Hobson and Lister 2002) other than formal representation in parliament or political parties, venues where women often lack a critical mass. Citizenship from below could embrace many forms: participation in social movements, grassroots organizing through NGOS, and community service. Jones used the concept of citizenship as practice, defining it “as an action practiced by a people of certain identity in a specifiable locale” (1994: 261), promoting a sense of community. Grassroots mobilization from below has also been very important in some developing countries, where women have little or no influence or access to formal politics, for example in Latin America (Safa 1990).

Having said this, recent scholarship has underscored that the practice of citizenship is not necessarily limited to a bounded territory, but can involve different sites of communication and mobilization, a discursive space or platform, and a supranational political organization (Epstein and Fuchs 2017: 7). Not to be forgotten is that the agency in “acts of citizenship” (Isin and Nielsen 2008) can be practiced by those without full membership in the polity, where civic belonging embraces a shared sense of entitlement. Many historical examples exist of women mobilizing before they had the vote to expand social rights (Epstein and Fuchs 2017). A classic example is Skocpol’s (1995) account of women’s activism in the Progressive era, which shaped the foundations of US welfare. Women’s collective agency was mobilized through national federations of local women’s clubs, a process that involved collaboration with

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3 Janoski (1998: 28) focuses on workers’ councils as an example of participatory citizenship and politics from below (also see Folbre et al. 2018).
reform-minded professional women to spur legislation on pensions and maternal health.

Participatory citizenship was a discursive frame in women’s mobilizations in Sweden in the 1920s and 1930s to create a civic engagement among women (many of whom did not exercise their right to vote). Without representation in unions or political parties, organized women’s groups, which cut across party lines, gained influence and voice in policy-making in the early years of social democracy, claiming political space in the building the Folkhem (people’s home) (Hobson and Lindholm 1997).

Albeit, these examples of women’s civic engagement and participatory citizenship, feminist scholars have underscored the fact that structural and institutional constraints limit women’s agency in the political sphere (Tastsoglou and Dobrowolsky 2006), but also that active citizenship requires material conditions to enable women’s agency (Pettman 1999). Finally, within the context of women’s agency, a crucial point to be made is that activation of collective agency is intertwined with political opportunities and the recognition of claims for participation and voice are bounded by framing of citizenship in historical and sociopolitical contexts.

Claims and Frames

The representation of political gender identities in discourse and policy is a dimension of participatory citizenship that has generated a rich theoretical literature and a contested set of debates. These involve citizenship frames and claim structures that are linked to them as well as the political opportunities that they enable and disable. With respect to gender, two main frames have dominated the research terrain: should women’s claims of citizenship rights be framed (1) in terms of distinctiveness or difference or (2) within universalist frameworks for justice? Rather than advocating one or the other position, theorizing on the framing of citizenship has been cast in terms of dilemmas or tensions.

The pathbreaking work of Carole Pateman (1989) on the patriarchal welfare state captured the tensions in these two frames of citizenship, especially in her oft-quoted formulation of Wollstonecraft’s dilemma, referring back to that eighteenth-century feminist philosopher and women’s rights activist. For Pateman, women were presented with two routes to the ideals of citizenship as workers or carers: One route is based upon a universalistic gender-neutral social world connected to paid work. Here, women are considered as lesser men, since the norms have been built upon a male model. The other acknowledges women’s special talents, needs, and caring capacities that differ from those of men, whose citizenship is based on rights and duties attached to paid work. Given that women’s contribution as carers is undervalued, then they appear as lesser citizens. Wollstonecraft’s dilemma has been a point of departure for theorizing gendered citizenship: fleshed out, contested, and
reformulated. The consensus among most feminist scholars is that it is unresolvable, which Pateman (1989: 196) herself recognized.

In *Making All the Difference*, the legal theorist Martha Minow (1990) articulates the same zero-sum game in the dilemma of difference, specifically addressing frames and claims with respect to claims for maternal leave and racial discrimination, using examples from US legal cases. She argues that by emphasizing difference, we highlight deviance or stigma, but by ignoring it we leave in place all the problems that arise from a false neutrality. For Minnow, the dilemma is unresolvable, although in the practice of citizenship, strategic choices are made within different contexts. Carole Bacchi has elaborated this position most fully in her book *Same Difference* (1990). In that study, she highlights examples of how feminists have employed different strategies, emphasizing gender distinctiveness and gender neutrality at different moments in time and across societies.

Wollstonecraft’s two-horned dilemma has grown multiple appendages and layers of complexity. We elaborate some of these below focusing on three general citizenship frames that encapsulate tensions and debates in the dilemma of difference and pathways to move beyond them: claims based on, first, gender difference, then, universalism, and, finally, pluralism (Hobson and Lister 2002).

**Gender-Differentiated Citizenship**

Rooted in histories of maternalist movements and politics of the early twentieth century (Koven and Michel 1993), the gender-differentiated citizenship frame celebrates the private sphere as women’s domain to exert influence and compassion in public life, as well as validating women’s contributions and distinct voices as carers, protectors of children and vulnerable groups (Elshtain 1981; Werbner 1999). Seeking to go beyond maternalist feminism, which naturalizes women’s role as carer, and yet retains the moral force of care as guiding principle in social and political spheres, Tronto (1990) and others have put forward the ethic of care, counterpoised against the ethic of justice and rights (Dean 2009; Kittay 1999). This stance has been criticized for reproducing a similar rhetoric of “essentialized carers,” who are in practice gender-coded as women carers (Leira and Saraceno 2002). Another position is that a less gender-specific version of the ethic of care can exist within a universalistic frame of care as responsibility for all citizens, recognizing that gender and other inequalities are embedded within it (Sevenhuijsen 1998). More generally, scholars have argued that the gender-differentiated framing of citizenship leaves little room for women’s political agency to reset the imbalance in care work (Lister 2003) and denies men’s movements advocating their rights to be fathers as caregivers (Collier and Sheldon 2008; Hobson 2002). When coupled to conservative political movements, gender-differentiated citizenship has been harnessed by political actors to justify efforts to limit women’s participatory rights or counter women’s movements to expand participatory rights (Gal and Kligman 2000).
Universalism: Gender-Neutral Citizenship

There is a long tradition of feminist claims for equal rights and nondiscrimination, dating back to the Enlightenment when women’s difference meant exclusion and lesser value (Pateman 1989; Phillips 1991). The gender-neutral citizenship takes as its point of departure universalism in rights. However, when fitted into a male template, this reflects a false universalism, since it denies gender power differentials and inequalities (Hobson and Lister 2002: 22). Even those who envision a universalistic citizenship frame, where gender is irrelevant, recognize that this is not possible while the gender playing field is unequal (Phillips 1992). Embracing the universalist position, Moller Okin (1989) argued that gendered rights could be incorporated into Rawls’ theory of justice and the veil of ignorance that assumes we would construct a just world if we could imagine ourselves not knowing who or where we would be within it. Moller Okin provides us with a virtual image of this cognitive process in which judges asked to rule on rights for pregnancy leave, in the middle of their deliberations, grow enormous pregnant bellies. It is difficult to convert Rawls’ abstract exercise into the expansion of rights or the practice of citizenship (Sen 1993). However, there are examples where gender and other claims for inclusion have been articulated within the universalist frame of human rights, which resonate in Benhabib’s (1992) concept of feminist universalism.

One consequential example is women’s claims for inclusionary citizenship at the UN Beijing conference in 1995, which were made within the frame of human rights derived from the Convention for the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women in Europe (CEDAW 1979), which encompasses a broad framework to guarantee basic human rights and fundamental freedoms to women “on an equal basis with men” through the “political, social, economic, and cultural fields,” as well as specific health education and employment (CEDAW 1979). Sexual citizenship has been coupled with human rights, for instance, in the successful campaigns for gay marriage, most notably in Ireland.

Gender-Pluralist Citizenship

Gender-pluralist citizenship acknowledges the post-structural critique of collective agency (Butler 1990), but also embraces citizenships, collective agency, and pluralist politics. Going beyond the gendered binary, this framework affirms that women and men can be members of multiple groups and holders of multiple identities (Isin and Wood 1999; Lister 2011), as conveyed in frames that suggest the potential of pluralistic politics, such as solidarity in difference (Lister 1998), reflective solidarity (Dean 1996), and transversal politics (Yuval-Davis 1997).

The translation of these abstract concepts into the practice of citizenship in collective action and political arenas underscores the tensions within the frame of pluralist citizenship. One of these tensions is revealed in the hierarchies within social groups in which the very same groups that claim to represent them based on their group disadvantage can be their oppressors or fail to
address their grievances. This has been highlighted in the research on aboriginal women (Kymlicka 1995) and Muslim women (Yuval Davis 1997). Another underside of the pluralist frame has become visible with the amalgamation of claims of disadvantaged groups in national and transnational bureaucracies, which conceal the differences in power positionings and power resources to achieve political voice (Williams 2003; Woodward 2004). Whether the theoretical casing of the pluralist citizen or the frames of difference in solidarity or transversalism can resolve the dilemma of difference is a question that continues to be debated. Lister, who has written the core book on gender and citizenship, acknowledges the limits of the pluralist frame: that it deprives us of citizenship’s function as a universal yardstick against which marginalized groups can measure their progress toward full inclusion (Lister 2003; Pascall 1993). It can also lead to the fragmentation of political constituencies and political claims (Dietz 2003), and, specifically, shade out the particularized experiences of groups with histories of disadvantage and social exclusion.

Importantly, Iris Marion Young’s (1990) formulation of a politics of differentiated citizenship was grounded in the assumption that groups cannot be socially equal unless their specific experience was recognized. She envisioned a polity in which institutional mechanisms could provide oppressed groups a voice in the political arena (Young 2000). Rather than its feasibility, the main criticisms leveled against Young’s formulation of group representation have underlined its theoretical limitations: it would result in the reification or freezing of identities, a main point of contention in the debates within the context of recognition struggles and group identities (Fraser 2003); and that it did not provide mechanisms for addressing differences in resources (economic and social capital that underlie who participates in the public sphere), even within marginalized social groups (Hobson 2003).

How to find institutional mechanisms that would support diversity and difference within an inclusionary citizenship also emerged within the theoretical debates around gender mainstreaming. Recognizing the transformative potential of mainstreaming beyond its use as a technocratic tool for extending the spheres of elite women’s presence in decision-making, feminist scholars argued that one could not look at gender inequality in isolation. Rather it would necessitate inclusive equality models addressing diversity and multiple forms of inequality (Verloo 2005; Squires 2005). The transformative potential of mainstreaming, according to Squires and others, would entail activating civil society via deliberative democratic forums sensitive to diversity. However, this vision of a pluralist participatory model in policy-making leaves unresolved the dilemma of who speaks for the most disadvantaged and marginalized: hence the transformative potential of mainstreaming remains unfulfilled. The implications of this example are twofold: the interplay between recognition and redistribution cannot be divorced from political voice and influence (Phillips 2003); and that
citizenship exclusion is multidimensional, involving complex sets of power relations within the state and beyond.

**CHANGING THE LANDSCAPE OF FEMINIST THEORIZING ON THE STATE AND CITIZENSHIPS: MULTIPLE DIMENSIONS, SCALES, AND STRUCTURES**

This section moves on from feminist theorizing on citizenship in dialogue with mainstream analyses of social membership and participatory citizenships to address more directly the more proactive challenges posed by multidimensionality that occur across different scales and dimensions. These complex challenges arise from many directions. The borders of gender, state, and citizenships have been redrawn in response to challenges from multiple research fronts: critical studies on men and masculinities; postcolonialism and critical race theory; intersectionality as a framework for engaging with the complexities in citizenship identities and exclusionary processes in citizenship and social membership, for example around migration; as well as the impact of further transnational processes and actors. All of these suggest more fundamental possibilities for rethinking the gendering, and indeed gendered critique of, citizenship.

**Critical Analysis on Men and Masculinities**

Over the last 40 years or more there has been a growing development of critical studies and research on men and masculinities, drawing on the insights of feminist and critical gender and sexuality studies, which has been referred to variously as, for example, Critical Masculinity Studies or Critical Studies on Men and Masculinities (Kimmel, Hearn, and Connell 2005). In this, men, boys, and masculinities are explicitly gendered, just as much as women, girls, and femininities. To say this is certainly not to reproduce simple binaries, as, in different ways, such research seeks to *deconstruct* how male, man/men, masculine, and masculinity/ies are still generally taken for granted, normalized, and naturalized categories. This also applies even within critical accounts of citizenship. In these studies, men and masculinities are examined within historical, cultural, relational, materialist, deconstructive, antiessentialist frames (Connell, Hearn, and Kimmel 2005). Men and masculinities are thus seen within historical gender relations, through a wide variety of analytical and methodological approaches. These approaches have implications for the analysis of gender and citizenship.

Men’s relations to citizenship have historically been framed by the city-state and more recently the nation-state, and their supposedly gender-neutral, in practice often male, often racialized, ethnicized, classed citizenry. Thus, the focus of the explicit gendering of men and masculinities involves their denaturalization, and is part of a broader attempt to move beyond binary
thinking on gender relations (see Lorber 2005). In the modern age, the nation-state has often been seen as hegemonic, a powerful form of hegemony, and indeed a powerful means of upholding different historical forms of patriarchy, patriarchal relations, and men’s privilege. Likewise, the gendered, raced, classed state and nation have often been conceived as ungendered or nongendered, or unraced or unclassed; or sometimes alternatively represented as a raced, classed female, “a woman,” the motherland, to be protected, promoted, ruled by men; or, yet still, may be constructed as a raced, classed male, as in “the fatherland.” This has involved and involves, in different combinations and degrees, inequalities and discriminations in formal political representation, social and cultural rights, and access to state machinery, including most obviously the military.

It is within these contexts that much of modern relations of men, masculinities, and (public) politics has been conducted (Brown 1988; Clark and Lange 1979; Connell 1987, 1990; Hearn 1987; Lloyd 1984); indeed this includes the very construction of politics itself, and what counts as politics. While women’s organizing has been central in many national liberation movements and in welfare state development, the nation-state has also been characteristically gendered as male. This is in the sense that its “making” has usually been a project historically led by men, and at least initially for men or certain classes of men, including in the bestowing of citizenship. It is onto this male political citizen base that women’s political participation has been grafted in many, though not all, countries. More generally, some forms of (male) citizenship, based on notions of male individualism, are in tension with forms of male-dominated nationalism based on notions of collective, often homogenizing, lineage, culture, language, and exclusion of difference, including violent confrontations occurring in the name of such mythic entities as nation, “the people,” religion, or “blood” (Kimmel 2002). While some of these latter identifications may seem somewhat archaic, this is by no means so, as with current revivals of nationalistic, nativist, and even neo-fascist references to an implicit “us,” as suggested in, for example, “America First” and similar phrases (Churchwell 2018). Ironically, autochthonous references (Yuval-Davis 2013) can even be made in countries founded on migration, most obviously the USA. Different state formations mediate more or less between such individualisms and collectivisms.

At times, “Men,” “Nation,” state, and citizenry have been represented as almost indivisible. This is perhaps clearest in times of war, but also relevant in terms of seeing nations as the nation-state or the state, or in terms of the (deep) state machinery, the military and paramilitary apparatus, the state security services, the departments of internal affairs, state foreign policy machinery, and so on (Hearn 2015; Yuval-Davis 1997). This is even though many, perhaps most, nationalisms, for example Hindu nationalism (Banerjee 2005), do not coincide exactly with territorial nation-states.

Having said this, it is important to immediately acknowledge major variations in the relations of men, masculinities, and the gendering of
citizenship at the national level. For example, the 1906 granting of full political rights to all adult men and women in Finland followed closely on the nationalist movement (Moring 2006). Despite formal degendering, citizenship often remains patriarchal in form, not least through continuation of prenationalistic discourses and practices, sometimes around particular notions of “equality,” as in the Soviet regimes (Novikova and Kambourov 2003), or more generally in lack of freedom from gender-based violence, surely one of the most obvious if least recognized negations of citizenship (Franzway 2016). Other examples derive from liberation struggles for nationhood and national citizenship. Women’s involvement in nation formation, as in struggles against colonial and imperialist powers, has often been formidable, only to be later partially undermined with moves to “peace” (Knauss 1987; Ponzanesi 2014), for example in Iran, South Africa, recent postwar Eritrea.

Approaching the nation and nationhood through the lens of explicit critical analysis of men and masculinities suggests many possible avenues for both theorizing and empirical study of citizenship. It can lead to a reformulation of the various historical marginalizations and exclusions of women toward a more fully gendered conceptualization of citizenship in terms of the differential gendered inclusion in political and economic entitlements, access, belonging, rights, and obligations. Yet, the explicit gendering and naming of men is uneven in different arenas of citizenship policy. The “man problem” remains obscure(d), partly because so much policy is about men, yet not recognized as such (Hearn and Pringle 2006), and partly because explicit policy on men is at uneven stages of formulation, sometimes as part of a gender-equality or broader antioppressive, egalitarian project, sometimes promoting men’s interests further still. In this process, the emergence of men as gendered subjects (Holter 2005) has been articulated partly in relation to women’s and feminist struggles, but also to other forms of affiliation and organizing, such as racial justice, labor struggles, and gay, queer, and transgender rights. In a long-term modernist sense, in many parts of the world one can discern gradual moves from taken-for-granted assumptions about men and masculinities in policy, to more implicit genderings, often with the gender-neutral (male) subject, to more explicit genderings of men and masculinities (Hearn 2015).

The social category of men has figured strongly in reforms in citizenship and policy, most obviously in the institutionalization of the power of men, fathers, and husbands, as heads of families and households; family law, legal practice, and the control of crime; promotion of public health; and most tellingly in social reform during and after wartime (Harris 1961). Looking back historically, this includes the realization of the poor health of young men in the Boer War and the First World War, the meeting of classes in the Second World War, the creation of welfare states in its aftermath, and so on (Hearn 1998). More broadly, the relation of the welfare state and the warfare state has long been documented and debated (Wilensky 1975), with clear implicit commentaries on different
groupings of men and different masculinities, within very different welfare scenarios (Walby 2009).

In some policy arenas, men, and sometimes masculinities, have been explicitly named, as part of formal governmental or quasi-governmental intervention. In particular, in many countries, state policies on fathers, fatherhood, and father leave have become a focal point of explicit gender politics around men, and a means of elaborating the citizen rights of some men, around legal and reproductive rights and obligations of fathers, often formulated differentially for biological fathers and social fathers, and in terms of child care and postdivorce relations to children (Collier and Sheldon 2008; Hobson 2002; Oechsle, Müller, and Hess 2012). This is especially so in societies with a strong orientation to the rights of fathers, albeit in very different ways, reinforcing and/or subverting patriarchal or nonpatriarchal gender relations. At root, there is a strong tension between the assertion of fathers’ rights, or putative and potential fathers’ rights, over mothers, children, and indeed adult children, and the gradual move to more involvement of fathers and other men in caring, child care, and unpaid domestic work, including possible rights to care.

Detailed and explicit laws and policies directed toward gendered interventions with men have often seemed relatively rare. More often, men, and masculinities, have been implicitly named, and implicitly gendered in policy interventions. As with gendered policies that are more tied to women, explicitly gendered policies in relation to men are much more likely when they concern issues that appear to be close to the body, notably men’s health, violence, and sexuality, than when they concern issues that may appear more distant from men’s bodies. In this way, men’s gendered policy associations are mostly framed within a form of nation-based welfarism rather than an engagement with, say, capitalist production, finance, energy, foreign policy, transport, or the environment, which tend to be transnational in form. Such latter policies are not explicitly gendered for women or men, even if they are implicitly, and may become more clearly gendered through gender mainstreaming.

One of the first books overviewing men and social policy was Pringle’s (1995) *Men, Masculinities and Social Welfare*, focusing mainly on social services, social work, and social care, and ways in which social policy engages and should engage with men, as well as general principles and even dangers, such as collusion, for men working in social welfare. Despite all these complications around men and masculinities, political debates on citizenship have often continued to be couched in strangely gender- and race-neutral terms – or more precisely “the citizen” has frequently been (represented as) both genderless and male, bringing us back to notions of the “adult model worker” and the “male breadwinner model.” Such obscuring of gender is challenged by feminist scholarship and critical gender commentaries, and increasingly by intersectional analyses (Christensen and Jensen 2014; Christensen and Larsen 2008; Hearn 2004a, 2011).
Postcolonial, Decolonial, and Critical Race Theory: Toward Intersectionality

A major source of multidimensional critique with strong implications for debates on gendered citizenship are critical race theory, and postcolonial and decolonial(izing) theorizing: in these analyses issues of race, racism, antiracism, coloniality, and thus intersections with gender are highlighted. Gender cannot be isolated, and the coloniality of gender is often emphasized (Lugones 2010). Such approaches critique imperialism, colonialism, neo-imperialism, and neocolonialism; both imperialism and colonialism are seen as supported, perhaps impelled, by ideologies which maintain “that certain territories and people require and beseech domination, as well as forms of knowledge affiliated with domination” (Said 1993: 9). Postcolonial, decolonial, and critical race perspectives draw on a wide set of influences, including Marxism, critical theory, theories of globalization and global capitalism, post-structuralism, postmodernism, feminisms, deconstruction, and indigeneity, thus presenting a possible ecology of knowledges (Santos 2014). They are typically antiessentialist, historical, geographical, disruptive, deconstructive, multi- or transdisciplinary, located and locational in positioning, and concerned with representation, resistance, and multiplicity.

Key foundational intellectuals, critics, and activists include Du Bois (1903) and Fanon (1952, 1961), writing on the postcolonial condition of black people within white-racist and imperialist culture, their psychological alienation and damage, and the movement beyond the fixedness of white/black, and colonizer/colonized. Feminist postcolonial, decolonial, and critical race theorists have elaborated on such work, through a gendered intersectional lens, as in the work of Spivak (1988a, 1988b) on the subaltern and the silent/silenced in discourse that cannot be spoken of/for/by someone else. More specifically, postcolonial critiques highlight the “liminal” negotiation of cultural identity across differences of race, class, gender, and cultural traditions as a key aspect of postcoloniality, as discussed by Bhabha (1994: 2) in The Location of Culture:

It is in the emergence of the interstices – the overlap and displacement of domains of difference – that the intersubjective and collective experiences of nationness, community interest, or cultural value are negotiated. How are subjects formed “in-between”, or in excess of, the sum of the “parts” of difference (usually intoned as race/class/gender, etc.)? How do strategies of representation or empowerment come to be formulated in the competing claims of communities where, despite shared histories of deprivation and discrimination, the exchange of values, meanings and priorities may not always be collaborative and dialogical, but may be profoundly antagonistic, conflictual and even incommensurable?

Black feminist, postcolonial, and critical race scholarship thus has fundamental critical implications for debates on citizenship, by problematizing universalizing citizenship claims, not least through recognizing the complex inequalities around black, non-Western, migrant, non-citizens’ lives (Collins...
Marginality, hybridity, and border crossings of all kinds paradoxically become central, raising questions of universality and difference to the fore of citizenship: a theme discussed earlier and which recurs in the remainder of this chapter.

These themes feed directly into the framing, and problematizing, of debates on citizenship, often through the notion of intersectionality; similarly, further feminist critiques have destabilized gender as a unitary analytical category (Butler 1990; Phillips 1995; Walby 2004). Accordingly, there is growing recognition of multiple identities, loyalties, and social divisions within such categories as gender, class, race, ethnicities, sexualities, citizenship status, age, and able(bodied)ness, as well as the acknowledgement of histories of colonialism, slavery, and race, in which middle- and upper-class women were complicit in colonialist and racist policies (Glenn 2004; Mohanty 2003; Mohanty, Russo, and Torres 1991). Intersectionality is both an analytical tool for mapping these complex sets of relationships and inequalities and a framework for analyzing the structures shaping how they mutually influence each other. Intersectionality is not only a field of inquiry but involves praxis, experiences of inequalities and resistances, and challenges to these through mobilizations for social justice (Choo, Crenshaw, and McCall 2013; Collins and Bilge 2016), highly relevant to citizenship and social membership. Rather than intersectionality belonging to feminism, the argument has been made that the reverse is true (Collins and Bilge 2016; Ferree 2018), within a critical theory and practice.

Intersectionality as a specifically named concept first appeared in the work of Crenshaw (1989). Its diverse roots can be traced to the antislavery movement, pluralist political theory, and the works of Marx, Weber, and Durkheim, as well as antiracist and Marxist feminisms. Three pioneering works most relevant to gender, state, and citizenship, focused on the central role of the state in structuring the intersections in race, gender, and class and the inscriptions of power underlying them. Fraser and Gordon (1994) traced the genealogy of dependency and its evolutions: how gender, class, and race become interwoven in the trope of the dependent, black, single mother in US history. Boris’ (1995) concept of the racialized gendered state, applied to the US case, captured the systematic exclusions of people of color and ethnic groups and their gendered dimensions through immigration reforms, policies that disqualified them from entitlements. Williams’ (1995) complex models, in which gender, class, and race/ethnicity are embedded in constructions of family, work, nationhood, migration, and welfare settlements, anticipated the ways in which intersectional perspectives would offer leverage for interpreting the changing face of citizenships and diversities and their consequences for social membership.

Intersectionality is an inherently complex concept, as well as one on which there is little agreement on its meaning, value, and uses (Collins and Bilge 2016; Ferree 2018). Crenshaw (1989) used the concept to make visible the experiences
of social groups at neglected points of intersection, particularly the experiences of women of color at the intersection of race, class, and gender, which exemplifies what McCall (2005) referred to as intra-categorical. Looking beyond this approach, McCall (2005) has argued for a process-oriented strategy encompassing the broader structures underpinning multiple and complex inequalities, which she refers to as inter-categorical. From this standpoint, intersectionality can be viewed as a theoretical framework in which social categories are understood as fluid, contingent, and contextualized within dominant institutions and hierarchies, and shaped by political and social settings (Choo and Ferree 2010; Misra 2018; Walby, Armstrong, and Strid 2012). Informed by sociological perspectives, the focus on intersectionalities has turned toward social systems, ideologies, and structures that underlie social inequalities: capitalism, nationalism, colonialism, neoliberalism and populisms, and processes of migration, globalization, and welfare state retrenchment (Choo and Ferree 2010; Williams 2017), with their interlocking hierarchies of value, power, and authority (Lutz, Herrera Vivar, and Supik 2011).

Intersectionality and Migration

Intersectionality analysis has altered the landscape in gendered theorizing on citizenship and social membership in myriad ways. First, a gendered intersectional approach involves multiple inequalities, multiple structures, and multiple policy domains (Walby et al. 2012; Williams 2012, 2017), encompassing those at the transnational and global levels. Second, when applied to transnational migration, this multidimensional approach offers conceptual space for exploring complex inequalities in which migrant status, nationality, and global region intersect with other overlapping social divisions, class, gender, ethnicity/race, age, marital status (Kofman and Raghuram 2015). These intersections are embodied in the image of the global care chain, where the flows of migrants from the poorer to richer nations, from the Global South to North, and from East to West Europe mirror widening inequalities across regions where households from poorer nations sacrifice caretakers for their own families to benefit the well-resourced households in richer nations (Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2003; Lutz 2008; Parreñas 2001).

Though migrant statuses and graduated citizenships are characteristically gendered, with differential rights and obligations (Donaldson et al. 2009), within mainstream migration debates and research gender has often been marginalized or assumed as male (Dobrowolsky and Tastsoglou 2006; 4 McCall’s (2005) three classifications have become a point of departure in the theory and methodological research on intersectionality: anti-categorical, which rejects all categories; intra-categorical, in which race, class, and gender are combined into a single category; and inter-categorical, in which social divisions are mutually constitutive of each other.}
Reilly 2012: 58–59; Pessar and Mahler 2003: 812). Migrant statuses and graduated citizenships are not a determined set of circumstances, but rather a frame of conditions in which both migrants and governments have various degrees of room for maneuver, not least as determined via hierarchies in citizenships, in terms of country of origin, race, and ethnicity. In some cases, national borders are or seem absolute, especially for noncitizens, those suffering racist or (hetero)sexist exclusions, persecution and possible death penalty, or who are stateless and who cannot return home. In others, the scope and intensity of transnational practices varies considerably. That said, “the lives of migrants, refugees and people of ethnic minority origins are probably affected by this multiplicity of citizenships even more than those of people who belong to hegemonic majorities” (Yuval-Davis 2007: 8, also 2013: 59).

Migration, transnationalism, and other transnational processes shape complex inequalities in multiple ways. The care chain, with its constant flow of migrants across borders, reflects the changing configurations in citizenship theorizing, what Soysal (1994) refers to as postnational membership, and Ong’s (1999) concept of flexible citizenship. These underscore the importance of interpreting social membership in terms of complexities and gradations in citizenship and migrant statuses and situations in specific institutional contexts (Isin and Wood 1999) and viewing them through a gendered intersectional lens. This entails engaging with the specific migration regime within each nation-state with respect to the conditions of entry and rights to remain in country. There is a wide spectrum: from achieved citizenship at one end and the undocumented at the other; in between these extremes are various levels of social membership, for example permanent residents who have access to social rights, and, even in some countries, can vote in local elections. Within legal migrant statuses, distinctions exist between visa-exempted, those with residence in an EU country, for instance, or through bilateral national agreements, and those with work permits whose rights to remain are limited by their labor contract.

Within these statuses, there are social divisions and distinctions that curtail rights and thwart social membership. The right to remain in a country, if based upon marital status with dependency on a partner who has the legal right to remain, undercuts the basic civil right to leave harmful relationships. Women suffer violence in these relationships (Choo 2016; Yuval-Davis 2007). Undocumented migrants are the most vulnerable, since the threat of deportation is always present, which leaves them open to exploitation without recourse to challenge loss of wages or indecent working conditions (Triandafyllidou 2013). Here the right to have rights implies basic civil rights as well as access to social protections (Somers 2011). In some Asian countries with national permit systems, migrant workers are not able to choose their own workplaces and can be denied the rights to form unions or protest poor working conditions; their contracts, often administered by state agencies, can be terminated at any time (Choo 2016: 169).
In European countries where these rights are often formally protected, employment may or may not provide access to the employment rights that others living in the same country enjoy (Anderson 2000; Shire 2015), given the high levels of informality in the care and domestic sectors (International Labour Organization 2011). Regarding access to rights, migrants in Europe who are EU citizens and permanent residents are privileged under EU law with rights, such as health care (not available to migrants in all countries) and freedom to move across borders within Europe to seek employment. Certain rights, as well as social benefits, may apply to asylum seekers, though not often to economic migrants. These can entail the right to bring family members, although this has become more restrictive in many Northern European countries (Williams 2017). Asylum seekers are more likely to have opportunities for free language training and stipends for education, the latter enhancing their potential for greater inclusion and integration (Hobson et al. 2018).

There are numerous other examples of transnational migrant hierarchies, between different formal statuses, for example skilled, semi-skilled, less skilled casualized workers, student/researcher mobility, unemployed migrants, asylum seekers, refugees, and “illegal migrants.” Such distinctions in turn frequently have explicit or implicit gendered forms or effects. These distinctions are also often codified in complex ways, for example Japan has 28 different residence statuses for foreigners, of which 16 are work-related (Naobumi and Brase 2012). Of particular significance are the lack of citizenship rights of spouses, au pairs or “hostesses,” typically women, but also men, who migrate from less privileged regions and with little or no local language skills. Their plight can be especially difficult following divorce or termination of employment, and for certain kinds of precarious workers. Forced marriage and the persistence of what are in effect modern forms of slavery and indenture make for clearly dire circumstances, as do those facing expulsion on grounds of nonnormative sexuality that may not be recognized as asylum grounds, even when return may mean criminalization and even death.

As Brubaker and others have argued, the borders of citizenship are made to limit outsiders but also to strengthen cohesion within (Brubaker 1996; Choo 2016). However, the multidimensions in social membership, and gradations among migrant statuses, rights, and protections can no longer be understood within in the binary of citizen and noncitizen, inclusion and exclusion dependent upon national and regional contexts (Turner 1999). In Decentering Citizenship, Choo (2016) engages with these complexities in a rich ethnographic study of Filipina migrant women in South Korea. Although excluded from full or equal membership, they are positioned differently as brides (mothers), labor (care and factory workers), and hostesses who are lowest on the hierarchy in the struggles for rights, security, and respect in their day-to-day interactions with employers, co-workers, and state bureaucracies. They also have the weakest potential to attract support from
civil society actors. Implicit in the notion of decentering citizenship is that citizenship is a process, often partial and incomplete, fluid and dynamically shaped by multiple actors, intersecting with the politics of gender, race, ethnicity, class, and nation. In these two respects, citizenship and migration share commonalities. The current wave of transnational migration has added new complexities to theorizing citizenship shaped by structural inequalities at local, national, and transnational levels (Choo 2016; Dobrowolsky and Tastsoglou 2006).

Migration has become increasingly prominent in gender research. This is not merely in response to the feminization of transnationalization (Castles and Miller 2003), but also because of the relationship of migration to shifting patterns in social reproduction (Kofman and Raghuram 2015), and intersections in the commodification of care, women’s increased participation in the labor force and global inequalities: who cares for whom and with what social costs (Michel 2018; Hobson et al. 2018). Migration is also intertwined with broader processes of welfare state change, reconfiguring the relationships between states, markets, and families and welfare states, where generous tax subsidies for domestic services represent a redistribution upward to middle- and upper-class households who can afford these services (Carbonnier and Morel 2015; Hobson et al. 2018), reflecting increasing class and gender inequalities. For these and other reasons, it is a mistake to reproduce a dualism between migrants and nonmigrants in the analysis of citizenships.

A gendered research on migration and care, both in-depth case studies and comparative analyses, reveals how even the gradations in citizenship and migrant status are embedded in layers of context and are experienced by individuals from diverse situations and migration trajectories. For instance, several scholars have shown that documented and undocumented are not fixed categories and lines between formal and informal employment are often blurred (Hellgren 2015). Work permits and legal contracts may bind a migrant care worker to her employer: in many Asian countries, care/domestic workers are bound by what are effectively slave contracts, organized by brokers and employment agencies (Laliberté 2017), where the employer has total power over the migrant care worker. Although less extreme, Anderson and Ruhs (2010) show the power imbalance and its ill effects on migrant care workers resulting from the employer–employee contract in the UK, where the permission to remain in the country is dependent upon having a specific employment contract.

Even in countries with a high tolerance for informality where the undocumented migrant care workers are not much worse off than the documented, such as Spain, the need to have regular employment in order to achieve residence status reinforces the dynamics of power and dependency between the employee and employer (Hobson et al. 2018). Understanding more fully the drivers and consequences of these complex inequalities demands more multiscalar (Mahon and Michel 2017; Michel and Peng 2017).
and multilevel lenses (Williams 2017) to capture the macro-level (politics and policies), the meso-level (stakeholders) (Hellgren 2015), and the micro-level interactions in daily practices (Williams 2012; Kilkey et al. 2010; Hobson et al. 2018).

Incorporating intersectionalities into citizenship and social membership is not merely an academic exercise, but one rooted in lived experiences, where context matters, and where universalized and objectified categories of citizenship dissolve with more complex analysis of diverse subjects situated in different institutional frameworks and within different policy domains (Isin and Nielsen 2008; Collins and Bilge 2016). Williams’ (2012) formulation of multiple and intersecting regimes, welfare, care, and migrant employment recognizes the convergences and variations in migrant care domestic work, as does Simonazzi’s (2009) national employment models.

Transnational dimensions, involving both institutions and actors beyond the state (Mahon and McBride 2008), and social movements, many of which travel across borders, are key elements (Paternotte 2015) in theorizing citizenship and social membership, and interpreting how complex inequalities are being played out within, beyond, and beneath the nation-state.

Transnational Processes and Transnational Actors

It will be clear by now that even critical gendered studies of citizenship are often primarily located within the confines of the nation-state. Such methodological nationalism is increasingly challenged by attention to transnational processes and transnational actors. Moving beyond national, societal, and cultural contexts has been prompted by various global(ized) and transnational researches over recent years. Many of these have been developed under the rubric of “globalization,” subsequently refined as “glocalization” (Robertson 1995; Robertson and Khondker 1998). In this, it is assumed that the specificities of place are becoming transcended through economic, political, and cultural linkages (Waters 1995). At the same time, there is considerable literature questioning the usefulness and accuracy of the notion of globalization (Hirst and Thompson 1999; Petras and Veltmeyer 2001; Rugman 2000). One aspect of the critique concerns how nation-states, national boundaries, and nationally organized labor remain important (Edwards and Elger 1999; Gibson-Graham 1999; Kite 2004; Waddington 1999). In many respects, transnationalization seems a more accurate concept than globalization (Hearn 2004b). This necessitates considering interrogating differential meaning(s) of “the transnational.”

Different transnational processes and transnational actors problematize taken-for-granted national citizenships. To attend to such questions also involves the (de)construction of privileged “centers,” such as “Europe,” “the North,” as well as deconstruction of the “core” perspective embodied in some theoretical ideas. Transnationalizations take many forms, with many implications for intersectional gender relations. They involve multiple forms
of difference, presence, and absence for men and women, in power, and who are dispossessed materially, in terms of aspects of citizenship. Moreover, speaking of transnational relations raises a paradox: they refer to the nation, yet at the same time also to relations across nations. The nation is simultaneously affirmed and deconstructed, and often involves the emergence of a set of intensified phenomena. Transnationalizations encompass different kinds of movements, material or virtual, but also result in more or less stable, material and territorial entities, which tend to stabilize through new structures.5

In other words, transnational processes and actors force consideration of more expansive and open-ended conceptions of citizenship, as well as how governments respond to this challenge. This is not only a matter of migrations, but also follows from the impact of many transnational institutional actors. These range from multinational corporations to supranational governance by the IMF and World Bank to transnational cultural organizations, transnational NGOs, and transnational agents for change, social movements, platforms, communities, social locations, and identities that problematize nations and blur national boundaries. Some of these processes are profoundly contradictory. For example, the OECD and OSCE are engaged in promoting both the neoliberal order and gender and social welfare policies (Mahon 2009).

Transnational networks and advocacy groups include international nongovernment agencies (INGOs) which may also provide various forms of basic welfare, such as health, including education and other welfare services, in parts of Africa and Asia. They may also support the activities of groups at the margins who lack representation and voice in formal politics, as can UN, ILO, and Council of Europe protocols, which can be used to empower those without or with less voice (Keck and Sikkink 1998; also Abraham et al. 2010; Ferrée and Tripp 2006). Relevant transnational legal apparatuses include the ILO Administrative Tribunal, the European courts, and the International Court of Human Rights, even if legal interventions may not be an option for those without legal access. The European Union (EU) provides a unique societal laboratory to assess the implications of gender-equality and gender-related policies for gendered European citizenship. It prompts such questions as: How do gender-equality policies address core issues of gender inequality that present obstacles to an equal citizenship? How do gender and further social dimensions intersect in constructions of both national and transnational/EU citizenship? And how useful

5 The element of “trans” in transnational refers to three different notions:

- moving across or between two or more somethings, in this case across national boundaries or between nations;
- metamorphosing, problematizing, blurring, transgressing, breaking down, even dissolving something(s), in this case nations or national boundaries;
- creating new configurations, intensified transnational, supranational, or, to different degrees, deterritorialized, dematerialized, or virtual entities (Hearn and Blagojević 2013: 9).
is it to rethink citizenship operating, for some aspects at least, at the transnational level?

Transnational processes and actors shift debates on citizenship toward the recognition of transnational social spaces, flows, and forms of deterritorialization, translocality, and transnationality (Appadurai 1996; Hannerz 1996; Ong 1999), and in which citizenship becomes more understandable as belonging located within social space, not primarily experienced or understood as the geographical space of nationally located place that is occupied. Transnational processes and actors operating within the context of neoliberal globalization and transnational patriarchal relations, coupled with postcoloniality and global processes, have created new and changing material and representational hierarchies, deeply affecting constructions, legalities, and experiences of and demands for national and transnational citizenship. Multidimensionality in citizenship thus means not only a variety of citizenships – political, social, economic, ethnic, bodily, sexual, intimate, belonging (as examined in the EU FEMCIT project6) – but also their various forms and extensions across and between borders and social spaces. Citizenship is increasingly multidimensional, with complex intersections in and between gender, state, and transnationality, operating at and across different scales, of actors, institutions, and borders – some fluid, some rigid – both geographically and theoretically.

CHALLENGES, DILEMMAS, AND DEBATES

In this final section, we consider some recent debates emerging from multidimensionality in gender and citizenships and multilevel frameworks (global, glocal, and transnational actors, and institutions) (Olesky, Hearn, and Golańska 2011). These raise challenges for research on gender, state, and citizenships. First, political and theoretical challenges arise in broad shifts in the possibilities for new forms of nationhood, nationalism, and populism, with both progressive and retrogressive sociopolitical movements having emerged, often with very clear gender agendas. This would include studies of the relationship of whiteness, nationalism, neoliberal authoritarianism, and right-wing nationalist movements and their impact on citizenship claims. The urgent need for these kinds of citizenship studies is clear in the dramatically and explicitly racialized politics of citizenship in the USA, antirefugee politics in parts of Europe, and the entrenchment of autocracies and “ethnic cleansing” in diverse locations. In the European context, one of the most specific current manifestations of such contestations concerns the relations of gender and multiculturalism (see Halsaa, Roseneil, and Sümer 2012; Predelli and Halsaa 2012), and the variety of state policy interventions, thus in turn suggesting new forms of gender-pluralist citizenships.

More specifically, the headscarf/burqa debates have become one of the most contested and divisive within Europe. Nine European countries have banned the wearing of clothing covering the face in public spaces, such as schools, universities, courts of law, and, in some countries, for example the Netherlands, in parks and on public transportation. Feminist debates catalyzed by Okin and Cohen’s provocative (1999) book *Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?* have highlighted the tensions in cultural rights and gender equality, recognizing that accommodation to cultural difference could translate into oppression of women and children within traditional cultural and religious groups. Asserting the need for a more nuanced analysis, scholars such as Shachar (2001), Phillips (2007), and Song (2009) have argued that gender hierarchies structure all cultures, underscoring the dynamic intercultural interactions between minority and majoritarian norms. Abu-Lughod (2013) asserts in *Do Muslim Women Need Saving?* that the role of the veil must be interpreted in the context of lived lives and historical eras. She contends that in the name of saving Muslim women from the subjugation of the veil, interventions can place limits on their freedom, borne out by the wave of bans on the burqa in public spaces. These nuanced perspectives have been shaded out in the current political climate with the rise of nationalist populist parties, in which the burqa are interwoven in public discourse in an attempt to construct a majoritarian vision of national identity: what it means to be British, Dutch, French, or Austrian. These movements have not only co-opted the gender-equality position as a motivation for campaigns to deny citizenship to Muslims (Roggeband and Lettinga 2016), but have also framed the debates in either/or terms: religious rights versus pluralism; accommodation versus civic participation; integration versus terrorist threat.

Second, in many parts of the world there is increasing recognition of, as well as concerted resistance to, gender and sexual diversity; this concerns not just lesbian, gay, bisexual, and straight, but also intersex, queer, nonbinary, and transgender and agender citizenships (see, e.g., Plummer 2001; Munro and Warren 2004). Together, these bring political, legal, and policy claims on and against the state, and highlight shifting intersectionalities and new gender/sexual hierarchies (Hearn, Aboim, and Shefer 2018; Misra and Bernstein, Chapter 32, this volume). Some of these developments, which may destabilize the notion of gender, though far from new, appear to be facilitated by new technologies. Indeed, virtuality and cyberworlds, in their reformulation of space and place, create possibilities for the enhancement of dissident gender/sexual citizenships that have long been marginalized, as well as for antagonistic hate speech across national boundaries that undermines gender/sexual citizenship (Hearn 2006).

Third is the prospect of and possibilities for global citizenship. The impact of gendered globalizing capitalism and the diffusion of neoliberal ideology,

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7 European countries include: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, France, Germany, Latvia, Netherlands, and Norway: see [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hijab](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hijab).
policies, and practices can undermine national citizenships, raising the question of the need for perspectives on citizenship beyond the nation-state. However, the urgent need for frames of global citizenship is perhaps clearest in relation to the urgent issues of environment and climate change. Gendered patterns of (over)consumption, energy use, transportation, and extraction – stemming in part from tendencies of certain men, masculinities, and indeed male-dominated industrial sectors toward domination and exploitation over others and the planet, with little regard for ecological consequences (Enarson and Pease 2016) – lead on to climate migrants and “climate noncitizens.” The future plight of humanity, and even recognition of the rights of nonhumans, prompt an orientation toward new forms of global ecological citizenship (Dobson 2003; Smith and Pangsapa 2008), future citizenships, and the citizenship of future generations, sometimes framed within eco-feminist politics.

Finally, new inequalities can be discerned in citizenships, for example through growing divides within and across regions, between the superrich and the dispossessed, insiders and outsiders, those with secure jobs and access to social rights and the precariat, those in less secure jobs, and more often women. But, now the outsourcing of a much wider range of employment, for example in IT and graphic design, means a new layer of precarious workforce: highly skilled men and women (Standing 2011). The gap in inequalities is widening between Global North and South, and between East and West Europe. Here the salience of citizenship and migration statuses, reflecting differences in access to civil, political, and social rights, comes back full-circle to Marshall. There is growing interest in some countries for a social wage, citizens’ wage, or universal basic income, even if these often assume and may reproduce the binary of insiders and outsiders (Folbre et al. 2018). These demands are spreading at the same time as some national and transnational processes are weakening social citizenships. Marketized citizenship, privatization of public resources, and outsourcing on a global scale tend to result in reductions in state social welfare services. Outsourcing of digital services, and increasingly skilled professional work, via transnational companies may provide a modicum of welfare for those employed, but may also undermine pressures for more extensive frameworks for social citizenships.

Furthermore, a whole variety of internal divides are arising within national citizenships, for example by age(ing) and generation, by changing gender/sexual identifications, such as nonbinary identities, through state internal markets and market-oriented citizenships, and through the impact of new technologies, especially with, in some countries, the near compulsory digitalization of (access to) state services, and the existence of digital divides, where we see the intersections in age, gender, class, and generation.

All of these trends highlight complex inequalities and multidimensionality, and pose challenges for developing theoretical frameworks for their analysis and interpretation. The relations of gender, intersectionality, and citizenship are
thus both subject to dynamic change and unfinished, in research, politics, policy, and practice.

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I. Theories of Political Sociology


I. Theories of Political Sociology


Theories of Race, Ethnicity, and the Racial State

Joe R. Feagin and Sean Elias

A systemic racism approach to understanding racial states like the United States is well-validated in much historical and contemporary social science research. Here we emphasize a number of the key contributions of this contemporary approach to assessing the US racial state. We use “state” to mean a socially and territorially bounded community with a national government complex and many local government institutions. We include aspects of the state accented by the classical theorist Max Weber – national states’ territorial sovereignty and their monopolization of coercion – and also the state’s executive bureaucracy, legislatures, courts, legal norms, and overall political operations (2015 [1919]).

In the sections that follow we first examine traditional social science approaches to the US state. We then assess more recent theorizing about this state in regard to its racial character. As we will see, much of this latter work accents issues of nationalism and ethnicity. Next we evaluate major social science analysts who have more explicitly focused on, and used, the term “racial state.” This includes the work of theorists of racial formation such as Michael Omi and Howard Winant and the work of neo-Marxist theorists of the racial state such as David Theo Goldberg.

Then, after a background discussion of the US black critical tradition, we examine the approach of systemic racism theorists and researchers to what is in our view better termed the systemically racist state. In several sections herein we trace the early emergence, long oppressive history, and contemporary reality of this racist state as one major aspect of what Joe Feagin and Kimberley Ducey term the elite white male dominance system (2017). This overarching societal dominance system is characteristic of numerous Western societies – with its constantly interlinked and co-reproducing major subsystems of systemic racism, systemic sexism (heterosexism), and systemic classism (capitalism). Central to each subsystem of this overarching elite white male dominance system are the same or similar elite white men whose great societal power has
been reproduced now over at least 20 generations in the case of the United States. Generally, this elite stays in power by controlling all major private and state institutions of a society.

**TRADITIONAL SOCIAL SCIENCE APPROACHES TO THE US STATE**

Social science investigations of the US state have mostly fallen into what are usually termed elitist, pluralist, and class perspectives. Early on, Floyd Hunter demonstrated the role of a small political elite of mostly business policy-makers, networked with implementing acolytes, in a major study of (Atlanta) city politics (1953). Other social scientists further elaborated this urban local-elite perspective (Domhoff 1978; Sayre and Kaufman 1960). Similarly, in this early era the neo-Marxist sociologist C. Wright Mills examined national US political economic decision-making and found a “power elite” made up of well-off leaders of big corporations, government agencies, and military institutions (1959). Countering these elite theorists and their argument that the United States is not a democracy, pluralist theorists, early led by political scientists Robert Dahl and Edward Banfield, argued that the local and national US states were not dominated principally by a wealthy business-oriented elite, but involved a complex and relatively democratic array of diverse powerful individuals and groups varying by political issue (Dahl 1961; Banfield 1961).

Then, countering these political pluralists, by the 1970s scholars like Philip Burch and Bill Domhoff did extensive empirical work demonstrating that at the national level the US is governed by an upper-class elite in its state, economic, and civic institutions (Domhoff 2013; Burch 1981).

In addition, in the 1980s a more developed neo-Marxist class perspective on the state was offered by scholars such as Bob Jessop and Fred Block (Jessop 1982; Block 1990). They revealed not only that Western states are class elitist and undemocratic, but also how all sectors of these capitalistic societies, including the corporate elites themselves, are greatly shaped by the broader inertial processes of the larger capitalistic system. In addition, various neo-Marxist theorists view the state in systemic terms as the instrument of the ruling class, as a collective capitalist, and/or as the political coordinator of a complex capitalistic society.

Significantly, almost all of this power elite and Marxist conceptualization and research has focused on a variously defined class dimension in assessing the important aspects of the dominant elite. The racial (and gender) dimension has been ignored or marginalized in most of this theorizing. In addition, our broader review of much of the social science literature has revealed that remarkably little of the analysis and theory of the US state deals with its foundationally and systemically racist structure. As we will see in the next sections, several social scientists do deal with race and the US state to some degree, but often too abstractly or without grounding that analysis in the actual history of the US racial state.
We now turn to some important aspects of the historical and contemporary social science discussions dealing with the state, race, and ethnicity.

RECENT CONCEPTUALIZATIONS OF NATIONALISM AND ETHNICITY

In assessing modern nation-states a century ago, Max Weber highlighted their significant bureaucratization and the ways in which many develop an ethnonationalistic character. Nationalistic and ethnic group loyalties are often more important than class and political loyalties. Thus, Weber assessed the German nation-state as resulting from the German group’s “eternal struggle” to “defend its own culture” and “preserve and raise the quality of [the German] national species” (Weber 1994 [1895]:16). In one essay he contrasts the ethnonationalistic German and Polish nations, positing the former as the superior culturally developed national group (Sadri 1992: 16–18). Weber importantly introduced major frameworks for assessing ethnicity and nation-states in Europe, yet did not offer significant assessments of the European states then massively engaged in developing large-scale and highly racialized colonialism and slavery outside of Europe, including across Africa, Asia, and the Americas. Indeed, like almost all white social analysts of his era, Weber at times operated out of a white-racist framing of peoples of color. Thus, he wrote of “hereditary hysteria” characterizing Asian-Indians, of Africans as genetically incapable of factory work, and of the Chinese as low in intelligence; and he viewed these as the biologically shaped racial traits of inferior “races” that contrast sharply with superior traits of the white “race” (Blaut 1993: 64, 102–103).

Much more recently, in the early to mid-1990s, a few social scientists, including Anthony Smith and Walker Connor, continued aspects of this Weberian tradition by examining the development of modern nation-states, critical examinations that bypass earlier white-supremacist assumptions. They thus elevate Weber’s nuanced understandings of the realities of ethnicity, nationality, and nationalism. For instance, Smith views a nation as a “named human population sharing an historic territory, common myths and historical memories, a mass, public culture, a common economy and common legal rights and duties for all members” (Smith 1991: 14). Both Smith and Walker usefully distinguish between a state and a nation. For Connor, a state is best defined “in quantitative terms” depicting population size, GDP, and territorial boundaries; defining nation is “more difficult because the essence of a nation is intangible” (Connor 1994: 41–42). In his view many social scientists concerned with nation building have neglected the major ethnic roots of much contemporary nationalism. Smith similarly addresses the common reality of modern nations emerging most notably from earlier ethnic group formations termed “ethnies” (Smith 1991: 39–41).

Most recently, several other social scientists have offered broad examinations of nationality, ethnic, and racial matters. Consider, for example, the work of
Rogers Brubaker. In his interesting writings on ethnicity and the state, he does attend to matters of nation-state development, nationalism, social inequalities, and a broad category of “ethnicity” as it links to societal boundary-making. However, he does not deal with the reality of racial oppression as systemic for nation-states like the United States (Brubaker 2015). As we demonstrate elsewhere, numerous recent theorists of race and ethnicity – for example Brubaker, Andreas Wimmer, Mustafa Emirbayer, and Matthew Desmond – avoid adequately discussing the systemically racist US state and the white racial framing and systemic racism of other European nation-states and settler societies (Elias and Feagin 2016; see also Wimmer 2013; Emirbayer and Desmond 2015). These scholars’ social science analyses do assist us in understanding the ethnic roots of European nationalism and detail dimensions of that nationalism in ways that can sometimes be useful in understanding the racial dimension of nation-states. However, overall their analyses of the ethnic roots of European nations are inadequate for understanding the central reality of white-racist nationalism – the highly exploitative and well-institutionalized social relations between white Europeans and peoples of color resulting from imperialism, colonialism, and enslavement for centuries. In making sense of the rise and fall of nation-states, there is much historical evidence that racialized nation-states with their dominant and subordinate racial groups are as important as ethnicized nation-states and their ethnic core groups (Elias and Feagin 2017).

Additionally, almost all these aforementioned scholars seem unfamiliar or unconcerned with the many studies done by critical race and systemic racism scholars that deal substantially with white racism and Western states, especially studies in the long-standing tradition of critical black social thought. As a result, their scholarly focus on ethnicity and nation tends to obscure or marginalize much of the social reality of systemically racist states like the United States – and neglects the perspectives of people of color, who often best know the operations of oppressive racist states.

CALLING OUT THE RACIAL STATE: RACIAL FORMATION THEORY

Since the 1980s the first sustained attempt to explicitly develop a social science theory of the US racial state is that of sociologists Michael Omi and Howard Winant. Viewing the US state apparatus as racialized, they accent state action and legalization of societal “race meanings” over time and place. Emphasizing too the historical flexibility of these racial meanings, they argue that “race” involves “an unstable and decentered complex of social meanings constantly being transformed by political struggle” (Omi and Winant 2015: 110–111). They thus emphasize one important role of the racial state: as a site of political struggle and mediation in shaping these societal racial meanings and highly structured patterns. However, they avoid a substantial analysis of the often stable, less flexible, and relatively unchanging deep racial meanings and patterns of US racism – and thus the important ways that white-framed and systemic
racist realities have persisted over many generations (Omi and Winant 2015; Bracey 2015; Feagin and Elias 2012). One reason for this, perhaps, is that in their early development of racial formation theory they neglected important preexisting literatures addressing institutional racism (e.g., Ture and Hamilton 1967), much of it part of or influenced by the earlier black critical tradition, which empirically demonstrates the stability of much institutionalized white racism in the United States (see below).

Omi and Winant do recognize, often rather vaguely, that the US state has been substantially white controlled, especially prior to the 1960s rights struggles. Yet, since then, as they insist, the US racial state has become much more democratic (termed “the Great Transformation”). Like numerous other scholars, they argue that the demise of much overt Jim Crow segregation in the 1960s signaled a new era of racial progressivism, with great changes in the racial state and societal landscape. Indeed, “racial rule can be understood as a slow and uneven historical process which has moved from dictatorship to democracy, from domination to hegemony”; and in the US case “without question there has been significant progress toward racial democracy” (Omi and Winant 1994: 66–67). Signaling this result is what they consider to be the fact that the pluralistic contemporary US state is a “preeminent site” of racial group relations and social interaction – and thus a site where major racial conflicts are fairly mediated, including those that have brought substantial change in the direction of much greater racial democracy.

Additionally, in the early 2000s a few other scholars, such as Jarvis Hall, attempted to link the general state theory tradition with the analysis of scholars like Omi and Winant specifically focusing on the racial state (Hall 2003). Hall insisted on the need for a structural view of the US “racial state in a globalized milieu” and viewed that state as a main “locus of conflict” between the dominant racial group and those racially dominated in society (2003: 173–174). This racial state’s bureaucratic officials are also viewed as often acting relatively autonomously with regard to other powerful political economic actors.

THE RACIAL STATE: RECENT NEO-MARXIST PERSPECTIVES

In recent years some neo-Marxist analysts have probed deeply into the relationships of class and racial oppression. For instance, in the 1990s, influenced by European neo-Marxists, Jack Niemonen argued that traditional race relations analysts must move to more aggressive examinations of the relationship of the established state to racial inequality (1995). Critiquing the mainstream race relations focus on individual prejudice and its conception of the liberal US state, he argued for a structuralist perspective emphasizing that racial relations have roots in “material forces,” that these must be assessed in their “specific historical contexts,” and that racial “discourse and practice are embodied in, and shaped by, the state”
(Niemonen 1995: 35). He is an early critic of the approach of scholars like Omi and Winant, arguing that this US racial state is never a “neutral arbiter in racial and ethnic conflicts because it embodies rather than stands apart from those conflicts” (Niemonen 1995: 35).

Writing about the same time, the neo-Marxist analysts John Solomos and Les Back likewise underscored the states’ role in the “reproduction of racially structured situations” (Solomos and Back 1995: 408). In their view mainstream conceptions of race and racism are themselves regularly politicized, and these larger political contexts must be examined well beyond the economic structures usually assessed by Marxist analysts. They prefer conceptualizing “race” solely as a political construct with different forms. They note that a few research studies of specific state institutions that maintain racial structures in the US and South Africa have examined this political context. Thus, they raise key questions such as “What is the precise role of the state in the reproduction of racially structured social relations?” And “How far can the state be transformed into an instrument of antiracist political actions?” (Solomos and Back 1995: 409–418).

In his other work Solomos also foregrounds the issue of distinctively racist social structures being generated by specific historical struggles. Citing scholars like John Gabriel and Gideon Ben-Tovim, he notes that their autonomous state model prioritizes ideology over practice, viewing racist ideologies as driving political economic actions in nation-states where such racism exists. Critical in this perspective is the argument that modern nation-states are not monolithic or permanent, but are political sites of recurring racist and antiracist struggles (Solomos 1986).

More recently, neo-Marxist sociologist David Theo Goldberg published the first book-length comparative analysis of “racial states,” one that notes that racial states are subsequently “racist states.” In his assessment of state developments in South Africa, Europe, and North America, Goldberg shows that “race” homogeneity and exclusionary racial structures, as an extension of family networks, are fundamental to the material and conceptual development of numerous nation-states. Modern nation-states did not seek to develop as “heterogeneous spaces,” but specifically developed “as racially and culturally homogeneous ones” (Goldberg 2001: 16). As matters of rational social control, racial struggles, structures, and ideologies have been important in the emergence of modern racial state “projects and practices, social conditions and institutions.” These modern states are “intimately involved in the reproduction of national identity, the national population, labor and security in and through the articulation of race, gender, and class” (Goldberg 2001: 5–6). These are important points for state theorizing, but it is noteworthy that Goldberg also makes no significant use of the prior US scholarly tradition generated by critical black social thought and activism, a tradition emphasizing structural and systemic racism realities as they relate to an array of societal institutions. Moreover, these various racial state theorists fail to investigate critically the
what and how of elite whites’ central role in the creation and reproduction of state-generated racist realities.

BUILDING ON CRITICAL BLACK ANALYSES OF THE RACIST STATE

For many decades a critical black social scientific worldview and policy-oriented perspective have challenged much nineteenth- and twentieth-century white framing of North American patterns of social oppression, including the Eurocentric knowledge system justifying the extensive white oppression of people of color, both nationally and globally. For example, between the 1940s and the 1970s the brilliant but neglected black American sociologist Oliver C. Cox contributed mightily to an understanding of the incestuous intertwining of institutional racism and capitalistic economic structures. As Cox demonstrated in *Caste, Class and Race*, the concepts of capitalists and of elite white people essentially “mean the same thing for, with respect to the colored peoples of the world, it is almost always through a white bourgeoisie that capitalism has been introduced. The early [white] capitalist settlers … were disposed to look upon the latter and their natural resources as factors of production to be manipulated impersonally with ‘white capital’ in the interest of profits” (2015 [1948]: Kindle loc. 8883–8891). Cox was apparently the first US scholar to analyze how the capitalistic elite’s *whiteness* played a central role in the development of both US capitalism and its related white-racist state – a state that implemented and honed a white-racist ideology and legal structure to maintain that white elite’s broad societal control (Cox 1959).

Moreover, drawing on earlier African-American social thinkers like Cox to help navigate the 1960s Civil Rights movement, black activist-scholars Kwame Ture and Charles Hamilton further analyzed the racial and class aspects of what they termed the “white power structure.” They called out and critically assessed that collective white power and showed how it oppressed people of color within numerous structures of “institutional racism” (Ture and Hamilton 1967). Their critical research work had great impact. In the late 1960s and 1970s, numerous black and a few white activists and social scientists were inspired by the black social or nationalist movements and critical black epistemological tradition to research issues of institutional racism, internal colonialism, and capitalism, including the racist actions of the US state. These included the black scholar-activists Robert Allen (1969) and James Jones (1972), as well as the white scholars Louis Knowles and Kenneth Prewitt (1969) and Joe and Clairece Feagin (1978). This important work has usually been neglected by most later social science analysts of the racial state.

Significantly, too, in the early 1990s African-American scholars such as Kimberlé Crenshaw (1991), bell hooks (1994), and Patricia Hill Collins (1990) developed an intersectionality conceptual approach to understanding society and the state. Over time they have critically analyzed the ways in which racial and gender oppression have been closely interconnected and embedded in
the operations of both the US economy and the US state, especially with regard to the lives of women of color. Central to their analyses is how the US legal and political structures of the state have operated to jointly institutionalize racial, class, and gender oppression.

Most recently, the African-American sociologist Noel Cazenave has been inspired in part by this black critical tradition to examine how the local level of the US state is also racialized (2011). His work is timely considering that this localized dimension of state-run systemic racism has become highly visible in cases like Flint, Michigan, where the mostly black community’s water supply was poisoned through careless, potentially criminal decisions made by a mostly white governing body headed by Michigan’s white governor. Researching two other city governments, Cazenave demonstrated that the leading, disproportionately white politicians and bureaucratic managers of “urban racial states” make decisions shaped not only by white business elites and other external interests but also by their own interests as part of state bureaucracies. He outlines the range and contexts of their white-framed decisions: from “racially oblivious” actions to “racially ameliorative” or “racially repressive” actions (Cazenave 2011: 169–170). The long-institutionalized structure of local racial states ensures that, while some now have politicians or managers of color, all such locales of urban political management operate within constraints established by the status quo of a systemically racist US society.

THE SYSTEMICALLY RACIST STATE: US FOUNDATIONS

Drawing from the insights and research on institutional racism and political economy in this long-established critical black tradition, we turn to what we consider to be the most accurate theory of the racial state – or better, the systemically racist state. Our focus is again on the US state.

Over centuries of imperialistic colonization, white Western elites have engaged in much nation-state building. In the US case, this elite dominance has resulted in many racially oppressive, state-reinforced structures and actions with lasting consequences to the present. These state-enforced actions have included the genocidal oppression of indigenous Americans, the massive enslavement of black Americans, the exploitative incorporation of Hispanic and Asian immigrant labor, the creation of the near slavery of Jim Crow segregation, and continuing large-scale and systemic racial discrimination and inequality into the twenty-first century.

Unmistakably, the US state is much more than a “state” with a distinctive racial dimension, a view most analysts of the racial state have adopted. Indisputable empirical evidence demonstrates that the US nation-state is foundationally and systemically racist. It has been this way since the eighteenth century. As we detail in the next sections, this systemically racist state was, and still is, founded upon a thoroughly white-framed Constitution
and a racialized legal and political system first established by elite white male slaveholders and their elite commercial allies. They constructed a white-racist state from the ground up, and thereby protected the racially rigged socioeconomic system in which they also ruled – that is, rapidly expanding, slavery-based, wealth-generating agricultural and commercial capitalism (Baptist 2016).

Early on, this economy-buttressing role of the white-racist state became obvious in its aggressive funding and building of critical aspects of a transportation infrastructure (e.g., extensive railways) linking together a capitalism replete with slave plantations, slave ports and ship building, slave-produced cotton and other related manufacturing, and the commercial selling of these manufactured products. Repeatedly, the role of the white-racist state has been to create wealth and prosperity for white Americans, most especially those in the upper classes (Beckert 2014).

Since much of this foundational and systemically racist reality, past and present, is relatively unknown or intentionally concealed, we devote the next sections to some detailed recovery and documentation of this much overlooked societal reality. Consider, first, that from its beginning in the 1780s, the US state complex has been grounded in a Constitution created and maintained by elite white men, assisted by an array of implementing (male and female, white and other) acolytes. That Constitution, undemocratically prepared by elite white men in 1787, is still the legal and political foundation of the United States. Of the 55 men at the constitutional convention, 40 percent were or had been slave owners; numerous others profited as merchants and professionals from the enslavement system (Feagin 2012; National Archives and Records Administration 1986). Contrary to much scholarly and popular discussion, then and now, these elite white men did not create a real democracy where most adults could actively participate in democratically structured political institutions. These elite delegates’ Constitution did implement important reforms rejecting certain antidemocratic British practices. However, it also made sure that the new US state protected private profit-making property, including land taken from indigenous peoples and the enslaved African-American workers that many whites “owned” (Feagin 2014). Slaveholding James Madison, considered by many the “brains” behind the Constitution’s final structure, and two colleagues argued in the then influential Federalist Papers against true democracy, preferring instead a (white) “republic” that allowed for a screening of “public views, by passing them through the medium of a chosen body of citizens, whose wisdom may best discern the true interest of their country, and whose patriotism and love of justice will be least likely to sacrifice it to temporary or partial considerations” (Madison 1787). The “chosen body” most white constitution-makers had in mind comprised well-off white men (see Dolbeare and Medcalf 1987).

The new US Constitution and associated legal system provided the essential and foundational legitimations and protections for the racialized enslavement
of nearly a fifth of the US population. This was accomplished by means of several constitutional provisions: (1) Article 1, Section 2, counting the enslaved person as only three-fifths of a white person; (2) Article 1, Sections 2 and 9, apportioning by this three-fifths formula; (3) Article 1, Section 8, on congressional authority to suppress slave insurrections; (4) Article 1, Section 9, preventing abolition of the slave trade; (5) Article 1, Sections 9 and 10, exempting slave-made goods from export duties; (6) Article 4, Section 2, mandating return of fugitive slaves; and (7) Article 4, Section 4, providing federal government help for putting down domestic violence (e.g., slave workers’ uprisings). This Constitution, together with other legal and political actions taken after its ratification, intentionally set up a foundationally and systemically racist US state (Feagin 2010: 27–32; Lively 1992: 4–5).

Further demonstrating that the US was established as a “white man’s republic” from its earliest years, one of the first pieces of congressional legislation was the 1790 Naturalization Act. It required that only “free white persons” could become naturalized US citizens. Thus, as historian Peter O’Neill has shown, the many Irish immigrants coming in soon after 1790 were thereby legally “white” and could soon become US citizens. As a result, Irish Americans gradually became well-integrated with other whites in nineteenth-century economic and political institutions. In contrast, this law and its implementation signaled that those in the growing population considered racially inferior – African, Native, Chinese, and Mexican Americans – could not be full US citizens, nor be societally advantaged like early white immigrants (O’Neill 2017).

For its first seven decades, the US government was generally controlled by slaveholders and their slavery-supportive merchant and professional allies. Primary goals included protecting the reality and profits of an economy substantially based on the often murderous theft of indigenous Americans’ lands; the brutal enslavement of millions of African-American workers to work those and other lands; and, by the 1840s and 1850s, the theft of the lands of Mexicans and the exploitation of Chinese immigrant laborers. Indeed, until the mid-1860s most African Americans and other Americans of color remained under an officially imposed racial totalitarianism. This totalitarianism involved a white-controlled state and other societal institutions regulating most areas of everyday life for most Americans of color. For example, until the 1860s and the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution, the major US slaveholding areas operated under a state-totalitarian system that aggressively denied enslaved African Americans basic human rights (Feagin 2014).

A modestly revised version of this racial totalitarianism persisted long after slavery during the extended era of Jim Crow segregation (1870s–1960s). The Jim Crow segregation era again revealed a white-racist state working to assist the material prosperity of whites. Legalized racial segregation typically relegated black and Mexican Americans to low-paying jobs. Moreover, the
major welfare state programs created by the US government from the 1930s to
the 1950s systematically discriminated against Americans of color. The latter
were often excluded, such as from Old Age Insurance (Social Security), because
of the occupations they held (e.g., agricultural workers). These government
welfare programs and later government housing and veterans’ programs after
the Second World War – the first “affirmation action” programs – dramatically
expanded the white middle class (Katznelson 2005).

Clearly, racialized dominance by whites over people of color has long
extended well beyond official state contours. From the centuries-long slavery
and Jim Crow eras (82 percent of American history) to the present, successive
white-run oligarchical regimes have created, maintained, and extended racially
inegalitarian and undemocratic institutions not only in areas such as politics
and policing but also in economic institutions and (private and public)
educational institutions, thereby socially disadvantaging or significantly
excluding people of color (Feagin 2012).

Some readers of this historical analysis might ask, what about the widespread
framing of the US state as being about “liberty and justice for all”? Using this
individualistic language of the English Lockean tradition, from the beginning to
the present day, the mainstream celebration of the “founding fathers” has
portrayed them as establishing a liberty-and-justice system approaching
political perfection. However, more critical state theorists have shown that
the Lockean “social contract” that Western individualism has emphasized is
not the free and just reality that is claimed. As political philosopher Charles
Mills observes, instead there is a racial, class, and gender “contract,” and it is
just among those in the dominant groups at the top of societal hierarchies.
Western states are thus racial-contract states where the dominant white group
asserts dominant power and denies “self-ownership rights to people of color”
viewed in white-racialized terms as “subpersons” (Mills 2011: 45–46). As
critical black analysts have argued since the early 1800s, the US state was
hypocritically proclaimed as a democratic republic, yet was actually a whites-
only republic (e.g., Walker 1993 [1830]).

THE SYSTEMICALLY RACIST STATE

Essential to the operation of any white-racist state is an array of specific political
institutions, including important legislative, judicial, and executive branches. In
the US case each of these branches was established and continues to operate in
buttressing a still systemically racist state. We will now briefly demonstrate key
empirical aspects of major state branches that remain central to contemporary
racist state operations.

The elite white male founders established the US Senate as an intentionally
antidemocratic political institution, one designed to protect their racial, class,
and gender interests. James Madison wrote that the Senate was designed to
protect the people against “transient impressions into which they themselves
might be led” (quoted in Caro 2002: 9). He was especially concerned with protecting the propertied elite against the “masses.” The 1787 Constitution established two senators for each US state. This was an antidemocratic upper house where people (until 1948 all but three were elite white men) in a sparsely populated state got the same two-senator representation as those in much more populated states. Senators had longer terms than representatives in the more democratic House. This white elite Senate was provided with substantial and exclusive decision-making power, including ratifying treaties and vetting major presidential appointments (Feagin 2012). Thus, since the late eighteenth century the US Senate has been a central source for much racialized legislation that has been necessary to protect white dominance during the slavery, Jim Crow, and contemporary eras of a white-racist society.

Key features of the systemically racist state’s major legislative bodies have persisted to the present. In recent years white men have overwhelmingly dominated major political institutions. This includes the still racialized Senate and House of Representatives. The 2015–2017 US Congress was 80 percent white and mostly male. (White men are only 31 percent of the population.) These officials were not unique, for white men also then dominated major elected offices at many local government levels – as mayors of large cities, legislators and governors in most states, major judges, and top police officials (Bump 2015; Baxter and Keene 2014). Assisted by modest numbers of white women, these white male top government officials have regularly passed or implemented legislation reflecting their white-racist goals and white racial framing – framing of themselves as white-virtuous, entitled, and competent and framing of people of color as unvirtuous, unentitled, and incompetent. Over recent decades and up to the present, such legislation has included a significant reduction in government socioeconomic programs to assist modest-income people of color and a periodic reduction in their voting opportunities. White legislative action has also included laws making it more difficult for immigrants of color to establish a secure socioeconomic or citizenship status. Currently, such legislative actions, and executive actions implementing them, are intended by the white elite at the helm of the racist state to slow down or prevent the development of political power by the growing numbers of Americans of color (Feagin 2014).

Yet another state institution intentionally created as racialized and undemocratic by the white founders is the Supreme Court. An unelected body of nine with little democratic overview, the court has gradually gained great and largely unsupervised state power. This judicial elite has periodically “amended” the US Constitution. Together with colleagues in appellate courts just below them in power, these judges in effect legislate without input from the more democratic legislative branch. As of mid-2017, just 114 justices (110 men and 4 women) have ever served on the high court. Some 97 percent of these have been white.

Over the century and a half from the 1790s to the 1950s an all-white-male Supreme Court aggressively protected the foundational slavery and Jim Crow
structures of US society. Leading white judges regularly generated legal rulings that utilized a legal lens reflecting their white-racist framing of state and society. One of the first and most important was the *Dred Scott v. John F. A. Sandford* (1857) Supreme Court decision. Assessing a petition from Dred Scott, an enslaved black American, elite white judges ruled that this native-born man was *not* a US citizen. The decision, as stated by the Chief Justice, argued African Americans were “beings of an inferior order, and altogether unfit to associate with the white race, either in social or political relations.” They had “no rights which the white man was bound to respect.” Further, the decision insistently added that this view of black inferiority was “universal in the civilized portion of the white race” (*Dred Scott* 1857: 407–408). These elite judges were operating out of a broad white-racist framing of society. That white frame has persisted over generations now, and still includes much more than just racist prejudices. It incorporates racist images, emotions, and interpretive narratives.

*Dred Scott* showed not only that the US had a systemically racist state excluding blacks from citizenship but also that the extensive slavery system was essential to white wealth – and that such oppression was legitimated by a racist framing of black and white Americans at all levels of society. In the nineteenth century most US presidents and most members of Congress aggressively supported this white framing and the highly racialized and extensively segregated society it legitimated.

While we do not have the space to assess other powerful state institutions in any detail, we must note that since 1789 all but one of the 45 US presidents have been elite white men, and most with close ties to the capitalistic economic system. (Barack Obama, the only president of color, was surrounded by elite white officials.) This usually white male presidential executive, and the always white male-dominated Senate, have provided the state power necessary for the white elite to secure its major political and economic interests – including centuries-old expansions of this racist state’s power across North America and much of the globe. To the present, this expansion and imperialism have been regularly viewed out of the dominant white frame as the country’s “manifest destiny” and “expansion of democracy” (*Rana* 2010; *Feagin* 2012).

**LEGAL SEGREGATION AND THE JIM CROW RACIST STATE**

The hyperracist Jim Crow state lasted from the eighth decade of the nineteenth century to the seventh decade of the supposedly “modern” twentieth century. Today many Americans, especially white Americans, consider the Jim Crow state era to be something in the distant past, yet it only officially ended in 1969, well within the lifetimes of millions of currently living Americans. Recent research has demonstrated its lasting effects on the current thought and actions of those who were oppressed by Jim Crow totalitarianism and their descendants (*Thompson-Miller*, *Feagin*, and *Picca* 2015).
In this era the state’s undemocratic institutions again played a central role in legalizing and buttressing the oppression of African Americans in what was essentially a new version of enslavement. Just a decade after the official ending of US slavery in 1865, another major Supreme Court decision by elite white men blocked the federal prosecution of the many white-supremacist mass murderers of 150 newly freed black voters and officials in Louisiana, part of the state-sanctioned white violence that ended Reconstruction’s brief liberalization of the white-racist state (Feagin 2012). Decades later, eight of the nine Supreme Court’s white male judges decided in *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) that racial segregation of Louisiana railroad cars was constitutional. The court’s white men repeatedly demonstrated their intensely white-racist framing as they declared that in regard to racial segregation “legislation is powerless to eradicate [white] racial instincts.” Underscoring their framing and central role in a systemically racist state, they decided that “If one race be inferior [blacks] to the other socially, the Constitution of the United States cannot put them upon the same plane” (*Plessy* 1896: 563). This powerful decision set a major precedent backing up the rapidly spreading, racially segregated facilities across the country.

Centuries of a slavery-centered political economy were thus followed by nearly a century (1870s–1960s) of the near slavery of Jim Crow. Racial segregation was extensively legalized and enshrined in southern and border state areas by the many white male legislators. The lives of black Americans were highly regimented by racially totalitarian laws mostly excluding them from significant participation in voting and politics and mandating racially segregated schools, workplaces, and public accommodations. Elite southern whites regained the great political power they had lost during the Civil War in major national government institutions, especially in the US Congress. As a result, they were able to regularly create major roadblocks to all government attempts to reduce segregation and expand civil rights until the mid-1960s (Thompson-Miller and Feagin 2007).

They were often assisted by the all-white-male Supreme Court, as it persisted in mostly backing up the racist Jim Crow state from the 1890s to the 1950s in important race-related decisions – that is, until a few decisions against Jim Crow laws were gradually forced by African-American and Mexican-American civil rights lawyers and movements, especially in important decisions of the 1950s–1960s (e.g., *Brown v. Board of Education*, see Bell 1980; see also Klarman 2004).

During the Jim Crow era leading white government officials not only created great segregation by means of Jim Crow laws, but also destroyed many black attempts at socioeconomic progress. For example, numerous black business communities were intentionally destroyed by elite and ordinary whites, such as in the large-scale massacres of black people and major destruction of businesses in the black communities of Wilmington (North Carolina) and Tulsa (Oklahoma) (Oliver and Shapiro 1995: 51–52). Repeatedly, many thousands
of white violent attacks on black Americans were led or unimpeded by white local and federal government officials, and white perpetrators were rarely brought to justice by state officials.

Additionally, this era’s systemically racist US state – legal segregation in the south and similar but de facto racial segregation in the north – had substantial global impact as a model of oppression. Examples can be seen in the development of white-racist states in Germany and South Africa. For example, the scholars Michael Burleigh and Wolfgang Wippermann have shown that German Nazi officials’ racial state goals cannot be classified as just reactionary (1991). Instead, being well-read on the white-racist perspectives long coming out of the United States in support of the Jim Crow state, the Nazi officials sought to create a new and ideal racial state to last for a millennium. This new state would be one with an aggressively white-racist framing and ordering (i.e., dividing and segregating) of groups according to “race” categories created by white social scientists (Burleigh and Wippermann 1991: 3). Specifically, Adolf Hitler and other like-minded Germans were influenced by the US “race state” (their term for Jim Crow) in developing their Nuremberg laws defining authentic German citizenship and protecting superior German “blood” (Whitman 2017: 3).

Over time, this ideal German racial state development was to narrow class divisions and to create racial hierarchy dividing “healthy” Aryans from racial inferiors. The latter (e.g., Jews) were repressed, segregated, exiled, or exterminated. Imitating the US Jim Crow state, Nazi leaders created a white-racist government with laws sustaining a racial hierarchy – laws for the most part voluntarily implemented by white German professionals and state bureaucrats, as they had been by similar professionals and bureaucrats in the United States. For Nazi leaders and many ordinary Germans, the Second World War was thus a racial war – the goal being to create a new racially hierarchical society that eliminated or oppressed “lesser races” (Burleigh and Wippermann 1991: 4).

REPLACING THE JIM CROW STATE: THE REALITY OF INTEREST CONVERGENCE

Like other recent scholars (e.g., Niemonen 1995), our examination of empirical data on the systemically racist US state has revealed that it cannot be a “neutral arbiter” in most racial conflicts because it structurally embodies those conflicts in several ways. Indeed, this racist state structurally and differentially empowers key players in racial conflicts, especially the elite white men at its head. In a real sense, the latter are the white-racist state. For nearly a century these powerful white actors, assisted by acolytes at all government levels, and especially in southern and border areas, implemented and maintained a Jim Crow society, one of history’s most oppressive racial states.

Moreover, without great pressure over many decades from those oppressed by that white-racist state – who were thus excluded from participation in its
decision-making – and without other important external societal conditions, powerful white officials would never have acted to bring even modest decreases in US racial oppression. In such societal settings the default condition has been the most extensive oppression possible. Historically, major societal changes, such as significant reductions in racial or other societal oppression, more taxes on powerful oppressors, and expenditures for public social support services for those oppressed, occur only under the relatively rare circumstances of large-scale and sustained people’s movements, major state upheavals, or major wars (Scheidel 2017). Moreover, after such changes are implemented in the US case, the elite white men at society’s helm typically push back as quickly as they can to their preferred default inegalitarian condition.

Indeed, a leading constitutional expert on US legal and political racism, Derrick Bell, argued that the white-controlled federal government has only taken action to remedy aspects of racial discrimination or otherwise improve the conditions of Americans of color when a significant segment of powerful whites have benefitted thereby – a process he termed racial group “interest convergence” (1980: 518). In his well-documented view certain Supreme Court decisions since the 1950s–1960s era of Civil Rights movements by African Americans and other Americans of color illustrate this principle. Consider the aforementioned Brown v. Board of Education decision that began much official desegregation of public schools. This decision was substantially the result of decades of African-American civil rights organizing, litigation, and demonstrations. But even these protests were not enough. At least as important was the US state’s need to put a better face on its international human rights image, especially in its competition with the Soviet Union for influence in non-European countries. The moderate segment of the white elite was concerned with international relations and global politics, as could be seen in the assertion of a US attorney general after Brown that Jim Crow must be dismantled because it “furnishes grist for [Soviet] Communist propaganda mills” (Franklin 1974: 421).

For more than a decade after Brown, this moderate wing of the governing white elite (e.g., President Lyndon Johnson) faced yet more international human rights pressures, including those connected with the ongoing competition for worldwide influence with the Soviet Union. Even more importantly, local and federal governments faced escalating internal pressures not only from many nonviolent civil rights protests but also from hundreds of violent black urban uprisings. Again demonstrating the interest convergence principle, even these societal pressures probably would not have brought the significant racial change – especially three major civil rights laws – that they did without other great pressures on the federal government at the time. Importantly, the latter included the federal government’s great need for more black soldiers for an intensifying Vietnam War (Feagin 2014).

Significantly, many white policy and social science analysts in this era viewed these large-scale black protests, especially the growing numbers of major urban
uprisings, negatively out of elements of the old white racial framing (e.g., black “looters”). However, influenced by earlier critical black social thought on the US state and politics, several black and white scholars such as Robert Allen (1969) and Joe Feagin and Harlan Hahn (1973) developed a critical perspective on this black violence as an expected “politics of the dispossessed” to protest a white-racist state. In a book-length assessment of hundreds of black uprisings in the 1960s–1970s, Feagin and Hahn demonstrated that this collective protest violence was “occasioned by the failure of the existing urban political system to respond adequately . . . . [R]ioting reflected an attempted reclamation of political authority . . . and a type of political recall . . . of the entire political apparatus that had failed” (1973: 53). Early on, these scholars underscored the political agency of millions of African Americans with few avenues or means to voice their social concerns to the state and larger society. In our view these research analyses also need to be resurrected in contemporary state theorizing.

INSTITUTIONALIZED BACKTRACKING: THE MODERN RACIST STATE

When leading white state officials, usually reluctantly, agree to important racial liberalization in this systemically racist state and society, they permit only those that will not significantly threaten their national state and societal control, especially in the long run. In assessing the reality of this systemically racist state, one must add to the interest convergence principle another key historical lesson from US racial conflict and change – what Joe Feagin has termed the time-limitation principle (Feagin 2017). That is, the default condition of well-established systems of racial exploitation and oppression is always as much exploitation and oppression as possible. After significant racial changes occur, such as ending legal segregation with three important 1960s civil rights laws, there has always been large-scale elite and ordinary white pushback against new racially liberalized conditions, usually even as they are taking place. Such racial changes are structurally time-limited, typically with a short half-life demonstrated as they are weakened in principle or practice.

Thus, by the early 1970s, as US and international human rights pressures lessened and the Vietnam War ended, leading white state officials at local and national levels began backing off of implementing major desegregation and other civil rights changes. Beginning with President Richard Nixon (1969–1975) and continuing to President Donald Trump (2017–), conservative presidents have aggressively sought white voters (the racialized “southern strategy”) and thus pursued white interests. Since the early 1970s, operating in various branches of the state, the dominant conservative wing of the white elite has created a Supreme Court largely unsympathetic to real racial desegregation, backtracked on voting rights and other civil rights laws’ enforcement, militarized urban policing, and
expanded discriminatory incarceration – thereby reestablishing features of the racist state that were modestly reformed in the 1960s (Feagin and Ducey 2017).

Since the 1960s the US state’s mostly white elite still “regularly generates racial conflict, enforces racial divisions, and attempts to exploit, exclude or eliminate certain racial groups through homogenizing or marginalizing processes” (Feagin and Elias 2012: 15). From the beginning these have been key features of this systemically racist state. There are many contemporary manifestations of these state-shaped processes.

For example, over the last century to the present day, local and national governments, headed mostly by well-off whites, have implemented laws and regulations directly or indirectly encouraging racial segregation in housing in towns and cities. Mostly white-run governments have also played an important role in backing up a mostly white-controlled economy with many jobs still arranged according to the racial hierarchy and shaped by extensive whites-only networking (DiTomaso 2013). Racial group conflict over jobs and other economic resources is at least as substantial as within-state group contestation, and white state officials rarely implement sustained programs substantially reducing job discrimination. For centuries whites have very disproportionately had better-paying jobs, better material incomes, and other economic power, as compared to most workers of color. Neither the US economy nor the US state are sites allowing fair racial group contestation (Elias and Feagin 2016).

Additionally, there is still a large-scale, state-generated hyperincarceration of black and brown Americans in the US prison-industrial complex’s burgeoning public and private institutions (Alexander 2010). This racialized prison reality substantially stems from police profiling in communities of color and discriminatory processing of people of color by mostly white prosecutors and judges. Over recent decades, top white officials in all state branches (executive, legislative, judicial) have made just token-to-modest efforts to reform this openly racist criminal justice system, including its discriminatory drug laws.

Indeed, in many of these cases of persisting or increasing racial discrimination, the white-racist state officials have backtracked on earlier racial reforms, thereby demonstrating how such reforms are almost always time-limited. Sometimes, too, the weak or partial dismantling of racist institutions, as happened in the case of Jim Crow segregation, opens up more creative ways of buttressing or extending racial (or class) oppression by the white elite. As Randolph Hohle (2015) has demonstrated, the demise of state-created Jim Crow segregation in once highly segregated southern and border areas led many formerly segregationist white government officials to work with white regional and national capitalists – bankers, insurance executives, manufacturers – to secure the implementation of the latter’s long-term capitalistic goals of retreating from government commitments to provide certain public goods and services, especially costly public social support programs. This coalition of white state officials and corporate capitalists made crafty use of antiblack framing and racial fears of whites that increased
as black Americans gained greater economic and political freedom after the 1960s. White capitalists, large and small, and their white government allies propagated, implicitly or explicitly, the highly racialized language and framing of \textit{black/brown=public=inferior} and the parallel \textit{white=private=superior} (Hohle 2015, 2018).

This reinvigorated version of the old white-racist framing of society linked closely to the now jointly sought goals of formerly segregationist officials and regional and national capitalists. Both pursued a reduction in government regulations and taxes and government expenditures on public school systems, certain other public social services, and new public social spending – all of these having a strongly coded meaning of being state actions too oriented to black and brown Americans. In tandem, they also sought an aggressive privatization of numerous government services and facilities, including the officially desegregated public schools, as well as accelerated state expenditures for policing and incarcerating Americans of color. Clearly, the deep-seated, pro-white center of the dominant white frame could be seen in the highly positive evaluation of white privatization goals and actions; the antiblack subframe could be observed in a reinvigorated negative view of oppressed black Americans and a commitment to reducing their much needed public facilities and services (Feagin 2010).

Hohle argues that this elite-developed neoliberal framing has made possible a unified white response across social classes. The white elite has woven “together a thread of white-private-taxes to distort the perception of who ‘owns’ public resources, and a separate thread of white-private-security to define who is comforted by the expanded police and military presence. On the flip side, elites assemble a black-public-taxes sequence to define who benefits from public resources in order to rally support for privatizing our social welfare system” (Hohle 2017).

Note again that the default condition of the elite white male dominance system has been as little state intervention as possible for major socioeconomic supports for ordinary Americans, especially those framed as racially inferior. Here, as in the past, racialized oligopolistic capitalism aggressively promotes, wherever possible, state-accelerated destruction of many public social services and goods, including by their privatization for private profit – as contrasted with those increased state services and tax reductions needed for the wealth enhancement of the capitalistic elite and their more affluent acolytes (Feagin and Ducey 2017).

**THE TRUMP ERA: THE CONTINUING RACIST STATE**

Since the 2016 US presidential election we have observed a further demonstration of not only the time-limitation principle but also the closely related default principle that routinely operate in a systemically racist society like the United States. In that election billionaire developer Donald Trump was
the popular vote loser, yet still became president because of the Constitution’s undemocratic “electoral college,” a racist state institution established by the white “founders” to protect elite white power. Trump won the election with a large majority of white voters, in all income groups including well-off whites. He used an overtly white nationalist and nativistic campaign, assisted by white arch-conservative advisers (many later his appointees) committed to further dismantling earlier state reforms directed at modestly increasing racial democracy (Feagin and Ducey 2017).

In that campaign and later as president, Trump aggressively organized his thinking and actions around an openly white nationalist framing of society. As Michael Eric Dyson has observed, the Trump election was “all about whiteness” (2017: 219). He made campaign speeches about dangerous “inner cities,” sinister Mexican immigrants, and Muslim immigrant “terrorists.” He intentionally played into supporters’ racist framing that includes nativistic fears about demographic changes that might mean less white power and privilege. Trump’s racist framing was predictable, as he had been a “birther” conspiracist on President Barack Obama’s birthplace, an opponent of a Manhattan Muslim community center, an outspoken critic of “Black Lives Matter” efforts at police reform, and a New York landlord with a record of racial discrimination (Coates 2017; Chait 2017).

Once inaugurated, President Donald Trump and his mostly white and arch-conservative staff revealed they were determined to move back toward the historical default condition of a more openly racially segregated and white-dominant America. Thus, he and his appointees openly pursued programs of anti-Mexican wall building and racialized police profiling of Mexicans. They shifted the policing efforts of the Department of Homeland Security away from the more numerous domestic white terrorists to focus heavily on less likely Middle Eastern terrorists (Chait 2017). Long critical of efforts to reform racialized local policing, these white arch-conservatives have pressed law enforcement agencies to more aggressively police black and brown “inner cities.” Moderate policing reforms by two black attorney generals appointed by President Barack Obama were rolled back by Trump’s white attorney general, Jeff Sessions, a lawyer, judge, and senator who had for years expressed racist views of civil rights organizations and supported attempts to restrict black voting. Sessions’ and other administration actions helped to push policing back to the default position of often uncritical, white-racist-framed, and militaristic policing, such as the increased arrest and deportation of nonviolent undocumented immigrant workers (Townes 2017). In recent decades hundreds of unwarranted assaults and killings of black Americans by (mostly white) police officers have triggered local and national civil rights protests seeking the goal, as one civil rights movement named it, of making “Black Lives Matter.” In addition, in the Trump era growing neo-Nazi and other white-supremacist groups marched in various US cities (most famously Charlottesville, Virginia), violence-threatening activities that President Trump
was openly reluctant to condemn. Under the Donald Trump administration the US racial state was again clearly revealed as a site where major racial conflicts are not fairly mediated and where antidemocratic values and practices are still regularly demonstrated.

CONCLUSION

In summary, a systemic racism approach to comprehending white-racist states such as the United States is well demonstrated in social science research. We have emphasized numerous key contributions of this important systemic approach. One is the necessity of calling out and critically analyzing the dominant white-racist framing and actions of elite white men who have, now for centuries, established and headed up a *foundationally* and *systemically* racist US state. In addition to developing highly exploitive structures of racial oppression, they have crafted, perpetuated, and been motivated by a white racial frame that not only dehumanizes people of color but also features white individual and collective virtuousness and the normalizing of whiteness at its center. Utilizing the centuries-old white frame, many important state actions steered by generations of elite white decision-makers and their (male and female, white and other) acolytes have been central to the creation and perpetuation of racially oppressive institutions principally designed to generate unjust enrichment for white Americans and unjust impoverishment for Americans of color.

Periodic state reforms in this centuries-old oppressive system, usually forced by the assertive agency of those oppressed, are always *time-limited* and thus soon reduced as powerful whites successfully press state and society back toward the *default* condition of more overt, large-scale white oppression.

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I. Theories of Political Sociology


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Toward the Convergence of Culture and Political Economy?

Pierre Bourdieu, Michael Mann, and Institutional Theory

Thomas Janoski

For the last half century, theory in political sociology has been dominated at different times by materialist or idealist approaches. From the mid-1960s to the mid-1980s, political economy and conflict theories seemed to prevail, led by Marxist theories but followed by other forms of conflict theories, such as resource mobilization and power resources theory. At this time, political economy approaches tried to bend culture into the class conflict process (see item 1 in Figure 8.1 with the dark circle representing political economy). For instance, gender and race issues were often filtered through class conflict lenses.

From the late 1980s to the first decade of the new millennium there has been a “cultural turn” with ideational, discourse, and narrative theories being more dominant. The “cultural turn” reversed the trend, and culture prevailed in new and exciting approaches to political sociology (see item 2 in Figure 8.1 with culture being hegemonic). And as the political economy approach was dominant in the earlier period, so the cultural approach was in its period. Though not a political economist, Seth Abrutyn (2016: 9) states that the cultural turn “basically abandoned the material side of social life, thus robbing institutions and macrosociology of an essential force or mechanism.” And in the decades prior to the cultural turn, political economy did just the same, putting cultural issues, race and ethnicity, and gender into the straitjacket of class.

However, since the Great Recession of 2008, a new balance of these forces has been appearing, in which the two types of analysis do not try to dominate one another, but instead often reinforce each other in political sociology (see item 3 in Figure 8.1). There are still those who push materialist or idealist explanations alone, but most scholars see at least some value in combining

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1 Abrutyn (2016) does except Jeffery Alexander and neofunctionalism from this statement about the cultural turn ignoring the materialist aspect of politics.
cultural and political economy approaches, and they end up building stronger explanations that include, as explanatory variables, both (a) material factors such as money, resources, and force, and (b) cultural factors such as assumptions, ideas, and ideologies. Both types of theories also have particular areas of political sociology in which their approach is singularly developed, but in many domains of political sociology most scholars are considering aspects of both material and cultural factors.

This chapter will address two theorists who exhibit this convergence. The first major example of this general trend toward reinforcement or overlap in political sociology is Pierre Bourdieu’s (2015) work – *On the State: Lectures at the Collège de France 1989–1992* – that highlights the impact of cultural capital, habitus, and symbolic violence, but also gives due credence to economic and coercive capital in the structuring of state and capitalist power. In *Pascalian Meditations*, Bourdieu (2000: 172) writes:

> Domination, even when based on naked force, that of arms or money, always has a symbolic dimension, and acts of submission, of obedience, are acts of knowledge and recognition, which, as such, implement cognitive structures capable of being applied to all the things of the world, and in particular to social structures.\(^2\)

Patricia Thornton makes a similar point when she asserts that “each of the institutional orders in society has both material and symbolic elements. By material aspects of institutions, we refer to structures and practices; by symbolic aspects, we refer to ideation and meaning, recognizing that the symbolic and the material are intertwined and constitutive of one another” (2012: 10). In these views, culture and political economy are consubstantial, relational, and invariably linked (Arnholtz 2018).

A second major example of convergence of culture and material explanations comes from the four volumes of Michael Mann’s *The Sources of Social Power* (*1986, 1993, 2012a, 2012b*). Mann presents the IEMP theory

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\(^2\) Bourdieu also has stated that “the whole of my work is intended to produce a materialist theory of the symbolic, which is traditionally opposed to the material” (2014: 166).
of power – ideological, economic, military, and political power – which is in many ways similar to Bourdieu’s (1999) approach to capital – symbolic, cultural, economic, and physically coercive capital. Mann is much more systematically historical and comparative than Bourdieu even after his more detailed attention to political sociology in On the State. Mann’s approach is very much a macro- and mezzo-sociological theory, but it has little in the way of micro-aspects that fit Bourdieu’s theory of dispositions and habitus. However, his focus on over 250 years of history is a more detailed and challenging approach to change than Bourdieu’s main focus on the history of the French state. Nevertheless, the similarities of their approaches to both cultural and materialist explanations of politics within fields or institutional spheres are a somewhat unexplored area of convergence that can bring these two major theories of political sociology together.

There are other examples of modified or limited convergence and I will briefly mention a few. First, Bob Jessop’s (2016) work – The State: Past, Present, Future – has taken political economy much further into the arenas of culture of the state as a social relation. Jessop’s “strategic-relational theory” (SRT) identifies several social processes that shape politics, including articulation, collibration, representation, state projects, and social capital in social networks of power.3 His theory combines ideas influenced by Antonio Gramsci and Nicos Poulantzas with ideas influenced by Bourdieu and Foucault. As a result, Jessop sees governance as composed of command and exchange (political economy) and dialogue and solidarity or culture. Davita Glasberg, Abbey Willis, and Deric Shannon (2018: 39) take this a step further using Jessop’s concepts but making power and culture more explicit by inserting a multisite theory of power involving class, gendered, racial, and sexual “state projects” in a permeable and fluid state with “selectivity filters” and varying levels of privilege and disadvantage.4 Second, another synthetic example may also be seen in Luc Boltanski and Ève Chiapello’s work The New Spirit of Capitalism (2005; see also Boltanski 2011; Boltanski and Thévenot 2006). In fact, David Priestland (2016) recommends a complete political sociology being based on “uniting Bourdieu’s culturalist sociology, Boltanski’s more actor-

3 Jessop uses two terms that require elaboration. “Articulation” comes from Gramsci and refers to how cultural forms and practices have relative autonomy, and shows how groups shape, frame, or articulate various policy positions or basic human needs. Cedric de Leon, Manali Desai, and Cihan Tuğal (2009) refer to how political parties shape, frame, or articulate party positions for their constituents. “Collibration” is a process that alters the “weight of individual modes of governance” so that society is better adapted in its complex social relations (based on Dunsire 1993). It is in an indirect way that the state achieves a rebalancing of social capital (Jessop 2016: 171). Although Jessop himself does not supply much in the way of empirical analyses, collibration is in many of the chapters of Morgan and Orloff’s (2017) focus on the many hands of the state.

4 Glasberg et al. use the term “policy arena” but do not use “fields” or make mention of Bourdieu in their theoretical review or their way forward (2018: 56, 1–35, 155–164). In going beyond Jessop, they replace his “balance of class forces” with the “balance of political forces” to accommodate their multisite theory of power (2018: 156–157).
oriented theory, and Mann’s Marxian-Weberian conflictualist scheme of competing power networks” (Priestland 2016: 156). Priestland says that this theory would be both “macro-historical and interpretivist.” A similar integration could include the micro-aspects of Randall Collins’ interaction ritual chains and violence (2004, 2008, 2012). But expanding upon these examples of Jessop, Boltanski, and Collins is beyond the scope of this chapter.5

The surprising but partial convergence of Bourdieu and Mann in political sociology illustrates the promise of a synthetic approach. Bourdieu began with a cultural theory, and ultimately drew on political economy, whereas Mann and Jessop began with political economy and ultimately drew on theories of culture. Both Bourdieu’s and Mann’s theories differ in their emphases, but they agree on combining material resources and ideational culture. This is not to say these theorists are in total agreement, and I want to make it very clear that each of their theories is not a convergence theory that says that societies and states are becoming more similar over time. But their theoretical similarities do suggest a new stage of recognizing that both types of theory – the material and the ideational – have important contributions. Political sociologists can make their arguments stronger by including materials from both approaches. Arguing for one over the other and ignoring evidence from different quarters largely wastes time and effort and it is ultimately incomplete. It seems to repeat the paradox of origin as in “what came first, the chicken or the egg?” In political sociology, is it material action or cultural ideation? In comprehensive and effective research, action and ideation are intrinsically relational and intertwined, as stated long ago by Aristotle – the process is an infinite sequence with no true origin (Emirbayer and Johnson 2008; Sorensen 2003: 10–18).

On the other hand, political sociologists have long relied on institutional theories of politics (Evans, Rueschemeyer, and Skocpol 1985). And they continue to do so. However, institutional theories have some weaknesses that Bourdieu and Mann do not have. One weakness is that there has been a disguised functionalist focus on traditional values and continued reliance on the past as an explanation of the present. This is signified in the powerful explanation in comparative social science of “path dependence” and different countries being shaped by their histories. While institutions definitely have staying power and influence on other organizations, much of what Mann in particular is trying to explain is how the state changes over time, especially when countries encounter other countries and global forces. In other words, countries competing with each other are in a relational context (Emirbayer and Johnson 2008). This can be summarized in the relational concept of power, which is not a major focus of institutional theories.

5 Some of this is emerging in more micro-interactionist theories with “dual process models” that combine culture and values with rationality and action (Haidt 2012; Hitlin and Vaisey 2013; and Robbins and Kiser 2018).
In this chapter, considerable attention is given to the two power theories of Pierre Bourdieu and Michael Mann in their somewhat convergent approaches and to trying to point out both their commonalities and their differences. In the next section I take up the cultural and material approach of Pierre Bourdieu and the ideas of Michael Mann. In the third section I examine their views of social change. I then switch gears in the fourth section and review the institutional approach, exemplified by organizational, historical, and evolutionary institutionalists. And finally I look at three key weaknesses of each theory. But the main focus is on Bourdieu and Mann because they clearly focus on power in a field or institution, but also involve considerable aspects of social change.

**Structures of Power**

The structure of power can be explored through the contrast between Pierre Bourdieu’s and Michael Mann’s theories of power. In lectures published as *On the State* (2015) and in essays published in *State/Culture* (1999) and in the journal *Sociological Theory* (1994), Bourdieu presents a much more comprehensive theory of political sociology involving the state than in any of his other works. In *On the State*, Bourdieu defines the state as “the culmination of a process of concentration of different species of capital” that include physical force, economic capital, cultural or informational capital, and symbolic capital (1999: 57–67). Michael Mann similarly posits the existence of four autonomous sources of power, namely, ideological, economic, military, and political power – the IEMP model (1986). Mann’s conception of power received considerable extension in three subsequent volumes of *The Sources of Social Power* (1993, 2012a, 2012b), and extensive review and replies (2006, 2016; Hall and Schroeder 2005; Schroeder 2016). Mann has been directly and explicitly engaged with political sociology. By contrast, reconstruction of some of Bourdieu’s views on political sociology requires some inference and synthesis (Arnholtz 2018). Nonetheless, both are powerful theoretical influences.

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6 The theories of Pierre Bourdieu and Michael Mann, despite various weaknesses, have seen a resurgence, and at the same time the reflexive and relational aspects of political parties, social movements and public policies have a much more sensitive approach to politics. In this *New Handbook of Political Sociology*, 27 out of 40 chapters reference Bourdieu and 14 refer to Mann. Both Levi Martin and Judd (this volume), and Scoville and Fligstein (this volume) make Bourdieu the major theorist of the next decades (see also Martin 2003). Thus, the monocausal genie of either culture or political economy is out of its lamp, and these two theoretical approaches are now reinforcing each other in the best studies in political sociology (Martin 2011).

7 In his later years, Bourdieu became more overtly political in advocating for different political causes (antineoliberalism, the French Model, farmers, strikers, etc. in 1998 and 2003); however, these discussions have received mixed reviews and are not research studies (Lane 2006; Swartz 2004). This introduction relies more on Bourdieu’s lectures from 1989 to 1992 in *On the State* (2014) and articles in *Language and Symbolic Power* (1991) based on work from 1975 to 1989.
Because Bourdieu’s and Mann’s theories both identify four kinds of power in a similar way, it is instructive to compare them (see Table 8.1).

**Economic Power**

Both theorists also emphasize economic power. Bourdieu refers to “economic capital” that may include money or wealth in kind (e.g., bushels of wheat). Economic capital is often extracted by states through taxes under the penalty of seizures of property, arrests for debt, or the quartering of soldiers (Bourdieu 1999: 59). Mann refers to “economic power” that “derives from the satisfaction of subsistence needs through the social organization of the extraction, transformation, distribution, and consumption of the objects of nature” (1986: 24). These relations may develop in “latent, extensive, symmetrical or political class structures” (1986: 24). Mann refers to economic power as “circuits of praxis,” following Marx (but also, perhaps, echoing Bourdieu’s *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, 1977). Both Bourdieu and Mann view economic power as a separate form of power, and Jessop’s exchange of power is very closely related to the two. States may exercise economic power through taxes and regulation, but other actors such as individuals and economic organizations also may exercise economic power in a capitalist economy. And both theories view physical force and economic power as existing in civil society outside of the state. Rebellions, organized crime, and private corporate police forces, for example, involve the nonstate exercise of force, and corporate and
private capital involve nonstate economic power in terms of campaign contributions, threats to move operations to other provinces or countries, and even some private governments that regulate commerce (e.g., stock exchanges, credit rating firms, and the National Collegiate Athletic Association [NCAA]).

Military and Police Power

Both Bourdieu’s and Mann’s theories have a clear similarity in their characterization of military force as an autonomous locus of power, and Jessop’s command governance is closely related. Bourdieu refers to “the capital of physical force,” which includes external force exercised by other “actual or potential states” and which generally expresses itself through war. He also refers to internal physical force. Mann refers to “military power” as the direct force that is “concentrated-coercive” in that it “mobilizes violence” as the “bluntest” form of social power (1986). Military power may be exercised through the coercion of labor (corvée or conscription) where one works under penalty of death. Military power also includes the power of an army to engage other external forces, whether they are invading one’s own lands or are enemies located abroad (1986: 26). Both Bourdieu and Mann adhere to a Weberian view of the state as an organization that holds a monopoly on legitimate violence, whether that violence be exercised through the internally focused police or the mostly externally oriented military.

In short, with respect to military and economic power, Bourdieu’s and Mann’s arguments are similar. The more difficult issues in trying to reconcile the two theories concern the other half of their approaches to capital and power, which involve cultural aspects of the state. In Table 8.1, the components of each theory are outlined. Items 1 and 2 are rather similar. I will next discuss item 3 (knowledge) and item 4 (political discourse), which distinguish these theorists more clearly from each other than their discussions of military and economic capital or power.

Knowledge

Bourdieu refers to knowledge as cultural or informational capital, which broadly includes things the state does to create information that describes or classifies politics and society. His specific examples include government censuses, national accounting systems (of the state and the economy as a whole), archives, and “mental structures” such as the principle of “national identity” that impose “common principles of vision and division” (1999: 61; 2015: 212–219). Bourdieu specifically connects his account of knowledge to Durkheim’s sociology of knowledge, Levi-Strauss’ “savage mind” (Bourdieu 1999: 61), and Durkheim’s theory of the “internalized state” (Bourdieu 2015: 214).
By contrast, Mann’s “ideological power” is construed to include knowledge with normative and emotional dimensions. He disaggregates ideological power into three parts: first, “meaning” imposed upon sense perceptions (1986: 23); second, norms or “shared understandings of how people should act morally” in relation to one another; and third, aesthetic or ritual practices. An example to illustrate the ideological force of aesthetic ritual might be the scene in Casablanca in which the French patrons of Rick’s bar sing “La Marseillaise” in the presence of officers of the occupying German army. The German colonel does not contest the singing, for fear of embarrassment; instead, he closes the bar on the entirely unrelated pretext of illegal gambling – the song itself has moral force. Mann further recognizes subtypes of ideological power. Ideologies may be transcendent (with aspirations to be universal, as in religion, science, or communist ideology) or immanent (more specific and time-bound, as in a particular political campaign). Regardless of which type it belongs to, ideology should be conceived of as a worldview that incorporates some deeply held assumptions about society and the state. Mann’s conception of ideology does not assume that an ideology is logically coherent. For example, he notes that people may hold “confused and often contradictory values and norms” (2016: 303). Still, Mann’s conception of ideological power is more like a set of explicit normative ideas, and less like a set of internalized, precognitive categories, than Bourdieu’s conception of informational or cultural capital (and Jessop’s unreflexive power). A further contrast is Jessop’s solidarity governance involving love and reflexivity; however, this concept is quite distinct from Bourdieu and Mann, and I will not pursue it further.

Discourse Power

The fourth category, which I have labeled “political discourse,” is more complex. Bourdieu refers to symbolic capital as “any property, when it is perceived by social agents endowed with categories of perception which cause them to know it and recognize it, to give it value” (1999: 62; 2015: 191). He gives “honor” in Mediterranean societies as an example, and one can infer that his conception of honor is more or less like the Weberian concept of status honor. Symbolic capital is “perceived through categories of perception” as a product of divisions or oppositions. In contrast to cultural capital, symbolic capital may involve the exercise of “symbolic violence,” or the authoritative devaluation of others. Bourdieu appears to view the exercise of symbolic

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8 Philip Gorski (2006: 122–131) argues that Mann’s theory of ideological power could be strengthened by considering “intensive” and “diffuse” ideological power. Diffuse ideological power would be especially useful in completing his concept of caging with what might be referred to as “decaging” or “loosely coupled” caging.

9 Risto Heiskala (2016: 31–35) would redo Mann’s theory of ideology and add two other items: natural power to include the environment, and artefactual power to include technology.
violence as instrumental, something like the Marxist thesis that ruling-class ideology is a set of ideas used deliberately in the service of interests. Bourdieu also appears to regard symbolic violence as an effective means whereby political parties can shape the interests of their constituents and other followers through symbolic violence. Symbolic capital seems to be characteristically connected to some sort of organization; Bourdieu refers to the state, its bureaucracy, and a subcategory of symbolic capital called “juridical capital” (1999: 63). He also refers to the law and various purveyors of law in courts as enforcing symbolic violence. In a sense, a trial is all about the symbolic capital of the defendant and prosecutor or litigant doing “symbolic violence” to each other. The formation and spread of ideologies also include organizations such as religious communities and the media.

Mann’s concept of political power has some similarities to Bourdieu’s discussion of symbolic capital. Mann distinguishes political power from coercion and force. In contrast to police or military power, political power relies on the prestige of states’ “centralized, institutionalized, territorialized regulation” of social relations (1986: 24). This conception of political power clearly emphasizes its symbolic and economic aspects. For Mann, political power is why people follow leaders, parties, and institutions. This political power is also akin to Weber’s concept of legitimacy, but it differs from Weber’s emphasis on coercion. For Mann, political power is conceptually and empirically distinct from military power, which rests on the threat of force. Jessop’s concept of dialogue and negotiation fits well into many aspects of political power. Political power may be exercised by organizations that are not connected to the military power of the state, such as political parties or an opposition that are out of power. In Mann’s view, those who exercise political power have a symbolic or ideological power unto themselves, which excludes or controls for coercion. This position is somewhat different from Weber’s claim that the distinctiveness of the state is its monopoly on physical coercion, which both Mann and Bourdieu seem to accept. However, their fourth view of power shows that their view differs somewhat from Weber’s insistence on “monopoly on violence.” And Weber’s own view of “legitimacy” avoids the direct use of coercive power.

More broadly, Robert Wuthnow (1989) adds agents, organizations, and stages to how ideological power was historically spread in different epochs: (a) in the Reformation, by the religious leaders in a pulpit with sermons about favored protestant ideas and disfavored catholic dogma; (b) in the Enlightenment by philosophers and intellectuals, with discussions of books and new ideas being discussed in elite salons; and (c) with the rise of socialism, with radical organizers making speeches at rallies and strikes to promote the union cause.

Novak, Sawyer, and Sparrow (2016: 245) indicate that the political “can be conceived apart from violence” and they quote Pierre Clastres that “it is not evident that coercion and subordination contribute the essence of political power at all times and in all places.”
criticize capitalists, and even foment revolution (Wuthnow 1989). More recently, the print and electronic media are thoroughly implicated, with political parties, bloggers, and interest groups involved in election campaigns and regime criticism (Bourdieu covers this but Mann less so). Thus, both Bourdieu and Mann are heavily involved in the delivery of symbolic power through diverse organizations such as churches, salons, trade unions, and the media. In the present period, “symbolic promotion” imposes the ideas of social movement projects through newspapers, television, and the Internet often backed by think tanks, voluntary associations, and lobbying groups.

Bourdieu’s and Mann’s theories of capital and power respectively are improvements on the often used power resources and resource mobilization theories. Power resources theory was a political economic theory that viewed money and people as the main political resources that parties would be able to mobilize to win policy struggles in democratic states (van den Berg and Janoski 2005). It often became embedded in calculating the number of seats won in parliament and the holding of the highest executive office. In the study of social movements, resource mobilization theory was quite similar: material resources and numbers of people were thought to be the key resources determining whether a movement mobilized. When theorists sought to expand resource mobilization theory to encompass ideological and cultural elements, the theory devolved into an undifferentiated list of “resources” of many different kinds. The specificity of cultural and symbolic processes remained undeveloped.11 By contrast, both Bourdieu and Mann present a more theoretically refined view of power, emphasizing the specific effects of different kinds of power or capital, which can operate singly or together. And while Bob Jessop’s theory is somewhat similar to Mann and Bourdieu on exchange and command (see column 3 in Table 8.1), Jessop adds the concepts of reflexive and unreﬂexive ideas to cultural and informational capital.12

Although there are important differences between the two theorists’ views of power or capital, their conceptions have many similarities. Each theorist emphasizes that there are multiple types of capital or power, and each highlights the distinctive constraints that are created by each of four types of capital and power. Bourdieu and Mann share some weaknesses; for example, they may be criticized for focusing too much on the state as an economic and

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11 A similar process happened with opportunity structures in social movement theory. These structures could be almost anything, and were perhaps similar to “organizational environments” in general.

12 Critiques of theories of power, whether in capital or resources, are that there are many more forms of power that Bourdieu and Mann do not recognize. Eric Neveu speaks of this as “an inflation of capitals” that encompasses emotional and erotic capital (2018: 366–371), and even speaks of “maverick capitals.” Woodward (2018) refers to “moral capital” and “emotional capital.” Jessop’s (2016) view of reflexive and unreﬂexive ideas instead of symbolic and cultural capital is another variation.
coercive power, when in a capitalist world economy, corporations and private capital are an enormous power bloc.\(^\text{13}\)

BOURDIEU’S AND MANN’S THEORIES OF POLITICAL AND SOCIAL CHANGE

What of Bourdieu’s and Mann’s theories of social and political change? Bourdieu’s early emphasis on social reproduction colored his reception in American sociology, and he is often criticized for not having an adequate theory of social change (Abrutyn 2016: 9; Jenkins 2002: 118). His emphasis on the structural determination of “habitus” in particular has been criticized for coming close to a form of determinism (Abrutyn 2016: 9–10; but see Gorski 2013, who notes that elements of a theory of change are pervasive in Bourdieu’s writings). For this chapter, I concentrate on his lectures on political sociology published as On the State. This is an opportune text for discussing Bourdieu’s theory of social change because it concerns the genesis of the state. In discussing this transformation in social life, Bourdieu does not make much use of the verb “to change” (changer), but instead focuses mainly on the verb “constitute” (constituer) in the present and future tense (Drake 2010: 48–51). He also uses a variety of terms such as “transformation,” “construction,” and “contradiction” (though he disparages “dialectical” theory, in a dig at Marxism: see 2015: 333). When new organizations or institutions come into being, in his account, they are then referred to as having been constituted (created) or transformed (modified or adapted). For our present purposes, all of these discussions will be taken to refer to social change, broadly construed.

There appear to be six mechanisms of social change in Bourdieu’s major work on the state. First, he refers to major changes in political and economic regimes leading to a group’s habitus losing much of its meaning (e.g., the Kabyle people coming under French rule, or the factory worker facing deindustrialization and plant closings). The result is an outmoded habitus that needs to reacquire meaning through positive or negative adaptation (e.g., a factory worker finding a job at McDonald’s or drifting into drug dealing) that produces an altered habitus. There is an implied form of change in habitus that connects it to social mobility. In talking about his own life, Bourdieu refers to his backward and provincial background, and how he had to transform himself to enter into the field of academia. He then refers to his own habitus clivé whereby he has a foot in two worlds, each with its own habitus. He remarks on the pain of moving from one habitus to another (Friedman 2016; see also Bourdieu 2017). This kind of habitus clivé is certainly a form of social change

\(^{13}\) Examining the weaknesses of both Bourdieu and Mann in political sociology are beyond the scope of this New Handbook, but interested scholars can start with Lahire (2015), Robbins (2011), Burawoy (2012, 2018), Lane (2006), Jenkins (2002), and Swartz (2004) for Bourdieu, and Schroeder (2016) and Hall and Schroeder (2005) for Mann.
that can be generalized. For instance, workers in the US in the 1920s had a habitus that was nonunion, and by 1938 many of them were unionized with a quite different habitus. This change in habitus is slow and often resisted, and it may require a total reorientation of socialized dispositions that are not always conscious.

Second, there is the “state as a producer of principles of classification” (2015: 165–166) that may then alter habitus through symbolic violence (e.g., a poor person being labeled as shiftless and requiring work to receive welfare, or an illegal migrant being labeled as a criminal). This can be done through state censuses or racial classifications. This is a fertile area of research in sociology at the moment (Emigh, Riley, and Ahmed 2015, 2016; Loveman 2014; Mayrl and Quinn 2016). Third, there are occupational projects, as in the case of the rise of the juridical clerks in the French state, which Bourdieu details in On the State (2015: 323–338). A good application of this is in Andrew Abbott’s (1988) view of “professional projects” and “turf battles” among different professions and occupations. Fourth, there are the “transformations of the dynastic state” whereby kin groups formulate very specific matrimonial, succession, and educational strategies to gain and maintain power (Bourdieu 2015: 237). Though he often refers to these strategies as partially conscious and partially tacit, such as having “a feel for the game” (2015: 241), they often involved the creative and clearly conscious invention of new practices. Kin groups created new apanages to grant the second- or third-born sons a smaller jurisdiction of power, and they gave younger sons the opportunity to emigrate to the colonies or start businesses, all in order to avoid battles between brothers (2015: 242–246). This can also apply to dynastic families like the Habsburgs, but, more recently, the Kennedy and the Bush families in American politics.

Fifth, there are conflicts between fields, whereby the elite of one field usurps the power of other fields. For example, the economic field has usurped the power of the political and industrial fields through neoliberal policies that

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14 Habitus clivé can also refer to a social mobility whereby the lower- or working-class student strives to gain a college degree and enter into a middle- or upper middle-class habitus. These movements are often painful due to the ressentiment of those left behind (Grey and Janoski 2017). Vincent Dubois’ work (2015) refers to a more downward mobility in habitus with the sons and daughters of upper middle-class parents deciding to pursue music and artistic careers that will not generate sufficient income to be upper or even middle class. In these cases, habitus does not have that hard shell that Bourdieu’s educational research tends to portray concerning the elite students in The State Nobility (1996). Finally, Wacquant (2018) provides an extremely flexible view of habitus as a constantly changing phenomena or socially constructed habitus that is very different from the social reproduction version.

15 Bourdieu does not appear to have a social psychological theory of how habitus changes (though see the preceding footnote for a possible development in this area) because he spends so much time on how habitus is reproduced. A specific theory of the development of a habitus would need to engage both conscious aspects of one’s situation, and the unconscious or “feel for the game” aspects of it. But Bourdieu does refer to a “double consciousness” that would be a beginning of such a theory (Reed 2015: 270).
promote free markets, deprecate labor organizing, weaken professional self-governance, and promote firm lobbying or protective associations. These battles between overlapping fields or among leading subfields may be caused or accentuated by external or global effects (Fligstein and McAdam 2012; Friedland 2009). Sixth, there may be a “generalized social crisis” where all fields are affected simultaneously, but in ways that are at least partially fitting each specific field (Reed 2015: 273). Examples of such generalized crises include the German occupation of France during the Second World War, or the fall of communism (see the Ermakoff [2013] and Sapiro [2013] chapters in Gorski’s attempt to promote a Bourdieusian theory of social change). Bourdieu appears to assume the underlying disposition of social actors to accumulate the four types of capital to gain as much power as possible within their fields as a mechanism in each of these types of change.

Bourdieu’s theory of social change has been appreciated as a theoretical resource by political sociologists working on a variety of different problems. Fligstein and McAdam (2012; Scoville and Fligstein, Chapter 3, this volume), for example, is a clear application of much of Bourdieu’s work on fields. Their theory of social change involves somewhat different elements, including (1) strategic action fields (implying there are nonstrategic fields, weak fields, and areas of life not directly run by fields); (2) incumbents who face challengers, with both dealing with governance units; (3) differences in social skills involving agency (e.g., Ronald Reagan “folksiness” compared to the less effusive Robert Dole, or William Clinton’s “I feel your pain” compared to more intellectual Adlai Stevenson); (4) the broader field environment which never stays static; (5) exogenous shocks coming from other national fields or from global fields; (6) episodes of contention between challengers and incumbents; and (7) some form of settlement that may involve more or less change (2012: 8–23). Fligstein and McAdam (2012) regard themselves as synthesizing and extending Bourdieu rather than adhering to the “master’s” words, but their approach is quite close to Bourdieu.

Another application of Bourdieusian theory is to the sociology of empire. George Steinmetz, for example, states that Bourdieu’s theory is a “fruitful starting point for thinking about some of the analytic puzzles raised by colonial states and empires” (2015: 7, 2017, 2018; Poupeau 2018). Due to Bourdieu’s work on the Kabyle people, he was certainly aware of and wrote about the impact of empire (Calhoun 2006). And Julian Go extends Bourdieu’s more nation-state oriented fields to global fields (2012: 125–127, 171; 2008), and Sapiro (2018) and Kauppi (2018) apply Bourdieu to transnational fields.

Social change is more at the forefront of Michael Mann’s theory, and examples of change are multitudinous in his sweeping historical account of
social power from “the beginning” to 2011. There are, broadly speaking, two types of changes in his account. The first is incremental. This category would encompass the many gradual changes in political regimes and the state that occur over time, and that may occur in different locations within a state or society as various groups obtain the powers of ideology, economy, coercion, and politics. The second type of change that Mann discusses encompasses rapid, large-scale political and social changes such as the transformation of the Roman Republic into the Roman Empire, or the fall of communism. In Mann’s account of these social transformations, there is generally an impetus for change that leads to the creation of many different social networks (i.e., political projects) that then use organizations and institutions to acquire social power. This social power leads to their institutionalization or crystallization of new forms of political power and states. The greatest social changes in his account come from interstitial networks that evolve within the gaps of the seemingly dominant power structure. As the old power structure fades in its effectiveness, these interstitial networks emerge and battle among themselves, and against the declining state, to produce a new round of institutionalization and crystallization. These interstitial groups may draw on any of the main types of power – ideological, economic, military, or political. Sometimes the interstitial groups achieve power by doing more efficiently what the previous dominant group did; sometimes the source of their power may be orthogonal to the sources of the power of previous elites. Mann uses Weber’s analogy of history to railroads with deterministic tracks which are then culturally switched at certain moments to take the train to an entirely different destination, and then he extends Weber’s metaphor to speak of the social power of track-laying vehicles (1986: 28). Rome’s encounter with Christianity fits this model of “interstitial surprise” (1986: 20).

Stepping further toward socialization, Bourdieu’s concept of “habitus” is also matched to a lesser degree by Mann’s concept of “social cages,” which bears some similarity to Weber’s “iron cages.” Mann (2006: 343) says that his power sources, while sometimes overlapping but rarely coinciding, focus on “real networks of people” (Heiskala 2016: 30). He compares his work to Bourdieu’s theory of power, which he sees as being focused more on individual social power in networks. In contrast Mann views human activity as comprising “multiple, overlapping, intersecting networks of social interaction” (2006: 343) that sometimes become coordinated to produce increased caging. The national caging of social groups as highly overlapped networks can lead to strong organizations and focused nation-states, but the breakdown of their intersections (perhaps “decaging” during the student movements of 1968 in the US and France) and partial reassembly can lead to opportunities for interstitial change. The processes of intersection, diffusion, and reassembly lead to new and competing caging or confused diffusion of “real social networks.” Caging or not being caged highlights the constraints that are created by four types of capital and power. While Mann refers to social cages
concerning city states (1986: 38–39), small military units (2012a: 150), and nation-state (2012a: 455) from the top down, he also envisions the “real networks of people” where caging has definite social impacts on society. Nonetheless, Bourdieu’s habitus is much more individually focused than Mann’s caging (2016: 343; Heiskala 2016: 31).17

However, in the last analysis, Bourdieu’s concept of habitus is much more developed than Mann’s social cages, which are mainly referred to in strong instances of unified nation-states or armies, and then little used in describing breakdowns and interstitial emergence of new organizations and states. Further, Bourdieu’s use of symbolic capital and especially symbolic violence engages culture in a much stronger way than Mann’s concept of ideology or political power. Similarly, Bourdieu envisions many fields and subfields which Friedland (2009) finds to be somewhat confusing, while Mann is much more restrictive in envisioning fields or institutions.18 Nonetheless, both theoretical approaches focus a bit too much on the state as an economic power when in a capitalist world economy, corporations and private capital are an enormous power bloc that Marxists such as Jessop (2016) have always emphasized even while acknowledging cultural power.

Mann has a great deal to say about globalization, empires, and colonization. Despite remarks to the contrary (Steinmetz 2017: 369), discussions of empires and globalization appear frequently in volumes 1, 3, and 4 of The Sources of Social Power. But G. John Ikenberry (2016), Odd Arne Westad (2017), and John Darwin (2016) take Mann to task on empire and globalization. Mann defends himself from Ikenberry in not labeling the US as a hegemon rather than an empire (2016), which is based on the distinction between owning colonies and controlling weaker states through economic and military power. Mann views empires as direct with colonies, indirect with protectorates, informal with gunboat diplomacy, and hegemonic with economic and military influence (Mann 2016: 292). But they are in effect, all empires. Westad’s critique is that as Mann progresses through his four volumes of social power, his theoretical apparatus becomes “less theoretically parsimonious” (Westad 2017: 247). This is a complex argument, but Westad centers it on why the US did not have colonies – it was “burnt” by its experience with Cuba and the Philippines, it lacked imperial institutions (somewhat of a cultural argument), and empire was not really needed by corporate capitalism. Mann’s answer comes through his view that American empire was less rational (possibly accidental or inconsistent)

17 Kiser (2006: 64) comments that Mann’s “non-instrumental micro-foundations” play a much smaller role in Mann’s work and this weakens his ideological arguments or he simply drops them at certain times. This would be a weakness of social cages compared to dispositions in Bourdieu’s habitus.

18 It is worth noting that Bourdieu’s lack of separately defined fields that do not overlap are seen by many of his followers as a strength. Further, Bourdieu also sees areas of social life that are not involved in fields. Thus, these flexible aspects of fields are seen as a theoretical strength (Hilgers and Mangez 2015; Hilgers 2015; Lahire 2015).
than Westad seems to imply, and that its strategic choices on empire were muddled through rather than thought out (Mann 2016: 300). Though Mann agrees with Darwin that empires were “weaker than is generally thought,” he disagrees that empires are not violent (2016: 291). However, Mann stops well short of Immanuel Wallerstein’s concept of the world-system (2004, 2011), and he is especially critical of Wallerstein’s theory for giving “primacy to a single source of power” — economic power — that is largely deterministic (Mann 2010: 179). Mann argues that empires are restricted and often incoherent (2003). Mann also discusses other transnational processes, including war and global warming — the latter of which is going to present new global conflicts and rearrange constituencies, coalitions, and conflicts (Kauppi 2018; Sapiro 2018).

In sum, both Bourdieu and Mann offer synthetic theories of social change that encompass both material and cultural processes. Mann has more to say about global and transnational processes, though he is clearly wary of what he regards as the one-sided view of world-systems theory. Bourdieu’s theory of globalization and empire has to be inferred. On the whole, the two theorists have several similarities, and some aspects of their theories may complement and compensate for each other’s weaknesses.

INSTITUTIONAL THEORY AND POWER

Institutional theory overlaps with the accounts of Bourdieu and Mann in a number of ways, and since Bourdieu and Mann are challenging institutional theory in political sociology, it is only fair to look at why and what new developments have come about in institutional theory to see if they add to the theoretical tools that political sociologists can use. Critics of institutional theory have often focused on its overuse of path dependency and isomorphism because they emphasized mimetic change and implied somewhat theoretically conservative accounts of social change. In contrast to field theory, institutional theory itself does not put power struggles and change in a primary position. But in many ways, institutional analysis is somewhat similar in setting boundaries to issues as field theory does. Institutional theorists have not been unaware of these problems, and they use “policy domains” (Burstein 1991), “policy networks” (Granados and Knoke 2005), “regimes” (Esping-Andersen 1990; Janoski 2010), and “arenas” (Jasper and Duyvendak 2015) as concepts quite similar to fields. I will consider some recent innovations concerning social change in recent organizational, historical, and evolutionary institutional theories.

First, organizational institutionalism, which was called “new institutionalism” by Walter Powell and Paul DiMaggio (1991), has emphasized cultural processes since John Meyer and Brian Rowan’s (1977) focus on organizations as “myth and ceremony.” But too much of new institutionalism has devolved into explaining how some organizations or states copy other, more successful organizations and
states. Isomorphism is important, but this focus on following the leader leaves innovation by first-movers unexplained.

The most impressive recent foray into reconceiving social change in organizational institutionalism is John Padgett and Walter Powell’s (2012a) *The Emergence of Organizations and Markets*. Padgett and Powell describe eight mechanisms of social change in institutions based on “autocatalysis,” which is a transformation and restructuring of the nodes of a network of leaders in an organization or government (2012b: 8). These network processes include: (1) transposition and refunctionality, (2) anchoring diversity, (3) incorporation and detachment, (4) migration and homology, (5) conflict displacement and dual inclusion, (6) purge and mass mobilization, (7) privatization and business groups, and (8) robust action and multivocality (2012b: 12–25). These mechanisms of change tend to take place between institutional spheres such as politics and the economy; business and science; the military, religion, economy, and kinship; and so forth. In general, the changes come through an alteration of network structure that may arise for many reasons: a system can tip rapidly from one condition to another as a result of “network thinning” (e.g., lack of support as people shift to competing or disinterested networks), which in turn results from political crises, natural cleavages, personnel turnover, annealing (a metaphor using the heat treatments that alter the inner structure of a metal making it harder), parasites and free riders, and drift (2012b: 26–27). Few political sociologists have made use of this perspective, but Padgett (2012) applies it fruitfully to a comparative analysis of the politics of communist economic reform in the Soviet Union and China. There is great potential in this theory for political sociology, and network thinning is similar to the loosening of habitus and the interstitial weakening of social cages discussed earlier.

Second, historical institutionalism has focused on political processes since the influential volume *Structuring Politics: Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Analysis* (Steinmo, Thelen, and Longstreth 1992). James Mahoney and Kathleen Thelen (2009) further develop a theory of gradual political change that involves four types of institutional change: (1) “layering” of a new organizational structure upon an existing one (e.g., a new agency with different and prioritized tasks being placed upon an existing institution that still keeps its old tasks); (2) “conversion” of one institution to another (e.g., a welfare office becoming a workfare agency); (3) “drift,” which refers to the gradual change of an organization to new and different tasks (e.g., police

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19 Many comparative/historical sociologists also consider themselves historical institutionalists, but I argue that they are sociological institutionalists. They have not pushed the theory of institutionalism as far as Mahoney and Thelen, who label their approach “historical institutionalism.” Further, *The Oxford Handbook of Historical Institutionalism* is dominated by political scientists and does not list one of 54 authors as being in a sociology department (Fioretos, Falleti, and Sheingate 2016).
departments gradually becoming more militaristic); and (4) “displacement” of one organization by another (e.g., immigration policy being dropped from the Department of Justice and inserted into the Department of Homeland Security). These changes are brought about by the characteristics of the political context and the institution’s background.

Mahoney and Thelen also offer a typology of change agents: (1) “subversives” seek to replace institutions but they avoid being obvious as they break institutional rules; (2) “opportunists” have ambiguous preferences but take advantage of possibilities to promote or delimit the institution as the political context presents itself; (3) “insurrectionaries” want to destroy or disable the institution and are willing to do so by breaking rules; and (4) “symbionts” seek to preserve the institution but do so by avoiding or breaking the rules. These are interesting theories of institutional change agents; however, this typology is often hard to implement, and political sociologists have not yet made much use of Mahoney and Thelen’s contributions to the theory of change.\(^\text{20}\)

Wolfgang Streeck and Kathleen Thelen (2005) describe additional mechanisms of institutional change under the heading of “punctuated equilibrium.” With new regimes, for example, nation-states are able to build new institutions that have new goals, new personnel, and new mechanisms for action. For instance, the French Revolution tried to build new institutions with some of them sticking, such as citizenship, and others falling by the wayside, such as the new calendar with Germinal (March–April) through Ventôse (February–March). The Soviet Union imposed the collectivization of agriculture and the removal of private property with a considerable amount of violence, but these institutions had dissolved by 1990, after 60 to 70 years. The causes of these abrupt changes in institutions lie in the social revolutions that brought new regimes to power. The theoretical question of why these institutional changes only sometimes persist or succeed is unresolved. Some major change agents create abrupt political breaks, but implement regimes quite different from their democratic promises (as when populist movements produce authoritarian rather than democratic rule).

Third, there is a long tradition of institutional analysis that comes out of systems and evolutionary theory based on the works of Max Weber, Shmuel Eisenstadt, and Niklas Luhmann, and somewhat on those of Talcott Parsons. Seth Abrutyn, Paul Colomy, and Jonathan H. Turner are the current exponents of this approach. Abrutyn’s monograph *Revisiting Institutionalism in Sociology* (2016) clearly focuses on the importance of institutional entrepreneurs for changing institutions (not unlike Fligstein and McAdam’s

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\(^{20}\) As political scientists, both Mahoney and Thelen have made contributions to comparative/historical methodology for “process tracing” of institutions that looks at how institutions change using multiple data points and looking at how institutions develop over time. Mahoney is in the Political Science Department at Northwestern with a joint appointment in Sociology, and Thelen is at MIT, which does not have a sociology department.
“challengers”). He argues that exogenous and endogenous factors lead to structural differentiation in society, producing problems of social integration that require entrepreneurial innovation (2016: 45–67). Unlike a Parsonian systemic and evolutionary approach to institutions, Abrutyn’s theory does involve material and agentic power to make these changes. In response to real or imagined crises (not the “needs” assumed by functionalist theory), institutional entrepreneurs and their followers articulate and frame entrepreneurial projects to change institutions. Abrutyn (2016: 129) sees institutional entrepreneurs operating with generalized media of exchange using the language and coin of the realm (i.e., love and loyalty in kinship, sacredness and piety in religion, health in medicine, competition in sport, power in the polity, and of course money in the economy). However, within political sociology where power is central this neofunctionalist approach has not made much of a dent.

Thus, theories under the rubric of new institutionalism have made some valuable additions to the literature, but they are either too new, too difficult to implement, or too little used to compete with the Bourdieusian and Mannian approaches in political sociology. Much of this delay in their use by political sociologists is due to the fact that institutional theories make too little use of a complex theory of power.

CHALLENGES TO THE BOURDIEU AND MANN SYNTHESIS

Many challenges confront the theories of Bourdieu and Mann, but this section will focus on just three of them: the difficulties of theorizing the politics of gender, the rise of China, and the role of the media.

First, it is clear that Bourdieu’s and Mann’s theories have not been at the forefront of gender studies, and their comments on these issues have come late in their careers. Bourdieu addresses gender in his book *Masculine Domination* (2002). He presents a “hardened habitus” that expresses an “androcentric unconscious” that involves male domination that is very difficult to alter (1998b: 9, see also 1984: 171–172). In doing so, he leaves very little possibility for change. This work lends evidence to the claim that his theory is overwhelmingly social reproductionist. His commentary compares Kabylia in Algeria to modern-day France, but little is gained from the comparison (Lane claims that this is an ahistorical argument: see 2006: 103). Although Bourdieu discussed how the gendered habitus was changed with mass consumption, his focus was on specialty beauty products; he had little to say about the historic social changes involved with women’s emancipation in his lifetime. His concepts, nevertheless, may be used by feminists to analyze the politics of gender – fields of power, symbolic violence, and habitus all have found use in feminist scholarship (see Reay 2005 on emotional capital, and McNay 2005 on retheorizing habitus, both in Adkins and Skeggs’ edited volume on Bourdieu and gender).
Michael Mann largely ignored gender in the first two volumes of *The Sources of Social Power*, but he discusses gender in the final two volumes, which cover a period of world history that included feminist writing (e.g., Mary Wollstonecraft) and feminist protests for women’s enfranchisement (e.g., Emmeline Pankhurst). He views the women’s movement as a social movement that followed from industrialization and the rise of the middle classes (Smith 2016: 34–35). It grew in terms of political and economic power, especially after women entered the workforce and subsequent political legislation affirmed women’s equality in various domains. In Volume 3, Mann relies on Theda Skocpol’s account of the maternalist welfare state in the United States (1995 [1992]), and Elisabeth Clemens’ work on feminist organizing in social movements and voluntary associations (1997: 68, 75, 280–314). In Volume 4, Mann discusses how feminists in the United States benefitted from coalitions with African Americans in the Civil Rights movement (2012b: 83). However, Mann has not yet brought these observations together into a discussion of gender and power over the long run of history. For instance, I know of no references to a “social cage of gender.”

Second, the rise of China presents many challenges to both theories. Bourdieu simply had little to say about China. Mann, by contrast, does analyze China but not extensively enough for Dennis Smith (2016; Mann 2016: 290–291). But Dingxin Zhao (2015: 32–48) explicitly uses Mann’s theory of four types of power, the crystallization of institutions, and interstitial change to make sense of social change in China. Zhao emphasizes economic and military power, and describes a contest between three types of legitimacy in Chinese history: legal-procedural legitimacy, ideological legitimacy, and performance-based legitimacy (2015: 38). The last type of legitimacy is rather new, and especially refers to the present situation of the rise of China. The performance-based legitimacy of the Chinese state emphasizes economic growth, instead of democracy or citizenship rights. Zhao’s use of Mann’s theory and his various amendments are helpful in explaining the Chinese case, and can be used in analyzing both the distant past and the present situation in China.²¹

Third is the issue of news media. Journalists and pundits are now important actors in the political process. Neither Bourdieu nor Mann has enough to say about their role. Bourdieu reviews the impact of the media in his book *On Television* (1998a). This technology may have had a major impact on politics in society. Bourdieu does address the issue of symbolic violence, *doxa, illusio*, and other issues involving the media emerging as a major player in the political process. But this is a limited discussion focused on a single technology – and one that may be losing influence relative to online media. Mann has written

²¹ Zhao (2015: 39) also makes a change in Weber’s theory of rationality combining theoretical and formal rationality into one category, but adds a concept of historical rationality. This theoretical change is quite interesting but not particularly relevant to the argument of this chapter.
comparatively little about the media, and in general appears to treat the rise of mass media as a technological alteration to the process of ideological power. The question of the possibilities afforded to politics today by the emergence of new communication technologies is a critical one for political sociology, but it is not one that these theorists have much to say about.

CONCLUSION

Political sociology encounters a different world than in 2000. The approaches of rational choice and postmodernity at that time appeared to be diverging into totally incompatible approaches (Janoski, Hicks, and Schwarz 2005). Since then, theorists of culture and political economy have become much more interested in reinforcing each other. There are still partisans of each approach who plant their theoretical flags in the ground in opposition to the other, but for the most part, cultural and political economy approaches to political sociology are converging to more complex and complete explanations in political sociology.

Thus, there is a profitable convergence of material and ideational approaches to political sociology that political sociologists can use of and make headway with in the explanation of politics. The convergence is illustrated by Pierre Bourdieu and Michael Mann. Their theories are not identical, but their interplay and differences can lead to very useful cross-fertilization. There is no need for theory builders in political sociology to be “true believers” in the works of any single theorist. Further, there is also room for synthesis of some of the new developments in organizational and historical institutionalism in both Bourdieu’s and Mann’s theories of political sociology. In sum, there is much progress that can be made through synthesis and expansion of fields and mechanisms for change in all of these theories.

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INTRODUCTION

We here make some suggestions as to how a specifically sociological approach to politics can build upon the course corrections recently made in political and historical sociology, as well as in the theory of action and of social structures. We argue that late-twentieth-century political sociology was led in several directions that were unprofitable. First, this political sociology was characterized by a disproportionate (and largely disappointing) focus on large-scale transitions, like revolutions, or other significant outcomes, at the expense of the examination of regularities in conventional political process. Second, the sociology that did treat everyday, lay, political behavior tended to embrace a notion of action that confused the reasons people gave for their choices with the predictors of their actions. Third, there was relatively little attention to the sociology of political elites as members of face-to-face groups with their own imperatives and organizational principles.

Of the many new directions now pursued in political sociology, we propose that two, in particular, are the most promising. The first is characterized by a field theoretic approach to social action, which allows the analyst to examine the interplay between the forms of organization that characterize political actors (on the one hand), and then the wider populace (on the other). The second is characterized by engagement with advances made in social and political psychology, cognitive science, and elsewhere in the social sciences, which allow the analyst to build a more plausible – and generative – theory of social action.
LOST GROUND

It does not appear that political sociology, narrowly defined, gained much ground in the late twentieth century, despite cumulative progress in the closely related fields of social movements, social psychology, and state formation. To some extent, this may be because we have a sister-science dedicated to the study of politics, and, for quite some time, the two fields were not very different in outlook. But this also, we suspect, came from the influx of students with social movement experience into sociological graduate schools. If they were like most people, they would tend to begin from the assumption that what they and their friends had done was unusually important and worthy of detailed study. But more influential on the post-1960s development of political sociology than any possible tendency toward me-search was the general mood of supercilious dismissal of the everyday in favor of the “revolutionary” (usually a self-anointment). To generations of sociology graduate students, the work of Thomas Kuhn was radically misinterpreted to mean that dull people did normal science, and brilliant people revolutionized whatever was in their way.

This spirit, or so runs our empirically underdetermined reconstruction, discouraged students from examining politics as usual, whether the classic voting studies of mass behavior or the examination of legislative or electoral process on the part of elites. This could be left to political science (see Burstein 1981 for this point). Although sociologists continued to study attitudes, political public opinion was largely abandoned to the pollsters—often because of sociologists’ dismissal of its importance as a cause of policy or the reliability of its measurements (Burstein 1998).

Further, the interest in “revolutions” led to a focus on state-building efforts that started with what seemed a reasonable assumption, namely, that we should try to explain large-scale outcomes, with inspirational exemplars like the work of Perry Anderson and Barrington Moore. But, we firmly believe, this turned out to be a grave mistake.1 Given few cases, noisy data subject to endless tendentious reclassification, and, most probably, fragile and stochastic processes (Lieberson 1991), there was almost no chance of analysts finding anything that was both robust and nontrivial. (The one secure finding from all this research seems to be that the best cause of a revolution is the state breaking down, which is a bit like saying that the strongest cause of burning is being on fire.) As Machiavelli (1998) said, “Two persons working differently come out

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1 A similar false lead in explaining outcomes also diverted social movement theory which, correcting the dismissive analyses of the 1950s that understood movements as mere expressiveness as a result of “strain,” took movement goals seriously and attempted to see which were met. But just as with the revolutions literature, the more that was known, the more the generalizations inched toward tautology, leading to a recognition of the need to focus less on outcomes and more on processes—indeed, tedious processes as well as contentious ones (McAdam and Tarrow 2010, 2011).
with the same effect; and of two persons working identically, one is led to his end, the other not.”

The consequence of this overweening prosecution of a revolution-oriented program of research has been that other disciplines in the social sciences have left sociology behind in the development of new knowledge about politics (also see Walder 2009). While there have been numerous important exceptions thanks to a number of political sociologists (e.g., Clem Brooks, Jeff Manza, Myra Marx Ferree, and others), overall, little of the advance in understanding conventional political behavior came from sociologists. The advances that were made do, we believe, indicate well enough the directions for the political sociology of the next generation, and which empirical tasks are most pressing.

We argue that political sociology must grapple with the distinctive theoretical characteristics of politics as a form of social action. Noting the places where politics happens and the people involved, this leads logically to three specific tasks: first, to better understand the logic of political professionals and their relations to other groups of elites; second, to better understand the logic of mass political ideology or, more generally, the cognitive-emotional components of their political action; and third, to better understand the processes linking these two forms of regularity. The first step to accomplishing these tasks, we propose, is a proper conceptualization of political action.

WHAT ARE POLITICS?

Form and Content

We suspect that in cases of difficult-to-theorize objects, such as “politics,” the common tactic of beginning by definition is a dangerous one, as it may define out of the realm of observations cases, events, processes, or facts that might be crucial for our conclusions. Because “politics” is a term taken from everyday life, as opposed to a specialist-derived one (such as “population momentum”), there may be, in common discourse, a shared if inchoate understanding of what one means by politics. If there is, our initial task is not to define, but to clarify existing ideas and bring them to exactitude where possible and to identify their limits and contradictions where not.

The confusion as to the referent of the term “politics” can be somewhat clarified by making two common distinctions. The first has to do with what sorts of persons it is whose actions we study. On the one hand, we might consider politics as a specific activity undertaken by dedicated specialists, whom we might consider specifically political elites (which does not imply that they are necessarily also elites in other ways). In this light, we would focus on legislators, party leaders, and executives, perhaps bureaucrats or judges, and so on. On the other hand, we might consider politics as something
that involves most citizens, even if their involvement is sporadic, vague, and/or inconsistent. We will return to this distinction between the professional and lay senses of “politics” below.

The second distinction has to do with our analytic approach. As in many other cases, we avoid a number of conceptual confusions if we make a distinction between a formal definition of our subject and a substantive one. For example, consider the case of “Economics,” which is used both to refer to the science of economics (which is a formal sense of the term), and to the goings-on studied by this science (a substantive one). It is the former (formal) sense that allows us to speak of (for example) an “economic” approach to dating; here what we mean is that we are going to treat dating as, say, an equilibrium established by a set of individual choices by agents attempting to maximize their utility. It is the latter (substantive) sense that allows for a non-economic approach to want satisfaction, as in the theory of Karl Polanyi. For this reason, we would not call a Polanyian approach to dating an “economic theory” of dating.

A similar distinction arises when it comes to politics. It will be our argument that we are most likely to classify an event or institution as political if it satisfies both the formal and substantive definitions, and most of us will see cases in which only one of these two criteria is satisfied as less central. From a substantive perspective, it seems undeniable that we use the term “politics” to refer to activities that turn on the state as organization. Someone who claimed to know a great deal about politics, but had no understanding of, say, either the structure of parliament or how elections to a parliament were conducted, would strike us as very curious, even if she knew about, say, public attitudes. However, someone who claimed to study politics, and only examined relations between members of parliament, but did not study elections, would not seem as strange.

When it comes to a formal perspective, it may at first be difficult to discern a commonality to usage. Yet we may make provisional forays by noting that there seems to be wide consensus that politics involves struggles over some aspect of social structure, usually to control an organization. Thus while an advertising agency may have no direct relations with the state, we might describe a member of this agency’s actions as “political” if they are oriented to taking control of this organization.

One thing that organizations do is create the possibility of certain indivisible goods (Martin 2009). That is because a strong organization – one that has the capacity of acting as a virtual unity, and hence pooling the effort of many people – is itself such an indivisible good. Split into little pieces it loses its capacity, and if there is some sort of difference of interests between members, it cannot be solved by determining the optimum allocation of goods, as can be done with divisible goods such as money.

States by their nature are strong organizations; while they can generate divisible goods (like politically controlled appointments, which can be parcelled out as the result of compromises), the control over the organization
itself tends to outweigh any of the particular goods that it can produce. Thus, all other things being equal, we would expect states to be arenas of politicization.

This is a convenient story, but there are two ambiguities. The first is that, contrary to our usual ways of talking, “the” state is not a single organization, but a network of organizations. Indeed, it might be more truthful to say there is not a “the” state at all. This means that a study of one aspect of the state, such as its economic development apparatus (Evans and Rauch 1999) or the culture of its civil servants and political appointees (Bourdieu 1998), in any one part of the state, cannot be assumed to offer a synecdoche for the whole. In fact, the institutional logics of state organizations vary widely depending on branch of government, legislative mandate, and public reputation. Differences in the salience of different state organizations for different sets of elites or mass actors, and variation in the institutional logics governing how resources and careers flow through these organizations, prevent the “politicization” of some aspects of the state while hastening conflict over others (see, e.g., Mettler 2011; Laumann and Knoke 1987).

Second, once we orient ourselves to this network of interlaced and interdependent organizations, we may find confusions in delimiting what we mean by the state. In some cases, the armed forces are a nearly independent counterweight to civilian organizations. In others, paramilitary organizations gradually shade into private organizations. So, too, practices of contracting can lead technically private companies to be crucial for the implementation of state policies. Finally, state-owned companies may be functionally independent of the state in most ways.

This suggests the limitations to a purely substantive definition of the object of political sociology. It is significant that we term studies of the army “military sociology” and not political sociology, and call investigation of judges “sociology of law.” It seems that we must use some sort of formal distinction to bound our object. One approach was taken by Weber (1946 [1918]), in his attempt to divide politics from administration. Is this position a “political” one (which is struggled for via, say, party) or a purely “administrative” one (that is sheltered from party competition by, for example, a merit-based civil service system)?

This seems promising, but has its own difficulties. A position may be the object of partisan struggle, and go as reward to the victor, but once it is captured, the occupant is not necessarily expected to use this position to further political efforts (even if the use of the position is not wholly disinterested). If she is not using this position to weaken opposing alliances, then although the position is a political appointment, it is not a politicized position. Politicization, then, involves struggle – but what are the actors struggling for? The most common answer is that they struggle for power. This notion, however, is at best misleading, because of how we understand this term.
Political Power, Force, and Violence

Here we think it important that sociology reject the Weberian notion of politics, which, as Arendt (1958, 1969) emphasized, tended to confuse force and power—a conflation common to a generation of intellectuals and politicians still in awe of Bismarck.\(^2\) This confusion, as Arendt said, leads to the destruction of politics, not its clarification. It is no accident that it was a generation that confused force and power that could find no way to justify its brief experiment with democracy and actual politics.

Force, argued Arendt, has to be understood as making reference to the physical state of persons. Power, on the contrary, is a latent potential of a set of social relations. To say that a politician “strives for power” is therefore a bit misleading. A politician might attempt to create power, or control it, but it is not something that one person can squirrel away, like diamonds. Force causes power to collapse, breaking social relationships and returning us to the world of bodies and material objects. Thus what is most distinctive about politics is that it does not involve the resort to force. However, as Clemens (2016: 20) says, this “conception of ‘the political’ as a zone of freedom has been an enduring source of confusion,” and may be misunderstood as a tautological ideal typical thinking at best, blatant apologetics at worst.

First, it is important to distinguish (like Arendt) between force and violence. Although, as Clemens (2016: 19f.) notes, the key thing about the realm of the political was its insulation from certain types of coercion, this did not always imply an absence of the use of violence. What it implied, instead, was a presence of a freedom of actors to form or to sever alliances.

Consider a stereotypical picture of organized crime. If one mid-level crime boss makes an alliance with a declining top boss, and then manages to take over his erstwhile ally’s territory, this is, in Arendt’s terms, political action. If instead he simply shot his rival, his act would be outside the realm of politics. However, if he were to terrorize inhabitants of his rival’s territory, to demonstrate his rival’s weakness and therefore cause him to reevaluate his strategy, this is still a political action, as long as the rival trusts that his opponent adheres to the code of never attacking another elite member directly.

The transition from violence as a means to politics to the use of force in place of politics is, for actors, palpable. The normal things political actors do cease to make sense; once Nazis began not only brawling in the street but also attacking political elites physically, the political arena began to collapse.\(^3\) Indeed, the fact that autocrats often do apply force to previous political actors is evidence of this

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\(^2\) “‘Peace’ is nothing more than a change in the form of the conflict or in the antagonists or in the objects of the conflict, or finally in the chances of selection” (Weber 1949 [1917]: 27). Clausewitz (1968 [1832]) could not have put it better himself.

\(^3\) Ermakoff (2008: 70) tries to argue against the importance of fear for one’s own safety in the “collective abdication” of the Reichstag to the Nazis, by pointing out that some people did resist, therefore others could have, therefore coercion is an incomplete explanation. We think that such a
understanding, for as Aristotle (Politics 1314a20) and Arendt (1958: 202f.) understood, the autocrat is attempting to destroy politics itself, by attacking any capacity for the orientation to free relationship formation between others.

Above we compared our formal approach to politics to the formal approach to economic action. The excision of force plays a similar role in both. No one denies that sometimes people steal from others, or that the reason why we have labor markets in the first place is the deep coercion of “he who does not work, neither shall he eat.” But the mathematicization of economics required the postulate of free action in the “field of competition” (Edgeworth 1881: 17f.). We misremember if we think that the ideologicization of economics came from this axiom; rather, it was the claim to find aggregate equilibria of maximum overall utility even in cases that departed from the axioms. Just as we want neither an apologetic economics, one that confuses its formal conditions with substantive claims (and hence refuses to acknowledge actual violence and coercion), nor a meaningless economics that cannot recognize what is distinctive about markets as a form of coordination, so we want neither a Panglossian vision of politics, nor a sociology that cannot comprehend what is important about politics as a form of social organization. Yet the last of these is what we have.

We do not deny that there may be occasional cases that defy easy categorization. But if our response to such complications when they arise is to confuse politics and war, as implied by the many definitions of politics that emphasize “the pursuit of the capacity to force one’s will on others,” we rid ourselves of the chance to investigate one of the most fascinating aspects of state formation and deformation, namely, the transition from one to the other. Rather than politics and all-out civil war being minor variations on a theme, they are, just as Hobbes (1909 [1651]) would have said, antithetical solutions to the same sorts of problems – where there is one, there is not the other. A space for politics opens up only with a kind of pacification, even if that space of politics is used to coordinate war regarding other disputes.

Thus, in formal terms, politics is paradigmatically the struggle to achieve control over organizational resources via the manipulation of social relations of alliance (mutual support of some sort). The notion put forward by Schmitt (2008 [1932]) – that politics turns on the identification of enemies and friends – is, we claim, a crucial insight. But the extermination or disempowerment of enemies via force involves a radical collapse of the relations of power inherent in a true polity, and we only hamper our ability to develop a theory of politics if we confuse such applications of force with politics.

Thus, distinctively political action appears to arise in areas cordoned off from the direct application of coercion, where actors seek to make, maintain, and break alliances so as to best other alliances. It is not surprising that we so often use the tactic (one which basically eliminates the category of coercion entirely) is distracting – once legislators are thinking in terms of fight or flight, they are no longer acting as politicians.
formal notion of politics when it comes to the control of organizations. Because organizations are likely to be winner-takes-all goods, they provoke the formation of alliances. However, there is no reason to imagine that such formally political action cannot take place outside of organizations. Consider the well-studied case of the formulation of marital alliances between lineages. Some of the strategy guiding these actions will strike us as political. Yet someone who works to marry his daughters to the richest possible families, in the hopes of increasing the wealth of his lineage, is not exactly acting politically, the way he would if there were, say, two different alliances of lineages, each trying to squeeze the other out.

In sum, there are both substantive and formal aspects to what we mean by the political. The first involves all those things that seem to be centrally related to the state. Here we believe that the sociology of the past 25 years has done quite well at improving our conceptual apparatus. The problematic view was one of the state as “an” organization, one that could be treated as a “man writ large,” and one that had to be understood as paradigmatically a nation-state, the prototype of which was nineteenth-century France, which was, or so we were told, a contiguous body of land occupied by persons sharing language and culture and facing a common fate, and its state was one that had substituted direct rule for indirect rule. But first, as Evans et al. (Evans, Rueschemeyer, and Skocpol 1985) emphasized, the state, rather than a single unitary institution, is an interconnected set of institutions. Second, as Go (2013) argues, we have unjustifiably attempted to hold on to this view of nation-states as distinct from empires largely by simply disattending to the significant colonial territories of these supposedly contiguous states. The states are not monads, but sets of relations. Third, and continuing with this relational imperative, without denying the utility of the distinction between direct and indirect rule, we find that we often must disaggregate states not only into sets of institutions, but into principals and agents (e.g., Hechter 2000). Even more, we find that modern states distinctly develop a new sort of indirect rule, in which they help to establish and stabilize fields of semi-autonomous action (Fligstein and McAdam 2012).

Thus we think that sociology is now in a good position to make advances in our understanding of politics that were previously blocked by our mis-theorization of the state. However, the weaknesses in our theory of action still interfere with progress in two other key parts of political sociology – an understanding of the logic of elite political action, and of mass political subjectivity. While we see the substantive approach to field theory developed by Fligstein and McAdam (2012) as the most promising way forward for the theory of the state, we propose that to make progress on our micro-sociology of political action and cognition, sociology must – at last – rid itself of unfounded assumptions about the nature of action.

The End of GOFAT

Despite all the evidence against it coming from the neural and behavioral sciences, and despite almost none of their own theorists defending it,
sociologists still reach back to what, following Martin (2014), Strand and Lizardo (2017), and Turner (2018), we can call Good Old-Fashioned Action Theory (GOFAT) to explain individual actions (this has been recently spruced up for resale, now termed the “DBO – Desires/Beliefs/Opportunities” model, by Hedström 2005). Here, we have goals we are trying to reach, whether they come from our organic desires or transcendent values. We also have beliefs about the world, including beliefs about others’ beliefs (and what they will approve of). Finally, there are constraints and opportunities offered by the situation that we are in. Our action, then, can be explained by the motivation that is formed in a calculus, conscious or not, that precedes the action.

The falsity of this account in literal terms does not prevent it from being a useful generator of predictions in many cases, and it can be enlightening to treat it as a null model, deviations from which point to interesting cases that need to be explained (Weber 1978). However, it is singularly inappropriate for the case of politics. Here, the ascription of motivations is endogenous to the political sphere itself – to say what led someone to do what he did is itself a political act. Given that we cannot adjudicate these disputes via psychological science (because science rejects the core psychological assumptions of GOFAT), we will find that our political psychology necessarily turns into a politicized psychology. Even more, reliance on GOFAT has led us to collect precisely the wrong data. When thinking about a political action (say, the choice of a party to affiliate with), we have taken our knowledge of the justifications that adherents give, assumed that such post-factum claims have an ex-ante existence, queried people about them, and used these to predict their choices as if they made their political alliances by completing a spreadsheet.

What we neglect in such situations are two things, one familiar to us – the crudity of our measures of actors’ external positions – and the other unfamiliar – the overly complex and refined nature of our theory of their internal processing. Regarding the first, the one thing that sociological studies of political action, especially when we have individual-level data on the laity, almost always do is to attempt to explain political action or position by reference to variables like income and education, which seem to be proxies for position in “social space.” The effects of these predictors are in line with expectations derived from theoretically strong models (such as those of class-based voting), but they are usually weaker than the stronger theories would imply.

However, given that our measures of location in social structure are famously bad, we cannot take their relatively poor predictive power as a reason to cease attempting to develop theories that tie political action to social position. Instead, there are two tasks for the future that involve a closer specification of position in social structure. The first is to understand how and why regularities in political behavior correlate with an actor’s location in physical as well as social space. Two people with identical co-variates, living
in different places, should not be assumed to have the same propensities to vote one way as opposed to another.

The second task is to improve the precision of our measures. Even if they are in the same place, two persons with identical co-variates are rarely identical. Of course, sociologists have always understood that unobserved heterogeneity gives all of their conclusions a *ceteris paribus* quality. However, we have not widely faced up to the fact that it is quite likely that divisions *within* what we have considered to be our finest categories (such as a three-digit census occupation code) are relevant for political side taking. Some “accountants and auditors” (#080) have the job of helping private firms evade government taxation, and other “accountants and auditors” have the job of catching them when they err. In all cases, recognizing the “natural level” on which the organization of occupations has cultural-political implications (Weeden and Grusky 2005) will require moving away from conventional individual-level survey data to sources that allow us, among other things, to finally examine the explanatory of power of class for vote.

We have thus been overly coarse in our examination of individuals’ location in social structure or social space. But we have been overly refined in our theory of individuals’ subjectivities. That is, we have allowed ourselves to decompose this subjectivity into convenient boxes, things like *beliefs, values, attitudes, opinions, and emotions*, and allowed ourselves to spin out fanciful models of their relations (for example that *beliefs* plus *values* produce *opinions*) with little supporting evidence. By attempting to impose a serial reasoning process on our actors—the complement to our spreadsheet vision of their cognitive capacities—we have foregone any disciplined investigation of the ways in which political action relies on the qualitative nature of lived experience. Such an investigation requires, whether we like it or not, accepting that the relation that political actors have with the social objects that they confront is technically an aesthetic one (see Martin 2011). Just as we do not need to *derive* that we detest okra (if in fact we do), we merely react to its quality of being *slimy* (Sartre 1956: 607–612), so too we do not need to make such derivations when we perceive the *sliminess* of a political candidate. The problem we face with such analyses is that we cannot (yet) explain why of two workers in similar nonunion establishments in the same state, one feels threatened by Mexican immigration, and the other not; why one *sees* Bill Clinton as *obviously, visibly* “slimy” and the other sees Clinton as “decent, chummy.”

The great task for the future, when it comes to mass politics, involves bringing these two subtasks together—to relate the seemingly vague issues of aesthetic perception to the specific locations of persons in a web of social relations. Already, real advances have been made by moving away from the assumption that there is *one* model that characterizes all political cognition. For instance, Baldassarri (2012) relates the *perceptions* individual voters have of parties and candidates to different cognitive *styles*, or approaches to making decisions about politics—and, in turn, shows that people in different social
positions apply different styles of thought. This is of a piece with a growing literature on political cognition, mostly produced by psychologists and political scientists (e.g., Redlawsk, Civettini, and Emmerson 2010). To a certain extent, an apparent lack of interest in this field can be easily forgiven; some programs of research in this area may seem to lose the sociological impetus and devolve into personality at best, faux genetics at worst. And it might seem simply “cute” that most Americans can predict whether an unknown (white) political figure is Republican or Democrat simply by viewing his picture (and they can; see Rule and Ambady 2010). But important information lies in processes of attitude formation and opinion change, as some sociologists now argue (Wright and Boudet 2012; see also Ojeda and Hatemi 2015). If we are lucky, we will be able to bring such differential processing of sensory stimuli into at least partial agreement with our theories of social structure. If not, we will probably begin to understand what aspects of personality (feel free to call this habitus) are orthogonal to social structure, and which ones cannot be ignored.

But it is not at all clear that the same theoretical approach that is most satisfactory for our study of mass political attitudes will be generative when it comes to understanding the action of political specialists. Here there is also a task for the future, but explicating this requires not only that we distinguish between mass and elite politics, but that we understand their relation.

MASS AND ELITE

Little (Esoteric) and Big (Exoteric) Fields

We have argued that the prototypical case of politics involves both formal and substantive considerations— that alliances are assembled to best other alliances for control over certain portions of the state. Indeed, most states—and not only democratic ones— have organizational components that are designed for formally political action. Unlike inside a business or a church, there is nothing untoward when it comes to political action here (although there might be in other organizational components of the state).

The insulation of political actors from force allows their actions in this realm to reflect the balance of power outside (which may well involve violence). This reflection or mapping may involve a relation of representation, but it need not— returning to our example of the crime bosses, they may meet and conduct political maneuvering among one another based on their capacity to mobilize their followers for violence, as opposed to voting. What is key is that the free exercise of the formal capacity to make and break alliances has additional weight because of the mapping of relations of elites to nonelites.

We propose that the best way to think about these two realms, that of the professionals and that of the laity, is to consider them two fields— fields being the sorts of regularities that mutually oriented free actors tend to induce. Politics thus involves not only what we shall call the “little” (or, following Fleck 1979...
[1935], esoteric; to avoid terminological fatigue we alternate) political field – that in which the formal and substantive aspects of politics are joined in a protected organizational venue – but also the “big” (or exoteric) political field, in which the laity are mapped onto this little field. While the duplication of terminology is generally to be regretted – and the uncontrolled proliferation of field analyses based on Bourdieu’s (e.g., 1996 [1992]) wonderful terminology is widely decried by sociologists – in this case, we think that this division, rather than defining away complexity by introducing new terms, increases the simplicity of our understanding of the relation between mass and elite politics.

A field is a set of actors who are mutually oriented and susceptible in such a way that it becomes parsimonious for them to understand the logic of their action by reference to position, where position is a continuously variable and abstract concept (as opposed to, say, a slot in a formal organization). Let us sketch an example from an important borderline case of political action – the world of state diplomats. We shall imagine a case in which they are truly nonpartisan, yet not locked into a rigid civil service career system. Rather, they can move up in their world by demonstrating a number of skills, including relational skill (quite reasonable, since a person who is “diplomatic” enough to move ahead in a field can be expected to make a good diplomat!) (Fligstein 2001). Such actors may be oriented to a “field” that is quite independent of what we would generally call “the political field.” Such state fields have been explored by Steinmetz (2008). What is key is that we cannot understand action outside of the context of the set of available positions for elites (Adams 2005).

Aspects of this sort of field are found even for those who are, in Weberian terms, true politicians as opposed to administrators. For example, legislators in the United States must now be popularly elected to maintain their position (ignoring initial appointments to replace those that have had to leave their seats for reasons of death, disease, or disgrace). Yet in addition to the maneuvering to ensure election, there is a little field that is largely independent of partisanship, which has to do with access to coveted committee positions (here see, inter alia, Padgett 1990 and Marwell 1967 as well). Persons who were allies on “partisan” matters might be opponents in this career field, and vice versa. Thus actors in the esoteric field actually have two orientations: one to the exoteric field, and one to the esoteric field.

However, in some cases, movement within the esoteric field is conditioned strongly by the nature of the mapping to the exoteric field. The exoteric may be understood as giving a structured set of possibilities that esoteric field actors must seize upon to advance their own careers. Thus we see a path of influence from the exoteric field to the esoteric, but of course, it is also the case that the organization of the exoteric field is made specifically with respect to a mapping to the esoteric field. Groups may struggle with one another or make alliances or
purposive their interests (“material and ideal,” as Weber would say) without this being political. It is political when their struggles with one another are mediated by the members of esoteric field.

There are a number of different theoretical approaches that could be used with equal plausibility to describe the nature of this relation between the little and big fields. A systems theory perspective, such as that put forward by Niklas Luhmann (2000), might consider the larger political field more like an environment for the smaller political field. (Luhmann’s own perspective involves public opinion as such an interpenetrating system, an interesting question which we put to the side for now, as we do his distinction between center and periphery, which we think was a false step.) An ecological perspective might compare the esoteric field to a physical environment, offering certain kinds of niches – possibilities for conduct that leads to survival – for different sorts of creatures. One may, quite reasonably, point out that political figures do much to shape the larger field which is to serve as their environment, but it actually appears that animals do this as well (Odling-Smee, Laland, and Feldman 2003). In addition to those that obviously transform the environment to make homes or to raise crops or livestock as do ants, many discourage competitors by reshaping the environment in ways that seem formally quite like the ways in which politicians may facilitate their continued thriving in one area, both physically and in terms of their position in resource space.

While leaving open the question of whether any of these terminological choices offer technical advantages, we emphasize that we think that theorizing the core relation of the big and the little field requires not so much the adoption of a new terminology as the clarification of a persistent misunderstanding of the nature of fields. This misunderstanding came from Pierre Bourdieu’s emotional orientation to fields as possessing an analytically derivable set of inner principles (Eigengetzlichkeit), and his sense that the field was in some respects besmirched when other principles guided action. Thus he tended to see fields as organized in terms of a rivalry between those more committed to the field’s autonomy (playwrights’ playwrights, for example) and those more willing to obey heteronomous imperatives for mercenary motivations (playwrights for the Broadway tourist, to continue the example). As Martin and Merriman (2017) argue, this implied, probably wrongly, that fields could at least in principle exist without this heteronomy. In contrast, argue Merriman and Martin, while participants may indeed differ in terms of their commitment to autonomy, and although heteronomy dilutes field effects, fields require some degree of heteronomy if they are not to explode or collapse.

Thus the fact that political actors must play with reference to two arenas at once, managing their relations to other political actors and to the constellation clear political field in which they acted. But, since they were technically slaves, they were not included in the free populace of the big field.
of positions that constitutes the “big” political field, does not, in our eyes, lessen the appropriateness of the field analysis. The same could be said for playwrights or chefs (Leschziner 2016).

Further, just as with other fields, there is variation in the degree to which certain positions lead to greater attention to the “audience” and which less, as well as which persons pursue more heteronomous strategies (sometimes miscalled “outsiders”) as opposed to more field-specific ones (“insiders”). If there is anything distinctive in the relation between the little and big fields in politics, it might be that in most polities, party membership is exclusive, leading to a clarity coming from a partition of the laity. However, it is not clear that the attachment of audience members to the hippie jug band the Grateful Dead was less exclusive than that of most supporters of the Democratic Party, especially those in states with open primaries. The distinctiveness of the political field in these respects is an empirical question. Thus we believe that the Janus-faced nature of political action – that the professionals act with one eye toward one another, and another to the distribution of support and resources in the exoteric field – may actually be the modal case of fields, and not an exception. But this takes us outside the jurisdiction of the current work; we return to consider the principles of organization of the exoteric field.

Mapping and Shaping

We noted that actors in the esoteric field generally must act with one eye trained on their fellows (allies and rivals) and another trained on the exoteric field – their supporters and potential supporters, for example. The great task of a political sociology is in going beyond this generic vision to a more precise statement of the relations connecting what happens in the esoteric field to the nature of the exoteric field.

We may start with a simple, though important, approach, one which may be our sociological common sense – that the polity consists of groups with interests, and these groups clump together to push for candidates or policies. More subtly, we may say that society is divided by “cleavages,” and that these may align with structured divisions between political elites (Lipset and Rokkan 1967). Such a vision is natural in cases in which we find “workers” or “Catholic” or “Islamic” parties, and we do not wish to deny the importance of such analyses. Yet even in such cases, we often find complications, for the salience – and in some cases, the categorical definitions – of such seemingly extra-political groupings can be endogenous to the political process.

Given the difficulty of a general theory of the relation between the substantive organization of the polity in terms of “types” (now that Labor parties no longer appeal merely to “Labor”), we might be interested in some less grandiose, but perhaps promising, ways of linking the formal organization of the polity to formal aspects of the state’s institutional structure. To take a famous example of this sort of reasoning, there is good cause to think that single-representative, first-past-the-post,
districts tend to induce a two-party structure. A two-party structure, further, all things being equal, can be expected to lead to a bifurcation of the population into roughly equal camps of supporters (Duverger 1963 [1954]; Sartori 1976). In addition, where voters can identify a single predominant dimension to make sense of their action, the line of division is likely to move toward the median of the distribution on this dimension (Downs 1957).

A second way in which the little political field shapes the big has to do with the degree of federalism as opposed to centralization when it comes to the flow of collective resources. Polities in which regions, provinces, or states control important resources or make important decisions naturally have different politics from those where local bodies have either less power, or less independence from the national system (Chhibber and Kollman 2004). While to some degree, this relation is fixed, and cross-polity differences in degree of federalism are relatively stable, still, the degree to which resource allocation and extraction takes place in provinces as opposed to centers varies over time according to political actions. In particular, where there is a possibility of federalism, parties that are out of power at the national level tend to work very hard to devolve power to lower levels that they can hope to control.

More generally, the particular features of any state organization shape the sorts of struggles that arise, as they shift some resources into positions where they are objects of contestation, and others not. Thus it is not only the vertical structure of the state (where different decisions are made: the local, provincial, or national level, for example), but also its horizontal structure (whether the state controls media, which industries it owns or regulates, and so on) that shape the zones of politicization. Finally, we also cannot exclude the role of other, often competing, structures of organization (for example industry associations, patron states, or the church) in draining politics to other arenas, thereby shaping the nature of the arenas for political organization and action.

These facets of the esoteric organization, coupled with the distribution of types of persons across sociogeographic space, create the space of possibilities for effective mappings of political elites to the exoteric field. And more subtle issues – for example, whether senators are directly elected or chosen by legislatures, or whether nonwhites have greater representation in the House than in the Senate – also may establish conditions for effective political action. But in all cases of modern politics, the key element of this mapping involves a special type of organization: the political party. Understanding the changing nature of such parties is another key task for the future.

PARTY AND IDEOLOGY

Parties and Party Formation

We noted that the substantive definition of politics turns on the organizational apparatus of the state. But modern polities generate a second form of
organization that is even more closely identified with political action, namely, the party. While the pivotal role of parties in such polities is hardly in dispute, the same parties appear very differently – and therefore suggest different theories of politics – when they are understood from the top down (as means by which elites mobilize nonelites) than they do when understood from the bottom up (as means by which those with shared interests in the electorate combine forces). Of course, the relative explanatory priority of these two accounts need not always correlate precisely with the relative initiatory capacity of the two sides (top and bottom), and the balance of this capacity may shift over the life span of both parties and of party systems. Unfortunately, functionalist understandings of parties can interfere with a recognition of such changed priority (as they impose the key principles of past organization upon present cases). For this reason, we think that we are best off beginning with an analytic-genetic approach to parties (drawing on Martin 2009: Chapter 8), an account which may also be of use in understanding how parties transform.

There are, historically, two different ideal typical versions of parties. One, often called a legislative party, consists of ties between political elites, paradigmatically horizontal ties of alliance between parliamentarians. These may have ties because they recognize similar interests, because they share certain characteristics (most importantly, regional and linguistic/ethnic), or because they find that for strategic purposes, they need to ally with some others, even if their choice of allies cannot be predicted on the basis of previous statuses. In many cases, such legislative parties are found in a more rudimentary sense of “blocs.” These are sets of political elites who act together, but rarely require specific coordination, often because of a natural confluence of interests.

The second ideal type, often called an electoral party, is organized around a vertical relationship (though not always concrete ties) between elites and the lowest relevant level of political actors (again, paradigmatically the mass, but where the mass is disenfranchised, this may be an intermediate stratum, as in the ancient Roman republic). In most of the older democracies, the former (legislative party) preceded the latter (electoral party), and it was only through repeated waves of electoral competition that elites were forced to extend their reach into the populace. (In general, we may say that mobilization of an electorate is always the second choice for elites, taken when they have no chance of triumphing over other elites without the support of nonelites.)

Such electoral parties have something in common with the “factional” organizations that arise among elites where politics turns on control of an indivisible good (such as control over a strong and unitary organization), as opposed to a divisible good (such as tax revenues). Such factions tend to involve coordinated action, but only that required to best another faction. Competition between elite factions can, in some cases, lead to the mobilization of nonelites. When this happens via progressive and alternating extensions of opportunities for political action, we may see parties develop (where the elites already have
preexisting relations with nonelites a sudden increase in interelite competition is more likely to lead to civil war than to party formation).

Such social structures, however, tend to be limited to localities in which most politics can be coordinated by face-to-face relations, and there are subgroups that can be treated as fixed for purposes of mobilization (for example, families, churches, unions) that have corporate existence. Formation of national political structures often involves the formation of horizontal relations of alliance between such sectional parties. However, how this happens depends on whether the party system is a multiparty one, a two-party system, or a single-party system. In a two-party system, the “outs” in one area (those out of power) attempt to take the conflicts of interests between the “ins” across region to ally with the “ins” in a different region, leading to a pattern of alliances of local parties. Once established, such parties then become understood as alliances that take place less across areas of geophysical space and more ones that take place across social space. In a multiparty system, it is possible for a party to retain a stable regional identity and to enter into alliances with parties in other regions that do not imply the emergence of a new identity. In single-party systems, the establishment of cross-regional alliances would actually be more difficult, were it not for the fact that such parties often develop in conditions of struggle, in which they can also use the heuristic of common enemies to establish alliances.

Modernization and Ideologization

This analytic-genetic account is a low, but stable, platform on which to begin to ask further questions about the relation between elite and mass politics. Most important, there is reason to think that there is a general tendency toward the increased importance of ideology as a way of coordinating political action. In other words, parties that may have begun as sets of multilateral compromises of expediency between political elites (what is referred to as “log-rolling” in American politics) end up with relatively well-developed theories of the alliance system that now appear as derived from first principles. Just as the old modernization theories held, the growth of democratic states, at any rate, seems to be associated with the replacement of divisible with indivisible goods in politics, and hence a transition from particularistic and concrete to more general and abstract ways of making claims, even when parties began “ideologically.”

There was – just as Simmel (1950 [1923]: 256f.) would have it – a transition between the more particularistic politics and the more abstract ones in the form of the “party of incorporation,” a species which played an important role in the development of democratic parties. Such parties go beyond the function of mobilizing votes or aggregating demands, and provide social and economic organization for members. Parties of incorporation were strong in most European states at different times in the nineteenth century, and were generally associated with workers’, peasants’, or veterans’ groups (the
People’s Party in some portions of the late-nineteenth-century United States had some of these characteristics). What is distinctive about such parties is that while the absence of crosscutting cleavages may increase the commitment of members to a strong perspective, because there is no difference between “the good” and “good for us,” to the extent that there is ideological development, it tends to occur in the ontological as opposed to deontological register. This, however, may be more true of contemporary parties than we have tended to accept. And this brings us to the last task of future political sociology: to understand the processes of ideological production among the laity.

Political Ideology

Perhaps the most confusing, but exciting, question that follows from the rejection of GOFAT pertains to the nature of the political ideology of the mass. Most definitions of ideology, as Martin and Desmond (2010) point out, have emphasized principles of valuation. Accepting the centrality of such valuation stems from the fact that partisans must justify their choices, and sociologists persistently confuse such after-the-fact justifications with motivations that, or so we would have it, precede the actions which they justify (Mills 1940). But, if we bracket the strident claims of political actors to be pursuing this or that value – claims which, while not necessarily false, must be understood as interested and in need of empirical confirmation – we find little reason to think that the core of ideology turns on “values” in anything but the most vacuous sense.

Instead, it appears that what divides those of different ideologies is less their ultimate values and more the ways in which they see the world. Conservatives and liberals in the United States, for example, agree as to the importance of the values of self-reliance, of fairness, of freedom, and of equality. What they disagree about is whether most poor are self-reliant or not, whether unions do undermine freedom, and so on. Martin and Desmond (2010) accordingly argue that ideology can be parsimoniously understood as a subjective representation of one’s position in the political field, and that sophistication is akin to the width of one’s field of view over the field as a whole.

Without denying the force of this argument, we can see that it – like most similar theoretical analyses of the relation between spheres of action and subjective orientation – is largely tautological. That is, if indeed we are to speak of political field (in the general sense of Bourdieu), which is to say, a set of positions that actors use to organize their experiences and actions, then it necessarily follows that the subjective side of their action is dual to their position in the field (“dual” in the Spinozan sense of Breiger 2000). We think that, based on the considerations regarding the nature of the mapping between the esoteric and exoteric realms of politics, one can say a bit more. Political ideology does not merely bring with it a social ontology, but rather, it is fundamentally a theory of the polity, however rudimentary or fragmentary it may be, and,
indirectly, a theory of the wider social world. To have a “far right” position in a central European polity now is largely to have a conception of a world pitting older natives against newer immigrants.

Ideology, then, is the theory of the polity held by nonelites. The greater abstractness of contemporary ideologies in contrast to those associated with parties of incorporation has more to do with the challenge of making sense of a multidimensional space without sharp borders and less to do with moving upward in a chain of deductive reasoning. Ideology is, of necessity, a complex and inchoate theory, but it is one that affords the solution of novel problems via the projection of this complexity to a space of reduced dimensionality. In particular, in many cases it is unnecessary for actors to flesh out all aspects of this theory of the field, as it is – like all other theories – designed to facilitate a certain form of action, in this case, specifically political action – the identification of friends and enemies. Thus ideology may have many weak spots and aporia but still be compelling, so long as it can be used to determine this difference between allies and opponents (Baldassarri 2012; Lau and Redlawsk 1997, 2001). The task for the future, then, is to cease focusing on which of the proffered justifications our subjects pick (when they are forced to do so), and, instead, to understand their conceptions of the sociopolitical cartography, and how they use these to identify friends and enemies.

We already know about some of the political ways in which citizens produce these identifications. One is via party affiliation – who is on whose side. Where parties are stable (especially where they extend in corporatist fashion beyond the political arena narrowly defined), this heuristic is so successful that many forms of political reasoning become wholly redundant and may wither away. Paradigmatically, a labor party that is integrated with unions can lead to very simple but successful and ecologically valid forms of portioning (I am a worker).

We suspect that it will turn out that many, perhaps all, persons have more than one theory of the polity; they may sporadically update these theories with new information (true or not) – but they may also throw up temporary and fragile constructions for specific purposes, as well as choose among their available theories to best accomplish the task at hand. Further, we emphasize that these theories, as maps for practice, have the same characteristic as old navigators’ charts – they are quite attentive to issues of coast, and relatively tolerant of large swaths of terra incognita inland, where our actors are not going to go anyway. If, as we suspect, too many of the questions that social scientists ask citizens pertain to inland matters, we will have a hard time understanding mass actors’ capacity to successfully navigate the environments they do traverse.

We recognize that this seems to imply that political professionals (e.g., legislators) lack ideology. Although one would be mad to deny that many such actors may have every bit as much ideology as could possibly be desired, the nature of this subjective orientation is far from clear, and the flexibility of such actors (i.e., political actors who themselves stand for election), to have a good part of their ideological conceptions shift with changes in the political field, is sufficiently pronounced to forbid us to make convenient assumptions about the subjectivities of such actors. We regretfully see this as a place in which little can be said, except that we must recognize that where people have a material interest in what comes out of their mouths, we must weigh their words quite judiciously before retroducing a cognitive order that we then impute to them. Perhaps the same can be said for academics as well.
→ I vote Labor → those who do not are my opponents). Where the party system is weak, shifting, or destabilized by crosscutting cleavages, other heuristics may be used, such as coherent issue voting – when actors keep in mind one key issue, and simply throw their support for whomever professes to come closest to their position here.

But more complex are those ways of developing a theory of the social composition of the polity that rely on extra-political experiences, information, and theories. One especially simple class of processes that are likely to be relevant here consist of what Martin and Merriman (2015) call second order judgments – judging the judgments of others. As Alexius Meinong (1894: 45) emphasized, it seems to cause us some unhappiness to judge the judgments of our friends negatively, and ditto to be judged by them. That means that even in a complex world with perhaps many parties, we can partition others into friends and enemies by requiring that they make a public judgment of something which we ourselves can judge. The insatiable demand of Americans that they and all others comment on whatever seemingly irrelevant happenstance arose the previous day (for example, an inarticulate political statement by a television personality) comes, or so we hazard, not because Americans think that they should be guided in their political choices by the reasoning of professional athletes, say, but because this gives an opportunity for actors to determine or confirm their sense of their allies and enemies. The meme of the day is the tertium quid that allows us to establish ecologically valid relationships with people about whom we know very little, and whose interests we would be unlikely to discern.

Such isolatable mechanisms are manageable for theorizing, but they are unlikely to explain the most important dimensions of lay cartographies. There may be no shortcut around the compilation of many different studies of how different sorts of people piece together their approximation of the world out there from various sources, of which news media and party pronouncements are unlikely to be the most important. This is perhaps the most formidable, but most exciting, task for the future. We close with some tentative orientations that may usefully guide this search.

CONCLUSIONS

Henri Bergson (1911), discussing the manifestations of intelligence in nature, gives the example of a wasp that feeds its young on a particular caterpillar that it stings to paralysis. The caterpillar has several nerve ganglia inside its body, and the wasp stings each one in turn as if it had both X-ray vision and a sophisticated theory of neural entomology. Presumably, it has neither, making its action seem as good a proof of theism as one would want. Bergson’s point is that the wasp, whose own sensory-motor system has coevolved with that of the caterpillar, can orient itself to superficial features of the worm’s anatomy so as to conduct ecologically rational actions that transcend its computational ability.
So, too, mass actors have the capacity to orient themselves to complex political objects about which they have very little knowledge. Even if they had knowledge, it would be quite implausible for them simply to attempt to make “rational decisions” (although we insist that they generally do so attempt this, at least, until they tire, and many tire quickly). The implausibility of rationality comes not because mass actors are fools or because they are selfless, but more prosaically, because, given that we do not know the future, we cannot always be sure what is “in our interest.” Further, we can select parties and candidates on the basis of their proclamations and announced policies, but they may not implement these anyway. Most important, though, lay actors in a modernized polity understand that they must give reasons to justify their choices, and part of making a political choice is adopting the reasons (including the view of the world) that makes this choice a defensible one.

This has long distracted analysts of political action. Adopting the assumption that one’s political action is “caused” by one’s own opinions – a conception of causality whose fundamental incoherence has been unable to outweigh its attraction given its compatibility with our folk theories – has meant that we have treated mass political action as something that is the result of reasoning. To reject this hypothesis – which we certainly must for a great many significant political actions – is not to consign the actors to the ranks of the unreasonable, any more than someone who appreciates a great work of music but cannot analyze it musicologically must be thrown out of the concert hall as an imposter.

Understanding the constitution, organization, and transformation of this ideational field of exoteric politics is certainly necessary if we are to correctly recreate the dynamics of the esoteric field of political action; although the reverse is also true, this has been less problematic, as there are fewer actors there and their actions are (highly) visible. The greatest challenge for the future of political sociology is rectifying our political psychology to understand how actors develop ecologically valid representations of their position in a social world, at least, one conditional on the sort of polity in which they find themselves.

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I. Theories of Political Sociology


MEDIA EXPLOSION, KNOWLEDGE AS POWER, AND DEMOGRAPHIC REVERSALS
“Old” Media, “New” Media, Hybrid Media, and the Changing Character of Political Participation

Michael Schudson and Gal Beckerman

What is the role of media, especially the news media, in influencing citizens’ political beliefs, values, and political or civic action?

Clearly, many people for several hundred years have believed the media to be powerful agents of political persuasion and instruments of political action. In the early United States, both George Washington and Thomas Jefferson wrote scathingly of the press because they thought it caused harm to government (Schudson 1998). In Europe as in North America, individuals founded news organizations to influence political outcomes. Others established news operations in order to provide a voice and even a meeting hall for civic associations, from unions to church groups to social movements with single-issue agendas, such as abolitionists in the nineteenth century. They would not have done so without believing in, or simply taking for granted, the efficacy of such action. In democracies, political office holders have regularly sought favor with publishers, editors, and reporters, while in more autocratic states, monarchs or ministers have strictly controlled the press and made newspapers and later broadcasters servants of the state. The contemporary assault on “fake news” by the American president is too, in its way, confirmation of how powerful the media are assumed to be as shapers of public opinion.

Most research in this general arena has historically focused on the specific impact of media on voting, but elections are by no means the only mechanism by which publics influence governments, a fact quite neatly indicated in the title of a collection of papers by European scholars – Between-Election Democracy – that focuses on the ways citizens influence politicians outside of elections (Esaiasson and Narud 2013). This is true more broadly of the effects of media on citizenship. At its most basic level, media provide information about politics, like who is running for office, details on specific policies the government has adopted or is considering, and other news that might help citizens decide which person or party to support. But media can also have a more amorphous function
of bringing people together around issues or ideologies, allowing them to build real or virtual communities of co-participants, often co-partisans, that enable a sense of solidarity or fellowship as a piece of or prelude to civic engagement.

Others are more qualified than we are to closely review the studies of media effects on voting, both citizens’ likelihood of voting at all and their voting selections. We know that media messages, under different conditions, can influence what people think, or what they think about (“agenda setting”), or when they think about what they think about (“priming,” nudging people to consider one topic rather than another on the eve of an election), and how they think about what they think about (“framing”). Political messaging is likely to have more impact on people whose political convictions are weaker than those who have strong political views. All of this is worth much fuller attention than we can give it here. Our effort is rather to take a broader perspective, assessing the way media might shape the variety of ways citizens express their civic or political participation not just inside but outside the voting booth. We will look first at the various ways that politics can interact with people’s lives in conjunction with some media form. Then our task will be to see whether there is some way to distinguish between how new and old media change the nature of this participation. And finally we will take up some specific areas of concern, such as whether different media forms help engender different types of political identity, and the much discussed phenomenon of the echo chamber, that stem from this broad discussion.

Our particular question is whether the new media of the digital era operate in a fundamentally different way from old media – are they more or less powerful? Or is their power of a different order or different character? And how much do we know (and how much can we know) about this when both the media institutions with power to affect civic behavior and the very forms of civic behavior themselves are rapidly changing and expanding? In fact, as we will propose, the very distinction of old versus new media might be outdated. In order to capture the effect that the news media have on political participation we need to think of a “hybrid media” that crosses back and forth over the quickly disappearing boundaries between digital and traditional forms of communication. This concept was first introduced by Chadwick, who laid out a holistic theory of political communication that integrated the various ways that old and new media shape political life (2013).

What it means to engage in politics outside of voting has also changed, either along with or in response to the media landscape. It may be, as Neuman, Bimber, and Hindman suggest (2011: 32), following Bennett (1998), that “many citizens, especially younger ones, are more interested in civic engagement, lifestyle politics, and citizen-directed advocacy than they are in institutionalized forms of participation.” It may also be that this new style of citizenship is an outgrowth of new media and their particular affordances. Still, if a new style of citizenship represents a new ethos, it equally reflects the changing character of government, one that predates the digital revolution of
the 1990s. In 1961 political scientist Robert Dahl observed that for most people politics lies at “the outer periphery of attention.” At their center of attention are “primary activities involving food, sex, love, family, work, play, shelter, comfort, friendship, social esteem, and the like” (Dahl 1961: 279). It is easy to recognize that every one of these arenas of attention has been politicized in the past half century. Most of them have been engaged by government agencies, by legislation, and even by judicial decisions as in *Griswold v. Connecticut* (1965) on contraception, *Roe v. Wade* (1973), and *Planned Parenthood v. Casey* (1986) on abortion, and much more. This is indeed “lifestyle politics” but both words in that term merit equal emphasis and the label should be descriptive, not dismissive. This should also complicate notions of what came first: new media or new styles of citizenship.

### The Many Modes of Political Participation

What are the various modes of political engagement today that media, old and new, might affect? We suggest the following seven should be considered:

- **Voting:** symbolically and practically speaking this is still the center of democratic politics.
- **Nonvoting but conventional communicating with candidates, parties, and government:** volunteering in political campaigns, contributing money to political campaigns, contacting government officials to express an opinion or influence a decision, signing a petition are all customary (and often measured) indices of political participation.
- **Antiestablishment protest:** Ronald Inglehart (1971, 1977) distinguishes between elite-directed and elite-challenging forms of protest. David Meyer and Sidney Tarrow and colleagues have documented a significant growth in social movement activity – often elite-challenging but not always – in the post-1945 era so that the people of advanced democracies around the world now live in “social movement societies” (Meyer and Tarrow 1998).
- **Civil society participation:** taking part in civic actions outside the electoral sphere, civic-related but not antielite and often not directly or intentionally political – such as membership in a school or neighborhood group, a church group or service club, a union or a professional association. There is a conventional distinction between political participation – activity intended to influence government action – and civic participation, which is more broadly “activity focused on problem solving and helping others” (Zukin et al. 2006: 7). These are distinguishable, certainly, but the borderline between them is itself a contested matter: Is the universal coverage of health care a governmental or a private, voluntary responsibility? Is supporting candidates who favor expanding governmental provision of medical care or subsidizing health insurance for individuals who cannot afford private insurance on their own “political,” while supporting a
Entrepreneurial politics: activities that seek to expand the boundaries of the “political” or the “public” or the “public sphere” or force public recognition of what had long been “political” without due acknowledgement (the women’s movement made child care a political issue, the pro-life movement made abortion a political issue, transgendered persons made access to public bathrooms a political issue). These enterprising, often citizen-initiated activities, do not just respond to conventional politics but also expand what politics includes.

Buying or boycotting a product or service: people may seek or may avoid particular products or services in expression of approval or disapproval of the social or political values that the product, the company that produces it, or the values of the company’s leadership represent. Choosing to buy a product or favor a particular brand for political reasons or choosing to boycott or avoid other products or brands for political reasons has become an extensively used form of political expression or political action across many European and North American countries (Stolle and Micheletti 2013). While various forms of politically motivated shopping (or refusal to shop) have been part of politics at least back to the Boston Tea Party, this form of political engagement has often been linked to young people in recent years, and judged to be more identified with “lifestyle politics” than “dutiful citizenship” (see below).

Politicizing personal relations: asking smokers not to smoke in your home or at the restaurant table next to yours; urging people who say “he” to say “he or she” or respect gender-neutral pronouns, and other sorts of linguistic political action among friends, family, and acquaintances are all political acts. To refuse to talk to family members with political allegiances one finds offensive, and to support or ridicule acquaintances who recycle or who compost—or who decide not to—takes politics directly into private relations. These personalized forms of political expression can also now extend to relative strangers as social media platforms like Facebook or Twitter allow for the quick and dirty comment to a friend of a friend’s post or drawn-out angry and ad hominem digital exchanges.

“HYBRID MEDIA”

To examine how the media may influence one or more of these forms of civic and political participation and how the media’s role has been altered by the advent of digital media is obviously a mammoth task. Indeed, it may be an essentially impossible task for multiple compelling reasons. How and how much “old media” affected political engagement in the past is not easy to state simply. It all depends on the political institutions, electoral systems,
strength of political parties, and which of the various types of political involvement described above one is examining. To take just one important example, it is difficult to establish any general conclusion about the efficacy of “watchdog” or “investigative” reporting. While an ideological commitment to watchdog reporting is widespread in Anglo-American news culture, it is much less accepted in other nations, including, for instance, the Netherlands and Germany; its practice has many obstacles in liberal democracies, often economic obstacles as it is expensive and time-consuming. At the same time, it may actually exist in some autocracies when the central state – as in China – tolerates or encourages watchdog reporting on corruption among local elites even as it censors and suppresses the same scrutiny of the Communist Party or its national leaders. Even where there is strong investigative reporting, electorates are not necessarily responsive to publicly accepted evidence of corruption or other malfeasance (Norris 2014).

Media influence on politics depends also on preexisting social and cultural predispositions as well as on political institutions. Consider, for instance, the work of Hutchison et al. (Hutchison, Schiano, and Whitten-Woodring 2016) that in societies with low levels of social intolerance, a generally free press helps to discourage civil wars or extensive violent domestic conflicts, but in societies with high levels of social intolerance, the more free the media the more likely they are to polarize, inflame, and incite, increasing or exacerbating civil conflicts.

Moreover comparing how, how much, and in what direction old and new media influence political participation depends on the moment in time at which one is looking at both old and new media. Do you do your study at a moment when “blogs” were entirely a product of the emerging online world and journalists at legacy media took blogging to be an unfriendly rival to serious journalism? Or at a moment when legacy media journalists began blogging themselves for their news organizations, which had become, essentially like all legacy media, active online publications as well as on-paper publications? The “new media” world changes frequently, not only in the services it provides (new media are software as well as hardware, and widely used software undergoes frequent major changes even if the hardware endures in roughly the same form for some years) but also in the way it is regarded by old news establishments.

The “old media” do not stand still. If an old medium is one that does not publish many times a day on its website as well as in print or on televisual broadcasts, there are scarcely any old media to be found anywhere. Even a decade ago when Sue Robinson (2007) interviewed several dozen US journalists at a wide variety of news organizations, she found great energy in “old” media for incorporating digital media and their capacities for interactivity, linking, more transparency, and other features to bolster what the journalists saw as the long-declining authority of news organizations.

If we are to compare the influence of old and new media, should we focus on the production of original news where legacy media still dominate? Or on the
consumption side, where the media influence ordinary citizens, who get their news increasingly online, especially through social media, even if the news they find there originates in the work of a legacy news organization they may not know about? What role indeed should we assign to sharing? This has become a separate category of dissemination that falls between production and consumption. Many news organizations now produce their news reports with an eye toward what will appeal to consumers on social media in the hope that they will be shared and “go viral” (Kümpel, Karnowski, and Keyling 2015).

There is no agreement on just what the A-list of advantages or affordances of the new media are compared to the old media: Is it the values of convenient archiving, annotating, addressing, attaching, associating, and architecting of information that online media can provide individuals for their own communicative uses? (Some old media still prove very useful, even invaluable, with respect to, say, archiving – photocopying, for instance – while others – carbon paper – are essentially extinct, having disappeared in the face of better mousetraps. New media make some archiving much easier than in the past – for instance, retrieving a news story from six months ago, but digital media have made other archiving more difficult – the problem of “link rot” is serious.)

We need to think instead in terms of “hybrid media.” It is the case now, and we believe it will continue to be the case for many years to come, that the news-centered organizations that we think of as “legacy media” or “old media” – organizations that produce and have long produced newspapers or magazines on paper – today also produce news online and also encourage or require their reporters to promote themselves and their stories through social media. Generally speaking, old-line newspaper organizations all have websites and all allow or encourage or require their reporters to make use of social media.

The first lesson from this is that the old-line media cannot be neglected. Indeed, evidence suggests that as late as 2009 more than 90 percent of the news that circulates online and gains general notice originates with old-line media companies. The Project for Excellence in Journalism conducted a study of the Baltimore news market and found for their sample of news stories from 2009 that the vast majority of original news reports came from general interest newspapers (48 percent), television stations (28 percent), specialized business and law newspapers (13 percent), and radio (7 percent). Only the remaining 4 percent of stories originated in online-only outlets. This does not mean that the legacy media were not already hybrid news organizations – nearly half of the newspapers’ original reporting appeared initially online rather than in print (Project for Excellent in Journalism 2010). It would be useful if this study were repeated now for a later date. Surely online news organizations and social media originate more than 4 percent of original news stories today, but we suspect the overwhelming preponderance will still come primarily from multimedia operations that began as newspaper organizations and still print newspapers.

A second lesson is that there are and will be for some time growing pains as old media become hybrid media. For instance, in the effort of old-line news
organizations to market themselves better on and through social media, they encourage reporters to push their recently published news stories on social media. But using social media, notably Twitter, which only about a quarter of the US population uses but almost all journalists use, reporters are expected to “brand” themselves, to show themselves to be individual human beings, and to adopt the informality and emotionality common to Twitter discourse. This has included sharing their personal political views, and this has caused consternation and conflict. At the Washington Post, editor Martin Baron has urged “caution” among his reporting staff and in a few cases he or other editors have taken aside reporters who, in their judgment, have been too personal, political, and partisan for the good of the newspaper’s overall professional reputation. At the New York Times, executive editor Dean Baquet has recently issued guidelines to the same effect. News organizations cannot seem to ignore social media as an important forum for disseminating their reporting and promoting journalists, but so far this type of engagement does seem to strain against traditional ethical standards that still reign in these newsrooms.

A third lesson is that it seems most people in the news audience who get their news through Facebook or through Twitter have little or no idea where the news they are reading originated. News arrives in an undifferentiated way that garbles a number of distinctions previously sacrosanct in journalism. The difference between “hard news” and “opinion” pieces is not clear to most readers when seen in a stream on Twitter or Facebook. Likewise, dubious sources of advocacy news not guided by traditional ethical standards can stand side by side with the output of news organizations like the New York Times or the Washington Post. In the 2016 election this led to a high degree of misinformation and rumor that was passed off as news. Audiences taking it all in online have lost the critical tools and category distinctions (if they ever had them) to recognize that the various forms, formats, and sources of news should not all be afforded the same degree of trust.

We know far too little about what uses people make of the media, both old and new and now hybrid. In the famous paper by Bernard Berelson about what New York newspaper readers “missed” in 1945 during a prolonged absence of newspapers during a newspaper strike, it was not any particular messages, stories, or issues covered that they missed so much as it was having the newspaper handy for reading at particular ritual moments during the day, such as at the breakfast table (Berelson 1949). In work on the political uses people make of the Internet Kruikemeier et al. (2014) found that “active” uses (like contributing to online political discussions) led to more favorable attitudes toward political participation than “passive” uses (like reading political news online), but that this influence was minimal for people already fairly active in politics, and larger for those with little political involvement. Whatever the differences between “old” and “new” media in their impact on political engagement, it depends on just how audiences use the media they encounter.
The whole shift from “mass media” to “interactive media” or “connective media,” (Clark and Marchi 2017) from one-to-many communication toward media that make many-to-many communication much easier and more common, alters the entire paradigm of how “media” “affect” “individuals.” Consider Raymond Pingree’s (2015) proposition that people who send messages to their Facebook friends or Twitter followers influence their own political or civic consciousness by this very act of communication. People who express themselves politically online may, by broadcasting their opinions, be prompted then to pay closer attention to what they see online (and offline) and they may retain more of it. If they do express themselves online to hundreds or thousands at a time, it commits them publicly. That social commitment makes online communication very different from most television or print communications and makes the conventional “transmission” model of communication (sender–message–receiver) hard to translate into today’s communication environment.

Distinguishing today between “old” and “new” media or between “legacy” and “digital” media or any other binary set of distinguishing terms is a fool’s errand. Almost anywhere you look, news comes to people, at least in more democratic and more developed societies, and not only there, through “hybrid news practices,” the complexities of which are nicely discussed by Hamilton (2016). As he shows, however “alternative” or “oppositional” adherents of digital news practices may claim to be, they find audiences through distribution on commercial social media like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube and through pickup and retransmission and legitimation in legacy newspaper and broadcast news organizations. Even if one thinks of news operations before the Internet, it is also clear that newsletters and newspapers for hundreds of years have relied on eyewitness accounts. Today there are close ties between legacy newsrooms and the witnesses Jeremie Nicey has called “semi-professional amateurs,” who find audiences through distribution on commercial social media like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube and through pickup and retransmission and legitimation in legacy newspaper and broadcast news organizations. Even if one thinks of news operations before the Internet, it is also clear that newsletters and newspapers for hundreds of years have relied on eyewitness accounts. Today there are close ties between legacy newsrooms and the witnesses Jeremie Nicey has called “semi-professional amateurs,” who receive alerts from newsrooms on their mobile devices if they accept geolocation. They are not full-time journalists or trained journalists and they may not think of themselves as journalists at all, but they are “active informants” rather than casual or one-time-only informants (Nicey 2016: 226).

It seems fair to conclude that journalism as an institution of modernity in advanced societies from the 1600s on, and as an increasingly central institution especially in liberal societies from the late 1700s on, has long been a hybrid collaboration of amateurs, partisans, tipsters, and by the late nineteenth century full-time, self-conscious reporters who gathered news firsthand rather than aggregating news items from other newspapers with a few eyewitness accounts from friends and travelers. There is a continuing misunderstanding that Walter Lippmann thought of journalists as “experts” (Josephi 2016: 14) but he thought no such thing. On the contrary, he believed journalists should become more “professional” and that meant that they should know more about how to rely on the production of subject-matter expertise in what he called “political observatories,” whether independent nonprofits, government
research agencies, or universities. The journalists’ professionalism lay in knowing their limitations and recognizing how dependent they must necessarily be on the expertise of others.

**DUTIFUL AND ACTUALIZING CITIZENSHIP**

The advent of digital communication that drastically lowers the cost of entry for anyone who wants to produce their own content or share and interact with others online has been linked to theorizing about a new style of citizenship that has come along with it. It’s a conversation that threatens to tip into overly simplistic technological determinism. But it’s nevertheless useful to understand how the Internet as a conduit for both circulating information and engaging with others might indeed have altered how individuals think of their relationship to politics and the state. Much of the recent literature on this question has referred to a pre- and postdigital style of citizenship: the dutiful citizen and the actualizing citizen, whose civic behavior and self-perception correspond, respectively, to older mass media or newer, diffuse digital media (Bennett 2008). These categories have stuck as shorthands to help explain what appears to be a generational change, occasioned, possibly, or at least intensified by, the enormous growth of online communication.

What makes it relatively easy to recognize that the new modes of civic engagement are not owed primarily to the Internet is that they were the subject of much discussion years before the Internet existed. As Bennett, who coined the distinction between “dutiful citizenship” and “actualizing citizenship” recognized himself, others were pointing to a developing new mode of citizenship at least as early as Ronald Inglehart’s work in the 1970s on new “post-materialist” values based on cross-national survey research (Inglehart 1971, 1977).

Dutiful citizens, in Bennett’s taxonomy, still see voting as the central act of civic responsibility. They get their information mostly from mass media and express themselves politically through the traditional outlets of civil society and party politics – preexisting hierarchically organized structures. Actualizing citizens have a diminished sense of government obligation – they are focused instead on achieving “a higher sense of individual purpose.” For them, voting is less meaningful than volunteering or activist consumerism (say, supporting or boycotting products and business for political or moral reasons). And this citizen does not trust the mass media or professional politicians, preferring loose networks for communication and political participation – often created online, including through thin social ties maintained by social media platforms.

The strict dualism implied by these two ideal type styles is not evident in how citizens actually behave. The younger actualizing citizens, engaged online in sharing political information, can still focus their energies on voting – see, for example, the youthful energy that fueled the presidential campaigns of Howard Dean (2004), Barack Obama (2008, 2012), and Bernie Sanders (2016). Equally,
the older, dutiful citizens who might have once expressed themselves politically only by voting in general elections can now find Facebook groups to support particular causes they find worthwhile. But appreciating that the Internet has provided avenues for certain new forms of connectivity and engagement that have partly supplanted older ones may help explain why traditional channels of civil society and sociality can be fading away, as Robert Putnam (2000) has famously documented. The shift has also been described as a move from a public to a private sphere, one that allows individuals to create their own networks for activism and engagement on their own terms (Papacharissi 2010). But the term “private” here is misleading. It is more a move from a party-centered, election-centered public sphere to a politicized sphere of what was once considered beyond the reach of politics.

There are other ways to frame this transformation. Two related approaches in political theory merit more attention in political sociology. Pierre Rosanvallon (2008) writes of the emergence of a “counter-democracy,” an awkward term in that he means to argue that late-twentieth-century democratic regimes have added civil society efforts to hold the executive branch of government accountable to the oversight provided by the legislature and judiciary. Indeed, he holds that the accompanying shift in citizen engagement should not be seen in any sense as a “decline” in civic morality even if party loyalties weaken and voter turnout declines: “The scale of participation in associational activities and the massive support for a welter of advocacy groups contradict the idea of an individualist withdrawal from civic life. The notion of the advent of a new civic passivity, so often accepted unreflectively therefore has to be revised” (Rosanvallon 2008: 236). Similarly, Australian political historian and theorist John Keane argues that since 1945 the dominant form of democracy worldwide has shifted from “representative democracy” to “monitory democracy” (Keane 2009). Like Rosanvallon, he does not picture a decline in political diligence on the part of citizens but an expansion of what counts as diligence and what counts as political from voting in elections and active party involvement to 24/7 involvement through the news media, through private associations, and even through private actions like litigation against the government in defense of rights.

The actualizing citizen and the form of politics he or she prefers seem to be reshaping the civic landscape. From the online networks of support for Donald Trump in the last American election to the waves of antiglobalization, anticorporatist, and antiauthoritarian protest in recent years, from anti-WTO demonstrations to Occupy Wall Street to the Arab Spring, there is ample evidence of the importance of new forms of “connective action,” as they have been described by W. Lance Bennett and Alexandra Segerberg (2012). The lowered cost of communication and coordination allows disorganized masses of citizens to coalesce around a shared political interest without developing stable organizations or infrastructures. In fact, it is the lack of organization and traditional leadership that seems to appeal to many of the citizens engaged in
these actions (Tufekci 2017). Though there are offline aspects to this activism and offline implications (e.g. electoral victories), most of the connectivity and the flattened, network nature of these actions occur on and through social media. The actualizing citizen is not meeting in a town hall, raising his hand for his turn at the microphone to be heard by a local congressman. He is at home in front of his computer, liking and sharing and commenting on political content. This changes one’s relationship to the political system and a sense of one’s role in it. It becomes at once a more personal, individual process – locating the decision to be involved or get informed in one’s home alone before a screen. This also ties one in to a wider network that extends way beyond the local community.

Traditional outlets for politics, like the political party or civil society advocacy groups, have adjusted to this new reality. Advocacy organizations like Change.org and MoveOn.org use digital technology to “listen” to their audience and define and refine new strategies for promoting their causes based on what they hear, as do political parties. New “listening” strategies are uniquely suited for the “politicized private sphere” where “actualizing citizens” manifest their political interests and preference through personal networks and social media activity. We are now in the era of the “hypermedia campaign,” which has succeeded the mass media campaign with electronic databases, metadata, and various other digital means that campaigns have for micro-targeting voters (Howard 2005; Nielsen 2012).

But for all the new, more personalized ways that individuals can both engage as citizens and be reached by political organizations, has the Internet generally increased political participation or not? This was the question Pippa Norris posed as early as 2000. She wondered whether the effect of digital media could be characterized as “mobilization” or “reinforcement.” By “mobilization” she meant that because of the availability of new information and communication technologies, previously disengaged or disenfranchised groups could be drawn into politics. “Reinforcement,” on the other hand, assumes that in the best case scenario the Internet will not change existing patterns of political participation and, in the worst, may even widen participatory gaps between advantaged and disadvantaged populations. In other words, does the Internet as a medium provide a greater number of citizens with outlets for engaging in politics?

Research over the years into this question has not turned up a definitive answer. The most recent work has come up with mixed results, which show that when it comes to age and gender, the mobilization thesis stands up best, with larger numbers of young people and women benefitting from digital media. But the same study shows the Internet not having any real impact when it comes to socioeconomic status, reinforcing rather than shrinking the distance between poor people and the political process (Oser, Hooghe, Marien 2013). As Hindman (2008) argues, “power laws” prevail online as in older media, and generally access and use of the Internet and prominence on the Internet are very highly concentrated.
Moreover, there is reason to be skeptical of the view that expanded political expressiveness online translates into enduring political attentiveness, energy, or efficacy. “Liking,” sharing, or commenting online does not forge “lasting collective identity” the way participating bodily in protests or engaging in political conversations while canvassing can do. Getting out of the house to attend a demonstration, for instance, may be transformative, providing a memorable experience, perhaps a political “high,” something that “sitting alone, urgently retweeting, lacks” (Karpf 2016: 166). It may be that commenting, retweeting, and other expressive acts online may be a pathway to more difficult and deeper political involvement but it may also be that they give a misplaced sense of political efficacy and may satisfy conscience without making a political impression.

It is inevitable that dominant new communication technology will have an effect on citizenship, since at the very least they create different pathways for individuals to access information and express themselves, and not just in the realm of politics. But imagining a clean break with past forms also ignores historical patterns. Television too was once seen to be a great democratizing force, informing the masses about the political process as never before (Blumler and McQuail 1968). But it was eventually regarded by many as a source of mindless amusement that would kill the critical faculties of citizens, making them susceptible to authoritarian rule (Postman 1985). The digital age version of this recurrent concern is the increasing worry that the Internet has become too circumscribed by algorithms – a private sphere grown too private, limiting the opinions people can see and placing them in echo chambers dangerous to democracy.

The actualizing and dutiful citizenship styles might be more accurately captured as a continuum. Even those who took part in the protests of Occupy Wall Street – the very model of actualizing citizenship – were moving between online and offline activism in a way that blurred easy distinctions (Nielsen 2013). The eventual faltering and fading of certain social movements that started out with massive protests and popular hashtags, like Black Lives Matter, have also pointed to a need to return to certain features of dutiful citizenship. As Zeynep Tufekci writes, “The Internet allows networked movements to grow dramatically and rapidly, but without prior building of formal or informal organizational and other collective capacities that could prepare them for the inevitable challenges they will face and give them the ability to respond to what comes next” (2017: xii–xiii). The Internet, in this respect, has given citizens powerful tools of connection that have allowed them to get ahead of themselves, individually actualizing but lacking the capacity to realize political change. The digital age may indeed have helped produce a new style of citizenship, but it must borrow from and meld with older styles in order to have an impact on politics and society.
chambers” or “filter bubbles.” Unlike older mass media, such as television and radio, which dominated through a limited number of channels, the diversity of information outlets online, tailored to various political viewpoints, allows individuals the chance to see the news they want to see and ignore what they don’t want to see. The promise and fear of this reality was present even in 1995 with the idea of “the Daily Me,” MIT Media Lab founder Nicholas Negroponte’s fantasy of an entirely personalized news source, now largely a reality through the Facebook and Twitter feeds. Since the 1990s the critique has also been augmented to include a focus on algorithms as a means for filtering out uncomfortable or politically discordant information without the user even being aware (Pariser 2011).

Law professor Cass Sunstein has offered the most persistent criticism of this feature of the Internet in a book, Republic.com (2001), which he first published in 2001 and has since updated twice to reflect changing technology (Sunstein 2007, 2017). The argument, however, has remained the same. Its premise is that in “a well-functioning democracy” citizens should be exposed to “a wide range of topics and ideas” and “competing perspectives.” In the tradition of Louis Brandeis, he argues that the idea of free speech has an affirmative side. It is not simply about constraining what the government can do to limit the expression of opinion, but it demands also the sustaining of an open culture that encourages awareness and engagement of other points of view from one’s own. In other words, if the democratic ideal is a “free marketplace of ideas,” we have to work to make sure that it is an open and diverse marketplace. The Internet, by allowing the development of what Sunstein calls “gated communities” or “information cocoons,” is making this very hard. He pleads for “an architecture of serendipity” that would counter the “architecture of control” that characterizes social media and has led to political polarization, an increase in rumor and “fake news,” and, at its most extreme, incitement to violence (Sunstein 2001).

Sunstein and others who see echo chambers eroding an older idea of citizenship assume a predigital media landscape that allowed for or encouraged exposure to diverse ideas across the political spectrum. But the model of three network channels offering 22 minutes a day of inoffensively centrist political coverage, local television news highlighting crime more than politics (“if it bleeds, it leads”), and sometimes excellent metropolitan daily newspapers (though the number of these have been drastically shrinking, with many cities containing no more than one) had problems of its own in representing diverse opinions and perspectives.

Even though there was a more widely shared consensus about what counted as news (and what was the truth of that news), the information was filtered by a small group of individuals sharing assumptions and biases about what they considered important and what was marginal or too extreme to demand attention (Gans 1979). This presents its own kind of society-wide bubble that ignores the concerns of many citizens and is closed to ideas that might challenge
the status quo. In this respect, the Internet, even if it allows people to indulge their homophily, actually offers more potential opportunities to explore a diverse range of opinions than the more curated mass media model ever did.

Research in recent years has undermined two basic assumptions of the echo chamber argument: first of all, that citizens get most of their political news from the Internet and, second, that they indeed limit their own exposure to other points of view. In 2016, Andrew Guess looked at a range of data, including browsing histories and surveys, in order to understand individual online media consumption. He found that the percentage of visits to sites characterized as providing news and information about politics was quite low, only 6.9 percent of all visits. Despite there being a number of sites that only Republicans or only Democrats visited (like Breitbart or Huffington Post), the majority gravitated to news sites that could be described as centrist. Most people’s choices, Guess wrote, “cluster around the center of the ideological spectrum.”

The economists Matthew Gentzkow and Jesse M. Shapiro have tried to determine whether our online behavior is leading to ideological segregation. In one paper, drawing on data sources from 2004 to 2009, they tried to arrive at an “isolation index,” the measure of how far apart liberals and conservatives are in the news they consume (Gentzkow and Shapiro 2011). They found that on the Internet, the average conservative’s exposure to conservative news is 60.6 percent, while the average liberal’s to the same right-wing outlets is 53.1 percent, giving them an isolation index of 7.5 percentage points. To put this in perspective, they write, “a consumer who got news exclusively from foxnews.com would have a more conservative news diet than 99% of Internet news users.” Tellingly this isolation index was lower than the comparative analysis they did for national newspapers and much lower than real-world conversations with trusted friends. Using micro-data on the browsing internet behavior of individuals from 2004 to 2008, they also found “no evidence that the Internet is becoming more segregated over time” (Gentzkow and Shapiro 2011).

A more recent study by Gentzkow, this time coauthored by Hunt Allcott, directly addresses the 2016 election (Allcott and Gentzkow 2017). The contest between Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton was seen to have been influenced by echo chambers that circulated fake news and filtered out any critical appraisals of one’s preferred candidate. Given that 62 percent of American adults get news on social media (Gottfried and Shearer 2016) and that the most popular fake news stories circulated more widely on Facebook than the most popular mainstream news stories (Silverman 2016), combined with the much higher number of fake news stories that favored Donald Trump over Hillary Clinton (Silverman 2016) and the finding that many people who see fake news stories tend to believe them (Silverman and Singer-Vine 2016), many have assumed that fake news distributed on social media played a major role in Trump’s win. The shock of Trump’s win when Clinton was presented as the inevitable victor for much of the campaign was anecdotal proof for many
that fake news had combined with the echo chamber of social media to have a powerful effect on citizens.

Though not discounting the increase in fake news and the particular affordances of social media that account for its increased presence on those platforms, Gentzkow and Allcott found more complexity in a series of postelection surveys. For one thing, social media were not the major source of political news for most Americans—only 14 percent viewed Facebook and other such social media platforms as their “most important” source of election news. Television (cable, local, and network) remained a more significant medium for political news, reaching 57 percent of their respondents. Even though pro-Trump fabricated stories were shared a total of 30 million times—nearly quadruple the number of pro-Clinton shares—they use a combination of factors (number of shares, impression per share, and individual recall of stories) to come to the finding that social media users actually saw a very small number of these stories. They conclude that “the average US adult read and remembered on the order of one or perhaps several fake news articles during the election period, with higher exposure to pro-Trump articles than pro-Clinton articles” (Allcott and Gentzkow 2017: 220). Using the benchmark that exposing voters to one additional television campaign ad changes vote shares by approximately 0.02 percentage points (Spenkuch and Toniatti 2016), they calculate that “if one fake news article were about as persuasive as one TV campaign ad, the fake news in our database would have changed vote shares by an amount on the order of hundredths of a percentage point.” In other words, fake news had an extremely marginal effect on the election’s outcome, according to their findings.

Still, the idea that the country is divided beyond all reconciliation is deeply felt and in itself has an effect on politics. Levendusky has characterized this as a misperception (2016). His survey found that people significantly misperceive the public to be more divided along partisan lines than it is in reality. Still there is no doubt that the recent years have increased what Stroud has called “partisan selective exposure,” in which individuals select news sources that match their own views (2011). This was certainly the finding of a January 2017 Pew Center report that discovered a vast divergence when Trump and Clinton voters were asked about their main source of news (Mitchell, Gotfried, and Barthel 2017). With vastly distinct media experiences come different narratives and framings about the candidates and about the media per se.

If the question though is whether this partisan media consumption is degrading citizenship in new ways, the answer seems far from clear. The model of citizenship that Sunstein and others have in mind when they decry the echo chambers is the utopian ideal of deliberative democracy. It’s a Habermasian vision in which all participants enter the arena of conversation on equal footing, each listening to one another and rationally presenting their point of view, with the best argument winning out. As many have pointed out, this is a dreamy notion that has little correspondence with the way humans actually interact in society. It leaves aside all that can get in the way of this
rationality – from tribalism to emotion to social stratification. And this is as true in real life as it is evident online. The era of older, mass media masked this messiness because information was in the hands of a small number of gatekeepers who determined what was newsworthy. This gave the appearance of society-wide consensus when, in reality, divisions, possibly as deep as those we see online today, existed but simply had no outlet for expression. That they can be heard online should not be reason to lament the state of democracy. If anything citizens now have access to divergent voices – even if they choose not to listen to them. They know they are there and can tune in when they want to hear the logic of the other side. This seems truer to the notion of what a deliberative democracy can look like – if not exactly talking to each other, then talking next to each other, where each can hear the other out.

THE IMPACT OF OLD AND NEW MEDIA ON ELITES, ORGANIZATIONS, AND INSTITUTIONS

One of the perennial temptations in thinking about the media is to assume that the media affect only individuals as part of a mass audience. But social organizations are themselves also audiences for media messages and they, in turn, use media to communicate with their memberships, employees, co-religionists, customers, or clients. Media researchers cannot neglect social organizations, nor can they portray individual citizens as isolated atoms rather than as affiliated members of families, churches, or neighborhoods.

Equally important, individuals who are online make themselves known and make themselves thereby available to corporations, governments, platforms, parties, and campaigns by the traces they leave behind of their own communication and consumer behavior. The digital world allows for a clearer articulation of individual voice, but the filtering, processing, and usage of those voices (both intentional voicing and unintentional traces) are as hierarchical as ever, if not more so. As Karpf (2016) suggests, our knowledge of this new world of communication is very limited – most studies look at Twitter and other accessible data sources as if we were still in the mass media era – that is, they are drawn to the sheer numbers of an aggregated audience of atomized individuals. In media research there are thus “mountains of Twitter papers, molehills written about Facebook, and an awkward silence regarding email” (Karpf 2016: 174). Karpf argues that it is time to turn the telescope around to look at the organizations that organize the data.

In politics, a large part of communication is messaging not so much for the purpose of recruiting new individuals but to reward and reinforce members, adherents, donors, and other supporters and remind them to stay engaged. Most messages from political parties, political candidate organizations, and other mass-based civil society organizations are aimed at activating people who have already made clear their connectedness to a particular party or cause. While most attention
to how new media alter political communication examines new capacities for isolated individuals to speak, to share, to “like” from the comfort of home or office, another strand of work emphasizes how new media amplify “the capacity of new civil society organizations to more effectively listen” (Karpf 2016: 1 and also Kreiss 2012 and Nielsen 2012 among others). What Karpf (2016) calls “analytic activism” is the new media–enhanced array of tools for crafting and, through “A/B testing” and weekly member surveys, recrafting at relatively modest expense their messages and even their strategic objectives (2016: 16).

And it is also worth noting that new media capacities that inspire utopian thinking – more democracy, more interaction, more conversation – are not necessarily what political elites view as advantageous. Heads of state around the world are on Twitter, but not to engage in conversation with others. Waisbord and Amado’s (2017) study of how Latin American presidents have employed Twitter indicates that they use Twitter very much like they used and use television – for top-down communication. For left-wing populists who have dominated in many Latin American countries in recent years, the presidential use of Twitter “represents the continuation of populism’s top-down approach to public communication” (Waisbord and Amado 2017: 1340). It is leader-centered; it focuses on an antagonistic discourse about various “elite” enemies including journalists; and it is focused on – even fixated by – news coverage.

CONCLUSION

The apparently straightforward questions of how and how much new media differ from traditional media in their effect on citizenship turn out not to be straightforward in the least. These questions cannot be addressed without recognizing how sharply basic democratic institutions have shifted and the center of political participation has moved from individuals’ loyalties to party, their focus on elections, and their understanding of politics as important but relatively remote from everyday life, to a citizenship spread across the year, which involves monitoring government action not just in voting but through a variety of civil society activities and concerning a great expansion of national governmental investment in people’s everyday life. Citizens need to be engaged no longer just on questions of taxation and a military draft and the provision of postal services but on educational standards and testing, organization of health insurance markets, provision of medical care for the elderly and the indigent, regulation of private actions that may damage the environment, and much more.

In other words, what counts as politics has changed, and the avenues of political participation opened up to citizens have also changed. We cannot imagine that the effects of digital media on political participation can be separated out from the concomitant transformation in what government undertakes and what counts as “political.”
Rather than trying to isolate the effects of new media, research that examines the hybrid ways that older forms of mass media and the interactive platforms of digital media mix might be more rewarding. Can we measure, for example, the impact of Donald Trump’s tweets on the agenda and framing of cable news – and what does this tell us about the way politicians can now use social media? How has the need of traditional news organizations to produce “sharable” content altered the kind of political information and news these organizations now deliver? Grassroots activism and civil society now utilize new media as a way to organize and inform, but in what ways do these extra-governmental forms of citizenship still rely on mass media to gain true legitimacy and wider adherence?

There are, of course, many other such questions that could address the media’s effect on citizenship in a way that does not reduce the question to one of newness but rather takes into account a multivalent media environment in which actors can influence and be influenced in different directions and through varied platforms. The combinations and competition might be a richer target for research as we move forward.

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II. Media, Knowledge, and Demography


The Sociology of Official Information Gathering

Enumeration, Influence, Reactivity, and Power of States and Societies

Rebecca Jean Emigh, Dylan Riley, and Patricia Ahmed

The government collects a barrage of information through censuses, registration, licenses, permits, and geographical information, so official information is a ubiquitous part of contemporary life. The sociology of official statistics analyzes this activity (Starr 1987: 7). The overall thrust of this work shows that official information gathering is socially constructed, that is, it is influenced by social and historical conditions, and it influences the reality that it supposedly describes.

We begin with four well-established claims about this process of social construction. First, information, even quantitative information couched in a language of objectivity, is never neutral; it embodies the position of those who construct it. For example, the US Consumer Price Index, though ostensibly a way to rationalize and depoliticize decision-making, arose from efforts of moderate and left-wing reformers whose agenda became embodied within it (Stapleford 2009: 11). The social position of the director of late-nineteenth-century US censuses influenced his agenda to isolate racial and immigrant populations (Hannah 2000: 222). Europeans’ racial ideologies shaped the categories of their colonial censuses in Malaysia, even though their ethnic terms drew on Malaysians’ self-identification (Hirschman 1987: 565, 570). US census takers sought to apply their binary race model to a fluid multiracial Puerto Rican society (Duany 2002: 250).

Even seemingly neutral techniques of statistical analysis are imbued with social theories of race and thus can support domination through racial stratification (Zuberi 2001: xvi; cf. Prewitt 2013: 4–8). Similarly, maps embody social hierarchies by centering or highlighting some locations, and they can redistribute power by making relations between people appear to be impersonal spatial...

Second, information is transformative. Statistics do not merely reflect reality, they construct it (Alonso and Starr 1987: 1; Igo 2007: 5; Kertzer and Arel 2002: 2; Prewitt 2013: 184; Scott 1998: 3). For example, because the US census affects how government programs and benefits are administered, Latino and Asian American activists lobbied to change the configuration of its categories (Espiritu 1992: 121–124; Humes and Hogan 2009: 119).

Third, all information is inherently social and interactive. Even official, state information is produced jointly by social and state actors. For example, the US Consumer Price Index, and economic policies more generally, were created by social science elite experts and government bureaucrats (Furner and Supple 1990: 20; Stapleford 2009: 12, 14; cf. Goldberg 1997: 29). The widespread deployment of surveys in the United States was influenced by social scientists, government agencies, and commercial interests (Igo 2007: 8–10). State and social actors contributed to the frequent redefinition of the classification of Latinos in the US census (Petersen 1987: 223–229; Rodríguez 2000: 174–176). Between 1965 and 1990, state actors and ethnic entrepreneurs negotiated to define and promote a Hispanic census category (Mora 2014: 183, 201; Petersen 1987: 223–229). One particular pattern of interaction is well established: social actors react to information collected by state actors. Social actors may protest the collection of information by the state or demand revisions to it (Kertzer and Arel 2002: 27). Early attempts to take censuses were unsuccessful and resisted by the populations being enumerated (Loveman 2014: 100–101). For example, activists understood the crucial role the state plays in establishing the reality of groups, and thus presented themselves as representatives of the broader multiracial population to persuade the US Census Bureau to create multiracial census categories in 2000 (DaCosta 2007: 14). This pattern of interaction creates tensions between developing categories that are relevant and recognizable to the individuals being counted and that fulfill the state’s need to have uniform, comparable data (Rodríguez 2000: 176).

Fourth, all forms of information gathering, including official ones, operate as technologies of power that can be deployed by a range of actors (e.g., Bruno, Didier, and Vitale 2014: 200, 210; Urla 1993: 819). However, the power of information gathering is usually associated with the state from the Foucauldian, Bourdieusian, and Weberian perspectives. Bourdieu (1999: 61–63; 2012: 13, 60–61, 262; cf. 2000: 175) focused on how states’ classification schemes shaped structures of consciousness; Foucault (1979b: 19–20) examined governmentality as a form of political power that relied on knowledge about the population; and Weber (1978: 223, 225) considered how bureaucracy is a form of domination through information and power.

Despite these four widely agreed upon premises, most claims about how official information is constructed operate at the heuristic level, asserting an important relation with an example but providing little systematic supporting
evidence and specifying few boundary conditions about when and where the relationship may hold. Thus, instead of providing additional review of these four premises at the heuristic level, we review four questions and possible answers to them, corresponding to these four premises, that can explain how official information gathering operates and that could motivate empirical research: What constitutes official information? How is official information transformative? Who influences official information? And how does official information entail power?

WHAT CONSTITUTES OFFICIAL INFORMATION?

Categories and quantities form the basis of the enumeration of official information. With respect to official information, classification is the process of state actors’ marking and dividing into categories on the basis of social attributes, while categorization is the process of social actors’ marking and dividing on the basis of social attributes (Emigh, Riley, and Ahmed 2016a: 34; Starr 1987: 43). Quantitative attributes can be assigned to these categories. This attribution can appear to be a neutral activity if categories are conceptualized as grounded in scientific theories, and quantification is conceptualized as a unique, universal language (reviews in Starr 1987: 42; Urla 1993: 820). Although common parlance as well as official rhetoric suggest these are innate properties of quantification and categorization, both are created and mediated by historical conditions (Comaroff and Comaroff 2006: 212; Schaffer 1988: 115).

Although classification is analytically different from quantification, they are closely related. Counting always makes something accountable as a member in a class of relevant objects, so the counting of human and nonhuman objects necessitates classification (Martin and Lynch 2009: 246, 262). Thus, there are few distinctions between quantitative counting and qualitative judgments because both are grounded in social relationships (Martin and Lynch 2009: 262; Starr 1987: 43). Quantification, therefore, is not a unique form of thought. However, counting humans is accomplished through social interaction and relationships requiring cooperation between counters and the counted (Bowker and Star 1999: 285; Martin and Lynch 2009: 246–247).

Numbers epitomize the modern fact because they seem to provide a noninterpretive foundation of systematic knowledge (Poovey 1998: xii). However, this view of numbers was created historically, starting with merchants’ use of accounting techniques in the fifteenth century that provided a model of a rule-governed system for government (Poovey 1998: xii, xvi–xvii). Subsequent intellectuals, bolstering their own intellectual positions, argued that specialists, disinterested in the outcome, were best suited for the systematic collection of data (Poovey 1998: xxiv). Thus the idea that some unit of value-and theory-free numerical representation can be the basis of systematic knowledge was a historical creation; this idea proved attractive to states
trying to strengthen their national and international positions in the nineteenth century (Poovey 1998: xviii–xxv). Liberal governmentality, then, as a form of government based on rule rather than coercion, depended on the intellectual achievement that a disinterested account could be equivalent to “self-interest” (Poovey 1998: xx). Quantitative methods, thus far from a creation of states to solve administrative purposes, originated in commerce and accounting and were taken up by them.

This history suggests that quantification in and of itself has no innate rhetorical function. Instead, counting is a mundane, everyday form of reasoning that historically came to carry rhetorical significance (Bowker and Star 1999: 288; Comaroff and Comaroff 2006: 239; Lampland 2010: 378; Lave 1988: 2; Sudnow 1967: 36). Between 1820 and 1840, fundamental historical changes, located in states and societies, created an avalanche of printed, numerical facts (Cohen 1982: 12–13; Hacking 1982: 281; 1986: 223; 1990: 2–3; Porter 1995: 46–48; Woolf 1989: 590). These numbers came in a probabilistic format that created law-like regularities (Hacking 1990: 3–5).

Because of this historical process, quantification appears to be an innately unique form of reasoning. It creates averages and rates (Urla 1993: 820). Quantification is a rigorous and universal language that can be easily transported across space to coordinate activities and settle disputes (Porter 1995: ix; Urla 1993: 820). It minimizes the need for intimate knowledge and personal trust (Porter 1995: ix). Thus, it supports bureaucratic authority because it enhances predictability, coordination, and impersonality (Urla 1993: 820). All social forms create patterns of exclusion and inclusion by erecting or erasing boundaries, but quantification is often seen as a particularly potent form of doing so (Espeland and Sauder 2007: 16–17; Espeland and Stevens 2008: 431; Urla 1993: 820). In sum, although counting may not be inherently oppressive, it is particularly effective (Urla 1993: 820).

These features make quantification particularly useful for states. Censuses are authoritative, national reports (Loveman 2014: 30). The creation of statistical bureaus at the beginning of the early nineteenth century institutionalized the merger of the science of probability and the practice of public administration (Loveman 2014: 30). Censuses identified and objectified consistencies in social relationships, containing them within standardized classifications and crystallizing them in numerical form (Loveman 2014: 31; Starr 1987: 11). Representations of populations, such as averages, ratios, and rates, became internationally comparable facts (Loveman 2014: 31).

**How is official information transformative?**

Knowledge is both enabling and constraining because it is dialectically related to its social base (Berger and Luckmann 1966: 81). Knowledge is enabling because it contributes to social change (Berger and Luckmann 1966: 81). However, it is also constraining because once any body of knowledge is
institutionalized, it has the capacity to act back on the social base and individuals that created it (Berger and Luckmann 1966: 80; cf. Gigerenzer et al. 1989: xv). This process is called reactivity: individuals change their behavior in response to being evaluated, observed, or measured (Espeland and Sauder 2007: 1; Hacking 1995: 369). For example, economic theory is performative: individuals acting in accordance with the theories of economics create the patterns predicted by this theory (Callon 1998: 50; MacKenzie 2006: 50).

Reactivity can work through self-fulfilling prophecies and commensuration (Espeland and Sauder 2007: 11, 16). Self-fulfilling prophecies are processes through which the reaction to a measure confirms the expectations or predictions embedded in it, or the reaction increases the validity of the measure by encouraging behavior that conforms to it (Espeland and Sauder 2007: 11). Commensuration transforms qualities into quantities, transforms cognition, and therefore changes how individuals perceive the relations between entities (Espeland and Sauder 2007: 16). It reduces, simplifies, and integrates information; it creates new relationships between social actors and organizations; and it elicits reflection on the validity of quantitative information (Espeland and Sauder 2007: 16). Reactivity, working through these mechanisms of self-fulfilling prophecy and commensuration, exhibits patterns, such as shifting resources, altering organizational scripts and procedures in conformance with the measures, and the creation of gaming strategies to circumvent the measures (Espeland and Sauder 2007: 24).

In information gathering, reactivity may be induced at two stages: during its collection, collation, and distribution or during its use. During the collection of the information, a first possibility is that individuals may consciously or unconsciously conform to the official categories, therefore creating self-fulfilling prophecies (cf. Hacking 1982: 280; 1990: 6; Patriarca 1996: 11). Providing information according to particular categories or filling out forms exhibiting a certain logic may create familiarity with the terms or procedures and therefore increase the use of these terms and procedures. Similarly, during distribution, bureaucratic forms can reproduce as well as reflect racial identities, widely disseminating them throughout the culture (Goldberg 1997: 30). This possible cognitive shift during enumeration is rarely examined empirically for official information gathering, but a well-known effect of interviewing is that interviewers’ expectations influence respondents (Weiss 1994: 211). A second possibility during the collection of information is that the methodologies change the consciousness of the subjects through commensuration. Although this effect is again not well studied in official information gathering, participating in a survey can facilitate statistical thinking (Igo 2007: 15). For example, an individual interviewed in Kinsey’s sex study described a process of deindividualization in becoming a mere pattern of checked boxes on the surveyor’s page to be aggregated with others’ information (Igo 2007: 270). Similarly, during the collation of information, census officials use
commensuration to make the questionnaires combinable (e.g., Latour 1987: 234).

Once information is collected, collated, and distributed, at the second stage, its subsequent use may be reactive in multiple ways. First, through the mechanism of a self-fulfilling prophecy, official categories may be used more widely after the information is collected (Hacking 1986: 223; cf. Starr 1987: 53). For example, occupational reports provided employees with clear ways to describe their work and employers with clear ways to classify their tasks (Hacking 1986: 223). However, unintended or subversive effects, in contrast to the ones sought by the makers of statistics, are often more enduring (Hacking 1982: 280; Loveman 2014: 29; Patriarca 1996: 12). For example, Italian statisticians explicitly intended for the census to unify the country but unintentionally reinforced preunification divisions (Patriarca 1996: 234–239). British censuses of India fostered the illusion of bureaucratic control rather than providing referential information, and they fueled long-term opposition to colonial rule and brought about a self-conscious, postcolonial community (Anderson 1991 [1983]: 170; Appadurai 1996: 117; Cohn 1987: 230; Hirschman 1987: 570). In early US censuses, the differences between the occupational classifications for men and women solidified the idea that household work was un gainful employment, and in the contemporary United States, the use of census counts for affirmative action led to the crystallization of the categories (review in Loveman 2014: 29).

States may provide incentives for individuals to adopt classificatory schemes, either through legal mandates or voluntary programs. For example, the collection of information about farms in Britain according to the government’s methods and measures induced farmers to modify their attitudes according to the government’s accounting practices (Murdoch and Ward 1997: 319–320). Farmers who could define their activities in accordance with official calculations were eligible for grants (Murdoch and Ward 1997: 319). The US Office of Management and Budget has the authority to coordinate racial and ethnic categories used by federal agencies, and although its explicit statements emphasize that it has no authority to determine what groups receive resources as a result of its classifications, this is inevitably the result (Skerry 2000: 72). Ethnic and racial groups in the United States routinely lobby the Census Bureau to maximize their census counts (Skerry 2000: 3). This pattern of reactivity works, at least in part, through shifting resources (Espeland and Sauder 2007: 24).

A second possibility is that social organizations may explicitly adopt official categories as their own, thus widely dispersing the official ones. For example, alignment between the US census categories and biomedical research helped geneticists connect their research to the interests of multiple stakeholders and bring together scientific, political, bureaucratic, and activists’ forms of power (Epstein 2007: 278; Panofsky and Bliss 2017: 61). Similarly, diverse actors, such as international genome projects, pharmaceutical companies, criminal justice
agencies, and researchers committed to including racial minorities in their research, used the US census categories (Panofsky and Bliss 2017: 61). Biomedical research supported by the US Department of Health and Human Services in fact must attempt to recruit and record subjects according to the US census categories (Epstein 2007: 150–151; Panofsky and Bliss 2017: 62). Though legal requirements undoubtedly increase compliance and the spread of categories, they are no guarantee, as noncompliance with US Department of Health and Human Services requirements is rampant (Panofsky and Bliss 2017: 62; cf. Scott 1998: 3). A content analysis of scientific journals, in fact, shows that geographical labels (such as a continent, a country, or a region), not US census categories, are most frequently used to report results (Panofsky and Bliss 2017: 64–65). These geographical labels are not rationalized standards; instead they are useful for their flexibility and ambiguity, and geneticists mix and combine different classification schemes (Panofsky and Bliss 2017: 65, 79). Scientists argue that these classification methods allow them to describe accurately their populations while resisting bureaucratic demands to regulate research (Panofsky and Bliss 2017: 80). While sociologists of knowledge stressed that rationalization creates scientific authority, in this case, ambiguity and flexibility created scientific authority (Panofsky and Bliss 2017: 84).

A third possibility is that through commensuration, information may have transformational effects by creating images or measures that were previously not present. Statistical studies or surveys aggregate individual experiences, and thus create an image of a typical, average, or normal person, and often align this image with a scientific concept of mean or median (Igo 2007: 19). These results are then distributed, allowing other individuals to measure themselves against them (Igo 2007: 15, 17, 19). These numbers become self-regulating: because they express what is normal, individuals try to conform to this normalcy (Hacking 1990: 2). These studies can highlight the advantages or disadvantages of some groups vis-à-vis others (Bruno et al. 2014: 202). Even when individuals understand their disadvantage from their own experience, statistical studies show that their lives are affected by structural patterns of domination beyond their own control (Bruno et al. 2014: 202). Thus, they demarcate lines of inclusion, exclusion, and affinity in a national public (Bruno et al. 2014: 202; Igo 2007: 2). They create equivalence between singular situations and support the creation of shared identities and collective action (Bruno et al. 2014: 203).

For example, Comaroff and Comaroff (2006: 222, 233), in describing how crime rates are inherently political, explain what could be considered their reactivity through commensuration: the enumeration of crime rates translates a multiplicity of events into a shared subjectivity and reality that can in turn point to individuals’ circumstances. These rates have a constitutive dimension because they are used strategically by a wide range of individuals to convert multiple sources of danger into concrete, communicable facts, and therefore into markers of risk, subjectivity, and identity (Comaroff and Comaroff 2006: 224). Thus,
enumeration has a constitutive dimension because it creates self, community, and society (Comaroff and Comaroff 2006: 225). Zuberi (2001: 121) presents a particularly powerful form of this criticism of racial statistics, by showing that statistics that purport to reflect racial realities actually encode racial theories.

Censuses are surveys with potentially powerful effects on the imagination. Censuses played an important role in the political and infrastructural development of states, in the symbolic construction of nations, and in the production of knowledge about national populations (Loveman 2014: 24). They provide the concepts, taxonomies, and information through which nations understand their component parts as well as their wholes, creating an image of the nation and a mirror through which the nation sees itself (Hochschild and Powell 2008: 60). This image makes it possible to imagine a nation, a cultural reality, and people and groups within it (Anderson 1991 [1983]: 163–164; Kertzer and Arel 2002: 3; Mezey 2003: 1764–1765; Patriarca 1996: 7). Thus, censuses construct individual, group, collective, and national identities around race, ethnicity, language, and religion (Kertzer and Arel 2002: 2; Mezey 2003: 1702–1703; Nobles 2000: 1; Patriarca 1996: 11). For example, Chinese cultural and political elites, embarrassed that there were few fact-finding surveys about their own country, explicitly created them, and, in the process, molded those being enumerated into a collective national subject (Lam 2011: 16).

State leaders, understanding these image-creating capacities of censuses, purposefully tried to use the census to unite the nation, such as in France, Italy, and Latin America (Loveman 2014: 29; Patriarca 1996: 176–177). For example, after independence from Spain, Latin American national states created race through inclusionary, but deeply hierarchical, governance strategies that recognized ethnoracial distinctions within populations (Loveman 2014: 5). Census projects described and thus defined nations through statistical presentations, but they were also prescriptive projects to diagnose the populations’ strengths and weaknesses to create a better future (Loveman 2014: 8). The official classifications in these censuses created political and cultural divides, even though they were not tied directly to the administrative allocation of benefits or penalties or to the legal separation of ethnoracial groups (Loveman 2014: 11). Latin American leaders used racial categories to illustrate their progress in line with a racial ideology that privileged whiteness by showing that their populations were increasingly racially white (Loveman 2014: 131). Though Latin American leaders were strongly influenced by internationally accepted standards for census taking, these standards had few recommendations about racial questions per se, so the particular racial categories that officials deployed reflected their explicit attempts to alter their racial orders (Loveman 2014: 9, 119, 224). In countries such as Argentina and Chile where the populations of individuals of African descent were small and those of indigenous descent marginalized, censuses could be used to project a rapid creation of a white
nation (Loveman 2014: 131). In countries with a large indigenous population, such as Mexico, Guatemala, Peru, and Bolivia, census takers focused on how the indigenous were being either demographically or culturally assimilated (Loveman 2014: 132). In countries with a large population of African descent, such as Colombia, Venezuela, and the Dominican Republic, censuses focused on how Blacks were being assimilated (Loveman 2014: 132). Following the Second World War, most Latin American countries dropped explicit questions about race but instead included cultural questions about language, dress, and food that were markers of assimilation (Loveman 2014: 236–237). By the first decades of the twenty-first century, however, most censuses included a question intended to capture populations of indigenous or African descent (Loveman 2014: 252). With the shifts to democracy in the region in the 1980s, social movements and organizations made demands for material resources and cultural recognition (Loveman 2014: 266–267). Thus, these officially ascribed classifications became the unifying basis for making collective claims and opposing the state through social protest (Loveman 2014: 12, 17).

Hochschild and Powell (2008: 62) described a four-part process by which a census can construct an ethnoracial order. First, censuses provide a taxonomy and language of race (Hochschild and Powell 2008: 62). These ethnoracial taxonomies can emerge from a dominant group’s racial ideology, the state’s disciplinary control, subordinated groups’ demands for inclusion and status, international pressures, bureaucrats’ conservatism, technological feasibility, policy concerns (in particular, apportionment), or, as they show for the US census, political, scientific, and ideological motivations within the Census Bureau (Hochschild and Powell 2008: 65). Second, once these taxonomies exist, they can then have a widespread effect because a census can generate the informational content for that taxonomy through the collection of data. Third, data then facilitate the development of public policies (Hochschild and Powell 2008: 63; cf. Nobles 2000: 1–2). Finally, the data then generate numbers upon which claims to political representation are made (Hochschild and Powell 2008: 63; cf. Nobles 2000: 2).

A fourth possibility is that the existence of information leads to social actors’ protests that transform the measures through commensuration. Bruno et al. (2014: 199) distinguish between two forms of this reactivity through “statactivism”: reformist and transformative. Reformist protests criticize the use of official statistics and insist on a reworking of the calculations (e.g., the debate over the French Consumer Price Index; Bruno et al. 2014: 204). However, they do not change the fundamental premises underlying official statistics because they adopt the overall architecture of the information (Bruno et al. 2014: 204). In transformative forms, ordinary actors fundamentally alter statistical measures by remaking the data, by creating a completely alternative presentation from it (e.g., art), or by creating completely new categories and instruments (Bruno et al. 2014: 208–210). Consequently, they are emancipatory because they question the reality put forth by the official institution, and they denounce the institution’s right to
create reality (Bruno et al. 2014: 208). Somewhat like statactivists, “information intellectuals” are social actors who can translate taken-for-granted social categories into classificatory schemes used in official information gathering (Emigh et al. 2016a: 19–23).

However, studies rarely distinguish between these different possible mechanisms or patterns of reactivity or examine them empirically. Furthermore, if censuses simply use already widespread and widely accepted categories or depend on already common patterns of thinking, their effects may be limited (Emigh, Riley, and Ahmed 2015: 487). While it is entirely plausible that official information creates patterns of reactivity, and possibly through the mechanisms described, this remains largely metaphorical in most research.

To move beyond assumptions or metaphors, to show the effects of either state or social reactivity, specific methodological techniques should be deployed. For example, longitudinal data can be used. To show empirically that the use or distribution of official categories increased the subsequent prevalence of these categories or that enumeration techniques shifted patterns of thought or identity, a measure of the prevalence of the categories or patterns before and after the distribution of the official information could be used. This technique could show, for example, that an entirely new category or pattern of thinking was introduced through information gathering or it could show that there were multiple social categories, but official information gathering increased the prominence of one of them after the distribution of the official information. Another technique is a comparative analysis (Emigh et al. 2016a: 51; Loveman 2014: 34–37). Such an analysis can show variation in the social adoption of official categories. For example, it can illustrate that official information gathering has little effect by demonstrating how national or regional censuses stably reflect the lay categories of their societies despite convergence in methodological techniques and categories across nations over time (Emigh, Riley, and Ahmed 2016b: 15, 208). It can also explain why some categorical content is privileged over other content. For example, while most authors examine race as a principal line of division in official information, using a comparative logic, Emigh et al. (2016b: 25) show that class and place could be equally salient. Another possibility would be to show that some deliberate attempt to introduce a limited (elite or scientific category) had little effect (Emigh et al. 2015: 507; 2016a: 44; 2016b: 79). Finally, a technique like process tracing combined with an analysis of changes in the percentages of the population in particular categories can show how changes are induced through individuals’ actions (e.g., Loveman 2007b: 36; Loveman and Muniz 2007: 933–934; cf. Espeland and Sauder 2007: 10).

**WHO INFLUENCES OFFICIAL INFORMATION?**

Although official information gathering is, of course, virtually by definition a state activity, there is widespread agreement that state and social actors jointly
influence it. However, there is less agreement on how to analyze this reciprocal influence. Part of the difficulty lies in conceptualizing states and societies. A classic literature tried to specify precise, mutually exclusive definitions of these terms to emphasize sharp differences between them as a way to theorize autonomous states as powerful ones (reviews in Balogh 2015: 6; Mitchell 1999: 81). However, the definitions of what constitutes the realms of states and societies changes over time, the composition of states and societies themselves is historically and socially constructed, and the boundary between them is porous and changeable (Emigh et al. 2016a: 33–34). At the same time, the distinction between them is consequential and must be analyzed (Mitchell 1999: 95). Examining the boundaries or the invisible dimensions of the state provides nuanced knowledge about it (e.g., Balogh 2009: 6; Mayrl and Quinn 2016: 1, 19–20; Mettler 2011: 4). However, these works rarely conceptualize social relations explicitly, and sometimes they simply redescribe them as parts of the state, thereby making it impossible to analyze state and social relations or understand the influence of social actors. Thus, inadvertently, they reinforce the state-centered agenda that they criticize (e.g., Mitchell 1999: 82). Furthermore, attempts to historicize the definitions of the state and society, by arguing that the distinction between the two actually constitutes the modern state, are paradoxically ahistorical because they ignore older configurations of states and societies (see Jepperson 2002: 65–66; Mitchell 1999: 95). Inadvertently, then, they undermine historically sensitive analyses of the relation between states and societies. Thus, for all of these reasons, we are skeptical of eliminating the terms, “state” and “society.” However, we use this distinction, like other recent work, to explore the interconnections between states and societies as well as the hybrid forms that combine attributes of both (Balogh 2009: 9–10, 13–15; 2015: 6, 10–14; Clemens 2006: 191; Mayrl and Quinn 2016: 3; Mettler 2011: 4).

Theorizing Actors’ Influences

Two different conceptualizations of the relationships among enumeration, classification, and official information gathering lead to different understandings of state and social actors’ roles. First, from the macrosociological perspective, quantitative information gathering is tied to states’ power. Second, from the microsociological perspective, numbers are an everyday method of making meaning.

Macrosociological Understandings of Influence

Bourdieu’s (1999: 61; cf. 2000: 175) understanding of “information capital” (a form of symbolic capital) focused on the role and power of the state to impose information-collecting schemes on its subjects and then to order these subjects according to these schemes. Thus, the state is the primary creator of classification schemes that shape the structures of consciousness, and, in turn,
the social world (Bourdieu 1999: 61–63; 2012: 13, 60–61, 262). The role of social actors is generally limited to contestation, subversion, or replacement of categories (Brubaker and Cooper 2000: 15–16).

For Foucault (1979b: 19–20), governmentality is a form of governance that operates through sets of institutions and procedures that are oriented toward knowledge over the population. Governmentality arose historically in connection with forms of statistical knowledge that were tied to state power (Foucault 1979b: 14). Statistics classified, ordered, and standardized society as an object of rule (Crook and O’Hara 2011: 3). The objectification of society through numbers furnished the epistemological conditions for the emergence of the modern state and bureaucratic power (Crook and O’Hara 2011: 3). Of course such states were not all-powerful, and these forms of power created resistance in the form of opposition to the information (Crook and O’Hara 2011: 4). Because power and resistance are dialectically related, the power created through information gathering is necessarily resisted (Foucault 1978: 95; Hannah 2000: 39–40; Kertzer and Arel 2002: 6–7).

For Weber (1978: 223, 225), bureaucratic power held in democratic, state institutions is a form of domination through information and power. Bureaucracies, including democratic governments, collect and process information according to calculations and rules (Loveman 2005: 1660; Saiani 2012: 226; Schwarze 1981: 46–49; Shaw and Miles 1979: 34–35; Stapleford 2009: 5–7; Weber 1978: 223–224). Classificatory systems, as well as the ubiquitous work of assigning things, people, and their actions to categories within these systems, are crucial for bureaucratic states (Bowker and Star 1999: 285). Quantification is a hallmark of bureaucratic authority because it enhances predictability, coordination, and impersonality (Espeland and Sauder 2007: 4). Bureaucratic administration is superior because it uses technical knowledge, stored in documents, to calculate results.

In theory, all these treatments provide leverage to analyze social actors because they include, at least to some extent, a dialectical position that attends to structure and agency (though it is sometimes implicit; see Emigh et al. 2016a: 6–11). However, in practice, state actors are prioritized, and social actors are limited to relatively narrow roles of cooperation or protest (Emigh et al. 2016a: 6–11). Bourdieu’s emphasis on state power ignores that through social and political actions, social actors can construct categories for themselves based on their common social experiences, and these categories can draw in other actors (Boltanski 1987: 31; Boltanski and Thévenot 2006: 3). Furthermore, social actors can simultaneously recognize their own categorizations, criticize a set of imposed classifications, and recognize an overarching set of categories beyond their and the imposed ones (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006: 15). Governmentality fails to grasp the multiplicity between private and public sectors and glosses over the degree to which quantitative information is contested (Comaroff and Comaroff 2006: 238).
Much Weberian research on official information gathering also emphasizes the state bureaucracies (Loveman 2005: 1660–1661; Rule 1973: 13–14; Stapleford 2009: 5–7, 384; cf. Higgs 2004: 16). However, Habermas expanded on Weber’s understanding of information to show the links between state and social actors. He argued that the public sphere, which became intertwined with statistical information, developed out of private citizens coming together to discuss their interests (Crook and O’Hara 2011: 5–6; Habermas 1989: 27, 32, 42, 55–56). This public sphere, and its associated form of rationality, were closely tied to the requirements of the capitalist market and influenced state structures (Habermas 1989: 55–57; Marcuse 1968: 26; Saiani 2012: 226).

**Microsociological Understandings of Influence**

Weber’s micro-theorizing, in contrast to his macro-theorizing, inspired phenomenological and ethnomethodological perspectives on information gathering that, as we argued above, suggest that there is little difference between quantification and classification. Furthermore, they show that the widespread use of enumeration by ordinary actors is a mundane communicative and interpretive practice (Bowker and Star 1999: 288; Comaroff and Comaroff 2006: 239; Lave 1988: 2; Sudnow 1967: 36). Because classification systems, including governmental ones, are built up from practices informed by shared understandings and categorizations, they are also inherently contradictory and ambiguous, and they rarely point to a single decision as their outcome (Bowker and Star 1999: 322–323).

Because counting depends – at least provisionally – on shared social understandings, this perspective provides a more fundamental theorization of social actors’ influences than the state-centered ones (review in Emigh et al. 2016a: 19–22). Members count members by means of social relationships with those being counted, who intentionally or unintentionally act to facilitate, thwart, or evade being counted (Martin and Lynch 2009: 262). The credibility of a count thus depends on local categorical judgments and discriminatory actions that create an infrastructure of accountability (Bowker and Star 1999: 287; Martin and Lynch 2009: 262). The idea that the understanding of the situation must be shared – or at least provisionally shared – by the counters and the counted is different from the idea that the positionality of the actors affects the collection of information that is common from the Foucauldian and Bourdieusian perspective (e.g., Hannah 2000: 180–181; Loveman 2007b: 18).

Emigh et al. (2016a: 30, 38–41) provide one of the few explicit syntheses of the macrosociological and microsociological positions by modeling state and social influences on information gathering, as well as the interactions between them. They draw on the ethnomethodological and phenomenological perspectives to show how shared understandings are essential for collecting information at the micro-level, a Gramscian perspective to show how power relations between social and state actors shape the transformation of these
understandings into information categories at the meso-level, and Weberian theories of bureaucracy to show how these categories shape state power at the macro-level (Emigh et al. 2016a: 19–30). Thus, Emigh et al. help to operationalize Berger and Luckmann’s (1966: 74–85) ideas about how knowledge that is created by individuals from the bottom up is then institutionalized with the capacity to react back upon those individuals.

The Comparative and Temporal Dimensions of Influence

From the Foucauldian and Weberian perspectives, states use official information gathering to fulfill concrete administrative needs (e.g., Curtis 2001: 10–11; 2002: 510–511; Giddens 1985: 179–180; Kertzer and Arel 2002: 5–6; Lam 2011: 52–57). Population censuses arose historically from states’ efforts to extract resources for taxation and military conscription from their populations (Emigh et al. 2016a: 57; Loveman 2014: 24; Starr 1987: 10–11). Official information gathering, however, is often linked to the rise of capitalism and social bureaucracies (Giddens 1981: 218; Starr 1987: 20; review in Higgs 2004: 11–13). Thus, information gathering usually built off of existing social institutions in commercialized societies where land values were measured and marketized or where feudal institutions entailed the declarations of rights (Emigh et al. 2016a: 82–83, 107–108; Poovey 1998: xvi–xvii; Woolf 1984: 81; review in Emigh et al. 2016a: 12–13). Civil registration usually built on religious registration (Emigh et al. 2016a: 173). Thus, the state’s role was often the systematic collation of previously existing social information.

Furthermore, social changes were often prerequisites for the collection of official information (Woolf 1989: 588–590). For example, a rise in social numeracy was a precondition for the collection of censuses, and, in particular, for the occupational information in them (Cohen 1982: 164, 253). Cohen (1982: 150) traced the origin of the word “statistics” not to the German noun for “the state” as is typical but to the English verb “to state” (cf. MacKenzie 1981: 7–8; Starr 1987: 10, 15; Woolf 1989: 590–591). These statements of facts and figures about civil relations became a common form of reporting first in private and subsequently in governmental entities (Cohen 1982: 151). This development of a Habermasian (1989: 27, 32, 42, 52, 56) public sphere extended to statistical knowledge in the nineteenth century creating public information, organizational forms, and bureaucratic structures that shaped whether the state could collect official information (Crook and O’Hara 2011: 4–6, 9–11; Higgs 2011: 70–75; Zaret 2000: 9–10, 39). For example, a successful French census depended on the centralization of the state, an increase in the number of trained administrators, and a disciplined citizenry (Porter 1995: 35–37). Of all the locations in the Napoleonic empire, information gathering was the most successful in Italy, not in France, because of the long history of the interaction between the Italian state and society in collecting such information (Emigh et al. 2016a: 196; Porter 1995: 36; cf. Woolf 1984: 165, 167–168).
These broad social changes also intersected with the explicit actions of state and social actors (cf. Hacking 1986: 223). For example, from 1850 to 1930, instability in US census racial taxonomies arose from demographic shifts, but the reconceptualization of the categories themselves came from struggles within the Census Bureau over politics (struggles for bureaucratic control and autonomy), science (drive for scientific legitimacy), and ideology (ideological commitments about the nature of race) (Hochschild and Powell 2008: 88). Similarly, the “mark one or more races” option in the 2000 US census was influenced by immigration and the growing social acceptance of interracial marriage, as well as explicit social activism and lobbying by multiracial individuals (DaCosta 2007: 27–46; Ellis 2000: 187–188; Perlmann and Waters 2002: 1; Prewitt 2013: 132–133; Robbin 2000: 412–413; Snipp 2003: 575–576; Williams 2006: 2). In fact, this pressure cannot be understood as an attempt to garner political or legal rights, as many civil rights groups argued that in pressing for a multiracial category, these individuals worked against their own self-interest because it would undermine the enforcement of civil rights law (Anderson and Fienberg 2000: 94; Mezey 2003: 1749; Nobles 2002: 59; Perlmann and Waters 2002: 13; Prewitt 2013: 133; Spencer 1999: 137). Instead, they sought government recognition of their identity (DaCosta 2007: 5; King 2000: 201; Mezey 2003: 1749; Perlmann and Waters 2002: 13; Prewitt 2013: 133; Robbin 2000: 414–415).

The intentional influence of state and social actors is also apparent in the initiation of official information gathering. Of course, state actors pressed for the adoption of the collection of official information (Anderson 1988: 10; Curtis 2001: 46–47; Emigh et al. 2015: 497; Hannah 2000: 3). However, this seemingly obvious conclusion may be a methodological artifact, because it is easier to find records documenting the role of state actors than social ones, as the actions of state actors were usually recorded in the official documents that accompanied data collection that is intrinsically tied to administrative purposes. Conventional histories, starting from the official documents that record how state actors create and collect data, may impute causality and even intentionality to actors that may not have been present (Poovey 1998: xiii–xiv). A prehistory of state data collection may discover social pressures before official data collection started. Social actors, for example, explicitly pressed for the first British censuses (Emigh et al. 2016a: 130, 134; Levitan 2011: 17). In fact, Parliament blocked the bill for a national census in 1753 and agreed to one in 1801 only under considerable social pressure (Emigh et al. 2016a: 125–135; Levitan 2011: 16–17). The census, which had been viewed by intellectuals largely in the private sphere as a way to increase the power of the government, became a way to limit it (Buck 1982: 28, 37; Levitan 2011: 17). Thus, the first British census was an outgrowth of nonconformist clergy, physicians, and commercial interests as they tried to increase their social and political power (Buck 1982: 37). Censuses would provide evidence for annuity funds that would highlight mobile as opposed to landed wealth and therefore increase their social status (Buck 1982: 43).
Social actors also made explicit requests for information from censuses after they were established. In Tuscany in the first half of the nineteenth century, intellectuals pushed for official information gathering, but their efforts were blocked by state actors’ repressive policies (Patriarca 1996: 107–110). Similarly, in the mid-nineteenth century, Italian nationalists pushed for the collection of statistics because they argued that they would help create an Italian nation-state (Patriarca 1996: 6–7). In the United States, social actors in organizations promoting science and social reform pressed for the collection of statistical information in the first few censuses (e.g., Cohen 1982: 156–157, 170–173; Emigh et al. 2016a: 163–164). Many censuses are subject to explicit lobbying by social groups hoping to influence the categories (Kertzer and Arel 2002: 29). Social actors also object to the collection of official information because they fear the redistribution of power that accompanies it or because of privacy concerns (Loveman 2005: 1670–1671; Schiaffino 1974: 351–352, 356–359; Thompson 2010: 379).

Official state information or large-scale state infrastructural projects seemingly the outcome of state officials or bureaucracies, for example, on closer inspection, can turn out to be the products of elite social actors working consensually, of the interaction between social and state actors, or of local knowledge based on taken-for-granted elements of everyday life (Desrosières 1998: 13; Mukerji 2009: 11; Schweber 2006: 6; Vertesi 2015: 12, 16). And, of course, the extent to which state and social actors are even distinct, as well as the mechanisms that draw them into interaction, should be a matter of empirical investigation (Emigh et al. 2016a: 26; Loveman 2005: 1661). For example, the US censuses (as with other US phenomena [Balogh 2009: 6–7; Clemens 2006: 188]) depended on an intense degree of interaction between state and social actors not found in other censuses (Emigh et al. 2016b: 209).

Similar issues apply to considerations of whether state or social actors influenced the creation of instruments to collect the information. A focus on the official documents may suggest that state bureaucrats developed the methodology or categories of analysis explicitly for that particular round of data collection. However, state actors often drew on long histories of information gathering for methodological precedents. For example, the first US census, though it was the first national attempt and an early historical one with few national precedents, drew on many previous rounds of information gathering in the North American British colonies by state officials, companies, and religious organizations (Emigh et al. 2016a: 145–151). The early medieval English Domesday book drew on private estate records kept by social actors as well as an oral tradition of collection by juries (Emigh et al. 2016a: 65). The twentieth-century French state was transformed by benchmarking, a quantitative technique imported from private businesses (Bruno and Didier 2013: 50–51).

If taken-for-granted categories are the basis for information gathering as the ethnomethodological and phenomenological perspective suggests, the relative
weight of taken-for-granted categories versus explicitly created ones should be carefully examined. For example, Madison drew on Enlightenment philosophies of information gathering to propose demographic categories in the first US census (Emigh et al. 2015: 503–504). However, these categories did not resonate with other state actors’ social understandings and were mostly eliminated (Emigh et al. 2015: 505–511). Social elites, drawing on eugenic theory to document differences about whiteness in the early twentieth century, failed to transform the primary racial classification in the US census based on the divide between Blacks and Whites because their schemas did not resonate with the general population (Emigh et al. 2016b: 66–67). Similarly, politicians’ last-minute change to the 1840 census created what was widely assumed to be unusable data (Cohen 1982: 177–178; Emigh et al. 2016a: 167).

Many studies, despite empirically showing a subtle interplay between state and social actors, theoretically or summarily emphasize state actors. For example, though Stapleford (2009: 4) subtly analyzed how social activists, social scientists, and government bureaucrats contributed to the Consumer Price Index, he argued that he focused on “state-created, quantitative knowledge.” Similarly, though Woolf (1989: 588–590, 598) explicitly noted the multiple social sources of statistics, he emphasized the close identification of statistics with the modern state. Loveman (2007b: 25) showed that whitening in the 1920 Puerto Rican census occurred because census enumerators frequently reported children of mixed parents as “white,” though this contradicted census administrators’ intentions to label them as “mulatto” or “black.” Despite her subtle analysis of the interplay of these, and other, state and social actors, Loveman (2007b: 37–40) emphasized the power of the state, in Bourdieusian fashion.

Despite many claims that the influence of social vis-à-vis state actors increases over time, only a few studies examine the point empirically (Bowker and Star 1999: 223; Choldin 1994: 5; Hochschild and Powell 2008: 89; Kertzer and Arel 2002: 27; Nobles 2000: 19–22). Emigh et al. (2016b: 218–219) investigated how conflicts shifted from being about gathering information per se to struggles over the specific content of census categories. Hochschild and Powell (2008: 64), drawing on Kertzer and Arel (2002: 27), suggested that as the form of state power shifts from coercion to nation building, power over the classification system shifts toward the classified. Mezey (2003: 1765) argued that popular sentiment was important in the 1870 census, but it was the sentiment of the classifiers, not the classified; these patterns of influence were reversed in the 2000 census. During the periods from 1790 to 1840 and from 1930 to 1960 the census reflected racial thinking, but during the periods from 1850 to 1930 and from 1970 to the present, the census contributed directly to the formation of racial ideas (Nobles 2000: 25–26). It would be useful to integrate the study of official information more closely with comparative and historical sociology by exploring the connections that link particular types of class structures and particular sorts of states with particular formats of
information gathering. This might also help integrate many of the interesting findings about race and ethnicity with better understandings of how these phenomena intersect with class and place and how they link to the interaction between state and social actors across time (e.g., Emigh 2016b: 25).

Clearly, state and social actors contributed to the collection of official information. However, relatively little is known about the conditions under which state and social actors separately or interactively press for the collection of information or for the implementation of specific methodological techniques, both during the initial establishment of the information gathering and during subsequent collection efforts. Furthermore, relatively little is known about how the influence of state and social actors changes over time.

**How does official information entail power?**

We review here four mechanisms – legibility, center of control, classification, and institutionalization – that may explain how information gathering, including official information gathering, entails power. These mechanisms are not mutually exclusive. In principle, state or social actors can capitalize on these mechanisms, but, in practice, they are often tied to the state (though with varying degrees of theorized inherentness).

**Legibility**

Official information gathering makes society legible, so that it can be seen and understood more clearly (Scott 1998: 2). With it, officials simplify complex and variable social practices, creating a standard set of measures that can be centrally recorded and monitored (Scott 1998: 2). These practices of rationalization and standardization facilitate state administration and increase state capacity by remaking the reality that they depict and by creating categories through the force of law (Scott 1998: 3). For example, surveys on farms and agriculture made this economic sector visible to the British government and thus increased the state’s power (Murdoch and Ward 1997: 308, 321). Through censuses, nations also become legible and thus comparable to other nations; consequently, censuses demonstrate and document nation-statehood (Loveman 2014: 87). This comparability was enhanced as nations followed the prescriptions of International Statistical Congresses, starting in 1853 (Loveman 2014: 88).

Successful legibility is linked to surveillance and discipline (cf. Dandeker 1990: 12, 25, 36; Foucault 1979a: 198–199; Rule 1973: 28–29). Surveillance through panoptic knowledge induces individuals to discipline themselves (Foucault 1979a: 200–201). Surveillance has two components: the collation and integration of administrative information and the act of direct supervision (Giddens 1985: 46). Surveillance as the coding of information is an essential part of administrative and bureaucratic power because writing has mnemonic and distributional advantages
over orality (Dandeker 1990: 2, 4; Giddens 1985: 47). Surveillance is thus a feature of the modern state, accomplished through the census and other forms of information gathering (Giddens 1985: 48–49; Mezey 2003: 1715).

However, despite the many claims based on Foucault and Scott, empirical studies, and in fact Scott’s (1998: 4) own argument, suggest that techniques that supposedly increase legibility do not necessarily have this effect (Rose-Redwood 2012: 625–626). For example, early British censuses were not collected for the purposes of social control nor contained the sort of information that would have made this possible (Higgs 2004: 97–98). Similarly, the modest staffs of Latin American states could do little with the stacks of collected returns from their early censuses (Loveman 2014: 105). Their census directors disavowed their results even while arguing that the census was a great accomplishment (Loveman 2014: 105). Likewise, US house numbering was undertaken haphazardly and unsystematically, and municipal authorities were unable to keep up with the rapid pace of tearing down and rebuilding houses (Rose-Redwood 2012: 626). More uniform and rationalized methods of assigning numbers did not create a uniform numerical pattern (Rose-Redwood 2012: 627). Finally, creating legibility through quantitative information can be a powerful political tool for subaltern groups (Urla 1993: 820). Basque activists appropriated statistics as a method of resistance by turning language into a countable entity to document authoritatively their cultural and linguistic marginalization (Urla 1993: 820, 836).

When technocratic and political elites fail to account for local, practical knowledge, legibility projects fail (Loveman 2005: 1670–1672; Scott 1998: 6; cf. Mukerji 2009: 11). In the early nineteenth century, Napoleonic officials tried to exclude the clergy from participating in the collection of information for their newly implemented civil registration, but it was impossible to collect the information without them (Schiaffino 1974: 356–359). Similarly, Brazilian state modernizers failed to impose civil registration because they did not understand how it seemingly interfered with established religious registration (Loveman 2005: 1670–1672; 2007a: 30). Scott (1998: 4–5) argued that state-initiated efforts fail when they combine with high-modernist ideologies, authoritarian states, and civil societies incapable of resistance. This illustrates, however, the larger problem with assuming that information gathering is a technology of state power: projects that do not increase legibility or state power are deemed failures. Although Scott (1998: 6) emphasized the importance of local knowledge, his theorization of it lacks the depth and sophistication of the ethnomethodological or phenomenological perspective that sees everyday knowledge as constitutive. Perhaps a state-centered focus highlights legibility as Scott’s main contribution, instead of what is arguably his main point that most such projects fail (e.g., Kertzer and Arel 2006: 664–667; Loveman 2005: 1653).
Center of Control

Governmentality requires ways of collecting and presenting statistics and of transporting them to centers where calculations and judgments can be made (Miller and Rose 1990: 5). From the perspective of actor network theory, the state is not inherently the most powerful actor, but often assumes this attribute because it sits at the center of control and calculation when collecting and processing official information (Latour 1987: 234–235). These processes render social fields as information, amenable to intervention and regulation, rather than to speculation (Miller and Rose 1990: 5). Thus, written reports, drawings, pictures, numbers, charts, graphs, statistics are essential to governmentality (Miller and Rose 1990: 7). Information must be stable, mobile, combinable, and comparable, so that it can be re-presented at the decision-making location (Latour 1987: 223; Miller and Rose 1990: 7; Rose 1991: 676). Numbers have these attributes, so they are an ideal medium through which states exercise control (Hannah 2000: 28; Latour 1987: 223; Rose 1991: 676). Complex mechanisms must link calculations through a network of agents and agencies whose interests are aligned without the use of direct force (Callon 1986: 223–224; Latour 1986: 277; Miller and Rose 1990: 9; Rose 1999: 199).

Governmentality, however, is often tied to democratic states, where power has different attributes than in authoritarian ones. Democratic power is calculating power, and numbers are integral to its technologies, including the census (Rose 1999: 200, 221). In liberal democracies, the delineation of the powers of political authorities typically corresponded with the creation of the private realm that had self-governing capacities fostered by the state (Murdoch and Ward 1997: 309). Thus, a democratic state is a loose assemblage of governing rationalities, practices, techniques, and programs that facilitate intervention in civil society (Foucault 1979b: 20; Miller and Rose 1990: 8; Murdoch and Ward 1997: 310; Rose 1991: 691; Rose and Miller 1992: 180). Experts are central to this form of governance (Miller and Rose 1990: 9). Thus, the state, a series of centers that links state and nonstate actors, can govern at a distance (Murdoch and Ward 1997: 311). Official statistics draw on rationalized calculation, numerate citizens, numericized civic discourse, and numerical evaluations of government to create self-controlling citizens (Prewitt 1987: 262; Rose 1991: 675, 691). Democracy operates as a technology to the extent that such a network of numbers, which produce a public rhetoric of disinterest in situations of contestation, can be composed and stabilized (Rose 1991: 678, 691). In particular, statistics facilitate democracy by providing data for apportioning representation, by making information public, in helping to evaluate legislation, and in creating a political culture that supports pluralism and interest groups (Desrosières 1998: 188–189; Frankel 2006: 3; Prewitt 1987: 265–266; Starr 1987: 19). Public information keeps state bureaucracies open and accountable, which in turn supports contestation and democratic state structures (Emigh et al. 2016a: 30; Frankel 2006: 3).
In democracies, therefore, numerical information may have centering and decentering influences that empower both states and citizens. However, many adults in Western democracies lack skills of literacy, numeracy, and knowledge of basic sociodemographic statistics (Saiani 2012: 234–236). If numbers contribute to the accountability required for democracy, much remains unknown about how they do so (Saiani 2012: 237). Finally, some quantitative technologies eliminate centers of control because they allow individuals to regulate and control their own social technology, though perhaps through a standardized measure (e.g., a thermometer, Hess 2005: 122; on government standards, see Timmermans and Epstein 2010: 76–77).

**Classification**

Official information categories endorse, reify, and normalize the categories found in the general culture, even when they do not create categories from anew (Goldberg 1997: 52–53). Categories on information-gathering forms always lag behind the identities of lived experience, and census categories are constantly reformulated to try to better reflect this lived experience (Goldberg 1997: 32). The state’s symbolic power backing their categories contributes to racialization by making some ethnic and racial distinctions seem self-evidently real, socially salient, and officially powerful while obscuring others (Goldberg 1997: 52–53; Loveman 2014: 11–12). A census serves state interests ideologically by creating a national profile by race (Goldberg 1997: 33). Official classifications are most likely to be naturalized when they correspond with everyday ones (Loveman 2014: 18).

Social actors also can use official information to criticize reality as well as represent a shared reality (Bruno et al. 2014: 200). For example, the depersonalization of poverty through official statistics in the late eighteenth century also gave the poor the power to bargain face-to-face for their needs (Sherman 2001: 5). Ordinary actors, statactivists, can use statistical information in an emancipatory way to organize their own interests and to challenge representations of reality (Bruno et al. 2014: 200, 210). Although it could be argued that such social actors merely follow the models provided by state actors, our historical review shows that state actors often drew on social information-gathering techniques. Similarly, social actors – information or census intellectuals – transform everyday categories into explicit ways of recording information (Emigh et al. 2016a: 25). However, this also can have emancipatory features for the classified and increase their power.

Classification can combine with surveillance and discipline. Enumeration entails classifying and counting, and these activities create averages and aggregates that serve as standards for individuals to measure themselves and others, as well as be measured by others (Urla 1993: 820). Censuses and surveys provide a normalizing feature: a population average implicitly suggests what is normal and, therefore, not normal or deviant (Foucault 1979a: 183; Hacking
Thus, a census can be panoptic, disciplinary, and can induce individual conformity through classification as well as direct surveillance (cf. Foucault 1979a: 190). For example, the Chinese category in the US census created and solidified Chinese identity, and it was a disciplinary mechanism to control them (Mezey 2003: 1743). The census can be linked to identity through a program such as affirmative action that attempts to redress past injustices, through the attainment of a given statistical threshold, or through a power-sharing formula (Kertzer and Arel 2006: 669–670). The classificatory power of statistics is thus constitutive (Urla 1993: 820).

Similarly, Walker, the head of the ninth and tenth US censuses, had a particular understanding of race and gender conditioned by his social background that informed his policies of social control through spatial restriction (Hannah 2000: 222). Walker considered Native Americans, Blacks, and Eastern and Southern European immigrants to be degrading American whiteness and manhood and proposed policies that would restrict their geographical distribution in the United States (Hannah 2000: 181). His ideas shaped the census categories, and, at least in part through them, his highly influential program of immigration restriction and his consolidation of the Native American reservation system (Hannah 2000: 211, 218). While it is entirely plausible that the census had this effect, Hannah cannot isolate Walker’s influence through the census from other social, nongovernmental effects of this ideology. Thus, Hannah, like other authors who use this approach, cannot explain the extent to which the census categories are reflections of social categories that are constructed elsewhere in society (Ostler 2002: 313).

Institutionalization

Official statistics comprise a technology of the modern state, and their power is linked to the authority of the state (Hacking 1981: 15; Nobles 2000: 3). Censuses help states become more powerful, or, perhaps, just more effective by fulfilling administrative needs. States need to gather information to govern effectively, and they create state institutions to do so (Furner and Supple 1990: 5). In turn, these institutions reshape the nature and capacities of the state (Furner and Supple 1990: 5). The first national censuses in Latin America were tied to administrative needs of governments and voting (Loveman 2014: 100). Similarly, maps maintained state power by demarcating boundaries; strengthening the military; and facilitating commerce, administration, and population control (Harley 1989: 12). The census thus serves state interests by furnishing information for revenue collection and voting rights (Goldberg 1997: 33). States miss opportunities to consolidate power and increase capacity when they fail to implement information gathering, such as civil registration (Loveman 2005: 1660, 1665, 1675). Census taking at a local or provincial level often outpaced states’ capacities to orchestrate
a national census (Loveman 2014: 101). States improved their capacity to take
censuses by following the rubrics of the International Statistical Congresses

Colonial censuses are perhaps viewed as the epitome of holding power
through censuses. Censuses, maps, and museums are institutions of power
that shaped how the colonial state imagined its domain (Anderson 1991
[1983]:163–164; Atkinson 2003: 9). For example, British censuses were
engines of statecraft that transformed land and people into a territory and
population through data (Carroll 2006: 112). Spanish colonial censuses
helped to instantiate an ethnoracial social order (Loveman 2014: 44).

Official information is also powerful because it creates channels for
legitimate actions. State institutions and agencies, such as censuses, create
channels for acceptable expressions of political action and provide incentives
and disincentives for organized action (Nobles 2000: 19). The American
multiracial and Brazilian Black movements identified their respective national
censuses as a way to refigure and reconstitute racial identities through
categorization (Nobles 2000: 21). In the United States, the censuses
contributed to a racial discourse that justified racial discrimination; in Brazil,
the census contributed to a racial discourse that denied that discrimination
existed, and thus justified state inaction (Nobles 2000: 86).

These four mechanisms of power are not mutually exclusive, and, in fact, often
reinforce each other. The ability of official statistics to reinforce state power in
fascist Italy, for example, may have lain in how statisticians there developed
original, consistent, and widely recognized scientific and technical developments
supporting the fascist state, while maintaining professional autonomy (Prévost
2009: 3). Fascists tried, with some success, to institutionalize a strong center of
control with classificatory population ideologies, and statisticians created
particularly effective tools to view the population.

While statistics can be a form of state power, to reinforce this theoretically
without empirical evidence and to ignore social construction from social actors
reifies and amplifies this power. More research is needed to specify where and
when this power might or might not be held and deployed. Furthermore,
virtually no studies measure or even evaluate qualitatively the extent of power
to investigate whether it increases longitudinally after information is collected.
A methodology comparing strong and weak states, however, suggests that
strong states do not necessarily collect more information (comparatively in
Emigh et al. 2016a: 51–53). A crucial concern is whether official information
is a primary, or merely derivative, site of social construction (Ostler 2002: 313).

CONCLUSIONS

The sociology of official information gathering has been an incredibly fruitful
research topic. Official information gathering, far from a process of merely
documenting reality, helps to create that reality. Or does it? In this review, we documented a range of studies showing how official information gathering can have this effect, but this effect is often more assumed than empirically illustrated. Furthermore, although official information gathering should of course be the prima facie case to show the power and effectiveness of the state, our review shows in fact that social actors are often more important than state ones in shaping official information. To push the field away from heuristics and toward more theoretically and empirically grounded research, we organized our review around specific areas that might motivate research. First, we showed how enumeration was a historically constructed activity that combined the everyday mundane activity of quantification with classification that necessarily entailed categorization. Second, we showed how official information can have transformative effects through reactivity, and, in particular, through the mechanisms of the self-fulfilling prophecy and commensuration. Third, although many studies show that the state actors influence official information gathering, we showed that social actors are also crucial, theoretically and empirically. Who constitutes social and state actors, how influential each were, and the extent and pattern of the interaction between the two vary comparatively and historically. Finally, we showed that the power of official information gathering can work through four mechanisms: legibility, centers of control, classification, and institutionalization. We hope future research addresses these points.

REFERENCES


The Dark and Light Sides of Big Data

*How Big Data Is Transforming Political Sociology*

J. Craig Jenkins

The growth of Big Data has become central to the politics of contemporary societies and stimulated new research in political sociology. Citizens and states increasingly depend on the Internet, cell phones, social media, and other new information communication technologies (or ICTs) to communicate about politics, and to mobilize, control, monitor, and influence politics (Castells 2009, 2012; Castells and Cardoso 2015). One of the most important consequences has been the “Twitter revolution” of using websites, blogs, social media, and cell phones to mobilize and coordinate political action. ICTs have lowered communication costs, provided platforms for forming new political identities and identifying grievances, devising strategies, organizing protests and collective action, creating citizen access to information (including internet hacks), carrying out administrative planning, and providing new platforms for democratic discussion and governance (the “light side”). At the same time, there is a “dark side” of Big Data as these new ICTs are used by criminal and terrorist groups to raise funds, recruit activists, and disrupt institutions while also giving states, antidemocratic movements, and elites new tools for monitoring and manipulating public opinion, promoting polarization, creating confusion and apathy with disinformation campaigns, and conducting cyberwarfare of various types. As of March 2019, there were over 4.3 billion internet users with the global internet penetration rate at over 56.8 percent and steadily climbing (InternetWorldStats 2019). In the world’s rich democracies, near 90 percent of the population is online and devotes more time to using ICTs (especially cell phones and social media) than watching TV or any other nonwork activity. Even in the developing world, internet

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1 We treat “Big Data” here largely in terms of the Internet and cell phones but it has broader meaning as any type of large-scale digital data (e.g., credit reports, web searches, credit card transactions, disease and injury reports, GIS traces of car and truck mobility, electronic toll records, etc. [Lazer and Radford 2017; Tsai et al. 2015]).
penetration and cell phone rates run near half or more of the population. While political activity is not the main use of ICTs, these technologies have become sufficiently woven into everyday life that they are now central to the political arena almost everywhere. Is this positive or has it contributed to elite, criminal, and terrorist manipulation and power? What has been its impact on political mobilization, conflict, and democratic practice?

We review recent research on the uses, abuses, and impacts of ICTs in contemporary politics and the new Big Data methods that have been developed to study power, political action, and control linked to ICT use. Political sociologists have been slow to enter this field partially because they lack the computational and analytic skills to collect and analyze Big Data. Yet the Big Data revolution in business, public administration, politics, and everyday life is transforming the way in which everyday (read: political) life is conducted, making it imperative that political sociologists adopt the many new tools for web scraping, text analysis, data reduction, and the collection, management, curation, and analysis of massive amounts of Big Data. We begin with a brief discussion of the meaning of Big Data and the major tools and methods involved. We then examine the use and impact of ICTs in the mobilization and control of political action and the question as to whether these new ICTs boost democracy or foster elite control, manipulation, and destructive conflict.

THE BIG DATA REVOLUTION AND ITS METHODOLOGICAL IMPACT

What exactly is Big Data? Recent social science reviews (Alvarez 2016; Bail 2014; Cioffi-Rivella 2013; Golder and Macy 2014; Japec et al. 2015; Kitchin 2014; Kitchin and McArdle 2016; Lazer and Radford 2017; Lazer and Wojcik 2017; Wagner-Pacifi, Mohr, and Breiger 2015; Zeitzoff 2017) and the launching of new journals (e.g. Big Data & Society; Big Data Research; Journal of Big Data) constitute a recognition of the reality that everyday life and politics have become sufficiently organized around the use of ICTs and other Big Data information systems that it is no longer possible to understand the traditional topics in the field – political mobilization, communications, power, control, public opinion, public policy, and the like – without understanding the Internet and the many forms of digitized Big Data created by ICTs. In response, political sociologists, political scientists, and data scientists in multiple disciplines have developed new tools for gathering, managing, archiving, reducing, and analyzing the massive amounts of ICT-generated Big Data. Data mining, geo-mapping, machine learning, web crawling, and various automated and semi-automated tools such as neural networks, random forests classification, topic coding, automated event coding, and the like have been developed to support these data gathering, archiving, management, and analysis efforts (Alvarez 2016; Chang, Kauffman, and Kwon 2014; Foster et al. 2017; Hargittai and Sandvig 2015; Lazer and Radford 2017).
Some leaders in the broader Big Data movement have argued that these techniques are creating a scientific revolution in how we approach and use social science data (e.g., “The End of Theory” [Anderson 2008]; see also Kitchin and McArdle 2016). Some contend that we should replace traditional deductive social science based on scarce and expensive data with cheaper and more expansive Big Data which allows access to “all of it” and hence the ability to build scientific insights from massive Big Data. Further, Big Data allows us to directly tap the meanings and actions of social actors unobtrusively, surpassing the indirect and obtrusive methods used in traditional surveys, qualitative interviewing, and the like (Veltri 2017). Additional Big Data advantages are its timeliness (i.e., near real time), reduced costs, greater flexibility, and the ability to identify the geographic and temporal locations of events and actions (Chang et al. 2014; Mian and Rosenthal 2016; Tsai et al. 2015).

While several of these arguments have merit, the claim of a scientific revolution is flawed (see Chang et al. 2014). Big Data confronts the same problems of partiality, complexity and ambiguity as traditional social science data. In fact, one of the major challenges facing Big Data is assessing representativeness (Tufekci 2014). While access to meaning may be more direct and less obtrusive, all samples of Big Data are partial and require concepts and interpretations to be apprehended and analyzed. Plus there is the aforementioned problem of representativeness. Although having more data might at first glance seem better, selection can bias a massive dataset just as badly as a small one. The best current solutions to assessing representativeness of Big Data are the “capture-recapture” or Lincoln–Peterson method originally developed in field ecology to estimate total populations and the representativeness of specific samples (Seber 1982; Sutherland 1996). Earl (2013), for example, outlines and compares three sampling methods for studying internet protest and finds that sampling “reachable websites” locates more online protest than organizational sampling or expert judgment. Jenkins and Maher (2016) outline the use of “capture-recapture” and related methods to assess the representativeness of news-derived event data.

The second major problem with Big Data is untidiness. Big Data is typically not collected with social science in mind and require considerable cleaning and management to be used scientifically. For many projects, cross-disciplinary partnerships with data scientists are needed to construct usable data. Big Data methods are also increasingly being incorporated into professional training in the social sciences with an outpouring of new guidebooks (e.g., Cioffi-Revilla 2013; Foster et al. 2017), and the aforementioned new journals.

**Big Data and Survey Research.** One of the major analytic applications of Big Data has been to improve survey research by housing and distributing huge archives of survey data. The Internet is also used to administer surveys with significantly reduced costs and, with new computational techniques, to allow analyses that could not previously be done. Warshaw (2016) shows how the
growth of large online public opinion survey archives, such as those housed at the Roper Center (http://ropercenter.cornell.edu), and the development of new techniques for adjusting quota samples and for estimating public opinion in small areas has transformed our ability to study many topics, like subnational variation in public opinion over time and its effects on elections and public policy. Durso et al. (2018) show that web surveys, which cost a third or more of traditional phone and face-to-face surveys, may produce lower and potentially biased responses but these biases can be controlled by weighting developed from demographic and political data purchased from consumer credit/information aggregators, such as Experian (http://experian.com). Survey researchers are also experimenting with using internet data to fill in missing data in surveys and to confirm opinion measures (Japec et al. 2015). The Survey Data Recycling Project (Slomczynski, Tomescu-Dubrow, and Jenkins 2016; Slomczynski et al. 2017; Slomczynski, Tomescu-Dubrow, and Jenkins 2019; Tomescu-Dubrow and Slomczynski 2016) uses the Internet to distribute in customizable form data from a vast archive of over 3,500 international social surveys that have been harmonized and annotated in a comparable form. This project is also developing an online platform with analytic tools that will be used to access, extract, and analyze these data online.

**Big Data and Event Data.** A second area of Big Data research has been the construction of political event data to capture protest and other contentious and routine forms of political action (Beieler et al. 2016; Schrodt 2012). Drawing on the vast electronic news archives maintained online by Reuters, BBC World Monitoring, Agence France-Presse (AFP), and the like, scholars have developed automated and semi-automated techniques for constructing event data. Using sparse-parsing techniques that employ the basic noun–verb–noun grammatical structure of news story lead lines to identify actor, event form, and target, Schrodt and collaborators (Schrodt and Gerner 2000; Schrodt, Gerner, and Yilmaz 2009) have shown that machine coding applied to Reuters and AFP can produce vast amounts of data that are comparable in terms of accuracy and reliability to data generated by human coders (see also King and Lowe 2003; Best, Carpino, and Crescenzi 2013). Others have used more complex pattern recognition coding techniques (e.g., King and Lowe 2003; Jenkins et al. 2012, 2018a, 2018b; O’Brien 2010; Brandt et al. 2017) as well as computer-assisted human coding (Kriesik, Lorenzini, Wuest and Makarov 2017; Nardulli, Althaus, and Hayes 2015; Raleigh et al. 2010; Salehyan et al. 2012) to construct event data. For example, the Cline Center’s Phoenix Event Data provides several million contentious politics events extracted from over 14 million news stories (https://bit.ly/2ISfCID). Similar machine learning methods have also been applied to legal and administrative electronic archives. As Beieler et al. (2016), Schrodt (2012), and Jenkins et al. (2018b) conclude, automated methods can achieve more than 70 percent accuracy, which is comparable to well-managed human coding and likely more stable
over time than long-term multi-institution human coding. More important, it is more transparent and correctable than human coding (i.e., there is no “black box” of the human coder’s mind and corrections can be done to the program to improve accuracy and reliability), and can create vastly greater amounts of data from existing vast digital news archives. With sufficient resources, such event data coding can be available on a near real-time basis and is being used for early warning and conflict monitoring (Bond et al. 2003; O’Brien 2010; Meier 2015).

New techniques are being developed for dealing with multiple news sources, multiple languages (Farsi, Arabic, etc.) and the full parsing of news text (as opposed to traditional lead-line coding) along with open source programs, dictionaries, and other tools for collecting, organizing, archiving, and analyzing both news text and resulting event data (Beier et al. 2016; http://openeventdata.org). Integrated Crisis Early Warning System (ICEWS) codes over 1,000 multi-language local and international newswires and online newspapers (https://lmt.co/2Kq4kZ1), which creates the problem of resolving potential duplicate reports of events. For example, the GDELT dataset (www.gdeltproject.org) has been found to contain large numbers of duplicates due to using Google news aggregator as its input. In a notable example, the Boko Haram hostage seizure of over 200 schoolgirls in Chibok Nigeria on April 14, 2013 produced over 2,200 GDELT reports of hostage seizures (Unknown author 2014; Ward et al. 2013). All event data projects confront the problem of de-duplication, which has typically been addressed by eliminating exact matches on key event characteristics (e.g., date, location, actor or source, event form, and target) but country- and time-specific dynamics may also need to be taken into account.

There is also the problem of news selection, which is positively associated with urban, wealthy, accessible areas, official news sources, “newsworthiness” (i.e., violence or unusualness), and other aspects of events (Davenport and Ball 2002; Maher and Jenkins 2018). One way to address this is to control for factors associated with news selection, like press freedom, population, and media capacity (Costello, Jenkins, and Aly 2015; Crenshaw, Robison, and Jenkins 2018). One can also use the above-discussed “capture-recapture” methods to estimate selection associated with particular news sources (Jenkins and Maher 2016).

**Big Data and Topic Modelling.** A third major area of Big Data research has been sentiment and topic modelling, namely, a family of automated and semi-automated machine learning methods for identifying the attitudes (e.g., polarity classification, agreement detection, other sentiment coding) toward topics in text and using patterns of word co-occurrences to identify latent themes or topics across massive sets of documents (Cambria et al. 2013; DiMaggio, Nag, and Blei 2013; Grimmer and King 2011; Grimmer and Stewart 2013; Mohr and Bogdanov 2013; Roberts, Stewart, and Tingley 2016). Here techniques such as multiple regression and latent Dirichlet allocation (LDA) can be used in exploratory and supervised analyses to find topics in large quantities of text by
identifying commonly co-occurring keywords. These topics can then be used to examine political discourse in blog posts and Tweets, governmental reports, public relations statements put out by political candidates, and the like, thereby providing ways to classify the topics in public opinion (Hopkins and King 2010), congressional speeches (Gentzkow, Shapiro, and Taddy 2017), regulatory agency documents (O’Halloran et al. 2016), political monitoring and control (King, Pan, and Roberts 2013), the production of cultural and political frames (DiMaggio et al. 2013; Tsur, Calacci, and Lazer 2015), measures of governmental performance (Griepentrog et al. 2016; Singh and Ilavarasan 2016), and the presentation styles of congressional representatives (Grimmer 2013). Grimmer (2013) shows that US senators adopt two major presentation styles: issues-oriented and appropriator styles. Coding vast numbers of their press releases shows that the first attempts to agree with their constituents’ ideology and contributes to opinion polarization among constituents. The appropriator style is more common for senators who stand in ideological opposition to the Senate majority and produces in their constituents less knowledge about their partisan affiliation and rollcall voting records. Senators in mixed and bipartisan districts tend to adopt a combination of both styles.

**Big Data and Network Analysis.** A fourth application has been network analysis, typically applied to Twitter links and to hyperlinks between websites to study political mobilization and affiliations with particular groups. Pointing to the potential for horizontal “many-to-many” spread of information through social media versus the hierarchical “one-to-many” structure of traditional media (Goel et al. 2016), several have argued that the Internet and cell phones create the potential for a new decentralized, multicentered networked communications that can fuel “bottom-up” social movements and political campaigns. Castells (2009, 2012), for example, argues that the new social media create “communicative power” that diffuses power to nonhierarchical leaderless “network movements.” Bennett and Segerberg talk of “connective action” that bypasses the classic collective goods problem (Olson 1966) by invoking “personally expressive content [that] is shared with, and recognized by, others who in turn often repeat these network sharing activities” (2013: 34; 2015), thereby generating a cascading effect. By facilitating personalized expression and social influence, these new digital-enabled movements are largely “crowd-sourced,” that is, regulated by decentralized, leaderless movements with multiple local cells, layers, and “weak ties” based on casual acquaintance (Granovetter 1973) that allow information to flow outside of face-to-face groups through cell phones and the Internet. How well do these ideas hold up?

Although these studies provide some illustrative evidence in support of their picture of decentralized networked mobilization, they make little use of formal network methods per se. Another set of studies have used formal network methods to examine the size, density, centrality, hierarchy, and closure of these
networks, the presence and distribution of structural holes (i.e., network gaps), and the presence and distribution of bridging ties, finding a more complex picture. Some studies have looked at the potential for communication (e.g., Twitter follower networks, based on the formal following of a Twitter user) while others have examined the actual flow of communications through these networks (e.g., Twitter “mention” and retweet networks, where messages are sent to specific users or in reply to a specific user post) and examined specific types of actors, such as bridging gatekeepers who control the flow of information across loose-knit networks. Most analysis has focused on Twitter use because of accessibility (Tweets can be purchased from information aggregators or downloaded from the “firehose”) while a few studies have used publicly accessible Facebook data.

To examine the integration of online networks and the importance of bridging ties, Barbera et al. (2015) compare retweet networks associated with the relatively successful Istanbul, Turkey Taksim Gezi Park protests in the spring–fall of 2013 with those associated with two less successful mobilizations (the second wave “United for Global Change” campaigns launched by Occupy Wall Street-New York and the Indignados movements in Spain in the spring of 2012) and two nonpolitical events (the 2014 Academy Awards and a year’s worth of Tweets about raising the minimum wage in the US). They find that the three protest campaigns displayed a more integrated network with a core of highly active retweeters versus a periphery of more numerous but less active users. The nonpolitical events displayed no such core–periphery organization. The core in the Gezi Park protests was much larger (near 3,000) as was the periphery (over 100,000 users) and these in turn communicated with nearly 300,000 additional users. The majority of the core could be geolocated as in Gezi Park during the protests with most of the periphery and outer periphery appearing to be nonparticipatory observers located elsewhere. Despite the successful show of force by the police that cleared Gezi Square on June 11–15, 2013, these protests persisted throughout the fall and involved over 3.5 million people who joined some 5,000 demonstrations that spread throughout Turkey. For the first eight days of the protests, the mainstream media provided no coverage, cooperating with the government but, when the police first attempted to force the protestors out of their tent city, the mainstream media began to cover the protest. In comparison, the two smaller second wave “United” campaigns had much smaller cores and fewer peripheral links to a much smaller outer periphery, suggesting that stronger bridging ties may have been critical to the diffusion and upscaling of the Gezi Park protest.

A similar conclusion is reached by Gonzalez-Bailon et al. (2011; Gonzalez-Bailon, Borge-Holthoefer, and Moreno 2013), who examine the network structure of one month’s Twitter retweets and mentions posted during the buildup and peak of the first Spanish Indignados demonstrations (April 25 and May 25, 2011). The centrality and the sending/receipt of targeted
mention messages show a small group of “hidden influential” who appear to have bridged a core of “influentials”\(^2\) with a much larger periphery of common users. Most influential were traditional news websites and celebrities, which were often sent mentions in hopes that they would rebroadcast these to their large follower networks. They also identify a set of “broadcasters” (mostly activists and movement website masters) who had the largest number of followers. Hidden influential and broadcasters provided bridging ties between influential and common users and played a critical gatekeeper role by managing the distribution of Tweets. Although these retweets and mentions helped organize the earliest protests (especially while the mainstream media were ignoring the campaign), face-to-face communications in the events and camps were the major early vehicles for protest communications. Later, once mainstream media began reporting on the protests, these became the major sources of information for the broader public.

The key idea in these studies is that bridging ties link a core of protest activists to a broader set of audiences, thereby mobilizing a broader base of sympathizers and occasional activists, fitting the idea of a protest cascade (Lohmann 1994). Gonzalez-Bailon and Wang (2016) conduct a formal network analysis of the follower, retweet, and mention networks associated with the second Indignados (Spain) and Occupy Wall Street “United” protest (US) in 2012. Examining a half million Tweets (38 million users) that used the hashtags related to the 2011 campaign plus any use of the root “Occupy,” they select all users who posted at least one protest Tweet during the campaign month (April 30–May 30, 2012) and map all follower networks. Analysis of centrality for the follower network showed a steep power curve (i.e., a plot of the ratio of number following/number of followers) with the top 10 percent receiving more than 80 percent of all follower ties, which clashes with the idea of a highly decentralized mobilization structure. Using community detection methods (i.e., information mapping, which takes into account the direction of ties), they find evidence of five large groups or circles that contain 53 percent of all relevant users, leaving the remaining 47 percent in small disjointed circles. This suggests that there were significant structural holes in this communication network that may have bottlenecked information flow and thus weakened the campaign. Treating retweets and mentions as actual communication flows, they also find a sharp split between the Indignados and the Occupy “United” groups, which were trying to jointly coordinate the campaign, suggesting significant network fragmentation. All this suggests that the 2012 campaign, which was far less successful than either of the 2011 campaigns in mobilizing support, may have been weakened by significant structural holes.

These studies have mainly focused on the global justice movement, where ICTs enable transnational mobilization. In another instance of transnational

\(^2\) “Influentials” was first used by Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955) to refer to network stars who served as opinion leaders linking mass media to the majority of society (circles).
mobilization, Meraz and Papacharissi (2013) analyze the one million Latin character Tweets generated by the Egyptian anti-Mubarak protests under the hashtag #egypt starting the day before the first coordinated anti-Mubarak protest in Cairo Egypt (January 25, 2011) until a month later after Mubarak’s resignation and the spread of the Arab Spring protests across the Middle East/ North Africa. By focusing only on Latin character Tweets (which made up 75 percent of all relevant Tweets), they in effect focused on the diaspora and the mainstream international media sites outside of Egypt. A centrality analysis of retweets, mentions, and “via” posts (a less commonly used type of retweet) showed a highly integrated single network with an identifiable core of about 10 percent of all users, the majority of whom were activist bloggers and international journalists and news websites, most of whom operated outside of Egypt. This top 10 percent “core” was central to the larger Twitter network, reciprocated ties with each other, displayed few structural holes, and produced over 80 percent of all #egypt Tweets. By interlinking and distributing messages through this network, this core played a central gatekeeping role in regulating the crowd-sourcing of ideas about frames, tactics, major events, and other aspects of the Arab Spring protests.

A second area of formal network analysis has addressed the idea of homophily, namely, the tendency for users to connect with others like themselves, and its implications for self-segregation, polarization, and the potential for democratic dialogue. Conover et al. (2011a, 2011b) find sharp partisan polarization in their analysis of 956 Twitter users (252,300 Tweets) who posted one or more messages with a politically relevant hashtag in the three months immediately prior to the November 2010 US election. They then have humans classify a random sample of these Tweets into “left,” “right,” and neutral stances and use these to assess the accuracy of machine learning–based codings of these Tweets based on four methods: (1) retweets; (2) mentions; (3) topic coding of the Twitter texts; and (4) hashtags. Machine learning of retweets displays the highest accuracy (95 percent), followed by hashtags (91 percent), and topic coding (79 percent). Mention coding failed largely because these are mostly rejoiners to Tweets from the opposite side of various debates. In a second analysis, Conover et al. (2011b) find a highly polarized pattern of communication. Almost all users are classified into the “left” and “right” camps with less than 15 percent being neutral or ambiguous. Hashtags are the major tool that sets up this political self-segregation and are often subjects of focused debate and rivalry between groups vying for hashtag control. Given the psychological tendency of actors to prefer attitude-consistent information (Garrett 2009), there is little communication between these two groups, with the implication that this polarization creates an “echo chamber” in which Twitter users are overwhelmingly exposed only to like-minded political communications. Reinforcing this is the argument that internet algorithms used for Google web searches and Facebook customized news feeds creates selective exposure to information, thereby contributing to information “echo chambers” and more extreme views (Daniels 2018). This clashes with the idea of an online
deliberative democracy in which a broadly informed public is exposed to reasoned opinions and competing ideas (Sunstein 2002, 2007).

To further develop this idea of echo chambers, Barbera (2015) develops a Bayesian spatial following model based on follower links. He uses a set of elected politicians, party organizations, think tanks, and news outlets with clear ideological profiles in five Western democracies to serve as the base for identifying a set of 850,000 moderately active Twitter followers (assigned to “left” and “right”). These follower networks are highly polarized and match various externally derived measures, such as the aggregate distribution of left/right self-placements from public opinion data. An analysis of 300,000 US Twitter users who retweeted with “Obama” or “Romney” in their text during the 2012 election campaign finds two polarized groups with over 85 percent of their political Tweets directed at users in the same ideological camp.

A third set of network analyses has focused on hyperlink ties among NGO and other websites, treating these as affiliation networks. Shumate and Lipp (2008) examine English-language Islamic Resistance NGO hyperlinks, finding that generalist NGOs play a brokerage role and bridge smaller circles in the larger network. Shumate and Dewitt (2008) look at hyperlink networks of HIV/AIDS international NGOs and find a sharp North/South divide that seems to block interorganizational cooperation. Murdie (2013) looks at hyperlink networks of human rights INGOs, finding that centrality boosts advocacy output in terms of press releases and internet postings and that shared organizational characteristics (homophily) encourage shared hyperlinks.

A key problem in network analysis is sampling. It is near impossible to secure full universe samples, which is often assumed by network methods. The typical hyperlink study begins with a small list of organization websites assembled from expert knowledge, then uses a webcrawler to identify the outbound links to other websites but has difficulty saying when the broader universe of websites has been captured. Stearmer (2016) notes that many early webcrawlers neglected inbound hyperlinks (i.e., other websites that refer to the focal organization) (see also Shumate and Weber 2015). Using an improved crawler that collects links with both directions, he collects a set of NGOs and INGOs advocating for Kurdish identity, the world’s largest stateless national identity group, and finds that traditional outbound crawlers find around one-tenth of the fuller set of NGOs and INGOs found by the improved webcrawler, creating a quite different list and network of Kurdish advocacy organizations.

What About Images and Other Big Data? These methods are ultimately based in texts, which misses the overwhelming majority of the social media content used in political mobilization. Some of the most motivating online content are images, typically pictures and videos serving as personalized portraits of injustice, to informally poll movement supporters, expose mainstream media inaccuracies, declare solidarity, and the like (Bennett and Segerberg 2013; Gaby and Caren 2012). To date, there has been little analysis of these images and
other Big Data records that could be tracers for political processes. Big Data applications for image analysis have been developed (e.g., Luo et al. 2004; Parmeggiani 2009), but political sociologists have yet to display interest. Future work will likely make use of these techniques to fruitfully analyze a major share of social media content.

**How Important Are ICTs to Political Mobilization?**

Virtually all contemporary political officials, political campaigns, and social movements make use of ICTs to publicize their goals and activities and to recruit and coordinate collective action, suggesting that ICTs are critical to political mobilization and democratic political change. Nonetheless, this idea has come in for significant criticism. Gladwell (2010) argues that social media “makes it easier for activists to express themselves and harder for that expression to have any impact.” Comparing online activists with the 1960 sit-in protestors in 1960 Greensboro, North Carolina, he contends that online activism relies on weak ties and commitments and hence cannot sustain the type of high-risk activism needed to bring about political change. In a similar critique of “slacktivism” and “clicktivism,” Morozov (2013) points out that the Arab Spring organizers relied on face-to-face meetings, limited their use of Twitter or Facebook (although smartphones and websites were critical in securing mainstream media access and coordinating and recruiting for events), and that most of the online activity came from outside Egypt and Tunisia (see Bruns, Highfield, and Burgess 2013; Tufeckci and Wilson 2012). Scholars have advanced similar assessments that ICTs cannot grow or sustain the social networks necessary for effective mobilization, and at best need to interact positively with offline mobilizing to generate political change (Diani 2000; van Aelst and Walgrave 2002; van Laer 2010).

Earl and Kimport (2011) note that the literature about ICTs and online activism is often informed by a “digital dualism” in which online activism is treated as having a lesser reality and needing to have a “real world” effect before it is seen as causal and important. Earl et al. (2010) make the case that online activism is much broader than often presented, including the mobilization of e-movements and various e-tactics that affect online as well as offline activism and political outcomes.

The discussion about the positive effects of ICTs on political mobilization is largely guided by two theses: (1) a “supersize” argument that ICTs simply increase the size, speed, and reach of offline activism; and (2) a “Theory 2.0” that ICTs alter the organization of and participation in movements and campaigns (Earl and Kimport 2011). The first argues that reduced information costs combine with the ability of ICTs to provide quick upscaling of collective action, and, for online protests, to dispense with costly physical co-presence, thereby creating greater protest participation (offline, online, and both). The

3 Bennett and Segerberg’s (2013) argument about the socioemotional incentives of “connective action” can be seen as reinforcing this thesis.
second points to new forms of action (e.g., flash mobs, e-petitions, hacktivism, virtual sit-ins [McCaughey and Ayers 2003]), and e-movements that “route around organizations” by relying wholly on online activity (e.g., “vote-pairing” websites allowing individuals to trade presidential third-party votes [Earl and Schussman 2003], “netroots” groups such as MoveOn.org [Karpf 2012], and online lifestyle politics and identity campaigns [Earl, Copeland and Bimber 2017; Polletta et al. 2013]), which all stand at odds with the skeptics’ claim of no effects on political change.

**Micro-Studies.** Most of the studies examining the “supersize” and “Theory 2.0” theses have used micro-level evidence about individual political participation. In a meta-analysis of 38 micro studies, Boulainne (2015; see also Anduiza, Cantijoch, and Gallego 2009; Boulainne 2009; Garrett 2006; Jost et al. 2018) concludes that there is a positive correlation between internet use and offline political participation (including protest), but the effects are small and it is unclear whether this relationship is “causal and transformative” (2015: 543). These studies are almost all based on cross-sectional surveys (only one is a panel study with negative results), which leaves temporal order unclear, and several suggest that interest in politics may be an underlying common factor that drives both internet activism and offline participation. There is also evidence that “superactivists” are the most active ICT users, which allows them to manage their multiple engagements, and that ICT use reinforces participation inequality (Vaccari et al. 2015; van Laer 2010; Walgrave et al. 2011). This research could be read as supporting a “virtuous circle” (Norris 2000) between on- and offline mobilization in which activities in these two fields mutually reinforce one another, and by interacting with each other may contribute to political change.

At the same time, there is also micro-evidence supporting “Theory 2.0” that online participation is a distinct dimension of political participation with youthfulness being the major demographic correlate, suggesting that online mobilizing may recruit and activate youth, whose age often puts them under parental or other adult control, which may deter their political activism (earl, Maher, and Elliott 2017; Oser, Hooghe, and Marien 2013; Theocharis and van Deth 2018; Vissers and Stolle 2014). For this group to have access to online forums provides a unique opportunity to engage in political activism. Many youth engage in e-movements and other types of e-protest that “route around” social movement organizations. In addition, several studies (Fisher and Boekkooi 2009; Metzger and Tucker 2017; Tufecki and Wilson 2012) show that half or more of the participants at demonstrations learned of the event exclusively through online sources. In line with the “supersize” thesis, online mobilization might boost participation but might not create additional events. Further, many of these internet recruits are not networked to the protest groups and are less likely to sustain their participation (Walgrave and Wouters 2014).
The strongest micro evidence on the effects of ICTs on offline mobilization has come from field experiments. In a study of voting turnout, Bond et al. (2012) conducted a huge field experiment on election day November 2012 by exposing 600,000 who logged into Facebook that day with a message to vote, information on where, and allowing them to click an “I Voted” button. Another 60 million were randomly put in this social condition and received in addition a list of all their Facebook friends who had clicked the “I Voted” button. A control group of 600,000 users received no message at all. To measure voting, they linked a subsample of the study population to public voting records, where they found a direct effect on voting of being exposed to the informational condition versus the control group, and of being exposed to Facebook friends who clicked the “I Voted” versus simply the informational condition. Those who had friends in the social condition were 0.255 percent more likely to vote per friend and 0.012 percent more likely to seek out information per friend in the condition. Although these effects are small, this experiment affected hundreds of thousands of voters with small but meaningful effects.

Several other analyses have used field experiments to study participation in political campaigns. In a study using 307 randomly selected college students in Belgium and Canada that asked whether website versus in-person versus no contact did better in environmental education and eliciting donations for climate action, Hooghe et al. (2010) and Vissers et al. (2012) found that website exposure had stronger effects on climate knowledge but there was no significant difference on willingness to donate from either group compared to “no contact.” Web-based recruitment only affected online participation whereas face-to-face recruitment only affected offline behavior, suggesting that recruitment effects may be medium specific. However, all these mobilization effects were of limited duration, no longer showing four months later.

The major impact of online recruiting may be to activate already mobilized “superactivists” who then go on to become campaign organizers. Foos et al. (2018) used a randomized field experiment among 884 randomly selected Bulgarian Facebook users to see if Facebook posts affect environmental opinions and actions, finding no effects. But the Facebook campaign did activate a small number of activists who later went on to become campaign organizers, which created major differences in the outcomes of local campaigns.

Studies of offline recruitment have repeatedly found that personalized appeals and “strong tie” networks involving family and friends are critical to recruitment. Using field experiments with the members of the National Association of Doctors, Han (2016) found that email appeals with personalized messages were far more successful in eliciting responses to requests to sign an e-petition and to recruit others to sign e-petitions about Medicaid/Medicare funding. Similarly, field experiments among over 800 college students in the US about supporting local environmental activism
found that recruitment and persuasion messages from “strong tie” family and friends were far more influential than distant network and organizational contacts (Nekmat et al. 2015). Nonetheless, in this last experiment, all three types of ties had some recruitment effect with the question being relative degree. This study also controlled for past environmental activism and interest in the issue, which suggests a stronger effect of online recruiting than the survey studies analyzed by Boulainne (2015), and showed up for both on- and offline activities.

**Organizational and Macro-Studies.** Another approach has been to analyze organizational and macro-level dynamics. There is some evidence that the organizational and political resources of the recruitment target makes a difference in sustaining mobilization and creating a favorable outcome. In a study comparing a local MoveOn.org group and the Florida Tea Party, Rohlinger and Bunnage (2015) find that both made extensive use of ICTs to maintain dialogue and coordinate activities but in a very different way, reflecting their organizational philosophies. MoveOn.org used ICTs to structure communication hierarchically and was more successful at coordinating action but had less success at sustaining participation. The Tea Party used ICTs horizontally, engaging in extensive dialogue and debate, which strengthened participation but came at the cost of frequent disputes, acrimony, and turnover in the group. These differences may also reflect the political resources of the two groups with the Tea Party drawing more affluent, better-educated activists who were more able to sustain mobilization regardless of the communication methods. Certainly on the national plane, the Tea Party has been quite effective at mobilizing educated middle-class voters to engage in e-campaigns and at using e-tactics to interject issues on the political agenda and to pressure elected officials (Skocpol and Williamson 2012).

Critical mass theory (Marwell and Oliver 1993) argues that mobilization begins with a small group of highly committed activists who take the lead in creating campaigns and recruiting others. This suggests that finding and recruiting such a small group of “superactivists” may be the critical step to launching successful campaigns. Vaillant et al. (2015) use field experiments in e-petitions launched on www.change.org to see if initial online sign-up counts affect later online sign-up counts. In one experiment, they arbitrarily added 100 e-signatures to a set of e-petitions, finding that this increased the odds of more signatures. So perceived recruitment success may matter in securing further support. But in a second experiment, they traced the growth trajectory of animal rights e-petitions over the course of a year, finding that these displayed highly erratic growth trajectories unrelated to the intrinsic appeal of different animal species and to early signature success. Instead these online e-petition growth curves and case evidence they were able to collect suggested that some campaigns simply accidentally located “superactivists” who then posted the petition on various online networking sites, thereby creating sudden “jolts” of
recruitment. There was nothing about the campaigns per se that would have predicted discovering these “superactivists,” which led them to label these “accidental.” Yet these secondary mobilizers may well have made the difference between low and high signature counts.

Further support for the idea of “superactivists” comes from the Lewis, Gray, and Meiererich (2014) study of the “Save Darfur Cause” online campaign, which mobilized over one million affiliates and over $100,000 in donations over a three-year period. Eighty-one percent of all supporters were recruited by other supporters, but the odds of independents recruiting were significantly greater (11 percent) as was donating (258 percent). The top 1 percent of recruiters generated 62.8 percent of all supporters and 46.5 percent of all donations with the top recruiter bringing in 1,196 new supporters and the largest donor ($250), providing 2.8 percent of total donations. Interestingly, the top recruiter did not donate personally. Although the mean donation ($29) was roughly the same as for conventional workplace and in-person appeals, donation rates were less than a tenth of these conventional methods, suggesting that online appeals cannot replace offline campaigns.

A second body of macro-research looks at the effects of ICTs on collective action. Several argue that ICTs are especially important in authoritarian contexts where there are fewer opportunities for organizing. In a multivariate time series analysis of the Arab Spring protests in eighteen Arab-majority countries, Costello et al. (2015) find that cell phone density, along with political openness and the prod of state repression, contributed to protests. There was little effect of economic grievances, despite them being pervasive among Arab Spring protestors. In a similar vein, Howard and Hussain (2011) and Hussain and Howard (2013a, 2013b) use Qualitative Categorical Analysis (QCA) to analyze the sources of regime change in the Arab Spring, finding that internet penetration combined with weak regimes and higher GDP/capita contributed to regime breakdowns. This complements the micro-studies in that macro-access to cell phones and protest websites was critical to individual participation in the Arab Spring protests (Bruns et al. 2013; Brym et al. 2014; Tufecki and Wilson 2012).

In a study of the geographic diffusion of Occupy protests in US cities, Vasi and Suh (2016) find that the presence of a city-based Facebook Occupy website contributed to the likelihood of protest diffusion. A critical mechanism is access to mainstream media, which multiple case studies of the Ferguson, Missouri protests, the Gezi Park protests, the killing of Trayvon Martin, and Occupy Wall Street-New York show required a week or more of sustained social media posting by activists before mainstream media coverage began (Tufecki 2017: 207–208). A key advantage of ICTs is the ability to visually document police brutality. By posting a dramatic video, activists can use social media to publicize a grievance, eventually forcing mainstream media to cover the issue and to influence the mainstream media narrative. Due to controversies about the authenticity of such online posts, citizen news websites have introduced
requirements for documenting the metadata for such videos and pictures. Suh, Vasi, and Chang (2017) find that such online documented police repression was a critical spur to the spatial diffusion of the city-specific Facebook Occupy websites.

As suggested by the earlier discussed network research, ICT communications can be organized differently. Comparing the 2008 and the 2012 Obama presidential campaigns, the first created the possibility of user-defined online forums for discussion and debate, which boosted participation, recruited many first-time activists, defined new action projects, and created spin-off groups, while the latter was a hierarchical top-down structure for headquarters communications, which created less participation, fewer first-time recruits, no internal discussion, and no spin-offs (Bimber 2014; Sifry 2014). This is a question of organizational design over which SMOs and political advocacy organizations differ. Bennett and Segerberg (2013, 2015) show how these ICT platforms reflect political values and technology preferences and lead to different organizational outcomes. In the current environment, most political advocacy groups have adopted a moderately centralized ICT system that allows nonmembers to access information and interact in a limited way with staff and members and for members to use online polls and blogs to initiate and filter projects, thereby boosting participation and legitimacy (Bennett and Segerberg 2015).

Do ICTs lead to effective mobilization in terms of political change? Some conclude that the answer is “unknown” (Earl and Kimport 2011) and certainly any firm conclusion risks the selective and limited evidence accumulated to date, but the overall picture seems to be at least as positive as that for the effectiveness of offline activism. Key is recognizing that any effect is not a simple direct one but typically involves interacting with and amplifying other political dynamics. One focus has been legislative decision-making. Examining the 2011 e-petition launched by the Tea Party, Vasi, Strang, and van de Rijt (2014) find that the Tea Party mobilized over 230,000 signatures and influenced the votes of conservative congressional representatives on debt limit legislation. Similarly, Skocpol and Williamson (2012) document the effectiveness of the Tea Party in using online campaigns to pressure Republican representatives to adopt more conservative positions and congressional votes.

Another focus has been on ICT use in political crises. In a study of the Euromaidan protests in Kiev, Ukraine, between November 2013 and the flight of President Yanukovych in February 23–24, 2015, Metzger and Tucker (2017) find that over 80 percent of surveyed Kiev residents relied exclusively on online news and dissident websites for their news in the midst of this crisis. In the minds of the Euromaidan dissidents, the distinction between on- and offline organizing was irrelevant; there was just organizing by any method possible. Activists used whatever methods they could to influence change. Indicating how durable the Euromaidan mobilization was, after the campaign finally toppled the government almost all the dissident Facebook pages were repurposed to
crowd-source funds for the Ukrainian army that was fighting the Russian-backed Crimean invasion, to monitor Russian attacks on Ukrainian citizens, and to monitor the new interim government. They conclude that, while there is no simple direct connection between online mobilization and the overturning of the Yanukovych government, the positive mutually reinforcing interaction between online and offline mobilization was critical to the eventual outcome. Online mobilization cannot substitute for offline mobilization in this type of campaign (e.g., street fighting and occupying the square), but it can reinforce and magnify offline mobilization in ways that help to sustain the campaign and bring about regime change. In this sense, online mobilizing “supersized” the protests, contributing to a regime transition. At the same time, these outcomes were also contingent on other political dynamics, such as elite power struggles, shifting alignments, and the like, that are more causally proximate to the resulting political change.

Some have pointed to the blocking of the Stop Online Piracy Act and Protect Intellectual Property Act (SOPA/PIPA) in the spring of 2012 as a notable case of online organizing success. Written by the entertainment industry to protect their copyrights and intellectual property and strongly supported by the major Capitol Hill business lobbies, most in Congress thought that the SOPA/PIPA bill would quickly pass. But a loose network of internet freedom advocates mounted a large-scale blogging campaign, contending that SOPA/PIPA would restructure the entire internet by blocking websites and policing any internet traffic that could be suspected of harboring copyright infringement. Several million blog posts made the issue visible. But the most potent force seems to have been a “call-in” campaign mounted by the major internet platform companies (Google, Yahoo, Amazon, Wikipedia, etc.) that flooded congressional offices for two weeks with thousands of phone calls (Benkler et al. 2015; Faris et al. 2015). Congress was caught by surprise and many representatives became concerned about potential voter backlash, voting to scuttle the bill. It is also easier to block new legislation than to initiate and push through new legislation.

Several analysts have discussed the political limitations of relying heavily on online organizing. Tufecki (2017: 49–82) and Conover, Ferrara, Menczer, and Flammini (2013) document the “ad hocracy” of the ICT-reliant Occupy movements, which used ICTs to rapidly upscale support but failed to sustain the challenge beyond three to four months. In part, the problem was the decentralized decision-making system that the Occupy activists adhered to, which made it difficult to innovate tactically and to engage in negotiations with government officials. Relying on decentralized ICT networks for communication and dialogue reinforced this problem, leading to a “tactical freeze” in which a consensus on new and challenging tactics could not be generated (Tufecki 2017: 77–82). Further, Occupy Wall Street was unable to sustain the interest of its core online activists beyond a few months. Bennett and Segerberg (2013) compare the political outcomes of the hybrid communication method Robin Hood campaign
in the UK with the more ICT-dependent Occupy Wall Street-New York campaign in the US, finding that they were roughly equally effective in getting the problem of poverty and growing inequality onto the political agenda. The Robin Hood campaign was, however, more effective at promoting legislation and negotiating with elites and, in this sense, had more legislative impact. At the same time, both campaigns ultimately failed to generate sufficient pressure for policies that would overturn growing inequality.

A second problem with exclusively ICT-based mobilization is what Karpf (2012) calls “advocacy inflation,” that is, the tendency of political elites to discount e-campaigns as reflecting thin support and minimal negative sanction. Taking a page from the “digital dualism” thesis, elected officials are prone to discount e-petitions and other online expressions of citizen opinion and discontent. Unless connected to a visible voter backlash, an online campaign alone has little impact.

In sum, these organizational and macro-studies show that ICTs can be used to create sustained activism and can interact positively with offline mobilization and political opportunities to create political change. There is also evidence that e-movements and e-campaigns can be organized and sustained without offline mobilizing. In this sense, both the “supersize” and the “Theory 2.0” ideas about ICT-based mobilization get support. It is less clear, however, that online organizing alone can produce political change. In this regard, it is also useful to keep in mind the limits of social movements on social change generally. Existing literature (Amenta et al. 2010; Meyer 2015) suggests that social movements are at most indirect and secondary sources of political change, having a greater impact on political agendas and, in conjunction with favorable political opportunities, helping to shape political outcomes. Skepticism about “slacktivism” and “clicktivism” should be no surprise in that even in the most favorable conditions movements never succeed on their own terms. Instead their impact is largely to set in motion political dynamics that increase the likelihood that other actors, especially elites and more powerful allies, will bring about favorable changes.

THE “DARK SIDE” OF ICTS: REPRESSSION, CONTROL, AND DEMOBILIZATION

Most of the literature about the political impact of ICTs has been on their decentralizing, empowering, and pro-democratic effects, including e-democracy (Macintosh 2004) and democracy promotion (Diamond and Plattner 2012) as well as the previous discussion of political mobilization. But the impact of technology is ultimately contingent on its use, which means that ICTs can also be used to monitor and harass dissidents, engage in censorship, and promote propaganda and disinformation that ultimately demobilizes citizens.
Discussions of this “dark side” have focused on three topics. One has been authoritarian regimes’ use of ICTs for censorship, harassment of dissidents, propaganda, and “information floods” designed to overwhelm independent citizen mobilization. Autocrats learned from the early ICT-facilitated revolts that the Internet created a diffuse, difficult to control forum for communication and that new control tactics were needed. At the peak of the Arab Spring protests in Egypt, Mubarak made the mistake of shutting down the Internet and the cell phone grid, thinking that traditional censorship would work. But this only fueled the protests, if only because it disrupted normal business and signaled the weakness of the regime. By this point, everyone knew where the major protest sites were and resented the disruption.

The new autocratic approaches have accepted the existence of social media and the Internet and attempted to turn it to regime advantage. This has included using blog posts to track down and arrest dissidents (Morozov 2011), the posting of “compromising pictures” of dissidents (Pearce 2015), and the creation of an army of pro-regime bloggers assisted by automated bots to “flood” the Internet with pro-regime posts.

China, which has unique advantages in terms of size, software development capacities, and getting started early on internet control, developed the “Great Firewall,” which largely creates a closed but richly developed internal internet. To control this field, the government has mounted a massive censorship program with hundreds of thousands of network-specific and governmental censors who remove posts (typically within 24 hours) which threaten to create independent collective action and not because they are critical of the government or its policies (King et al. 2013, 2014). Flooding is carried out by another army of the “50 Cent Party” (mostly governmental and party employees, so named because they are rumored to be paid 50 cents for every post), who generate cheerleading and other pro-regime posts that are timed to respond to protests and political uncertainty but never directly engage critics in online debates (King et al. 2017). The aim of flooding is to drown out dissidents with other information, controlling political attention by creating distractions, confusion, and political apathy. Russia and other weaker autocracies appear to rely more heavily on flooding since it requires less ability to cordon off and censor the Internet (Sanovich, Stukal, and Tucker 2018; Tufekci 2017: 225–239).

A second topic has been the use of ICTs for disinformation and harassment campaigns by antidemocratic movements, including terrorist groups such as ISIS and other Jihadi groups that have used elaborate videos and websites to recruit thousands of activists worldwide (Berger 2013, 2014; Berger and Morgan 2015; Chen et al. 2008; Musawi 2010). In the US, “new” and “alt-right” groups have developed an elaborate network of websites, some of which masqueraded as civil rights movement websites and provided a vehicle for

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4 Until August 2017, the white supremacist neo-Nazi organization Stormfront operated a website [http://MartinLutherKing.com](http://MartinLutherKing.com), which appeared to celebrate the civil rights leaders’ life but...
recruiting or coordinating events (Daniels 2009). In the 2016 US elections, several of these groups were supported by Russian security agencies with an interest in promoting polarization and division to spread rumors, “fake news” about Democratic candidates, and organizing protests (Frenkel 2018; Tucker et al. 2017).

A third focus has been international cyberwarfare, which promises to become a new weapon in the international arena (Sanger 2017). Early experiences involved attacks on defense systems, such as the mid-2000s Stuxnet malware computer worm attack on Iran’s nuclear weapons, probably carried out by US and Israel security agencies (Nakashima and Warrick 2012). In 2007, Russia shut down the entire internet in Estonia and, in 2015, mounted a similar attack in the Ukraine to support the invasion and shut down major parts of the electric power grid throughout the Baltic (Jewkes and Vukmanovic 2017; Tamkin 2017). North Korea, which operates outside the global banking system and the Internet, is alleged to have attempted a cyberheist of $10 billion from the Bank of Bangladesh based on penetrating the SWIFT international bank transfer system (Perlroth and Corkery 2016). In the 2016 US election, Russian security agencies were responsible for hacking and leaking emails from the Clinton campaign, mounting thousands of “flooding” attacks on particular candidates, attempting to hack state and local election agency computers, and promoting protests and counterprotests by extreme right and extreme left groups (Wikipedia 2018). Similar Russian cyberattacks were also launched in the 2017 French presidential election (Perlroth 2017) and, in the midst of the Swedish debates over possible NATO membership, carried out similar “flooding” operations by promoting rumors and false claims about NATO weapons and policies (Macfarquhar 2016).

While the technical aspects of these ICT attacks differ greatly, they share three basic control strategies: fear, friction, and flooding (Tucker et al. 2017). By “fear” is meant attempts to intimidate, harass, and arrest targets by posting attacks and other compromising claims. “Friction” ranges from the “Great Firewall of China” to formal censorship systems. “Flooding” involves circulating massive numbers of pro-regime or distracting information with the aim of controlling attention and creating apathy and cynicism among those who cannot consistently sort out “fake” from reliable news.

It is impossible and probably irrelevant to assess the overall balance of “dark” and “light” sides to ICTs. Ultimately, technology does not in a simple sense “cause” any specific sociopolitical outcome. The critical question is the uses and decisions of human actors who employ specific technologies to actually castigated him and his beliefs. Stormfront’s registrar finally pulled the site due to evidence of connections between the site and several murders (Wikipedia 2019). There are currently thousands of such “fake news” websites and continuous conflicts over Internet monitoring and countermonitoring.
advance their goals. In this sense, ICTs have transformed both the mobilization of political action and its demobilization and control.

CONCLUSIONS

The current literature on Big Data and the use of ICTs opens up many avenues for new research in political sociology. On the one hand, there are a growing number of new Big Data tools that can be used to collect, clean, archive, manage, and analyze Big Data derived from ICTs. The scale of these data and their proximity to the intentions and behavior of political actors make them appealing as an alternative to existing methods. Insights into, for example, the interpersonal networks involved in cascading mobilizations can be tapped in a way that has previously been unimaginable. Especially important is the ability to build in considerations of space and time and get closer to the meanings and behavior of political actors. Traditional surveys and ethnographic research have often been challenging in this respect. Collaboration with data science scholars and incorporating Big Data tools into professional training are important options that need to be included into the field.

On the other hand are the specific insights into the processes of political mobilization and control where ICTs play a critical role. The research on political mobilization supports both a “supersize” thesis that ICTs allow more rapid and larger upscaling of mobilization and a “Theory 2.0” thesis that new forms of protest and collective action are possible and can be sustained with just online communications. Most of the research has focused on the “supersize” thesis by asking how online mobilizing interacts with, magnifies, and accelerates offline mobilizing. The general picture that emerges is of significant “supersizing.” Likely we are sampling on the more successful cases, so care needs to be taken in looking at less effective “supersizing” but the general pattern is apparent. Existing research has shown that online publicity, recruitment, and organizing have positive effects on offline mobilizing and collective action. Problems with online mobilizing, such as “tactical freeze” (Tufecki 2017) and “advocacy inflation” (Karpf 2012), are also rooted in the other dynamics, such as a decentralized decision-making system in the case of the Occupy Wall Street movements and the difficulty of generating uncertainty and risk in the minds of elites. Nonetheless, online communications cannot do everything and may need to interact with offline mobilizing and activism to become sufficiently sustained and large-scale to contribute to political change.

The support for “Theory 2.0” is also evident from the growth of e-movements, e-tactics, and other forms of online organizing that operate without or with minimal conventional organization. It is less clear whether this type of activism can generate political change alone, but the presence of ICTs and their growing infusion into everyday life makes it clear that e-movements and online communications will remain an important and growing component of social movement activity and protest.
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II. Media, Knowledge, and Demography


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The first opinion that is formed of a ruler’s intelligence is based on the quality of the men he has around him. When they are competent and loyal he can always be considered wise … . But when they are otherwise, the prince is always open to adverse criticism. … [A]s for how a prince can assess his minister, here is an infallible guide: when you see a minister thinking more of himself than of you, and seeking his own profit in everything he does, such a one will never be a good minister, you will never be able to trust him.

Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 1513, p. 74

**INTRODUCTION**

There is surely no better-known Western commentator on politics and expertise than Niccolò Machiavelli. Well before the 1648 Treaty of Westphalia – often cited, however inaccurately, as a turning point in the consolidation of a notion of the state as a sovereign and territorial entity – Machiavelli recognized that political power-seekers and bearers of expertise need each other. In the brief passage above, Machiavelli hints at the complexity of the politics–expertise relationship: experts communicate important things about the competence of rulers-to-be, but they are also a threat to the ruler’s authority. Power-seeking and truth-claiming are yoked to each other in an interdependent but fragile alliance.

Western social thought on politics and expertise is deep, rich, and profoundly relevant to the present moment but, for the most part, political sociology carries on separately from the sociologies of knowledge, experts, and expertise. There is nonetheless a symmetry between contemporary political sociology’s cultural concerns and, in the sociology of knowledge (hereafter SoK), interest in experts’ capacity for political intervention. Indeed, in the wake of the cultural turn many
political sociologists recognize the centrality of culture, sometimes with special reference to consecrated bearers of cultural authority (or, simply, “experts”\(^1\)), in state formation, government, social movements, party politics, and the public sphere. Meanwhile the sociology of intellectuals, always prone to normative debates over “what intellectuals ought to do,” has renewed concerns with how intellectuals are produced, their locations in social space, how they see things, and their capacity to “intervene” in public life (Eyal and Bucholz 2010; Karabel 1996: 206). Given the politicization and weaponization of knowledge in these unstable times, there is a strong case to be made that this symmetry should be pressed toward fusion – that is, that the sociologies of knowledge and politics should become a joint endeavor, taking the tension-ridden interconnection between cultural and political authority and its consequences for democratic representation as central concerns.

To lay some groundwork in this direction, the present chapter offers a selective discussion of foundational and contemporary scholarship on politics and expertise. After some preliminaries – namely, why a distinction between parties and states is important for thinking about politics and expertise, and how the term “expert” is defined in the present chapter – I provide a discussion of how the politics–expertise relationship figured in late-nineteenth- and early twentieth-century social thought, emphasizing that the sociology of knowledge was initially conceived as a complement to, or even a basis of, political sociology, but was then hived off as a separate endeavor. The post-1970s sociology of science and its offshoot, science and technology studies (hereafter STS), meanwhile, seemed to position themselves as a substitute for the study of politics and political institutions by calling for a focus on scientific claims-making and credibility struggles, understood as “politics by other means” (Latour 1983). While STS never sidelined the study of the political – and, indeed, its claim that to study science and scientists was to study an increasingly important arena within, not external to, political life is well taken – it nonetheless tended to take experts, expertise, technology, and technique, and not the necessary and yet tension-ridden *intersection* of political and expert fields, as the key analytical objects.

I then turn to contemporary political sociology, highlighting that analyses of social movements and states often raise, explicitly or implicitly, the specter of the expert, but tend not to make the politics–expertise relationship a central analytical concern. After highlighting promising moves toward a resuscitation of the analysis of politics and expertise in new and recent work on political parties; inter-, supra-, and transnational politics; and historical political

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\(^{1}\) I explain my use of this term below. For now, I will simply acknowledge that various more or less historically specific, academic, politically inflected, and normative (or derogatory) terms can, and have, been used to refer to the sorts of figure treated here as “experts” – e.g., intellectual, academic, professional, technocrat, aide, adviser, minister, knowledge-bearing elite, egghead, wonk, and so forth.
economy, I emphasize the potential of relational and field theoretic ways of thinking for developing a historical, grounded, critical, political sociology of experts and expertise – one that retains the insights of classical thinkers but also confronts the specific dilemmas of contemporary democratic politics. In the conclusion I argue that the architecture of such an effort would place two sets of dual processes front and center: the scientization of politics and the politicization of science on the one hand, and the professionalization of politics and the democratic dispossession of represented publics on the other.

**PRELIMINARIES**

Before continuing, two preliminaries are in order. First, I’ll simply note that although parties and states are sometimes conflated or, at least, not clearly demarcated from each other in political sociology, the two are not the same and, in fact, the distinction between them is critical when it comes to the matter of experts. A number of seminal writings on politics were not primarily concerned with established holders of political power (the monarch or the state), but rather with the would-be ruler – that is, the power-seeker. If for Machiavelli the ruler-in-waiting was the Prince,¹ for Max Weber and Antonio Gramsci it was the political party. In both cases, the figure concerned is a prospective ruler, engaged not only in the struggle to govern but also the struggle over the right to govern.

The distinction matters for two reasons: because the would-be ruler has special expert needs, and because the would-be ruler also has a distinctive relationship to experts. In the first place, the political party has a special need for specifically strategic expertise that is suited to the special tasks of persuasion, communication, mobilization, negotiation, and coalition building, in addition to the specialist competence (merit) that is more characteristic of the ideal typical civil servant. In the second place, as I will discuss further below, the would-be ruler seeks out experts who are not merely competent, but also loyal – and must go to special lengths to secure and reward loyalty, especially when the ruler is out of power. Historically speaking, this means that political parties play a special role in the formation and elaboration of expert terrains in and around the state, which shape the conditions of possibility for future political orders. The discussion to follow is thus structured by a distinction between states and parties, with particular emphasis on parties and party-based political expertise (see also Mudge 2018).

The second preliminary is a clarification of what I mean by the term “expert.” Broadly speaking, to study experts and expertise is to engage in the study of knowledge, knowledge-producing activities and apparatuses, knowledge producers, and social terrains in which truth-claiming is a central object of contention. Following the suggestion of Gil Eyal and Larissa Bucolchz

¹ The figure of Machiavelli’s Prince was inspired by Cesare Borgia, son of Pope Alexander VI.
my inclination is to avoid any essentialized notion of experts as a hard-bounded social type (in which the important question becomes, who is an expert, and who is not?), thinking instead in terms of institutional and organizational contexts, resource endowments, and actor-orientations. For present purposes, activities oriented toward the production of truth claims and acquisition of the means of making those claims effective in political life – that is, putting truth claims in service of the pursuit and exercise of political authority – is expert political activity. In this way of thinking many sorts of social actors are, or can be, experts, and the most pertinent analytical questions shift toward the ability to acquire cultural authority; the means and effectiveness of expert action; the way experts see, analyze, and represent the world around them; experts’ trajectories, positions, and resource endowments; and the extent to which experts’ cultural authority is a means to power of other sorts (economic, political, symbolic). In short, a political sociology of experts and expertise centers on struggles over power for its own sake on the basis of claims to truth or insight, making experts’ trajectories through social space, institutional locations, and means and modes of representation analytically central.

FOUNDATIONS

The dynamic relationship between politics and expertise was once a central problematic in Western social scientific thought. This had much to do with Western sociology’s disciplinary formation alongside mass democracy and its complement, the mass party – which brought new sorts of experts-in-politics to the fore (in particular, journalists) and, with them, a new epoch in the (mass) politicization of knowledge (Mudge 2018). From the mid-1800s to the 1930s, beginning with Karl Marx’s incisive analysis of the economic situatedness of bearers of ideology and ending with Karl Mannheim’s call for a new sociology of knowledge as a means to political sociology (of which more further below), early social scientific thinking took for granted that the analysis of politics required the analysis of knowledge and vice versa.

The origin point of all this is probably best located in the basic Marxian proposition that the content and influence of expertise is an effect of the class position of experts. If, for Marx, bourgeois classes (via bourgeois parties) are

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3 The present discussion is necessarily selective; for space reasons, I have largely omitted a discussion of distinctively Durkheimian concerns with the social bases of mental categories (Durkheim 1995 [1912]; Durkheim and Mauss 1903). This should not be read to mean that such concerns are not useful or important for the analysis of politics and expertise. To the contrary, the question of structures of thought is linked to matters of classification and (e)valuation, which are born of political contestation and have deeply political implications. The problematic of classification is central, especially, to contemporary work in state formation inspired by Pierre Bourdieu, which I discuss further below (see also Bourdieu, Loic, and Farage 1994 [1991]: 7–8). There is also a case to be made that Durkheim, and not Marx, should be a starting point in the analysis of culture and
progenitors of “ruling ideas” that form the ideological basis of both capital and the capitalist state, the political party was a potential means of analytical, ideological, and political opposition. I say “potential” because the working-class party that Marx and Engels imagined in the mid-1800s did not yet exist (Marx and Engels 1978 [1848]). By declaring that “Communists should openly, in the face of the whole world, publish their views, their aims, their tendencies, and meet this nursery tale of the Spectre of Communism with a Manifesto of the party itself,” Marx and Engels sought to delineate the parameters of a working-class party in-the-making that would be distinctive for its marriage of theory and practice (Marx and Engels 1978 [1848]: 473; see also Billington 2007 [1980]; Mudge 2018; Mudge and Chen 2014). For Marx there is no form of social knowledge, or knowledge producer, that is apolitical or disinterested; if the “ruthless criticism of everything existing” leads to a rejection of, or opposition to, the current political order, so be it (Marx 1978 [1843]).

There is an ambiguity here: Marx insisted on the objectivity and scientism of his own thinking, but was no fan of the professional and academic bearers of liberalism (the “ideologists”). On the one hand, Marx and Engels developed the claim that in class-stratified societies dominant ideas, no matter how universalist in pretension, always express the worldviews and interests of the powerful; on the other hand, Marx and Engels also carved out an exception for historical materialism, understood as a mode of analysis grounded in the lived experience of the ever growing, immiserated proletariat (Marx and Engels 1978 [1845–1846]). In this ambiguity lies a kernel from which the sociology of knowledge, and its concerns with the conditions and nature of objectivity in contemporary political orders, would spring.

In the long arc from Machiavelli to Marx the emphasis thus shifts from the matter-of-fact observation that politics and expertise are at once interdependent and mutually threatening to the historical claim that they tend to ally with each other, however uneasily, in defense of the economic status quo – with the awkward caveat that the working class–allied progenitors of Marxian political economy were “real” scientists, not “ideologists,” uniquely able to formulate and weaponize social scientific knowledge in service of moving history forward (Marx 1978 [1845–1846]; see also Merton 1973 [1945]: 20–21). It is here that we find a special emphasis on the institution of the party, as opposed to the capitalist state: the key vehicle of intervention was a new kind of party that, as a site of both political and theoretical activity, would be armed with an analytically grounded, forward-looking historical consciousness, serving as a critical means of education and mobilization – thus generating, for Antonio Gramsci, the embryo of a new kind of state (Gramsci 1971 [1929–1935]; Marx 1978 [1845]; Marx and Engels 1978 [1848]).

Politics, especially insofar as his notion of religion as a moral community that furnishes the basic social architecture of mental categories is transferable, also, to political communities (Durkheim 1995 [1912]).
By Max Weber’s time the kind of party that Marx and Engels merely imagined was, in Germany, a reality. The Social Democratic Party (SPD), formed in the 1875 fusion of two earlier organizations, emerged in the face of aggressive state suppression (of which Weber disapproved) as a singularly powerful, and explicitly Marxist, political force (Mudge 2018). In this context Weber – a nationalist-cum-liberal who saw the SPD’s blurring of the line between politics and science as deeply problematic – rejected the Marxian imperative of marrying theory and practice and, on that basis, developed a distinctive analysis of the formation of modern politics and the place of experts and expertise therein.

Weber saw political and cultural power as opposing, and irreducible, forms of authority. This is especially clear in Weber’s “Politics as a Vocation” (hereafter PaV) – most famous for its definition of the state as a holder of the monopoly of violence over a definite territory, but also readable as a post-Machiavelli analysis of Western political fields in an increasingly politicized moment. In PaV “politics” means power-seeking: “striving to share power or striving to influence the distribution of power” (Weber 1958 [1918]: 78). But power-seeking requires experts and expertise; indeed, insofar as the legal-rational, administrative state develops into an autonomous realm that operates on a logic of merit, credentialed expertise becomes the bedrock of contemporary political orders.

The political party, by contrast, is a charismatic organization built on the basis of “personal devotion and personal confidence in revelation, heroism, or other qualities of individual leadership” (Weber 1958 [1918]: 79, 86). Parties may fashion themselves in the image of the state, but they cannot recruit experts purely on the basis of technical skill or merit for a simple reason: the ruler-in-the-state has the power to make appointments, but a prospective ruler can only promise them, and so successful recruitment requires loyalty, or faith. Weber thus highlights how parties make use of actual or de facto affiliate organizations in order to develop and sustain cadres of loyal experts: “For loyal services today, party leaders give offices of all sorts – in parties, newspapers, co-operative societies, health insurance, municipalities, as well as in the state” (Weber 1958 [1918]: 87). Parties thus seek office to make good not only on promises to constituents and to achieve their own power-seeking ends, but also to attract and sustain loyal (party) experts who, by definition, do not operate on a purely meritocratic logic (Weber 1958 [1918]: 87–88; on the concept of the party expert, see Mudge 2018).

4 The modern political actor – state, politician, party, or otherwise – “strives for power either as a means in serving other aims, ideal or egoistic, or as ‘power for power’s sake,’ that is, in order to enjoy the prestige-feeling that power gives” (Weber 1958 [1918]: 78).

5 Weber points to the “highly qualified, professional labor force” of officiodom, which is “specialized in expertness through long years of preparatory training” (especially in law) and ports “a high sense of status honor” (Weber 1958 [1918]: 87–88).

6 The American state, in Weber’s assessment, was distinctive for its nontechnocratic, partisan saturation: “In the United States, amateur administration through booty politicians in accordance
The bigger picture is one of modern political orders in which the (meritocratic) legal-rational state and loyalty-driven party politics constitute intersecting but relatively autonomous worlds. Both have deep expert dependencies, but they operate according to fundamentally different logics. Party contestation involves ongoing struggles over the construction and consecration of experts and expertise, in which the power to install loyal experts in administrative (or state) positions is a prime objective. This has massive implications, for it gives rise to a vast and complex terrain of expert professions and professionals that is more or less explicitly partisan, and that is pregnant with future political possibilities. In present terms, we might think here of the complex ties between parties (or factions therein) and think tanks, news and media outlets, academe, centers of scientific and military research, consultancies, foundations, corporate executives and research arms, and polling and data analytics firms. Like the technocratic state, this party–expert terrain is a long-term historical effect, originating in the dynamic tension between political and intellectual authority that Machiavelli identified. In short: modern expertise is political, and modern politics is saturated with expertise.

Cognizant of the dangers of a world (like ours) in which expertise and politics are inextricably intermeshed, in the conclusion to *PaV* Weber reminds us that violence, not belief, is the ultimate means of politics ("the ... tasks of politics can only be solved by violence") and that truth-seeking and power-seeking, however irreducible, nonetheless have a logical affinity: both hinge on the pursuit of "absolute" ends. Weber, alongside contemporaries in France and the United States, held out hope for specifically civic professional ethics that could sustain a sense of responsibility and a concern with consequences (Weber 1958 [1918]: 126; cf. Addams 2002 [1915]; Cooper 1998 [1886–1930]; Dewey 2011 [1922]; Durkheim 1992 [1890–1900]). Other of Weber’s contemporaries, notably Robert Michels (who saw power-seeking as, in the end, an overwhelming force), were less optimistic (Michels 1962 [1911]).

Marx and Weber are thus among the key figures who, by delving into the analysis of politics and expertise, laid the foundations of what is now the sociology of knowledge (SoK). Building on these foundations, SoK as initially conceived by Karl Mannheim was a means to "political science." But by the 1950s mainstream American sociologists of knowledge exhibited a marked tendency to drain SoK of its political concerns. In the 1970s, the emerging field of the sociology of science and technology rendered scientific professions and laboratory activities objects of inquiry unto themselves. The cumulative result, I will argue in the next section, was a decline of the notion that to understand politics we have to understand its historically dynamic, tension-ridden, socially productive intersection with experts and expertise.

with the outcome of presidential elections resulted in the exchange of hundreds of thousands of officials, even down to the mail carrier” (Weber 1958 [1918]: 88).
SOCKET AND STS: SEVERING THE POLITICS–EXPERTISE CONNECTION

Mannheim’s *Ideology and Utopia*, published in English in 1936, is known for its notion of a “free-floating” intellectual who speaks truth to power – later identified with a “moralist” SoK tradition that centers on intellectuals’ allegiances and normative obligations (Karabel 1996; see also Eyal and Buchholz 2010; Medvetz 2012). The Mannheimian notion of the “free” intellectual was a reaction to the politicized historical moment that Weber foresaw – in Mannheim’s words, “an age of ‘conspicuous disagreement’” in which “all knowledge … is inevitably partisan” (Mannheim 1936: 5–7, 132). *Ideology and Utopia* can thus be read as an effort to advance the conditions of possibility of the “free” intellectual by laying the groundwork of an SoK that would bring to fruition, at last, a true “science of politics.”

Recognizing that democratization and party formation gave political voice to both the powerful and the dominated, thus rendering visible a full range of politically situated worldviews, Mannheim argued that a distinctively “sociological approach” to the study of knowledge had become possible, putting “an end to the fiction of the detachment of the individual from the group, within the matrix of which the individual thinks and experiences” (Mannheim 1936: 28). The task was not to develop an apolitical SoK, but rather to situate knowledge production, and ways of seeing the world, in relation to politics (Mannheim 1936: 31). Indeed, Mannheim argues that the politicization of knowledge made possible “a political science which will not be merely a party science, but a science of the whole.” The goal was to realize “Political sociology, as the science which comprehends the whole political sphere” (Mannheim 1936: 132). Mannheim thus situated SoK as an enterprise of and for political sociology, not as a separate or stand-alone concern.

Over time, however, SoK and its cousin, science and technology studies (STS), moved away from its originating Mannheimian rationale. Robert Merton’s mid-1940s account of SoK’s birth – which traced it to Marx, Durkheim, Scheler, Mannheim, Sorokin, and others – identified its origins in “a definite complex of social and cultural conditions” marked by “increasing social conflict” and value differences, leading to the development of “distinct universes of discourse” that challenge each other’s “validity and legitimacy,” making no explicit reference to politics or political institutions (Merton 1973 [1945]: 7–13). In Merton’s view SoK, understood as the study of “relations between knowledge and other existential factors in society or culture,” had little or no necessary link with political sociology (Merton 1973 [1945]: 7–13).

In the 1970s, with the birth of STS, the cleavage between SoK and political sociology morphed into a remarkable reversal: for Bruno Latour and his colleagues, the “micro” study of knowledge-producing activities, settings, and techniques is the study of politics. In 1983, four years after his publication of *Laboratory Life* (1979) with Steve Woolgar, Latour noted the
“division of labour between scholars studying organizations, institutions, public policy on the one hand, and people studying micro-negotiations inside scientific disciplines on the other” and argued that, since “In our modern societies most of the really fresh power comes from sciences” and not the “classical political process,” laboratory studies were de facto political analyses (Latour 1983: 142, 168). The difference between the “greedy, full of self-interest, short-sighted, fuzzy, always ready to compromise ... shaky” politician and the “disinterested, far-sighted, honest,” rigorous, clear, evidence-bound scientist, Latour argued, is not knowledge, but rather the construction of “a technological device to gain strength by multiplying mistakes” – that is, a laboratory (Latour 1983: 165).

Latour has a point. The project of STS, particularly in its application to the study of economics and its calculative techniques, has proven tremendously fruitful as a form of political analysis (see, e.g., Callon 1998; MacKenzie and Millo 2003; MacKenzie, Muniesa, and Siu 2007; I revisit this below). So, too, has the study of how science, culture and politics “co-produce” each other in contemporary life (Jasanoff 2004). But these literatures, however rich, do not amount to the SoK-as-a-means-to-political-sociology that Mannheim envisioned. And yet, given the contemporary return of a Mannheimian world in which all knowledge presents itself, or is at risk of being presented as, partisan, the original understanding that SoK is best undertaken jointly with, and as a basis of, political sociology – or, in other words, that the study of knowledge and expertise cannot be divorced from the study of politics and political institutions – merits reconsideration.7

Indeed, with the erasure of the politics–expert intersection as an object of study a whole range of insightful propositions fell by the wayside – namely: that political and expert authority are at once interdependent and oppositional; that the politics–expertise relationship is a historically generative force in the formation of modern political and cultural institutions (parties and states; journalism and media; science and academe; foundations, corporations, and nonprofits; professions); that how experts see the world is systematically linked to their position in it; that experts’ civic commitments and professional ethics can temper dogmatism and opportunism in democratic political arenas. These propositions are, arguably, now more important than ever, given the elaboration and complexity of the expert terrain on which today’s politics operates. But they are not organizing concerns in SoK – nor are they central, as I will argue in the next section, in contemporary political sociology.

7 Controversies over the question of politics and the study thereof in relation to the study of science and technology in the 1980s attest to this separation (see, e.g., Latour 1983).
THE ETHEREAL EXPERT: THE SPECTER HAUNTING POLITICAL SOCIOLOGY

As a complement to the analysis above, this section carves a path through culturally inflected work in political sociology on social movements, states and state formation with the aim of showing how contemporary scholarship often raises the specter of the expert, but still falls short of the politically oriented SoK that Mannheim envisioned. One difficulty lies in a failure to characterize and analyze party–expert terrains (note: as opposed to state-expert terrains), and the situated worldviews of their inhabitants, in toto. An important symptom of this failure is that experts themselves often appear as shadowy, ahistorical figures in political analysis. Indeed, experts’ origins, positions, resources, trajectories, worldviews, and modes of representation often get less attention than the categories, techniques, and systems of (e)valuation that they produce. And yet, if we are to acquire a clear historical and comparative understanding of contemporary politics and expertise, this cannot suffice.

The Political Sociology of Social Movements

The flipside of the severing, or reversing, of politics–expertise relations in SoK and STS has been, in the study of social movements especially, a turn to culture—but not necessarily its consecrated bearers—in political life. Symptomatically, this literature tends to bypass the crucial distinction between parties and states, elaborated above, that underpinned classical concerns with politics and expertise.

In the mid-1990s Emirbayer and Goodwin argued that network-based, structural-relational work in political sociology failed to deal adequately with culture—by which they meant “discourses, narratives, and idioms,” or more generally “symbolic formations” (Emirbayer and Goodwin 1994). Symbolic formations should figure, they argued, as “analytically autonomous cultural structures,” since they “both constrain and enable historical actors” (Emirbayer and Goodwin 1994). This line of thinking took an emotion-oriented turn in work on social and protest movements by James Jasper, Jeff Goodwin, Francesca Polletta, and others. Jasper’s The Art of Moral Protest (1997) outlines an approach to the analysis of social protest centered on culture, resources, strategies, and biography, with special attention to the role of emotion. Calling for greater attention to “emotions, cognitions, and moral principles and intuitions of elected officials and bureaucrats,” this line of thinking was partly a reaction against political sociologists’ preoccupations with “the institutions of the nation-state”—although, one should note, this critical reaction tended not to differentiate between parties and states. Instead,

8 For an analysis of emotion and state formation, see Berezin (1999).
“parties and elections” figure here as but one of various nation-state institutions (Jasper 2005: 132; see also Goodwin, Jasper, and Polletta 2001; Jasper 2011).

To the extent that concern with emotion as a means of political action raises questions as to the position of the actors, however, we find ourselves at the doorstep of SoK – which is, after all, built on the premise that the meaning of what is said cannot be divorced from the position of the person doing the saying.9 Indeed, some work emphasizes how displays of emotion in social movements tend to undercut claims to rationality or scientificity, especially for women, which has consequences for movement leadership – as, for instance, in work by Julian Groves, in which “activists, trying to downplay the emotions of the movement in order to emphasize its rational, professional, even scientific grounding, favored men as spokespersons even though the movement was heavily female,” since (in one activist’s words) “Being emotional becomes legitimate when men do it” (Jasper 2011: 293, citing a quote in Groves 2001: 226). This has important implications for the gendered nature of expertise in politics and, more generally, the significance of categorical position for perceptions of competence, clarity, and disinterestedness in political life.

A similar point can be made regarding dynamics of contention (DOC) emphases on frames and framing (McAdam and Tarrow 2010: 530–531; see also McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 2001). In DOC scholarship the concept of the “collective action frame” draws culture into the analysis of social movements, allowing for attention to the “meaning work” of “movement actors” (Benford and Snow 2000: 613; see also Snow and Benford 1988). A key concern in frame-centered DOC is how “prognostic and diagnostic frames” do or do not facilitate movement “traction” in a given political setting (Amenta et al. 2010: 296); see also Benford and Snow 2000; Polletta and Ho 2004). Expertise comes up in DOC and frame analyses with the matter of “resonance,” the variable effect of which Benford and Snow attribute to the credibility and salience of frames (Benford and Snow 2000: 619–620). Benford and Snow describe credibility as “a function of three factors”: “frame consistency, empirical credibility, and credibility of frame articulators or claimsmakers” (2000: 619–620, emphasis added).

All this immediately raises the question of the degree to which credibility can be understood as something autonomous – that is, a thing that exists separately from credibility-seeking claims-makers. Indeed, Benford and Snow suggest that “the greater the status and/or perceived expertise of the frame articulator and/or the organization they represent,” the more “plausible and resonant the framings or claims” (Benford and Snow 2000: 621).

That the matter of credibility, also, brings us to the doorstep of SoK is nowhere more clear than in Steven Epstein’s analysis of “credibility struggles”

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9 For a reaffirmation of this sociological contention in a broader analysis of the centrality of language as the medium of politics, see Bourdieu (1991).
in the making of AIDS experts and expertise in the 1980s and 1990s. Emphasizing the distinctively public character of AIDS research (owing partly to its social movement origins), Epstein traces the complex array of actors involved – virologists, biomedical institutions, public health experts, activists, media players, and others – and emphasizes how actors’ interests, social locations, and organizations shape their framing strategies and expert claims (Epstein 1996: 25, 39). Arguing that “scientific” controversies over AIDS would have remained insignificant in the absence of “a scientific field that is unusually broad and public,” Epstein made an influential call for “new approaches to the study of the politics of knowledge-making in scientific controversies with overtly public dimensions” in the sociologies of medicine and science (Epstein 1996: 331–332).

Recalling classical themes, Epstein also reminds us of the “curious fragility” of expert authority: on the one hand, “there is no avoiding reliance on experts who are crucial transmitters and translators of technical knowledge” and means of settling political controversies, and yet the “scientization of politics’ simultaneously brings about a ‘politicization of science’” (Epstein 1996: 5–6, quoting Habermas 1970; see also Brint 1994; Panofsky 2014).

Classical emphases on the science–politics relationship notwithstanding, these lines of work nonetheless tend to track away from the study of political actors and institutions (movements, states, parties) in favor of the study of expert and scientific networks. This is perhaps to be expected – one can only do so much – but, at the same time, it falls short of the Mannheimian vision. This is especially true insofar as very little culturally inflected and expert-centered social movement scholarship attends in any specific way to parties and partisanship. As we will see, analyses of states and state formation exhibit similar tendencies.

States and State Formation

If experts figure in social movements and DOC scholarship as frame articulators and claims-makers who wield credentials and truth claims as a means of engagement in contentious politics, in the sociology of state formation they appear as bearers of specialized credentials engaged in the construction of, and struggles over, the symbolic, extractive, violence-wielding, and rule-making authority of governing institutions. Again, this can be read as symptomatic of the cultural turn: to the extent that the state-centered work of Peter Evans, Theda Skocpol, and their colleagues dealt with ideas, intellectuals, officials, and official decision-making (Evans, Skocpol, and Rueschemeyer 1985), particularly in the making of social policy in Western countries (Rueschemeyer and Skocpol 1996),

10 As of April 2018, Impure Science lists almost 3,000 citations on Google Scholar – most in the sociology of science, knowledge, and medicine.
Steinmetz notes, it opened “up the Pandora’s box of subjectivity and culture” (Steinmetz 1999: 18).

The understanding that state formation is both grounded in culture and culturally generative is now a relative commonplace in political sociology. Julia Adams and Phil Gorski have shown that cultural systems and practices grounded in family and religious ethics play a central role in state formation (Adams 2005; Gorski 2003). Steinmetz stresses the necessity of tracing the ideological formation of state officials within a broader cultural and discursive context (Steinmetz 1993, 2008). Other lines of culturally sensitive state analysis consider the ways in which racial and gender distinctions intersect with state formation (Geva 2013, 2015; Goodwin 1997; O’Connor, Orloff, and Shaver 1999; Orloff 2001, 2003; Morgan 2006; Quadagno 1990, 1994). Similar concerns can be found in work on racial formation and the “racial state” (Jung and Kwon 2013; Omi and Winant 2015 [1986]). In all this work culture consists of modes of categorical and hierarchical distinction, forms of practical action, semiotics, language, and emotions. By extension, as Steinmetz argues, an orienting assumption is that the problematic of the culture–state connection cannot be resolved by way of a “whiggish or technocratic language of ‘political learning’” or by falling “back on a sociologically impoverished conception of ideology as simply ideas, ignoring the role of broader, impersonal cultural systems” (Steinmetz 1999: 18).

Varieties of “culturalism” in state analysis range from the strong claim that the state is itself a cultural effect to the gentler position that the rules of the game in struggles in and over the state are culturally defined (Steinmetz 1999: 27–28). Either way, it is a short step from concerns with the state–culture connection to politics and expertise.

Take, for instance, the strong culturalist end of the spectrum. In the Foucault-inspired work of Timothy Mitchell the state is a network of institutional arrangements and political practices with constitutionally incoherent boundaries (Mitchell 1991, 1999). The modern state’s ability to present itself as external to society is, Mitchell argues, a “distinctive technique of the modern political order” that is grounded in certain technical practices (Mitchell 1999: 77; 1991; cf. Mayrl and Quinn 2016). For Mitchell the analysis of states should therefore account for practices that make the state’s apparent externality possible – including the early twentieth-century disciplinary and statistical construction of “the economy” (Mitchell 1999: 89–94; see also Mitchell 1998). Accordingly, Mitchell’s analysis of the twentieth century state–culture connection centers on the development of disciplinary economic knowledge: tracing how, in the wake of the post-1931 collapse of “the system of monetary representation,” economists who borrowed heavily from physics and drove state-assisted processes of statistical production developed a conception of the

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11 For a broader discussion of “feminist challenges” in historical sociology, see Adams, Clemens, and Orloff (2005: 45–56).

Mitchell’s work is one strand of an extensive literature on the interrelations between economic expertise and governing institutions, national and otherwise (for a review, see Hirschman and Berman 2014) – and, more broadly, on interrelations between law, economics, and state formation (e.g., Dezalay and Garth 2002; Mudge and Vauchez 2012; Vauchez 2008). Marion Fourcade (Fourcade-Gourinchas 2001) traces how economic knowledge is itself patterned by state formation. Dan Hirschman and Elizabeth Berman point out that economics’ influence goes well beyond the technical tools used to inform and structure decision-making: “economics discourse” in general “reshapes how non-economist policymakers understand a given issue” (2014: 2). Others focus on how economics shapes politics and policy-making, not only as a body of knowledge and a set of analytical techniques but also as a language in its own right, a site of production of a certain kind of expert, and a producer of ways of seeing that have left a definite imprint on both political and economic institutions. Indeed, for scholars of performativity in STS, postwar economics organizes policy decision-making and “performs, shapes, and formats the economy” (Callon 1998: 2).

Economics’ performativity unfolds at the intersection of disciplinary economics, sites of economic activity, and state agencies, reminding us that the study of the tools, techniques, and technologies of economic analysis, forms of economic knowledge, and economists themselves is inseparable not only from the study of markets, but also the study of political networks and institutions. In a study of the making of modern financial derivatives exchanges, for instance, Donald MacKenzie and Yuval Millo emphasize that economics’ influence “flowed through a Granovetterian network” that linked economists to consulting firms, regulatory agencies, and the federal administration (MacKenzie and Millo 2003: 139–141). In performativity we thus find, once again, that the study of experts and expertise cannot be separated from the study of politics.

This point can be extended to other culturalist approaches in the analysis of state formation – for instance, works grounded in Pierre Bourdieu’s neo-Weberian conception of the modern state as an entity defined by its accumulation of the means of “physical and symbolic violence over a definite territory and over the totality of the corresponding population” (Bourdieu et al. 1994 [1991]: 3, emphasis in original; see also Loveman 2005). This line of thinking draws on a variety of important works bearing on the relationship between political power, classification, and subjectivity (e.g., Brubaker 1996; Foucault 1979; Giddens 1987; Mann 1986). And it also brings us back, one way or another, to the specter of the expert.

Mara Loveman’s analysis of the formation of the mid-nineteenth-century Brazilian state, for instance, draws attention to the uncertain and contested nature of the “primitive accumulation of symbolic power” (or “the ability to
make appear as natural, inevitable, and thus apolitical, that which is a product of historical struggle and human invention”) (Loveman 2005: 1655). Cristina Mora’s analysis of the making of a Hispanic panethnicity in the US shows how, by contrast, cross-field exchanges and collaborations between technocrats, social movement leaders, and media-based actors ultimately gave rise to a new ethnic census classification (Mora 2014). Rebecca Emigh, Dylan Riley, and Patricia Ahmed, in an ambitious analysis of the making of censuses in Italy, Britain, and the United States from the medieval period through the twentieth century, identify at least three “society-centered” bases of the formation of census classifications: lay categories, “census” or “informational” intellectuals who “translate lay categories into scientific ones,” and the relative power of “nonstate elites, nonelites, and state actors” in political struggles (Emigh et al. 2016: 15–16). Matthew Norton (2014) traces the “cultural foundations of a practical capacity for violence” in an analysis of British state formation and early eighteenth-century piracy, showing that a precondition of effective coercion is “effective classification” (Norton 2014: 1538–1539).

None of the works just referenced are framed as analyses of politics and expertise per se, and yet in all of them the relations between consecrated bearers of specifically cultural authority and seekers of political power are causally central. In Loveman’s analysis, the Brazilian state’s failed effort at the primitive accumulation of symbolic power hinged partly on its inability to co-opt or capitalize on the authority of local religious authorities (Loveman 2005: 1670). In Mora’s work, preexisting credentials of census bureau leadership and politics over the expert-versus-activist staffing of committees feature prominently in the making of Hispanic panethnicity. For Rebecca Emigh and her coauthors, “informational” intellectuals are a basis of census-making. In Norton’s account, the English state’s ability to wield coercive power hinged partly on its authority to essentially produce expertise de novo within state-appointed commissions, and thus rearrange its legal framework for the definition and punishment of piracy (Norton 2014: 1565). In all this work we can see that definition and classification are not only central to the formation of politics and government, but also that they are struggled over and produced in specific historical forums in which expert authority is among the most important stakes.

Research centered on matters of definition and classification in the contemporary cultural sociology of state and governmental formation is one strand of a broader, increasingly popular concern that stretches across many sociological subfields: what Michèle Lamont dubs “SVE,” or the sociology of valuation and evaluation (Lamont 2012). Lamont does not identify SVE as a key concern of political sociology, and yet processes in which “value is produced, diffused, assessed, and institutionalized” clearly have deeply political implications. Indeed, the vast interdisciplinary literatures dealing with neoliberalism and the rise of neoliberal politics – that is, a politics
centered on markets and market-making as the means and ends of government activity (Mudge 2008, 2016; see also Somers and Block 2005; Springer, Birch, and MacLeavey 2016) – can be read as analyses of nothing less than a global transformation in the relative valuation of market versus public or political goods, one that is deeply interconnected with economics, expert professionals, and the spread of new tools and techniques of management, accounting, measurement, commensuration, and valuation in the post-1970s period (Espeland and Stevens 2008; see also Davies 2014). Justifications and conventions research on the cultural organization of economic and political action, for instance Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello’s analysis of French capitalism’s shifting moral grounding using “texts that provide moral education on business practices,” also brings SVE concerns to bear on neoliberal transformations (Boltanski and Chiapello 2005: 164; see also Boltanski and Chiapello 2007[1999]; Boltanski and Thévenot 1983, 2006[1991]; Beamish 2015).

In SVE and conventions work matters of experts, expertise, and the terrains and technologies that shape expert production may not be analytically foregrounded, but they tend to surface nonetheless. Behind Boltanski and Chiapello’s business texts are the institutionally situated people who wrote them, and the cultural terrains in which they were produced. Marion Fourcade notes that the analysis of the “valuation of peculiar goods” should include attention to “the specific techniques and arguments laymen and experts might use in order to elicit monetary value where value is hard to produce” – processes that, in her analysis of the aftermath of oil spills in France and the US, unfold in public and political institutions: courts, public agencies, and partisan contestation (Fourcade 2011: 1723–1727, 1751–1752).

In sum, culturally sensitive work bearing on the political sociology of states and government, like cultural approaches in social movements research, tends to call forth expert terrains of modern politics; the experts who are indigenous to them; the ways in which said experts acquire not only cultural, but also political, authority (or do not); and the tools, techniques, networks, and practices through which knowledge-producing and political realms of activity are linked. Concerns with experts themselves are often subordinated to more abstract cultural phenomena (categories, classifications, modes of valuation and evaluation) or rendered secondary to the things they produce (e.g., academic texts), but they are there nonetheless. A political sociology of SVE that engages more directly with politics–expertise dynamics would need to bring experts out of the shadows, considering their historical conditions of possibility and locating them in social space.

A political sociology of SVE should also consider the specificities of the varied political institutions in and through which contestation over valuation, evaluation, and classification unfolds. Unsurprisingly, given the centrality of political parties to early thinking on politics and expertise, significant developments on this front can be found in the renewed sociology of political
parties (for a review, see Mudge and Chen 2014). Other promising sites for a renewed political sociology of experts and expertise include studies that look beyond the nation-state to trans-, inter-, and supranational politics and to the formation and development of knowledge-producing institutions, fields, and organizational networks. To these we now turn.

PROMISING SITES: EXPERTS IN PARTIES, BEYOND THE NATION-STATE, AND IN POLITICAL ECONOMY

An arguable weakness of the now sizable culturally inflected literatures in political sociology is an ongoing tendency to divide politics into two phenomena: social movements and national states. Recognition of party–movement dynamics came relatively late to contemporary social movements scholarship. Despite the centrality of the party–state distinction in foundational works in political sociology (outlined above), much contemporary work in the sociology of state formation deals awkwardly, if at all, with political parties. Methodological nationalism and Euro- or Western-centrism (despite ongoing efforts at “provincializing Europe” [Chakrabarty 2000]) are also not yet things of the past, “third-wave” developments in historical sociology notwithstanding (Adams et al. 2005; Krause 2016). Here I will selectively address several strands of work that move past states and social movements and place politics–expertise dynamics center stage: reengagements with political parties centered on articulation and intermediation; analyses of trans-, supra-, and international politics; and analyses that concern themselves explicitly with the development of expert terrains in national political fields.

Political sociology has lately seen a resurgence of concern with political parties and partisan contention in which, like the sociologies of social movements and state formation, cultural concerns are central. One strand of party-centered work, the “articulation” school, deserves special attention because it deals directly with the making of political classifications and the role of parties therein (de Leon, Desai, and Tüg 2015; for a discussion of party scholarship centered on performance, symbolism, and meaning-making, see Mudge and Chen 2014: 319–320). My own work responds to and engages with this line of scholarship by pairing the articulation problematic with a specifically expert-centric concern: that of party experts’ capacities for intermediation (Mudge 2018). Among my aims has been an effort to shift the study of parties beyond the party–society problematic and center it, instead, on

12 In the 2000s DOC shifted toward a fuller model of politics that incorporated political parties (e.g., Amenta et al. 2010; Goldstone 2003; McAdam et al. 2001, 2008; see Mudge and Chen 2014 for a review).

13 On the relationship between colonial governing practices, culture, and politics in India see Cohn (1996). Steinmetz (2008) explores how ethnographic knowledge shaped German colonial practices between 1884 and 1918.
how experts in and around political parties, depending on their social location and ways of seeing things, shape both “refraction” (how events beyond the party are interpreted within it) and representation (how parties characterize and speak for groups, organizations, interests, and things).

For Cedric de Leon and his colleagues, parties “articulate” social cleavages “to build powerful blocs of supporters in whose name they attempt to remake states and societies” (de Leon et al. 2015: 2). Defining articulation as “the process by which parties ‘suture’ together coherent blocs and cleavages from a disparate set of constituencies and individuals,” the articulation school makes a strong claim that goes to the heart of the problematic of expertise, classification, and political power: namely, that the political valence of categories of class, race and gender are, in the end, party effects (de Leon et al. 2015: 2–3, emphasis in original). In de Leon et al.’s words: “ethnoreligious, economic, and gender differences ... have no natural political valence of their own and thus do not, on their own steam, predispose mass electorates to do anything”; nor do religious affiliations or economic crises (de Leon et al. 2015: 2). Key to the process of imbuing differences, affiliations, and economic events with political meaning is parties’ command of the “means of articulation,” which includes political rhetoric, the rule-making and violence-wielding powers of the state, influence over constitutional frameworks, relations to civic groups, and abilities to recruit and mobilize (de Leon et al. 2015: 3–4).

The articulation approach raises the Gramscian problematic of parties, organic intellectuals, and political transformation in a double way (Gramsci 1971 [1929–1935]). On the one hand, there is a concern with how parties, in general, organize “the gradual cultivation of” party cadres, leaders, and experts (de Leon et al. 2015: 25). On the other hand, de Leon et al. highlight the special case of “integral” (as opposed to “traditional”) parties, which are distinguished by orientations toward “transformational questions.” The integral party’s transformational capacities and orientations, they argue, are a function of various factors, including “the influence of founding intellectuals and thinkers” (de Leon et al. 2015: 5).

My work has also taken up Gramscian concerns with parties, articulation, and expertise, analyzing what de Leon et al. would surely classify as “traditional” parties – mainstream parties of the laborite, social democratic, and (American) Democratic center-left in Europe and the United States – to account for transformations in the language and logic of Western leftism between the 1920s and the early 2000s (Mudge 2018). Via a historical, comparative, biographical, and relational analysis of four major parties (the German and Swedish Social Democrats, the British Labour Party, and the American Democratic Party15), I show that center-left parties’ expert

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14 Other factors are the party’s origins, ability to monopolize the political field, and professionalism.

15 Acknowledging, of course, that the Democratic Party is not, and has never been, a party of the “left” in the same sense as its Western European counterparts (see Mudge 2018: Chapter 5).
dependencies moved from party-embedded journalists, to academically embedded Keynesian economists, and finally to a newer generation of transnational, finance-oriented economists (TFEs) flanked by strategic experts (“spin doctors”) and policy specialists (“wonks”). Drawing from Gramsci’s notion of parties as tripartite entities in which experts may (or may not) serve the crucial function of intermediating between party elites and represented groups, I argue that TFEs, spin doctors, and wonks were historically novel expert figures made possible by the formation, respectively, of financial economics, political consulting, and political think tanks. Like party experts before them, TFEs, strategic experts, and policy specialists represented the world in ways that reflected their positions in it – that is, in terms of markets, “what wins,” and “what works.” In stark contrast with mid-century Keynesian economists who understood their jobs in terms of the marriage of strategy, coalition building, and economic science, TFEs, policy specialists, and strategists had limited capacities to intermediate. Among the major consequences was, in the neoliberal period, a disarticulation of left parties’ constituencies – grounded, in an SVE perspective, in a dissolution of political classifications that sustained party-political life (Mudge 2018).

Some relational and field theoretical work in political sociology takes concerns with politics and expertise beyond the nation-state (on the general project of “fielding transnationalism,” see Go and Krause 2016). Yves Dezalay and Bryant Garth (2002) use law as an empirical entry point to understanding “palace wars” in Latin America, offering a study in comparative politics with a strong international dimension that is squarely focused on politics-expertise relationships, particularly of a scholarly sort. They propose that “international strategies” – that is, scholarly or “learned” strategies made possible by having achieved academic recognition, deployed by national actors seeking to “use foreign capital” – can be used to grasp “the relationship between global influences and state transformations” (2002: 7). International strategies work, first, as currency, allowing credentials to be invested locally; they also serve, second, as weaponry for engaging in palace wars (that is, fights over state power) (2002: 8).16 Tianna Paschel similarly highlights how social movements can use transnational contexts to serve nationally centered political aims (Paschel 2016; see also Loveman 2014).

My work with Antoine Vauchez also considers the interactions of politics and expertise on a transnational scale, focusing on European integration. Echoing Dezalay and Garth’s arguments, we highlight the primary importance of scholarly professions, and especially law and economics, in European palace wars (Mudge and Vauchez 2012). We show, via an analysis of Europe’s historically variable meanings (first as a Community of Law, then as a Single Market), how legal and economic scholarly networks operating via a

16 Their prime example here is Pinochet’s use of Chicago economics to discredit the existing government.
“weak field” of EU studies have, under certain conditions, became cultural, or expert, drivers of the whole integration project (Mudge and Vauchez 2012). This is meant, in part, as a friendly amendment to institutionalist work that brings social movement–style frame analysis to bear on European integration, but does not attend especially closely to the social and professional locations of frame producers (e.g., Fligstein and Mara-Drita 1996; Fligstein and Stone Sweet 2002; Stone Sweet, Sandholtz, and Fligstein 2001).

Necessarily, this task of locating, professionally and institutionally, experts (or frame producers) requires that the researcher adopt an investigative style of analysis. As one follows experts’ biographical and professional trajectories through time, the researcher has to then back off and historicize not only the people, but also the various institutions, professions, organizations, and social networks to which they have been connected, as well as how those settings emerged; how they changed over time. In my own work I describe this as an “inside-out” approach, in which one takes seriously experts’ self-descriptions as “economists,” “consultants,” or “journalists,” for instance, but also situates those self-accounts with respect to broader institutional and professional developments (Mudge 2018). When approached in this way, the expert terrains that are part and parcel of political life—pace Weber—come squarely into view.

So, too, do the technologies and materials that are the means of expert production; the broader economic context; and the ways in which experts are, unavoidably, situated with respect to markets, economies, and the systemic forces of capitalist orders. There is much room in this approach, in other words, for critical political economy. Indeed, by attending to experts’ institutional locations through time the researcher inevitably confronts what the late, great political economist Susan Strange (2015 [1988]) identified as the “knowledge structures” of the economy, which determine “what knowledge is discovered, how it is stored, and who communicates it by what means to whom and on what terms.” Knowledge structures, Strange argues, are key to the distribution of political and economic power, and thus rightfully a key concern for the analysis of political economy (Strange 2015 [1988]: Kindle Loc 2664–2669). Strange encourages us to attend to experts—or, in her words, those on whom “power and authority are conferred” in decision-making, and those who occupy “key decision-making positions” in the knowledge structure (Strange 2015 [1988]: Kindle Loc 2664–2669). Strange highlights three sorts of changes in knowledge structures as particularly central: in information and communication systems, “the use of language and non-verbal channels of communication,” and “the fundamental perceptions of and beliefs about the human condition which influence value judgements and, through them, political and economic decisions and policies” (Strange 2015 [1988]: Kindle Loc 2628–2631).

John Campbell and Ove Pedersen make the case for a similarly knowledge-centered political economy in their analysis of “knowledge regimes” (Campbell
and Pedersen 2014). Defining knowledge regimes as national organizations with dense networks of interaction that, together, constitute a “sense-making apparatus,” their cross-national analysis of post-1970s Western countries (the US, Germany, France, and Denmark) highlights their increasing importance after the 1970s in the face of globalization and in the wake of the “Golden Age” and makes the case that cross-national differences in knowledge regimes shaped the trajectory of, and imposed limits on, the unfolding of neoliberalism.

Campbell and Pedersen do not situate their analysis with respect to Mannheimian concerns with the relationship between political sociology and SoK. Political parties are especially conspicuous in their conceptual absence. Yet the knowledge–politics nexus – where “politics” refers not only to states and governments, but also to parties and partisan contention – is nonetheless their focus. Akin to other work on the post-1970 development of think tanks in the US (Medvetz 2012), Campbell and Pedersen identify a specifically American combination of rising partisanship and the proliferation of competitive and contentious private research organizations, funded largely by corporations and wealthy donors. They contrast this with the French experience, where a more state-dominated knowledge regime generated a reaction against insulated, state-dominated thinking, led to the creation of semi-public and private research organizations, and generated a knowledge regime that was more fragmented but lacking the intense ideological warfare found in the US. Germany, they speculate, may also be “witnessing the initial salvos of an emergent war of ideas,” while in Denmark an initial war of ideas waned after the mid-1980s, grounding Danish policy-making in a more consensual knowledge regime. If we flip Campbell and Pedersen’s “wars of ideas” right side up (as it were), locating ideational producers historically with special attention to states, parties, and movements, we find ourselves confronted with the politics–expertise relationship in a way that Weber and Mannheim may have found familiar. Indeed, Campbell and Pedersen’s use of “knowledge regime” as an organizing concept, and the prominence of concerns with partisanship, contention, and polarization-versus-consensus in their analysis, recall imageries of deeply political, and variably politicized, expert terrains of which Weber and Mannheim spoke.

How, then, do we move forward from here? In the following section I will conclude with some observations as to how relational and field theoretic analysis – especially in the mode developed by Pierre Bourdieu – might aid in the effort.

17 In Medvetz’s (2012) analysis, the making of the “think tank” was deeply linked to American political development, effectively producing a new kind of organizational field that married knowledge production to activist political orientations – changing the whole American intellectual landscape in the process.
Toward a Grounded, Critical, Historical Sociology of Political–Expert Relations

Field theory, especially its Bourdieusian strain, is especially helpful in the endeavor to move forward the study of politics and expertise for many reasons, including: its synthesis of classical insights, including the Weberian notion of tension between forms of authority or (economic, cultural, political); its refusal of categorical essentialism in favor of relationality; its attentiveness to biography and positionality over time; and its critical take on the specificities of contemporary politics. To make this case, here I will sketch some ways in which field theoretic and relational analysis can aid in the effort to bring political sociology back to classical concerns with the tension-ridden intersection of politics and expertise while also pushing in new directions. On the one hand, field theoretic thinking recenters the same dynamic that focused the attention of figures like Weber and Mannheim—namely the scientization of politics and the politicization of science. On the other hand, Bourdieu’s analysis pointed to a dynamic that is specific to the present era of mass (formal) democratization: the professionalization of politics and democratic dispossession.

Making possible a broad-ranging “science of cultural works” (Camic 2011) that retrieves the “knowing, active, and skilled agent” and retains the relational insights of structuralism (Wacquant and Akçaoglu 2017), field theory allows for an understanding of the expert-in-politics as a particularly significant kind of social actor who is nonetheless “fielded”—that is, made possible by social relations beyond their control (here, specifically, political relations), which condition their way of seeing the world and their role in it. The notion of field, meanwhile, allows for political institutions and expert terrains to change internally and vis-à-vis each other over time, making no assumption about the inevitability or naturalness of experts’ political centrality: political and expert fields may be deeply interdependent with each other (as in the case of Keynesian economics, party politics, and administrative states by the mid-1960s); weakly linked (as in the case of academic economics and socialist party politics in the 1920s); or mediated by emergent fields (as in the case of American academe in general from the 1970s forward, due to the professionalization of strategic political expertise and the elaboration of the field of think tanks) (Medvetz 2012; Mudge 2018; see also Dezalay and Garth 2002).

Bourdieu’s field theory retains the long-established premises that political and expert authority are interdependent, irreducible, generative, and in tension with each other, but it also updates Weber’s initial vision of expert-saturated modern politics, highlighting the problem of democratic “closure and dispossession” in contemporary political life (Bourdieu 1991: 172–173, emphasis added; see also Bourdieu 1984 [1979]). For Bourdieu a chief characteristic of professionally saturated contemporary political fields (i.e., sites “in which, through the competition between the agents involved in it, political
products, issues, programmes, analyses, commentaries, concepts and events are created”) is that they increasingly operate as sites of dispossession: active participation in politics starts to require a degree of “social and technical competence” that most, and especially those who lack “leisure time and cultural capital,” cannot attain (Bourdieu 1991: 172).

And so, if “politics as a vocation” heralded the new possibility of becoming a professional politician in a democratizing age – that is, of living “off politics” – Bourdieu’s politics-as-dispossession is marked by the de facto barring of nonprofessionals from meaningful participation. Modern politics, by “limiting the universe of political discourse,” mainly produces “censorship” and apoliticism (Bourdieu 1991: 172–173). Political struggles, which are ultimately contests for control over “the development and circulation of the principles of di-vision of the social world” – that is, the means of classification – thus become democratic in name only (Bourdieu 1991: 196). Bourdieu understands apoliticism as “a protest against the monopoly of the politicians” (Bourdieu 1991: 175; see also Bourdieu 1984 [1979]: 406); people do not speak, Bourdieu argues, when they feel they have no “right to speak” (Bourdieu 1984 [1979]: 411). Drawing a direct line between professionalization and political alienation, Bourdieu thus reminds us that there is a relationship between professionals’ monopoly of political language and dispossessed publics’ desire to escape from political institutions in which their central experience is one of powerlessness. One need not stretch Bourdieu’s argument very far to see how democratic dispossession logically extends, over time, into populist discontent.

The study of contemporary politics thus requires, for Bourdieu, attention to the unwritten rules underpinning contemporary professionalized politics. To grasp “the universe of what can be said and thought politically, as opposed to what is rejected as unsayable and unthinkable,” the analysis of the production and socialization of political professionals is indispensable (Bourdieu 1991: 176). Beyond Bourdieu’s own work (for a helpful overview, see Wacquant 2005), this notion of the professionally saturated, dispossession-inducing modern political field has inspired analyses of the history of electoral practices (Christin 2005), public opinion polling (Champagne 2005), American political consultants (Laurison 2014), and the way economic position shapes civic engagement and political participation (Laurison 2015a, 2015b). A range of authors, including Caroline Lee, Edward Walker, Michael McQuarrie, and Josh Pacewicz, take up related concerns, tracking how political, participatory, nonprofit organizations, public officials, and other sorts of professionals shape modern-day politics in ways that may work more to legitimate or “democratize inequality” rather than to facilitate meaningful political representation (Lee 2015; Lee, McQuarrie, and Walker 2015; McQuarrie 2013; Pacewicz 2016; Walker 2014). This work complements that of political scientists tracking the rise of political consultancies and professionalization in political life (e.g., Dulio 2004; Grossman 2009; Nyhan and Montgomery 2015; Skocpol and Fiorina 1999; Thurber and Nelson 2000).
Field theoretic and relational analysis also provides fodder for what Gil Eyal and Larissa Buccholz describe as a turn in the sociology of intellectuals toward the “sociology of interventions” (2010). Foundational here is Eyal’s conception of the field of expertise in terms of the strategic dilemmas specific to it: autonomy versus heteronomy, and openness and accessibility versus closure (Eyal 2006; see also Medvetz 2012). Eyal’s conception of the field of expertise has informed the analysis of think tanks in American political life (Medvetz 2012) and of the “unruly field” of terrorism expertise (Stampnitzky 2011, 2013). In another line of work, analyses of the development and political effects of “weak fields” mobilize Bourdieusian thinking to consider politics–expertise dynamics in expert settings that lack an autonomous pole, with particular attention to law and economics (Mudge and Vauchez 2012; Vauchez 2008, 2011). Finally, my analysis of Western center-left parties brings Bourdieuian concerns to bear on the analysis of parties, experts, and representation, marrying relationality to a Gramscian conception of the party in order to trace how the evolution of party–expert relations, and in particular the rise and fall of a tight interdependence between economics professions and left parties, fed into a collapse of left parties’ representative capacity at the end of the twentieth century (Mudge 2018). All of these works engage with the dynamics of the contemporary professional-saturated political world of de jure but not de facto democratic rights of which Bourdieu spoke.

CONCLUSIONS

The dynamic relationship between politics and expertise—essential, and yet fraught with tension—that Machiavelli pointed out long ago goes to the heart of contemporary political experience. Democratic struggles are not merely competitions for office; they are also struggles over competing visions of the world, the definitions of groups and interests, notions of what is to be done, and systems of classification and valuation. As such, democratic struggles are always, also, struggles over (and among) experts and expertise. Contemporary political sociology can, I think, do better at grappling with these dynamics, but to do so it will have to break with its historical preoccupations with essentialized, categorical phenomena (social movements, states) in favor of a more nuanced, relational conception of the political, revive its distinctive concern with political parties, and reassert the problematic of politics–expertise dynamics as one of its core concerns.

Such a reassertion should take seriously the long-standing sociological propositions that there is no such thing as knowledge claims that do not express institutional situations, economic interests, and political alignments; that the development of states and parties drives the formation of contemporary knowledge-producing institutions of all sorts; that states and parties operate according to fundamentally different logics; and that, because of the deep intersection between politics and expertise, the claims that experts
make always have representative implications. The long-noted dual processes of the scientization of politics and the politicization of science are, as ever, ongoing; the hopes that Weber and his contemporaries pinned on professional ethics point, as ever, to new possibilities. Last but not least, in order to deal with specificities of the contemporary moment, a revived political sociology of expertise should also concern itself with a second dual process – raised by Bourdieu among others, and in which the social sciences are deeply implicated: the professionalization of politics and the democratic dispossession of represented publics.

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Although not entirely ignored, demography has not been a central concern or preoccupation for most political sociologists; other topics and themes have more forcefully commanded attention. With some important exceptions, its relationship to states, parties, and movements has rarely been explicitly foregrounded. The same can be said about the relationship between demography and power. But what would a political sociology of demography look like? What kinds of questions and issues could it address? How could it contribute to our understanding of politics and demography, and of the relationship between the two?

To answer these questions, and thereby carve out intellectual space, one must begin with the exceptions among us. We must take stock of the work of those political sociologists who – along with their colleagues in proximate fields – have taken up the study of demography and politics. I argue that this research suggests the contours of a political sociology of demography. These contours reveal numerous approaches to the demography–politics nexus. These approaches operate with different, and not necessarily congruent, conceptions of demography. On one end, there is the conception of demography as social-biological, and, on the other, a conception of demography as an object of knowledge and perception. These differences in conception frame the study of demography and the conclusions scholars have drawn. Unsurprisingly, these differences are also sites of active disagreement. Some may be unconvinced by works that trade on a kind of demographic realism, or unmoved by research that

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1 In this regard, political sociologists are no different from their colleagues in the fields of demography and political science (Kaufmann and Loft 2012; Teitelbaum 2015; Weiner and Teitelbaum 2001). It is beyond the scope and interests of this chapter to explain this apparent “deficit of attention” (Weiner and Teitelbaum 2001: 12).
stresses the ideational and emotive aspects of demography. The goal of this chapter is not to settle these differences, squash argument, or legislate in favor of a particular conception. Rather, it is to outline an expansive terrain with several possible areas of inquiry. Herein, I focus on three.

The first area considers the political consequences of demographic changes. Following the work of a relatively small community of scholars (e.g., Choucri 1974; Goldstone 1991; Teitelbaum 2015; Weiner 1983), this avenue is called “political demography.” Political demographers note that intellectual and political concerns about the impact of demography on political systems have a long history, as evidenced in the writings of Plato, Aristotle, and Ibn Khaldun, among others (Teitelbaum 2005). In the modern era, no thinker has exceeded the influence of Thomas Malthus (1798), who famously postulated that unregulated population growth was a socially and politically disastrous phenomenon. But, as Teitelbaum (1988) observes, the Malthusian account has had many contenders.

The second area reverses the causal arrows of the first and investigates how politics shape demography. Past research has shown that governments and political elites have attempted – with varying degrees of success – to harness and control demographic processes, what scholars have called “demographic engineering” (e.g., Bookman 2002; McGarry 1998; Morland 2016; Weiner and Teitelbaum 2001). A major contributor to this scholarship is feminist and Foucauldian-inspired research on reproduction politics (e.g., Greenhalgh 2008; Gutiérrez 2008; Lovett 2009; McCann 2016; Solinger 2007; Timm 2010).

The third area concerns political discourse and rhetoric about demography. As research on demographic anxieties (e.g., Chavez 2008; Santa Ana 2002; Winter and Teitelbaum 2013) and the politics of censuses (e.g., Curtis 2001; Loveman 2014; Rodríguez-Muñiz 2017) shows, political actors – often but not exclusively elites – have actively worked to construct demographic “populations” and to shape how demographic trends are publicly perceived and acted upon. I call this activity “population politics.”

In contrast to political demography and demographic engineering, the study of population politics is far less established. For this reason, I devote more space to the latter. I contend that research on current population politics offers political sociologists an underutilized platform from which to contribute to scholarly and public debates about demographic change. As an illustrative case, I discuss US population politics concerning the so-called browning of America.

In sum, this chapter builds on past scholarship to invite greater political sociological reflection and engagement with demography, broadly understood. Such engagement would expand our understanding and theorization of the relationship between politics and demography, so central to modern politics and statecraft. Moreover, this would enable political sociologists to make a stronger, and hopefully more reflexive, impact on how present and projected demographic dynamics are understood and engaged across the globe.
POLITICAL DEMOGRAPHY

Over the past four decades, a group of political scientists, demographers, and political sociologists have undertaken the study of political demography. Although preoccupations with the impact of demography are not new, this work has elaborated a more sophisticated account of the political implications of demographic change than earlier approaches.

The study of political demography was proposed by political scientist Myron Weiner in 1971. In an article for the National Academy of Sciences, Weiner elaborated a broad research program with three major foci: the “study of the size, composition, and distribution of population in relation to both government and politics”; the “political determinants of population change”; and “knowledge and attitudes that people and their governments have toward population issues” (Weiner 1971: 567). Even though Weiner articulated an expansive agenda for political demography, the label, in practice, has remained most closely associated with the first of these foci. Accordingly, my discussion of this area of inquiry concentrates on this focus.

Political demographers dismiss the idea that demographic processes such as mortality, fertility, and migration are mere backdrops to political affairs. As Kaufman and Loft (2012: 4) assert, demography is “a major driver of politics alongside classic materialist, idealist, and institutional perspectives.” Treating demography as an explanatory variable, this scholarship highlights demography’s power to influence various political outcomes, including ethnic violence (Green 2012; Weiner 1983); democratization (Dyson 2013; Weber 2013); social movements (Goldstone 2015); and geopolitical conflict (Jackson and Howe 2008). For example, in a recent article, Eric Kaufmann (2014) finds that anti-immigration sentiment and support for nativist political parties in Europe, such as the UK Independence Party, are associated with rapid ethnic change, especially in sites with limited preexisting diversity. While he recognizes that cultural understandings are key, he argues that the “most important driver of majority attitudes is demography: the balance between ethnic change and integration” (2014: 267).

Often concerned with questions of political stability, this scholarship considers how changes in population can introduce or intensify sources of political destabilization. For example, the “youth bulge” hypothesis posits that the presence of a large pool of youth, especially when unemployed, can foster civil unrest and violence. Urdal (2006) finds strong support for this thesis, though regime type and level of development are, overall, more predictive of increases in armed domestic conflict, terrorism, and violent demonstrations. Goldstone (2002) identifies several ways that changes to specific populations – immigrant, urban, rural, or ethnic – could increase conflict or security challenges. Global aging scholars have argued, could both encourage “geriatric peace” among major powers and foster more conflict among less dominant countries (Haas 2007). Dyson (2013) notes that low and volatile life
expectancy presents an obstacle to democratization, as do high rates of fertility, which have traditionally hindered women’s empowerment. At the same time, Dyson points out that relative decreases in mortality and fertility can also encourage sociopolitical stability and democracy.

These scholars are not of one mind about the extent to which demography matters, but most reject the Malthusian or neo-Malthusian assumption that demography has a direct and singular impact. Goldstone, in his seminal work, *Revolution and Rebellion in the Early Modern World*, argues that “demographic trends alone determine nothing” (1991: xxvi). Dismissing a “crude Malthusian view of population change,” Goldstone emphasizes the interplay between demographics and institutions (1991: 31). It is not overall population growth that leads to unrest. Rather, it is the indirect and marginal impacts of demography on political and economic conditions, such as inflation, migration, and unemployment, that can foster political crisis. For Goldstone, this outcome hinges on whether existing institutions are flexible enough to adapt to demographic changes.

The political effects of demographics are, therefore, conditional and linked to other factors. This is evident in Weiner’s (1983) analysis of the 1983 massacre in the northeastern Indian state of Assam. The massacre, in which thousands of Bengali immigrants and their descendants were killed or displaced, was set off by a series of struggles pertaining to the legal and political status of the Bengali population. These struggles, Weiner argues, were rooted in British colonial structures and ethnicized class conflict spurred by the rapid and expansive growth of the Bengali population. He cites this case as evidence that precarious political systems are especially vulnerable to demographic disruption. This account thus stresses the contextual interplay between politics and demography. As Krebs and Levy (2001: 63) elaborate, in relation to global affairs, “population growth may, on occasion, contribute to international conflict, but it does so only in combination with other factors and under particular circumstances.” Work on political demography, therefore, has generally adopted a conjunctural vision of demographic effects. It is unsurprising that Goldstone, a political sociologist, has been most insistent on the institutional and structural conditions that influence how and in what ways demography shapes politics.

**DEMOGRAPHIC ENGINEERING**

Politics can also shape demography. As Weiner (1971: 567) urges, scholars should study the “political determinants of population change.” Here, it is important to distinguish between political determinants that are inadvertent and those that are intentional (Morland 2016). Take, for example, mass education, which has been found to decrease fertility rates (Axinn and Barber 2001). If school expansion was implemented without this outcome in mind, then such an effect would be considered inadvertent. But if, on the contrary, the
outcome was desired, then it is an example of demographic engineering, the second entry point of interest.²

Demographic engineering, in the hands of most scholars, is an expansive notion. As Weiner and Teitelbaum (2001: 54) write, it “entails the full range of government policies intended to affect the size, composition, distribution and growth rate of a population.” Researchers have identified numerous methods that governments have employed to modulate and control demography.³ One method is state-coordinated and state-sanctioned violence. Such violence can be carried out to diminish the size of a population or to eradicate it altogether, as in the case of genocide. The use of violence, including rape and murder, as a tactic of population control has been extensively documented in cases such as the Holocaust, the Rwandan genocide, and “ethnic cleansing” in Bosnia-Herzegovina (e.g., Allen 1996; Mamdani 2002; Quine 2013; Salzman 1998).

Another tactic of demographic engineering consists of policies and practices that physically move or remove populations from a particular territory. Weiner and Teitelbaum (2001) adumbrate five state interventions that have been used to accomplish this objective. The first intervention includes those policies that “promote the movement of dominant national or ethnic groups as settlers into areas populated primarily by subordinate or minority groups.” This intervention is characteristic of settler colonial societies, such as the United States and South Africa. Latin American states’ recruitment of European migrants to “whiten” their societies offers another example (Loveman 2014; Paschel 2016). The second intervention seeks the removal of a population from a particular region or entire country. The US federal policy known as Indian removal represents the former, while mass deportation or repatriation projects like Operation Wetback, which targeted undocumented Mexican laborers, represent the latter. The third intervention, which they call substitution, combines the preceding two as co-occurring processes. The fourth kind involves the promotion of out-migration of dominant groups as a means to “generate domestic and international benefits of both an economic and a political character.” The fifth and last type is entry restriction through, for instance, legal or physical barriers to admission or settlement. US immigration

² Amy Bailey (2009) provides another example of political dynamics having unintended demographic consequences. She argues that eighteenth- and nineteenth-century revolutionary movements in Western societies influenced – by way of ideological changes that emphasized personal autonomy – choices individuals made about reproduction. Although not part of a deliberate strategy, political upheaval contributed to the period’s well-documented fertility decline.

³ Bookman (1997) conceptualizes efforts to change how population processes are measured and classified – particularly through national censuses – as a method of demographic engineering. As she writes, “The census, universally the principal measure of population size, lends itself to this kind of manipulation principally by alterations in definitions that de jure result in a change in the ethnic population size, even if they may not de facto change that size” (1997: 28). Although this point is well taken, I treat the politics of knowledge as a key element of the last entry point: population politics.
policy is a case in point (Armenta 2017; FitzGerald and Cook-Martin 2014; Kil and Menjivar 2006; Ngai 2004). As Zolberg (2006: 2) argues, “the calculated and planned use of immigration policy to shape the size of population, composition of population and rules for political membership make the U.S. an exceptional case of nation-building, both in comparison to European nations and liberated Spanish colonies.”

Demographic engineering has also targeted birth rates through “anti-natalism” and “pro-natalism.” As Solinger and Nakachi (2016: 16) argue, these projects have made “the female body a key tool for achieving national and international goals of many kinds.” Anti-natalism policies seek to minimize fertility as a means to diminish future population growth. This goal has been pursued through both involuntary and voluntary means. On the coercive end of the spectrum are forced sterilization, abortions, and euthanasia. For instance, in the early twentieth century, Western governments adopted eugenicist policies to forcibly sterilize certain individuals, such as those deemed feebleminded, insane, physically disabled, or prone to criminality or sexual deviance (Hansen and King 2013). A more recent example is China’s one-child policy, which oversaw 21 million sterilizations and 14 million abortions to decrease overall population size (Greenhalgh 2008). On the voluntary end, antinatalist projects have attempted to reduce birth rates through highly gendered and classed public “education” campaigns, family planning, contraceptives, and voluntary sterilization and abortions (Ahluwalia and Parmar 2016; Briggs 2002). Efforts to address the “problem” of global overpopulation in the post–Second World War period relied on a combination of these tactics (Connelly 2010).

Governments and political movements have also pursued pro-natalist policies. Like anti-natalism politics, pro-natalism has been adopted across the political spectrum, instituted by both liberal democratic and authoritarian governments, and not always tied to eugenics. Pro-natalist politics have been advanced using both passive and active means (Bookman 2002). The former has involved persuasion, such as appeals by public figures or campaigns, to encourage women to procreate or avoid abortions. The latter type has relied on incentives to promote population growth (or to prohibit birth control). For example, in recent decades, several East Asian countries have embraced active pro-natalist strategies such as support for child care expenses and tax benefits for families to combat population decline (Ogawa 2003; Suzuki 2008). Similarly, several European countries have adopted policies to spur native population growth. Italy, for instance, passed a “baby-bonus” law that financially compensated any Italian or European citizen that gave birth to or adopted a second child (Krause and Marchesi 2007). Pro-natalism has also involved aggressive antiabortion laws, such as those adopted in Romania under the rule of Ceaușescu (Kligman 1998). Finally, population growth has also been promoted through indirect means. As historian Laura Lovett (2009: 3) shows, in the early twentieth century, the US government advanced “pronatalism
indirectly as part of public campaigns for land reclamation, playgrounds, or suburban development.”

In sum, this scholarship provides extensive evidence that political elites and governments have, for diverse reasons, sought to engineer demographic processes. Operating at various scales (subnational, national, and international), these efforts have often counted on the support of nongovernmental actors, such as reformist movements, feminist organizations, scholars, conservative parties, and international bodies. Scholars have been particularly concerned with the ways that ideologies of nation, gender, race, class, and sexuality have informed these projects and structured their effects. The record reveals that while some projects have been “successful,” in the sense that they have accomplished the goals of their engineers, others have been far less so, such as mid-twentieth-century family planning campaigns (Connelly 2010: 373; Renne 2016). Often times, individuals and populations have evaded, resisted, and subverted demographic engineering (Greenhalgh 1994). For political sociologists, the study of demographic engineering therefore offers insight into the ways that state agents and their collaborators have calibrated the makeup of human societies.

**POPULATION POLITICS**

The third domain of study is population politics. Unlike political demography and demographic engineering, population politics focuses on neither the effects nor control of demographic processes. Rather, it addresses “demography” as an object of political knowledge and tool of political rhetoric.

Although distinct, population politics can be understood to mediate, and even facilitate, political demography and demographic engineering. As an example of the former, take what political demographers have described as “sons of the soil” conflicts in Asia and Africa (Côté and Mitchell 2017; Fearon and Laitin 2011; Weiner 1978). These conflicts involve contention and competition – sometimes leading to violent clashes – between an older, geographically concentrated minority ethnic group and relatively newer and ethnically distinct migrants from another part of the country (Fearon and Laitin 2011). But, as scholars recognize, it is not migration, in itself, that explains tensions between local and migrant populations. Among other institutional, political, and economic factors, such conflicts are fueled (or assuaged) by how local populations perceive themselves and newcomers. Far from automatic, objective responses to demographic conditions, these perceptions are politically shaped and cultivated.

The relationship between demographic engineering and population politics is even closer. The decision to regulate or control fertility, whether through coercion or persuasion, presupposes certain ideas and beliefs about the significance of demographic trends, such as whether they should be taken as
signs of civilizational decline or indicators of power. These meanings are not determined by demography. They are products of population politics, which, in practice, has not only informed demographic engineering but also rationalized and legitimated population control policies.

In these ways, the study of population politics addresses the third aspect of Weiner’s original and broad definition of political demography: “What matters is not only the empirical facts underlying demographic trends, but in addition the ways in which such trends are perceived by political elites and publics” (Weiner and Teitelbaum 2001: 13). However, although perception is important, the study of population politics focuses attention on the cultural politics and knowledge that undergird and shape what people come to perceive as relevant demographic categories and what they come to think are significant demographic changes. Said differently, it makes the political work behind perception the object of analysis.

Population politics rests on demographic knowledge and its “populations.” Over the past several decades, to a large extent due to Foucault’s writings on governmentality and biopolitics (e.g., Foucault 2007), an interdisciplinary body of work on the origins of demographic knowledge and the field of demography has developed (e.g., Cole 2000; Greenhalgh 1996; Marshall 2015; Merchant 2017; Schweber 2006). This scholarship has been closely linked, and overlaps to some extent, with work on the emergence of statistics and other modern techniques of quantification (e.g., Desrosières 1998; Emigh, Riley, and Ahmed 2015; Hacking 1990; Patriarca 2003; Poovey 1998; Porter 1986; Prévost and Beaud 2015; Zuberi 2001). From this and related scholarship, we can glean two major moments of population politics: production and uptake.

With respect to the former, population politics can involve broad efforts to promote or provision the making of demographic knowledge, such as establishing bureaucratic infrastructures for national censuses (Anderson 1988; Curtis 2001; Loveman 2014), pressuring state officials for population statistics (Emigh, Riley, and Ahmed 2015; Mora 2014; Paschel 2016), and encouraging popular participation in enumeration (Brubaker et al. 2006; Clark 1998; Rodríguez-Muñiz 2017), among other actions. Although far less common, population politics can also involve efforts to limit the production of such knowledge, motivated, for example, by worries that data will reveal a smaller population size (Bookman 1997: 48).

Within the production moment, population politics also – and often – centers on the content of demographic knowledge. The historical record is replete with examples of conflict over how and what to classify. These preeminently political decisions determine what kinds of populations are

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4 Although political elites and philosophers have long pondered and tried to shape the number of subjects under rule, the notion of “population” is a modern creation (Curtis 2002; Duden 1992; Poovey 1998). It is a theoretical abstraction based on the establishment of equivalences among heterogeneous entities (Curtis 2001).
constructed. For example, the 1980 census, which debuted the “Hispanic” category, enacted the “Hispanic population” into existence – a figure that has transformed depictions of the country’s ethnoracial composition and future. Bookman (1997: 56–62) identifies three ways that ethnic political entrepreneurs have tried to change census categories in pursuit of desired population counts. They can decrease population size by separating populations into subgroups or increase population size through aggregation, such as panethnic classification (Mora 2014; Nagel 1995). In addition, influential political actors can simply negate or refuse to count certain categories or groups, what Patrick Simon (2008) has phrased “the choice of ignorance” in the case of French opposition to ethnic and race enumeration. Additionally, changes to administrative boundaries can also reconfigure demographic portraits and create new “majorities” and “minorities” (Bookman 1997: 62; Rodríguez-Muñiz 2019).

But population politics is not limited to the production of demographic knowledge. The second moment – uptake – refers to the movement and mobilization of this knowledge, how it enters public discourse and is wielded rhetorically. As scholars have documented, diverse political, social, and intellectual actors have invoked demographic knowledge to advance their projects (e.g., Connelly 2010; Prévost and Beaud 2015; Winter and Teitelbaum 2013). Mara Loveman (2014) shows how Latin American state officials and scientists used demographic projections to publicly communicate and elaborate narratives of “national progress” through racial whitening. In her research on Roberto Bachi, the first director of Israel’s Central Bureau of Statistics, Anat Leibler (2014) documents how Bachi actively used projections of Palestinian population growth to petition Zionist leaders to adopt aggressive policies aimed at increasing Jewish reproduction. Nondominant political projects have also made political use of population statistics. Anthropologist Jacqueline Urla (1993), for instance, narrates how Basque nationalists mobilized language statistics and visualizations, such as maps, to depict Basque-language speakers as an “endangered” population. This new, calculable, and quantified “linguistic community” would become a target of preservation projects and promotional campaigns.

Although the above works provide a blueprint, the study of population politics has not yet fully congealed into an established area of inquiry. While scholarly activity has clustered around the notions of demographic engineering and political demography, work on population politics remains more disparate and without an accepted unifying label. This represents an opportunity for political sociologists to help further concretize this area of inquiry. As an illustration, the remainder of the chapter turns to the case of contemporary population politics in the United States, specifically with respect to ethnoracial demographic change.
THE CASE OF CONTEMPORARY US POPULATION POLITICS

In the United States, as in much of Western Europe today, population politics concerning ethnoracial demographic change has intensified over the past several decades. Research on current manifestations of population politics could make important contributions to scholarly and public debates on a number of issues, including the changing meaning of race and ethnicity, partisan realignments, the resurgence of extreme conservative and white-supremacist projects, and the increase in repressive immigration policies, among other things. This section seeks to highlight — in a preliminary and provisional manner — three potential contributions that population politics opens up for political sociology. As such, my discussion is illustrative rather than exhaustive. Before turning to these contributions, I first situate contemporary population politics within a longer trajectory.

Population Politics in US History: An Overview

Population politics concerning ethnoracial demographics in the United States has a long history. This history reveals recurrent episodes of white reaction to the presence and growth of putatively nonwhite populations. Strong traces of this leitmotif, as elaborated below, prevail in the present. As such, the past is a necessary starting point.

Ben Franklin offers an early example of population politics. Writing in 1751, prior to the US War of Independence, Franklin lamented that “the Number of purely white People in the World is proportionally very small.” Franklin was especially concerned with the growth of German immigrants, whom he understood as nonwhite. “Why should Pennsylvania, founded by the English, become a Colony of Aliens, who will shortly be so numerous as to Germanize us instead of our Anglifying them, and will never adopt our Language or Customs, any more than they can acquire our Complexion?” In response, he proposed the exclusion of Germans, as well as “Blacks and Tawneys” (Franklin 1970 [1751]).

The next century witnessed an intensification of population politics, particularly as demographic statistics became widely available. For instance, laws against “black” and “white” miscegenation were couched and legitimated through demographic statistics from the census. In the white imagination, native groups were a problem population, to be forcibly assimilated or violently suppressed (Hoxie 1984; Wolfe 2016). After the Civil War, census officials and proponents of white racial purity cited statistics to argue that the “black race” was “doomed to comparatively rapid absorption or extinction” (cited in Nobles 2000: 47). In the late nineteenth century, discourses about the “yellow peril” exploded and led to the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act.

The twentieth century was marked by numerous and highly consequential episodes of racially motivated population politics. With a domestic and global
point of reference, white social scientists and intellectuals such as Madison Grant (1916) and Lothrop Stoddard (1920) wrote extensively about “race suicide,” as did fiction writers. As Andreu Domingo (2008: 725) explains, dystopian fiction emerged in this period as “a new literary genre” and held racial demography as a major theme. Eugenicists and nativists (often one and the same) also used demographic statistics to craft narratives in support of restrictions on immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe, then considered the lowest “stocks” of the white race (Ngai 2004). Beginning at this time, the growth of the Mexican population in the Southwest became an object of concern.

Population politics in the post–World War era shadowed the growing Western obsession with overpopulation in the Global South (Connelly 2010; McCann 2016). By the 1960s, overpopulation had become a topic in domestic policy circles. As scholars have documented, domestic discourse was racially targeted. Even though the birth rate of poor nonwhites saw the fastest decline during that decade, black fertility was depicted as a serious social problem in need of control. As one Cornell professor put it, “In the process of creation right now are rioters and rapists, murderers and marauders who will despoil society’s landscape before the century has run its course” (cited in Connelly 2010: 251). Calls for zero population growth increased, notably from environmental conservationists.

By the late 1970s, domestic overpopulation would come to be linked with immigration regulation, specifically the regulation of Mexican and Latin American immigration, in the final decades of the century (Gonzales 2014; Gutiérrez 2008). As Leo Chavez (2008) traces, Mexican immigrants, and Latinos more generally, became cast as a demographic and political “threat.” A series of US News and World Report articles, for instance, drew comparisons between the US Southwest and the Canadian province of Québec. The “Québec model,” as Chavez labels it, posits that Mexicans are unwilling to assimilate and as a result will eventually constitute a separatist threat from within, similar to Québécois nationalists. Elements of this history persist.

Now, turning to the present, the remainder of this section addresses three ways in which sociological research on population politics could contribute to scholarly and public knowledge about ethnoracial demographic change. The first focuses on the conviction that the “browning of America” is underway. The second focuses on white fear about demographic change. And the third focuses on scholarly debates about the future of the US ethnoracial order.

The Browning of America as a Social Fact

In the contemporary US social imagination, ethnoracial demographic change is perceived and taken as a social fact. There is a strong and widespread conviction
that the country is undergoing an unprecedented, perhaps even inevitable, demographic transformation. Scholars have shown that population trends do not alone – or at all, in some cases – explain the existence of this conviction or its ubiquity in public discourse (Díaz McConnell 2011; Winter and Teitelbaum 2013). And even if these trends were to inform this belief, as Gratton (2012) argues is the case with nativism, they cannot, in themselves, account for the valences that demographic changes possess in public and political life. This is the domain of population politics.

Over the past 30 years, intellectuals, state officials, political leaders, and journalists have engaged in population politics. While advancing different, and sometimes conflicting, interpretations and assumptions, these diverse actors have collectively made ethnoracial demographic change an object of concern and contemplation in public imagination. Take, for example, the central role of the media. In the wake of the 2010 census, for instance, major news outlets made ethnoracial demographics a major topic. Press coverage qualified census data with words such as “swelled,” “surged,” “jumped,” and “plummeted.” Such qualifications appeared both in headlines and copy. A CNN headline proclaimed, “Hispanic population exceeds 50 million, firmly nation’s No. 2 group,” and an early New York Times article focused on the “rise” of multiracial youth. Journalists have also spilled much ink on the coming “white minority,” as one Economist article dubbed it, and editorials have also reflected on the implications of these shifts. This media coverage and commentary also projects ideas about demographic change through visual representations. Maps have communicated the geographic reach of changes, as infographics have provided data about the present and the future. Photographs and cartoons have also encouraged particular interpretations. For instance, in 2016, just prior to the general election, the National Review featured a cover with a drawing of a large blue wave about to crash into and likely capsize a small vessel with one frightened passenger, the GOP elephant. The cover’s headline punctuated its meaning: “Demographic changes are threatening to turn traditional red states blue. How do Republicans

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5 As Winter and Teitelbaum (2013: 96) remind us, Germany’s Jewish population in 1933 was less than 1 percent of the total population. This demographic fact did not temper German fear and antipathy. Moreover, individuals often misperceive the size of demographic populations, particularly nondominant groups (Alba, Rumbaut, and Marotz 2005; Herda 2010).


survive?” In these ways, the media have not only reported demographic trends, but dramatized them.

Partisan commentators and leaders have also engaged in population politics. In doing so, they have both contributed to the “fact” of change and rendered it politically and electorally salient. Some Democrats have communicated and celebrated the future “New Majority.” For example, in his political tract Brown is the New White, Steve Phillips (2016), a senior fellow at the liberal Center for American Progress, argues that the growth of nonwhite voters represents an opportunity to build a new majority along with progressive whites. Republican leaders, in contrast, have cast population trends as a problem or threat. South Carolina senator Lindsey Graham, for one, expressed that the Republican Party is in a “demographic death spiral.” Within the GOP, however, there has been strong disagreement about how the party should respond to these changes.

These examples, although briefly discussed, show how population politics has contributed to the idea that the “browning of America” is a social fact—one that confronts the country for better or worse. Media and partisan representations give value to population statistics and productions. Political sociologists are well positioned to give such representations a deeper cultural analysis. Over the past two decades, work in political sociology has elevated the topic of meaning-making (Auyero 2012; Berezin 1997; Decoteau 2013; Glaeser 2011; Go 2008; Mische 2007; Reed 2017). This scholarship has drawn on cultural sociology to examine the discursive and symbolic dimensions of politics, social movements, and statecraft (see Chapter 4).

Researchers could tap into this conceptual reservoir and use concepts like “genres,” “narratives,” and “projectivity” to further document and theorize how “demography” is politically rendered meaningful and significant in the public imagination.

The Political Cultivation of White Fear

Studies show that whites are anxious about and fearful of demographic trends. Experimental research has found that projected population trends are perceived as threatening to whites (Abascal 2015; Craig and Richeson 2014; Danbold and Huo 2014). Based on a nationally representative sample of white adults, psychologists Craig and Richeson (2014: 757), for example, found that information on racial demographic change contributed to “the expression of more negative attitudes toward racial minority groups.” In his recent comparative study of white US and British workers, Justin Gest (2016: 196) similarly concludes that “respondents in both countries feel increasingly outnumbered, in light of both local and national demographic changes.” Demographic fears also loom heavily in what Arlie Hochschild (2016) describes as the “deep story” of rural whites. Racialized demographic fear has helped fuel support for the Tea Party and the candidacy of Donald Trump. It has
also provoked white-supremacist violence. For example, when Dylan Roof massacred nine African-American churchgoers in Charleston, South Carolina, in 2015, he shouted, “You’re taking over our country!”

As with the social fact of demographic change, these expressions of white fear and anxiety cannot be understood apart from population politics. As past historical episodes reveal, white racial projects and their spokespersons have actively worked to cultivate white fear and anxiety over ethnoracial demographic change. In the past 30 years, the intellectual mouthpieces of “white reaction” (Omi and Winant 1986) have argued – in explicit and coded language – that nonwhite population growth threatens the demise of “Western civilization.” Take, for example, Pat Buchanan, who has authored numerous alarmist tracts (see, e.g., Buchanan 2006). In 2011, Buchanan wrote a short essay lamenting the (then) latest census demographic projections. “The Census Bureau has now fixed at 2041 the year when whites become a minority in a country where the Founding Fathers had restricted citizenship to ‘free white persons’ of ‘good moral character.’” In her recent book, ¡Adios, America!, Ann Coulter (2015: 76) similarly launches into a tirade against “Third World” immigration, especially from Mexico and Muslim-dominant countries. “Immigration of the past half century,” she writes, “has been a national homicide made to look like a suicide.” Other racially charged, dystopic monographs include Peter Brimelow’s Alien Nation (1996) and Samuel Huntington’s Who Are We? (2004). Sociologist Deenesh Sohoni (2017) has analyzed how immigration restrictionists have used the internet to espouse “demographic threat narratives” about population change, undocumented immigration, and white minoritization. Restrictionists, Sohoni shows, make extensive use of demographic statistics to present their arguments as scientifically credible and to deflect charges of racism (2017: 477). These articulations about demographic change both signal and stoke white fear.

Rather than treating white fear as a direct, almost unavoidable consequence of population trends, the study of population politics focuses on its political cultivation. As Winter and Teitelbaum (2013) discuss, political elites and partisan commentators have long engaged in hyperbole about demographic trends, seeking to raise fears for political gain (see also Teitelbaum and Winter 1985, 1998). In this case, conservative and white-supremacist projects have conducted population politics with the aims of recruiting voters and building support for their agendas. With these aims in mind, these projects ascribe particular meanings to demography and its projected outcomes. But this process need not be successful. Efforts to instill fear or anger can fail to resonate with intended audiences, or resonate in unexpected ways (McDonnell, Bail, and Tavory 2017). Yet, as research and recent events suggest, these forms of population politics have had some effect. Hence, understanding contemporary white politics and emergent narratives of white victimization and loss will require further research on population politics. Such work would benefit from
recent scholarship on the role of emotions and affect in politics (Gould 2009; Jasper 2011; Wetherell 2012). This scholarship offers tools and theories to help researchers explain how fears and anxieties are generated, but also how hopes and aspirations can be fostered through population politics.

**Future of the US Ethnoracial Order**

In addition to improving our understanding of key features of contemporary US politics, the study of population politics can also contribute to existing scholarly debates about the future of the country’s ethnoracial order. Three broad camps have formed, each with competing arguments about the future. One set of scholars argue that the US is headed, however slowly and turbulently, toward a “postracial” future (e.g., Alba 2009; Hollinger 2011; Prewitt 2013). While serious proponents of this theory recognize the persistence of ethnoracial stratification and exclusion, they tend to emphasize signs of progress.

The remaining sets of scholars find little evidence that the country is moving toward a postracial future and instead contend that race will continue to be (for the foreseeable future) an organizing principle of social relations, identities, and life chances. However, there is serious disagreement about what the racial order will look like. Some scholars advance the position that the traditional black–white binary will remain. As they did with Southern and Eastern European migrants in the early twentieth century, the boundaries of “whiteness” are projected to expand and incorporate most Latinos and Asian Americans (e.g., Lee and Bean 2012; Warren and Twine 1997; Yancey 2003). In this vein, Lee and Bean (2012) highlight the paradoxical inclusion of Asians and Latinos, particularly among lighter-skinned and multiracial individuals. Far from postracial, the coming decades may witness the entrenchment of a “Black–non-Black color line” (Lee and Bean 2012: 433), with antiblackness persisting despite – or because – of a rapidly diversifying landscape. The other set of scholars reject this view, theorizing instead the formation of a tripartite system. For O’Brien (2008), Latinos and Asians will form an intermediary category between whites and blacks. Bonilla-Silva’s (2004) “Latin Americanization” thesis introduces a somewhat different typology: whites, honorary whites, and the collective black. In his view, individuals will be sorted by skin color: lighter-skinned Latinos and most Asian Americans will become “honorary whites,” while the rest will join a subaltern “collective black” category.

Importantly, these competing sociological accounts complicate popular understandings of demographic change. Challenging essentialist conceptions of race, they show how racial boundaries could expand or contract, brighten or blur in the future. Despite these and other insights, this debate has proceeded without addressing politics, and specifically population politics. Rather than politics, Yancey (2003), for instance, takes intermarriage rates among white and nonblack individuals as evidence that the boundaries of whiteness are
expanding. Other scholars have examined skin color and experiences and perceptions of discrimination (Frank, Redstone Akresh, and Lu 2010; Golash-Boza and Darity Jr. 2008). Alba and Nee (2004) assert that generational change will ultimately transform the racial order. These claims, however, underestimate or fail to recognize that, as José Itzigsohn (2009: 202) asserts, the future of ethnoracial relations “will be determined by the political dynamics of the country, not by the passing of generations” or any other nonpolitical factors.

Although we cannot predict the ethnoracial future with “any measure of certainty” (Bobo 2011: 32), population politics concerning demographic futures is, as discussed above, having concrete effects. Competing political and racial projects are engaging in population politics – struggles to shape public understandings and interpretations of demography. These projects, we can reasonably assume, may come to impact – intentionally or not – the very ethnoracial future that sociologists are debating. Thus, by foregrounding politics, specifically population politics, political sociologists could contribute to these scholarly debates about the country’s ethnoracial future (e.g., Mora and Rodríguez-Muñiz 2017).

CONCLUSION

Across the globe, demography has reemerged as a major object of public discourse, policy-making, and political conflict. In the United States and Western Europe, talk about the growth of “minority” or “non-white” populations has become ubiquitous in the media and partisan rhetoric, and has helped fuel the recent resurgence of white-supremacist projects and extreme conservatism. Carrying other valences, demographic trends in other national contexts have encouraged the adoption of pro-natalist measures, such as Russia’s “maternity capital” program. Elsewhere, such as in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, development projects and state interventions continue to focus on “overpopulation.”

Although demography is not one of the subfield’s major concerns, this chapter shows that political sociologists have helped lay a foundation for its study. Each poses unique questions, holds distinct assumptions, and approaches the relationship between politics and demography differently. The first – political demography – focuses on the ways that demographies impact political outcomes, including social and ethnic conflict, electoral affiliations, and revolutions. The second – demographic engineering – concentrates on deliberate attempts to manage and control demography, whether through policies to increase or reduce fertility, or policies to restrict or reshape immigration. The third – population politics – addresses demography as an object of knowledge and rhetoric. The study of population politics encourages research into the ways that demography is rendered meaningful and ascribed normative value.
However, this is merely a starting point. There are many questions yet to pose and agendas yet to pursue. I anticipate that future work within and across these areas will both deepen and expand the political sociology of demography outlined here. In doing so, political sociologists will be better equipped to intervene – thoughtfully and conscientiously – in the public debates and political struggles about demography to come.

REFERENCES


II. Media, Knowledge, and Demography


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III

THE STATE AND ITS POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS
As a field of scholarship, political economy sometimes appears to hang together loosely in the contemporary social sciences, if at all. Those who self-identify as political economists or are identified that way by others may work in different disciplines like anthropology, political science, sociology, history, or geography and on topics that range from global capital flows to street-level accounts of urban poverty. But, at some level, political economists are united by an understanding of the economy, state, and civil society as interdependent systems or regimes. They depart from the assumption that one must analyze politics and the economy relationally.

As such, political economy is often animated by an implicit critique of everyday talk, wherein people speak as if the economy, state, and civil society are analytically distinct, in tensions, or even trade-offs for one another. People say, for example, that the United States is “more capitalist” than Sweden. In contrast to such everyday talk, the political economist uncovers the historically constructed relationship between naturalized and hence apparently autonomous political, economic, and civic systems. She analyzes the United States and Sweden as different sorts of capitalisms. Under this broad umbrella, one can further subdivide scholars along a continuum that runs from relatively weaker to stronger political economic programs.

At the weaker end of the program, scholars treat economy, state, and society as ontologically autonomous, but functionally interrelated – Hayek (1944), for instance, famously identified market coordination as a self-contained phenomenon that arises from the innate human capacity for exchange, but argued that only states that plan for, rather than against, competition can unleash this spontaneous tendency. Scholars who adhere to stronger programs present state, economy, and society as ontologically intertwined, but analytically distinct by, for instance, insisting that ideal typical price competition can occur between actors who are embedded in certain types of
social relationships (Baker 1984; Geertz 1973; Granovetter 1985). At the strongest end of the program, some argue that the economy, state, and society are analytically relational – for instance, that actually existing markets always consist of systems of relationships, norms, and technologies of seeing that do not approximate the frictionless, automatically correcting markets of neoclassical economic theory (see Gemici 2008, 2015; Krippner 2002).

In what follows, I arrange my review into three parts: the capitalist state writ large, which covers debates that center on the relationship between capitalism and the state; the capitalist state writ small, which covers debates that center on particular aspects of political economy (American exceptionalism, the 1970s as a political economic turning point, efforts to disaggregate the state, and multiscalar governance); and promising new directions. These sections are presented in order of their historical appearance, and I do not mean to imply that newer modes of political economic inquiry have or should eclipse older modes. That is, scholarship on the capitalist state writ large dates to the beginnings of political economy, whereas political economy writ small appears most notably in the late twentieth century, but the former remains a well-trodden field of inquiry – indeed, its relevance is arguably heightened by global political economic events like the 2007/8 financial crisis and the worldwide rise of reactionary populism. In this light, the concluding section on promising future directions concerns areas of inquiry that facilitate linkages between political economy writ large and small (i.e., empirical analysis of the “middle state” and how policies create politics). Because this volume contains a separate chapter on the political economy of the world-system (36), I omit discussion of this literature.

THE CAPITALIST STATE, WRIT LARGE

What is the relationship between the capitalist economy and state? The question has been central to Western thought since Adam Smith (2003 [1776]) argued that a state that dispenses with aristocratic privilege, breaks up monopolies, avoids unproductive investment, and invests in education and transportation infrastructure will occasion a productive division of labor that multiplies the stock of society’s goods. The relationship between economy and state was also central to what is arguably the agenda-setting debate of contemporary political economy: between Hayek and Polanyi, who championed, respectively, economic and political coordination of production within capitalist states. Among contemporary political economists, one can identify two approaches

1 Hayek achieved central influence over right-wing political discourse by becoming a central figure within a growing universe of right-wing think tanks and discussion networks and via disciples like Milton Friedman (Mirowski 2013). Polanyi’s biggest influence was on the academy and, although Hayek was largely not in conversation with him, Polanyi reportedly wrote some of TG as a critique of RšS (Somers and Block 2005).
to this question, which are loosely coupled with weaker and stronger versions of the political economic program. Some scholars present the capitalist economy as fundamentally at odds with democratic states. Others present analyses of what might be termed “state capitalisms,” which treat economic, political, and social institutions as complementaries.

**Capitalism versus the State**

Some political economists see the capitalist economy as fundamentally incompatible with democratic states. This position dates to Marx (1972 [1844]), for whom the capitalist economy consists of a pursuit of profit that he characterized as the M–C–M dynamic, wherein M represents money and C represents a commodity. From the capitalist’s perspective, the goal is to maximize M, and the commodity and its consumption is thereby immaterial so long as it creates surplus value – in Marx’s words, “however scurvy [it] may look or however badly [it] may smell.” But actually, only one commodity has the quality of creating surplus value through its consumption: human labor. Accordingly, Marx saw capitalist society as consisting of two irreconcilably opposed classes: workers who yearn to recoup the value of their labor and capitalists who seek to exploit them for the surplus value of their labor. Although Marx’s analysis of the state changed over time, scholars commonly identify with his position in the Manifesto (1972 [1844]), wherein Marx presented states as merely “the instrument of one class for oppressing another.”

Marx’s analysis of class conflict and exploitation powerfully informed the imagination of mid-twentieth-century political economists, who fixated on the power elite – a constellation of economic, military, and political leaders who play a domineering role in national and global affairs, generally at the expense of regular citizens (Domhoff 1967; Mills and Wolfe 2000). Within political science, for instance, debate raged over, “Who Governs?” Pluralists like Dahl (1961) insisted that the public can influence policy since elites are frequently deadlocked, while Hunter (1953) argued that business interests sit atop “pyramids of power” that dictate in public affairs. For Molotch (1976), it was not so much business interests that held sway as those with an interest in growth, who – consistent with the Marxist formulation – are fundamentally at odds with those who see the world as a place to work, live, and play.

Many historically minded political economists, too, portray modern history as a tug-of-war between economic and political forces. The most influential such telling is Polanyi’s (1944) *The Great Transformation*. Polanyi argues that markets have long existed, but were incidental to society. Most people attained life’s needs and conveniences via relationships that promoted reciprocity, redistribution, and house holding. Even when people relied on markets, these did not transform the fabric of society since some commodities – notably, land, labor, and money – could not be bought or sold therein. Polanyi (1944: 70–72) saw the turning point as transition from individual markets to “one big
market,” a scenario achieved when “all production is for sale on the market and . . . all incomes derive from such sales.” This one big market was created by political elites, who hoped to encourage machine production and did so by ensuring that capitalists could buy all production inputs, including the fictitious ones. For Polanyi, this is the great transformation: when people show up at the market to sell not goods, but rather the means of exchange, their own labor time, and nature itself. It does not take much historical imagination to see that society was thereby radically transformed.

There is ambiguity within *The Great Transformation* about the nature of the one big market – some scholars have argued that Polanyi had in mind a frictionless, self-correcting institution similar to the market model of neoclassical economics, while others insist that he imagined a socialized market mediated by relationships, norms, and cultural schemas (the text supports both interpretations, see Gemici 2015; Somers and Block 2005). What is beyond question is Polanyi’s identification of a key historical turning point. Once everything could be bought and sold, the West experienced a manufacturing revolution and commodity prices became, following Marx (1972 [1844]: 477), “the heavy artillery with which [capitalism] batters down all Chinese walls [and] compels all nations, on pain of extinction, to adopt the bourgeois mode of production.”

But for Polanyi (1944: 136), a capitalist production is socially untenable because land, labor, and money are “fictitious commodities.” They are not produced for sale. To treat them as such attacks “the fabric of society [and] destroys the very organization of production that the market called into being.” The relationship between capitalist economy and the state is therefore dialectical. The state first creates one big market by eliminating restraints on market competition (or, in some accounts, by embedding exchange in institutions that promote price competition, see Somers and Block 2007: 262–263). Then, a countermovement begins as state agents check the commodification of fictitious commodities. Indeed, Polanyi famously declared unbridled capitalism over and argued that the state would henceforth decommodify land, labor, and money.

Contemporary political economists have built upon Polanyi primarily in their analyses of capitalist crises and political economic institutions. The crises literature begins with the insight that capitalist economies and democratic states are fundamentally at odds and seeks to uncover the displacement strategies, temporary reconciliations, or fixes that stave off crisis or democratic countermovements – for instance, via inflationary monetary policy or financialization (Harvey 2007; Krippner 2011; Peck 2010). Streeck (2011), for instance, argues that democratic capitalism consists of conflicting principles of resource allocation and is always at risk of two crises: the loss of majority support and a Kaleckian crisis that occurs when capitalists withhold investment. The history of capitalist states is therefore one of sequential crises as elite efforts to displace conflict pass from one set of institutions to the next. Political elites initially resolved democratic capitalist tensions via Keynesian
collective bargaining and full employment enabled by loose, inflationary monetary policy. This produced an inflationary spiral, low investment, and unemployment, leading political elites to anti-inflationary policy coupled with generous public spending. When public debt spiraled, elites turned to privatized Keynesianism, which compelled citizens to rely on easy credit as opposed to public programs. This solution too came to a dramatic end with the 2007/8 financial crisis, and states once again assumed unsustainable debt after bailing out financial institutions. In Streeck’s telling (2011), democratic capitalism is out of obvious fixes. Many states must choose defaulting on sovereign debt or austerity measures, a scenario that Streeck provocatively compares to the reactionary populist period of the 1920s.

Other contemporary political economists engage with Polanyi primarily via an analysis of political economic institutions. This line of analysis is especially pertinent because recent history suggests that capitalist exploitation is loosely coupled with the cohesion and apparent influence of actually existing capitalists. On the one hand, market fundamentalism has been in vogue for decades and the wealthy have seen massive income gains at the expense of others, especially in the United States (Hacker and Pierson 2011; Piketty and Saez 2003). But, on the other hand, businesses leaders have simultaneously experienced a loss of cohesion (Mizruchi 2013), influence within the GOP vis-à-vis movement conservatives (Block 2007), and even influence within their own communities (Pacewicz 2016a). Partially to resolve this apparent contradiction, political economists have focused on think tanks and thought collectives, economists and policy experts, and political parties – topics all covered in other chapters of this volume.

**State Capitalisms**

Other scholars portray the capitalist systems as less a tug-of-war between economic, political, and social power than as particular constellations of civic, political, and economic institutions. The varieties of capitalism literature is the first of these subfields and focuses primarily on economic implications (as shorthand, on political ECONOMY). The welfare regimes literature covers much of the same terrain, but focuses on consequences for welfare provision (i.e., on POLITICAL economy).

Within the varieties of capitalism literature, Hall and Soskice’s (2001) typology of regimes has been especially influential. They argue that welfare states are characterized by institutional complementarities (Amable 2000), or reinforcing dynamics between welfare benefits, labor markets, and research institutions. Hall and Soskice (2001) identify two ideal typical political economic regimes: Liberal Market Economies, or LMEs (the United States, Canada, Britain, Australia, New Zealand, and Ireland), and Coordinated Market Economies, or CMEs (Germany, Japan, Switzerland, Austria, and the Benelux and Nordic countries). Some countries, notably France and southern European nations, have characteristics of both LMEs and CMEs.
The difference between LMEs and CMEs hinges on the types of institutional support available to firms. To succeed, firms must find workers with suitable skills, secure access to capital, resolve tensions over wages and workplace conditions, motivate workers, locate suppliers and clients, and enter into research collaborations (Hall and Soskice 2001: 6–7). In LMEs, firms resolve such problems via open market operations and formal intra-firm hierarchies. Managers exercise total control over workers, secure capable workers by hiring them away from other firms, obtain capital via the stock market, compete over suppliers and clients, and rely on short-term labor contracts that allow them to hire and fire workers as needed. In CMEs, firms rely on long-term, collaborative relationships to resolve coordination problems. Managerial authority is curtailed by roadblocks like supervisory boards and unions. Companies’ relationships with workers are also contractually long-term and difficult to break; at the extreme, lifelong employment is the norm, as in Japan. Firms in the ideal typical CME are also embedded in industry groups, wherein they cooperate to create training programs for workers and on research and development. Capital in CMEs is “patient”; firms obtain it from long-term ties with financial institutions that receive access to nonpublic information.

Hall and Soskice argue that neither type of political economy is more economically efficient; each has comparative advantages. CMEs provide advantages to firms that rely on incremental innovation, which requires stable labor relations and highly invested workers with firm-specific skills. A company like IKEA, for instance, relies on a workforce that is skilled at innovating – albeit not radically – around the established parameters of the brand. LMEs provide comparative advantages to firms that adjust their workforce seasonally, low-wage industries, and firms seeking radical innovation. Silicon Valley is only imaginable in the context of an LME: therein, CEOs and managers exercise total discretion, hire and fire at will, and depend on a large pool of mobile workers that cross-pollinate ideas from one firm to another.

On the most superficial level, LMEs appear “more capitalist” because, following Hayek, the state plans more “for competition” than against it. Traditionally, for instance, LMEs have enforced price-competitive behavior via strict antitrust enforcement, whereas many CMEs encourage monopolistic behavior by their most profitable national industries. But alternatively, both systems are capitalist in the sense that the means of production are privately owned. More to the point, state action assists, rather than countervails against, private market actors in both systems, which means that one can also interpret LMEs and CMEs as different versions of Polanyi’s market society. Indeed, both types of regimes rely on public welfare spending, albeit in different ways. Public education is important to both regimes, but takes the form of generalist education that promotes an ability to move from one job to another in LMEs and narrowly defined, technical, and even firm-specific education in CMEs. LMEs provide low, means-tested benefits (especially unemployment benefits) to incentivize workers to find new jobs, whereas CMEs usually have long-term
and generous benefits to encourage workers to invest in firm-specific skills. But the latter is as much a productive strategy as an anticapitalist countermovement and, indeed, CME firms provide such benefits themselves in some nations (e.g., Continental Europe, Japan).

Gøsta Esping-Andersen’s *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism* (1990), foundational in the welfare regimes literature, begins from a similarly systemic understanding of state capitalism.

Starting with Polanyi, Esping-Andersen (1990) argues that all welfare states decommodify, but do so in different ways, and constructs a typology based on each nation’s strategy of decommodification. The typology consists of three regimes: Liberal Welfare States (USA, Canada, UK, Ireland, and the Antipodes), Traditional Welfare States (Central and Southern Europe), and Universal Welfare States (the Nordic counties).

Esping-Andersen argues that nations developed different welfare regimes due to their different responses to the market revolution of the nineteenth century. Traditional welfare regimes developed when the nobility, clergy, and other representatives of the ancient regime successfully framed market dislocations as caused by the degradation of the family, church, and traditional corporate bodies. Therein, decommodification protected traditional institutions: tax, pension, and employment policies that favor single employee households (historically, headed by male breadwinners), and social insurance that relies on delivery of benefits via employers and nonprofits. Liberal welfare states developed when the middle classes successfully framed market dislocation as a problem of imperfectly realized markets. They adopted inactive welfare states, wherein policy-makers encourage market participation by extending means-tested benefits only to those unable to work. Universal welfare states emerged where the urban working classes allied with small, independent farmers – the so-called red-green coalition of the Nordic states. Their politicians developed expansive, universal benefits delivered by public bureaucracies. Here again, some states offer more generous benefits than others, but there is no single zero-sum trade-off between market and state. Decommodification of health care, for instance, can mean a system of public hospitals in Sweden, universal insurance and nonprofit providers in Germany, or paternalistic employment relationships in Haiti, which entitle workers to beseech bosses for assistance with hat in hand (Esping-Andersen 1990: 45).

THE CAPITALIST STATE, WRIT SMALL

Since the late twentieth century, many political economic debates have emerged in critical dialogue with grand political economic narratives. Scholars have focused especially on the fit of particular cases within bigger schemas (e.g., American exceptionalism), conceptualizing the turning point of the 1970s and 1980s, unpacking abstractions like the state and civil society, and capitalist processes and governance at different scales. I discuss each debate in turn.
American Exceptionalism

In both the varieties of capitalism and welfare regimes literature, the United States appears as the most extreme liberal or market-oriented regime. The label fits in some respects. The USA is alone among developed states in its absence of programs like universal health care coverage and paid sick or maternity leave policy (although some American states have adopted the latter). But scholars have long noted that aspects of American political economy do not fit the liberal, pro-market mold – principally its progressive taxation system, which was created in the early twentieth century under the assumption that revenue extraction should be proportional to one’s ability to pay (Mehrotra 2017). As a result, the United States is also unique for its absence of a (relatively regressive) value added or national sales tax, and has high corporate and marginal income tax rates. Indeed, for much of the mid-twentieth century, the American top marginal tax rate was the highest in the world – consistently over 50 percent, at times over 90 percent (Steinmo 1989).

Prasad (2012) offers the most comprehensive treatment of this apparent anomaly, arguing that – contrary to conventional wisdom – the American welfare state is neither weak nor necessarily more pro-market than its European counterparts. Rather, Prasad classifies the US as a demand-side welfare state, in contrast to supply-side European welfare states.

For Prasad, this divergence between the American and European welfare states occurred during the Great Depression and post–Second World War period. European politicians saw the working class as their core constituency and capital underinvestment as their primary problem, particularly after the war decimated domestic industry. European welfare was therefore based on a capital–labor–state bargain: unions agreed to lower wages, which freed up capital for rebuilding national industries, in exchange for cradle-to-grave public programs. By contrast, American policies represented a still relatively rural population and thought first of independent farmers. And their primary problem was overproduction, especially of agricultural goods, which produced a deflationary spiral during the depression (a problem elites addressed first by purchasing and destroying crops and livestock). Under these circumstances, American policy-makers saw their primary problem as insufficient demand for goods – in part due to colorful populist agitators like Louisiana’s Huey Long, who thusly diagnosed the problem (cited in Prasad 2012: 138): “People are starving, and yet we have more wheat, corn, meat, milk, cheese, honey and truck in this land than the whole human race in America can consume if everyone were cut loose … the man owning these commodities has no market because no one has the money to buy them.”

Prasad argues that American politicians responded with demand-side policies, which rested on three pillars. The first was progressive taxation, which left more money in the hands of the middle classes and stimulated demand (and also unintentionally incentivized the proliferation of private
welfare provisions like pensions as corporations sought to reduce their tax liabilities). American politicians also stimulated consumption by creating a mortgage market and other forms of easy credit. Finally, American regulatory institutions traditionally employed aggressive antitrust and regulatory enforcement, both of finance and other industries. In the words of one corporate chairman who demanded, “Why is it that I and my American colleagues are being constantly taken to court – made to stand trial – for activities that our counterparts in Britain . . . are knighted, given peerages, and comparable honors [for]?” (cited in Prasad 2012: 13). But in the end, demand-side welfare also empowered financial sector actors, who eventually undermined many aspects of its key protective provisions.

Prasad’s analysis is nicely complemented by Fox’s Three Worlds of Relief (2012), which identifies racial relations as central to welfare state formation. Whereas Prasad identifies farmers of Western European extraction as a preoccupation of policy-makers, Fox’s analysis focuses on three groups who were both outside of this category and had greater need of a European-style supply-side welfare: recent white immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe, African Americans in the south, and Mexicans in the Southwest. Fox argues that these latter groups lived in different “worlds”: geographically distinct regions with different informal welfare institutions and labor markets. Ultimately, the supply-side American welfare state remained decentralized and underdeveloped due to the politics engendered by such racial divisions.

In the early twentieth century, Eastern and Southern European immigrants worked manufacturing jobs in the northeast and Midwest and benefitted from many forms of nonfederal relief: unions, outdoor relief, settlement houses, churches, charities, and political machines. They were also in regular contact with social workers, the era’s assimilation experts, who convinced politicians that white ethnics could become full-fledged Americans. Mexicans worked primarily as seasonal agricultural workers in the Southwest and California (some, of course, had lived there since before the US annexed the regions). They were a mobile population, with many working sporadically and traveling thousands of miles each growing season. Mexicans could therefore count on few stable forms of relief, including from growers who preferred short-term, arm’s-length contracts. Between harvests, Mexicans migrated into cities like Los Angeles, overwhelming outdoor relief and other charities and drawing the ire of social workers. African Americans lived in debt peonage to white planters within a slavery-like paternalistic system. Most worked as farmers or domestics and, unlike in the Southwest, white employers saw themselves as responsible for the movement, conduct, and welfare of their employees (a framing disputed by black workers themselves – see Fox 2012: 23).

Representatives of the three worlds of welfare influenced the New Deal. By some accounts, enthusiastic New Dealers imagined a universal, less racially exclusive welfare state. But the relevant experts – whether social workers, employers, or regional politicians – presented blacks and Mexicans as undeserving of relief.
Southern politicians especially argued that blacks already enjoyed social protection from their paternalistic relations with employers. Northern experts, by contrast, argued that white ethnics were hardworking and could achieve integration with state assistance. In the end, New Dealers acquiesced and developed a decentralized and incomplete welfare state, which left much of the implementation to locals. Many works programs, for instance, went predominantly to white workers, because local bosses discriminated. Even social security excluded agricultural workers and domestics, who were overwhelmingly Mexican and African American during this period, but surprisingly not nonnaturalized immigrants (at the time, many European immigrants were not naturalized).

The 1970s and 80s as a Turning Point in Global Political Economy

Political economists have also devoted much energy to dissecting the history of the 1970s and 80s, a global turning point. Scholars typically identify the period with the rise of neoliberalism or financialization, although others make cases for different characterizations (see Berman [2014] on “economization” or Rodgers [2011] on “thin” social metaphors).

The concept of neoliberalism is notoriously slippery, in part because different aspects of the state changed during the 1970s and 80s – the prevailing ideology of statecraft, the policy positions of right- and especially left-wing parties, and policies themselves (Mudge 2008: 705). Central to these shifts was the emergence of an ideology that was suspicious of dirigiste economic policies and glorified markets as optimal for the allocation of resources (Livne and Yonay 2016; Mirowski 2013; Somers and Block 2005), which spread across the West (Bourdieu 1990; Campbell and Pedersen 2001; Fourcade-Gournicas and Babb 2002; Stiglitz 2002), the former Soviet bloc (Bockman 2011), and the Global South (Chorev and Babb 2009).

The policy reforms of the 1970s and 80s bore a family resemblance that is consistent with Hayek’s “planning for competition”: the idea that coordination through markets and market-like institutions requires an adaptive and active state. This ideology led policy-makers to spearhead three types of reforms: public sector rollback, preference for competitive systems of public finance, and downscaling – a shedding of federal responsibility achieved by moving funding and authority over programs to lower levels of government in conjunction with funding cuts. On the whole, the 1970s and 80s witnessed a greater increase in pro-market institutions than public sector rollback – Levi-Faur (2003), for example, shows that pro-market rhetoric in different nations was correlated with a slight increase in public sector size and expenditure, and it is for this reason that political economists typically identify neoliberalism as a political, rather than economic, project (Harvey 2007). But there was also variation in different nations’ trajectories. Pro-market rhetoric produced dramatic change in the United States and Britain, for instance, but little change in France and Germany (Prasad 2006).
Political economists who focus on criminalization additionally identify neoliberal policy consequences that appear coercive and contrary to the Hayekian ideal – for instance, police forces that harass and torment the poor (Stuart 2016). Wacquant (2012) argues that such policies are part of the neoliberal centaur-like state, which appears as laissez-faire to affluent market participants and “fiercely interventionist, bossy, and pricey” to the underclass. The logic is one of incentives. In order to create market coordination, the state must coerce those who do not respond to market incentives due to abject poverty – although Campbell and Schoenfeld’s (2013) analysis suggests that market expansion was a strong motivator of the prison boom.

Other scholars of political economy identify the turning point of the 1970s and 80s as rooted in the financialization of the economy – although there is overlap between those focusing on financialization and neoliberalism. Krippner (2002) provides the most widely accepted definition of financialization: the share of profits that firms derive from portfolio investments vis-à-vis other types of economic activities. As such, financialization impacts both financial firms and nonfinancial firms, which began relying heavily on their financing divisions in the 1980s (Ford Motor Company, for example, makes its profits in the leasing department – see Davis 2009).

Financialization began in the late twentieth century and was largely the product of changes in financial regulation. The USA’s mid-twentieth-century financial system was unusually decentralized, with divisions between different banking functions (consumer lending, commercial banking, investment banking) and restrictions on branch banking, which prevented banks from operating branches in multiple states – and, in some cases, more than one branch anywhere (Johnson and Kwak 2011). Because of this, consumer savings were generally unavailable to financial sector actors. Mortgage loans were held mostly by savings and loans, which took deposits and made loans within the same community (Davis 2009). Many workers’ retirement also took the form of fixed-benefits pensions paid directly by their employer, not mutual funds (McCarthy 2017).

This situation began to change in the 1970s, after the oil shock caused a simultaneous rise in unemployment and inflation (Prasad 2006; Krippner 2011). This development confounded the era’s policy experts, who had previously assumed that unemployment and inflation were trade-offs, and overwhelmed policies that regulators had previously employed to regulate the business cycle (by simply shutting off the supply of credit when interest rates rose above certain benchmarks). But with interest rates perpetually high, many borrowers could not get access to loans. Policy-makers from both parties called for financial deregulation and regulators stopped keeping up with new innovations – particularly securitization (Funk and Hirschman 2014).

Although financialization occurred in other nations, study of it has traditionally been US-centric, in part because American practices diffused elsewhere (see Krippner 2011).
Much of the financialization literature focuses on the consequences of this new mode of profit-making: changes in corporate leadership, workplace relations, interfirm inequality, and even changes in nonprofit organizations and municipal governments, which rely heavily on debt financing. Indeed, financialization, in conjunction with laxer antitrust enforcement, fueled the twentieth century’s largest corporate merger movement (Fligstein 2001), as firms and takeover specialists bought up corporations – both to resell their parts at profit (Espeland and Hirsch 1990) and to achieve efficiencies by acquiring suppliers, distributors, and competitors (Zorn et al. 2009). This changed the nature of the American business community by eliminating long-time business owners and thinning interfirm ties – both nationally (Mizruchi 2013) and within urban economies (Galaskiewicz 1985; Pacewicz 2013a).

Financialization also changed the nature of employment. During the credit-scarce economy of the mid-twentieth century, corporations adopted a conglomerate structure defined by ownership of multiple, unrelated product lines (firms like General Electric are surviving examples of this corporate model). This allowed CEOs to strategically invest profits in their own divisions – because each conglomerate functioned as a mini financial market, scholars sometimes identify this as the financial model of the firm (Chandler 1990; Fligstein 2001). CEOs were generally compensated according to the size of the firm, which gave them an incentive to create steady profits via stability and labor peace. Firms’ increasing reliance on financial markets changed corporate governance, with CEOs increasingly identifying their interests with those of investors rather than the firm (Lazonick and O’Sullivan 2000). Stock analysts found conglomerates less dynamic and difficult to evaluate, so many firms restructured, shedding divisions in different industries and focusing on core competencies. Companies also tied CEO compensation to stock price, which gave CEOs an incentive to exceed market expectations – often by cutting costs or initiating layoffs. Scholars argue that these changes in corporate governance created a bifurcated labor force. Most workers saw erosion or stagnation of pay, benefits, and job security, while another class of managers and professionals saw an increase in superstar compensation (Fligstein and Shin 2007; Lin and Tomaskovic-Devey 2013). Financialization also changed patterns of household savings and nonfinancial practices (Fligstein and Goldstein 2015; Owens 2015) – what van der Zwan (2014) refers to as the “financialization of everyday life.”

A final branch of the financialization literature focuses on consequences for the public and nonprofit sector. In the United States and the United Kingdom, for instance, municipal leaders have increased their reliance on speculative bonds (Christophers 2015; Pacewicz 2013b; Weber 2010), some of which produced serious budgetary problems in states like California (Kirkpatrick and Smith 2011; Peck 2010; Pacewicz 2016b; Schafran 2013). Managers of public institutions have also incorporated the financialized mind-set of revenue maximization (Eaton et al. 2016), restructuring public debt into marketable
securities (Livne and Yonay 2016), and engaging in active and speculative portfolio management (Fligstein 2001).

Deconstructing Abstractions: The Disaggregated State

Due to the difficulty of fitting actually existing states into grand historical narratives, many scholars have become critical of classic abstractions like the state and – less so – civil society and economy. The most sustained discussion has focused on efforts to disaggregate the state: to move away from a Weberian conception of singular, top-down bureaucracy, and generally rethink the relationship between legislative and bureaucratic action (Morgan and Orloff 2017). The most elaborated research programs in this vein are analyses of the delegated (Morgan and Campbell 2011) and divided welfare state (Hacker 2002).

In their foundational treatment of delegated welfare, Morgan and Campbell (2011) argue that one can usefully distinguish welfare states by their level of delegation. In the United States especially, most social programs are not administered directly by the federal agencies, but instead by state or local governments, nonprofit entities, or for profits. Morgan and Campbell (2011) argue that delegated governance is the result of a fragmented policy environment characterized by multiple veto points, which allowed conservatives to successfully check the expansion of federal bureaucracies during the New Deal. Indeed, champions of the welfare state created just one significant and directly administered social program: social security, an administratively simple program, which nevertheless requires 62,000 employees and 1,300 field offices to implement (Campbell and Morgan 2011:11). By contrast, Medicare and Medicaid are complex, but delegated programs, which require a workforce of only 6,000 federal employees (mostly in the offices of the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services [CMS] in Maryland, with the rest in ten regional offices).

The delegation of the American welfare state is not necessarily linked to any particular policy agenda. For much of the twentieth century, different forms of delegation were championed by conservatives and liberals alike. Lyndon Johnson, for example, turned to delegation due to a left-of-center critique of public sector bureaucracies and dehumanizing and envisioned community action agencies (CAA), quasi-public nonprofits, as the primary delivery vehicle for programs like Head Start and income assistance grants. But particularly since the 1980s, conservatives and neoliberals pursued delegation – particularly to for-profits and via competitive, market-like systems of allocation – as an alternative to traditional welfare programs (Chernick and Reschovsky 1999; Clemens and Guthrie 2010; Smith and Lipsky 1993). Despite its varied ideological origins, the delegated welfare state has one singular consequence: it creates a complex welfare state whose activities are frequently opaque to constituents. Clemens (2006) describes the resulting system as a Rube
Goldberg state, a reference to a machine in which a long series of contraptions perform an action that one could perform in a single step. As a result, many Americans receive federal benefits indirectly without realizing it. The public expects state benefits to be distinguishable from market and civil society, but delegation means that the dividing line is arbitrary, and impossible to draw from the inside (Clemens 2017).

In his foundational work on the divided welfare state, Hacker (2002) also characterizes the American welfare state as a complex, riven with veto points, and susceptible to elite co-optation. Hacker (2002: 17) shows that the state has thereby become reliant on what he terms private welfare: tax provisions that transfer wealth to certain taxpayers or encourage private sector actors to provide benefits (e.g., the Low Income Tax Credit, Home Mortgage Interest Deduction, tax exempt employer-paid health care and retirement funds). Overall, liberal welfare states are characterized by slightly higher private welfare expenditures than more-generous welfare regimes, but the United States is an outlier among these, which devotes nearly four times as much of its GDP to private welfare as any other nation.

For Hacker (2002), such programs amount to a hidden welfare state, which – unlike visible welfare programs – mostly redistributes public dollars toward wealthy constituencies. Some scholars dispute whether tax benefits are best characterized as welfare – consider, for instance, that doing so would lead one to classify a nation that credited back all taxes collected as a generous welfare regime (Prasad 2016) – but no one denies that the amount of wealth that affluent Americans gain through the tax code is significant. For instance, a home-owning Silicon Valley tech worker earning $250,000 annually could easily receive more in tax credits and rebates than an impoverished California family could maximally draw from all welfare benefits – and the impoverished family would need to navigate multiple, intrusive bureaucracies, whereas the former needs only take standard deductions when filing taxes.

Beyond these two main perspectives, scholars have taken various other approaches to disaggregating the state in their analyses. Although none of these efforts necessarily rises to the level of a fully developed research program, many take inspiration from Bourdieu (1989) and conceptualize the state as a field-like arena of competition (Fligstein and McAdam 2012; Levi-Martin 2003; Mudge 2008; Medvetz 2012; Wacquant 2004; Wilson 2011), or some related relational metaphor like political ecology (Abbott 2005) or game (Pacewicz 2015). One strand of research analyzes how public policy emerges out of the struggle between various stakeholders – how state agencies drive classification of different populations as they strive to absorb or offload clients (Lara-Millán 2014) or make policies more or less visible and salient for the public (Mayrl and Quinn 2016, 2017). Another strand examines what might be termed field-spillover or contagion effects – how dynamics within one arena of competition induce shifts in a related field of competition as they selectively empower or inhibit actors therein. For instance, Medvetz (2012) and Mudge
(2018) show how changes within the field of policy advocacy and the economic profession empowered pro-market elements in the Democratic Party.

It is noteworthy that political economist inquiry into deconstructing economy and civil society is less developed than inquiry into states. To an extent, numerous scholars have noted that public participation has become less confrontational in recent decades, and is sometimes engineered by elites outright to support the political economic status quo (Eliasoph 1998; Lee 2011, 2015; Lee, McQuarrie, and Walker 2014; Levine 2016; McQuarrie 2013; Walker 2014) – and some have explicitly tied such shifts to the different role that civil society plays within political economic regimes (Eliasoph 2011; Pacewicz 2015, 2016a). By contrast, analyses of the relational properties of economic activity are virtually nonexistent. One could imagine, for instance, that the increasingly precarious nature of employment promotes unique forms of political and civic subjectivity, but studies of such dynamics are few (but see Silva 2013).

**Multiscalar Governance**

Finally, many contemporary political economists focus on multiscalar governance: the constellation of political, economic, and civic interests that arises at street level in response to changes in democratic capitalism. Historically, critical urban geographers have been most interested in this topic. Their key motivating insight is that neoliberal ideology is distinct from “actually existing neoliberalism” at scales of governance far removed from the experience of pro-market reformers (Peck, Theodore, and Brenner 2009).

Urban geographers argue that actually existing neoliberalism involves a destructive and creative phase (Harvey 1989), which scholars also identify as a period of rollback and rollout (Peck, Theodore, and Brenner 2009). Rollback involves the typical pro-market reforms: removing or restricting countercyclical Keynesian policy, glorification of entrepreneurship, free markets, and reduced state intervention (Harvey 1989, 2007). But, following Polanyi, urban geographers argue that public sector rollback necessitates “rollout” of new state and civic projects that reinforce market mechanisms and check their worst consequences (Jessop 2002). But rollback and rollout occur at different scales. Whereas austerity reforms usually occur federally, their consequences fall hardest on community and regional leaders who must ultimately deal with the results. Harvey (1989) argues that local leaders responded to 1980s era federal rollback with entrepreneurial strategies that tout innovation and ceaselessly promote the uniqueness of place, but actually discourage real innovation and instead copy perceived winners. In any Rust Belt city, for instance, one is sure to encounter boosters who celebrate their city’s unique culture and history via carbon-copy art walks, farmers’ markets, local history museums, and the like.

And indeed, there is much commonality in the apparently spontaneous shifts in urban governance – in the United States, Global North, and beyond. Peck,
Theodore and Brenner (2009: 212) note a long list of common policy innovations that appeared in the 1980s:

Devolution of social welfare functions to lower levels of government, shrinking public sector ... public–private partnerships and networks of governance ... new authoritarian “state” apparatuses that are insulated from public accountability ... creation of new incentives to reward entrepreneurialism and reward endogenous growth, new revenue collection districts ... expansion of community based social protective sectors ... new urban infrastructures to reposition cities within supranational capital flows ... privatization and competition in contracting municipal services ... new glocal strategies to channel economic capacities into “globally connected” local/regional agglomerations ... decontextualized best-practices models ... generic “modernizing reforms” popular among policymakers in search of quick fixes (e.g. place marketing strategies, workfare), [and] entrepreneurial discourses [stressing] need for revitalization discourses.

Historians of urban policy confirm that federal reforms radically transformed conditions of possibility for community leaders in recent decades. During the 1980s, federal transfers fell from nearly 20 to 3 percent of municipal expenditures, and urban nonprofits also saw decreases in federal funds (Biles 2011; Smith and Lipsky 1993). The corporate merger movement of the 1980s also robbed many cities of their large business owners, and thereby both tax base and source of charitable contribution. In response to such rollback, political economists identify two types of rollout among community and regional leaders: of new policies and politics.

First, community and regional leaders adopted policies of active economic management. Since the 1980s, local leaders have taken it as given that they should supply the infrastructure necessary for private sector development as well as subsidize the costs of new and existing developments and business ventures (Kirkpatrick and Smith 2011). They have also pioneered special financing districts that allow them to fund development without voter approval (Kirkpatrick and Smith 2011; Leigland 1990; Pacewicz 2016b) – for instance, via Tax Increment Financing (Pacewicz 2013b; Weber 2010). Publicly financed economic development personnel are also more active in brokering local deals, finding sites for investment, and arranging logistics for corporate managers (Pacewicz 2013a). More generally, street-level public representatives have effectively become handmaidens to private industry – like county sheriffs, who focus almost exclusively on enforcing evictions (Desmond 2016).

This policy shift has gone hand in hand with a technical, postpartisan politics at the urban scale: an “ideology of privatism” (Gotham 2001) that “expands the sphere of governing while shrinking the space of the ‘properly political’” (Swyngedouw 2005), increases the influence of quasi-public agencies (Swyngedouw 2005), and increases “reliance on partnership, networks, consultation, negotiation, and other forms of reflexive self-organization, rather than on the combination of anarchic market forces” (Jessop 2002). In sites as diverse as Cleveland (McQuarrie 2013), Iowa (Pacewicz 2015, 2016a), and
Boston (Levine 2016), scholars find that elected politicians have lost ground to economic development personnel and other nonelected local boosters (although Marwell [2009] finds that politicians are able to retain influence in New York City).

**Promising Future Directions**

Studies of political economy writ small have identified two general problems with grand political economy narratives. First, street-level policy consequences are often loosely coupled with national policies. And second, federal policies often shape citizen’s political subjectivities in unexpected ways. But such studies of meso- and micro-political economic processes have also fragmented the field of political economic inquiry and failed to produce enduring, synthetic analyses of historical processes. In this final section, I discuss two areas of empirical inquiry that could help political economists link analyses of on the ground realities to broader historical trends: analysis of the “middle state” and of how policies make politics.

The Middle State

Studies of political economy focus overwhelmingly on two scales of analysis: policy formulation by nation-states and street-level implementation of social service, urban, and other policies. A juxtaposition of these areas of inquiry suggests glaring disconnects. In the health care field, for instance, administrators disregard the spirit of federal law, strategically reclassifying patients to offload costs or win funding, even to the point of patient-dumping (Eaton and Weir 2015; Lara-Millán 2014). Social service providers act like penal institutions (Rios 2011), while police officers act like punitive social workers (Stuart 2016). Programs designed to mobilize youth to address systemic inequalities actually teach them to sideline troublesome topics and opportunistically broadcast their marginal identities to funders (Eliasoph 2011). Among political economists, urban geographers have tried to account for such disconnects via the concept of “actually existing neoliberalism” (Peck, Theodore, and Brenner 2009), but many argue that this research agenda has run out of steam as it simultaneously explains everything and nothing.

Political economists could achieve greater insight into street-level political outcomes via empirical analysis of what might be termed the middle state: the underexplored black box that connects legislative policy change to on the ground public administration. The middle state concept captures several types of phenomena, which include both state-level legislative action and the autonomy exercised by executive bureaucracies during policy implementation. Consider, for example, Medicaid in the USA, which provides health care coverage to low-income Americans. Medicaid policy is made by Congress, but implemented by states, which have the ability to alter how health care providers are reimbursed, who is eligible for coverage, and which services are covered via a system of federal
waivers. Each state’s Medicaid system is the product of negotiation between state legislatures (which control the budget), governors (who appoint executive agency personnel), bureaucrats (who write the regulations and are uniquely empowered to communicate with the feds), and civil society actors (who have unique knowledge about problem populations and on the ground realities (see Eaton and Weir 2015). Health care laws and regulations are then interpreted by implementation councils consisting of industry, nonprofit, and civil society stakeholders who identify what regulations mean in practice and which parts of them are enforceable. Such middle state processes produce extreme variation in the health care of low-income Americans, such that it is arguably inaccurate to speak of the United States as having a single health care system – Medicaid expenditures for children, for example, range from $1,500 to $5,100 annually, depending on the state.

As the example of Medicaid suggests, the middle state concept points to dynamic interaction between national and subnational governments as an underexplored avenue of political economic change. Martin (2008) presents such state–federal dynamics as central to American politics. Drawing on a study of property tax restrictions in the 1970s, he shows how Nixon’s effort to replace property taxes with a value added tax (VAT) was blocked by states, which preferred property tax caps – a dynamic that illustrates “the two faces of federalism.” One the one hand, multiple veto points make it difficult to achieve policy innovation at the federal level, but, on the other, social movement actors and entrepreneurs have 50 chances to pass state-level legislation and begin a national wave of state-level reforms. Few scholars have explored such processes of state–federal policy diffusion, even though many of the biggest policy innovations of recent decades began as state reforms: marriage equality, legalized marijuana, the Affordable Care Act (which federal policy-makers copied from Massachusetts – see Starr 2013), ongoing efforts to restrict voting rights, and talk of national right-to-work legislations, whose proponents have been emboldened by successful state efforts (Lotesta 2018).

Scholars interested in such middle state processes could profit from greater attention to cross-national research. Scholars of the Global South, for instance, generally begin from the presumption that the state rarely works as it is supposed to and treat policy implementation as theoretically central to political economic process (e.g., Ferguson 1990; Scott 1998). For instance, scholars of India argue that bureaucracies are often fragmented and work at cross-purposes, which leaves civil society actors much creative policy potential for innovation (Appadurai 2001; Roy 2009) – a state of affairs also identified in a recent study of bureaucracies that source and deliver emergency food assistance in the United States (Bouek 2017). Similarly, McDonnell (2017) finds that, contrary to the Weberian narrative, Ghanaian bureaucracies successfully achieve reforms when they contain a social movement like cadre of noncareer civil servants – an observation that is probably also true of the United States.
Another obvious point of comparison with the United States is Canada, which scholars have traditionally identified as most similar to the United States in both its economy and welfare state (Esping-Andersen 1990; Hall and Soskice 2001). Since the 1980s, the political economic trajectory of the two countries has diverged, partially as a result of processes of bureaucratic implementation. For instance, Canada’s unionization rate once tracked America’s, but plateaued in the 1970s just as American organized labor went into free fall, which Eidlin (2015) shows was partially due to how regulatory commissions interpreted labor rights. Canada also suffered no housing crisis in 2007/8, largely because provincial and local regulators were more active in preempting the sorts of predatory lending practices that became endemic in the United States.

How Policies Make Politics

Scholars could also gain much insight into contemporary political economy by empirically investigating how policies make politics (Hacker and Pierson 2011): how they shape political coalitions, interest groups, and voters. Indeed, grand political economy narratives have not shed foundational thinkers’ penchant for empirically unsubstantiated claims about how political and economic processes shape peoples’ thinking – consider Marx’s claims about looming proletariat revolution or Polanyi’s rather thin account about how countermovements arise in practice.

Connecting policy to politics necessitates the sort of institutional imagination that is more characteristic of political economy writ small, because the consequences of policies are seldom straightforward and often manifest at unexpected scales of analysis. Consider, for instance, the reactionary populist wave of the 2010s, which caught many political economists flat-footed. Particularly among scholars focused on the rise of market-friendly ideologies, the prevailing assumption had been that regional leaders and citizens would eventually adopt the technocratic, depoliticized political subjectivity of policy-makers (see e.g., Peck, Theodore, and Brenner 2009) – a prediction that seems wildly inaccurate in light of the tribal, ethnonationalist turn in the politics of many nation-states. But actually, analyses that focus on the multiscalar consequences of market fundamentalism illustrate causal links between it and reactionary populism.

Mizruchi (2013), for example, argues that the hyperpolarization and extremism of American right-wing discourse are the product of the corporate merger wave of the 1980s and other changes in corporate governance associated with shareholder value. Such changes enriched top business executives, but also paradoxically decreased their collective efficacy by lowering the tenure of individual CEOs, eroding their capacity to form long-term relationships with one another, and reducing the importance of former sites of collective coordination like money center banks. Mizruchi argues that CEOs now engage in politics only to win
concessions for their own firms and have lost the ability to exert collective pressure, which prevents them from – among other things – checking the influence of movement conservatives over the GOP (Block 2007).

Pacewicz (2016a) shows that 1980s corporate mergers along with changes in intergovernmental finance also enabled reactionary populism at the community scale. Drawing on a study of two Rust Belt cities, Pacewicz shows how corporate mergers thinned the ranks of local business owners and labor union leaders alike, who had once been central to – respectively – GOP and Democratic Party politics. After these mergers, remaining community leaders increasingly fixated on wooing outside corporations, winning outside grants, and generally forming nonpartisan coalitions to market the city – efforts that led them to leave grassroots branches of the two political parties to ideologically motivated weekend activists, particularly on the GOP side. Pacewicz shows how the resulting local configuration, which he terms, “politics disembedded from community governance,” promotes a spiral of self-radicalization among grassroots party activists and generally leads voters to see politics as a contest between technocratic, outwardly focused elites and reactionary populist partisans.

Finally, Skocpol (2003) identifies a transformation of the civil advocacy sector as key to the rise of reactionary populism. Traditionally, American advocacy organizations were organized federally, consisting of local chapters, linked in turn to regional coordinating bodies and national mouthpiece organizations (think of the NAACP or labor unions as surviving organizational analogues). Within this system, national civic elites were financially dependent for dues on local chapters, and made efforts to align their rhetoric with the needs of civic leaders at the grassroots. But then in the 1970s and 80s, national civic entrepreneurs pioneered a new civic model that focused more economically and revolved around fund-raising by making hyperpartisan appeals to niche demographics. With no need for local chapters, new civic entrepreneurs broke ties with local chapters and busied themselves instead filling politics with “a sound and a fury that turns most citizens off” (Skocpol 2003).

With the global rise of reactionary populism now established fact, political economists have much to add to the public debate. Historically, the field has been built around the sort of systemic analysis of the long durée that is often missing in mainstream political discourse. But tidal shifts in Western liberalism are irreducible to singular demographics, events, or even purely economic, political, or social processes. We need a holistic political economic explanation that considers the changing relationship between economic, social, and political systems.

REFERENCES


III. The State and Its Political Organizations


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During the 1980s, the state was “brought back in” to political sociology (Evans, Rueschemeyer, and Skocpol 1985), but its reappearance has taken a number of forms. For many scholars, the state returned in the role of a dominant actor or as a centralized organizational vehicle controlled by political elites and bureaucratic officials. Others conceptualized the state as the locus of “exchange” of social capitals among domains or fields (Bourdieu 2014) or as a centralized node harnessed to interlinked power networks that “penetrate” the economy and civil society within a particular territory (Mann 1986; Mitchell 1991). Still others envisioned the state as a concatenation of problem-solving projects or “assemblages” (Clemens 2006; Joyce and Mukerji 2017; Loveman 2005) rather than a bounded, coherent, hierarchical organization. Despite the many differences among these theoretical approaches, two claims recur. First, the state must be theorized within the context of multiple social orders, relations, and actions and appropriately disaggregated into multiple agencies, organizations, and programs (Morgan and Orloff 2017). Second, the state is distinctive in its capacity to shape those social orders, to regulate relationships and exchanges, and to establish recognized categories and forms of action. In this second sense, the state is broadly understood as an institution, as something that has higher-order effects on other domains of social life and on diverse forms of social action.

This second claim has long been foundational to institutional analyses of the state. A higher-order effect can be understood by thinking about things from the perspective of a billiard ball. That ball, say the green one, may move because it is hit by another ball or the green ball may be struck by a stick wielded by a human player and in turn collide with other balls. But all these interactions among balls are constrained – and constituted – by the shape and material of the table as well as the rules followed by the human players. Only within the material and cultural framework provided by the table and the rules can the movement of a
ball be explained by the movement of other balls (and the intervention of the stick). Without the bumpers on the table and the friction of the felt, a ball in motion would continue in motion. At a micro-sociological level, institutional effects may be generated by culturally available and normatively enforced scripts for interactions of a certain type. In these cases, cultural expectations shared by others constitute the bumpers and the rules; behavior that is inconsistent with those expectations elicits the pushback of sanction, taboo, or incomprehension.

The generation of higher-order effects is characteristic of institutions in general, whether understood as cultural templates or conventions that constrain and enable interaction, laws that establish sharper distinctions between what is and is not permissible, or taken-for-granted cognitive frameworks. Institutions may operate on different scales: the practices distinctive to some number of actors who interact repeatedly and develop a sense of “this is who we are, this is what we do”; a given formal organization that proclaims values and enforces specific policies that generate predictably distinctive patterns of action; or an established, widely recognized “way of being.” Given the wide range of the concept, what specifically marks the state as an institution?

A clue may be found in the classic Weberian formulation which characterizes the state in terms of a monopoly of legitimate violence within a territory. In this formulation, the legitimate use of force has the capacity to impose specific order on models and patterns of action established through other mechanisms. Thus the substantive focus on legitimate violence encompasses an analytic assumption about hierarchies of determination. Empirically, any actually existing state is at best an approximation of this ideal; witness the proliferation of private militias and lightly regulated gun ownership in the United States, at times with explicit endorsement from law enforcement officials (Carlson 2017). But the assumption that this configuration of power possesses, at least in the last instance, a capacity to trump others is central to stateness or, in Timothy Mitchell’s argument (1991; Brooke, Strauss, and Anderson 2018: 59–61), to the concept of a “state effect.” Mitchell redirects attention from the centralized, hierarchical bureaucracy at the core of the classic Weberian understanding of the state to the conditions under which the idea of such an organization becomes plausible. Such a “state effect” encompasses both the material conditions and the cultural interpretations that they make possible.

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1 Simmel’s analysis of flirtation is a classic example (1950: 50–51) and recent work on etiquettes, relational models, and group styles has elaborated this approach to questions of political participation (Eliasoph 1998; Eliasoph and Lichterman 2003; Polletta 2002).

2 Given this argument, Bourdieu’s revision of the Weberian argument overreaches. In defining the state by its monopoly of both physical and symbolic violence, he conflates an approximation of actual monopoly over legitimate violence with an “in the last instance” capacity to rule on symbolic violence enacted by private citizens, corporations, or other nonstate actors. Hate speech laws would be one example of this “in the last instance” effect.
For analyses of the state, the most influential institutional accounts have focused on the ways in which state policies and actors shape access to and action within other fields of social activity (Hall and Taylor 1996; Schneiberg and Clemens 2006; Schneiberg and Soule 2005; Thelen and Steinmo 1992). Such accounts acknowledge that states themselves are constructions, but they emphasize how the political generally, and the state specifically, define, legitimate, and naturalize understandings of the forms and limits of what should and should not be done, which actors are and are not recognized. The distinctive feature of these projects of state formation, as opposed to other kinds of political projects, is that they involve “a practice of depersonalizing power” (Joyce and Mukerji 2017: 6) that is exemplified by the transition from indirect to direct rule and the consolidation of a rational bureaucracy (Tilly 1992). As one major form of institutionalization, depersonalized power decreases the likelihood of question or challenge and lessens the investment of resources required to reproduce authoritative rule. In this account, institutionalization promotes political stability by rendering alternative social orders unthinkable.

As power is consolidated and depersonalized, its effects become reified, naturalized, or legitimated. Although the terminology varies, the consistent insight is that depersonalized or legitimated power has the quality of being taken-for-granted or eliciting deference, thereby gaining the capacity to shape and reshape surrounding social orders by requiring the adoption of policies or conformity to regulations. By establishing authority to label, list, and count persons and other entities, states-in-formation involve the accumulation of power to define the categories that organize cognition (Espeland and Sauder 2007; Loveman 2005) as well as legitimating models of the actor and entrenching particular kinds of collective identity while suppressing or failing to recognize others (Mora 2014; Porter 1995). Thus projects of colonial settlement entail the oppression and even eradication of native populations; practices of violent differentiation may then be theorized in racial formations, some of which are purported to be color-blind (Omi and Winant 2008).

But as categories of race are linked to organizational practices and then incorporated in state policy, as has happened pervasively with the practices of credit and mortgage lending, these social constructions of difference generate pervasive and durable inequalities. Through policies, spending, and regulation, state effects may alter elements of organizations and the distribution of resources and opportunities across categories of citizens, jurisdictions, and other entities through mechanisms as diverse as passports, the census, and taxation (Brubaker 1996; Dobbin 1994). The depersonalized power of states may also stabilize economic interactions and create markets by enforcing sanctions against predation, providing guarantees, or serving as an authoritative third party to judge disputes (North and Weingast 1989). In all these ways, the depersonalized forms of power that distinguish states contribute to the intensification and extension of social and economic activity, fueling trajectories of development, an insight that builds from Weber’s own General
Economic History (Collins 1980; Evans 1995). Taken together, these arguments exemplify the cognitive, constitutive, regulatory, and enabling dimensions of the state understood as an institution.

But note the use of the singular: state, institution. In this formulation, the depersonalized and taken-for-granted character of institutionalized power produces a world stabilized by shared cognitions, regulatory practices, and structured fields of action. By contrast, recent theoretical work has conceptualized the state as a configuration of intersecting networks or assembled components rather than a singular integrated whole. As a consequence, quite different expectations follow. State effects may be depersonalized, but they are also partial, potentially criss-crossing in ways that generate dynamic zones of contention and repeatedly stabilized and destabilized settlements.3 Thus as theorizations of the state have shifted from the unified, coherent Weberian image to an assembled or composite understanding of the organization of state power, our expectations for the institutional effects of state power also change (Morgan and Orloff 2017). Rather than analyzing the state as an institution (singular), states are understood as configurations of institutions, each producing higher-order effects without any guarantee that those effects will be consistent across domains of state activity, economic behavior, or social action. Across research on empires, markets, developmental states, and social policy regimes, this shift away from a unified conception of the state-as-institution toward the state-as-institutions affords an opportunity to enrich our understanding of the sources of stability and coherence with analyses of the dynamics set in motion by particular configurations of political authority and organizational power. But before turning to institutions in the plural, we consider the character of the state as a singular institution.

### The State as Institution

In Leviathan, Thomas Hobbes compared laws to “Hedges [that] are set, not to stop Travellers, but to keep them in the way” (1985 [1651]: 388). This image captures a core contention about the central place of institutions in political analysis. Laws, like all institutions, operate to delimit the zone of possibility or to shape the probabilities of action along some lines rather than others. The importance of this shaping and channeling reflects what Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann described as the fundamentally underdetermined character of human nature: “Human existence, if it were thrown back on its organismic resources by themselves, would be existence in some sort of chaos” (1967: 51). But as expectations are stabilized first through repeated interaction

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3 This assertion breaks with the claim by certain institutional theorists in organizational sociology who conceptualize organizations as nested within a hierarchical set of institutions or fields (Thornton, Ocasio, and Lounsbury 2012; for a review see Haveman and Gualtieri, 2017).
and then through culture in the form of narrative, myth, ritual, and law, emerging institutions transform that primordial state of utter underdetermination into patterned and somewhat predictable lines of opportunity, thought, and action. The revival of institutional analysis in the guise of transactions cost theory in economics built from a similar insight, recognizing that so long as human rationality is “bounded ... it is impossible to deal with complexity in all contractually relevant respects” (Williamson 1981: 553–554). Institutions constrain, but in so doing they reduce complexity and uncertainty either by intentional design or as a consequence of the cumulative consequences of past actions (Thelen 1999).

At this basic level, institutions make human action possible. If we encountered every situation de novo, with no possibility of simply following established habits or familiar expectations of the terms of interaction, even the most basic engagements would overwhelm our cognitive capacities and require extended exploration and negotiation. By contrast, the capacity for action lies in the linkage of a cultural or virtual element – signaled by terms such as “schema” (Sewell 1992) or “toolkit” (Swidler 1986) – with resources in the form of material, social networks, and other supports for the capacity to act or to influence the actions of others. As cultural schemas are connected to one another and embodied in material resources, the resulting configurations shape the behavior of greater numbers of individuals. One of the most powerful institutional effects of the state as a source of social order operates through the capacity to constitute and enforce the cognitive frameworks that organize action and interaction.

Through practices, policies, and infrastructures of information, states have the capacity to create particular kinds of selves, to constitute cultural categories that structure interaction, and to define as well as sanction appropriate or inappropriate behavior in particular settings. As Mara Loveman argues, “through practices of classification, codification, and regulation ... modern states not only naturalize certain distinctions and not others, but they also help constitute particular kinds of people” (2005: 1655; see also Meyer and Jepperson 2000). Drawing theoretical inspiration from Michel Foucault, Philip Gorski (1993) and Eiko Ikegami (1995) link state-building projects to the cultivation of models of self, centered on discipline in post-Reformation Northern Europe and honor in medieval and early modern Japan. The collection and aggregation of information about these selves was central to new forms of state building that Foucault (2004) would characterize as “biopolitics.”

The capacity to structure cognition and understanding of the social world is not unique to states. Emile Durkheim’s core claim in The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life (1995 [1912]) was precisely that these cognitive frameworks emerged from systems of social interaction in ways that imbued categories of understanding with a sense of the sacred. When religious belief is connected to other sources of power – political, military, or economic – such recombinations
produce new architectures of authority that are recognizably state-like (Mann 1986), although the process of claiming state authority over the administration of these cognitive categories and symbolic resources may be profoundly contested. “As complex organizational webs, modern states may engage in primitive accumulation of symbolic power in one domain while they already exercise symbolic power in another” (Loveman 2005: 1659). The alternative is to organize state power in ways that they are not recognized as “state” at all (Balogh 2009). This may defuse resistance from the start, but foregoes the advantages that may follow from the accrual of legitimate and recognized state authority.

The consequences of such processes of institutionalization are not simply the reduction of complexity or uncertainty. In addition, elaborated institutional orders function as coordinating devices that extend the possibilities of joint action across both time and space: “Exercising logistical power allows states to side-step the direct control of ruling elites, turning states into obligatory passage points for those wanting to exercise modern forms of power. To gain power, elites must go through state forms, forms that either severely restrict or negate their autonomy” (Joyce and Mukerji 2017: 2). Yet in constituting domains of comparatively taken-for-granted and habitual social action, institutions simultaneously generate zones of contention.

One such zone is recognized as formally political, the setting for contention over the issues and events that figure in debates, campaigns, elections, and deliberations over government. A second represents what Nancy Fraser describes as the “discursive-political” or the “politicized” which “contrasts both with what is not contested in public at all and also with what is contested only by and within relatively specialized, enclaved, and/or segmented publics” (1990: 204). Precisely because taken-for-grantedness and habituation are forms of de-politicization, one important kind of political project aims at institutionalization in order to remove issues from active contention. Yet institution building itself may constrain without eliminating the possibilities for multiple and even conflicting imageries of order and models for action. These possibilities are central to recent developments in the sociology of empire, the political construction of markets, and the analysis of policy regimes.

Dynamics of Empire

Empires involve the extension of rule, very occasionally over uninhabited territory but almost always over people somehow already ordered. Constituted within an always-already-existing context of social orders and ordering, empires are characterized by the persistence of diverse forms of local culture and indirect rule rather than the imposition of an encompassing system of centralized direct rule (Barkey 2008). But the work of constructing empire often contributed to the development of states at the imperial center. As Julia
Adams and Steve Pincus contend, the “iconic period of early modern European state formation was actually in large part an era of imperial state formation” (2017: 335).

How do empires-in-formation contribute to the context for state building? Matthew Norton (2017) illustrates this dynamic through a close analysis of the White Pine Acts that asserted British control over the timber best-suited for mast-making in its North American holdings. Efforts to secure this critical material component of naval power generated a “state-dominated circulatory assemblage” that set the terms of ongoing “struggle on two fronts: first, against circuits of local use; and second against global and transnational circuits. Any degree of circulatory control over the movement of white pine achieved by English state agents depended on an apparatus of constant exclusion, a continuing effort to secure the boundaries of the circuit from the ongoing pressure of alternative patterns of circulation” (2017: 48–49). The politics of constructing such a “circulatory assemblage” may generate conflicts over the specific forms of relationship between metropole and territories beyond the current limit of state sovereignty; British elites were torn between two different visions of an imperial project, one featuring an “authoritarian and extractive empire,” the other promoting “opening markets and political and economic integration” (Adams and Pincus 2017: 340–341). The fortunes of the two imperial projects oscillated, but the effort to justify the latter generated one of modernity’s most powerful naturalizing cognitive frameworks in the form of the economic theory of free trade (Erikson 2017).

Yet even the ascendance of one version of an imperial project does not necessarily set in motion the robust reproduction of a stable social order, the outcome suggested by the image of “laws as hedges” that constitute tight constraints and channel action in a very specific pattern. Policies, like hedgerows, may be more or less defined and constricting, a point illustrated by the use of the corporation as a model for political organization in colonial America (Kaufman 2008). Although most North American colonies were organized by royal charter, Massachusetts was organized as a corporation that claimed (against denials from London) that it had the power to issue new corporate charters; the status of Harvard University was caught in the limbo of this disagreement for decades (Kaufman 2008: 407–409). In the course of these struggles, the ability to form corporations took on cultural significance, becoming a marker of political liberty. As a consequence, Massachusetts (along with Rhode Island) emerged as a leader in the issuing of corporate charters after the Revolution, first predominantly for the establishment of corporate and religious bodies, later for infrastructure projects and commercial firms. The resulting proliferation of private entities with legal corporate form – congregations, banks, voluntary associations, and for-profit firms – set in motion a distinctively vibrant trajectory of development that has been characterized as an “open access society” (North, Wallis, and Weingast 2009; Lamoreaux and Wallis 2017).
In this analysis, what initially operated as a higher-order constraint – the corporation as a model of colonial governance – set in motion multiple processes of change, including revolution, economic development, and the elaboration of new law. The achievement of a settlement in the metropole may trigger new lines of contestation across an imperial system, as when the expansion of civil and voting rights for citizens in the imperial state are then adopted as aspirational standards for would-be citizens in the colonies (Strang 1990). A similar dynamic is evident in other aspects of empire, as when the goal of controlling extended territory leads to the recruitment of members of the indigenous population into colonial armed forces, deploying the military as a “cosmopolitan form of discipline” (Barkawi 2017: 64) which may in time be torn from the control of metropolitan authority. Military authority may be naturalized or depersonalized in one setting, while it becomes both model for emulation and target of resistance in another.

This attention to the role of institutions as frameworks for variation rather than as the source of a locked-in trajectory recurs in Steinmetz’s comparative analysis of multiple colonies within the German empire (2008). The brutal genocide waged against indigenous populations in the German colonies of southwest Africa (contemporary Namibia) has been portrayed as a prehistory of the Holocaust, expressing a durable element of German political culture. Yet extended comparisons with the German colonies in Samoa and in Qingdao/Kiaochow in China document the establishment of contrasting and changing ethnographic imageries by colonial officials which might support preservation of traditional culture or interaction with the colonized, rather than positioning the indigenous population as inferior, rebellious, and appropriate for extermination. While colonial officials in southwest Africa moved toward genocide, the Chinese colony “began to move away from its violent, segregationist beginnings, engaging in more open-ended processes of civilizational exchange and cultural syncretism” (2008: 606). Rather than attributing these between-colony and over-time variations to idiosyncratic features of each case, Steinmetz argues that empire itself constituted a “field” that set the terms of access to careers in the colonial office and of competition over the dominant terms of “ethnographic insight.” The dominance of different imageries of the colonized in different colonies had self-fulfilling consequences, constructing the social on the terms envisioned by the officials themselves.

This feedback captures a more general feature of the state-as-institutions: “As specific administrative practices came to appear as naturally, rightfully, or inevitably the prerogative of the state, the power of the state to ‘order’ more of social life was enhanced” (Loveman 2005: 1661). In this way, “state” in the singular may generate durable trajectories of development and the reproduction of order. However to the extent that such trajectories do not encompass the whole of social order, a robust but delimited ordering dynamic may generate tensions, opportunities, and contradictions with other elements, which in turn may be generated by other components of a composite state or architecture of
governance. Over the early modern and modern eras, the role of states as institutional frameworks for the development of markets represents a powerful example of this capacity of state-as-institutions to instigate processes of thoroughgoing social change.

**HOW STATES MAKE MARKETS**

For economic institutionalists, the emergence of expanded capacities to organize exchange, limit opportunism, and sustain credit markets represents a critical turn in the history of economic development (North and Weingast 1989). According to Weber, the bureaucratized state is the most rational form of organization, within which calculable law makes free labor, technological advancement, and the creation of unrestricted markets possible. The rational and legal state, put in a nutshell, is “not an extraneous interest but, instead, the key to all of the institutional structure of rational capitalism” (Collins 1980: 932). States generate “capitalized coercion” (Tilly 1990), processes that made early modern markets and contributed to the economic growth at the onset of capitalism. In seventeenth-century England, “impersonal capital markets” or the “one necessary condition for the creation of modern economics” were established only when the political and judiciary powers struck a balance and enforced the property rights of public creditors occurred (North and Weingast 1989: 831, emphasis in original). The legal changes that provide a framework for anonymous creditor–debtor relationships are particularly important (Carruthers 1996: 135), and such anonymity once again exemplifies how state formation involves “a practice of depersonalized power” (Joyce and Mukerji 2017: 6).

But there is no single way to make a market. Whereas the neoclassical economistic perspective suggests that efficiency leads to a homogeneous operation of markets, institutionalists find a variety of market systems coexisting under capitalism as an outcome of institutional arrangements. This varieties of capitalism approach both highlights how “a nation’s political economy [pushes] its firms toward particular kinds of corporate strategies” (Hall and Soskice 2001: 17) and predicts a unique political dynamic that facilitates coordinated markets under globalization (2001: 57). Within nations, power shifts as seen in policy implementations and reforms can define market features (Hall 1986; March and Olsen 1989). The antitrust law in the United States shows that the application of the law generated public coercion and replaced an erstwhile “efficient” business model (Dobbin and Dowd 2000). While the American model of industrial production in the twentieth century, developed within the constraints of antitrust regulation, appeared efficient and was introduced to other Western European countries, the exported model received varying degrees of acceptance across nations because of the preexisting institutional environments (Djelic 1998). The fact that government structures determine the legitimacy of competition and
cooperation affects market development beyond national territories. In creating the Single Market Program of the European Union, the cross-national institutional project came into being only under the constraints of the preexisting institutional conditions. When coordinating across political and corporate actors, states continue to claim their sovereignty over regulating property rights and holding their symbolic power through maintaining and changing the rules of the markets (Fligstein and Mara-Drita 1996).

The institutional processes that made early markets are not simply a historical phenomenon but continue to shape contemporary economies. The state and institutions structure markets most directly through law enforcement and are especially influential in creating markets for innovative commodities. When novel industries such as biotechnology and cochlear implants emerged, government agencies not only scrutinized firms but also actively fostered trust among them (Aldrich and Fiol 1994: 662). These effects exemplify how institutions counter the instability of markets by establishing the sociopolitical legitimacy of the market participants (Aldrich and Fiol 1994: 663; Fligstein 2002: 20) and create conditions for innovation and economic change. For instance, the rise of shareholder value reorganized corporations, an outcome that could not happen without the forces of policies (Fligstein 2002: 168). Within the realm of finance, the markets of mortgage banking emerged as elites designed legal and institutional structures as the “backbones,” with which the infrastructure and the norms of interaction were established (Jacobides 2005: 491–492).

Institutional approaches have produced particularly rich accounts of the most recent financial crisis as it developed out of mortgage banking. Government responses to the collapse of key credit markets exemplify the cognitive, constitutive, regulatory, and enabling dimensions of the state in shaping markets that are foundational to contemporary economies. When exerting power over the financial markets to meet the interests of the elite and strengthen authorities, “governments are always already financial entities” (Quinn 2017: 78). As states attempted to establish the market’s legitimacy and to satisfy their fiscal demands in the aforementioned processes during the last decades of the twentieth century, policies of deregulation led to rapid financialization and eventually the collapse of the markets (Krippner 2011). In making the secondary markets of mortgage banking, the government provided liquidity and attracted capitalists to invest in products whose value and risk appeared ambiguous (Carruthers and Stinchcombe 2001: 119–120). Nevertheless, the policies shifted from deregulating to regulating under the financial crisis, a turn highlighting the contestably selective role of the government. The states influenced the aftermath of the crisis by enabling some actors to minimize the damage they have suffered – a case in point was the securitization of Fannie Mae, the enormous government-sponsored mortgage loan enterprise – while leaving others devastated by market collapse without affording them relief (Carruthers and Stinchcombe 2001: 121; Quinn 2017). In
other words, the antecedents of the financial crisis originated in a retreat from the regulatory role of states rule-makers and guarantors of certain debt obligations.

In addition to their role in shaping the core markets for financial credit, modern states also structure atypical markets that may be subject to particularly intense regulation. But states often apply contradictory logics when setting the boundaries for exchanging morally contested objects. For example, the commodification of persons – understood as corporeal, spiritual, or political beings – is a locus of state-generated institutionalization and delineation of the domain of the market. Establishing the discursive opportunity structures of bodily exchange, including defining what can be legally bought and sold, what can be donated, and what exchanges are disallowed, becomes especially challenging when the common social practices are incompatible with state agendas (Ferree et al. 2002). At the moral limits of markets, states determine the possibility of commodification through legal frameworks governing commerce in tissues, organs, and cadavers (Almeling 2007; Hogle 1999) or the legalization of brain death (Lock 2002). Even for the same body part, regulations may differ in complex ways; in the United States, brokers can legally sell donated cadavers but not donated organs (Anteby 2010). In such restricted markets, states can be even more proactive by taking a direct role in collecting body parts. For example, the most “extensive” regimes for blood collection are state-sponsored (Healy 2000). In building (and circumscribing) moralized markets, states have been especially exemplary for their “Janus-faced” nature (Evans et al. 1985) as they implement regulations which may defend or corrupt moral values.

STATES CREATE ECONOMIES, CATEGORIES, AND INEQUALITIES

Just as the impersonal power of states contributes to shared social ontologies – the understanding of what is in the world – states also figure prominently in the generation of legitimated and naturalized relations among social entities. Historically, this has often taken the form of reinforcing relations – particularly ranked hierarchies – among categories. But this type of effect is not an artifact of the past; modern states are centrally engaged in the allocation of advantage and imposition of disadvantage across types of organizations and within their entire populations. A key contribution emerged from lively debates over the development of the modern welfare state that followed the “bringing the state back in” moment of the 1980s (Evans et al. 1985). Whereas early research on social spending had been framed by modernization theory, assessing the relationships between economic development and demography with levels of social spending, a later wave of scholarship argued for the identification of distinctive “worlds of welfare” (Esping-Andersen 1990) as well as “varieties of capitalism” (Hall and Soskice 2001). Both approaches to political economy were fundamentally configurational, arguing that historically
rooted patterns (of unionization, of church–state relationships, of family models, and cultural commitments) characterized durable trajectories of policy adoption and implementation (Hacker 1998). These analyses focused on the diverse ways in which policies were interlocked: patterns of spending on education and rules about school-leaving age fit with approaches to workforce development and corporate governance as well as gendered patterns of child-rearing and employment. In these accounts, particular welfare regimes structured their social context which, in turn, reinforced the reproduction of policy and incentives to work, to marry, and to have children.

As the attention to institutional multiplicity has increased, the insight that states structure societies has not been abandoned but rather has been complicated in ways that contribute to explanations of political change as well as of the reproduction of distinctive regimes. Rather than assuming that all agencies and policies are of a piece, Orloff’s comparison of gendered labor policies begins by disaggregating this policy complex in order to “conceptualize this transformation as composed of two processes – a destructive one, which eliminates the policy and legal underpinnings for male breadwinner/female caregiver households, and a constructive one, which guilds supports for maternal employment” (2017: 133). The relative success and timing of developments along these two lines of policy development – which have played out across legislative, judicial, and administrative arenas – shape outcomes in a fashion that is conjunctural without necessarily producing a stable policy configuration. Instead, “state institutions vary along multiple gendered dimensions, instantiating competing or complementary gendered logics … simultaneously offering support to women and sometimes empowering their political agency while often also reinforcing principles of difference and inequality” (2017: 141).

This insight supplants a more rudimentary understanding of institutions as a kind of opportunity structure that may be either open or closed with respect to challengers and incumbents. Once states are conceptualized as concatenations of institutions, state actors and mobilized interests act in the context of potentially multiple opportunities for policy adoption and extension, enabling “mobilization and access to some groups while denying it to others” (Htun and Weldon 2017) and strengthening policy developments along some trajectories while others shrivel or remain fallow. In some cases, policy adoptions may be catalysts for the undoing of those same policies, for the “potential reversibility of statebuilding.” King and Lieberman, in a discussion of the civil rights state, describe this as the “democratization trap” in which state actors seeking to expand democratic rights must also defend those expanded rights. “Can a democracy, especially one seeking to emerge from a less than fully democratic past, accomplish this without resorting to means that effectively subvert the transparency and popular control that are the hallmarks of democratic policymaking?” Equality as a foundational value is in tension with democratic procedures as an institutionally sustained regime (King and
Lieberman 2017: 184–185). In contrast to the linear formulations of early modernization theory, in which economic change generates corresponding changes in politics and policy, the multiplicity central to these models of the state generates irregular ratchets and even reversals.

The Developmental State

From building the legal frameworks for early modern credit markets and establishing social welfare regimes to regulating the postfinancial crisis, states have created conditions for intense and sustained economic development. In the Weberian rational and legal state, political elites propose and carry out projects that shape economic outcomes (Carruthers 1996; Collins 1980; North and Weingast 1989). To describe how states make not only nations but also a “safer and richer” world, Morris revises Tilly’s line and claims, “war makes the state, but the state makes peace” (Morris 2014: 18–19). Serving as both examples of and critiques against the argument that “legal states produce bigger and more complex economies,” developmental states enrich our theoretical understanding of how political institutions mold markets. Of particular interests are the ways in which state institutions generate trajectories of development that display increasing levels of coherence across domains, the reinforcing and interlocking orders central to analysis of distinctive welfare regimes (Esping-Andersen 1990) or “varieties of capitalism” (Hall and Soskice 2001).

The developmental state literature emerged to make sense of the dramatic economic growth of several East Asian countries over the course of a few decades during the mid-twentieth century. This pattern of growth prompted scholars to revisit core assumptions of modernization theory. The region’s rapid development challenged expectations derived from neoclassical economics which associates economic growth with market-oriented policies (Rostow 1960 and Smelser 1964). Rather than playing a minimalist role centered on the enforcement of contracts, developmental states were characterized by state-led plans and ideologies. State interventions, which attained legitimacy (or received recognition) by solving “coordination problems” between market actors, shaped the agendas of research departments and reshaped industry chains (Chang 1994 in Haggard 2015: 43; Johnson 1982; Wade 1990). While putting the state at the center of market development, the analysis of developmental states questioned another assumption of modernization theory, namely, that strong rational-legal bureaucracies and absolutist states would stifle economic growth. Many of these early developmental states in East Asia were ruled by conservative and authoritarian regimes and, therefore, had neither “strong checks on state power” nor “independent judiciaries” (Haggard 2015: 46). In the context of Weberian models of the relation of rational-legal bureaucracy to the development of capitalism, these cases of the developmental state motivated a new wave of scholarship focused on clarifying the relationship
of institutions to economic growth, often using analyses of cross-regional variation.

Developmental states are characterized by sharing a distinctive state capacity for social and economic intervention that is the product of specific historical trajectories rather than generalizable and linear processes. In his comparison of how states facilitate and mediate exchange, Evans describes the East Asian regimes that combine an internally cohesive bureaucracy with strong ties to networks of business actors as exercising “embedded autonomy” (1989: 575; 1995). This “embedding of” the state in its social context retains that neo-Weberian imagery of a coherent state entity, but the insight can be aligned with recognition of how state building involves different projects of linking and interconnecting social networks and orders (Mann 1986). Building upon Evans’ emphasis on state cohesiveness, Chibber (2002) finds that contrary to earlier scholarship on the benefit of the Weberian legal state, rational bureaucracies – especially those without supra-agency coordination – might in reverse hinder development given their organizational complexity. This finding exemplifies the difficulty of conceptualizing the state as a coherent and hierarchical entity. In other cases, states may fail to develop sufficient bureaucratic capacity and coherence, leaving state authority vulnerable to capture by predatory officials and private citizens who extract and exploit resources for personal gain rather than enhancing development (Evans 1995).

While Evans and Chibber characterized developmental states as overall regimes, subsequent work has explored variation across agencies within a single regime. This move complements the theoretical turn away from a monolithic concept of the state as actor toward analyses of the varying character and capacity of different administrative components and programmatic efforts. In an innovative study of Ghana, for example, McDonnell (2017) draws on expert informants to identify comparatively ineffective and effective national agencies. Starting from the assumption that the bureaucratic ethos and professional practices contribute to economic development, she asks how such capacities are constituted at particular locales within a national regime. Her analysis identifies the importance of key actors, interstitial locations, and career paths that crosscut public and private fields. In some agencies that establish reputations for rigorous expertise, a spell of public service then opens doors to desirable careers. These opportunities for former public servants then feed back to attract new and promising applicants for staff positions in these specific agencies. In this way, developmental states may assemble a variety of disparate practices, understandings, and networks in ways that facilitate some trajectories of development while at the same time some institutions that once supported progress may turn into hotbeds of clientelism and even corruption (Chibber 2002) or possibly vice versa (McDonnell 2017).

The neoliberal reforms of late industrialization have further complicated understandings of the character of developmental states. Whereas their trajectories of economic development had been understood as an alternative
to the path of market-driven capitalism, strong states now enabled market-oriented reforms without entirely abandoning their developmental models (Park et al. 2012). In post-communist Poland, for instance, the interventionist state took an active role in facilitating the transition to “the market” and promoting Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). Adoption of both these policies was enabled by the collaboration of the technocracy and intellectuals who kept the nation from fully embracing foreign and global capitalism (King and Sznajder 2006). The Polish case exemplifies the response to neoliberalism across many of its Central and Eastern European counterparts, in that the rise of FDI could not have happened without the state constructing and legitimizing such demand (Bandelj 2009). As nation-states encounter the force of global economy and cultivate their responses to neoliberalism, international organizations also confront the same challenge.

Throughout its evolution, scholarship on the developmental state has retained its focus on the political construction of markets; and the emergence of global development structures is no exception. International development projects demonstrate that the “system of states,” where national politics dominate the game of transnational governance, manifests the political terrains of global superpowers and their relationships to multilateral organizations (Babb 2009; Hintze 1975). For instance, transnational certification systems emerge as a result of global contestation among associations, which meet their political goals by providing “market-based solutions to collective action problems” (Bartley 2007: 309, 338). Even when international bureaucracies encounter neoliberalism, the strategies through which the institutions retain their organizational agendas also determine the bureaucracies’ survival (Chorev 2013). This most recent turn of development agendas, additionally, shows how the influence of the state institutions are not bounded – as Morris writes, the states and the international political institutions push scholars to “out-Hobbes Hobbes” (2014: 19). Just as the British Empire was driven by conflicts between a project of building extensive structures of authority over extraction and a second project of developing commercial ties as a medium of incorporation, so the contemporary global order oscillates between projects centered on competitive markets and projects of negotiated regulatory orders.

Developmental states, like mature social democracies, may also be embedded in ways that enhance or obstruct the cultivation of democratic capacities and practices of citizenship. Comparative research on the welfare state has advanced the claim that “the organizational coherence and encompassingness of working class mobilization is directly correlated with the size and depth of the welfare state, which is in turn directly correlated with more egalitarian economic and social outcomes” (Heller 2012: 643). As Patrick Heller argues in a comparative study of projects of participatory governance, the introduction of more robust decentralized forms of civic engagement in Brazil, the Indian province of Kerala, and South Africa was profoundly influenced by configurations of party politics. Studies of more mature welfare states have made a related point, demonstrating
that policy design – particularly the clarity of linkages between electoral outcomes and policy changes – can have profound effects on mobilizing or demobilizing citizens (Mettler and Soss 2004; see also Amenta et al. 1999). In these ways, configurations of state power can induce patterns of political participation that stabilize or destabilize particular regimes.

Half a century after the glory days of the developmental state, scholars have explored how state-led development led to further reshaping of states (Chang 2009; Fine and Stoneman 1996; Kim 1993). In many of the East Asian countries central to this literature, industrialization fueled democratization and democratization changed the organizational arrangements of the government. Political competition and power turnovers have destabilized some ministry-monopolized developmental agendas (Fukuoka 2012). In other cases, governments have lost their “autonomy” as policy-makers seek to satisfy the competing claims of both businessmen and labor (Chang 2009; Kim 1993). In retrospect, the developmental state may represent a “transitional phase” of state evolution (Kim 1993: 244) rather than a growth model. It demonstrates yet again how the structures of institutions have been reconstituted over time. Not only do different interest groups and structural designs weave through as well as transform the patchwork of the state (McDonnell 2017), but the strengths of one institutional arrangement of the state may eventually undermine the Leviathan.

DEINSTITUTIONALIZATION, STATE COLLAPSE, AND REGIME CHANGE AS INSTITUTIONAL PROCESSES

Institutional analyses have been haunted by a well-known quip to the effect that “institutions explain everything until they explain nothing” (Thelen and Steinmo 1992: 15). This gibe has become more cutting as recent decades have brought the seemingly unanticipated destabilization and even collapse of major political and economic institutions, ranging from socialist states to national currencies to global markets. A key response has been to think much more closely about the specific character – rather than the overall level – of the vulnerabilities of specific institutional configurations. The specific construction of the system of state actors and their relations to other political forces delineate more or less likely trajectories of institutional collapse.

Few events illustrate this point more dramatically than the Cultural Revolution. Andrew Walder and Qinglian Lu open their study of the destabilization of the Chinese administration with a comparatively informed characterization of the regime as sharing “many of the features that Max Weber attributed to a modern rational-legal bureaucracy” but different on four key points: the lack of alternative careers for bureaucrats under a regime that was the sole employer, close surveillance of political loyalties as well as performance, the exercise of “harsh discipline” over state functionaries, and “the state’s unitary
and centralized structure,” which contrasts with the organization of more personalistic dictatorships (2017: 1147–1148). These institutional features of the regime contribute to an explanation of a widespread pattern of revolt against the administration by administrative personnel (party cadres) that differs from what would be expected if the cascade of revolts against the administration were driven primarily by extra-state insurgencies on the part of workers and students. The combination of directives from the center and the perceived possibility of insurgent challenges altered the preferences of individual state personnel: “the actions of individual bureaucrats, designed to ensure that they stayed on the right side of an escalating purge campaign, collectively destroyed the structures to which their group’s interests were inextricably tied” (2017: 1173). Thus the specific architecture of the Chinese state established a context for its unraveling. The Cultural Revolution exemplifies one type of state collapse: sudden, dramatic, systematic.

But institutional change – and specifically deinstitutionalization – may take other, more incremental forms. In an influential early account of welfare state retrenchment, Paul Pierson (1994) highlighted how decisions to frame benefits in particular ways – visible versus invisible, individualized versus linked to categorical identities and class positions – opened different possibilities for those who eventually sought to roll back systems of social provision (see also Hacker 1998, 2004). Similarly, projects of state building that rest on extensive relationships with nonstate entities – whether social networks, popular associations, or private firms – generate capacities for authoritative action that are not tightly linked to arrangements for accountability, particularly democratic accountability. When the organization of publicly authorized action is lodged in private actors or entities, there is an opening in which the depersonalized power of the state becomes repersonalized, susceptible to description as a particularly interested effort. Thus the development of ever more complex systems of “governed interdependence” (Weiss 2014; see also Tarrow 2015) may create greater capacity to govern at the expense of eroding the ways in which state power is naturalized and thereby becomes less susceptible to challenge.

This possibility highlights the stakes in moving from a unitary conception of state-as-institution to state-as-institutions with its recognition of the concatenated multiplicity of governing arrangements. Whereas the first set of assumptions leads to strong arguments about how states as unitary organizations generate coherence and thereby naturalization of categories and practices, the second framing requires sustained attention to the work of reproducing relative coherence and the possibilities for destabilization and transformation that result when diverse state effects crosscut one another. These possibilities have only increased as state constructions and systems of governance have become more complex and wherever those configurations incorporate diverse, nonpublic actors and entities. As Mara Loveman reflects in her analysis of the “primitive accumulation” of state power, “It is an open
question, and one I do not take up here, of whether we are now moving into
some third stage, characterized by the declining legitimacy of the modern state
with a concomitant dissolution of the state’s symbolic power” (2005: 1658 fn).
By taking up this open question, the institutional analysis of state capacity and
authority will be more attuned to the possibilities of contestation and change
that coexist with the production of depersonalized power.

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16: States as Institutions


III. The State and Its Political Organizations


Nation-state Formation

Power and Culture

Richard Lachmann

Nation-states began to form, in Europe first, in the sixteenth century. The process of formation shaped the sorts of states that emerged and have endured to the present. It is best to begin by defining nation-states so that we can be clear on the objects whose emergence we want to explain. States, in Max Weber’s (1978 [1922]: 54) definition, claim a “monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force in the enforcement of its order,” to which Michael Mann adds the crucial qualifier, in “a territorially demarcated area, over which it claims a monopoly of binding and permanent rule-making” (1986: 37).

What limits the geographic boundaries of each state’s authority? The answer, as we will see, was historically determined by wars and political deals. Some states, however, drew support from their subjects and claimed legitimacy from other states by asserting “a principle which holds that the political and national unit should be congruent [and] that political duty … to the polity which encompasses and represents the … nation, overrides all other public obligations, and in extreme cases (such as wars) all other obligations of whatever kind” (Hobsbawm 1990: 9).

Hobsbawm and virtually every student of this subject agree that nationalism is based on the false assertion that the nation and its people are ancient and enduring. In fact, nations are inventions of nationalists.

[N]ationalism is a political program which has as its goal not merely to praise, or defend, or strengthen a nation, but actively to construct one, casting its human raw material into a fundamentally new form. Long before the current fashion of treating all social and cultural phenomena as constructions, nationalists quite consciously saw their nations in this manner … nationalism has something inescapably paradoxical about it. It makes political claims which take the nation’s existence wholly for granted, yet it proposes programs which treat the nation as something yet unbuilt. (Bell 2001: 3-5)

If we want to understand the formation of nation-states we need to explain how rulers (1) gained monopolies on the legitimate use of force in a territory, (2)
convinced subjects that they belonged to a nationality whose destiny it was to live within the boundaries of that state, and (3) were aided or set back by wars, the developing global capitalist economy, the waves of colonization and decolonization that have accompanied capitalism over the past 500 years, and the infrastructural capacity created by bureaucratization and technological developments. Of course, we can’t provide a full explanation of nation-state formation in a single chapter. Rather, my goal here is to review the most prominent works on this topic, to ascertain their contributions and limitations, and to identify fruitful avenues for future research.

STATE FORMATION

The Fiscal Military Model: Tilly, Ertman, Porter, Downing

The most prominent explanation of state formation is the fiscal military model, developed by Charles Tilly. Tilly seeks to explain why from “something like 500 states, would-be states, stateless, and statelike organizations” in 1490, Europe’s polities consolidated into “a mere 25 to 28 states” by 1990 (1990: 42–43 and passim). In Tilly’s model, the initiative was with rulers. Some early modern European monarchs managed to defeat rivals, absorb their territories, and “empowered existing, relatively autonomous local and regional authorities to collect taxes, gather troops, administer justice, and maintain order on their behalf” (Tilly 2004: 49).

Successful rulers made deals that gathered more capital (which could be used to buy weapons and to hire mercenaries and administrators) and more coercion (armed men) to their side than neighboring polities, which they then defeated. Rulers’ success depended partly on their political skills in building alliances and winning support from rich and powerful subjects, but more decisively was determined by the relative concentrations of capital and coercion that rulers found in their territories and which varied across Europe. At first, the advantage lay with capital-rich polities. Mercenaries could be mobilized more quickly, and were better armed, than bands of feudal retainers. In the sixteenth century, “the increasing scale of war and the knitting together of the European state system . . . gave the warmaking advantage to those states that could field great standing armies; states having access to a combination of large rural populations, capitalists, and relatively commercialized economies won out” (Tilly 1990: 58). As a result, dominance passed to states that combined capital and coercion, most notably France and Britain.

The fiscal military model sees state formation as path dependent. States, once launched on their particular trajectories, were not diverted by later contingent events. The initial deals rulers struck with capital or coercion-controlling subjects shaped the organization of each state, and its ultimate success in defeating and absorbing rivals as well as its capacity to suppress subjects’ tax strikes or rebellions. Other scholars follow a similar path dependent logic while
giving emphasis to different factors than Tilly. Ertman (1997) distinguishes states along two dimensions: their absolutist or constitutional political regimes, and their patrimonial or bureaucratic state structures. He argues that states became embedded in their typological cell when they were drawn into geopolitical competition; thus the timing of their entry into European wars was crucial. Similarly, Porter (1994) and Downing (1992) argue that wars forced rulers to reach accommodations with subjects that then set the future social and political arrangements of each state.

These state-centered authors pay too little attention to the aristocrats, clerics, urban merchants, and ordinary people who surrendered money, arms, and their autonomy to rulers. The authors’ assumption is that entities smaller than states could not survive on their own, and their only choice was to whom they would submit: their own king or an invading army. In fact, subordinate groups had choices and often their resistance was effective in fending off rulers or in extracting better deals. Tilly, in one of his last books, *Trust and Rule* (2005), acknowledges this reality when he describes how states offered security and benefits to peasants, who as migrants to cities were displaced from their kin-based rural trust networks of mutual support, in return for those citizens’ loyalty and service to a nation-state. However, Tilly recognizes the importance of such benefits only for the centuries after states already were established behind clear borders.¹

**Rational Choice**

Rational choice theorists bring an element of contingency to the fiscal military model’s relentless interaction of bureaucratization and war as propellants of fiscal growth. The key contributors to this strain of scholarship – Edgar Kiser and his collaborators (Kaiser and Cai 2003; Kiser and Kane 2001; Kiser and Linton 2002), Jean-Laurent Rosenthal (1998) and Avner Greif (1998) differ from Tilly in their analysis of how rulers and subjects decided whether to use cooperation or confrontation in their respective efforts to increase or minimize taxation. Rulers weighed the benefits of increasing taxes, which could finance potentially profitable wars, with the risk that subjects would rebel.

Taxpayers could submit to higher taxes, use bribery or subterfuge to reduce their personal tax burdens, or engage in collective action to roll back tax increases. Subjects evaded taxes if the ruler’s agents lacked the information to calculate the tax burden or enough personnel to collect what was due. As kings built bureaucracies capable of gathering such information, subjects then had to either pay what was demanded or rebel. Bureaucratization spurred rebellion.

Rulers’ and subjects’ decisions on whether to cooperate or fight were based on their (often inadequate) information about “the anticipated reactions of

¹ A recent edited volume (Kaspersen and Strandsbjerg 2017) includes essays that seek to extend Tilly’s model to regions beyond Europe and to more recent eras.
other actors” (Kiser and Linton 2002: 889). While past experience usually guided decisions, rebellions, civil wars, and wars of conquest could be “turning points.” If a ruler was successful in raising taxes in the past, he was likely to try again when he wanted or needed to fight the next war, and he would be even more aggressive in raising taxes after defeating a rebellion. If subjects could resist taxes or even better overthrow a ruler, then the next ruler would be more likely to offer or submit to subjects’ demands to be consulted on tax increase and decisions to go to war.

The rational choice model suffers from an inability to explain why actors learned from some rebellions, or from some rival polities’ military victories or bureaucratic innovations, but not in other similar instances. Kiser and Linton (2002) offer no clear criteria for identifying turning points. Learning is not explained; it merely is posited from otherwise unexplained changes in behavior. “[T]hese events can rarely, if ever, be predicted, but they can be recognized by their consequences after the fact” (2002: 893). Further, Kiser and Linton are not always clear on what is learned and by whom. They note “the aftermath of the Fronde [in mid-seventeenth century France] was marked not just by repression but by concessions and co-option as well” (2002: 897), but don’t explain why the crown learned to make concessions after it was supposedly so successful at repression. In fact, the crown practiced repression on some elites and made concessions to others, but because Kiser and Linton, and Rosenthal, build their analyses on highly simplified games, with a monolithic elite or “taxpayers” facing off against a unified monarchy, they are unable to explain why actors adopted the divergent strategies that determined the form and success of rulers’ state-building strategies.

**Perry Anderson: A Marxist Analysis of Absolutism**

Marxists identify a different division in medieval societies than the ruler–subject opposition that is the focus of Tilly and rational choice. In their analyses of how capitalists gained power and property at the expense of aristocrats, Marxists offer answers to who strengthened states, how they accomplished that, and why this occurred first in sixteenth-century Europe.

The most sophisticated Marxist analysis of how class struggle affected state formation is that of Perry Anderson. His *Lineages of the Absolutist State* (1974) situates the origins of states in the crisis that followed the Black Death of the fourteenth century. Feudal lords in the wake of that demographic catastrophe were no longer able to control peasants at the local level. “The result was a displacement of political-legal coercion upwards towards a centralized, militarized summit – the Absolutist state. Diluted at village level, it became concentrated at national level (1974: 19). Even though “for many individual nobles” absolutism “signified indignity or ruin, against which they rebelled . . . no feudal ruling class could afford to jettison the advances achieved by Absolutism, which were the expression of profound historical necessities” (1974: 47, 54).
Aristocrats, in Anderson’s view, had no choice but to remain loyal to absolutist monarchies upon which they depended for the power and legal legitimacy necessary to extract resources from peasants. That is why no European aristocracy “ever was wholly or mainly won to the cause of revolt” (1974: 54).

How did localized aristocrats first go about reorganizing themselves into absolutist states? Anderson suggests, without offering much historical detail, that nobles ceded power to a leading aristocrat, often one who already held the nominal title of king, who organized a collective military response to rebellious peasants. Aristocrats united into an absolutist state were able to extract more resources from peasants than isolated nobles ever had. As a result, the collective capacity of the aristocracy increased.

Absolutist states at first were strong only in comparison to isolated feudal nobles. Only a few of these monarchies developed into states with substantial capacities in the sixteenth century. How and why did they do so? Anderson’s answer centers on the development of a bourgeoisie, which he presents as the inadvertent outcome of absolutist state policies designed by aristocrats to safeguard their collective interests. Where a bourgeoisie formed, states became more powerful. Both state and capital grew and profited from the monetization of taxes and rents, the sale of state offices, and the establishment of protected monopolies domestically and of colonial ventures abroad. Anderson explains the different trajectories of Eastern and Western European states and between England and France in terms of the strength of aristocrats’ organization within estates, the extent of town autonomy, and the results of military competition.

Even though European bourgeoisies were able to coexist and prosper under absolutism, those monarchies, in Anderson’s model, were governments of, by, and for the aristocracy. In this Anderson differs from the authors discussed above, who view absolutist state rulers as self-interested and willing to work with any class as long as it helped them to aggrandize state power.

Anderson’s great accomplishment is to explain why states developed in Europe when they did, in the centuries following the Black Death, and to identify actors – feudal aristocracies engaged in a self-directed reorganization to reestablish control over peasants – as the mechanism of state formation. Anderson’s shortcoming is that he is unable to account for the subsequent bourgeois revolutions in seventeenth-century Britain and 1789 France that transformed absolutism into much more powerful modern states. Anderson’s reliance on broad Marxist class categories – aristocracy, peasantry, and bourgeoisie – leaves him unable to explain why bourgeois and aristocratic interests became opposed. The sites of bourgeois class formation he identifies – state offices, autonomous towns, crown monopolies, manufacture, foreign trade – also were inhabited by aristocrats. How can we impute different class identities to occupants of the same sites? What factors allow us to know when actors realign their interests away from those of the states that once privileged them?
Anderson never addresses those questions directly. Readers of *Lineages* never learn how distinctions among aristocratic and bourgeois actors and their interests could be made within or across states. Anderson suggests that differences among class fractions created political tensions within states, but never works out how that led to revolutionary conflict. Instead we are treated to summary sentences at the end of the French and British chapters which merely assert that “The aristocratic reaction against Absolutism [in France] . . . passed into the bourgeois revolution that overthrew it” (1974: 111–112), or “English Absolutism was brought to crisis by aristocratic particularism and clannic desperation on the periphery: forces that lay historically behind it. But it was felled at the centre by a commercialized gentry, a capitalist city, a commoner artisanate and yeomanry: forces pushing beyond it. Before it could reach the age of maturity, English Absolutism was cut off by a bourgeois revolution” (1974: 142).

Anderson’s analysis falls short because he is unable to specify the agents who strengthened absolutist states. His commitment to Marxist categories prevents him from seeing the crucial divisions between actors who occupied the same class positions but who, by virtue of the offices they held, were parts of different elites. When even the most historically informed and theoretically sophisticated Marxist analysis cannot account for the development of some absolutist monarchies into more robust and complex states, we need to look beyond a pure class analysis.

**Michael Mann**

Michael Mann adds complexity to both the simple ruler–subject dualism of Tilly and rational choice theory and to Anderson’s more sophisticated class analysis. Mann makes a huge contribution by recognizing that “societies are not unitary” but instead “are constituted of multiple overlapping and intersecting sociospatial networks of power . . . . A general account of societies, their structure, and their history can best be given in terms of the interrelations of what I will call the four sources of social power: ideological, economic, military, and political” (Mann 1986: 1–2). Mann’s key insight is that social change occurs in the “interstices” of the institutions in which power is held and exercised. Changes in the distribution of one type of power affect the other three types as well. In other words, when one power holder manages to co-opt or seize the power resources of others, the entire character of a society changes. Power holders can find that their ability to dominate subordinates or to apply their power within a territory is newly constrained by transfers of power among others in which they did not directly participate.

Mann, in the final chapters of the first volume of *The Sources of Social Power*, uses that general insight to trace the formation of states in Europe. He shows how political, economic, and military power in medieval Europe was decentralized among feudal manors and in the territories dominated by great
nobles. At the same time, ideological power was held by the Catholic Church, whose power in that realm encompassed all of Western Europe.

Mann traces the British state’s growing revenues and military might as archetypical of the reorganization of power in Europe. He argues that less territorially centralized polities, such as the Duchy of Burgundy, could not mobilize the force needed to defend themselves from the new centralized states like England or the Paris-based French monarch. Mann, like Tilly, sees the growing budget of the British monarchy, and the military power it bought, as the prime measure of state formation. Like Anderson, Mann believes that aristocrats had to join the newly strengthening states, even at the cost of their political and military power, to maintain their economic power over peasants.

Mann contends that aristocrats’ depoliticization (i.e., their subordination to and incorporation within central governments, in some places as members of representative bodies) smoothed the way for capitalists to gain state protection of their property rights and thereby furthered capitalist development. Where aristocrats had been weakened and capitalists were strong, kings took a constitutional path, granting capitalists parliamentary representation in return for higher taxes. Where aristocrats had not been sufficiently depoliticized, kings were more absolutist, granting powers to various corporate bodies in an effort to undermine the still powerful landed magnates. Thus Mann, unlike the rational choice theorists, has an answer to why states became parliamentary or absolutist. Yet that merely pushes the problem back in time. He does not explain how or why aristocrats in some parts of Europe but not others were depoliticized and for that reason he cannot account for why states developed when and where they did.

Pierre Bourdieu

Pierre Bourdieu (2014 [2012]), in On the State² presents himself as a challenger to Marxism in general and Anderson in particular, while also belittling Tilly, Mann, Theda Skocpol, and Barrington Moore for good measure.³ Bourdieu sees family reproduction as the main dynamic propelling state formation. Focusing on France, he identifies the Capetian dynasty, which ruled from 987 to 1328, as the first to successfully sustain a single male line for centuries. The Capetians did so through primogeniture, but kings had to compensate younger sons who neither became kings nor received any of their fathers’ lands. The solution was to expand the kingdom, which Bourdieu claims was accomplished mainly by strategic marriages. He notes that Habsburgs created their vast empire almost entirely by marriage rather than war.

² On the State is a volume containing the edited transcripts of lectures Bourdieu gave in 1989–1992.
³ On the State, partly because it was edited from lecture notes and transcripts, but more because Bourdieu like too many French academics made a cult of unclear writing, can be difficult to understand. Riley (2015) offers the clearest overview of Bourdieu’s argument available.
Of course, the total supply of royal lands in Europe did not expand and therefore the strategy of intermarriage produced more losers than winners among royal younger sons. Bourdieu has nothing to say about why some polities took land from others, whether through strategic marriages or in war, nor does he explain how royal dynasties reacted once all European lands were incorporated within states. Bourdieu, however, does offer an explanation for the internal dynamics of nation-states.

Bourdieu, like Tilly and Anderson, wants to explain why in a “feudal field [with] a set of social agents in competition, having fairly similar assets in terms of resources, military capital, economic capital, etc.” (2014 [2012]: 251) kings triumphed over rival nobles. Bourdieu’s answer is that the king had a decisive advantage in symbolic capital: only he can call himself king (although in fact rival nobles called themselves kings and fought for territory and the ability to claim an exclusive crown). The position of king combined a claim grounded in Roman law (Bourdieu unlike Anderson never explains how Roman law mattered) with a structural position at the top of the feudal chain of sovereignty. This combination allowed the medieval king to “make use of the feudal logic transformed into dynastic logic ... in order to accumulate patrimony and increase his difference over lesser nobles” (2014 [2012]: 251–252). In other words, the king’s symbolic power allowed him to present his private appropriation of resources as a benefit for the public because his person also was an office.

Kings’ ability to establish dynasties placed them in an ambiguous relationship with the staffs they relied upon to administer their growing domains. Bourdieu refers repeatedly to clerks, jurists who once held positions in the church but then moved into the secular state. Bourdieu rightly notes that clerks’ intermediate and ambiguous position between church and crown gave them leverage, but he never explains what that leverage was or how clerks used it beyond broad and vague claims like, “the rise of the clerks and the parallel rise of a thought about politics are two connected phenomena” (2014 [2012]: 335).

Bourdieu asserts, but never details how, staffs worked to consolidate symbolic power in the hands of the ruler. This accomplishment, which needed to be continually reproduced, left kings dependent on the growing corps of officials. At the same time, kings’ growing ability to consolidate symbolic legitimacy should have made them less threatened by younger brothers and so reduced the need to secure new territories for those potential rivals. Bourdieu never works out these dynamics, and he asserts but never explains how kings’ symbolic power actually allowed them to appropriate or control other actors’ economic or political power, thereby creating the modern nation-states he believes emerged in seventeenth-century England and France. Indeed, he never specifies who those rivals were beyond saying they were lesser nobles, nor does he explain how the royal consolidation of power affects class relations, economic development (capitalist or otherwise), or the dynamics of interstate relations beyond the strategy of territorial consolidation through marriage.
Bourdieu, like Tilly, Mann, and the rational choice theorists, gives rulers the initiative, and paints lesser nobles and ordinary subjects as either passive or reactive to royal demands. Bourdieu, like Weber and Anderson, identifies royal staffs as an emergent entity. However, Weber and Anderson are much more precise in identifying the interests of those staffs and in showing how they were able to act as a class in itself and for itself (Anderson) or as self-serving bureaucrats (Weber). Similarly, Tilly shows what and how rulers and capitalists both gained from their symbiotic relationship.

Elite Conflict and State Formation

All the authors reviewed above conflate kings with the state and then paint too bright a line between state and nonstate actors. In fact feudal societies were characterized by multiple elites, each of which exercised certain state-like powers and simultaneously were imbricated in economic production. Feudal manors were political and economic institutions that gave their lords military power and ideological legitimacy as well. The church was the largest manor lord in much of Europe. Clerics in almost every country held more manors than the monarch, and often fielded their own armed forces. Lay and clerical lords constituted rival elites, which jostled each other for resources and authority while trying to fend off demands by kings and aristocratic magnates for control over their lands and the peasants they exploited.

If manor lords, magnates, kings, and clerics all exercised a mix of economic and political power combined with varying degrees of military force and ideological legitimacy how can we differentiate one elite from another? The answer is that each elite inhabited a distinct organizational apparatus with the capacity to appropriate resources from nonelites (Lachmann 2000: Chapter 1). The king’s court, described by Bourdieu, was structurally separate from nobles’ manors and judicial systems and from the church, which also operated a court system, separate from those of king and nobles, with the capacity to regulate laymen’s economic relations and families. Towns had their own judiciaries, controlled rural lands, collected taxes, and often fielded armed forces.

Each elite sought to preserve its privileges and power by maintaining its organizational capacities. Elite institutions, not just the king’s court or putative national government, thus asserted a varying combination of economic, political, military, and ideological powers as they sought to guard their interests against both rival elites and the nonelites from whom they extract resources. Aristocratic, clerical, provincial, and urban institutions in early modern Europe made juridical and fiscal claims similar to those of kings.

All the authors we examined above assume that when rival elites were defeated or were incorporated into states headed by monarchs the resources they formerly controlled were available for geopolitical aims set by rulers (in some cases in consultation with parliaments). In fact, control over resources within states cannot be assumed; it needs to be the object of analysis. Just as
rival elite institutions could challenge and work at cross-purposes to “rulers,” so could elites seemingly incorporated within states retain powers and resources from their old organizational bases and seek to appropriate state resources for their own benefit.

Elsewhere (Lachmann 2000, 2010) I have compared the paths of state formation among Western and Eastern European countries and with Japan (the first modern nation-state outside of Europe). Those trajectories of elite and class conflict determined nation-states’ capacities to appropriate the powers and assets of other elites, to enhance control over peasants (the factor Anderson sees as the prime motivator of elite consolidation within states), and to protect themselves against foreign invaders and then to conquer new lands themselves (the dynamic that is central to Tilly, Bourdieu, and rational choice analysts).

It is a mistake to reduce the complexity of elite conflict, and its consequences for state formation, to a single motivation. State formation was not anywhere a single project of aggrandizing rulers. Rather, it was the inadvertent by-product of multiple elites coming together to gain leverage in their conflicts against other elites and peasants. My elite analysis thus takes a form similar to Mann’s argument (discussed above) that change happens in the interstices of power and to Kingdon’s (2014) view that new policies are implemented only when three separate, problem, policy, and political “streams” come together to set an agenda and identify a solution to a problem suddenly deemed critical. Each victory in elite conflict created a new constellation of elite relations, often altered agrarian class relations, and defined the terrain for the next round of elite conflict.

Elites mainly sought to preserve their existing positions and mostly were opportunistic rather than strategic in seizing openings to enhance their wealth, power, and prestige. Elites almost never were able to anticipate the long-term consequences of their actions. Even when an elite as a group gained in the process of state formation, individual families, the unit in which people conceived their interests and took action (Adams 2005), often lost wealth and position. State formation, like capitalism, was an inadvertent outcome of rare openings in the usually stalemated relations of multiple feudal elites.

HOW THE FIRST STATES AFFECTED THE REST OF THE WORLD

The state formation literature focuses almost entirely on the first states of Europe. Yet, once states established clear if shifting borders, and incorporated multiple elites within a single state structure, those polities affected the rest of the world. Various scholars analyze different facets of the relationship between state formation and (1) the concurrent development of a world capitalist system, (2) the global-spanning empires created by Britain, France, Spain, the Netherlands, and Portugal, and (3) the deepening relationship between states and their subjects/citizens. In this section I address the first two points, and look at the third in the following section.
States and Capitalism

Tilly (2004) identified ways in which states aided capitalist development. States forced peasants into markets to meet growing tax demands. State (mainly military) contracts enriched proto-capitalists, giving them the money to develop larger-scale enterprises. Financiers got rich loaning money to governments perpetually in need of rapid access to money during wars, while those states’ periodic bankruptcies wiped out those investors who had not hedged their bets. In Tilly’s analysis capitalists are passive beneficiaries of rulers’ self-aggrandizing strategies. His assumption is that differences among countries in their rate or level of capitalist development were reflections of their states’ capacities, although capitalists’ money in the form of loans is key to his explanation of how some states defeated others in war.

Marxists, beginning with Luxemburg (1951 [1913]) and Lenin (1996 [1917]), argue that capitalists in the largest and most militarily powerful states benefitted from, and indeed required, their governments’ territory grabbing within Europe and global imperialism to capture the markets and raw materials needed to overcome the inevitable falling rate of profit within their home economies. Eric Hobsbawm argued in “The Crisis of the Seventeenth Century” (1965 [1954]) that Britain used its formal and informal empire to create a “forced draught” of demand from the rest of the world that made it possible and profitable for British capitalists to invest in large-scale proto-industrial production and then full-fledged industry that could not be supported by Britain’s home market or indeed the home market of any European country.

This insight has been developed most fully by world-systems theorists, most notably Immanuel Wallerstein (1974–2011) and Giovanni Arrighi (1994, 2007). They argue that a world-system emerged during the seventeenth-century crisis. That economic and demographic crisis could not be resolved, as previous ones had, within the confines of feudal polities. Capitalists ceded power to political rulers organized into states, which they acknowledged as the superior authority in each territory, in return for recognition of their property rights and protection of commerce. Capitalists depended on states to guide and protect the key innovations that allowed the seventeenth-century and subsequent crises to be resolved: (1) the development of settler colonies beyond Europe, (2) slavery organized as a capitalist enterprise, and (3) economic nationalism, which made national governments the main actors in the contest for colonies and trade networks. Each of those innovations allowed capitalism to expand in scope and to realize new opportunities for profit.

Each of those innovations required ever stronger states to provide the legal regulation and military muscle to sustain those forms of capitalist exploitation. In this respect, world-system theory is functional. When capitalists need stronger states, those states gain strength. Why some states do so, while others fail, is not analyzed, beyond pointing out that core regions have the
strongest states. However, since core regions maintain their centrality through strategies that require strong states, this argument becomes tautological. Similarly, peripheral states appear to be weak from the perspective of residents of the periphery. However, from the perspective of the entire world-system, and of the core capitalists who reap the greatest profits, peripheral states function very well at facilitating exploitation of labor and resources in the periphery and the flow of profits to the core.

Despite world-systems theory’s contribution to understanding how states with different capacities contribute to the division of labor, profit, and power in the capitalist world-system, this model has little to say about how those different states, especially the strongest ones in early modern Europe, were established and then amassed the powers that facilitated capitalism at home and imperialism abroad. Instead we are left with a series of unanswered questions: How did capitalists decide to surrender powers to states? Did all capitalists understand the necessity of that concession and, if not, how did some capitalists convince or force others to go along? How did state rulers come to make it their mission to further the interests of their local capitalists, and in the case of peripheral states, of capitalists from core regions?

Empires and Nation-States

The formation of nation-states happened concurrently with the establishment of global empires by the largest and richest Western European states. While today we can regard Britons, Russians, and citizens of other nation-states each as part of a single people, when those states formed they were in essence internal empires whose rulers accepted and managed differences among ordinary people and their local elites, even as they used violence to suppress rebellions (Burbank and Cooper 2010; Go 2011; Hechter 1975; Kivelson and Suny 2017).

Imperialism enriched European states as well as capitalists, and to a lesser extent consumers. Imperial offices and commercial opportunities provided upward mobility for people in the metropole, especially younger sons of aristocrats (an alternative to the intermarriage Bourdieu highlights) and minorities such as the Scots in Britain (Bowen 1996). In that way, empire contributed to the strengthening of nation-states, and those states that succeeded in grabbing large and lucrative empires in the sixteenth through eighteenth centuries enjoyed a decided advantage in subsequent centuries in geopolitical and economic competition with rivals that lacked extensive empires. Paul Kennedy (1987) argued that empires imposed costs on great powers that eventually sapped their economic growth; an argument I found was groundless (Lachmann 2009).

Nationalism can be built upon “a proven capacity for conquest. There is nothing like being an imperial people to make a population conscious of its collective existence” (Hobsbawm 1990: 38). Krishan Kumar argues that it is not conquest per se that fosters nationalism but rather those few “empire-builders
... [who] saw themselves as engaged in the development and diffusion of civilization projects of world-historic importance ... [derived] ‘missionary’ or ‘imperial’ nationalism and national identity” from their success (2003: x; see Kumar 2017 for his most recent and comprehensive analysis). Porter (2006), in contrast, finds that Britons outside the upper class thought little about empire and came to identify with their nations as they gained what they saw as “domestic liberty” and later received social benefits.

Colonies and subjects outside of Europe for the most part were considered distinct, administratively and in terms of legal rights, from the metropolitan nation-state. There were, however, exceptions that blurred the line between metropole and colony. Portugal’s royal court fled to Brazil in 1808 ahead of Napoleon’s invading army and ruled the entire Portuguese Empire from Rio until 1820. Under the Estado Novo of 1932–1974, Portugal drew maps showing that small European country and its enormous colonies as a single landmass. France offered citizenship to a few Algerians (Cooper 2011) and its overseas departments elected deputies and senators to the National Assembly and Senate, as did Algeria before independence. However, such claims came in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries when empires came under ideological challenge and then armed resistance.

John Meyer (see his 1997 article for the clearest exposition of his model) makes the strongest claim for the homogenizing cultural influence European nation-states exerted first within their continent and then throughout the world. Meyer claims that “in the West, since at least the 17th century, nation-states have claimed legitimacy in terms of largely common models; this commonality led them to copy each other more freely than is usual in systems of interdependent societies” (1997: 163). In other words, Meyer asserts that early modern European states were able to demand that subjects pay taxes, serve in the military, and obey laws by evoking a European (and in later centuries a world) culture that “allocates responsible and authoritative actorhood to nation-states” (1997: 169). Meyer, and the amazingly large corps of students and followers who have signed on to develop his model, have little to say about how subjects who do not hold state office and had almost no contact with such officials came to share this “world culture.” As we will see below, states in the seventeenth century, and the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as well, were only partially successful in making demands on subjects. Contrary to Meyer’s notion of a world culture, states varied in the sorts of claims they were able to sustain and in the institutional mechanisms they employed to extract resources and obedience from their subjects.

Meyer and his followers are guilty of historical anachronism. To the extent that Meyer et al. present empirical evidence, it is for the twentieth century, and focuses on the adoption by governments of practices and forms borrowed from the most successful states. This “institutional isomorphism” certainly plays a role in explaining why contemporary governments conduct censuses, adopt constitutions, join international agencies, establish ministries of education,
and (at least until recently) all had a national airline as well as a flag. However, his claim that states’ common culture allows for “greater penetration to the level of daily life” (1997: 146) is not supported by the evidence he presents, which is confined entirely to showing commonalities among state symbols and organizational charts. In any case, his twentieth-century evidence cannot be used to claim that subjects regarded states as legitimate in earlier centuries.

HOW STATES CREATED CITIZENS, AND CITIZENS CHANGED STATES

As Europe, and eventually the entire world, became divided into states with mutually accepted borders (albeit ones challenged in wars and civil wars) governments became increasingly capable at extracting an ever broader and deeper set of resources and behaviors from their subjects. Subjects, in turn, made their own demands on states. Let us see how those various sorts of demands were conceived and pursued, and how the achievements of those demands affected subjects’ sense of themselves and their relation to their nation-states.

Money

Rulers above all wanted money from their subjects. Lack of information and a paucity of loyal bureaucrats forced states to rely on local elites to collect revenues. Elites largely spared themselves from those taxes, making most impositions highly regressive.

Tax farms, managed by financiers, provided a way for rulers to bypass nobles or town governments and both float loans and create corps of tax collectors. Sociologists have little to say about the mechanism of tax collection. Historians provide the best analyses of the political and organizational parameters of tax farming and financing state debt.4

While rulers long issued coins, until the nineteenth century those coins’ value was based entirely on their gold or silver content, although rulers repeatedly tried to debase currencies, leading either to inflation or subjects’ refusal to accept government coins. Government coins coexisted with currencies created by localities and private entities until Britain and then other governments in the nineteenth century and the United States in the early twentieth century banned the private issuance of money as the state exerted control over private banks, and the central government limited the autonomy of local and provincial authorities.

4 See Brewer (1989) for England, Collins (1988) and Dessert (1984) for ancien régime France. The volumes edited by Bonney (1999) and Ormrod et al. (Ormrod, Bonney, and Bonney 1999) give the most sophisticated overview of the organization of tax collection and state finance in Western Europe from the medieval era to 1815.
Once national currencies had been created and competing private and local currencies abolished, states could determine the amount of money in circulation and add to it at will. As with the debasement of metal coins in previous centuries this created the danger of inflation as governments printed money to cover deficits. When governments are restrained in issuing notes, the value of a currency can be sustained over long periods and governments can supplement their revenues by slowly expanding the supply of notes. National currencies also make the national governments that issue them a daily presence in their citizens’ lives. Every time someone uses currency they are reminded of their national identity and of their government’s power to confer value on pieces of paper bearing that government’s name and symbols. Nationality is further reinforced when citizens go abroad and need to convert their home currency into the local monetary unit.

States have even “expropriated from individuals and private entities the legitimate ‘means of movement,’ particularly but by no means exclusively across international borders” (Torpey 2000: 4). States issue passports that confer identity and national citizenship, which in turn authorizes individuals to cross borders and determines in which countries they can live, enjoy rights, or visit. Control of movement is essential to the “caging” process that Mann considered a keystone of rulers’ power, allowing states to count their subjects in censuses (Emigh, Riley, and Ahmed 2016), compel national service, confer social benefits, and develop subjects’ senses of themselves as citizens.

Men

Armed forces until the end of the eighteenth century were conglomerations of mercenaries, whose numbers, loyalty, and fighting spirit rose and fell with the amount of cash rulers had to pay them, and military companies recruited, equipped, and trained by provincial aristocrats, who often devised their own battle plans and could and did go home with their soldiers if they decided they no longer agreed with their rulers’ objectives or were unwilling to assume the financial or human costs of war. Only with rare exceptions did rulers command cohesive forces capable of conquering and controlling large territories.

The slow and uneven growth of national armies was transformed fundamentally by the first genuine draft in world history, which occurred in the United States in 1778 during the Revolutionary War. This was a world historical development. For the first time a state was able to enlist armed men beyond its fiscal capacity and without appealing to local elites. The American Continental Congress, faced with defeat and the likely execution of its leaders at the hands of the far more powerful British, shattered the parameters of national politics and international warfare by fostering “the emergence of the national citizen as an organizing principle in politics,” which provided an ideological justification for state policies to conscript those national citizens, and allowed
the “initial mobilization of the wide swath of ‘the people’ for war by the state” (Kestnbaum 2002: 119).

The Americans achieved only limited success in drafting men and ultimately were saved from defeat by French intervention. A decade later, the revolutionary French government, facing extinction at the hands of foreign invaders and aristocratic exiles, copied the American innovation. The 1793 Levee en masse brought in more than a million men and allowed France to defeat its enemies. Later drafts supplied the men for Napoleon’s armies.

“Citizen conscription . . . helped consolidate a politically mass-mobilizing regime . . . by rendering all citizens formally equal . . . by integrating them and their state into a single polity . . . by politicizing them, their relations to one another, and to the state” (Kestnbaum 2002: 131). Such a radical innovation, which was so destabilizing of existing elite power and privilege, was possible only in revolutionary polities, like those of the United States and France, where old elites were under attack and revolutionary leaders saw the draft as the most powerful way to elicit loyalty by giving the masses a stake in the state’s survival, making them citizens with individual and uniform political rights as well as military obligations.

The draft gave a huge advantage in military manpower and motivation to governments that were willing to grant citizenship to their subjects. This eventually forced rivals to attempt their own drafts. Prussia instituted a draft, in 1814, in response to Napoleon. No other country followed this example until both the Confederacy and United States drafted soldiers during the Civil War. By the late nineteenth century almost all European countries had instituted the draft, as did Japan in 1872, providing the basis for its twentieth-century imperial expansion. Britain was the last major power to adopt conscription, which it did only in 1916. Earlier Britain took advantage of its wealth to pay its large pool of impoverished proletarians to serve in the military.

Conscription allowed drastic increases in the size of armed forces, although many of those drafted were in poor health, illiterate, or otherwise unfit to fight. Titmuss (1958), one of the key intellectuals of the post-1945 British Labour Party, argues that these deficiencies provided the impetus for social programs in Britain such as free meals and medical clinics in schools, government-funded public health, the National Health Service, expanded universal education, and family allowances. Before conscription the largest armies in Europe were those of the Habsburgs in the 1630s at 300,000 men and France in the 1690s at 400,000 soldiers. France under Napoleon was the first army with over a million men, but by the late nineteenth century the peacetime, conscripted armies of

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5 Despite its importance in state formation, Meyer Kestnbaum (2002, 2009) and Dorit Geva (2013, 2014, 2015) are the only sociologists who have systematically studied the history and social consequences of conscription. See Lachmann (2013) for a synthetic overview of sociologists’ and historians’ work on conscription and the consequences for citizens’ notions of their national identities.
Russia and France approached that size, and in the First World War all the major combatants fielded multiple millions of troops, and continued fighting even after suffering hundreds of thousands of war dead.

Social Benefits and Democracy

Conscription, more than any other governmental action, turned subjects into citizens. Citizen-soldiers, and their wives, parents, children, and neighbors, came to see themselves as part of a nation. National identity, in turn, deepened soldiers’ willingness to kill and die. Subjects’ understanding of their nation, and of their citizenship in it, became so all-encompassing that it came to transcend the specific actions of paying taxes and military service, which we have just discussed, and voting and receiving social benefits, which I discuss below. Citizens felt themselves members of a collectivity that extended far beyond the lineages, occupational groups, religious communities, and localities that were the limits of almost all humans’ feelings of solidarity until the American and French Revolutions.

Once governments came to depend on conscripts for their very survival and for the territorial integrity of their states, and on “workers in factories supplying the front,” those governments had to respond to soldiers’ and workers’ demands by offering an “expansion of both workers’ rights [to unionize and strike] and broad democratic rights.” Thus, during and after the two World Wars (Silver 2003: 174) workers made gains in such rights in countries with conscription. Governments also had to offer social benefits, which often were first directed toward veterans. The US created a system of old age pensions for Civil War veterans that, by the early twentieth century, covered a majority of northern white males and their widows. Skocpol (1992) is exemplary in showing how veterans’ demands were expressed and realized through the American party system. More broadly, Esping-Andersen (1990) shows how the legacies of state formation – the lingering power of aristocracies and the ways in which elites were integrated into states, state–church relations, and the extent to which farmers were independent of aristocrats and capitalists – shaped state capacity and in turn the form and depth of twentieth-century welfare states.

Finally, soldiers and their families demanded moral recognition of their sacrifices. When wars came to be fought by citizens, especially mass armies of conscripts, “the meaning of the war had come to inhere in its cost. The nation’s value and importance were both derived from and proved by the human price paid for its survival” (Faust 2008: 268). The United States, beginning with the 1867 National Cemeteries Act, became the first state to assume responsibility for identifying and burying all war dead (2008: 211–249). Other states, many beginning during and after the First World War, followed this model, creating national cemeteries, Tombs of the Unknown Soldier, medals for heroism, and holidays and monuments to commemorate the war dead (Lachmann 2013; Lachmann and Stivers 2016).
Democracy is perhaps the ultimate social benefit and places nonelites in a position to demand yet more social programs and legislation to temper capitalist exploitation. As economic growth accelerated in the eighteenth and subsequent centuries, citizens also came to demand policies that fostered increases in their incomes and to reject governments that failed to provide sufficient growth. Rulers, in Tilly’s (2007) analysis, offer voting rights, civil liberties, and social welfare benefits as a way to bind subjects to the state as citizens. Subjects demanded those rights, not as part of a Marxist class struggle, or even as a way to check arbitrary state power, but because two master processes – capitalism and state formation – undermine the “local trust networks” that provide a measure of protection against economic and security risks. States, through police, national laws, and social welfare provisions, create new organizations that offered protection against such risks, binding subjects to the national polity. At the same time, states sought to weaken “autonomous power centers,” partly by attacking them and partly by offering their members “binding consultation.” This meant that voting rights first were offered to privileged minorities and only later were extended to a majority of the adult, male population. As more and more citizens won electoral rights, legal protections, and social welfare benefits, “categorical inequalities,” the institutionalized privileges of elites, were reduced. “[E]xpanding state activity drew more citizens into state-coordinated efforts, which enlarged public politics” (2007: 194). This virtuous cycle leads to a growing electorate of citizens who are dependent on and committed to the national state.

Stein Rokkan (1970) identifies representative bodies, such as aristocratic assemblies and estates, as the sources of democracy. The earlier such bodies win recognition by the ruler, and the stronger those bodies’ powers, the earlier opposition parties will be legitimized and contested elections will become institutionalized as happened in Britain. Barrington Moore (1966) also saw early state formation as determinative of the later viability of democracy. Unlike Rokkan, Moore saw landlord–peasant relations as key. Where landlords were weakened, as in England and France (and in the US, where slaveholders were eliminated by their defeat in the US Civil War), democracy developed.

Landlords’ enduring power led to fascism in Germany and Japan where capable modernizing rulers aborted bourgeois revolutions and suppressed peasants and workers. Communist revolutions as well as the sixteenth-century German peasant war were caused by “the absence of a commercial revolution in agriculture led by the landed upper classes and the concomitant survival of peasant social institutions into the modern era when they are subject to new stresses and strains” (1966: 477). That backwardness, Moore argues, was caused by landlord moves to increase profits by raising rents or tying

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6 Political scientists, beginning with Lipset (1959), have done most of the research on economic growth and elections. See Lewis-Beck (1986), Powell and Whitten (1993), and Pacek and Radcliff (1995) for cross-national comparisons.
peasants to land to use their labor to produce grain for export. In France, Russia, and China the old state’s success in taming or retarding the development of a bourgeoisie opened the door to peasant revolution. Yet, in France that revolution was a link in a long chain that led to democracy, while in Russia and China, peasant revolution was harnessed in what Moore sees as a fairly obvious and unproblematic way by communist parties.

Wallerstein finds that states in different zones of the world-system foster particular political systems with greater or lesser social benefits. Only where indigenous bourgeoisies dominated strong states could they implement a “liberal agenda” of “universal (male) suffrage, the beginning of a welfare state, and national identity” to quiet the revolutionary stirrings of the working class (2000: 421). Outside the core, indigenous ruling classes relied on authoritarian regimes to suppress the “dangerous classes.” Arrighi (1994, 2007; Arrighi and Silver 1999) makes a significant addition to world-systems theory by showing that voting rights and social welfare benefits expanded when competition for hegemony among core capitalist countries peaked, most notably right before, and especially in the aftermath of, the First and Second World Wars. In Arrighi’s view, competition among capitalists weakens them vis-à-vis workers.

National Cultures

Norbert Elias (1982 [1939], 1983 [1969]) locates the early emergence of national cultures in the efforts of rulers and court elites to incorporate provincial notables and then the emerging bourgeoisies in court culture. To the extent that each court culture was distinct, so too were the national cultures that formed as the civility of courtly life was imposed and adopted in the social and geographic peripheries of kingdoms. In that way provincials, bourgeois, and finally commoners derived their ideas of national identity from state elites, but they also were active agents themselves in forming a national culture and became invested in making those cultures distinct from one another. Since most provincials, not to mention bourgeois and commoners, never made it to the royal court, their ideas about national civilization came from books, written in the new literary vernaculars.

Benedict Anderson convincingly argues that nations and languages formed in tandem. Anderson describes nations as “imagined communities … because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members … [and] because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship” (1991 [1983]: 6–7). Anderson locates the origins of these imagined communities in the development of what he calls “print-capitalism.” Publishers usually picked the “administrative vernacular,” the language in which kings communicated with local elites who were not literate in Latin. As both published books and administrative documents
became more common, the “varied” oral languages in which people communicated were “assembled . . . into print-languages far fewer in number” (1991 [1983]: 43).

These print-languages laid the bases for national consciousness . . . they created unified fields of exchange and communication below Latin and above the spoken vernaculars . . . . In the process, [readers] gradually became aware of the . . . millions of people in their particular language-field . . . . These fellow-readers, to whom they were connected through print, formed, in their secular, particular, visible invisibility, the embryo of the nationally imagined community. (1991 [1983]: 44)

Print languages, in addition to fostering national identity, “helped to build that image of antiquity so central to the subjective idea of the nation” (1991 [1983]: 44).

The temporal relationship between nationhood and language is variable and in various times and places provided ideological justification for both of what Rogers Brubaker (1992) presents as two logics of citizenship: the French model opens citizenship to anyone who is willing to acquire the linguistic and cultural requisites, while the German conception is that of a people united by a common language, who then strive to achieve political unity in a single state. France in fact lags behind many European countries in its naturalization rate. Janoski (2010) shows that settler countries (the US, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand) have the highest rates of naturalization, followed by the Nordic countries because of their strong left parties. France and Germany are in the next tier, leading only those countries that never colonized outside Europe or that limited their imperialism to occupation.

Janoski’s analysis shows that countries’ conceptions and practices of nationalism and citizenship are grounded above all in their imperialism and the strength of their left. States’ ability to assert ideals of citizenship or create hybrid practices was determined in part by (1) their position in the world-system (Wallerstein 1974–2011: Volume 4), (2) the resources state elites could and did mobilize to foster national cultural institutions and practices (Breuilly 1982), as well as (3) patterns of migration shaped in part by economic development and capitalists’ demand for labor. Where a state was weak or absent, national languages sometimes became the medium for national literatures, and the existence of a literary tradition championed by “a long-established cultural elite . . . was the basis of the Italian and German claims to nationhood, although the respective ‘peoples’ had no single state with which they could identify” (Hobsbawm 1990: 37).

The best analysis yet written of how national cultures emerge comes from Pascale Casanova in The World Republic of Letters (2004 [1999]). Casanova goes beyond Anderson’s and Hobsbawm’s insight that print languages shape as well as reflect national borders to examine how writers actually conceive their relationship and that of the books they write to national and world literature.
National literatures need their own language, but in Casanova’s analysis they borrow from as much as they shape the oral vernacular. Writers’ individual and collective choices molded their nations’ literature and, in turn, the decisions and careers of their successors because nationalization had tangible consequences for literary practice. Acquaintance with the texts of a particular national pantheon and knowledge of the major dates of a country’s nationalized literary history had the effect of transforming an artificial construction into an object of shared learning and belief. Within the closed environment of the nation, the process of differentiation and essentialization created familiar and analyzable cultural distinctions: national peculiarities were insisted upon and cultivated, chiefly through the schools [that is the main reason why Casanova sees a national state as necessary for a national literature], with the result that references, citations, and allusions to the national literary past became the private property of native speakers [but also potentially of immigrants willing to learn the literary tropes of their adopted nation]. National peculiarities thus acquired a reality of their own, and helped in turn to produce a literature that was consistent with accepted national categories. (Casanova 2004 [1999]: 106)

Nation-states also try to mold citizens’ perceptions of their country’s geography. Yellowstone in the US, the world’s first national park, expresses an essentialist view of nation, rooted in land, unique, enduring, and unchanging. Many other countries have established public parks that preserve landscapes they see as emblematic of their nation. Central Park in New York City, in contrast, speaks to the aspirational nation, engineered and designed even as it appears natural, and planned to transform any and all arrivals willing to learn the customs, language, and culture of their adopted nation. This is Brubaker’s French model, albeit one that in reality France, the US, and other countries bar to some immigrants.

French citizens see their national identity as an amalgamation of language, culture, and the land itself. Food has been elevated into a symbol of that unity, and France in inventing the notion of food as a creative enterprise has made itself into the world center of culinary arts. This cultural claim was codified by the French national government with the creation in 1919 of Appellation d’origine contrôlée, a specific geographic zone that was given exclusive right to make a certain wine, cheese, or other product. The concept of terroir served brilliantly to make the distinctive character of a locality, which even in the early twentieth century was the primary identity of many citizens (Robb 2007), constitutive of the national essence. This French claim to the authenticity of ingredients and the artistry of their preparers was duplicated by Italy, Spain, and Germany, which quickly created their own appellations, and have been followed by other countries since and by the European Union which, in 1992, began granting Protected Geographical Status to foods. Food’s national basis is reinforced in the way in which restaurants around the world are classified in terms of whether they serve the national or a foreign cuisine. Conversely,
countries demonstrate their openness to immigrants by elevating fusion cooking to haute cuisine as the United States and Canada have done.

Bourdieu’s (2014 [2012]) great contribution – that culture is a fundamental source of state power– receives historical specificity from Casanova and the other authors discussed in this section. Bourdieu presents his analysis as a general theory of power and state formation, but the works we reviewed in this chapter show that the relationship between cultural and political, military, and economic power is complex, multidirectional, and changeable over time. The goal for scholars of nation-state formation and for political sociologists more generally should be to specify first how those forms of power relate to one another, second who held one or more of those sorts of power, and above all to identify changes in the institutional bases and efficacy of those sorts of power over time.

CONCLUSION: WHAT STATE FORMATION TELLS US ABOUT CONTEMPORARY STATES

Origins can tell us a great deal about mature social forms and practices. What does the formation of the original European states reveal about the twenty-first-century world of nation-states? I think we are justified in reaching seven conclusions. First, states are not unified. They contain multiple elites that inhabit distinct if often overlapping and always intertwined organizations. Second, state elites gain power by mobilizing allies and their own assets, often from outside the state. Third, while we can distinguish conceptually among cultural/ideological, political, military, and economic power, in practice social actors often exercise several of those forms at once.

Fourth, wars do not always strengthen states. Rulers are desperate for human and material resources during war and therefore make significant concessions to nonstate actors, both elite and mass. Fifth, those concessions endure after wars end and are a major source of social benefits and democratic rights. Sixth, states exist within a capitalist world and their relative geopolitical power and ability to provide improving living standards for their citizens depend on their place in the capitalist world-system, even as capitalists individually and as a class derive advantage from their relationships to national states. Finally, states are able to foster national identities and those endure despite globalization and the rise of alternate identities. Nation-states remain reservoirs of cultural power which combined with states’ other forms of power can compel and often entice citizens to surrender their autonomy to what remains the dominant collective identity in the modern world.

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We are living in a golden age for the political sociology of public finance. The study of taxation and public debt often has been assumed to belong to the domain of economics, but fiscal policies, like other public policies, are the outcomes of political processes that can be studied sociologically, and the eclectic theoretical toolkit of contemporary political sociology – stocked as it is with concepts and middle-range theories from pluralist, institutionalist, power elite, Marxist, feminist, post-structuralist, and other theoretical traditions – can be applied as well to this domain as to any other. Research on the political sociology of taxation and public debt has proliferated rapidly since the last edition of this handbook, as exemplified by articles in top journals (Lachmann 2009; Martin 2010; Morgan and Prasad 2009; O’Brien 2017; Pearson 2014; Quinn 2017; Rodriguez-Franco 2016; Wilson 2011; Young, Varner, and Lurie 2016), books winning major disciplinary awards (He 2013; Krippner 2011; Prasad 2012), synthetic reviews (Bradley 2018; Kiser and Karceski 2017; LeRoy 2011; Martin and Prasad 2014), and agenda-setting anthologies and symposia (Bräutigam, Fjelstad, and Moore 2008; Henricks and Seamster 2016; Martin, Mehrotra, and Prasad 2009; Streeck and Schäfer 2013).1

For the purposes of this chapter, however, the term “fiscal sociology” refers to something different from, and more specific than, the application of sociological theories to the facts of public finance. Fiscal sociology is a

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1 There has been almost as much research on taxation published in ASR and AJS since 2005 as in the entire previous history of those journals. One crude but informative measure is the number of articles with “tax” or cognate terms in the title: I count nine such articles in these two journals from 2005 to the time of this writing, and ten before that.
theoretical tradition that treats fiscal policy itself as a structuring principle of modern social life. The foundational premise of research in this tradition is that public finances – defined broadly to include public debts, public loan guarantees, public expenditures, and tax liabilities – are, themselves, social relations of obligation. When we say that a state levies a tax, for example, we mean that someone in an official capacity imposes on other people an obligation to pay resources into a fund that is recognized as “public.” When we say colloquially that a state or a government spends money, conversely, we mean that someone in an official capacity promulgates a decision that obligates other people to transfer resources from such a fund; sometimes, as with transfer programs that confer a legal entitlement or “social right” (Marshall 1949), the obligation to continue such transfers is rather like a tax in reverse. Fiscal policy is the name we give to the decisions of officials, as officials, to establish or change (or meet or shirk) such obligations. Fiscal sociology is the inquiry into how such social relations of obligation arise, and how they affect other aspects of the social order.¹

This conception of fiscal sociology, notwithstanding its recent labeling as “the new fiscal sociology” (Martin et al. 2009), is now a century old. Rudolf Goldscheid, a founding member of the German Sociological Society, argued in 1917 that the social relations entailed by the state’s mode of resource acquisition shaped the possibilities for social development, and he coined the term Finanzsoziologie to characterize his theory. In a polemical essay published the following year, the economist Joseph Schumpeter criticized the details of Goldscheid’s argument, but embraced the general idea of Finanzsoziologie as “a special field … of which much may be expected” (1991 [1918]: 101). The term was first translated into English as “fiscal sociology” by another critic of Goldscheid, the German-trained economist Edwin R. A. Seligman, who was also an early member of the American Sociological Society. Seligman contrasted Goldscheid’s “fiscal sociology” to his own preferred approach, which he called “fiscal science from the sociological point of view” (1926a: 194). But “fiscal sociology” was the name that stuck. The term had a brief vogue in American sociology in the 1970s and 1980s (Bell 1976; Block 1981; Campbell 1993; Musgrave 1980; O’Connor 1973; Padgett 1981) and it reemerged after 2008 (Martin et al. 2009).

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a focused introduction to, and overview of, recent work in the fiscal sociology of politics. Because this is a volume in political sociology, the focus of this chapter is on the contribution that fiscal sociology has to make to the resolution of some central problems in the field of political sociology. I will discuss older works as necessary to clarify the distinctive contributions of more recent scholarship. The first section of the

¹ This usage of the term “fiscal sociology” should be distinguished from its usage as a residual category to encompass all studies of taxation and public debt that do not fit within the paradigmatic assumptions of neoclassical public economics (see Leroy 2011; Wagner 2007).
chapter sketches a theoretical characterization of fiscal sociology in very general terms, and introduces a few stylized generalizations about the history of public finance that provide important reference points for work in this field. The remaining sections review the recent contributions of this research program to the resolution of three central theoretical problems in the sociology of politics: the causes of democracy, contentious politics, and partisan cleavage structures, respectively. The chapter will have little to say about the contributions of fiscal sociology to other branches of sociology, including such active areas of inquiry as environmental sociology (Fairbrother 2017; Geschwind 2017; Vasseur 2016) and the sociology of stratification and inequality (Henricks and Seamster 2016; Martin and Beck 2017; Newman and O’Brien 2011; O’Brien 2017; Volscho and Kelly 2012; Young et al. 2016). Some such trade-off of depth for breadth is unavoidable in a chapter like this one. Any overview of fiscal sociology will have to leave some things out, if it is not to become a textbook of sociology tout court, because – as Goldscheid argued – public finances touch almost every area of social life.

FISCAL SOCIOLoGY AS A RESEARCH PROGRAM

Fiscal sociology investigates both the social embeddedness of fiscal relations, and the effects of fiscal relations on social life. This chapter primarily reviews studies that concern the effects of fiscal relations – that is, studies that treat one or more aspects of fiscal policy as independent variables. Although fiscal sociology also encompasses studies that treat fiscal policy as the outcome to be explained, scholars working in the tradition of fiscal sociology typically argue that the causes of fiscal policy are worth investigating because fiscal policy, in turn, may have other effects that sociologists care about. It is the latter assumption – that fiscal relations are worth studying because they matter in some very general sense for social life – that is most characteristic of scholarship in this tradition. The focus of this chapter is on how, and for what other social outcomes, fiscal relationships might matter.

The promise that effects of fiscal relationships on social life can be found is an assumption, not a falsifiable hypothesis; even if no such effects had been found yet, it would be possible to keep searching. The first test of a research program like this is whether that search proves worthwhile, in the sense that it continues to generate new solutions to previously unresolved, and perhaps even previously unrecognized, problems in sociology (see Burawoy 1990; Lakatos 1978). A more stringent test of this particular research program is whether the intellectual pay-off for sociology remains sufficient to merit the investment of time and effort that may be required to learn about the relevant details of public finance. Goldscheid asserted that “sociology that is not oriented towards public finance and fiscal history must remain in an incomplete [lückenhaft] and unsatisfactory condition” (1917: 3). But the history of public finances can be a dry and technical subject. Fiscal sociology is worth pursuing only if studying that history yields some scientific benefit for sociology.
What scientific benefit, then, might we expect? Schumpeter gave a stirring but ambiguous answer in his own defense of fiscal sociology. “In some historical periods,” he wrote, “the immediate formative influence of the fiscal needs and policy of the state on the development of the economy and with it on all forms of life and all aspects of culture explains practically all the major features of events” (1991 [1918]: 101). If we read Schumpeter’s statement as a positive claim about the deep causal structure of history, then it would seem to imply that fiscal sociology has pretensions to supplant most sociological theory altogether. We might call this the totalizing program in fiscal sociology. This program has few if any adherents today, for good reason: the totalizing version of Schumpeter’s claim is easily refuted (this point is made by Lieberman 2009). All it takes is one counterexample of an important event for which no amount of knowledge about fiscal policy can provide a sufficient explanation. A more charitable reading of Schumpeter’s claim, then, might take it to be merely an implicit normative assertion about which variables should be regarded as “the major features of events” (namely, those that can be explained by fiscal policy). We might call this the weak program in fiscal sociology. The weak program also has few defenders, if only because it is trivial. It would seem to amount to little more than the claim that fiscal policy is intrinsically interesting. Fiscal policy is intrinsically interesting, to some people. But that is, at best, a reason why those people should take up fiscal sociology as a hobby. It is not an argument for the scientific importance of fiscal sociology.

The strongest case for fiscal sociology, then, may depend on a version of the research program that lies between these extremes. Schumpeter’s manifesto, stripped of its totalizing pretensions, can give us a more modest and defensible reason to pursue fiscal sociology: namely, that we think fiscal policy “explains” some important features of some kinds of events. Let us call this the strong program in fiscal sociology. When we say that a social fact of some kind “explains” something, we generally mean that it is a reasonable stopping place for a middle-range theoretical explanation. Any explanation of a social phenomenon can be subject to infinite regress if one keeps asking “why?” One purpose of metatheoretical commitments is to prevent such an infinite regress, by providing reasons to stop once an explanation has been articulated in terms of preferred theoretical categories. The bedrock assumption of the strong program in fiscal sociology is that at least sometimes it will be reasonable to stop asking “why?” when we have explained how the phenomena of interest result from relations of public finance.

The warrant for this assumption is that the relations of public finance are inherently dynamic and central to modernity (see Martin et al. 2009). Fiscal relations are dynamic in the minimal sense that they tend to change over time. They are also dynamic in the stronger sense that the impulse to change any fiscal relationship is intrinsic to the relationship. The parties to the relationship often have asymmetrical incentives to redefine its terms. These asymmetrical incentives arise from the fact that public finances – such as debts, tax
liabilities, and public expenditures — obligate unreciprocated transfers of resources. Even where the obligation to pay is embedded in a set of long-term relationships that involve some generalized expectation of reciprocity, the payment itself is not a purchase or exchange, and the absence of any immediate or specific recompense both preserves the relationship and creates a chronic potential for conflict (see Graeber 2011; Mallard 2011; Mauss 1990 [1925]). Taxpayers will resist, debtors will fight to renegotiate loan terms, and beneficiaries will demand more spending. Struggle ensues, and sometimes changes the relationship, even as the relationship persists.

To say that dynamism is intrinsic to a fiscal relationship is also to say that the relationship may exert some effects that are at least partly independent of other social relations. We moderns are all enmeshed in a variety of nonfiscal relations (such as class relations, kin relations, and commercial relations) that may have dynamic tendencies of their own. The strong program in fiscal sociology assumes that fiscal relations are irreducible to these other categorical relations among people. Class relations between labor and capital, for example, may influence tax policy, but the relations among different categories of taxpayers and recipients of public spending are more than simply veiled or misrecognized relationships between capitalists and workers. Wilson (2011) suggests the metaphor of “refraction,” instead of reflection, to characterize the way in which the categories embodied in a fiscal relation relate to the rest of the social world: the social relations that come out of a fiscal policy are not precisely parallel to those that went in. Fiscal policy can reorient social relations and redirect social exchange.

The dynamics of public finance are central to modernity because the state is a central institution in all modern societies, and public finances constitute the economic substance of the state (Mehrotra 2017). Taxes and public borrowing, for example, together furnish most of the resources for most of the things that most modern states do. The sheer variety of ends that can be achieved by using the powers of the state to borrow, tax, and spend means that public finances are central to any project of preserving or changing the social order. It is because public finances are dynamic that they can induce conflicts, but it is only because public finances are central to modernity that the resolution of those conflicts is likely to matter for other outcomes of interest to sociologists. The particular contours of a given set of fiscal relationships — the rules that specify who is obligated to pay what, for the benefit of whom, when, and on what terms — will have important implications for the resources available to the state, and thereby, in Schumpeter’s phrase, for all of “the deeds its policy may prepare” (1991 [1918]: 101).

The more proximately that an outcome results from some action of public officials, the more plausible it will be to look for an explanation of that outcome in terms of the relations of public finance. Such outcomes might include, for example, the degree of poverty and economic inequality (Newman and O’Brien 2011; O’Brien 2017; Volscho and Kelly 2012), the salience of national identity
(Lainer-Vos 2013), the economic and legal relations within the family (McCaffery 2009; Strach 2007), the availability of housing and the associated patterns of residential segregation (McCabe 2016; McQuarrie 2010; Oakley 2008), the structures of credit markets (Menaldo 2016; Quinn 2017) and labor markets (Schrank 2009), and many others. The adequacy of any such explanation will depend on the particulars of the explanatory problem at hand – and on the merits of the available theoretical alternatives – but recent comparative historical scholarship provides many examples of explanations that take this form: a conflict arises over public finances, and the resolution of that conflict patterns social relations in enduring ways (e.g., He 2013; Krippner 2011; Lainer-Vos 2013; McCabe and Berman 2016; Prasad 2012; Scheve and Stasavage 2016; Wilson 2011). Many things will have their source in unanticipated changes to the relations of public finance.

THE CAUSES OF FISCAL POLICY

These basic assumptions, as applied to political sociology, have often been taken to imply that public finances are characterized by endogenous and path dependent development. If public finances shape important features of social life, including patterns of conflict and alliance, the reasoning goes, then they may shape the political conflicts that give rise to subsequent relations of public finance. It follows that the explanation for any particular fiscal policy itself may lie in a previous configuration of public finances, rather than in any other contemporary circumstances. The classic works of Goldscheid and his critics described various immanent logics of fiscal development (Goldscheid 1917; Schumpeter 1991 [1918]; Seligman 1919). Fiscal relations, they thought, progressed through a predictable sequence of stages, independent of whatever else might be happening in the social world. Although these theories were overly schematic (and overgeneralized from a few European cases), some of the empirical regularities that they described are, by now, reasonably well established as typical – though not universal – patterns.

One such theory, associated with Goldscheid and Schumpeter, identifies fiscal development as an incremental process punctuated by critical junctures in time of war. A war imposes urgent costs. Those costs may come as an exogenous shock. Public officials, taxpayers, and lenders who are faced with the threat of military defeat may be strongly motivated to renegotiate their fiscal obligations. When a war begins, it therefore may induce an especially rapid increase in public revenues and public expenditures, and those revenues and expenditures sometimes do not revert to prewar levels when peace is restored. This pattern has been called the “ratchet effect,” an analogy that likens war to a ratcheting mechanism that can prevent a gear from turning in reverse (Peacock and Wiseman 1967; see also Tilly 1992). Scholars have identified war-induced ratchet effects on levels of taxation and expenditure (Kiser and Linton 2001; Mann 1980; Rasler and Thompson 1985; ’t Hart 2002), on the adoption of
particular tax and debt instruments (He 2013; Martin 2018), and on the graduation of tax rates (Piketty 2014; for a dissenting view, see Scheve and Stasavage 2016). The precise social mechanisms preventing reversion to prewar levels, and the associated scope conditions on the theory of the ratchet effect, are the subject of ongoing debate. There is some evidence that increased administrative capacity (Kiser and Cai 2003; Mehrotra 2013; Pollack 2009; Rodriguez-Franco 2016) and shifting compliance norms (Feldman and Slemrod 2009; Sparrow 2008) both may be part of the explanation. Regardless of the precise mechanisms, however, the evidence for path dependency is strong. Fiscal relationships often develop along lines laid down during previous military conflicts.

A second theory, associated with Seligman, identifies turning points in fiscal development with turning points in economic development. Seligman characterized the history of public finance as a sequence of qualitative shifts, first from taxes on persons and tangible things (taxation “ad rem”) to taxes on transactions, and then to taxes levied on the intangible market value of things (taxation “ad valorem”). Each stage gave rise to the next. The earliest states levied taxes on persons and things because such taxes were feasible without a developed market economy. Such taxes ad rem encouraged the development of markets: indeed, the obligation to pay taxes in money is a classic example of how states made markets by coercing people into participating in market exchange (Polanyi 2001 [1944]: 172). The more that people participated in markets, the more it was possible for the state to tax market transactions, until, ultimately, pervasive market exchange made available the price information that permitted public officials to appraise the value of things and tax them ad valorem (see Ardant 1965). Modern scholarship rejects Seligman’s assumption that developed market societies necessarily converge on a common fiscal policy. Societies at similar levels of development may differ substantially from one another in their relative degree of reliance on particular spending policies and tax instruments (see, e.g., Campbell 2005; Esping-Andersen 1990; Ide, Hürlimann, and Brownlee 2018; Park 2011; Prasad and Deng 2009; Schrank 2009; Wagschal 2001). Seligman’s most general observation nevertheless has withstood a century of comparative scholarship (see, e.g., Bonney 2002; Kotsonis 2014). Each major qualitative innovation in the instruments of taxation has contributed to the development of markets that enabled subsequent innovations in taxation.

Still a third theory, associated with Max Weber, describes a positive feedback process in the development of tax administration. The imposition of taxes in a population or territory of any substantial size requires substantial organizational effort to gather information and collect resources. This effort is easier when the ruler commands a bureaucratic corps of salaried officials, and Weber noted that the stable revenues provided by taxation first made it possible for some states to establish such a corps (Weber 1946 [1922]: 208). Bureaucratic tax administration disciplined the population to accept their tax
obligations – thereby reducing the costs of future tax enforcement, and increasing the efficiency of bureaucratic tax administration (Bergman 2009; Elias 1994 [1939]). Recent work in political sociology has emphasized that bureaucracies are not all alike, and the particulars of how any bureaucratic state administers its taxes may depend on the culturally specific assumptions that officials make about the societies that they administer – a point that emerges with particular clarity from studies of the diverse forms that tax administration could take within a single empire (e.g., Kim 2012; Wilson 2011). The virtuous or vicious circle described by Weber, however, in which bureaucratization improves tax collection, and increased tax revenues encourage further bureaucratic development, is widely accepted. It is this premise that has led many political sociologists to treat the development of taxation as an index of administrative development more generally (e.g., Kiser and Schneider 1994).

In the context of contemporary political sociology, all of these accounts of path dependent fiscal development are noteworthy for what they omit – namely, any reference to such independent variables as modern democratic ideologies, elections, public opinion, party politics, interest group influence, legislative institutions, or social movements. Such features of democratic political life have been the central preoccupations of political sociology since the founding contributions of Mannheim (1936) and Michels (1915). Their omission as independent variables from the classic texts of fiscal sociology illustrates the theoretical distinctiveness of this research program. Some recent works influenced by the tradition of fiscal sociology underscore the irrelevance of these variables by emphasizing similarities in the process by which fiscal institutions have developed in contemporary democracies and in early modern monarchies, despite the fact that the latter did not have legislatures, social movements, or political parties (Lachmann 2009; Pollack 2009). That is not to say that scholars in the tradition of fiscal sociology have ignored the effects of such phenomena as legislatures, social movements, or political parties. But one of the most distinctive intellectual moves of scholars in this tradition has been to treat these phenomena at least sometimes as dependent variables, that is, to emphasize the causal influence that runs from fiscal policy to these other features of democratic political life. Scholars have sometimes gone so far as to argue that institutions of taxation and sovereign debt are what gave rise to legislatures, movements, and parties in the first place. If these arguments are correct, then fiscal sociology may help to solve some of the core intellectual problems of political sociology. Let us assess them in turn.

The Fiscal Theory of Democratization

The most influential such argument is what Ross (2013) has called “the fiscal theory of democratization.” This theory addresses a central theoretical problem in political sociology. If we define the state in broadly Weberian terms as a compulsory membership organization that claims a monopoly over legitimate
coercion within a given territory (see Morgan and Orloff 2017: 4), then the emergence of democracy is a theoretical puzzle. Why should the leaders of an organization that is, by definition, compulsory, jealous of authority, and coercive care about legitimacy in the first place? And, in particular, why should the leaders of such an organization ever bother to consult with their subjects? The answer given by the fiscal theory of democratization is that states institutionalize consultation with their subjects because, and to the extent that, they depend on those subjects for resources. Consultation helps to render taxation legitimate.

This argument rests on the intrinsic dynamism of relations of public finance. An organization that monopolizes the legitimate use of force may presumably take what it needs by force. But that could cost the state its legitimacy. The price of unrestrained plunder may include resistance, which is costly to suppress, and the destruction of productive capacity, which reduces the resources available for future plunder (see Ardant 1965). In the long run, then, state officials may get the most revenues by restraining their most rapacious impulses and instead institutionalizing a more limited obligation to contribute resources on an ongoing basis: in a word, taxation. Some versions of this theory have made strong assumptions about the rationality and foresight of state officials, who are assumed to opt for taxation after calculating the respective yields of alternative revenue strategies (Bates and Lien 1985; Levi 1988). Other versions of the model have made weaker assumptions about the rationality of rulers, and have introduced military competition among states as a mechanism of selection that could produce a transition from plunder to regular taxation even if most individual states were ruled by short-sighted or nonrevenue-optimizing officials. The states that tax efficiently will have a resource advantage, and those that do not will lose on the battlefield and find themselves destroyed or absorbed (Mann 1980).

Representative institutions, in all such models, solve a problem of imperfect information. Rulers often might wish to increase taxes. But they do not know the limits beyond which further taxation will provoke rebellion or destroy incentives to produce. They might hope to discover these limits by trial and error, but the cost of error, if it means an armed rebellion at precisely the time when the state most needs additional resources for the preservation of order, could be catastrophic (see Kiser and Linton 2002). One solution to this problem of information is the creation of a bureaucratic tax administration empowered to investigate the tax capacity of subjects. Unsupervised tax collectors often steal. Bureaucratic supervision can solve this problem. But bureaucratization, as Max Weber argued, requires a very well-developed money economy and information infrastructure, and the most readily available alternatives to bureaucratic supervision (e.g., incentive pay for tax collectors, or tax farming; see Kiser and Sacks 2009) may incentivize rapacious behavior that can further exacerbate the ruler’s legitimacy problem. Some rulers eventually find their way to another solution that involves consultation – for example by demanding that
resource-holding elites send representatives to a parliament, or by delegating the
details of tax policy to an elected legislature – in order to anticipate, and
preempt, resistance to their resource demands. Citizens, conversely, may
preemptively concede rulers’ demands for resources, in exchange for the right
to be consulted about the form and timing of its resource demands. In short,
taxation is exchanged for representation.

The theory has been tested and refined in studies of the first representative
institutions – parliaments and estates – in early modern Europe. Such
institutions were not democratic in the modern sense, but they did involve an
implicit bargain that traded taxation for representation. Schumpeter’s (1991
[1918]) classic statement of this theory applied it to the convening of the estates
by the Habsburg monarchy. Other work in comparative historical sociology
and economic history has followed his lead, describing the convening of estates
and parliaments in several European monarchies as a response to fiscal
exigencies (see, e.g., Ertman 1997; Lachmann 2000; Tilly 1992). There is
some debate over who initiated the tax-for-representation trade: Tilly (2007,
2009), for example, characterized the creation of representative institutions in
early modern Europe as a response to the threat of rebellion, whereas some
recent studies of the early modern kingdoms of England (Boucoyannis 2015)
and Aragon (Møller 2017) have argued that the rulers who chartered the first
representative institutions were not responding to rebellious subjects so much as
preemptively compelling those subjects to supply information, and
commanding their representatives to stand present as de facto hostages. There
is nonetheless agreement on the general outlines of the bargain. Representative
institutions were tolerated by rulers because they provided useful information
for rulers’ ongoing efforts to raise taxes, and they were embraced by subjects
because they provided greater certainty about future impositions.

The theory also has been generalized to the case of mass suffrage in the
nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Taxation of the mass of wage earners may
require state officials to concede that wage earners, too, have a right to be
represented. There is plenty of comparative historical evidence for a causal link
between fiscal relations and voting rights. In the US, for example, many
nineteenth-century state constitutions explicitly linked voting rights to taxation
(Keyssar 2000), and the timing of the major constitutional changes that extended
the right to vote in federal elections – to working-class white men in 1787, to
African-American men in 1870, to women in 1919, and to adults as young as 18
in 1971 – followed closely on the heels of major wars that imposed new military
and fiscal obligations on these groups. Scholars have also fitted a variety of
statistical models to late-twentieth-century data to test for a cross-national
correlation between taxation and representation in the so-called third wave of
democratization. These studies have produced evidence that democracies
generally tax more heavily and more progressively than authoritarian states,
though there is some evidence that the most authoritarian states also may tax
more heavily than partial democracies (Garcia and Haldenwang 2016; Kenny
The findings concerning temporal order are mixed: some of these studies have found that democratization precedes an increase in the aggregate level of taxation (Acemoglu et al. 2015; Timmons 2010), and still others have found that increases in the aggregate level of taxation are followed by transitions toward democracy (Ross 2004). Either temporal order is potentially consistent with a fiscal theory of democratization in which the combination of representation and heavy taxation represents the negotiated settlement of a political conflict, although they imply different conclusions about the typical causal path to that ultimate settlement. Recent work attempts to identify the direction of causation by exploiting sources of exogenous variation in tax revenues. These studies have found evidence that increases in taxation may cause a subsequent increase in citizen demands for accountability (Baskaran and Bigsten 2013; Paler 2013) and the likelihood of transition toward democratic rule (Gur 2014; Kato and Tanaka 2016).

Another application of the fiscal theory of democratization is the “resource curse” model, according to which availability of certain nontax revenue sources can permit autocratic regimes to persist without conceding democratic rights. The revenues in question are those that state officials can acquire without seizing resources held by their citizens, and which therefore neither require officials to bargain with their citizens, nor trigger effective demands by citizens for representation. A classic and often-studied example of such a resource is petroleum, a point-source commodity that, at least since the late twentieth century, often could be sold on world markets at a price well above its cost of extraction. A substantial empirical literature on the “oil curse” finds consistently that state officials’ access to oil rents in this period is correlated with a lower likelihood of transition from autocratic to democratic rule (see the review in Ross 2015; for a particularly instructive debate that clarified the scope of oil curse effects, see Haber and Menaldo 2011 and Andersen and Ross 2014). Some scholars have argued that foreign aid is another such resource, because a state receiving aid escapes the need to bargain with its own citizens for resources. The evidence for an “aid curse” is less definitive than the evidence concerning oil, perhaps because the effects of aid on democracy are in fact more variable (see Prasad and Nickow 2016). Whereas oil comes from the ground, foreign aid comes from foreign people, and those people may have pro- or antidemocratic agendas of their own. The effects of aid on democracy thus may depend on how the officials of foreign aid-granting institutions exercise their own bargaining leverage. Some rich countries and international institutions have imposed political conditions on foreign aid that encouraged recipient states to become or remain relatively democratic (Brownlee, Ide, and Fukagai 2013; Levitsky and Way 2010).

Recent work by political sociologists has extended the fiscal theory of democratization to other institutions for consultation between states and citizens. Various forms of democratic consultation as different as the initiative and referendum (Martin 2015) and participatory budgeting (Baiocchi 2005)
may have roots in fiscal crises. I have argued elsewhere that state officials can be expected to continually improvise new institutional forms for consultation with their citizens (Martin 2015). Officials in modern liberal democratic states who wish to increase taxes, for example, cannot expect to secure consent by promising their citizens the right to vote, because those citizens already have that right. Officials therefore invent new and more intensive modes of consultation – advisory ballots, opinion polls, focus groups, listening sessions, town hall meetings, and so on – that can help them pacify or preempt resistance. Rather than treating the fiscal theory of democratization merely as an explanation for one historically specific constellation of representative institutions, reified under the label “democracy,” we might productively treat it as a more general theory of institutional innovation in modes of consultation between states and their citizens. If the theory is correct, we may expect that fiscal pressure will induce continued invention of new practices of consultation. Some of these practices eventually may come to be seen as part of the definition of “democracy.”

The Fiscal Sociology of Contention

All democratic states experience occasional, large-scale, collective, and extra-institutional challenges to their authority. Yet we often assume that citizens of democracies have ample institutional means for expressing their grievances with less risk and effort than may be involved in organizing a demonstration or instigating a riot. Why, then, do people protest in democratic states? There is no unified fiscal theory of protest comparable to the fiscal theory of democracy, but fiscal sociology has made a real – if more modest – contribution to the solution of this classic theoretical problem in political sociology. A variety of scholars have converged on the conclusion that, at least in a certain bounded set of cases, the reason for protest in democratic states may have to do with fiscal relations in those states.

The first scholars to advance this argument in modern social movement theory do not seem to have intended it literally. The key conceptual breakthrough of Olson’s *The Logic of Collective Action* (1965), arguably the founding text of modern social movement theory, was to conceive of collective action, including protest and interest group mobilization, as the production of a collective good. This conceptualization suggested an analogy between mobilization and taxation – and allowed theorists to draw on the economics of public finance to model how mobilization comes to be produced (see also Marwell and Oliver 1993; McCarthy and Zald 1977). Olson (1965: 16) explicitly likened the effort of mobilization to a tax on activists (“The individual member of the typical large organization is in a position analogous to that of ... the taxpayer in the state”) (cf. Seligman 1926a). Potential activists deciding whether or not to participate in collective action were assumed to weigh this prospective burden against the expected benefits to be achieved
thereby, and also against the perceived costs of inaction – including other taxes, literal or figurative, that they might be forced to pay if they did not protest (see, especially, Marwell and Oliver 1993). Most social movement scholarship that followed Olson took the analogy between taxation and collective action to be merely a theoretical provocation. Some scholars, however, made headway on the explanation of protest by taking the analogy literally, and identifying ways in which actual fiscal policy could affect the likelihood of collective action by affecting the relative costs and benefits of inaction.

One such line of scholarship focused on how tax policy affects the mobilizing resources available to social movement organizations. In the United States, for example, the tax advantages associated with incorporation as a “not-for-profit” organization have shaped the tactics of social protest. Social movement organizations that incorporate for purposes delimited by section 501(c) of the Internal Revenue Code secure a valuable tax exemption for themselves and their donors. In exchange, they must forego partisan electioneering. In practice they also must devote increasing resources to employ professional staff who can help them certify their compliance with the law. Surveys and interviews of movement organizations have found that these features of tax policy appear to have real effects on the social movement sector. Tax exempt organizations tend to have more resources, more donors, and more professional staff than nonexempt organizations (Cress 1997; Fisher, Campbell, and Svendsen 2012) – but they also have tactical repertoires that are typically narrower, less militant, and, perhaps especially, less oriented toward partisan electoral mobilization (Cress 1997; Edwards and Foley 2002; McCarthy, Britt, and Wolfson 1991). The distinction between social movement and party organizations that structures the field of politics in the United States is, at least in part, an artifact of tax policy.

Another line of inquiry focused on fiscal relations as a dimension of state capacity. Some scholars have argued that “strong states” with the capacity to spend heavily on public benefits, for example, may be especially likely to inspire protest against various forms of adversity, because they may appear to hold out the promise that protest will be rewarded (Kitschelt 1986; see also Amenta and Young 1999; Amenta et al. 2009). Others have argued for a contrary hypothesis: strong states may appear to be less inviting targets for protest, because their resources insulate them from the effects of protest, and fiscally weak states may face more ongoing challenges, because of their inability to impose a definitive settlement on any conflict (Kriesi et al. 1995: 42; Meyer and Staggenborg 1996). The evidence is ambiguous and inconsistent, perhaps because of inconsistency in the conceptualization and measurement of “strong” and “weak” states, or perhaps because the relationship between fiscal capacity and protest tactics is conditional on other factors. Even if relatively great fiscal capacity is seen to promise that a state will be responsive to public demands, that promise may be just as likely to inspire routine and relatively uncontentious forms of political participation, such as voting or lobbying.
Several recent models of protest in democracies have made greater headway by emphasizing “policy threats,” or anticipated losses of personal or economic security that are attributed to changes in public policy (Campbell 2003; Cho et al. 2006; Martin 2008, 2013; Reese 2005). Policy threats encourage mobilization by increasing the perceived cost of inaction. They also may bias action toward contentious forms, by presenting citizens with a signal that their more routine forms of political participation have failed to protect their security adequately. Policy threats may thereby trigger contentious political action by even those citizens who are enfranchised and have safer and less confrontational means of political influence available to them. For example, beneficiaries of public spending often mobilize in response to proposed budget cuts (Campbell 2005; Reese 2005). Citizens may also protest in response to tax increases, particularly when they are not compensated by additional benefits (Martin 2008, 2013). Fiscal austerity measures, which typically combine tax increases with benefit cuts, are among the most predictable triggers of large-scale political contention in democratic states. Several quantitative analyses of independently collected samples of protest event data from every region of the world have found evidence that austerity measures are associated with contentious collective action (Almeida 2014; Beissinger and Sasse 2014; Cisař and Navrátil 2015; Martin and Gabay 2012; Ponticelli and Voth 2011; Quaranta 2016; Walton and Ragin 1990). In the field of social movement research, which has relatively few replication studies, the association between austerity measures and protest may be one of the best-established macro-sociological regularities that we have.

Sociologists have also investigated whether there are particular kinds of fiscal policies that render states especially prone to provoking protest mobilization. One classical argument points to characteristics of the tax system. It was a common assumption of classical political economists that “direct taxes” on people and land generated the most resistance, because the economic burden of these taxes was borne by those who had the legal liability to pay them. By contrast, “indirect taxes” on trade, such as tariffs and excises, were thought to generate less resistance, because the taxpayer legally liable for remitting payment could recover the costs of compliance simply by raising prices, and the consumer who ultimately bore the economic burden would underestimate how much of it was due to the tax; or, in Seligman’s words, “the indirect taxes are often paid without the contributors being really conscious of it” (1919: 4; see also McCulloch 1815; Mill 1871; Puviani 1903). Wilensky (2002) revived this argument to explain both electoral and nonelectoral mobilization against twentieth-century welfare states. A popular “tax-welfare backlash” was most likely, he argued, where the expense of social provision was met with income taxes, which are comparatively visible; conversely, welfare states that relied more heavily on consumption taxes could expect political calm, because taxpayers were less likely to perceive, and therefore to resent, much less mobilize in protest against, the magnitude
of such taxes. The argument has not fared well empirically. Comparative studies of social protest have failed to replicate Wilensky’s finding that states with more reliance on direct taxes experience more resistance (Martin and Gabay 2012). Excise taxes are among the most commonly protested categories of tax within the welfare states that Wilensky studied (Martin and Gabay 2018). In other parts of the world including East Asia (Kato 2003), Central America (Almeida 2014), and Central Africa (Roitman 2004), new taxes on consumption were particular flashpoints of contention in the late twentieth century.

There is more empirical support for another classical argument, with roots in the work of Goldscheid, that points to a structural budget deficit as a cause of protest (O’Connor 1973). We say that a deficit is cyclical if it arose at least partly from the effects of macro-economic fluctuations, and structural where the prevailing fiscal policies would have produced a deficit regardless of the movements of the business cycle. A structural deficit indicates that the state has instead institutionalized incompatible long-term obligations to bondholders, taxpayers, and beneficiaries of public spending (Bell 1976; Musgrave 1980; O’Connor 1973). Where a structural deficit exists, the state must increase its borrowing even in good economic times, and the rising costs of debt service will create an incentive for public officials to repudiate their debt, cut spending, increase tax revenues, or all three. A proposal to enact any one of these fiscal policies is likely to be perceived as a policy threat by the members of some social group. Moreover, the resulting conflict is unlikely to be resolved by ordinary political means, precisely because the institutionalization of long-term fiscal obligations removes budgetary decisions from the realm of democratic deliberation (Streeck 2013). The political response to a structural budget deficit is therefore likely eventually to include contentious protest. Consistent with this argument, a handful of studies with independently collected measures of protest in different samples of countries in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries have found consistent associations between the magnitude of budget deficits and the frequency and magnitude of popular contention (Beissinger and Sasse 2014; Kriesi 2014; Martin and Gabay 2012, 2018).

The fiscal sociology of protest illustrates both the strength and the limits of the strong program in fiscal sociology. The fiscal sociology of protest is on its strongest ground when dealing with social movements that explicitly concern themselves with fiscal policy. Such protest movements are a common and particularly important subset of the social movement phenomena of interest to political sociologists: fiscal policy is a frequent object, and perhaps even the most frequent object, of contentious political mobilization in democratic states. Fiscal policy is far from the only object of protest, however, and movements concerned with fiscal policy are far from the only ones of sociological interest. Although fiscal threats and opportunities may play a more important role in some high-profile social movements than is usually appreciated – as in the antipoll tax campaigns of the Civil Rights movement in the United States, or the role
of excise tax resistance in the movement for women’s suffrage in the early twentieth century United States – many social movements of particular interest to political sociologists do not make claims on fiscal policy in any very direct way. The effect of fiscal policy on such movements is likely to be indirect, as, for example, through its influence on the distribution of relevant organizational resources, or on perceptions of the state’s capacity to address movement demands. In such cases, fiscal sociology has a real but modest contribution to make, by pointing to one set of factors, perhaps among many others, that can bias the terrain in favor of mobilization.

Fiscal and Partisan Cleavages

The fiscal sociology of political parties is a promising line of inquiry, but it is comparatively the least developed of the three branches of fiscal sociology considered here, and it faces important theoretical challenges. The central problem for this branch of fiscal sociology concerns the social bases of political parties. Classic works of political sociology assumed that political parties express the interests of social classes (e.g., Mannheim 1936), and conceptualized political party systems as institutional expressions of underlying social cleavages, where a “cleavage” is understood to be a relatively stable line of conflict between social groups (Lipset 1963: 83). The questions of why different societies exhibit different partisan cleavages, and why partisan cleavages may change over time even within the same society, are among the most enduring questions of political sociology. The contribution of fiscal sociology is the hypothesis that fiscal policy – by imposing categorical distinctions among social groups, and obligating particular distributions of benefits and burdens among the groups so categorized – can give rise to new or distinctive social cleavages, and thereby remake a party system.

The theoretical proposition that policies can shape partisan cleavages is conventionally traced to the work of E. E. Schattschneider, who was an early member of the American Sociological Society (see American Sociological Society 1914: 180) and an influential figure in the institutionalization of twentieth-century political science in the United States. Schattschneider did not cite his theoretical sources. It is plausible, however, to read his influential text on Politics, Pressures and the Tariff as an extension and critique of Seligman’s sociological approach to fiscal science. Schattschneider began this work as a political science dissertation under the title of “The Economic Basis of the Changing Democratic Attitude towards the Tariff” (see Crecraft 1930: 800) at Columbia University, where E. R. A. Seligman was the senior editor of the Political Science Quarterly, the leading proponent of the economic basis of politics, and the leading scholar of the tariff. Seligman had described the development of fiscal policy as the outcome of “the endeavor of each social class to roll off the burden of taxation on some other social class” (1919: 18). He had also argued that “the
government cannot derive any revenue – that is, cannot take any part of the social income – without inevitably affecting social relations” (1919: 316). Schattschneider simply put these two ideas together. He accepted the premise that tariff policy was the result of struggle among social groups to shed the cost of taxation, but emphasized that the relevant social groups were themselves creatures of prior fiscal policy. Tariff legislation, he argued, allows public officials to “stimulate the growth of industries dependent on this legislation for their existence[,] and these industries form the fighting legions behind the policy” (1974 [1935]: 288).

This was more than just a theory of interest groups: Schattschneider treated the tariff as a case study in the changing social bases of political parties in particular. He argued that partisan elected officials brokered coalitions among social groups by writing policies to align their interests. Partisan officials also used economic policy to cultivate new industries and occupations, bringing into existence the very social groups who would join those coalitions. For example, Schattschneider argued, “the dominant position of the Republican party before 1932 can be attributed largely to the successful exploitation of the tariff by this party as a means of attaching to itself a formidable array of interests dependent on the protective system and intent upon continuing it” (1974 [1935]: 283).

This theory of partisan cleavage formation would contrast sharply with the later political sociology of Lipset and Rokkan (1967), who argued that the structure of partisan cleavages had remained relatively immutable since the Industrial Revolution, and that the alliances within parties, and the enmities among them, resulted from the prior institutionalization of social cleavages outside the political system in such organizations as churches, trade unions, and cooperatives. But Schattschneider’s argument surely would have been recognized by Seligman as consistent with fiscal science from the sociological point of view.

Scholars in political science and sociology subsequently generalized Schattschneider’s claims about the tariff into a general inventory of mechanisms by which public policies may produce “policy feedback effects” (see, e.g., Campbell 2012; Pierson 1993). This line of theorizing, influenced especially (but not only) by Esping-Andersen (1985, 1990) and Skocpol (1992), described various mechanisms by which public policy can structure political conflict, chiefly by organizing the flow of resources and the direction of attention. Public spending, for example, may encourage potential recipients to organize for a share of the spoils. It also may reduce the costs of mobilization, both directly, by providing beneficiaries with resources and free time to engage in partisan politics, and indirectly, by explicitly distinguishing beneficiaries from others and thereby making it easier for people with common interests to find each other. Tax policy, too, may reduce the costs of mobilization by promulgating explicit categorical divisions – between people eligible and ineligible for a particular tax break, for example – that can reinforce perceptions of moral worthiness (Faricy 2016; McCabe and Berman 2016)
and furnish party activists with a ready sense of who their potential allies are. Few of the mechanisms of policy feedback identified in this literature are unique to fiscal policy, but, as these examples suggest, tax and transfer policies have been a particularly fertile field for application of policy feedback arguments (see, e.g., the studies reviewed in Campbell 2012: 336).

The empirical literature is rich with examples of fiscal policy generating new partisan alliances. Studies of “the new politics of the welfare state” (Pierson 1996), for example, applied Schattschneider’s dictum that “new policies create a new politics” (1974 [1935]: 288) to the fiscal policies that instituted new relationships between contributors and beneficiaries in late-twentieth-century welfare states. Esping-Andersen (1985, 1990) argued that the effects of fiscal relationships on postindustrial employment trajectories were sufficient to remake the landscape of potential party coalitions. Another influential application focused on the rise of right-wing parties in the US and Western Europe after 1970, and argued that tax systems reliant on progressive income taxes, which explicitly single out middle- and upper-income people, and thereby constitute them as a potential interest group, contributed to the rise of new-right parties (Kitschelt 1997) or to the neoliberal turn in existing conservative parties (Prasad 2006). Some studies of the United States have argued that resistance to income tax enforcement in the 1960s and 1970s was a critical issue that aligned the interests of white segregationists, Evangelical religious institutions, and economic conservatives, and thereby forged the alliance that characterizes the twenty-first-century Republican Party (e.g., Crespino 2007).

As compelling as these examples are, they do not test the hypothesis that fiscal relations affect partisan alignments, so much as illustrate it. This body of scholarship has yet to move beyond these case studies to develop more general theoretical propositions about conditions under which new fiscal policies create new partisan alignments. In the absence of such propositions, the fiscal sociology of political parties is open to challenge on the grounds that the illustrative case studies may be atypical, even if they are real. A particularly strong challenge comes from voluntarist models of political party issue selection, such as the model of “issue evolution” proposed by Carmines and Stimson (1989). According to this influential model, new issues arise unpredictably from exogenous shocks to the political system (1989: 189). Entrepreneurial politicians, particularly outsiders who seek to unseat an incumbent candidate or party, experiment with the new issues that arise locally to see which will resonate with voters. The greater the variety in external disruptions, the more likely it is that at least some of these issues will demonstrate their fitness by winning votes. According to this model, there is nothing particularly special about fiscal policy. The exogenous shocks that transform partisan cleavages arise randomly, and the issue agenda proceeds to evolve through a gradual process of reciprocal selection: entrepreneurial candidates assert novel positions on the issues; in turn, those positions attract activists who use the process of partisan primaries and caucuses to choose
future candidates who adhere to the party’s new line. On this alternative view, fiscal policy sometimes matters for partisan cleavages, and sometimes does not, because parties sometimes happen to seize more or less arbitrarily on this issue, not because of any dynamic quality intrinsic to the relations of public finance. One piece of evidence consistent with this voluntarist view of partisan cleavages is the fact that tax policy waned and waxed very dramatically in partisan salience in the twentieth-century US (Campbell 2009; Hansen 1983; Martin 2008). Another is that the same party may take different positions on fiscal policy at different times without thereby shedding its social base (Berman and Pagnucco 2010).

The fiscal sociology of political parties might be defended on probabilistic grounds. Perhaps fiscal relations are fundamental sources of political conflict and alliance in the sense that distinctions embedded in fiscal relations are consistently more likely than other arbitrary cultural distinctions to become sources of political conflict and alliance. For the present, however, this rejoinder is a hypothesis. One piece of evidence perhaps consistent with this view is the finding of a near universal cleavage between left and right political parties on some questions of tax and transfer policy (e.g., Budge et al. 2001). Much more work needs to be done, however, to distinguish partisan cleavages induced by fiscal policy from the spurious associations that might be expected if both partisan cleavages and fiscal policy were induced by, for example, exogenous social cleavages of class, ethnicity, and nation. Further progress on the question will require analysts to identify particular sets of fiscal relations that are likely to cause particular patterns of partisan contestation, and then to employ appropriate quantitative or qualitative comparative methods to test the hypothesis by comparing the development of partisan cleavages across a sufficiently diverse sample of fiscal contexts. If the fiscal sociology of political parties is correct, then we should expect fiscal relations to exert some structural influence on partisan cleavages wherever parties are found.

THE PROMISE OF FISCAL SOCIOLOGY

Fiscal sociology is more than just the application of sociological ideas to the study of taxation, and more than just a new field of play for the sociological imagination. Sometimes fiscal sociology has been identified with the bare normative assertion that “taxation is important” (Martin et al. 2009: 1), with the implication that sociologists should therefore study it. Taxation is important, and some of us should study it. But that is common sense, not fiscal sociology. What fiscal sociology offers is a particular set of arguments about what exactly sociologists can hope to learn from studying taxation, and public debt, and other relations of public finance: namely, important insights into basic processes of social development in the modern era.

The fiscal sociology of politics reviewed in this chapter may be considered an important but narrow core sample from recent work in fiscal sociology. Because
of the centrality and dynamism of the relations of public finance, they are a strategic point for sociological inquiries that aim to make progress on many of the other central problems of our discipline that have not been the subject of this review. These include the problems that are likely to preoccupy political sociology in the future. One is surely the problem of capital in the twenty-first century, or the problem of the political causes and effects of wealth inequality (Piketty 2014). Every serious work on this problem will have to grapple with the social effects of fiscal policy (e.g., Atkinson 2015; Kenworthy 2015). Another such problem is surely how our societies will adapt to rapid, anthropogenic climate change. Many experts have converged on proposed solutions that would rely on fiscal policy to manipulate the incentives for the production and consumption of fossil fuels. The fiscal sociology of fossil fuel taxation is already a particularly lively area of inquiry, and one that will, no doubt, continue to preoccupy scholars in the discipline (e.g., Fairbrother 2017; Geschwind 2017; Vasseur 2016).

As these examples suggest, the strong program in fiscal sociology remains generative. To fully realize its promise, however, it will need to become more than just an injunction to bring yet another thing “back in”; more than a set of orienting concepts; more, even, than a haphazard collection of hypotheses about particular fiscal institutions. Recent work provides some support for Schumpeter’s optimistic assessment that fiscal sociology is a field “of which much may be expected” (1991 [1918]: 101). But those expectations will be realized only if sociologists do the work of analytical clarification and theoretical synthesis that will be necessary to develop more and better middle-range theories about the conditions under which particular sets of fiscal relationships can be expected to have particular effects on political regimes, patterns of contention, and party systems. The field is wide open. Tilling it will be hard scholarly work. The optimistic premise of fiscal sociology is that the harvest will make this work worthwhile.

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III. The State and Its Political Organizations


INTRODUCTION: THE UNITED STATES AS A CARCERAL STATE

Carceral states rely on incarceration of an exceptionally large number of their citizens, typically accompanied by a diversity of supplemental methods of criminal justice control. The United States of the late twentieth and early twenty-first century is such a carceral state. In the words of political scientist Marie Gottschalk (2015: 1): “a tenacious carceral state has sprouted in the shadows of mass imprisonment and has been extending its reach far beyond the prison gate. It includes not only the country’s vast archipelago of jails and prisons, but also the far-reaching and growing range of penal punishments and controls that lies in the never-never land between the prison gates and full citizenship.” And indeed, jails and prisons in America today are supplemented by expanding probation and parole systems, community sanctions, drug courts, immigrant detention and deportation, public stigmatization of released sex offenders, and the disenfranchisement of ex-felons. Jails and prisons alone reveal the massive scale of the US carceral state. Today, America holds a far larger percentage of the population in its prisons and jails than any other Western democracy and far more than it ever did in its history. Its punitive practices of the past half century have been supported by large majorities of its population, though that support has weakened somewhat during the early part of the twenty-first century.

What explains dramatic trends within the United States, and what accounts for massive cross-national differences? Why did the United States become a carceral state to a degree unparalleled by any other Western democracy? This chapter seeks to answer these questions by offering a multifactorial approach that places particular emphasis on the nature of political and legal institutions and their interaction with conflict-ridden social structure and culture as
articulated by elite penal entrepreneurs and the public. In other words, we are skeptical of explanatory models that focus on one social force, be it the war on drugs, repressive racial structures, neoliberal projects, or elite campaigns, a skepticism we share with other recent literature (e.g., Pfaff 2017). As we review the pertinent literature, including works that do focus on singular factors, we hope to convince the reader first that a synthetic approach is most promising that engages with multiple social forces, linking them into a comprehensive explanatory model. Within this synthesis, however, and this is our second central message, final emphasis must be on those institutional structures within which knowledge on crime and punishment is generated and in which penal decision-makers operate. It is, after all, in the context of institutions that penal decisions are made, no matter what shape the structural and cultural forces take that surround them.

Our plea for a synthetic approach is supported by sophisticated multivariate statistical analyses according to which long- and mid-term changes in punitive attitudes and penal practices are indeed affected by complex interactions between multiple social forces (e.g., Jacobs and Helms 1996; Jacobs and Carmichael 2002, 2003; Jacobs and Jackson 2010). Many of the factors identified by such analyses are explained by theoretically informed studies, which provide an in-depth understanding of the role played by serious crime (Miller 2016; Pfaff 2017), everyday life experiences (Garland 2001), including economic conditions and racial/ethnic conflict (Wacquant 2009), elite strategies (Beckett 1997; Simon 2007), and long-term cultural patterns (Melossi 2001; Savelsberg 2004; Whitman 2003). And, in line with our plea above, recent literature, following earlier suggestions (Savelsberg 1994, 1999, 2002), has paid special attention to institutional arrangements and field conditions under which ideas regarding crime and punishment are generated (Barker 2009; Savelsberg, Cleveland, and King 2004; Savelsberg and Flood 2011) and under which penal decisions are made (Campbell 2012; Campbell and Schoenfeld 2013; Enns 2016; Garland 2010; Gottschalk 2015; King, Massoglia, and Uggen 2012; Lacey 2008; Lynch 2016; Miller 2016; Page 2011; Schoenfeld 2010; Sutton 2000; Tonry 2001; contributions in Ulmer and Bradley 2017; Pfaff 2017).

In this chapter we develop the following line of argument: a sketch of massive divergences in trends regarding public concerns, punitive attitudes, and penal practices, between the United States and European countries, is followed by an exploration of mutually complementary factors and approaches, each supported by distinct literatures. Data and literature show that crime trends, while important, cannot solely explain the growth of the carceral state. Rather, we argue that a focus on crime as culturally processed by political entrepreneurs presents a more promising approach. Long-term cultural patterns also cannot explain massive shifts, but as elements in a toolbox, at the disposal of political entrepreneurs, they matter. And political entrepreneurs are quite effective, especially in times of structural conflict that generate receptive publics. Such publics exert pressure that feeds back into the political process. Finally, again,
all societal pressures must be processed through political and legal institutions before they can translate into penal outcomes. Consideration of institutions is thus crucial if we hope to explain the development of the carceral state—and variation within that state. In the end, its buildup has consequences in the realm of social structure and culture, and some of these consequences may contribute to stabilizing its new and frightening edifice.

CROSS-NATIONAL PATTERNS AND TRENDS

Differences between crime concerns, penal attitudes, and intensities of punishment in Europe and the United States are substantial. Since the late 1970s, the United States has become home to not only massive punishment, but also considerable fear of crime. Such fear and related cognitions inform adaptations in everyday behavior as well as political attitudes and behaviors. They are a precondition for the extraordinarily high rate of public support for punishment across a variety of indicators generally (Enns 2016: 35) and for capital punishment specifically (hovering between 70% and 80% for much of the late twentieth century), for America’s continuing use of the death penalty (the only Western country), albeit only in a limited number of its states (Garland 2010), and for rates of imprisonment that are unparalleled in American history and in any Western democracy, including the substantial use of life terms without parole, also for women (Lempert 2016), and solitary confinement (Reiter 2016; Rhodes 2004).

Punitive attitudes and tough punishment practices are not a constant feature of the United States, just as populations of other countries do not consistently show lenient attitudes. A comparison of trends in support of capital punishment in Germany and the United States, for example, reveals that the public in both countries strongly supported the death penalty in the immediate post–Second World War era. Support among Germans was even higher than among Americans, despite (or because of) the most recent experience of the murderous Nazi regime. The 1960s witnessed a considerable weakening of support in both countries. Analyses for Germany show that this decline was primarily the result of cohort effects, only secondarily of period effects. It reached new lows in the 1980s and 1990s. The United States, on the other hand, experienced rising support of capital punishment, beginning in the mid-1970s, reaching new heights within a few years, and remaining at a high level into the early twenty-first century before weakening somewhat in recent years.

Penal practice shows some parallels to and differences from public attitudes. The trend line for imprisonment rates in the United States of the post–Second World War era decreased through the early 1970s and then began its unprecedented increase that culminated in levels never seen before by the turn of the millennium (from just above 100 per 100,000 population to approach 500 by the early 2000s). The incarceration rate (including the jail population) reached above 700. The buildup of the carceral state especially affected African-
American men, who “are eight times more likely to be incarcerated than whites” (Western and Wildeman 2009: 228). Other forms of criminal punishment such as probation have shown similar increases (Phelps 2017). In addition, rates of executions in the United States are closely associated with trends in public opinion. They declined through the 1960s until a Supreme Court–mandated moratorium brought executions to a standstill from 1968 through 1976; they increased steadily from there through the late 1990s to almost 100 executions per year in 1999, followed by a drop in most recent years. In European countries, by contrast, the death penalty is now abolished.

Comparative analyses show that the United States currently incarcerates far more individuals than any other democratic country, with incarceration rates averaging around 100 in European democracies (Sutton 2000; Western and Wildeman 2009). Further, imprisonment in other Western democracies was comparatively stable during the period in which the carceral state developed in the United States. While incarceration increased in some countries, it did so from comparatively low levels, now approximating international averages, most noteworthy in Scandinavian countries (Enns 2016: 3). Changing rates of punishment in other countries were also less in line with increases in punitive attitudes than they were in the United States (for Germany see Reuband 2003). We shall return to this observation below.

How can we explain the buildup of a syndrome of fear, punitive attitudes, and increasingly severe penal practice in the United States and quite distinct trends in Europe? Can we develop a theory general enough to explain distinct trends in different countries? Several explanatory approaches have been offered, each with its own promises and limits.

EXPLANATORY CONTROVERSIES: TOWARD A SYNTHETIC APPROACH

Crime as a Basis for Punitiveness?

Crime rates increased significantly throughout the 1970s and 1980s, and experienced a substantial decline after 1991. Yet, shifting US crime rates cannot easily explain the exceptional status of the United States as a carceral state. American crime rates for most offenses are quite comparable with rates in other Anglo-Saxon countries and not dramatically higher than those in most European countries. In addition, time series analyses of the relationship between crime and punishment show that the increase in American imprisonment is just as extraordinary when controlling for the rate of violent as well as property crimes (Enns 2016: 11, 120f.).

And yet, one remarkable difference in patterns of crime between Europe and the United States is the higher rate of violent crime such as robbery and homicide in the US (Gallo, Lacey, and Soskice 2014; Pfaff 2017). These
crimes are concentrated in poor inner-city ghettos, where dealing illegal drugs provided economic opportunity after inner cities faced deindustrialization and adverse demographic trends and policy decisions in the 1950s (Sampson and Wilson 1995). When conflicts develop in the world of illegal markets, the resolution of resulting grievances is not left to the state’s monopoly of force, but is carried out through self-help, thus contributing to high rates of violence in these areas (Black 1983; Miron 1999; but see Owens 2011). Consequences are especially deadly given the liberal gun laws of the United States.

How much rates and distributions of violence in the United States play into the country’s extreme levels of punishment is subject to intense debate among scholars. On the one hand, many scholars point out that the majority of inmates in America’s jails and prisons serve time for nonviolent offenses. While this indeed applies to all inmates in jails and federal and state prisons, others focus on state prisons, which house above a 50-percent portion of inmates convicted of violent offenses (Pfaff 2017). Marie Gottschalk similarly highlights the serious nature of crimes for which America’s prison inmates were convicted:

Surveys suggest that four out of five state inmates serving time for a “nonviolent” offense meet at least one of the four criteria that define a “serious” offender. Many people serving time for a nonviolent crime like drug possession have been convicted of a violent offense in the past. Only about a quarter of federal inmates and a fifth of state inmates are first-time offenders. Furthermore, some scholars and law enforcement officials contend that drug charges are often levied as surrogates for more serious, often violent, crimes. This is due to the difficulties that the police and prosecutors face in trying to directly prosecute violent felonies in many poor inner-city neighborhoods thanks to “no snitchin’” norms, the vulnerability of eyewitnesses, and other factors . . . . Releasing low-level drug offenders or diverting more of them from prison will not dramatically reduce the state and federal prison population . . . . The proportion of people in prison for drug-law violations because they were exclusively users amounts to 4 percent of drug offenders in state and federal prisons and just 1 percent of all prisoners. (Gottschalk 2015: 192–193)

In light of such patterns, it may not be surprising that fear of crime and punitive attitudes followed the rise of crime, albeit with a time lag, as John Pfaff (2017) most recently showed. In direct challenge of authors such as Katherine Beckett (1997), Pfaff continues that “as a general rule, public punitiveness has tracked crime, and prison growth in turn has tracked punitive attitudes . . . . Crime leads to fear leads to tough penal policies: it’s far more a bottom-up story than a top-down one where penal policies lead to fear” (2017: 169–170; see also Miller 2016). Even African-American punitiveness, generally far lower than that of white America, reached substantial levels in those years when violent crime began its upward trajectory, affecting primarily Black neighborhoods (Fortner 2015; Forman 2017). Eventually, however, African Americans realized that they were not just victimized by crime, but also by the state’s reaction to crime (van Cleve 2016).

Yet, even those who highlight the role of increasing crime rates for the prison expansion provide cautionary notes. Pfaff, for example, points at the role
played by penal entrepreneurs: “Several prominent criminologists at the time were also vocally warning – incorrectly – that a wave of ‘superpredators’ was right around the corner, which also kept fear of crime high” (2017: 169). In addition, and importantly, punitive attitudes are highest not among those who are most exposed to the risks of violent crime, but rather among residents of middle-class, white American towns and neighborhoods (Johnson 2008). There is an obvious disconnect between risk, fear, and punitive attitudes.

In short, the relationship between crime rates, punitive attitudes, and punishment is complex. We note rather loose sociostructural coupling, in cross-national and demographic terms, but a tighter temporal coupling. We conclude that it is conceivable that violent crime rates play a role in the increase in punitiveness, but argue that it can play that role only once translated into fear through various forms of cultural processing and political instrumentalization (Garland 2001), an issue to which we turn below.

National Cultures: Their Potential as a Toolbox for Political Entrepreneurs

Attempting to explain excessive American punitiveness, one school of thought considers conditions of national culture. Some argue that profoundly religious cultures with clear distinctions between “good” and “evil” dramatize evil and thus produce fear and punitive attitudes, and that such cultures are especially prominent in the United States. Research shows, for example, that judges who are members of fundamentalist Protestant congregations tend to sentence comparatively harshly, and members of fundamentalist Protestant denominations are more likely to support imprisonment, corporal punishment, and capital punishment (e.g., Grasmick et al. 1993).

Further, references to American exceptionalism suggest that American individualism privileges individual culpability as opposed to collective attribution of guilt, encouraging punitive rather than social reform responses (Downes 2001). Individualism is indeed in line with the institutional logic of criminal law, suggesting a particular cultural resonance of penal law responses to norm-breaking behavior in the context of the United States. Even the execution of the condemned is simultaneously a celebration of their individuality (LaChance 2016). James Whitman (2003) similarly highlights American cultural traditions when he contrasts America’s “Harsh Justice” with distinct European modes of punishment. Through historical analysis, Whitman illustrates that aristocratic sensibilities contributed to Europe’s less shaming and ferocious punishment regimes, while American egalitarianism did not provide such a protective shield.

Similarly, the notion of a link between Blackness and crime is an enduring cultural feature of American society (Mohammad 2011). Less suited to explaining high levels of incarceration, it speaks to race-specific patterns of imprisonment, a topic to which we return below.

References to enduring national cultures, however, face major challenges. Punitive attitudes and rates of punishment after all varied considerably in the

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course of the twentieth century across many countries. The United States is the very country in which, in the early nineteenth century, the Quakers had already promoted the replacement of corporal punishment for the sake of a rehabilitation-oriented prison system. Gustave de Beaumont and Alexis de Tocqueville traveled to America to learn about this system and its potential benefits for Europe (for an excellent sociohistorical analysis see Rubin 2015). Further, some American states abolished the death penalty as early as the late nineteenth century, long before European countries would have considered such a step (Garland 2010). Challenges of an enduring culture argument further arise in light of substantial cycles in more recent trends and patterns.

Reference to a long-term culture as a straightforward explanation of punitiveness is similarly cast into doubt when considering other countries. The German case, with its five political regimes in the course of the twentieth century, provides a natural experiment. While valuable measures for public attitudes during the Nazi era and the German Democratic Republic (the Communist part of the divided post–Second World War Germany) are missing, we do know that penal and police practice in the former were unspeakably harsher and in the latter considerably more severe than in the Weimar Republic or in the Federal Republic. As such, national culture fails to provide a straightforward explanation of such variation in penal practices (and probably not for penal attitudes either). A shorter-term perspective leads to the same conclusion in light of substantial variations of punitiveness in the post–Second World War era of the Federal Republic.

And yet, the role of culture may prove powerful if we consider culture as a “tool kit” (Swidler 1986) from which actors can draw in situations of need and opportunity. Philip Smith (2008) discusses how rituals and myths influence penal demands and practices. The question then arises: What types of myths, sensitivities, religious doctrines, and other tools are available in different societies? The availability of cultural tools is a necessary but not sufficient condition for the use of penal strategies. Further, tools need to be legitimate. It is noticeable that the use of force by government appears to have been delegitimized in countries such as Italy and Germany after the brutal misuse by the Fascist and Nazi regimes, but that its chances of survival were higher in liberator and victor countries (Melossi 2001; Savelsberg 2004).

In short, cultural tools matter, but we need to inquire into the conditions under which various types of actors are motivated and find opportunities to mobilize them toward penal strategies (see also Garland’s critique and development of Durkheim [1990: 47–82]).

Structure, Conflict, and Agency of Conservative Elites

Conditions of intense social conflict provide opportunities for the activation of penal instruments from a nation’s cultural toolkit, especially in the presence of penal entrepreneurs. Mohammad (2011) shows how politicians, and even some
scholars, in the late nineteenth century, used theories of racial inferiority and Black criminality as an element of the American cultural toolbox to appeal to white constituents who feared Black social and political progress following the Civil War. Almost a century after Reconstruction, political elites made use of those tools and employed similar rhetoric. Katherine Beckett (1997), for example, successfully links increases in punitive attitudes and practices to activities of members of conservative elites that responded to racial and class struggle and corresponding legal and policy reforms, beginning in the 1960s. Such elites respond to and reinforce conflict along racial and class lines.

The major struggles and victories of the Civil Rights movement, such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964, sparked racial tensions that linked segregationist and penal messages in the 1950s and 1960s (also Weaver 2007). For example, conservative southerners equated strategies of the Civil Rights movement (e.g., passive resistance, limited law violations) with the promotion of lawlessness to explain rising crime rates during this period. Consider the words of Charles Whittaker, a former US Supreme Court Justice, who argued that the 1960s crime wave was “fostered and inflamed by the preachments of self-appointed leaders of minority groups . . . [who told their followers] . . . to obey the good laws and to violate the bad ones . . . This simply advocates the violation of the laws they do not like . . . and the taking of the law into their own hands” (quoted in Beckett 1997: 31). Conservative elites found broader support when elements of the Civil Rights movement turned violent in the late 1960s in response to the deaths of Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy and when slowing economic growth rates intensified competition and broke up the liberal political coalition of the 1960s (Greenberg and Humphries 1980). Empirical studies demonstrate convincingly that white perceptions of Black threat lead to more punitive attitudes among whites (Muller 2012; King and Wheelock 2007). Later, racial dimensions of the punitive turn in the United States revealed themselves in the “war on drugs,” which was declared when drug use among whites was already declining and when policy-makers knew that the victims of this “war” would be primarily inner-city minorities (Tonry 1995).

More recently, scholars have extended the historical reach of the racial conflict thesis. They argue that the institutional racism, embedded within criminal justice practices, beginning with the African-American northern migration in the late 1800s (Muller 2012), was simply revived during the “tough on crime” era in the 1980s and 1990s. As such, several scholars refer to the carceral state as the “New Jim Crow” or the “ghetto” (Alexander 2010; Davis 2003). Yet, while such language suggests that current racial disparities in punishment are direct products of historical institutionalized racism, they neglect the role of politicians in reconstructing that historical past to appeal to public constituents. Other scholars thus prefer language such as “prison industrial complex” or “hyperincarceration” (Wacquant 2002). Their preference is in line with Gottschalk’s (2015) argument when she rightfully
notes that the “New Jim Crow” paradigm neglects the carceral effects of the punitive turn on women, poor whites, and Latinos/Hispanics.

At the same time, class conflict and its intersection with racial tension must be considered to make sense of the rise of the carceral state. The nexus between class and criminal punishment manifested itself with particular clarity in the 1960s, as a response to liberal policy innovations of the Johnson and Humphrey administration’s Great Society programs, especially its “War on Poverty.” Conservatives fought this expansion with a rhetoric that sought to establish a link between welfare and crime. A quote from a 1964 speech by the Republican presidential candidate Barry Goldwater may serve as an illustration: “If it is entirely proper for the government to take away from some to give to others, then won’t some be led to believe that they can rightfully take from anyone who has more than they? No wonder law and order has broken down, mob violence has engulfed great American cities, and our wives feel unsafe in the streets” (as quoted in Beckett 1997: 35; see also Hinton’s 2016 critical assessment of the role of the Johnson administration).

Penal entrepreneurs not only exploited racial and class divides, but also succeeded in transmitting their penal position into public opinion. Examining when respondents to public opinion surveys consider crime or drug use the most important problem the nation faces, statistical analyses of relatively short-term trends yield four insights (Beckett 1997: 14–27): First, media reporting of drug and crime issues and their ranking in public opinion surveys are highly uneven across time. Second, neither media reporting nor public opinion are clearly associated with the actual seriousness of the problem as measured by the crime rate and the incidence of drug use. Third, fluctuations of media reporting are closely associated with political campaigns that highlight crime or drug issues. Fourth, public opinion tends to be motivated by media reporting. Recently, some of these analyses and findings have come under attack. New analyses of longer-term trends by Pfaff (2017), for example, show that crime actually seems to be one driving force of punitiveness (also Miller 2016). Nevertheless, the role of media in culturally processing crime events is likely to be a crucial force in shaping public opinion, especially in light of the demographic disconnect between crime risk and punitive attitudes cited above. Another challenge to Beckett’s arguments was recently formulated by Enns (2016), who questions the causal direction from elites to public opinion. We suggest, and develop this argument further below, that a debate between two unidirectional arguments (elites to populace versus populace to elite) should be replaced by a dynamic multidirectional model.

We summarize the conservative elite approach to the carceral state as such: Elite actors respond to situations of racial and class conflict by causally linking racial and social justice programs to increasing crime rates through national and local political campaigns. The media reports these messages, and public opinion follows suit. Increases in violent crimes, as mediated by news media, further contribute to fear and punitive attitudes. The foundational stone for the carceral
state has thus been laid. Yet, two important factors are missing from this account which we now address in turn: First, to the degree to which elites in fact affected public opinion, why did the public fall in line with penal campaigns? Second, how could elite campaigns and public sentiments translate into legal and political decision-making? We argue that institutional conditions in the US context allowed for this transmission to occur. In addition, elites became captives to the punitive “habits of the heart” they had raised in the first place.

Structure, Conflict, and Public Receptivity to Penal Entrepreneurs

While constructivist social problem theorists tend to examine cases in which entrepreneurs succeed in their efforts at defining social problems, they fail to account for other cases in which the public is not receptive to the campaigns of political elites. Elite campaigns may be necessary, but never sufficient, conditions of social problem careers. Elite political campaigns are only effective if they reach public sensibilities. This sensitivity is a central theme in David Garland’s (2001) book on The Culture of Control. Garland argues that people, under conditions of late modernity, are exposed to extraordinary challenges that produce severe anxieties. He quotes Anthony Giddens’ thesis of ontological uncertainties: Old confidences in stable jobs, streamlined work careers, and social security have been lost. Arrangements of everyday life become more complicated as people are confronted with longer commutes; more single-parent or dual-income situations; longer periods of study, training, and retraining with less secure career expectations; and a weakening of the welfare state’s safety net. In addition, public space is less secured by informal social control, which helps explain actual increases in crime rates and a further increased sense of insecurity in Western societies in recent decades (also Zimring and Johnson 2006; Pfaff 2017). Garland thus argues that we can understand the public’s receptivity to punitive elite campaigns only against the backdrop of general insecurity under conditions of late modernity.

Garland’s arguments align with empirical scholarship on public support for the “three strikes” law in California (Tyler and Boeckmann 1997). Passed through a public referendum, this law demands that offenders convicted of a third felony offense be given a life prison term with no possibility of parole. Tyler and Boeckmann’s work indicates that California’s “three strikes” law was most strongly supported not by crime victims but by those who feel that the basic foundation of their social life has become undermined as the stability of their families is threatened or as immigrants move into their neighborhoods.

Conditions of everyday life and resulting public sensitivities must be taken seriously when we seek to explain general punitive attitudes and people’s receptivity to punitive campaigns by conservative elites specifically. Yet, this argument too faces an important limitation. The United States is not the only country whose residents experience conditions of late modernity. Consider the
small and seemingly peaceful alpine republic of Austria where the majority of young people no longer believe that their retirement benefits are secured. In some of its states, almost half of all children are born out of wedlock. Or consider Germany where family life has abandoned its traditional and standardized ways. Statistical trends show an almost doubled divorce rate by the end of the twentieth century compared to two decades earlier. In the same time span, the number of nonmarried cohabitating couples quadrupled, accompanied by a massive increase in the rate of out of wedlock birth. Finally, the participation of women in institutions of higher learning and in occupational life has increased in European countries, substantially changing family dynamics.

In short, US life has become less certain and life courses less predictable, but quite similar trends unfolded in other Western democracies. While late modernity has arrived in much of the Western world, no other country exhibits the same massive increases in punitive attitudes and practices as the United States. We argue that the transmission of public sentiments into practices of the carceral state, set in motion by conservative elites in times of intense social conflict, and propelled by conditions of late modernity and rising rates of serious crime, can only be understood when we take the institutional context of knowledge production and penal decision making seriously.

Institutional Particularities of the United States

As we address institutions, we are concerned with those that generate and diffuse knowledge, from mass media to academia, and with others in which penal decisions are made and implemented. We agree with Goodman, Page, and Phelps (2017) that reference to a simple pendulum metaphor as a driver of ever changing penal practices is unsatisfactory. We further agree with these authors when they instead highlight the importance of struggles between real social actors over laws, policies, and ideas regarding crime and punishment. We insist, however, that these struggles take place in institutional contexts that profoundly affect action strategies and outcomes.

Knowledge Markets in the United States

The puzzle of country-specific responses to the challenges of late modernity can only be solved if we consider nation-specific institutions that process the insecurities people experience, produce knowledge and ideas on how to respond to these insecurities, promote or inhibit attitudes, and channel those processes in the political and judicial worlds where punitive decisions are made. Such institutions differ considerably even across Western-style democracies.

Consider mass media as one institution through which information is generated and diffused. Mass media in the United States are largely steered through market mechanisms, while public radio and television play much more central roles in most European countries. Mass communication research has
shown that market-driven media tend more toward dramatized and sensationalized presentation of hot news items, including crime, thereby enhancing fear of crime and cultivating punitive attitudes (Heath and Gilbert 1996). In addition, as shown by David Green (2008), media dramatization of crime is contingent on the nature of dominant claims-makers, the legitimacy of elite expertise, and the consensual versus fractured nature of political cultures, all features that are likely to enhance moral panics in the contemporary United States.

Further, public opinion surveying has long been institutionalized in the United States. Media regularly report survey results back into the public, thus contributing to a positive feedback loop that further intensifies public sentiments (Noelle-Neumann 1974). The regular publication of public opinion survey results in mass media has become more common in European countries as well; yet, it was the exception for much of the post–Second World War era.

Finally, even institutional arrangements in the world of scholarship, a contributor to knowledge regarding crime and punishment, are susceptible to market pressures far more in the United States than in European countries. Resource distribution across and within universities depends on their success in competition for student enrollment and research grants. Signs of competitiveness include annual rankings of department members according to their achievement and public rankings of academic programs and universities (Heydebrand 1990). It is not surprising then that the intensifying culture of control was accompanied by rapid growth of academic programs of criminology and criminal justice studies. Driving forces included Justice Departments funding and the creation of demand for higher education among law enforcement personnel. Also, research funding has shifted away from (1) departments dealing with health, housing, or human services to the Justice Department and (2) from researcher-initiated to strategic funding programs.

Importantly, the institutional adaptation of academia to concerns of its political environment had consequences for scholarly knowledge. Content analyses of a large sample of articles on issues of crime and crime control in leading sociology and criminology journals, combined with in-depth interviews with scholars, show that research in specialized programs is more closely oriented toward themes and theories that dominate in the increasingly conservative political sector. This effect is further enhanced where research is funded by political institutions (e.g., Savelberg et al. 2004; Savelberg and Flood 2011). While comparable studies do not exist for other countries, it is likely that European academic institutions that are less competition-oriented will not adapt as readily to their political environment as their American counterparts do.

In short, institutional conditions of the construction and diffusion of knowledge, including knowledge about crime and punishment, are characterized by greater porosity between distinct social fields in the United States than in European democracies. Elite definitions thus translate...
more easily into public opinion and public opinion feeds back into policy positions and certified knowledge.

**Political Markets in the United States**

Markets play a greater role not only in the realm of knowledge production, but also in the world of politics in the United States than in other democracies. This focus on political markets has further contributed to the translation of punitive attitudes into penal practice (Savelsberg 1994). It is among the nation-level institutional and cultural particularities that filter global processes, dislodging them before they prove effective at the national level (Lacey 2008).

Consider the relatively weak position of political parties in the United States. They do not enjoy constitutional guarantees, in contrast to political parties in several European countries. Further, candidates for elected office, chosen through party committees and assemblies in Europe, are being selected in primary elections in the United States. American political candidates who seek to advance their political careers in the legislative branch of government thus have to orient their positions toward opinions and sentiments of the electorate rather than toward relatively stable party platforms.

The same principle applies to the executive branch. President and governors alike are elected through direct popular elections, not through a vote within the legislature as is the case in parliamentary democracies. Further, high-ranking civil servants in the USA are more frequently political appointees, selected by the president. They will return to their prior positions in the business world, academia, foundations, or law firms once the administration changes. Here too public sensitivities make their way into public administration more easily than in most of Europe (Bendix 1974 [1949]). Furthermore, the option of ballot initiatives allows public opinion to more readily translate into political decision-making in the United States than in other democracies (see also Zimring 1996; Pratt 2002).

Finally, the American public is represented in the judicial branch of government through the jury system, and most prosecutors and judges are also selected through popular elections. Even if most reelections of prosecutors are not contested, an argument made by Pfaff (2017), empirical studies show that elected judges and prosecutors will orient their decisions more toward public opinion than their life-tenured civil servant colleagues in most continental European countries (Brace and Boyea 2008; Berdejo and Yuchtman 2013).

In short, all branches of government are more open to adapting to public opinion in the United States than they are in Europe. As a result, anxieties and punitive public attitudes, even if initially unleashed by political elites, are more strongly reflected in the production and diffusion of knowledge and in political and legal decision-making, as political scientist Peter Enns recently demonstrated in rigorous time series analysis, based on solid data and broadly conceived indicators. He concludes that:
the public’s rising punitiveness has been a fundamental determinant of changes in the incarceration rate. This result holds controlling for the crime rate, the level of inequality in society, and a host of other factors. Furthermore, the mass public’s influence appears quite substantial: if the public had not become more punitive, millions of incarcerated individuals would not have been locked up. (Enns 2016: 120, emphasis in original; see also Tonry 2001; Jacobs and Carmichael 2003)

We do not argue, however, that other features of the political system are irrelevant. Lisa Miller (2016), for example, found through a comparative analysis of the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Netherlands that rising crime rates may gain substantial political salience exactly in unified parliamentary systems where the winner of elections is in control of the government agenda. They also do so in proportional parliamentary systems with their coalition-building practices. Yet political salience in these contexts translates into broader policy responses to crime that are not limited to intensified punishment.

In short, we argue that elite approaches and competing arguments according to which politicians respond to fear and rage are not mutually exclusive. Instead, we plead for the consideration of a dialectic process of mutual reinforcement between elite positions and popular demands that is enabled and accelerated by the institutional makeup of the United States and that more broadly is contingent upon the institutional makeup of political systems.

And yet, neither social structure nor institutional conditions are uniform across jurisdictions in the United States, nor are differences across Western democracies immune to change, two themes we now address.

Variation within the United States

We have thus far contrasted the United States with other Western democracies. Yet, heterogeneity of penal practice within the US is substantial, and it has recently become a focus of scholarly attention. David Garland (2010) examines the highly decentralized institutional organization of law and law enforcement in the United States as the central condition of such variation. He explores how, under such institutional conditions, local features of social structure and culture determine levels of punishment, leading to massive variation in the application of the death penalty. Phelps and Pager (2016) explore substantial variation in levels and changes of imprisonment rates: states such as Minnesota are closer to pre-1980 incarceration levels, with between 150 and 200 inmates (per 100,000), while states such as Texas have approximated the national average (around 447) and other states exceed rates of 800.

Other scholars argue that structural and institutional variation in both the political and civic spheres contributes to variation in punishment rates across jurisdictions within the United States. A comparison of penal practice in the states of California, New York, and Washington shows, for example, that state-level differences in political institutions and participatory practices help explain
distinct penal patterns (Barker 2009): “polarized populism” in California contributed to a retributive penal regime; Washington State’s “deliberative democracy” fostered de-escalation; and New York’s “elite pragmatism” advanced a managerial practice of punishment. Other scholars have explored institutional particularities of individual states to explain their specific patterns of punishment (Lynch 2010 on Arizona; Schoenfeld 2010 on Florida). Campbell (2012) finds for Texas that a period of unsettled and contested change generated a highly punitive penal code and created an additional layer of prison facilities to manage lower-level offenders. His analysis suggests that the patterns he identifies reflect institutionalized conflict between state and local governments.

Despite the weight of local-level politics in a highly decentralized United States, all states operate under shared conditions, including the Constitution, national law, federal funding programs for state projects, federal court decisions, and media discourses. Campbell and Schoenfeld (2013) are thus accurate when they engage with the explanatory power of a simultaneous consideration of varying local, state, and national structural and political factors. Interaction between these forces, they find, influenced crime control policies of state and local actors and thoroughly transformed the penal order in the 1980s and 90s. Their argument is in line with the synthetic explanatory approach offered here. The United States is characterized by a set of structural, cultural, and institutional features that resulted in a simultaneous takeoff of mass incarceration in 50 distinct jurisdictions, despite the substantial interstate and local variation of penal practices highlighted by authors we discussed in this section.

Institutional Change and Transnational Convergence?

Just like countries are not homogeneous, especially the United States, their structures and institutions are also subject to change, often converging in an age of globalization. In Europe, for example, institutions have been undergoing considerable change. The safety net of the welfare state is weakening and some functions are being passed on to the market (even if changes in Europe occur more slowly and meet more resistance than in the United States). The weight of public media has been declining over the past three decades as private channels, operating under the pressure of markets, have become more prominent. Simultaneously, media programs that address crime, especially violent crime, have multiplied. Research shows that consumers of such programs tend to overestimate crime as a problem, perceiving serious increases even for types of crime that have been on the decline. In addition, leading politicians are increasingly exposed to public pressure due to a growing media presence in combination with more frequent public opinion polling. Today, politicians are thus more likely to be oriented toward public opinion than in the past.
Despite such mutations, however, institutions in Europe maintain their distinct character and continue to differ markedly from those in the United States. The role of public media is still more prominent in Europe. Platform parties remain strong. Candidates for political office continue to be selected by parties, rather than by the public in primary elections. Heads of the executive branch continue to be elected by members of parliaments rather than in direct popular votes in most countries. Prosecutors and judges still do not get elected by the general public, nor should we expect any such change.

Due to continuing institutional conditions, increases in punitiveness in Europe are unlikely to reach American dimensions, even if public opinion came to resemble that in the United States. But public sentiments have not turned as punitive as they did in the United States (Reuband 2003). For example, the percentage of Germans (in the western part of the country for which long time series are available) who demand prison terms in response to burglary convictions increased from 13 to 19 percent between 1989 and 2002; 59 percent demand community service (down 1 percent); 7 percent suggest fines (down 2), 10 percent probationary terms (down 2); and 5 percent “other” penalties (up 3) (others “don’t know”). The increase in demand for prison terms is surprisingly modest given the advent of late modernity, a high rate of unemployment for much of the 1980s and 90s, the burden of German unification in 1990, with its cultural clashes and dramatic demographic and economic transformations, and the institutional changes sketched above. Each of these factors by itself might, according to substantial bodies of social science literature, result in massive increases in punitiveness, were it not for the continuing features of Europe’s institutional outfit (for institutional barriers to the transmission of public sentiments into penal practice in Canada see Roberts and Sprott 2008).

Feedback Loops: Positive and Negative

If national conditions are indeed subject to change, albeit reluctantly, what are we to expect for the future of the carceral state in the United States? Positive and negative feedback loops have to be accounted for.

Positive Feedback Loop: Carceral State Effects on Social Structure and Institutions

The buildup of the carceral state in the United States, fed by interactions between structural conflict, political entrepreneurs and receptivity of public opinion which fed back into the political process, has had consequences for social structure and culture that partly reinforce the conditions that resulted in the buildup in the first place.

For example, the US currently comprises more than 16 million felons and ex-felons, who now constitute a “felon class,” prohibited from participation in the democratic process in most states (Uggen, Manza, and Thompson 2006).
Manza and Uggen (2008) illustrate that state felon disenfranchisement policies disrupt democratic governance by affecting electoral outcomes at the state and national levels. By disenfranchising ex-felons, elites more easily maintain their political positions and the democratic rights of the formerly incarcerated remain unmet. Citizenship and legal status also render certain populations more vulnerable to criminalization and punishment (Gottschalk 2015). Light, Massoglia, and King (2014) found that noncitizens in the US, particularly those who are undocumented, receive tougher sentences than citizens, a finding that holds consistent regardless of race or ethnicity. Yet, the carceral apparatus not only denies democracy to those who have formerly served time, but also to those whose presence remains highly surveilled by the criminal justice system. Lerman and Weaver (2014) show how citizen contact with the carceral apparatus, beyond formal disenfranchisement, deters predominantly poor, minority communities from participating in the formal democratic processes, regardless of whether they were convicted of a crime.

In addition to directly undermining participation in the political process, the carceral state contributes to social disadvantages for virtually all incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals (Wakefield and Uggen 2010; Western 2006), through employment discrimination (Pager 2003; Western 2002), burdens on families and communities (Comfort 2008; Wakefield and Wildeman 2011), risky housing conditions, and long-term health effects (Massoglia 2008). These burdens are particularly pronounced for African Americans (Western and Wildeman 2009; Alexander 2010).

Under conditions of the carceral state, even antipunitive litigation may have counterproductive consequences. Guetzkow and Schon (2015) address consequences of litigation against prison overcrowding in the United States. They show that overcrowding litigation neither affects admissions or release rates nor does it reduce prison crowding. Instead, it produces unintended and counterproductive consequences, resulting in an increase in spending on prison capacity and higher incarceration rates.

More positive feedback loops can be found in the nature of legal and political institutions and processes. Indeed, the American “war on crime” contributed to a transformation of America’s democratic institutions, as Jonathan Simon (2007) has documented. Prominent among them is a shift toward the use of executive power in the political sphere. For the judicial realm, Mona Lynch (2016) demonstrates how changes in US sentencing and drug laws have concentrated the power to punish in the hands of prosecutors, resulting in weakened due process and the destruction of many lives, especially among African-American men. She summarizes thus:

The confluence of tough-on-crime politics, sentencing reform, and jurisdictional expansion in the 1970s and 1980s opened up a world of opportunity for federal prosecutors . . . . Ultimately, what all these efforts to constrain judicial sentencing did was to move the location of discretionary power away from judges to prosecutors . . . . In the contemporary
sentencing regime, prosecutors have become the conductors and primary navigators of case outcomes from inception to resolution, catalyzing cooperation even when it comes with heady risks, discouraging pretrial litigation and challenges to evidence and compelling guilty pleas at exceptionally high rates. (Lynch 2016: 131–133)

These conclusions are in line with earlier arguments by Savelsberg (1992) about unintended and counterproductive consequences of sentencing guidelines, including the shift of discretion from judges to prosecutors whose bargaining power the guidelines strengthened. Also Pfaff (2017) sees the power of prosecutors as a major contributor to increased punishment. The carceral state has further generated new and highly mobilized political forces that work effectively to stabilize its structures, as Joshua Page (2011) documents for the case of the corrections officers’ union in California and its lobbying efforts aiming to enhance, to use Max Weber’s famous term, an “iron cage” of criminal punishment practices via legislative and executive decisions.

The buildup of the carceral state thus appears to have strengthened the position of the criminal justice system in its competition with other institutional spheres over the classification of social actors, a competition to which Sutton (2000) has effectively alerted us.

Negative Feedback Loops: Rolling back the Carceral State?

While positive feedback loops continue to stabilize the carceral state, its buildup has also generated countervailing forces. In recent years, politicians, scholars, and activists have begun to propose penal reforms in hopes of downsizing current incarcerated populations. Petersilia and Cullen (2015), for example, call for a “criminology of downsizing” that does not solely address problems associated with mass incarceration, but that also finds pragmatic strategies of assisting with decarceration efforts. Some scholars have even proposed that current US trends are moving toward “late mass incarceration” (Seeds 2016: 4), an era in which political and criminal justice actors propose bipartisan reforms aimed at lowering costs, downsizing, and adjusting sentencing guidelines, while simultaneously maintaining harsher punishments for violent offenders. Indeed, Beckett and coauthors (2016) indicated that after the 2008 recession, containment reforms led punitive policy initiatives by a ratio of 3 to 1. Dagan and Teles (2014) predict that conservative movements, such as Right on Crime, will continue to support prison reduction, especially considering strong support from some evangelical groups who today stress forgiveness and reentry into society.

While such trends may weaken the carceral state to some degree, they are unlikely to result in an overarching change in the “tough on crime” movement (Phelps 2016; Gottschalk 2015). For example, the vast majority of reforms examined by Beckett and colleagues (2016) focus on drug offenses and parole policies such as “early” release. Little to no reforms have been enacted to confront serious violent crimes such as sexual assault with alternative means. In fact, greater leniency with regard to nonviolent crime is partly compensated
by increasingly harsh penalties toward violent offenders, who, reformers argue, pose a serious threat to public safety. Since almost half of the jail and prison inmate population is serving time for a violent offense, such reforms would have little to no effect on massive downsizing of inmates (Gottschalk 2015; Phelps 2016).

Though a number of states have enacted reforms regarding justice reinvestment, several also implemented harsher life without the possibility of parole (LWOP) rules (Seeds 2016). Additionally, scholars contend that downsizing measures have been most pronounced in California – and that without that state’s efforts, little moderation of the punitive turn would be seen for the average of the remaining 49 states (Petersilia and Cullen 2015: 18). In short, while the prison population of most US states is no longer growing, the US is not anywhere near the “end of mass incarceration.” Instead, the term “trans-incarceration” may be more appropriate, referring to the replacement of one form of carceral sanction by another (Petersilia and Cullen 2015).

Some scholars advocate broader political reform as a necessary condition for building back the carceral state (and overcoming other dysfunctions of the current US political system) (Gottschalk 2015). The respective roles of publics versus elites in such reforms are hotly debated within scholarship (Dzur, Loader, and Sparks 2016). At one end of the spectrum, penal scholars and advocates appear dubious about the benefits of allowing the public to dictate penal policies. David Garland (2001), in The Culture of Control, notes that uninformed public opinion has replaced the expertise of criminologists and penologists in criminal justice decision-making. Relatedly and in bitter irony, James Forman (2017) writes on the role of early African-American support for tough punishment in the political process and its unintended consequences (also Fortner 2015). Nicola Lacey (2008) appears to concur with such concerns, as she argues that criminal justice policy should no longer be placed within the competitive political field, but rather delegated to a panel of criminal justice experts. On the other side of the debate, such scholars as Albert Dzur (Dzur et al. 2016) argue that the problem is not too much public participation, but rather too little. Expert panels, he argues, would fail to garner the public support necessary to sustain criminal justice reform. Dzur pleads for a “rational disorganization” that allows the public and professionals to work with one another by providing new knowledge through training and procedures. In other words, lay and professional input should complement one another avoiding dominance by either side (Dzur et al. 2016). Democratic institutions may then emerge as a “resource of hope” in reshaping the penal field. Political scientist Lisa Miller (2016) concurs. She challenges the “mob rule thesis” – according to which public constituents necessarily support the development of the carceral state. Instead, she argues that “the more non-elites can successfully influence government policy over collective securities – the more the mob rules – the more likely the political system will address security from violence as a collective good and will moderate its use of repressive practices” (Miller 2016: 12). Yet, this hope is contingent on specific institutional context, which Miller also explores and
which we reported above. Barker (2009) illustrates empirically that democratic practices that include increased civic engagement, as opposed to elite rule, may reduce mass imprisonment. In her interstate comparative case study, Washington State developed a more participatory democracy where activist groups and concerned citizens worked with politicians to compromise. As such, unlike California where political conflict inhibited less punitive measures, Washington maintained a relatively low incarceration rate. Again, the institutional form of popular participation takes proves to shape its consequences.

Normative debates thus rage within scholarship, and empirical investigations on competing models and their institutional embeddedness continue to be urgent items on the scholarly agenda.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS: TOWARD SYNTHESIS

Punitive attitudes and practices have culminated in the buildup of a carceral state in the United States. Changes in crime rates provide only a limited and indirect explanation. Crime needs to be culturally processed before it can cause anxiety and punitive attitudes. Conservative elites play a major role in this process, employing well-suited cultural tools. Their effect, however, is partly contingent on the growing insecurity of many segments of the population under conditions of late modernity. We see a dialectic process of mutual reinforcement of conservative elite campaigns and popular pressure at work.

Yet, punitive responses to insecurity are not natural outcomes of late modernity. They are contingent on profoundly different institutional arrangements in the cultural, legal, and political fields of the United States vis-à-vis their equivalents in most continental European countries. This applies to institutions for the production and dissemination of knowledge as much as to institutions of political and legal decision-making. The more open political and legal institutions are for the transmission of public sentiments (or the more porous the boundaries between state and society), the more public concerns will affect political and legal decision-making. Anxieties will often not be calmed by punitive decisions, but instead may be reinforced, as the American case seems to indicate. This does not mean, of course, that democracy accounts for punitiveness; autocratic regimes, in fact, are characterized by particularly severe and arbitrary practices. But within democratic countries, some types of institutions may have that effect.

In sum, an appropriate theory of punitive attitudes and practices that allows us to explain the buildup of a carceral state in the United States must be conceived as a multifactorial and historically and institutionally grounded theory, as Max Weber would have suggested. Such a theory must take seriously crime, changing living conditions, elite strategies, cultural repertoires, and experiences with the state’s use of force, and finally institutional patterns through which knowledge is produced and diffused and through which decisions on punishment are made.
REFERENCES


III. The State and Its Political Organizations


19: Politics, Institutions, and the Carceral State


19: Politics, Institutions, and the Carceral State


The Political Sociology of Democracy

From Measurement to Rights

Jessica Kim and Kathleen M. Fallon

What is the political sociology of democratization? Political scientists and sociologists alike have long theorized about democratic transitions, though their focus has changed significantly over time. Although early models of democracy and democratization were largely based upon the experiences of today’s advanced industrialized nations, more recent frameworks offer an updated paradigm to account for the circumstances late democratizers face. Factors that were once considered irrelevant to democratization are now deemed part and parcel of the literature, including issues of power, inequality, history, state capacity, and globalization. A political sociology of democratization, then, is the study of the inherently political process of regime change that employs a sociological analysis of the circumstances and actors that surround and shape transitions, such as those mentioned above.

This chapter seeks to provide an overview of the literature that addresses issues key to the political sociology of democratization. We first ground our discussion in the ever-changing international and historical circumstances that work to mold the contextual backdrop for defining democratization. We then move to examine recent discussions within the literature that further provide nuances to measuring democratic citizenship. We conclude by discussing how local and transnational actors work together through social movements and global norm cascades to promote democratization.

UNDERSTANDING DEMOCRACY

Traditional Explanations of Democracy and their Limitations

In order to understand how democratization occurs, it is necessary to first define democracy. Political thinkers as far back as Plato and Aristotle¹ have long theorized

¹ While Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle considered democracies to be weak and lawless, operating through the “mob rule” of poor selfish masses (Browne 1889; Deutsch and Fornieri 2009),
about democracy, attempted to define it, pinpointed its causes, and examined its outcomes. In the early to middle decades of the twentieth century, scholars bearing witness to early iterations of modern democracy primarily conceptualized democracy using one of two models: elitism or pluralism. The former positions elites who “acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people’s vote” (Schumpeter 1942: 269) as a nation’s true deliberators, and dismisses the broader population as unsophisticated and “incapable of action other than a stampede” (Schumpeter 1942: 283; see also Walker 1966 for a summary of democratic elitism). Alternatively, pluralism emphasizes the equal opportunity for citizens to actively form, express, and debate opinions, participate in government, and engage in compromise. In this view, social inequality and privilege undermine democracy by producing differential access to political skills and resources (Dahl 1982).

It is from these perspectives that scholars have generated operational definitions of democracy. Although in practice, scholars often include components from each to varying degrees of parsimony or robustness, an elitist definition of democracy primarily emphasizes contested elections (Przeworski et al. 2000), where a pluralist definition stresses the right to due process, an independent judiciary, and a vibrant civil society (Diamond 2008), or, in the case of Dahl’s polyarchy, (1) elected officials, (2) free and fair elections, (3) inclusive suffrage, (4) freedom to run for election, (5) freedom of speech, (6) freedom of information and alternate information, and (7) freedom of association (Dahl 1982).²

Using these definitions to create an “ideal type” of democracy, traditional explanations for democratization typically rely on relatively simplistic “precondition” models and use Western democracy as the archetype that nascent democracies should try to replicate. Drawing upon both modernization and cultural frameworks, these explanations assume an evolutionary approach to democracy, positing that a nation will democratize if and only if it reaches some necessary economic “threshold” (Brunk, Calderia, and Lewis-Beck 1987; Burkhart and Lewis-Beck 1994; Jackman 1973) and possesses the requisite cultural components (Acemoglu and Robinson 2001; Almond and Verba 1963; Lipset 1959). This type of framework emphasizes the centrality of economic development to democratization (industrialization, wealth, urbanization, education), where “the more well-to-do a nation, the greater the chances that it will sustain democracy” (Lipset 1959: 75; also Dahl 1971; Rostow 1971; Russett 1965). Moreover, nations that are

² In operationalizing democracy, the Vanhanen dataset uses Dahl’s polyarchy to create a democracy index to measure competition and participation (Vanhanen 2000). Others employ similar but distinct indexing techniques, such as Freedom House’s index of civil liberties and political rights, or V-Dem’s seven Principles of Democracy.
characterized by their Protestant religion, civic attitudes, an egalitarian income distribution (Acemoglu and Robinson 2001), a consensually unified elite (Higley and Burton 1989; O’Donnell and Schmitter 1986), and a bourgeoisie middle class (Barro 1999; Moore Jr. 1966) should be successful in achieving consolidated democracy, according to this view.

Although economic and cultural explanations are not irrelevant today, they have come under scrutiny for being deterministic and Eurocentric. A country must simply possess the necessary qualifications; nations “not ready for democracy” can do little to generate these conditions (Carothers 2002: 8). And as non-Western and developing nations are increasingly experiencing political liberalization, we find that early models do not adequately explain on the ground realities. Nations that do not possess predemocracy characteristics are democratizing anyway. Contrary to economic threshold arguments, democratization can be initiated at any state of development, and while a country’s likelihood of remaining democratic increases with wealth, even poor countries that succeed in generating economic development can remain democratic (Przeworski and Limongi 1997). In addition, since 1990, approximately one-third of nations classified by the United Nations Development Program as having “low human development” have embraced and maintained democratic government (Diamond 2003). On the other hand, economic development does not necessarily lead to democracy, particularly for developing nations (Arat 1988; Gonick and Rosh 1988).

Contradictions such as these became especially apparent during the “third wave” of democracy in the post–Cold War era (Huntington 1991). As US tolerance for authoritarianism in the name of containing communism was fading, Western governments called for political liberalization and improved governance in exchange for membership in international institutions and aid (Levitsky and Way 2005). Using tactics of leverage (sanctions, interventions, aid) and linkages (alliances, investment, communication, migration) to raise the cost of authoritarian rule and encourage change, democratization efforts

3 Stepan (2000) points to the “twin tolerations” of church and state that foster democratic preconditions such as civil society and independent associational life, mass education, printing, economic development, and low corruption (Woodberry and Shah 2004).

4 These include tolerance, procedural consensus, and compromise (Almond and Verba 1963). See also Barker’s (1942) “agreement to differ.”

5 India is the quintessential example of a poor country that was able to establish and maintain a functional democracy (Kohli 2001).

6 The Human Development Index is a combination of measures capturing educational attainment, health and longevity, and standard of living.

abroad increased dramatically (Carothers 2002). Yet practitioners found that targeted nations could rarely replicate the expected trajectory, particularly in light of unaccounted for structural and historical factors that undermine the foundations for a functional state upon which practitioners can build (Carothers 2002).

Democratization Today: Building on Traditional Explanations

The acknowledged pitfalls of traditional explanations and the failure of democracy aid and assistance rendered vast improvements to the democratization literature. In moving forward, researchers began to situate local actors within their own unique global and historical contexts to take into consideration the role of external forces in democratic transitions (Huntington 1991; Li and Reuveny 2003; Torfason and Ingram 2010; Whitehead 2001). These factors include international aid, conflict, colonialism, as well as global civil society and social movements. At the same time, the updated paradigm became useful for understanding how local actors work within their existing circumstances (regardless of whether they are “ideal” or not) to either undermine or encourage democratization, thus rendering local actors far more agency than traditional models. As Tilly (2000) suggests, “prevailing circumstances under which democratization occurs vary significantly from era to era and region to region as a function of the international environment, available models of political organization, and predominant patterns of social relations” (2000: 2).

At the most basic level, current attempts at defining and identifying regime types have become much more complex. As opposed to dichotomizing regimes as decidedly or decidedly not democratic, scholars now instead consider both democratic and authoritarian characteristics of a nation when evaluating its level of democracy. This strategy has become particularly popular as scholars recognize the difference between nations that merely apply democracy in form, as opposed to those that also do so in function (Diamond 2002). Countries of this sort, known as hybrid regimes or quasi-democracies, exist in a political “grey zone” and operate neither as fully consolidated democracies nor as outright autocracies (Carothers 2002), and constitute “an unprecedented proportion of the world’s countries” (Diamond 2002: 22–24). For instance, as is the case in presidential regimes (van de Walle 2003) or delegative democracies (O’Donnell 1994), regimes will achieve constitutional standards for democracy while operating at the behest of a strong, central, and paternal

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8 This emphasized a linear progression from authoritarianism to democracy via distinct and predictable stages. These stages are: opening – the first democratic breaks in a dictatorial regime, liberalization – the collapse of the previous regime and establishment of new democratic rules and institutions, and consolidation – solidification and strengthening of democratic substance (Carothers 2002).
executive who holds near complete control over the government with little accountability to alternative branches or parties. Other variations of the hybrid regime include competitive authoritarianism, illiberal democracy, electoral democracy, and the hegemonic regime, among others. We must also not assume when assessing levels of democracy within a nation that a regime extends identical levels of legitimacy and power across all portions of its territory (O’Donnell 1993). In other words, a state’s monopoly over the use of legitimate force (Weber 1965) can vary widely from place to place within its own borders. As O’Donnell (1993) suggests, democratic regulations may abruptly end outside of national urban centers, leaving peripheral areas subject to local enclaves of power and ineffective state regulations. Thus, democratizing states with low capacity are not uniformly democratic in that they are at best subject to low monitoring capabilities and penetration of illegal activities within politics (low capacity democracy, e.g., Jamaica and Belgium), and, at worst, warlords and ethnic blocs engaging in violence and in some cases, all-out civil war (low capacity nondemocracy, e.g., Somalia) (Tilly 2007).

In addition to complicating the definition of what is truly considered a consolidated democracy, sociologists in particular are beginning to reject the existence of some objective or standard definition of democracy. Instead, they understand democracy as a social construct that is subject to change over time. “True” democracy is in fact a multidimensional “moving target” complicated by issues of inequality, boundaries of inclusion and exclusion, and conceptualization and operationalization choices (Bollen and Paxton 2000; Markoff 2011). For instance, though universal suffrage is considered a basic component of democracy, democratic participation has long been restricted according to criteria such as citizenship, gender, race, ethnicity, landownership, and literacy. Each time a group enters the franchise, the definition of “true” democracy evolves. To this day, suffrage remains an exclusionary

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9 Defined broadly as authoritarian regimes with multiparty elections, either competitive or non-competitive (Levitsky and Way 2010: 17).
10 Defined as “democratically elected regimes [that] have been reelected or reaffirmed from referenda, [which] are routinely ignoring constitutional limits on their power and depriving their citizens of basic rights and freedoms” (Zakaria 1997: 22).
11 Defined as a system that contains relatively free and fair elections coexisting with serious constraints on civil liberties, political freedoms, government transparency, as well as a weak rule of law (Diamond 2002: 23).
12 A system where democratic institutions exist, but, practically, high levels of repression by a heavily embedded ruling party crush any real opportunity for opposition to the extent that outcomes are not uncertain (Schedler 2002).
13 The Polity VI dataset operationalizes this shift by indexing combined measures of both democracy and autocracy.
14 Such was true in the United States, which originally excluded slaves, women, free blacks, and Native Americans (Markoff 2011), but would later extend suffrage to women in 1919 (US Constitution, Amendment 19), and in 1965, pass the Voting Rights Act to eliminate poll taxes, literacy tests, and other Jim Crow laws that disenfranchised and intimidated blacks (US
entitlement. As Markoff (2011: 248) notes, “there has never yet been a democratic state that has not excluded at least one [category] from voting rights.”

In fact, there is little definitional consensus across the literature. As Paxton (2000) notes, not only do scholars’ operational and conceptual definitions of democracy not match one other, but they also repeatedly fail to include women. This is true for both across and within studies. Across studies, operational suffrage thresholds establishing democratic governance range from at least 10 percent of adults (Singer and Small 1976), to 30 percent of all males (Doyle 1983), to 50 percent of adult males (Huntington 1991). Within studies, Rueschemeyer, Stephens, and Stephens conceptualize democracy as requiring “universal and equal suffrage” (1992: 43), yet they operationalize democracy to only require male suffrage. Evidently, not only is democracy constantly on the move, but determining democratic achievement is far more subjective than previously realized. The hybrid regime further complicates this picture, suggesting that even nations that may theoretically attain the highest levels of democratic inclusivity may still fall short in achieving democracy in practice.

Global Forces Meet Local Actors

Currently democratizing regimes face other barriers to meaningful democracy, often due to their position in the global system and outstanding colonial legacies. Sociologists such as Frank (1966) and Wallerstein (2004) recognize that the global system is structured to disproportionately benefit the industrial core. For instance, major post–Second World War global financial and governance institutions are largely run by, and pass policies to benefit, the major powers of the world while simultaneously promoting democratization. As a result, developing nations are left at a sizable disadvantage in development and governance (Arrighi 1994; Bollen 1983; Frank 1966). These nations are also historically distinct from earlier democratizers. Unlike post–Second World War nations who had economic support from the Marshall Plan, had moderate


15 For instance, in America, felon disenfranchisement (Behrens, Uggen, and Manza 2003; Alexander 2012) and voter identification laws (Alvarez et al. 2008; Combs 2016) remain major impediments to full democratic participation.

16 These include the World Trade Organization (WTO), the United Nations, and the Bretton Woods institutions (the International Monetary Fund [IMF] and the World Bank [WB]). While the Bretton Woods institutions were originally created to rebuild postwar Europe, today they operate primarily to provide loans to and promote development and democratization.

17 For instance, IMF votes are quota-based with quotas determined by a country’s relative economic wealth, the US holds veto power over all IMF decisions, and the WB and IMF are always headed by an American and a European, respectively. Moreover, though the WTO promotes free trade, it offers disparate exceptions for Western nations through agricultural subsidies and intellectual property rights (Stiglitz 2002).
expectations in the context of postwar devastation, and democratized alongside an expanding global economy, nations democratizing in later decades were susceptible to global economic crises and inherited colonial political legacies and apparatuses (O’Donnell 1994; Thomson 2010).

In postcolonial nations, histories of monocultivation and resource extraction created vulnerable economies and systems unequal exchange, rendering an insufficient base upon which to build a functional (let alone democratic) state (Emmanuel 1972). Additionally, colonial borders were often arbitrary or drawn according to colonizers’ interests (e.g., the Scramble for Africa), thus dividing existing political and ethnic boundaries and leaving nations unable to engage in critical state-building processes to lay the foundations for democracy (Griffiths 1986). Furthermore, the use of “divide and rule” tactics created and exploited differences between natives to generate a loyal native colonial elite accustomed to high levels of local autonomy and delivery of government resources through patronage networks (Christopher 1988; Morrock 1973; Young 1994). It is these ideas and practices that elites implemented in their own governments immediately following decolonization and independence, which to this day continue to plague these nations (Ajayi 1982; Thomson 2010).

Given these conditions, previously colonial states are more likely to struggle with ethnic fractionalization and conflict (Diamond, Linz, and Lipset 1995), have a political apparatus that is unprepared for democracy and favors the traditional ruling class (Chirot 1996), and rely heavily on foreign capital (Rueschemeyer et al. 1992). In both Africa and Latin America, scholars note the persistent role of patrimonialism and patronage networks (Menocala, Fritzb, and Lise Rakne 2008; O’Donnell 1994). It is these issues unique to newly democratizing states that ultimately make democratic transitions and their success far less likely (Bernhard, Nordstrom, and Reenock 2001).

Another issue that modern democracies face is the role of international aid. Despite heavy emphasis on democracy aid and conditionality promoted by aid practitioners, evidence of its effectiveness in generating democracy is mixed at best. Where some find positive correlations between aid and democracy (Dunning 2004; Goldsmith 2001; Savun and Tirone 2011), others find a negative association (Bueno de Mesquita and Smith 2009; Djankov, Montalvo, and Reynal-Querol 2008), and still others find no effect (Knack 2004). Of those studies documenting negative effects, they find that internal conditions and politics often subvert good intentions. By providing the existing regime and political elites with increased funding, aid may actually solidify their entrenchment (Brautigam and Knack 2004), boost their capacity to exclude actors, reduce representation (Djankov et al. 2008), insulate the state from reliance on tax revenues (Moore 1998), and shift government accountability away from its citizens (Brautigam 1992). Moreover, authoritarian regimes may co-opt aid by implementing the minimum necessary changes required to continue aid flows while largely retaining a monopoly on state power (Joseph 1997; Turner 1997). This becomes especially feasible for recipient governments.
who pursue economic liberalization, which pacifies donor demands for political openness (Brown 2005). As demonstrated by these findings, while aid does impact democratization, how it manifests is extremely conditional upon local conditions, power structures, and actors.

Although issues such as colonialism, international democracy aid, increasingly stringent classifications of democracy, and a changing global context serve to complicate the process of democratization for nations in the modern era, we must not underestimate the role of local actors in pushing for social change. Despite – and perhaps sometimes even as a result of – these complications, civil society has proven a competent and sizable force in lobbying governments for democratic rights and representation. Whether through the activities of local actors as examined by social movements scholars, or the top-down channels of global norm diffusion as discussed by world polity scholars, nonstate actors are a key component of democratization in the modern era. Yet this does not come without its complications: the local contexts within which social movements and norm diffusion occur largely determine the success or failure of democratization efforts of nonstate actors.

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND CIVIL SOCIETY: ACHIEVING REPRESENTATION, ACCESS, AND RIGHTS

Local actors operating within social movements and civil society are paramount to outcomes of democratization. A large body of work examines how actors rally for rights, representation, and access to the political apparatus throughout the democratization process. Dependent upon existing social and political circumstances, social movements actors achieve varied levels of success in achieving meaningful democratic outcomes. As opposed to less sociological accounts of democratization that only consider the actions of those who can claim legitimate and formal relations with (and hence acknowledgement by) the state, a political sociology of democratization must also examine advocacy strategies employed by oppressed groups that lack access to formal institutions of the state and thus act primarily through the channels of civil society and social movements. Instead of asking, “How do states achieve democracy?” scholars within this camp tend to ask, “What role do democracy and democratization play in obtaining rights?”

Armed with a broadened framework for examining democratization, these scholars decentralize the concept of “successful” or “complete” consolidation in their examination of democratization to instead focus on the role of democracy in achieving rights before, during, and after transitions. Political liberalization is often just one of several considerations when examining how marginalized and oppressed groups advocate for and acquire rights. During the most recent wave of transitions, civil society and social movements have played
an integral role in this process given the unique circumstances of nations in this wave (e.g., postcolonial, low levels of development, relation to aid, and the context of democratizing in a period of unprecedented globalization). When groups of citizens are excluded from the formal political process, social movements can become a space in which the disenfranchised attempt to gain rights from national governments. The success of using these informal and unconventional strategies for engaging the state throughout democratization is premised on: (1) the ability of activists to mobilize—particularly during major political upheavals, (2) the characteristics of the state and society, and (3) ties to transnational networks.

Seizing Opportunities for Democratization

Breaks in existing political frameworks provide actors within social movements the opportunity to insert themselves into the realm of formal state politics and advocate for rights and representation. Changes to political systems are particularly relevant here, as they not only create and expand these crucial opportunities, but also lower opportunity costs for marginalized groups. Significant political changes that create political opportunities for activists include: higher relative openness of institutions, greater instability and division among elites, increased presence of elite allies and their receptivity to social movements, and a reduced state capacity or proclivity for repression (McAdam 1982). For instance, indigenous social movements use political opportunities to expand democracy in the form of constitutional protections and recognition (Singh 2005; Yashar 2005). In Ecuador, indigenous leaders and protesters directly assisted in ousting the sitting president to enact political change and create the space and opportunity for indigenous Pachakutik candidates to run in national elections and earn formal representation (Beck and Mijeski 2001; Madrid 2012). As these changes create opportunities, groups can more easily exploit them and, by extension, gain political access (Costain 1992; McAdam 1982; Tarrow 1994).

The role of elites in creating opportunities is crucial for democratization: elites act as both gatekeepers and stabilizers for democratic transitions by determining if and to what extent liberalization will occur (O’Donnell and Schmitter 1986), and by engaging in compromise and pact-making among one another to increase tolerance and discourage outbreaks of violence during the transitional period (Cardoso 1986; Karl 1987). When opportunities such as these are fleeting or nonexistent, social movements will find it difficult to insert

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18 Opportunities are defined as “the perceived probability that social protest actions will lead to success in achieving a desired outcome,” where “any changes that shift the balance of political and economic resources between a state and challengers, that weaken a state’s ability to reward its followers or opponents to pursue a coherent policy, or that shift domestic or outside support away from the regime, increases opportunities” (Goldstone and Tilly 2001: 182–183).
themselves, thus limiting opportunities for change. For instance, when democratic transitions render changes to regime type but not personnel, the continued presence of old elites provides women few opportunities to vie for political positions or enter formal politics (Fallon 2008; Geisler 1995; Tripp et al. 2009).

The type of opportunities presented will furthermore shape how mobilization occurs (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1996; Moghadam and Gheytanchi 2010). Whether they are embedded in civil strife (Hughes 2009), revolutions, strike waves (Tilly 2004), systemic crises (Goldstone 1991; Skocpol 1979), political reforms (e.g., Russia’s Perestroika) (Zdravomyslova 1996), or episodes of political democratization (Tilly 2004), these different opportunities help produce unique structural circumstances that promote or limit mobilization for democratization.

Civil strife is one particularly volatile circumstance for generating democratic change in that it has the potential to make astounding leaps and bounds in democratic governance, but can also fall short and render stalled or failed democratization. On the whole, war can be productive for democracy. According to some tabulations, more than half of the democracies created since 1945 that still exist today were forged within a postwar context (Bermeo 2003). Postwar democratic consolidation is particularly likely when wars both: (1) delegitimate authoritarian rulers (Huntington 1991) by replacing elites outright (Higley and Burton 1989), or allow for elite compromise (Cardoso 1986), and (2) are immediately followed by demands for representation and electoral competition from an active, nonviolent civil society (Linz and Stepan 1996; Rueschemeyer et al. 1992).

For women’s movements, war has proven especially helpful in promoting democratic change, where episodes of political violence and civil strife provide the necessary opening women need to advocate for themselves. Research demonstrates that the higher the stakes and the longer the break in political routine, the more likely it is women will achieve improved representation (Hughes 2007, 2009; Tripp 2015). The major social disruption of war creates gaps in otherwise male-dominated positions that women must fill, including transporting and acquiring food, making bricks, building houses, or, in some cases, participating in warfare directly. These experiences allow women to realize their capacity to lead, find their voice, and organize to make demands for their rights and for peace (Tripp 2015; Viterna 2006, 2013). Women use this increased autonomy and new societal roles to insert themselves into the postwar transition process to advocate for rights and representation during the formulations of a new regime (Hughes 2007; Tarrow 1994; Tripp 2015; Viterna and Fallon 2008). This, however, must occur with the support of a strong and unified women’s movement and women’s organizations that pressure the state to enact feminist changes within the new constitution or government (Gelb and Hart 1999; Gordon 1994; Hassim 2006; Seidman 1993, 1999; Viterna and Fallon 2008).
On the other hand, civil wars can also produce contentious postwar environments. While wars are useful in creating political breaks, these breaks also tend to produce an extremely fragile postwar peace that can easily dissolve into renewed violence and chaos in the precarious context of democratization (Paris 2004). For instance, when old rulers find their interests threatened by calls for power sharing, peace, and democratization, they often find it in their benefit to continue or resume fighting (Joshi 2009). As Paris (2004) states, “the idea of transforming war-shattered societies into stable market democracies is sound, [but] pushing this process too quickly can have damaging and destabilizing effects” (2004: ix). With this in mind, scholars suggest emphasizing rebuilding the war-devastated state and its institutions first and democratization second, with particular emphasis on postponed and strategically timed elections (Bracanti and Snyder 2012; Diamond 2006; Flores and Nooruddin 2012) and continued assistance from external actors until the foundations for democracy are soundly in place (Doyle and Sambanis 2000; Grimm and Merkel 2008). Conversely, democratization, and in particular incomplete democratization, significantly increases a nation’s risk for both civil and international war. When leaders experience pressure to follow through on their democratic commitments within states lacking the capacity to do so, they often draw upon nationalist warmongering rhetoric to bolster popular support and distract from their incapacity to deliver democratic goods (Snyder 2000; Mansfield and Snyder 2005).

Social Movements as Initiators of Change

Even when opportunities, such as those offered by civil strife, provide access to the political realm, social movements’ success is further dependent upon organizational density (Minkoff 1997; Tarrow 1994), the construction of a movement’s goals (Gamson 1990), mobilizing structures,19 and framing processes20 (McAdam et al. 1996). For example, during moments of transition, women’s movements are most successful in transforming government structures and/or constitutions when democratic transition is complete (and actors and parties from the previous regime are not retained); when they form strong coalitions across race, class, and partisanship; when their frames align with the broader democratic movement frame; and when they are unified around the same goal (Baldez 2003; Einhorn 1993; Noonan 1995;

19 Mobilizing structures are defined as “collective vehicles, informal as well as formal, through which people mobilize and engage in collective action” (McAdam et al. 1996: 3), such as communities, associational ties, and kinship networks, that foster and maintain dialogue and discourse for action.

20 Collective action frames are shared beliefs and meanings constructed to “mobilize potential adherents and constituents, to garner bystander support, and to demobilize antagonists” (Snow and Benford 1988: 198) that “inspire and legitimate the activities and campaigns of a social movement organization” (Benford and Snow 2000: 614).
Ray and Korteweg 1999; Shayne 2004; Viterna and Fallon 2008). For indigenous movements advocating for rights (O’Sullivan 2007; Xanthaki 2007; Yashar 2005), the most successful techniques are those that promote images of indigenous peoples as the protectors of nature and the environment and exploit “authentic” and exotic colonial imagery to achieve the support of Western audiences (Brosius 1997; Conklin 1997).

As opposed to taking advantage of existing opportunities, social movements themselves may act as the driving force behind democratization in their quest for improved representation. Because representation systems are the “institutionalized set of organizations that claim to represent and aggregate the interest of various social interests” (Jenkins and Klandermans 1995: 5), representation acts as the key mechanism through which democratic constituents voice their concerns to the state. When actors find themselves unrepresented within national government structures or lacking conventional political resources, many turn to social movements with the hopes of gaining access. Because traditional political channels are severed, these actors often utilize unique and unconventional or noninstitutional strategies to engage the state, such as disruptive behavior (e.g., sit-ins, protests, marches) (Kitschelt 1986; Kriesi et al. 1995; McAdam et al. 1996).

In doing so, groups engaging in social movements often promote and lobby for not only their own group’s rights, but also for democratic principles more broadly – such as broad and equal citizenship, binding consultation of citizens to state actions and actors, and protection of citizens, particularly minorities (Giugni, McAdam, and Tilly 1998). As a result, although some sociologists focus simply on what factors contribute to increased legislative representation for marginalized populations – whether in relation to women broadly (Kenworthy and Malami 1999), or specifically for minority women (Hughes 2011) – other scholars examine representation hand in hand with social movements, as social movements tend to emphasize the acquisition of representation (Jenkins and Klandermans 1995).

Indeed, social movements appear to have an influence on representation. For example, as Fallon, Swiss, and Viterna (2012) demonstrate, women’s social movements incrementally increase women’s access to formal political representation. Paxton, Hughes, and Green (2006) find similar results where increasing global social movements pressures for women’s political inclusion generate positive outcomes for women’s representation. Furthermore, they find evidence for a snowball threshold: while at first women’s representation does not necessarily render improved access or increased pressures for women’s representation, after an achieved threshold, the acquisition of the previous electoral milestone becomes significant, albeit with diminishing returns. Similar case studies demonstrate the influences of women’s mobilization on increased women’s legislative representation (Bauer and Britton 2006; Goetz and Hassim 2003).

Finally, central to the analysis of social movements from a sociological perspective is the role of transnational influence where movements build and
learn from networks with other organizers in neighboring countries (Almeida 2014; Moghadam 2005). With the Fourth World Conference for Women in Beijing 1995, as well as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples in 2014, there has been a significant rise in transnational global civil society that promotes norm diffusion and compliance among and within states (Keck and Sikkink 1998; Smith and Wiest 2012). It is perhaps the recognition of the transnational influence on states and individuals that has sparked discussion within the literature of World Polity.

World Polity Theory

On the whole, scholars examining transnational influences on the behaviors of states emphasize the impact of a growing and connected global community marked by shared values and cooperation (Boli and Thomas 1997; Wendt 1992), transnational norms (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998; Meyer et al. 1997), increased interdependence (Keohane and Nye 1977; Russett and Oneal 2001), and international organizations (Keohane 1998; Meyer, Frank, Hironaka, et al. 1997; Risse and Sikkink 1999). For instance, democratic peace theorists find evidence to suggest the existence of “virtuous circles” that reinforce democratic governance through state membership in international organizations and economic interdependence between states (Pevehouse 2002; Russett and Oneal 2001). Political scientists also find that decreased sovereignty and increased idea flows promote “snowballing” of democratic models, experiences, and ideas across borders (Huntington 1991) and increase the pull of regional political organizations21 in motivating political change and reinforcing democratic norms (Diamond 2001). Sociological institutionalists make similar claims, where international nongovernmental organizations (INGOs) and intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) serve as the primary conduits for spreading liberal and human rights norms through dominant world cultural scripts (Boli and Thomas 1997; Cole 2005; Meyer, Boli, Thomas, and Ramirez 1997; Wotipka and Tsutsui 2008). Overall, democratic governance has emerged as a global norm: public support for democracy is on the rise (Diamond 2001) and is increasingly considered a basic and universal right (Franck 1992).

Although scholars demonstrate the benefits of democratic governance22 (Przeworski et al. 2000; Russett 1993; Simmons 2009), and the emergence of

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21 These organizations include the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the African Union (AU), and the Organization of American States (OAS).

22 Przeworski et al. (2000) find that democracies are less likely to experience war than dictatorships (but recover more slowly), and are able to maintain economic stability amidst head of state changes and social unrest, whereas dictatorships find such events much more costly. They also find that people living in democracies have lower mortality rates and higher life expectancies. Additionally, Simmons (2009) finds that democratic regimes comply with human rights norms better than authoritarian regimes. Finally, democratic peace theorists find that democracies do
a global community offers promise for meaningful democratic change and provision of rights to excluded populations, weak state structures and low state capacity\textsuperscript{23} in developing nations make the actualization of these ideals particularly difficult. Given that (1) developing nations tend to have low levels of investment and development and (2) transitions tend to be costly and render economic stagnation (Przeworski et al. 2000), both political scientists and sociologists acknowledge the difficulty low capacity states have in delivering on their democratic and normative obligations (Frank, Hardinge, and Wossick-Corea 2009; Fukuyama 2005; Hafner-Burton and Tsutsui 2005; Mansfield and Snyder 2005; Meyer et al. 1997; Sorensen 2008). This is particularly evident when examining the positionality of countries within the larger world society.

Whereas the traditional literature points to internal factors such as low institutional power and legitimacy that undermine states’ ability to exert control over territory and enact policies (Sorensen 2008), increased demands for accountability by newly enfranchised citizens (Huntington 1968), and the persistence of elite-run neopatrimonial and patron-client networks (Clapham 1985), globally focused scholars tend to examine weak states’ “involuntary noncompliance” from a transnational perspective (Chayes and Chayes 1993). Sociological institutionalism lays the theoretical framework for this discussion, where in the context of the world polity that promotes global human rights norms and practices cross-nationally, limited states lack the resources and political capacity to fully implement these norms, which leads to decoupling (Meyer et al. 1997). Because the blueprints for legitimate statehood are formally embedded in and promulgated by INGOs (Meyer et al. 1997), IGOs, and international treaties (Boli and Thomas 1997),\textsuperscript{24} states attracted to the benefits of membership accede to human rights agreements, but cannot or choose not to implement them (Frank et al. 2009; Hafner-Burton and Tsutsui 2005; Meyer et al. 1997). In fact, this “window dressing” undertaken by weak or developing states may actually increase the likelihood of committing human rights violations (Goodman and Jinks 2003; Hafner-Burton and Tsutsui 2005; Smith and Wiest 2012).

However, weak states are not inherently doomed to noncompliance. International relations scholars look to the role of global civil society and

\textsuperscript{23} State capacity is defined as the “degree of control that state agents exercise over persons, activities, and resources within their government’s territorial jurisdiction” (McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 2001: 78).

\textsuperscript{24} Though these treaties are framed as promoting human rights, they simultaneously embody democratic norms. These include: the right to due process, freedom of expression, freedom of association, and the ability to vote in genuine elections, as well as freedom from arbitrary arrests, discrimination, and torture, among others. Such norms are listed in the United Nations Human Rights Convention Against Torture, International Convention on Civil and Political Rights, and the International Convention on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights.
nonstate actors in promoting democratization and norm diffusion. Keck and Sikkink (1998) point to transnational advocacy networks that promote norm diffusion by mobilizing resources and information between domestic and international spheres, raising awareness, and setting agendas in order to influence states via a “boomerang pattern” (Keck and Sikkink 1998). Other scholars highlight strategies such as naming and shaming (Hafner-Burton 2008), mobilization (Keck and Sikkink 1998; Moghadam 2005), and persuasion (Risse and Ropp 2013). With the help of norm entrepreneurs (NGOs, activists, etc.), global norms undergo a norm cascade where they are introduced, gain support, acquire a critical mass of adhering states, and, if deeply enough entrenched, become internalized to the point that the norm acquires a “taken for granted” status (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998). These transnational network ties are crucial for empowering and legitimating claims for domestic social movements and simultaneously promoting change “from above” and “from below” (Brysk 1993; Moghadam 2005). Demonstrative of the rising salience of global civil society, independent nonstate activists often exploit the normative opening “window dressing” states unintentionally create to further promote compliance. This phenomenon is referred to as the “paradox of empty promises” (Hafner-Burton and Tsutsui 2005). This, in turn, actually renders improvements to human rights practices.

Sociologists build on this and also focus on the diffusion of policies and practices. In terms of liberal state policy, studies continually demonstrate the association between embeddedness in the world polity and the passage of policies that protect women’s rights (Wotipka and Ramirez 2008), increase women’s suffrage (Ramirez, Soysal, and Shanahan 1997), and improve human rights (Cole 2005). Moreover, network analyses find that democracy diffuses through IGO ties, and that networks and spatial proximity dilute the relevance of traditional endogenous predictors of democracy to better predict likelihood of democratization (Torfason and Ingram 2010; Wejnert 2005). However, democratization alone does not increase the likelihood of treaty ratification (Wotipka and Tsutsui 2008). In fact, Hathaway (2007) finds that democracies are less likely than autocracies to ratify treaties, given the higher symbolic importance of their commitment. However, in practice, democracy and strong civil society do increase the likelihood that states will respect the rights in the treaties to which they do adhere, rendering practical enjoyment of those rights more likely (Neumayer 2005).

CONCLUSION

As we move forward in the political sociology of democratization, we must remember that democracy and the social contexts in which it thrives are not unchanging. Even given the substantial advances scholars have made in mapping the sociological determinants of democratization, societies and the larger global and political environments in which they exist will continue to
change over time. So too, then, must our analyses of democratization. Neither societies nor democratization scholarship can exist in a vacuum. We must continue to acknowledge that democracy is a moving target (Markoff 2011), that norms progress and evolve, and that local conditions matter. As a result, we must be open to adapting or modifying existing knowledge of democratization as social change occurs.

With this in mind, future research, and particularly work within the norm diffusion literature, would do well to further consider the role of localization – or the combination of strategies used by domestic actors to reinterpret and reconstitute global norms to fit local scenarios (Acharya 2004). In conducting future democratization research and promotion, scholars and practitioners alike must consider how local actors modify existing norms through processes of framing (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998; Tarrow 1994), grafting (Farrell 2001), and reshaping (Zimmerman 2014), to make them locally palatable. Although Merry (2006) has begun this discussion by examining how norm entrepreneurs localize global human rights norms to better transfer abstract or unfamiliar ideas, further research is needed, particularly in the context of excluded groups attempting to gain formal access to state institutions and democracy.

Therefore, the efforts of groups still excluded from formal political institutions are perhaps the next frontier for democratization research. As additional groups continue to raise new issues and engage in democracy in a way that is meaningful to them, they continue to push the ever expanding boundaries of democracy and democratization. Research on indigenous movements provides insight here, as many groups have begun to lobby their governments for unique indigenous recognition via local autonomy, collective rights, and self-determination within the framework of the larger nation-state (O'Sullivan 2007; Yashar 2005; Xanthaki 2007). Others have experimented with modified models of democracy, including direct local participatory democracies operating within the larger sovereign state. For instance, in Bolivia, the new constitution modified typical definitions of democracy by including aspects of “communitarian democracy” where rural municipalities may create “indigenous autonomies” that give indigenous communities the liberty to practice democratic elections according to their own norms and procedures (Exeni Rodriguez 2012). In settlements in the rural Andes and in Ecuador following the transition to civilian rule and democracy, indigenous customary law (recognized by all Andean-nation constitutions) has become the law of the land, and focuses on local self-government, community reciprocity, and redistribution (van Cott 2006). Although these practices are not inherently democratic or directly replicable (van Cott 2006), they offer promising new directions for more inclusive models of democratic governance as more groups contend for rights.

Research on indigenous movements thus exemplifies potential frameworks and avenues for future research. Although some scholars have
begin to move in this direction to examine expanding notions of democracy, clearly many groups remain excluded from the political process—and democracies. Scholars must continue to consider who is excluded, who still needs access, and how democracy can be defined and redefined in relation to this. And, in the context of increasingly diverse, evolving and local democracy practice, understanding the mechanisms of localization will be invaluable for evaluating the success of new and budding democracies. We encourage political sociologists to keep this in mind as we continue to expand rights and push boundaries in studying the political sociology of democratization.

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Revolutions against the State

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The way social scientists think that others think about revolutions has been shaped primarily by Jack Goldstone. In his influential review essays, Goldstone (1982, 2001) presents the twentieth-century study of revolution as occurring in generations – from natural historians of the 1930s to general theorists of the mid-twentieth century, from state-centered scholars in the 1980s to a contemporary fourth generation basket of approaches. Because it is so familiar, his reading animates nearly all contemporary literature reviews in revolution studies. Goldstone’s categorizations have even impelled new work, as in Sohrabi’s (1995) research on models of revolution or Lawson’s (2016) recent theoretical synthesis.

There is a problem with this way of thinking about the field of revolution studies, however. Social science of any sort, let alone in the study of revolution, does not cohere in neat generations. I offer a few examples. During the so-called natural history phase, other scholars like Merriman (1938) argued for general structural theories of revolution that look much more like the state-centered accounts of four decades later. At the highpoint of theorization about social strain, Tilly in The Vendée (1964) and Wolf in Peasant Wars of the Twentieth Century (Wolf 1969) dug deep into specific revolutionary episodes to provide grounded and case-specific analyses. The year 1979 saw the publication of the state-centered States and Social Revolutions (Skocpol 1979), but also Goldfrank’s (1979) account of how world-systemic dynamics beyond states

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Goldstone’s (1982) original formulation of generations of theory did not separate out strain theory as a generation by itself but only as one aspect of general theories of revolution. Later reviewers of the field have lost this distinction.
and regimes creates revolutionary situations. And it requires little cognizance to see that “fourth generation” theory does not cohere as a theory or a generation at all.

I could go on. But the point is that thinking of prior theory in generational terms has overstated the extent of consensus present at any time. And that allows us to discard theories that are not fashionable (as Sohrabi [1995] discovered) and reify others beyond usefulness (see Goodwin 2001).

This chapter is an attempt to provide a more accurate and holistic account of revolution studies than the shackles of generational imagery have allowed. Instead of theoretical generations, I sketch eight theoretical schemas that guide ways of thinking about rebellions and revolutions.2 Three schemas are classical – Marxism, natural history, and strain theory – and two remain in force today – state-centered and mass mobilization approaches. And three are emergent and not yet institutionalized – cultural, international, and contingency schemas. In the following sections, I first consider definitions of revolution and present the consensual ways of thinking about revolution studies in prior reviews. I then provide an overview of the schemas of revolution studies, with especial attention to recent research. Next, I show the continued dissensus about the future of revolution studies and discuss the polysemy of related research in adjacent fields, to which I propose antidotes by way of conclusion.

(RE-)DEFINING REVOLUTION

There seem to be almost as many definitions of revolution as there are scholars in the field. This is due, in no small part, to the tendency to place scope conditions on a theory by seeking to explain only great revolutions (Huntington 1968), or peasant revolutions (Wolf 1969), or agrarian revolutions (Paige 1975), or revolutions from above (Trimberger 1978), or social revolutions (Skocpol 1979), or urban-based revolutions (Farhi 1990), or “revolutionary” revolutions (Ash 1990), or nonviolent revolutions (Zunes 1994), or political revolutions (Goldstone 1998), or Third World revolutions (Foran 2005), or negotiated revolutions (Lawson 2005), and so on.

Among all these definitions, none has had more influence than Skocpol’s (1979: 4) definition of the social revolution: “rapid, basic transformation of a society’s state and class structures ... in part carried through by class-based revolts from below.” Skocpol here had a particular sort of revolution in mind:

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2 I use the word “schema” here intentionally – revolution studies has mostly lacked the institutionalized networks of scholars that typify “schools” and the theoretical coherence of “paradigms” or “epistemologies.” Nor does the word “tradition” quite capture what I am after, which is a way to characterize our mental representations of what can and should be the purpose of studying revolution, hence the word “schema.” Alternatively, phalanxes might also be appropriate as the Greek form of military organization was based on self-kitted individuals in contrast to the hierarchical cohorts (generations) of the Roman legion.
the ones that created lasting change to society as well as government. The
definition encompasses many of the classic cases that spring to mind when we
consider revolution – France in 1789, Russia in 1917, and such. Skocpol’s
concise articulation of an object of study helped clear the weeds of revolution
studies at the time and likely helped the field advance through its
conceptualization of the object of study alone (Beck 2017a). Yet there was
always a problem with researching only social revolutions. What about those
cases where there was no lasting societal transformation? What about those
cases in which revolutionary attempts failed? And so, conceptions of revolution
proliferated once again.

The solution lies in a broader, yet still clear, definition of revolution. Drawing
on Trotsky’s (1932) conception of dual power, Tilly (1993: 10) proposes the
term “revolutionary situations,” which occur when “two or more blocs make
effective, incompatible claims to control the state, or to be the state.” An
effective claim is one in which a faction controls the loyalty of a significant
segment of the population. Here, revolutions are processes, not just outcomes.
All social revolutions involve a revolutionary situation, but not all
revolutionary situations lead to social revolutions. I add one thing to Tilly’s
definition, however. Revolutions are more than just dual claims to power. They
are also about dual visions of power and the social order to which it should be
set to achieve. Revolutions without ideology are hardly revolutions at all (Beck
2011). This criterion allows us to separate revolutions from coup d’états, civil
wars, and other related types of contention. I thus suggest that the most
appropriate way to conceptualize revolution is as revolutionary situations in
which different visions of social and/or political order are in play.

RETHINKING THE HISTORY OF REVOLUTION STUDIES

I opened the chapter by arguing that a conceptualization of generations of
revolution theory has missed the scholarly dissensus present at any particular
time. Even so, there remains a fair amount of agreement about the central areas
of revolution studies. In Figure 21.1, I present an overview of selected reviews
and syntheses of revolution research over the last three decades. The x-axis is
the reviews arranged in chronological order. The y-axis is the major themes in
roughly ascending chronological order. The intersection of a review and a
theme are then shaded. This allows us to see the change over time in ways of
thinking about how the field is organized.

3 I examine those reviews that still have currency today, are cited in recent research, or are recent
themselves. While this is not a full sample, it is a representative one. I categorize the major
organizational themes of each (in essence, headings and subheadings). A lack of intersection
does not mean the review did not discuss research in a given vein; rather it means that it did not
organize its review in that vein.
What seems apparent is that there is some consensus on how to think about revolution studies. Reviews tend to organize research by the familiar generations of Goldstone (1982), showing its influence. Only one theme is present across all reviews—state-centered theory, suggesting its paradigmatic status within the field. And only two major themes are shared by fewer than three reviews—a Marxist strand of thought (present in Kimmel 1990 and Goodwin 2005), and a focus on agency and leadership (present in Foran 1993 and Goldstone 2001). Notably, some topics that are of recent interest, such as international dimensions of revolution, were present in reviews decades before. In short, most reviews and syntheses seem to agree about what the study of revolution looks like.

Yet the shape of the data also suggests that the field of revolution studies has not evolved substantially. Imagine the counterfactual. A field identifies a problem at time 1, solves it at time 2, and so by time 3 it is completely doxa. The intersections of themes and reviews would thus cluster above the trend line in the upper left of the graph as one topic or theory replaced another.
Alternatively, if the field were completely additive then intersections would cluster below the trend line in the bottom right of the graph as no theme is ever resolved and still worthy of mention. What we see instead is that some new themes emerge, some old ones are discarded, but with most movement occurring around Goldstone’s historiography of generations. There is an endogeneity problem here – a prior review influences a later one; see for example the column for Lawson (2016) and its simple generational organization. In other words, the consensus we perceive here may be false. And our false consciousness has left some important ways of thinking about revolution aside.

I thus argue that we should think about revolution scholarship as proceeding in schemas, or different ideal typical models of revolution theory (see Guggenheim and Krause 2012). While generations may die, schemas never do; they merely rise and fall in fashion (Abbott 2001).

I argue that there are eight primary schemas in the study of revolution. In rough order of emergence, they are: Marxism, natural history, strain theory, state-centered theory, mass mobilization, cultural approaches, international dimensions, and contingency. Figure 21.2 presents a stylized sketch of the chronological development of the different models with notable exemplar citations. While there is some generational coherence to the schemas, the picture is more complex than a sequential account alone captures. For instance, Marxist accounts of revolution persist into the late twentieth century (see Boswell 1989), while state-centered ones arguably date as far back as the nineteenth (see de Tocqueville 1856). And the connections between schemas are more complicated than mere generational succession. For example, an emergent schema of contingency has roots in the old natural history accounts, and the international theories of revolution owe a debt to Marxist world-systems arguments about revolution.

In the sections that follow, I chart these schemas and the connections between them. I begin by reviewing the three that are classics and remain unfashionable in recent research on revolutions.

Classic Schemas of Revolution: Marxism, Natural History, and Strain Theory

An early account of revolution is present in Marxist theory, dating back to Karl Marx’s own writings on the subject, notably in the Manifesto of the Communist Party (Marx and Engels 1848). In Marx’s formulation, the way for society to

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4 As previous reviews have well plumbed the depths of the classic schemas of revolution – Marxism, natural histories, and social strain theory – my overview in this section will be brief. For coverage of Marxist theories of revolution, I recommend Goodwin (2005). Goldstone (1982) provides the best overview of natural history approaches, and both Goldstone (1982) and Goodwin (2005) ably cover strain and modernization theory; see also McAdam (1982: Chapter 2).
FIGURE 21.2 The schemas of revolution studies
move past a constant struggle between classes would be a social revolution and the establishment of a new social and political order. The Marxist theory of revolution was later developed further by Lenin (1918) and Trotsky (1932), among others. These early accounts were as much activist as they were scholarly, and many common Marxist phrases were coined to describe strategies for revolutionaries, for example vanguard of the proletariat and permanent revolution.

Marxist approaches were adopted fruitfully by scholars of revolution in the mid-twentieth century. Notably, Eric Wolf (1969) turned attention to the peasantry as a revolutionary class. In Wolf’s account, landholding peasants are the most likely to be revolutionary. As capitalism penetrates their agricultural societies, middle-status producers have more to lose as well as have access to the mobilizing resources that poor peasants and rural workers lack. Paige (1975) also focuses on rural rebellions, but locates revolutionary potential in sharecroppers rather than landowning peasants. In Paige’s formulation, the type of revolution that results is largely a product of the agricultural system itself and its class structure of owners and workers. At this point, Marxist approaches to revolution shared much in common with “peasant studies” and had moved beyond a simple notion of class struggle between industrial workers and capitalist owners (see also Scott 1976).

The 1970s brought another Marxist way of thinking about revolution. Drawing some inspiration from Lenin’s (1917) writings on imperialism, Immanuel Wallerstein (1974) proposes that the world economy operates as a capitalist society itself, with concentrations of power and resources and a resulting stratification of national states into classes. Extending this logic, Goldfrank (1979) argues that a permissive world context is essential for understanding modern revolutions – as society and economy become more international, the causes and processes of revolution themselves do, as well. The world-systemic account of revolution was then more fully developed by Terry Boswell and his collaborators (see Boswell 1989, 2004; Boswell and Dixon 1990, 1993).

The key point here is that a Marxist account of revolution did not stop with the classical Marxists or even mid-twentieth-century neo-Marxists. World-systems theory became a bridge between a Marxist schema for understanding revolution and the emergent international schema discussed in more detail later in the chapter (see Foran 2005). Even so, the key elements of Marxist theories of revolution remain fairly stable. Namely, causal disruptions of traditional systems by the penetration of a capitalist economic system, a focus on an actor’s position within a stratification system and consequent potential for a revolutionary movement, and the likelihood of particular revolutionary outcomes determined by a combination of class structure and economic system. In short, the contributions of Marxist approaches to revolution are to locate primary causation in the political economy of a society and emphasize the role of revolutionary representatives of an aggrieved social group or class.
In the first half of the twentieth century, Marxist theories of revolution had only one real rival – what Goldstone has termed the “natural history” approach. Taken from the title of Edwards’ (1927) book, natural history theories emphasized a stage model of the revolutionary process. Particular attention focused on the different social groups that enter into the revolutionary process at different time points. From this perspective, the distal causes of revolution lie in the contradictions and failings of the ancien régime (Brinton 1938; Pettee 1938), increases in grievances among the populace (Sorokin 1925), and a resulting legitimation crisis (Pettee 1938). Revolutions are thus expressions of social change as much as drivers of them, in contrast to Marxist theories (Edwards 1927). During a revolutionary situation, a central dynamic is the interplay between moderate and radical factions (Brinton 1938; Edwards 1927), which is only settled in later stages of the revolution as state power is reconsolidated, often along dictatorial lines (Brinton 1938; Sorokin 1925). A natural history approach thus emphasizes the revolutionary process and how different actors identify, articulate, and negotiate their interests in relation to other actors and the current revolutionary stage.

As Goldstone (1982) notes, many of the central elements that have animated revolution studies for decades are there – a concern with states and regimes, structural strains, the process of mobilization, and prospects for lasting social and political change. Even so, the natural history approach to revolution has mostly been supplanted. There is one exception, however. Nader Sohrabi (1995) argues that different types of revolution have different stages, which are mostly determined by the “world time” context in which a revolution occurs. For example, the French Revolution of 1789 created a model of republican revolution that lasted until it was supplanted by the communist template of the Russian Revolution in 1917. It is thus possible to compare and contrast revolutions dependent on the paradigm of revolution under which they occurred. While Sohrabi’s account is deeply historical, it also provides a bridge to the emergent schema of contingency in revolution studies. For both, context matters as much, if not more, than structure.

The third classic schema of revolution studies is that of social strain and modernization theory. While the view of collective action as inherently irrational and connected to the dynamics of crowds and riots has roots in late-nineteenth-century sociology (Le Bon 1896, 1913), theorization of social strain as a cause of revolution had its heyday in the 1960s. Strain models of revolution emphasize two mechanisms: rapid social change that disequilibrates existing social and political arrangements, and consequent aggregate psychological strains that motivate revolutionary acts. For the first mechanism, strain accounts are an aspect of modernization theory, typified by Huntington (1968) and Johnson (1966). As societies move from traditional forms of organization to more modern ones, revolutions are made more likely by the disconnect between increasing economic development and lagging
political modernization. Revolutions are thus an expression of modernization as well as a catalyst for it.

 Aggregate social psychological strain, on the other hand, tends to emphasize the grievances of individuals and marginalized social groups. As in the collective behavior tradition within social movement studies, mobilization is seen as inherently irrational and an anomaly to be explained (see Kornhauser 1959; Olson 1965; Smelser 1962). Davies (1962) proposes a J-curve theory of revolution where rising expectations of social and material well-being outstrip the capacity of social and political structures to deliver such benefits. As the gap grows, so does the likelihood of rebellion against the perceived underperformance of the system. Relatedly, Gurr (1970) emphasizes relative deprivation. Rather than absolute social and economic conditions being a source of grievances, it is the relative conditions for one group in society as compared to another that motivates revolutionaries. In short, strain theories of revolution identify social change as the cause of revolution and individuals and groups as enactors of larger processes.

 Of all the classic schemas in the sociology of revolution, strain theory is the closest to full extinction. While Marxist traditions and traces of natural history thinking live on, almost nothing of the strain and modernization schema persists. Suddenly imposed grievances and relative deprivation do still have some currency in political science, but it is almost impossible to find contemporary theories of revolution that take the irrationality of collective action as an explanatory framework. To the extent that strain theory has had an impact, it is in that it led to the oppositional development of mobilization-focused accounts of social movements and revolution (see McAdam 1982; McCarthy and Zald 1977). Discussion of the contemporary schemas of revolution studies – state-centered theories and mass mobilization approaches – is thus the focus of the next section.

**The Contemporary Schemas of Revolution: State-Centered and Mobilization Approaches**

If the classic schemas of revolution have mostly been surpassed, or morphed into other models, two latter-twentieth-century schemas live on. The first, state-centered theory, is so well established and considered so central to the field (see Figure 21.1) that it is as close to a paradigm as revolution studies has yet seen. The second schema, focusing on mass mobilization, has not coalesced to the same degree but nonetheless constitutes a continued competitor to structural accounts of revolution. I examine each of these in turn.

 A focus on the state as a cause and consequence of revolution is perhaps the very oldest tradition in revolution studies. De Tocqueville’s (1856) analysis of the French Revolution takes the state as a primary arena of action, and can be considered the first modern social scientific study of revolution. State-centered theory as we know it today emerged in the 1970s in response to the economic
determinism of Marxism and the psychological emphases of strain theory. Barrington Moore (1966) had offered a structural account of revolution that differed from both Marxist and strain theory by emphasizing the path dependent development of particular sociopolitical forms. This approach was extended by his students Trimberger (1978) and Skocpol (1979) and became a full-fledged theory of the state in revolution. For Skocpol, revolutions are not just competitions for state power; they are the product of states as autonomous entities themselves. Skocpol’s (1979) analysis is quite nuanced, but in broad strokes emphasizes that early modern bureaucracies found themselves bankrupted from geopolitical competition. The resulting fiscal crisis left them unable to maintain the loyalty of both elites and marginalized groups, and thus vulnerable to revolutionary challenges from below.

Later work has maintained the analytical focus on state structures and extended the basic model to other cases, for instance emphasizing the role of urban insurrections (Farhi 1990), demographic pressures (Goldstone 1991), and international war (Mann 2013). A consistent theme throughout these studies is that not only are the causes of revolution structural, but they tend to take place within regimes that are unable to adapt to political crises (Goodwin 2001). A primary mechanism of fragility here is often political exclusion. Regimes with narrow bases of power are more susceptible to revolutionary challenges from below (Beck 2015; Foran 2005; Goldstone 1991; Goodwin 2001). The most brittle regimes tend to be patrimonial or personalist dictatorships, or modern rentier states dependent on revenue from a single industry (Skocpol 1982). State-centered theory thus approaches revolution as a problem of political structures brought on by social and economic pressures on a regime.

State-centered theory, however, is explicitly nonvoluntarist in that the actions and motivations of individuals and movements matter little. It is in this lacuna that the second contemporary schema for revolution research lays. Charles Tilly’s (1964, 1978) early work is an originator of this approach (see also Dunn 1972). By the 1980s, a reaction to structuralist accounts of revolution began to focus on the process of mass mobilization itself. A key issue at the time was the formation of revolutionary coalitions. As Dix (1984) suggests, revolutions only succeed when a broad “negative” coalition of various actors from different segments of society band together to resist a regime. Along with states under external strain, the importance of coalitions is a consistent finding of revolution research (e.g., Beck 2015; Chang 2015; Foran 2005; Foran and Goodwin 1993; Kadivar 2013; Markoff 1988, 1996a; Slater 2010).

Research in the 1990s began to emphasize the micro-foundations of mobilization, examining who is likely to join a revolution (e.g., Wickham-Crowley 1992) and the networks that enable mobilization (e.g., Gould 1991,

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5 The consistent findings of state-centered theory are covered well by Goldstone (2001) and Goodwin (2005).
Micro-mobilization processes, as well as the decision-making processes of participants, remain a focus for recent scholars (Kadivar 2013; Viterna 2013; Weyland 2014). Recent scholars of nonviolent resistance also focus on mobilization processes and the strategies of revolutionaries (see Schock 2005; Zunes 1994). In the contemporary era, it appears that nonviolent mobilizations are increasingly more likely to succeed than violent ones (Chenoweth and Stephan 2011; Nepstad 2011), dependent on the growth of the international human rights regime (Ritter 2015). The choice not to use violence, or limited violence, limits state repression or increases the likelihood of a popular and international backlash against a repressive regime. Cases abound – the wave of “people power” revolutions in the 1980s and the collapse of communism in 1989, the early 2000s Color Revolutions of the former Soviet bloc, and most recently the Arab Spring uprisings of 2011. The overall thrust of these mobilization-centered accounts is that revolutions are accomplished by movement actors in interaction with social and political structures and responses of regimes. In this sense, they contrast to the predominantly structural imageries of Marxism, strain, and state-centered theory and have some parallels to early twentieth-century natural histories.

In short, what I term the mass mobilization schema may not be as paradigmatic as state-centered theory, but it is where much of the recent attention in revolution studies lies. Its consistent findings suggest the importance of coalition formation, resistance to state repression, and the social networks and identities that enable participation to grow and be sustained. Combined with state-centered structural causes, it appears that much of the terrain of revolution sketched by the natural historians has been met – distal causation, revolutionary processes, and the likelihood of particular outcomes. Yet there remain notable gaps and unanswered questions. To what extent do cultural practices enable or constrain revolution? Does ideology affect the strategy of revolutionaries and the outcomes of state consolidation? Are there international causal factors? What are the processes behind waves of revolution? And, are there truly universal causal patterns or only historical contingencies? These questions are the stuff of the emergent schemas of revolution that I examine in the next section.

The Emergent Schemas: Cultural, International, and Contingent Dynamics

I use the term “emergent” to characterize those current schemas that have not yet become as institutionalized as prior accounts, but provide coherent models of revolution nonetheless. Two of these – international dynamics and the role of contingency – are truly emergent, gaining attention mostly in the past few years. For the third, culture, a better fitting term might be “uninstitutionalized.” While cultural aspects of revolution have been a long-standing concern, social scientists have yet to develop a sustained program of research.
In the wake of the success of state-centered theory, early critics noted that the model emphasized structural conditions to the detriment of cultural contexts. This was most forcefully articulated by Sewell (1985). Sewell argues that crises preceding the French Revolution were heightened by ideological contradictions from “the disintegration of the absolutist synthesis and the development of a radical Enlightenment program” (Sewell 1985: 67), echoing a position long held by historians of the period’s revolutions (see Bailyn 1992; Chartier 1991; Godechot 1965; Hazard 1953; Palmer 1959). In response, Skocpol (1985) allows that cultural idioms may have affected the development of the political programs of revolutionaries but reiterates that structural factors are the most important causes.

Later work took up the challenge of culture in two ways. First, there was an attempt to provide a marriage between ideological dynamics and state-centered accounts, best represented by Goldstone (1991) and Parsa (2000). Here, ideology is not a cause of revolution per se, but a factor that shapes the course of a revolutionary situation and affects its settlement (see also Foran and Goodwin 1993; Selbin 1993). Ideology, in contrast to Marxist accounts, is often seen as a social process and emergent during the revolutionary situation (see Arjomand 1988; Moaddel 1992; Parsa 2000; Xu 2013). This echoes Tilly’s (1978) original view of repertoires of contention as cultural beliefs that inform revolutionary action.

A second challenge is locating processes of state strain and mobilization potential in cultural traditions and contexts rather than just an articulated ideology (see Sewell 1992; Wuthnow 1989). Rudé (1980) and Calhoun (1983) argue that cultural traditions and popular belief are an important aspect of mobilization, both revolutionary and counterrevolutionary. Similarly, Foran (2005; Reed and Foran 2002) and Wickham-Crowley (1992) contend that traditions interact with political ideologies and subjective experiences to create cultures of rebellion against the state. More recently, social scientists have examined what Stinchcombe (1986) terms the “cultural milieu.” Here, the role of culture and global cultural change in guiding states and elites is as important as it is for mobilizers (Beck 2011, 2014; Bukovansky 2010; Markoff 1996b; Sharman 2003). We thus see era effects in the orientations and forms of protest, as Hung (2011) demonstrates for early modern China.

What is of note here is that culture or ideology has been variously theorized, but there is little agreement as to what exactly the question is. Are culture and tradition causal or are they a mechanism? Is it global or historical or is it local and contingent? Is it inherited or created by a revolutionary situation? Lots of revolutionary ink has been spilled, but in contrast to the more institutionalized schemas like Marxism and state-centered theory or even dynamic programs like the mass mobilization tradition, the problem of culture has yet to be tackled systematically. As such, a cultural approach to revolution remains emergent, even after nearly four decades of effort.
In contrast, the two other emergent schemas of revolution have promise for escaping the fate of culture in revolution studies. Another point of departure from state-centered theory comes from those scholars who examine the international dimensions of revolutions. Skocpol (1979) recognized international causes of the revolutions she studied, as have other scholars who focus on state structures (Goldstone 1991; Mann 2013; Walt 1996; Walton 1984). But what Lawson (2005, 2015b) terms “intersocietal” dynamics never became integrated into the more abstract formulations of structural theories, and instead the modern national state has become reified in revolution studies. Drawing from international relations in political science (Halliday 1999; Lawson 2005) and the world-systems tradition in sociology (Boswell 2004; Foran 2005), scholars at the cusp of the twenty-first century began to challenge the state as the primary unit of analysis.

In the past decade, two approaches to international dimensions have taken shape. The first is to examine how the state as an actor is interdependent on other states and international regimes. For example, Foran (2005) argues that a key cause of revolution lies in a permissive world context for revolution—that is to say, a period in which great power rivalry or systemic changes make a local revolution more likely to succeed—and a situation of dependent development, where a society’s economy is more open to economic pressures beyond its border. Obviously, it is easy to imagine the contemporary world as having both these features as Pax Americana recedes and economic globalization has proven to be unsettling to class and social structures around the world. Probably the finest recent example of work in this vein comes from Daniel Ritter (2015). Ritter examines the Arab Spring revolutions in Egypt and Tunisia as compared to Iran in 1979. He argues that a regime’s relationship with Western powers constrains its ability to respond to revolutionary challenges. Western countries, in particular the United States, provide much needed material support for dictatorial regimes in return for at least lip service to the broadly legitimate values of human rights. When faced with a nonviolent uprising, these regimes are unable to use the full force of the state to maintain control as their great power patrons would withdraw support and the regime would face declining international legitimacy (see also Chenoweth and Stephan 2011; Lawson 2015a; Nepstad 2011). Human rights and patron–client relationships also undermine regime legitimacy at home, contributing to protest. In these lines of argument, the state or regime remains important but is embedded within its international relationships with other states.

The second approach emphasizes the uniquely transnational character of many revolutions, particularly those that occur in a wave of uprisings. Some scholars here emphasize the diffusion of contention across national boundaries as activists learn from and teach each other (Beissinger 2007; Bunce and Wolchik 2011; Hale 2013; Moss 2016; Weyland 2014). Others take the wave itself as the unit of analysis, examining how transnational conditions are conducive to regime fragility, mobilizing potential, and diffusive processes...
(Beck 2011; Kurzman 2008; Sohrabi 2002). Beck (2014) thus proposes that a truly complete model of revolution would foreground transnational dimensions, as does Lawson (2015). Here, we might consider revolutions as global events as much as local ones. In this way, revolution studies could escape the methodologically nationalist trap of comparative sociology inherited from state-centered theory.

In both cases, states and movements are recognized as global actors subject to transnational conditions and international relationships, whether economic, cultural, or geopolitical. The key point is that contemporary forces of globalization call attention to a different schema for understanding revolution. While the findings are emergent, the path is clear. An international approach allows for a better understanding of cases that have avoided sustained examination by revolution scholars, such as 1989, and calls for a reappraisal of classic cases where international factors were always at play, such as Haiti in 1794.6

Finally, the last emergent schema has spun off from studies of mass mobilization and the more general epistemological move within political sociology toward a study of dynamic mechanisms and relational dyads of actors (see McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 2001). This schema emphasizes the particular historical context and contingency present in confusing events like revolution. Here, it is not structure that matters, but agency. It is not path determinism, but near random chance. Revolutions do not unfold in stages from distant causes, but occur in dynamic episodes as challengers and regimes act and react, perceive and misperceive. This view is most clearly present in the work of Charles Kurzman. In his studies of the Islamic Revolution in Iran, Kurzman (1996, 2004a, 2004b) emphasizes the perceptual basis of mobilization; that is to say, how participants on the ground make sense of the unfolding revolution. In essence, dynamics of mobilization becomes the cause of revolution as much as the vehicle. The emphasis on examining the revolutionary episode itself is also a feature of much recent work that uses a mass mobilization schema (e.g., Austin Holmes 2012; Beissinger 2011; Harris 2012; Moss 2014; Weyland 2014).

An intriguing line of research on contingency itself as a social process is also emerging. Ermakoff (2008, 2015) tries to demonstrate that decisions to revolt or abdicate come at junctures where outcomes remain indeterminate and uncertainty among actors prevails. At these moments, small moments and improvised decisions can have lasting consequences. The key advantage of this approach is to treat contingency as an empirical problem rather than only an epistemological one. Collins (2017) notes that much of what Ermakoff is after is actually the collective effervescence of group processes. In that way, the emotional aspects of participants in revolution are at play. This suggests that there could be fruitful overlap with the study of emotions in social movements

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6 Though, for example, see Kumar (2001) and James (1938).
and other revolutionary situations (see Goodwin 1997; Jasper 2011; Reed 2004).

For the moment, the contingency schema is the least developed of the emergent ones but it may have a bright future. What is intriguing here is that research on contingency, confusion, and context could go beyond the truisms of social movements studies to uncover the micro-processes of mobilization and countermobilization that occur during revolutionary situations. This contrasts to the dominant ways of thinking about revolution present in Marxist, natural history, strain, state-centered, and international theories as expressions of large-scale forces of social change. A schema of contingency thus has the potential to be truly revolutionary.

CONSENSUAL PAST AND DISSENSUAL FUTURE IN REVOLUTION STUDIES

Figure 21.1 shows the different ways scholars have talked about revolution studies and Figure 21.2 suggests the chronological development of different ways to do revolution studies. But what similar conclusions have different strands of research and schemas of revolution brought us? Figure 21.3 presents the key findings that reoccur across schemas, even as the details may differ. The shaded areas represent the primary emphases of each schema.

First, various schemas agree that rapid social change is a causal condition for revolutions. The change may be economic restructuring or shocks as in Marxist and strain theory. Or it might be geopolitical reordering or transnational cultural evolutions as in the international schema. Second, the structure of regimes, states, and the international system matters. Some types of regimes and states are vulnerable to revolutionary challenges, as natural historians note and state-centered theorists find. And transnational political and social structures matter, as well, as the internationalists remind us. Third, different groups have different potential for mobilization. Whether the classes of Marxist theory, the groups of natural history, the networks and coalitions of mass mobilization, or communities with particular cultures, favorable conditions for revolution are not enough. Revolutions involve actors. Thus, fourth, the revolutionary episode itself matters as challengers, elites, and states act, react, and interact. This is key to any analysis of mobilizing and contingent processes in a revolutionary situation.

There is a question that is crucially important missing here, however. What of the outcome of revolution? How do revolutions end? How are new regimes consolidated? How is social transformation enacted? These questions are implicitly answered by most research on revolution. For example, work in the schemas of Marxism, natural history, strain theory, and state-centered approaches tend to consider accomplished great or social revolutions. Research from the perspective of mass mobilization, culture, international
factors, and contingency extends outcomes to less durable changes and even failures. Yet explicit and conscious appraisal of revolutionary outcomes is rare. The most prominent example of work in this vein is Selbin’s (1993) analysis of how revolutionaries must consolidate and institutionalize their gains by winning hearts and minds to their program and constructing durable institutions of governance that last beyond the lives of revolutionary leaders. Similarly, others like Foran and Goodwin (1993), O’Kane (2000, 2004), and Becker and Goldstone (2005) explicitly examine the consolidation of new states in the aftermath of a revolution. And Eckstein (1975, 1982, 1985) has considered the longer-term socioeconomic outcomes of revolution. In some ways, we might consider revolutionary aftermaths to be an obvious area for a schema that failed to develop in revolution studies.

This is where revolution studies has been. But what of its futures? The frontiers of research are much less consensual than prior findings. Figure 21.4 charts the future directions mentioned by previous reviews of revolution research. On the x-axis are the reviews, again, ordered chronologically. The y-axis presents the areas of open inquiry mentioned by each review, roughly ordered chronologically. In contrast to the degree of consensus present in Figure 21.1, what the future holds is much less agreed upon. Of thirteen frontiers, only four are mentioned in more than two reviews: the role of ideology and culture; the need for processual or temporal thinking; methodological issues; and a greater understand of mobilizing processes. Another four frontiers are only mentioned by one review piece: the role of capitalism; spatial dynamics; prediction; and Islamist movements. While the overall trend is to add new frontiers, there does not seem to be the conclusion of past areas of inquiry. For instance, culture is a frontier of research as early as the 1980s, and remains so in the mid-2000s. Temporal sequencing is introduced by the 1990s, but still

![Figure 21.3 Schemas of revolution and consensual findings](image-url)
seen as a future direction in 2016. In fact, of the seven areas identified in reviews published in the 2010s, the average year of first mention is 1998. Future directions are 20 years old? It appears that revolution studies has not made much progress.

I argue that a large part of the problem with contemporary revolution studies is that its cases and concerns have been absorbed by other subfields, leaving only a small cadre of scholars who identity first and foremost as social scientists of revolution. To some extent, there is a generational succession problem here. Skocpol, Tilly, and other scholars of the 1970s and 1980s trained a cohort of
comparative historical social scientists, some of whom went on to study revolution. But since those progeny, there has not been a sustained lineage of scholarship. In fact, most current scholars of revolution come from different traditions like social movement studies and international relations theory. Revolution studies thus has a problem of polysemy. Adjacent fields study revolutions, but do not consider them revolutionary in terms of theory or implication. I highlight below four subfields that could contribute to a rebirth of revolution studies.

The first area where revolution studies is occurring in practice, if not in name, is studies of democratization and regime change (for a recent review, see Haggard and Kaufman 2016). This is little surprise. Both subfields share a classic text in Huntington (1968), which is read by political scientists as about democratization and sociologists as about revolution. The lexical divide persists in recent years. Many political scientists would consider cases like post-Apartheid South Africa or post-Pinochet Chile as successful cases of democratization. Sociologists would point to these as negotiated revolutions or revolutions through the ballot box (see Foran 2005; Lawson 2005). At times the language can be convoluted. Consider how Hale (2013) scrupulously avoids the term “revolutionary wave” in favor of “regime change cascade” and Weyland (2014) refers to “democratic contention” but not revolution in the title of his book. But the division is more than semantic. Studies of regime change and democratization do not see the object of inquiry as being revolutionary causes or processes or outcomes, but rather the consolidation or failure of a particular type of regime. And social scientists of revolution seem to have ceded much of this terrain. For example, the events of 1989 are more commonly considered a collapse of communism rather than a revolutionary wave. And sociologists interested in the 1989 mobilizations tend to examine them for the long-term socioeconomic impacts rather than as a case of revolution (e.g., Bandelj and Mahutga 2010). Yet, clearly, these questions are related. Democratization may have bled revolution for a simple reason that I alluded to above: the failure of an explicit literature on revolutionary outcomes to crystalize within the field. This suggests an opportunity for the revolution scholar. What makes a revolution more or less likely to result in a democratic government?

The second area that has taken attention from revolution is the study of civil war (for recent reviews, see Walter 2017; Wimmer 2014; see also Fearon and Laitin 2003; Hironaka 2005; Sambanis 2004). Many civil wars are, in fact, revolutions. Many revolutionary episodes, in fact, end up in civil war. From the conceptualization of revolution offered in this chapter – dual, effective, and incompatible claims to power accompanied by alternate visions of social and political order – many civil wars would qualify as revolutionary. The overlap between the phenomena has not gone unnoticed (Calvert 2010; Casanova 2000; Goldstone 2014; Goldstone et al. 2010; Tilly 1993; Wickham-Crowley 1992). But civil war is a field of study itself and one that increasingly takes over conflict studies more broadly. As with democratization studies, the lack of
grounding in revolution research is striking. The solution, I believe, is not for revolution scholars to try and recapture the study of civil war. This is already attempted implicitly. Rather, the solution is to delineate which civil wars are not revolutionary. In broad strokes, we might conceive of three broad types of civil war. First, there are civil wars where insurgents try to capture the center, that is, the state itself. These are most likely to be revolutionary. Second, there are separatist civil wars, often between ethnonational groups. These may or may not be revolutionary. Finally, there are irredentist civil wars where conquest of territory of a state is the goal. These are least likely to be revolutionary. What I propose here is that civil war scholars should learn from revolution studies when they consider the first and second types. It is time for civil war scholars to bring revolution back in. Perhaps we can help by explicitly articulating the connection for them. How is postrevolution regime consolidation blocked and how does civil war result?

Another type of conflict that is often revolutionary, but not often seen as such, is political terrorism (see Beck 2015; Crenshaw 1978). While the connection between terrorism and civil wars is well known (Findley and Young 2015; Kalyvas 2004; Stanton 2013; Thomas 2014), terror has made few inroads into the study of revolution. This is ironic. The word “terrorism” itself derives from a revolution – the Reign of Terror in the French Revolution. And some scholars of revolution are also scholars of terrorism (e.g., Beck and Miner 2013; Chenoweth 2013; Goodwin 2006). Revolution studies thus needs to see terrorism as one form of revolutionary action. Such an endeavor is sketched by Beck (2015). He proposes that many cases of terrorism, including twentieth-century national-separatist movements and contemporary Islamist groups, are revolutions (see also Goodwin 2005). Consider, for instance, the case of the erstwhile Islamic State. The Islamic State emerges from the ashes of invasion and civil war in Iraq and revolution and civil war Syria to press revolutionary claims to state power with an alternate sociopolitical vision. This is truly a revolutionary situation, involving many of the dynamics that various schemas of revolution have drawn attention to. The use of the word “terrorist” here, both domestic and international, identifies merely one strategy that the Islamic State revolutionaries use. Of course, other forms of terrorism may not fall under the umbrella of revolution, but a third opportunity is presented for scholars of revolution to analyze a phenomenon of pressing concern with the tools of their field. Under what conditions is terrorism a preferred strategy of revolutionaries and states?

The last area of polysemy is that of research on nonviolent resistance (see Chenoweth and Stephan 2011; Schock 2005; Zunes 1994). At first, this might seem an odd claim, given that this chapter has consciously reviewed this field as part of the mass mobilization schema of revolution studies. Yet nonviolent resistance research has proceeded along its own lines, mostly separate from revolution studies and more connected to social movement studies. Some of this division is conceptual – revolutions are often considered violent. And some is
methodological – the classic and state-centered theories of revolution emphasize analyzing the structures of nation-states more than the actions of protestors. As such, research on nonviolence tends to come from the tradition of peace and social movement studies rather than that of revolution, even though it is possible that the nature of revolution itself has changed (Foran 2014). Though there are exceptions (Lawson 2015a; Nepstad 2011; Ritter 2015), revolution scholars should not let nonviolence run away from them any longer. Otherwise, the danger is that another disconnected and self-referential literature will develop. Why has revolution shifted away from tactics of armed rebellion and toward strategies of civil resistance?

The polysemy of various fields has retarded knowledge accumulation in revolution to a large degree since the 1990s. This is clearly illustrated by consideration of how the Arab Spring is studied within social science. These events could still revitalize the study of revolution in social science. Yet, so far, this has not happened. Even the moniker for these uprisings, which could easily be called the Revolutions of 2011, shows the ambivalence about revolution in the twenty-first century. Civil resistance scholars point to the cases of Tunisia and Egypt as demonstrating the power of nonviolence as a strategy, while civil war scholars focus on conflict in Syria, Yemen, and Libya as demonstrations of their theories. Democratization scholars show interest in the success of Tunisia, particularly when compared to the failures of Egypt. And terrorism scholars have found Syria and Iraq to be fertile ground for study. But each of these cases is, first and foremost, a revolution. Tunisia is a successful revolution, Egypt a revolution turned to counterrevolution, Bahrain a suppressed revolution, Libya an unconsolidated revolution, and Syria and Yemen failed revolutions. To analyze the Arab Spring without an understanding of it as a case of revolution and revolutionary movements is nonsensical.

Some of the divisions I chart above are due to disciplinary differences. Sociologists tend to see these conflicts through the lens of revolution or social movements, due to their discipline’s long-standing concern with social change. Political scientists tend to see these conflicts as part of political structures and processes, which is their disciplinary core. This suggests that the true solution to polysemy is cross-disciplinary collaboration. Or, at the very least, conversation. Revolution scholars thus need to consciously and explicitly place themselves at the center of conflict studies within sociology and political science. Without such territorial claims, fragmentation will persist.

CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter, I have charted the eight different schemas that have animated revolution research since its beginnings – Marxism, natural history, strain and modernization theory, state-centered theory, mass mobilization dynamics, cultural and ideological factors, international and transnational approaches, and the role of contingency. This framework contrasts, by design and intention, to
previous reviews of the field. And I have outlined the sets of findings that occur across schemas: the role of rapid social change in causing revolutions; the structure of regimes, states, and international systems as conducive factors; the potential for oppositional mobilization to develop and sustain; and the dynamics of action and reaction in revolutionary situations. And I have suggested that a path forward for revolution studies is to place itself back at the center of conflict studies. Cases of democratization and civil wars are often revolutionary; and revolution can involve cases of terrorism and nonviolent, civil resistance.

I have also implied that a future for the field lies in the further development of the emergent schemas. First, the cultural approach to revolution needs sustained attention. There is a rich vein here—well known to historians—that social scientists of revolution have yet to fully mine. The field still awaits a grand statement about culture and ideology in revolution. Second, the conditions of our contemporary world cry out for an internationalist version of revolution studies. Revolutionary situations are only more likely to be and become international and transnational in the future. Finally, the seed of a contingency theory of revolution has been planted. With further care, it may completely change our understanding of revolution as a fundamental feature of social and political systems in ways we cannot yet anticipate.

The danger for these schemas lies in an implicit argument of this chapter. Jack Goldstone (2017) once observed that besides Theda Skocpol no major scholar of revolution ended up in one of the few central Ph.D.-granting sociology departments. This has meant that there is no succession of intellectual protégés to develop an approach further and create the type of “schools” that animate other subfields. Data I have collected on who produces studies of revolution bears this out—in acknowledgements in books there are no master–pupil chains that extend beyond one intellectual generation, and only a handful of scholars thank each other. Our epistemic community is quite small. As Collins (2000) has it, our size and fragmentation would mean that knowledge accumulation is unlikely.

To this I add three further observations. Another problem has bedeviled revolution studies. And that is the role of unquestioned and honorific citation. As I note about generations, a blind reliance on the framework has misrepresented the actual consensus and dissensus within the field. Specifically, it is time to be done with state-centered theory. I assert this for two reasons. The first I described previously, we should do so on theoretical grounds as we recognize the globality of many revolutions. More importantly, relying on a simplistic image of States and Social Revolutions has muddied our thinking. For example, there is Ritter’s (2015) account of revolutions in the Middle East and North Africa. This, in my view, is the finest book on the Arab Spring that has yet been written, as Ritter traces how cultural constructions and geopolitical maneuvering constrained the actions of regimes. Yet the clumsiest part of the book came from grafting culture-geopolitics-regime mechanisms onto prior state-centered work. Honorific citation here was
unnecessary and, in fact, possibly contradictory. If Ritter were set free, we might all be talking about the iron cage of liberalism. And we probably should be.

Second, theories of dynamic mechanisms will not save us from theoretical and empirical impasse. Causal complexity is understandably appealing. But complexity for complexity’s sake is a canard. Roger Gould (2003: 13) once pointed out that the problem with a theory that does not fit all instances is not that it generalizes, but perhaps that it is not general enough. Theory, by definition, provides a model. And a model should simplify and stylize our understanding rather than obfuscate it. As Healy (2017) has it, fuck nuance. This is what separates social scientists from historians. A far better approach is to acknowledge the scope conditions of a particular theory. What are a theory’s logical boundaries? What historical instances can it be applied to? What cannot it explain? Honesty here requires explicitness in our articulation of study design, not hand waving in the direction of ontology. This allows us to move past the issue of complexity and get on with the empirical work. Unfortunately, it also requires understanding a theory much better than cursory citation provides.

Third, I have bad news. What we think we already know about revolution may very well be probably wrong. My current book project examines all comparative case studies of revolution published between 1970 and 2010. I look at methodological choices, how cases are compared, and which theories are employed. And there is a consistent story that emerges—methodologically, revolution studies is quite poorly done. To give one example—the Nicaraguan Revolution of 1979 is the most studied case. This is both puzzling and laughable, given the event’s limited geopolitical and historical import. To give another example—case studies show decreasing methodological awareness and rigor over time (Beck 2017b). In the 2000s, fewer than 40 percent of studies had explicit justifications for their case selection, and there is no convergence on the study design techniques that comparative methodologists recommend. For the moment, let us leave aside the fact that a robust finding in our field is one that maybe just three or four studies have documented (Gould 2003). Even so, the lack of rigor in case comparisons is troubling. It suggests that much of what we think the field has established lies on a faulty foundation. We would need to see much better comparisons—drawn for particular goals related to knowledge advancement—for us to know if conclusions about the nature of revolution are spurious or not (Beck 2018).

I argue, quite simply, that we do not actually know much about revolution. Even given the modest consistency I identify above. This is due, first, to honorific citations that misuse and misrepresent prior theory and, second, to questionable epistemologies that may or may not represent the phenomenon well. The lack of truth here may set us free. We can approach the subject of revolution anew and with fresh eyes.

How might we do so and avoid the mistakes of the past? I suggest the following. First, we should recapture the true intellectual history of our field. This requires reading more than citing. Next, we should stop relying on musty
paradigms to frame our work. Unrooted innovation should be embraced and celebrated. Third, we need to become deliberate in our theorization. Messiness is as dangerous as abstraction. Finally, we must become better methodological practitioners. Explicit study design for explicit reasons is preferable to significant results or ad hoc comparisons. This may sound like a harsh intervention, but it is one that is sorely needed. Revolution studies is dead; long live revolution studies.

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CIVIL SOCIETY: THE ROOTS AND PROCESSES OF POLITICAL ACTION
The Challenges of Citizenship in Civil Society

Thomas Janoski and Sara Compion

Citizenship theory in the social sciences has a rich ancestry starting with Karl Marx (1978: 40, 179) and Max Weber (1981), but since the new millennium, it has greatly expanded in its conceptual breadth and use. The new century ushered in a deluge of fresh research that has deployed “citizenship” to conceptualize all kinds of social movements and theoretical works that incorporate multiculturalism. The term now appears to be omnirelevant with “almost universal appeal,” thus becoming a “universal feature of the modern state” (Jensen 2001: 23; Isin 2015: 263; Cohen 2009: 13). Evelyn Nakano Glenn made it the president’s theme for the American Sociological Association convention in 2010 (2011). Nearly any movement seeking to promote equality for gender, racial, or ethnic groups now uses a citizenship framework to advance their work.

This renewed emphasis on citizenship in sociology and political science has occurred for three reasons. First, insurgent groups continue to make and define citizenship claims, while other groups critique their validity. Contested claims of belonging are interesting to sociologists because they involve class, race, and especially gender inequalities. Feminist scholars argue that citizenship is Western-centric, male-dominated, overly universalistic, and ignorant of how the unexamined private sphere hides violations of women’s and minorities’ rights (hooks 2005; Lister 2003, 2007; Lister et al. 2007; Yuval-Davis and Werbner 1999). Second, surges in international immigration and naturalization processes have spurred on studies of identity, belonging, and citizenship (Bloemraad 2006; Brubaker 1992; Janoski 2010a; Joppke 2005; Vink and Bauböck 2013). This scholarship focuses on the racist or sexist nature of immigration procedures, naturalization processes, and anti-immigrant movements and parties, especially as they concern noncitizens and illegal aliens. Third, neoliberalism has sought to rein in social rights by limiting the scope of the welfare state. Tax cuts and program closings have been the main mechanisms in
doing this, usually in the name of promoting economic growth. Political sociologists have sought to explain the effects of neoliberalism on citizenship rights (Aslam 2017; Prasad 2006). These three factors have introduced new contradictions and reinvigorated the scholarship on citizenship.

This chapter covers four major themes about the advances and challenges in citizenship studies. First, in the rush to use citizenship to promote subordinate groups, scholars often overlook foundational theories of citizenship and their characteristics. This oversight reduces the logical coherence of some newer theories and arguments. Second, as subordinated groups acquire personhood – women, blacks, indigenous, migrants, LGBTQ, mentally and physically challenged, and mentally ill persons – they make citizenship claims central to their social movements. Third, citizens establish identities and practices, especially in acts of extraordinary sacrifice, to promote their claims on citizenship. Much recent scholarship has examined how this happens within the multination state under conditions of empire, war, migration, and economic expansion. Fourth, noncitizens – denizens and undocumented immigrants – and their treatment, have become a major focus amongst political sociologists. Finally, we venture thoughts on the future directions of citizenship studies.

FOUNDATIONAL CITIZENSHIP THEORIES

Citizenship is the active and passive membership of persons in a nation-state or multination state, with certain differentially applied universalistic rights and obligations at a specified level of equality. Citizenship operates under the auspices of the state, but the public sphere in civil society is where citizens contest change and debate claims to rights and obligations. Citizens and organizations meet in the public sphere with dynamic and responsive discourse between their various forms – voluntary organizations, interest groups, private firms, the market, families, and individuals – and the state (Janoski 1998: 12; Ardut 2013; Turner 2007, 2008). Scholars generally concentrate on citizenship within the confines of the nation- or multination state.1 Based on these definitions, this section examines theories of citizenship, and the new types of citizenship they propose.

Theories of Citizenship

There are five types of citizenship theory – liberal, social democratic, civic communitarian, feminist, and transnational theories. The last two are relatively new. First, liberalism rests on individualism, liberties to be free, and few obligations or duties. The long history of liberalism has begotten a range of approaches. Libertarians on the right frame rights without encumbrances, while

1 See Calhoun (2007) and Chernilo (2007) for arguments that the nation-state is still relevant despite claims to the contrary. See the discussion of the multination state later in this chapter.
some like Rawls with his original position “behind the veil” (1971) and “pluralism” (1996) have tried to tame the individualistic aspects of liberalism. At the core of liberal theory are individual freedoms and liberties. Liberalism has received a major boost from neoliberal ideals, which advocate for greater international trade, free movement of workers and financial capital, and for sometimes socially counterproductive liberties (e.g., legal and political rights of private property). While neoliberalism distains expansion of social rights in the welfare state, it continually increases inequality. Taxes come under attack by conservative positions such as libertarianism, but liberal theory generally seeks to minimize obligations and spending. Nonetheless, taxes are still paid and governments largely function. Economic points of view that favor the free market and more libertarian views have gained influence (Friedman 1962; Hayek 2007; Tomasi 2012). Margaret Thatcher in the UK and Ronald Reagan in the US led neoliberal movements at the national level by cutting the welfare state and taxes. Political theorists, philosophers, and neo-Tocquevillians do the most work on liberal theory (Craiutu and Jennings 2004; Gaus, Courtland, and Schmidtz 2015; Gray 2002, 2015; Putnam 1993, 2001), while political sociologists tend to be less involved or often critical.

Second, social democratic or expansive theories concentrate on egalitarian participation by groups and individuals. Expansive theorists incorporate a fuller range of rights and obligations, balancing these in both individual and group forms of exchange (Janoski 1998; Warren 1992). These theorists suggest that individualism is constrained by organized groups such as unions, political parties, and status groups (e.g., women, and racial and ethnic groups). With the shrinkage of unions, and with the expansion of globalization, social democratic approaches to citizenship have declined. Nonetheless, the basic ideas of a welfare state with social protections and social rights remain embedded in most advanced industrialized countries. Examples include Sweden and Norway, which have strong welfare states with employment security through active labor market policies, and equally strong taxation policies that pay for these programs (Sejersted 2011). Another example is Germany, which has elected works councils in firms of a minimum size, and codetermination with the near parity of worker directors on corporate boards.

Habermas has done the most to advance this theory (1984/1987, 1989, and 1996). His focus on communicative action spawned a scholarly movement oriented toward improved communication and participation to ward off instrumental irrationality. More recently, James Fishkin has promoted the application of deliberative polling and “deliberation days,” where citizens discuss together the various issues involved in political campaigns (2009, 1982; Barber 2004 [1984]; Goodin 2008).

To counter the rising sociological pessimism brought on by advancing neoliberal ideology, two approaches redirect the social democratic theory toward more critical understandings. In one approach, expansive democratic critics call for a participatory welfare state with more caring services,
transparency in decision-making, citizen welfare councils, and police review boards (Fung 2006, 2015; Fung and Wright 2003). In other words, the content and delivery of social rights become more open. But critics show that major innovations in the welfare state have died on the budgetary vine as neoliberals have pursued a “starve the beast” approach toward budgets (Stoesz 2016; Hemerijck 2013). Implementing this model of a truly participatory welfare state faces major challenges in neoliberal contexts. Meyer’s (2007: 2–4) theory of social democracy examines the tension between formal validity and real-world efficacy regarding conflicts between the market, public, and private spheres with civil society being the arbiter of many decisions. He focuses on “the institutions, forums, policies, participatory channels, and rights” that a social democracy needs to have to achieve universal rights against the structural risks of modern societies (Meyer 2007: 4; Sejersted 2011; Turner 1986). Out of this flows a participatory movement in the heart of the welfare state that counters the right’s attack on marginal incentives to stay on welfare, replacing it with the need for more citizen participation with less interest group and professional domination (Esping-Andersen 2002; Fung 2006, 2015; Stevenson 2015).

In a more cultural approach, Merolli (2016) and Fortier (2013) show that public opinion often influences state naturalization policy to try to evoke immigrants’ emotions of love and allegiance in their desire to become citizens. This is done through citizenship courses and the study done to pass naturalization tests. Connected to this is Ardut’s (2013) parallel critique of the public sphere as too rational or ideal in that it “overemphasizes civic-minded or civil discourse.” Instead, he uses a semiotic theory to show that visibility, reputation, and scandalous events create a sensory access to the public sphere (see also Etzioni 2014). Using “scandal” as one example, Ardut shows that there is collective effervescence with representation and imitation (mimicry), and “otherness” and strange originality (alterity) among publics based on emotions of curiosity and titillation (2013: 245). So while some aspects of the public sphere and especially media are rational and participatory, other aspects are tendentious and highly emotional, which bring forth proposals to change the media to promote democracy (Meyer 2002).

The third direction of citizenship stresses that civic communitarianism rests on having a strong community with active participation in civil society and the state. This theory frames rights within the context of community solidarity, obligations, and long-term relationships. Thus, duties trump rights. Prominent democratic versions of civic communitarianism have been developed by such scholars as Walzer (1983, 1990), Etzioni (1991, 1993), Selznick (1992), and van Seters (2006). Civic republicanism is one such democratic version of communitarianism that is rooted in Roman and Renaissance governments (Delanty 2002). It specifically focuses on democratic participation in the

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nation-state (Dagger 2002; Pangle 1990; Pettit 2000). We see these two theories as one, with the first placing more emphasis on community and the second more focus on the democratic state.

Communitarianism rose to recent political prominence with the election of Donald Trump as president of the United States and Theresa May as the prime minister of the United Kingdom, and her party’s exit from the European Union (EU). Prime Minister May states her republican position clearly as protecting the citizens of a defined state and opposing globalization models. In 2016, she declared, “Too many people in positions of power behave as though they have more in common with international elites than with the people down the road, the people they employ, the people they pass in the street.” She trenchantly concluded, “if you believe you’re a citizen of the world, you’re a citizen of nowhere” and “You don’t understand what the very word ‘citizenship’ means” (May 2016). This communitarian viewpoint not only rejects the extreme individualism of liberal theories, but also reembraces the nation-state and denies that it has declined. Communitarianism also encompasses a considerable amount of neo-Tocquevillian ideology that stresses the value of voluntary and religious participation in fostering democratic social cohesion.

Fourth, feminists have critically reworked citizenship by examining care, maternalism, and the politics of difference (Robinson 2011; Lister et al. 2007; Bettio and Plantenga 2004; Daly 2001). Since the mid-1990s, critical feminist theorists have challenged the exclusion from citizenship theory of women’s roles in the private sphere of caring for children, the disabled, elderly parents, and spouses. This discussion opened new avenues for theorizing about intimate and sexual rights, body ownership, and the relationship of care to citizenship (Lister 2003: 55). It also articulates citizenship within an “ethos of pluralization” that acknowledges universality in diversity and solidarity in difference (Yuval-Davis 1997; Yuval-Davis and Werbner 1999).

Many feminist scholars emphasize the emotional labor of domestic care work that women and racial minorities provide – which often goes unrecognized by state labor policies, reflecting a gendered and racialized construction of citizenship rights and obligations (Collins and Bilge 2016; Hochschild 1983; Kershaw 2006; Robinson 2011; Yeates 2011). They argue that the “caring-citizen” should balance the “worker-citizen,” and that fulfilling socially prescriptive obligations should correspondingly entail rights. Just as serving in the military provides American veterans with a claim to rights, caring

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3 “Civic communitarianism” is more focused on communities, and “civic republicanism” is more oriented toward government (Lister and Pia 2008; van Gunsteren 1998). But they are quite similar (Blatter 2011: 773).

4 Despite Marshall not covering women’s issues, Elisabeth Clemens comments: “Nevertheless, nothing in the theoretical structure of Marshall’s argument prevents its being extended to such cases” (2016: 20).
within or between families should entail similar rights. Janoski (1998: 247) proposes HOMECCA (Home Caring and Community Administration) that would provide pensions and/or training stipends to US citizens who perform child care and elder care duties. Others propose advancements in paid paternity leave to induce men to do more care work, or they suggest state payments for household care work – as occurs in Italy for elder care.\(^5\)

Venturing further into the private sphere, feminists have pushed the state to recognize the relatively unique injustices against women and children that take place in the private and intimate sphere. Lifting this veil of injustice has exposed the state’s inability to protect vulnerable citizens from spousal abuse in marriage, child abuse, and incest. Greater protections for these individuals requires an extensive process of household surveillance by police, doctors, social workers, teachers, and others to reveal abusive practices.\(^6\) It also entails the establishment of specific policies and programs to detect and prevent abuse, such as women’s shelters, family planning clinics, and rapid laboratory processing of rape diagnostic kits (see End the Backlog 2017). The state also has a duty to prevent child abuse by: (a) taking children out of abusive homes and placing them into foster care or adoption, and (b) prosecuting and imprisoning parents/guardians for serious neglect or deadly abuse. However, feminist theorists have highlighted how the state’s involvement in the private sphere lacks balance in terms of enforcing violations versus the everyday maintenance of rights.

Fifth, after the fall of communism and the formation of the EU, an increasingly globalist world has broadened interest in the possibilities of cosmopolitanism and global citizenship. Bauböck (1995) pursues a conception of transnational citizenship whereby dual citizenship and increased international migration give people transnational rights (see also Spiro 2016). Soysal (1994, 2011) justifies this claim using immigrant and transnational rights for migrants as examples. Ong (1999, 2006) profiles the strategies of some well-off Asian investors who make a “citizenship base” in several different countries so that they can invest safely and escape persecution if need be. Cosmopolitanism proposes a “world citizenship” in which international nongovernmental organizations (INGOs) like Human Rights Watch or Care International have significant influence on governments and transnational bodies alike (i.e., EU or UN) (Held 2004, 2010; Archibugi 2009). The EU, World Trade Organization, World Bank, and UN have also been the sites of these forms of world citizenship. However, Brexit in the United Kingdom and

\(^5\) Legal home care models can have negative consequences for caregivers who leave their families in one country to care for upper-income children in another country (i.e., the north–south “care chain”) (Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2003). This “globalizing of intimate citizenship” reflects racialized and gendered citizenship rights and obligations, and ignores the migrant’s family back home (Lewis 2006; Plummer 2003).

\(^6\) For a stronger statement of feminism beyond citizenship see Sasha Roseneil (2013).
hostility toward NAFTA in the United States have recently mitigated the impact of this theory along with the rise of anti-immigration policies.

Transnational citizenship theories are stronger in Europe than the US and elsewhere, and they can be related to various regime types. Esping-Andersen (1990) has developed a model containing three worlds of welfare with liberal, traditional, and social democratic regimes. Janoski (1998) directly relates them to overall citizenship regimes, and immigration and naturalization regimes (2010a). To this list, feminists add “caring regimes” (Bettio and Plantenga 2004; Lister and Pia 2008; Schofer and Fourcade-Gourinchas 2001). Studies show that volunteering, public protest, and social movements flourish in more economically stable, democratic regimes where free association, open discussion, and critique exists (Anheier and Salamon 1999; Curtis, Baer, and Grabb 2001; Schofer and Fourcade-Gourinchas 2001). Thus, transnational citizenship is most evident in social democratic and traditional regimes, where human rights organizations, trade unions, and political parties thrive (i.e., Europe); and in liberal regimes where voluntary association and religious organizations do well (i.e., the USA) – as opposed to authoritarian ones (Luria, Cnaan, and Boehm 2014).

New Types of Rights and Obligations and their Systemic Interaction

Citizenship movements since the 1960s have recognized advancements in the familiar types of legal, political, and social rights. Social rights stem from Marshall’s (1964) breakthrough theory that introduced the welfare state into citizenship studies. Countries differ considerably in terms of distributing the rights of social welfare, old age pensions, disability grants, and educational access, health care, family assistance, unemployment insurance, and various compensatory rights such as work injury insurance and veterans’ benefits. Employers and citizens bear the costs of funding these state programs through obligations to pay a variety of targeted or general taxes. Nevertheless, others have proposed new rights.

Venturing further into the market sphere, Janoski (1990, 1998) proposes participation rights that involve worker assistance in labor markets (job creation services), job security, works councils, grievance procedures, affirmative action, comparable worth, collective bargaining rights, and various sorts of codetermination and government investment rights. Participation rights will be involved with worker participation in private firms such as grievance procedures, works councils, and codetermination on corporate boards. In government, participation rights involve citizen advisory committees for bureaucracies and citizen review boards for police departments. Democratic countries have considerable legal and political rights with a mix of social and participation rights. Legal and political rights are more in the public sphere; social and participation rights are more in the private sphere of households or within organizations.
Others have proposed cultural rights that involve aspects of religious, ethnic, linguistic, and racial expressions of culture in public holidays, parades, and the media. Miller (2007) and Sinha-Roy (2017) make the case for cultural rights and assertions for the right to Internet access and the right to fair representation of gender, ethnicity, and religion in the film and television industry (e.g., the recent Oscar debate on race), as well as in national sports and the arts. Discussions on the structure and content of public schools reveal claims on cultural rights, especially concerning minorities freely expressing their cultural lifestyle (e.g., wearing headscarves or going to a specific restroom). Beyond cultural rights, some propose environmental rights for inanimate objects, and animal rights concerning factory farms or scientific laboratories (Gray 2014).

Political sociology has focused most on rights for minority groups, but it often ignores obligations. Having an ambiguous and often naive position toward obligations, some scholars see rights as unbounded, and entailing some kind of utopia once rights are properly assigned. However, we emphasize that rights cannot exist without corresponding obligations. Rights are not absolute, naturally universal, or easy to ascertain. Societies formulate citizenship within systems of norms that are prone to conflict. On the other side of the political spectrum, libertarians and many conservatives view obligations in the form of taxation, eminent domain, and various laws regulating one’s behavior as “jackbooted Nazis” being one step closer to serfdom and extracting taxes as “legalized theft” (Hayek 2007; Friedman 1962). However, Morris Janowitz’s statement that “the long-term trend has been to emphasize and elaborate citizen rights without simultaneously clarifying the issues of citizen obligation” still rings true today (1980: 1). Moreover, these rights and obligations exist in a complex system at the state and more local levels (Martin 1993). As a result, society needs specific institutions and organizations to delineate, maintain, and harmonize rights and obligations. The “conflict of laws” field in legal scholarship tries to settle these difficulties of norm, value, and role conflicts. The courts deal with many of these conflicts, but, less formally, much adjustment occurs in the mutual give and take of citizens with legal norms (Kelsen 1961). The government in regulating the media could play a much stronger role here in preventing the selective misrecognition of citizenship rights and obligations (Mettler 2011).

Nonetheless, citizens have legal obligations to respect the liberties, free speech, religion, and property of others. They have civic obligations to vote,

7 According to “the slippery slope” theory, once a government constrains rights, it cannot stop. But Martin (1993: 110–126) formulates five steps to reconcile conflicts between different rights: determine what rights are affected; identify the overlapping areas between the rights; establish weights for each right in their zone of overlap; create “tests” that apply the weighting system; and restrict the scope of competing rights by partitioning them from each other. Etzioni proposes limitations on these restrictions: (a) a clear danger must exist, (b) reasonable alternatives do not, and (c) the authorities use a process that is least intrusive for the citizen (1993: 177–190).
to remain informed about public issues, and to have a certain respect for democracy. Citizens also have political and economic obligations to fund the government through taxes, to protest the government under certain circumstances, to work if able, and to be civil to other members of society. An interesting argument about obligations has developed in the discussion of dual citizenship. On the one hand, Spiro (2016) and Turner (2001, 2016) argue that citizenship no longer matters since denizens have the same rights as citizens. While this is an overstatement, the discussion raises questions of whether dual citizens can truly fulfill obligations to multiple states. The original argument against dual citizenship concerned service in the military. But should dual citizens pay income taxes to each state represented by their two passports? Spiro also indicates that the differential ability to obtain dual citizenships introduces a new form of inequality within and between societies for those who gladly receive rights but shed obligations.

Political theorists such as Fishkin (2009) have developed formulas to determine obligations in different circumstances based on: (1) the number of situations falling under an obligation (few or many), (2) the number of persons in need (one or thousands), and (3) the number of people who could help to perform the obligation (you alone or thousands). When all three are high, the citizens develop collective responses, but when all three are low, citizens have personal responsibilities. Dalton and Wenzel (2014) show that over time citizens have gone from being “allegiant” to “assertive” in terms of expressing their political opinions and engaging in volunteering and activist forms of participation. This is a good thing for political pluralism, but the increase in participation correlates with the rise of the self-centered individual seeking constant reinforcement and new benefits (Inglehart 1977; Inglehart and Welzel 2005, 2010). The cultures of “me” or “narcissism,” or the “citizen as consumer,” can lead to the unmitigated pursuit of self-interest and opportunism. Then citizenship obligations wither (Brooks 2016; Lasch 1991). The well-documented decline in empathy from 1979 to 2009 parallels this cultural change (Konrath, O’Brien, and Hsing 2011) and prompts the question: Does the “good” of citizen participation increase self-centeredness that ignores obligations?

One neglected and somewhat counterintuitive obligation is to recognize the rights that one actually receives. Often citizens decry their obligations, especially taxes, by denying that they have received benefits from the state. Although citizens should be well aware of roads and sewerage systems, they sometimes behave as if these costly items magically appear. Suzanne Mettler shows that the average American who says they “have not used a government program” have used at least four. The most submerged benefits tend to be tax deductions, which can result in thousands of dollars a year, but even about 40 percent of these rights deniers received social security, unemployment, veterans’ benefits or Medicare (2011: 38; Howard 1997). Citizens’ duties should include recognition of the very rights that they receive.
THE DEVELOPMENT AND ACQUISITION OF CITIZENSHIP

Two areas of contestation within citizenship exist: universalistic versus partial or unequal citizenship, and personhood and the emergence of new citizens.

**Full and Second-Class Citizenship**

States enact citizenship rights as universalistic entitlements, but in practice they may not be universalistic at all. This disjuncture occurs in two ways: exclusions as to who is a person, and norms or practices in civil society that prevent universalistic rights. When enacted, the US Constitution and Bill of Rights appeared to be universalistic, but the elite white male culture did not allow nonpropertied men, blacks, women, indigenous people, and, in some states, Catholics and Jews, to vote or to have most of the rights enumerated in these documents. From the very beginning, their restricted status suggests partial citizenship (Barras 2017; Cohen 2009). As a result, these groups have had to struggle over time to get their rights. In fact, what appears to be universalistic citizenship policy can be highly particularistic and only for the few.

The passing of universalistic rights legislation does not ensure its implementation – especially when it contradicts the interests of powerful elements within government and civil society like the KKK. For example, during the Jim Crow era white majorities in the US south often disqualified black voting through poll taxes or literacy examinations. Some argue that this trend is repeated in the present era with mass incarceration of black men (Alexander 2010; Manza and Uggen 2008; Muller 2012; Travis, Western, and Redburn 2014; Western 2007), with biased mandatory minimum sentencing, racial-profiling and the disproportionate killing of black people by the police (Zimring 2017). Others suggest that residents of poor, segregated neighborhoods experience second-class citizenship when governments neglect them concerning emergency care, such as in Hurricane Katrina (Somers 2008). Similarly, universalistic laws of most nation-states entitle women to freedom from injury, attack, and wrongful death, but male-dominated civil society does not always regard family interactions in the private sphere to be subject to public laws. In these cases, powerful elites countermand the universalistic aspects of citizenship in civil society. For women and black citizens, the law is formally universalistic, but its implementation is highly particularistic leading to partial or semi-citizenship.

**Personhood, Social Movements, and Emerging Citizens**

Citizens do not emerge automatically – they must struggle using social movements and interest groups to push for changing partial rights into fully
recognized citizenship. Sometimes this is a continuous process of protesting, lobbying, and surveillance by civil society groups. The anticolonial movements are prime examples of how subjected groups without citizenship rights must go through a process of gaining personhood or social recognition of their worthiness to be a citizen (Fraser 2015; Honneth 1996; Mamdani 1996).

There are four short-term processes to gain citizenship: discrimination extension based on justice, public goods extension based on efficiency or reputation, sacrifices that fulfill major citizenship obligations, and naturalization processes creating new citizens (Janoski 1998: 145–172). Longer-term methods involve subordinate groups mustering power resources in terms of money, volunteers, and voters. Korpi (1989) and Esping-Andersen (1990) focus on the power resources of working-class groups to conceptualize their problems, form social movements and unions for change, and then mobilize resources (e.g., money, ideas, and people) to oppose the government and employers. Cherif (2015) applies the idea that what’s needed in the women’s movement is a “core” power of resources (i.e., jobs and votes) aimed at political issues. These groups may also use resources to immobilize production through marches, strikes, demonstrations, and boycotts of products. Revolution also fits into this mobilization strategy (Janoski 1998: 174–178).

The creation of personhood relies on a group’s assertion that its members have legal standing because of their natural or moral rights to equal treatment. To make this claim effective, the affronted group requires the creation of a consciousness or subjectivity based in emotion and rationality. In addition, the group needs to show that the state or society has neglected or harmed them, and that the state should back up and correct the group’s loss of human or moral rights (Failer 2002; Honneth 1996; Martin 2013: 7; Mamdani 1996). Their subjective consciousness must be strong enough to overcome preexisting stigma. If a social movement can organize enough people under these rights claims or can get elite support, then social recognition occurs and a social movement has a reasonable chance of enacting these rights and obligations into law.

Those without standing as a person are subject to stigma or just ignored, but eventually they too seek recognition in the public sphere (Ardut 2013). Anderson and Snow (2001: 402–403) see four strategies for the stigmatized where movements are preemergent: hide the stigma or pass as normal; defy the label, making others uncomfortable; breech or violate established norms; or engage in collective action to challenge perceptions and laws. The latter two strategies begin to develop a more positive identity and make political action possible. Claiming moral rights also goes through four stages: believing that they are a person (e.g., public claims to personhood); disrupting politics through protests or strikes; gaining elite sympathies; and accepting citizenship obligations to further claims to rights (e.g., serving in the military or other volunteering) (Honneth 1996; Nussbaum 2006). Forming social movements
and influencing political parties then enables the legal changes necessary to confer rights and obligations on these previously subordinated people.

Women, African Americans, indigenous people, LGBTQ people, and those with mental and physical challenges have sought citizenship, but they have largely been inside the multination state. Legal and illegal immigrants present a different approach to personhood to be discussed later in this chapter.

Elites and Citizenship

Citizenship rights and some obligations have been developed, enacted, co-opted, or forcefully opposed by elites. Mann (1988, 2012) examines the role of elites in liberal, reformist, fascist, authoritarian monarchist, and socialist regimes. In each case, elites recognize problems, propose solutions, or diffuse or avoid other outcomes. First, stigmatized and other groups seeking representation usually contact those whom they believe to be sympathetic to their cause. They begin by approaching elites who have some moral position in society—sympathetic politicians, professors, or religious ministers—to garner support. After meetings between leaders and elites, the elites meet with group members to learn about their needs and share their basic humanity. In The Communist Manifesto, Marx even commented on the importance of members of the bourgeoisie joining the radical proletarian movement.

Second, stigmatized groups will try to ally with other social movements and interest groups. This is difficult, since few groups want to ally with the stigmatized, but with effort, coalitions do form. As the stigmatized group becomes an accepted part of a coalition, it acquires more influence in promoting its cause, and may begin to weaken the opposition. If the group eventually gains enough allied support, then their cause advances.

Third, elites may initiate and promote subaltern organizations. For instance, Eunice Kennedy Shriver started and funded Camp Shriver in 1962 for intellectually challenged children when nothing else was available. She then went on to create the Special Olympics movement in 1968, and, in 1989, her son formed Best Buddies International. In contrast, some grassroots groups may become wary of elite charity and instead crowd-source support from mass numbers of smaller individual donors (Nixon and Horsch 2013).

Fourth, elites may propose citizenship rights to defuse their opposition. For instance, Otto von Bismarck as an elite chancellor created the first health, pension, and disability insurance programs in the industrialized world by allowing workers and employers to contribute to the system (Mann 1988). Similarly, the Liberal Party in the UK created many worker protection laws before the Labour Party got on its feet. In the United States, the predominantly white and middle-class abolitionists brought forward pressure for the emancipation of slaves and then the reconstruction of the American South.
Finally, elites can be a powerful obstacle that can obliterate oppositional groups. One elite strategy is to divide social movements into competing groups. For instance, the British in India tried to divide Muslims and Hindus to thwart the independence movement. American employers divided black and white workers, and the South African National Party created the pseudo-Bantustan states to separate and weaken oppositional potential. However, some elites may abrogate their leadership role by withdrawing from discussions about key issues. Mark Mizruchi (2013) makes this argument about the corporate elite in the US that leaves political matters to a small number of conservative groups like the Koch brothers (see also Lasch 1996).

CITIZENSHIP IDENTITIES, PRACTICES, AND ACTS

Citizens respond to their rights and obligations in different ways. Scholarship shows that individual identities and practices of citizenship reflect not only a person’s political orientation but also a wider sense of civic culture. Thus, citizens may act in either an allegiant, oppositional, or an ambivalent way toward politics.

Citizen Identities

Civic culture is rooted equally in public and private experiences, and correlates with industrialization, economic growth, and even neoliberalism. Civic culture depends upon the individualist or collectivist nature of society, upon dominant social values, and upon evolving political and social circumstance (Inglehart 2003; Triandis 1995; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995). Janoski used this knowledge to recommend a classification of six types of citizen-selves or identities that reflect individuals’ internalization of civic culture: incorporated, active, deferential, cynical, opportunistic, marginal, and fatalistic citizen-self (1998). Value involvement and behavioral activity toward the state motivate each citizen’s orientation. Depending on one’s value orientations, one can respond as an active, passive, or inactive citizen. This typology integrates interaction into a context of “active or passive social motivation and allegiant or oppositional positions” (Janoski 1998: 95). Table 22.2 depicts how individuals’ orientations to a regime can be classified as allegiant, apathetic/indifferent, or alienated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 22.1 Four types of citizenship rights</th>
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<td><strong>Action Position:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Public Sphere</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Private Sphere</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Active</strong></td>
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<td>Political rights</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation rights</td>
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<td><strong>Passive</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Legal rights</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social rights</td>
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Citizenship Practices

Active citizens participate in social life in a multitude of ways: voting, paying taxes, staying informed, being employed or an entrepreneur, completing schooling, obeying laws and procedures, responsibly caring for children and the elderly, and exhibiting tolerance and respect for other members of society. Citizenship that is more assertive includes participation in mass rallies, marches, demonstrations, sit-ins, and volunteer work for socially “good” causes. Individuals can be motivated toward this engagement by a sense of public good, or by the perceived extrinsic, intrinsic, personal, or collective benefits associated with involvement (Ziemek 2006). Values of generosity, caring beliefs, and religious ideals also influence volunteer choices (Inglehart 1977; Lam 2002; Musick and Wilson 2007), as do socioeconomic status and social capital (Janoski 2010b; Janoski, Wilson, and Musick 1997; Khan 2012; Taniguchi and Thomas 2011; Janoski and Wilson 1995). Others suggest that social identity can place expectations of service upon women and wealthy homemakers (e.g., Brown and Ferris 2007; Kumar et al. 2012; Lin 1999; Wilson and Musick 1998). Finally, some people just have more time and connections than others, which leads them to being asked to volunteer more frequently (Schlozman, Verba, and Brady 2013; Verba et al. 1995).

Volunteering, voluntary group membership, and collective activism are responsible and pro-social citizen behaviors. Scholars stress the importance of such organized behavior for advancing democracy because it serves social and political objectives (de Tocqueville 1969; Dekker and Halman 2003; Putnam 2001; Skocpol 2003; Smith and Shen 2002). Civic engagement is valuable because it promotes community participation and social cohesion, generates social capital, and ultimately supports political well-being by encouraging government accountability and political alternatives (Curtis et al. 2001; Dalton 2006; Hustinx, Handy, and Cnaan 2010; Luria et al. 2014; Schlozman et al. 2013; Verba et al. 1995).

New forms of active citizenship include online social media campaigns and “click-activism.” A growing body of scholarship approaches civic action as something originating from the bottom up via the Internet and social media. This includes organizing flash mobs, keeping members up to date on current

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Action Position</th>
<th>Value Involvement with Current Regime</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Allegiance</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Apathy/indifference</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Alienation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Active</td>
<td>Incorporated citizen</td>
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<tr>
<td>Passive</td>
<td>Deferential citizen</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inactive</td>
<td>Marginal citizen</td>
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Table 22.2 Citizens by action and value involvement

IV. Civil Society: Roots and Processes

political activities, and soliciting small contribution funds from many ordinary people. MoveOn.org was an early initiator of this approach during the Clinton administration, but it grew in popularity under the Obama campaign for the presidency (Isin and Ruppert 2015; MoveOn.org 2004; Walker, Lee, and McQuarrie 2015). This type of activism has also been effective in mobilizing issue-based hashtag campaigns like #BlackLivesMatter, #RhodesMustFall, and #WomensMarchGlobal. While gaining much attention, electronic citizenship does not increase voter participation among the young, who use it the most (Hickman 2016).

McAdam (1997, 1999) and Tilly (2001) have examined how citizens pursue their shared interests in seemingly fluid and disconnected ways. This process occurs dynamically as structural forces transform and are transformed by collective action. McCarthy and Zald (1977, 1999) stress the abilities of citizens to acquire resources, to mobilize human capital through institutional capacity and legitimacy, and to mobilize people in pursuit of collective goals (Edwards and McCarthy 2004; Skocpol 2003). Citizen action also depends, in part, on the structures for political opportunity such as government responsiveness, legal platforms for dialogue, and rights to free speech. For instance, as political opportunity structures increase, protests decrease because better channels of negotiation are now open to the opposing parties (Opp 2009).

Salamon and Sokolowski (2003) extend the political opportunity and resource mobilization perspectives to suggest that the global explosion of civil society groups and social movements can be best explained with an “interdependence theory.” This view argues that civil society groups in liberal welfare democracies cooperate with the state in developing social policies, providing services, and establishing legitimacy. Due to the collaboration between civic and state entities – albeit uneasy at times – groups can access important political, social, human, and physical resources necessary to mobilize citizen-volunteers. Thus, the key to the success of citizenship activity and grassroots movements lies in accessing resources and government support. In this way, functional civic organizations with engaged members enable citizens to express their interests and make demands. These organizations are also mediators between interest groups and the state, and are thus arguably important for the stability and effectiveness of democracy (de Tocqueville 1969; Fukuyama 2000; Verba et al. 1995; Schlozman et al. 2013).

However, there is a dark side to volunteering in racial discrimination and demagoguery that even de Tocqueville recognized (Craiutu and Jennings 2004). Voluntary groups or movements may not always be beneficent. Divisive and fundamentally antidemocratic groups – Alt-right, racist, anti-Semitic, Jihadist, and segregationist movements – also rely on volunteers and willing participants. Civic groups do not necessarily cultivate broad-minded skills and tolerant virtues (Eliasoph 2011; Wiertz 2016). They can have a silo effect: attracting only like-minded individuals from similar social circumstances, and breeding
racism, parochialism, ethnic intolerance, and homogeneity (Mann 2005). While civic engagement programs and citizen empowerment groups are supposed to allow people to associate as independent equals, they can also amplify social inequalities and hierarchies and entrench preexisting paternalistic, racist, and classist social systems (Eliasoph 2011; Kraus 2014). A final criticism suggests that a public–private interdependence is how the voluntary and nonprofit sectors link to neoliberal privatization and the state’s retreat from services. This not only burdens citizens, but also undermines processes of accountability (Ferguson 1994; Helsley and Strange 1998; Mbembe 2000; Wallace 2002).

Exceptional Participatory Acts

Over the past few decades, citizens have increasingly distrusted elites, politicians, and traditional state institutions (Dalton and Welzel 2014). Grassroots organizers on the left and right are willing to confront systems of power at the local level and even beyond national boundaries. They are turning away from allegiance toward a more assertive and confrontational posture to the state. In the emerging field of assertive acts of citizenship, Isin (2012) and Clarke (1996) examine the types of citizen acts that are seemingly supererogatory. Isin focuses on the “acts” (not actions) of citizens that break established norms and often put the actor at risk, but that generally advance inclusiveness, openness, and accountability. Isin (2012) gives 20 illustrations of citizenship acts performed beyond the nation-state by individuals and groups such as Edward Snowden, Banksy, LulzSec, and the Open Rights Group. These acts are transgressive events in moments that rupture traditional boundaries, antagonize the state, and often have globally transformative consequences.

Statistically, the number of people who commit exceptional acts of citizenship is small, but the outcomes can be powerful: Julian Assange’s WikiLeaks in opposition to governments and their security forces; the British Open Rights Group that lobbies powerfully for unrestricted, free Internet access; or Doctors without Borders from Western countries who travel to foreign war zones to treat strangers. Though infrequent, these acts raise our awareness of new potential for expanding citizen consciousness.

Isin contends that citizen “acts” are descriptive forms and repertoires that cause social ruptures, resulting in the creation of new and meaningful politically relevant events. Acts cause major shifts in global morality and generate new imaginaries for contemporary citizenship (Isin 2012). They also involve subjects making claims or demands upon personhood, civil society, and the state. However, the intentionality of the act involves “answerability” only to a deeper meaning – not “responsibility” to formal legal obligations (Isin 2012: 123; 2008). This answerability connects to an internalized, existential guilt that appears if one does not prevent humanitarian catastrophes. This somewhat
metaphysical guilt interweaves with the deeper meanings of one’s citizenship, and ultimately drives these performances. Pushing this in a more Marxist direction, Etienne Balibar (2015) emphasizes in his concluding theses on citizenship that “acts” may become a form of “insurrectional politics” to counter antidemocratic movements.

TRANSNATIONAL CITIZENSHIP AND MULTINATION STATES

Globalization has moved the peoples of the earth. European and American imperialism started much of this initial movement, but twentieth- and twenty-first-century globalization has further accentuated international migration. This has affected citizenship theories and practices by raising concerns about the legality of denying immigrants citizenship, the morality of the naturalization process to attain citizenship, and the limits of scrutinizing refugees and asylum seekers.

International migration patterns of the past 200 years have dramatically affected empires and nonempires alike. Many states currently grapple with implementing naturalization policies that attempt to assimilate or accept new immigrants into their societies, but they do not offer easy or full citizenship. The British, French, Dutch, and American Empires initiated emigration movements to run colonies, followed by reverse immigration of colonial subjects to the metropole (Go, 2008, 2011; Janoski, 2010a). In colonized territories, states only granted partial access to citizenship rights to their subjects, and yet citizenship was not always vital for attaining welfare rights or even voting rights (Brubaker, 1989; Mamdani, 1996). The worldwide increase in illegal cross-border immigration has meant that accessing full citizenship in “sanctuary countries” has now become a critical factor for the desperate migrants and their children.

A different impact of transnationalism comes through the ironic effects or biopower of empire. Janoski (2010a) shows how empires paradoxically create reverse flows so that the colonized immigrate to the core of the empire. However, the empire in spreading its liberal doctrine of rights creates the conditions for many immigrants to interrogate the empire on its own legal principles. Joppke (2005) shows how the nation-state creates its ethnic and political society based on a clear selection process of certain kinds of citizens. Van Houdt (2008; van Houdt and Shinkel, 2013) more explicitly shapes citizenship processes using both Foucault’s (2003) and Agamben’s (2005) theories of biopower. This parallels with Titmuss’ (1963) theory of the state’s interests in war as a “progression of biological interests” – thousands of able-bodied soldiers with strong limbs and minds. Thus, the state, intentionally or not, shapes the biotic structuring of its citizens and society. Similarly, the state exploits the minds and bodies of noncitizens through cheap labor, substandard housing, deferential interaction, unclaimed benefits, and even deportation.
Noncitizenship: Legal and Undocumented

The treatment of legal and undocumented immigrants is now the dominant form of differential citizenship. Illegal and undocumented immigrants have almost no citizenship rights, while legal immigrants may be entitled to a subset of them. Legal immigrants are more permanent or long-term than tourists or foreign students, who have fewer rights. Nevertheless, legal denizens have an “in-between” or liminal status, with access to worker, education, and health care rights and possibly some social security, but no guarantee of eventual citizenship (Cebulko 2016). Where denizens have rights akin to citizens, Turner (2016), Spiro (2016), and Blatter (2011) say that this devalues the concept of citizenship. However, in many states, these immigrant rights are eroding (Benton 2014). In the US, the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 stripped many welfare rights from both legal and illegal immigrants.

Political sociologists have exposed the suffering and exploitation of illegal or undocumented immigrants, especially their children (Benhabib 2004; Gonzales 2016; Almaguer 2009; Menjivar 2000). This has led some like Menjivar and Kanstroom (2014: 12–16) to interrogate the concept of “illegality.” They find that the “illegal” framing of undocumented habitants fails to reflect the diversity of lived experiences of people behaving as citizens. This framing harms children and hurts millions of families, reinforces deportation, and does little to secure the borders of the receiving country because it pushes border policing into the interior. Others argue that noncitizenship is a socially constructed process rather than the simple absence of citizenship. It is shaped by legal categories (travel visas, temporary immigrants, and long-term residents) and various forms of nonlegal status (visa overstayer, border crosser, long-term immigrant without papers) (Fortier 2013; Goldring and Landolt 2013; Gonzales and Sigona 2017; Plotke 2014; Tonkiss and Bloom 2016; Weissbrodt and Divine 2015). Their main argument is that illegality harms the life chances of immigrants and their families. While Kanstroom (2012: xi) says that he “does not argue for completely open borders, for the abolition of the nation-state, or against all immigration enforcement,” he calls for a complete overhaul of the concept of “illegality” with a clear pathway to citizenship for long-term residents.

Much of the debate concerning illegality and noncitizenship uses the US–Mexico border as a point of departure. There are three arguments made for erasing “illegality” and pursuing a more humane policy. First, children brought illegally to the US by their parents (“dreamers”), who learn English and go to school, should be allowed legal status to complete their education and pursue upward social mobility. This argument rests on long-term residence (jus domicile) and being a minor at the time of immigration. Second, any undocumented immigrant who has lived in the country for a decade or more
should be automatically afforded a pathway to legal status because of their long-term residence (Standing 2014). Third, much of the land where undocumented Mexican-Hispanic immigrants reside in the US previously belonged to La Raza or the Mexican government, and a small contemporary Reconquista movement argues that these migrants are entitled to citizenship claims in this area. Most politicians and social movement leaders avoid this rationale in public policy debates, but it is as a submerged justification that may appear in racialized disputes about land rights.

Arguments in favor of enforcing “illegality” come from citizens on the political right (e.g., Donald Trump and Marine Le Pen supporters) but also surprisingly from legal immigrants who gained citizenship through naturalization at great cost (Huntington 2009; Tavernise 2017). There are two arguments here. One is that many of the now naturalized immigrants endured long lines and bureaucracies to earn citizenship and that granting exceptions to the rule would devalue their efforts. International justice policymakers also argue that US “grace policies” aimed at granting illegal immigrants pathways to citizenship favor Hispanic and discriminate against Asian and African immigrants. Immigration policy should be fair to people from all parts of the world. Second, does a country have the right of self-determination to decide who enters their borders and becomes citizens? Those who back the enforcement of “the illegality argument” favor self-determination, and also deportation and stricter adherence to legal immigration quotas for all nationality groups.

This debate will not be resolved by straightforward argument because so many values and justifications conflict. Political struggle between immigrant groups, nativist groups, and political parties will solve it. In the end, demography will determine the destiny of the debate, as border crossings and differential birth rates between natives and immigrants alter the population in favor of the new immigrants.

Migration, Citizenship, and Communitarian Backlash

In response to terrorism, the growing costs of maintaining a welfare state, and the rise of anti-immigration parties, many receiving countries have toughened immigration and naturalization policies. The United States even attempted, and to some extent succeeded, in banning immigrants from certain Muslim nations in 2017. In 2015, 51 percent of Americans expressed concerns about terrorism, which was second on their list of worries (Newport 2017). At the same time, 58 percent of Europeans saw immigration as being a major problem, and 39 percent saw terrorism as a significant fear (Szücs 2017). These new constraints, on what seemed to be relatively open immigration and naturalization policies in the West, have caused a U-turn in external citizenship. Immigration has gone down, deportations have risen, and surveillance has increased.

Some citizens who have committed terroristic acts have had many of their citizenship rights denied or their citizenship entirely revoked. In the US and
France, naturalized citizens can be “denaturalized” for falsified applications, refusal to testify, membership in a subversive group, or receiving a dishonorable discharge from the military. Native-born citizens under *jus soli* cannot have citizenship revoked; however, the US government declared Jose Padilla, a native US American, a “noncitizen” in 2002. The FBI held him without charges for over three years without the right to a trial. So much for being a citizen (Mayer 2009). In a similar fashion, the French government is considering a law to strip native-born individuals of their citizenship if they engage in terrorism, which prompted the Minister of Justice to resign in protest (Horn 2016; Joppke 2016).

Many countries have made immigration and naturalization more difficult due to fears that immigrants import culturally controversial practices into society (e.g., wearing headscarves, genital cutting, boozing the national anthem), or engage in murderous and terroristic attacks. Austria, Denmark, Estonia, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, and the UK have introduced written citizenship tests with political, cultural, and language components. Spain, Greece, and Hungary now have oral tests (Goodman 2014). Some countries have increased the number of years for their residency requirements, but many more have increased language requirements with higher proficiency standards. A few countries, like the Netherlands, even apply language tests before immigration itself. While naturalization rates have declined in many countries, there is a strong corresponding trend toward accepting dual citizenship (Spiro 2016).

Transnational citizenship theory generally recommends a wide-open policy toward accepting immigrants and a relatively easy path to citizenship. This contradicts communitarian theory, which in its extreme forms is xenophobic. However, there is a deeper conflict between these approaches. While the UN Declaration of Human Rights protects free movement out of a country, it does not guarantee any rights to enter a country (Orchowski 2015: 9). Furthermore, the right to self-determination of peoples is also protected in the Atlantic Charter (1941) and the UN Declaration of the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (1960). While these principles led to decolonization and expanded the number of countries in the world, they have also been applied to nation-states with rights to self-determination – many of whom have become multination states with a distinctive polity, society, and culture (e.g., France, UK, and US) (Buchanan 2007; Cassese 1999; McWhinney 2008). So how do scholars resolve the conflict between rights of free movement and the self-determination of peoples?

Since citizenship and migration are closely connected to the nation-state, this term needs some clarification. Balibar (1990) and Walby (2003) criticize the nation-state as constructed out of a myth or false sort of ethnic unity (e.g., France began as a fusion of the Franks and the Gauls in 500 to 800 AD). However, nation-states have always been imagined communities that have largely settled their identity and migration issues over centuries (Anderson
With increased global migration, pure nation-states are replaced by multination states that are culturally diverse (e.g., religious pluralism) and that primarily emphasize constitutional rules over cultural ones. The multination state creates a sense of common heritage through a culture of constitutional order and civic nationalism (Jessop 2016). Thus, the multination state is real because most of those who experience it believe it is real but its ethnic composition will shift.

To illustrate this point, Hispanic migration and naturalization in the United States are leading to an increase in the minority population to the point that in 15 years the United States will have a majority-minority citizenry of Hispanics, blacks, and Asians. For a viable democracy, social mobility must allow workers and politicians from the lower social classes to find political, economic, and social success—Pareto’s (1935) “circulation of elites.” This demographic destiny is due to the low birth rates of the Western elites and the high birth rates for immigrants with lower socioeconomic status. The result is that future elites will come from upwardly mobile minorities who acquire power positions and advocate for greater citizenship rights for their group. To ensure their integration, established elites must assimilate immigrant leaders emerging through a process of the circulation of elites coming from the lower classes (Pareto 1935). Anti-immigrant movements may stress the original nation-states’ ethnic and religious purity, and to some degree “hegemony,” but as long as immigrants keep coming, this particularistic defense will be a lost cause.

Transnational and communitarian theorists disagree over the basic right of all peoples to self-determination. Transnational critics often brand communitarians as nationalists or even racists, but these critics must deal with or eliminate the right of the self-determination of peoples to justify their position. If they remove it from the pantheon of rights, they also face the objections of many new states and former colonies. On the other hand, transnationalists might argue that multination states lose their right to self-determination when they accept diverse immigrants or that humanitarian needs trump a country’s rights. This also applies to many different separatist movements: Barcelonans in Spain, Russians in the Eastern Ukraine and Crimea, and Kurds in Turkey and Iraq. The issue turns on the question of defining “a people” in multination states.

Jessop (2016: 148–153) sees three types of nation-states: the Volksnation or blood community state (e.g., Germany before 1990), the Kulturnation based on a shared culture (e.g., France), or the Staatsnation based on adherence to a constitution and civic nationalism (US). Nation-states even exist where one nation partially imposes its culture and political rule on other internal nations. For instance, the Black Watch Battalion of the Royal Regiment of Scotland, marching with bagpipes and wearing tartan kilts, has long been a highly decorated part of the British army. Yet Scotland has a long history of opposition to England.
CONCLUSION

Four major advances and challenges shape the new citizenship. First, foundational theories of citizenship are important as two new citizenship theories have emerged – feminist and transnational theories. Citizenship theories reflect central tensions between rights and obligations that involve a mix of conflict and compromises. However, in the rush to use citizenship to reduce inequality, scholars often miss each theory’s complex discourse. This oversight reduces the logical coherence of their work, and it is clear that scholars should know the assumptions and theories behind their otherwise meaningful arguments.

Second, subordinate groups – women, blacks, indigenous, migrants, LGBTQ, mentally and physically challenged, and mentally ill persons – acquire personhood and make citizenship claims central to their social movements. We examine the process of how stigmatized groups are able to make moral claims that lead to citizenship. For instance, children’s rights have been built on acquiring and pushing for better protections; however, in the process, they give the state greater surveillance control over families in the private sphere (Brettschneider, Burgess, and Keating 2017). Sympathetic or strategic elites have also played a role in promoting personhood and achieving rights, but they can also be a major barrier.

Third, we examine citizen identities and practices, especially in acts of extraordinary sacrifice, to promote their claims on citizenship. Much new scholarship has examined how this happens within the multination state where “supererogatory” or heroic acts of participation have occurred. We also examine emerging theories about how volunteering emerges through new electronic technologies and old methods of simply being asked to volunteer. Some of this involves “answerability” that goes well beyond responsibility or citizenship duties.

Fourth, transnational citizenship has emerged from centuries of colonialism and relies on Foucault’s concept of biopower (2009). The largest new thrust in this area is the absence of citizenship for documented and undocumented immigrants. Scholarship on how immigrants are welcomed, exploited, ignored, or expelled has grown exponentially. Attention has focused on the paths to citizenship through naturalization. Increasing international migration has created more multination states than simple nation-states. In various ways, states have always resisted controls over who can enter their territory but, now, emergent social movements are lobbying governments on behalf of them.

In sum, citizenship in civil society represents a struggle that legitimates theories, the acquisition of personhood, the formation of identity, and the traversing of borders. In each case, groups face the advance of their rights, or their neglect or removal of rights. This ebb and flow of rights reveals citizenship as a constant struggle of Simmel’s “open bridge” and “closing door” (1994). But under globalization, it is a door that is increasingly open.
REFERENCES


IV. Civil Society: Roots and Processes


IV. Civil Society: Roots and Processes


Political sociology and social movement studies are closely entwined. Modern scholarship on movements was born in the 1960s, when they were detached from fads, crowds, and other collective behavior, and instead came to be seen as a normal part of politics. Since then scholars have perceived social movements and protest as parallel to (and interacting with) parties and elections, often adopted by groups who are excluded from regular institutional channels as a means to pursue their material and ideal interests. The new paradigm at first focused on formal organizations, material resources, and political structures, and was very much a part of a broader political sociology newly enlivened by comparative and historical methods. Scholars such as Charles Tilly (1975, 1978) and Theda Skocpol (1979, 1992) were equally adept at discussing states and protests, partly because revolutions linked the two.

The new field was part of an even broader shift in sociology away from a view of society as relatively unified, with considerable consensus over values and understandings ("a" culture), and instead toward a view of social life as largely conflictual, in which groups and individuals use cultural meanings as tools to pursue various ends. Protestors were no longer seen as deviants from a society’s basic values, symptoms of a fractured social structure (Kornhauser 1959; Smelser 1962), but as rational beings with their own goals, especially inclusion in politics. The Civil Rights movement provided a new exemplar for American scholars and others: sympathetic victims who had been legally, socially, and economically excluded from their nation’s basic institutions, and who sought basic human and political rights (McAdam 1982; Morris 1984).

Scholars today view social movements as sustained and intentional efforts to foster or retard social changes, primarily outside the normal institutional channels encouraged by authorities. They incorporate networks of individuals, formal organizations, and informal groups. Because it is often difficult to see where a movement ends and other entities begin, I prefer a
language of players, who have more coherence and coordination, and usually consist of organizations, factions of organizations, and individuals. I also use the term “arena” to indicate the places, governed by rules and commanding resources, where decisions emerge from strategic interaction among players (Duyvendak and Jasper 2015; Jasper and Duyvendak 2015).

For largely methodological reasons, the field of social movements proved more innovative than many areas of political sociology. Movement scholars have been able to incorporate micro-level dynamics, individuals’ points of view, cultural meanings, and emotions more readily than other political sociologists. Because they are often participants in the movements they study, they can observe and feel political action from the inside out, something that is harder to do by interviewing government officials or compiling official government statistics.

NEW ARENAS, NEW PLAYERS

The central insight of the new field of social movements as it flourished and crystallized in the 1970s was that movements emerge in response to new institutional opportunities for participants to pursue their existing goals. Taking a long historical view, Tilly (1986, 1995) demonstrated that as national legislatures became more accountable, protestors directed their claims toward those elected officials rather than toward local notables. They increasingly petitioned parliament instead of burning down a local mansion or tarring and feathering a tax collector. They hoped to use the new arenas to push specific programs but also to influence the rules of those arenas in ways that would help them in the future, especially gaining better access through the rights of citizenship. National news media and other improved forms of communication and transportation aided the process. Such historical transformations, especially in the nineteenth century in Europe and the United States, supported the rise of the modern social movement (Tarrow 2011; Young 2006).

Some political opportunities are structural channels for action, apparent especially from a cross-national perspective. Different nations have different sets of arenas, with different relationships among those arenas. They may allocate different tasks to the courts, for instance, making them a promising avenue for protest in some countries but not in others. Some constitutions give huge powers to their legislatures, while others try to balance this power with other branches. In particular, some arenas deal with policy formulation and others with implementation (Kitschelt 1986).

Political parties are the central player in electoral arenas, and protestors often engage them to accomplish their goals. In some cases movements become parties, such as Labor or the Greens. More often movements pressure parties to support their goals, finding more or less success depending on whether or not those parties are part of governments, and on the degree to which political
systems are open to new parties (Kriesi et al. 1995). Alliances with political parties can promote protest goals, but they can also lead to demobilization. Just as often, protestors enter party arenas as individuals in pursuit of their goals. In some cases, on the other hand, government officials encourage protest groups when they are otherwise blocked by normal channels (Verhoeven and Duyvendak 2017). Within these structural channels, players are constantly making alliances and other deals. American social movement theorists have begun rather belatedly to pay attention to how social movements influence the goals of political parties (McAdam and Kloos 2014; Heaney and Rojas 2015).

Within the context of these grand changes over time and differences across nations, smaller windows of opportunity give protestors a chance to advance their projects, such as a perceived crisis or an environmental/technological accident that draws attention to a social practice or organization. A scandal or other blunder may destroy the credibility of a politician, corporation, or other player, allowing its opponents to advance their proposals (Jasper and Poulsen 1993). Players are constantly making alliances and other deals. The main opportunities that McAdam (1996) cites are divisions in the political/economic elite, elite allies for the protestors, a collapse of the state’s repressive capacities, and the financial collapse of the state. Many other advantages have also been labeled opportunity structures, often fancifully, ranging from media attention to corporate vulnerabilities.

In addition to these political openings, protestors often need resources, especially money, in order to build the kinds of formal organizations that function effectively in certain arenas (McCarthy and Zald 1977). Organizations with paid staff can gather professional know-how and control their employees well, compared to informal groups that rely on ideologically committed volunteers (Mansbridge 1986). If the political metaphor suggested that protestors organize themselves like political parties, the economic approach proposed that they act like firms pursuing profits. Following firm and industry classifications, McCarthy and Zald spoke of social movement organizations (SMOs), grouped in social movement industries and all together forming a social movement sector.

Moral entrepreneurs are central in these resource mobilization theories, as rational actors who can get a pay-off from founding new organizations by appealing to public attitudes. They help young movements overcome the “free rider problem,” in that a small number of leaders invest some of their own resources in order to receive rewards later. Someone has to be doing the “mobilizing”: first individuals, later the organizations themselves, as they persuade sympathetic and beneficiary populations to contribute time and money.

This structural paradigm, in both its political and its economic forms, assumed that grievances are always present and so have little causal significance. In a vision beholden to Marxism, researchers assumed that latent groups merely need the resources and political openings to pursue their ends,
and that they do not need to be actively constructed as groups. An oppressed group’s fate lies in the hands of others, in this view: those who contribute money, the state players who are paralyzed or sympathetic, the media who ignore or acknowledge a movement’s grievances. As with most structuralisms, the point of view of the protestors themselves mattered little.

A moment’s reflection suggests that groups and their grievances are a variable, not a constant. Humans do not automatically pursue their objective material interests, but must come to define those interests. They pursue ideal interests as well, often to the detriment of their material interests (Frank 2004). The process of mobilization is about the creation of new collective identities, the redefinition of existing ones, the seduction of allies, emotional appeals to action, and a great deal of additional cultural work. Activists and moral entrepreneurs work hard at persuading others. That is how they mobilize resources or take advantage of (or even create) political opportunities. Research soon addressed these gaps in the structural paradigm, even while affirming its basic claims.

CULTURAL MEANINGS

In the late 1980s and 1990s, scholars of social movements rediscovered the cultural dimensions of social movements, reflecting a broader cultural turn throughout the social sciences. Many of their insights paralleled developments in social psychology (Jasper 2017). The thoughts, intuitions, and feelings of protestors had been downplayed in the structural models, but they were now perceived in all actions and institutions (Jasper 1997; Melucci 1996). Although earlier generations had recognized culture as a system of ideas or of values, it now appeared to be a wide range of tools and constraints that add up to the participants’ points of view and practices of action.

Frames and frame alignment proved useful ways to understand that recruits need to see the world in a new way, in a kind of gestalt shift, using symbols and stories that highlight the urgency and morality of a particular social problem (Snow et al. 1986). Framing is an interaction between organizers and their potential recruits, but it is also a recurrent motivation for those who are already part of a movement (Ryan and Gamson 2006). Participants can sustain their own enthusiasm through the use of symbols and emotions, often quite self-consciously. One limitation of frames is that they can take many different concrete forms: a word or slogan, a theme or basic value, a collective identity, a pair of heroes and villains, or almost any other carrier of meaning. For this reason scholars began to specify what forms meanings actually take.

In the 1990s scholars recognized that collective identities are a key ingredient in creating and especially sustaining social movements, as participants come to think of themselves as part of a category; as they feel trust, admiration, and loyalty to that collective; and as they adopt its goals and interests as their own. The women’s movement and the LGBTQ movements were useful laboratories for analyzing collective identities, including their perils and trade-offs.
(Bernstein 1997; Taylor and Whittier 1992). For every participant attracted by a particular formulation of an identity, another is likely to be repelled (Gamson 1995; McGarry and Jasper 2015). Every collective identity is a fragile fiction that can be broken down; each one papers over differences among factions. But when they are new and fresh they can inspire mobilization. Almost no political player emerges without some sense of its own identity – and usually that of its opponents (Touraine 1978).

Narratives package meanings into chronological sequences with beginnings and endings and some kind of moral lesson (Polletta 2006). They are especially useful in suggesting future possibilities, often open-ended potentials that protestors can themselves influence: a feeling of making history. They construct characters whom we admire, detest, pity, and more: heroes are supposed to save victims from villains, in the “essential triad” of character work (Jasper, Young, and Zuern 2018). Stories are especially powerful carriers of meanings, due to the emotions they inspire.

Images are often concise carriers of meaning, although less studied than words (cf. Doerr, Mattoni, and Teune 2015). A mocking caricature of a dictator helps transform him from hero to minion; photos of starvation or torture establish victims; posters and brochures appeal for help by painting a movement or its leaders as strong, righteous heroes. A sea of identical T-shirts or other clothing fosters collective effervescence and identity, and many movements are even labeled by a color. We make judgments about a human face in a split second, and only reluctantly change them later in the face of counterevidence (Willis and Todorov 2006). From movies to murals, from effigies to puppets, protestors and other political players promote their perspective through visual means.

Social movements use tools like these to conduct their central task of public persuasion and performance. Tilly (2008) expressed the rhetorical efforts of social movements in what he called WUNC displays, words and actions intended to persuade others of the moral Worth, the Unanimity, the Numbers, and the Coherence of a social movement. In other words, protestors are good and strong, the central traits of heroes, and therefore to be admired, joined, and accommodated.

New attention to emotions has helped us understand how all these carriers of meaning have the power to actually move people into action, or at least to energize existing paths of action (Gould 2009; Jasper 2018; Summers-Effler 2010). They may simply put participants in a good mood, ready to continue. They also generate moral shocks, indignation, and anger that direct people’s attention to social problems. They can help identify political characters by telling us how to feel about various players. Emotions also bond us to our in-groups and repel us from out-groups (or create out-groups), through trust, admiration, liking, loving, respect, as well as their opposites. Perhaps most of all, emotions take a moral form, drawing us toward actions and beliefs that we admire and helping us avoid those of which we will be ashamed or disgusted.
Much of morality – central to social movements – consists of emotions such as pride and shame, compassion, and indignation. Moral batteries combine positive and negative emotions – hope and outrage, or pride and shame – in ways that motivate action (Jasper 2011).

All these new concepts suggest that culture provides various tools with which players pursue their projects and goals. Far from a unified system of ideas and feelings, meanings can be recombined, contested, and adapted to different arenas. Collective memory, for instance, is subject to character workers who create heroes and villains out of historical figures, expressed in stone memorials intended to solidify collective identities around basic values (Fine 2012).

We can understand this new vision of culture by contrasting it to an older term, “ideology” (Oliver and Johnston 2000). Marxists viewed ideology as a class product, reflecting the interests of each class. If successful, a ruling class managed to impose its ideology on other classes, making them more docile to economic and political arrangements. By freeing it from this association with a particular class, we can now see ideology as a product of intellectuals who try to impose coherence and consistency on the frames, claims, emotions, identities, and stories that they favor. But normal people attain that coherence rarely. When they do, it is more likely at an emotional rather than a cognitive level: through who and what they trust or admire, like or dislike, love or hate.

STRATEGIC DECISIONS AND DILEMMAS

Given existing distributions of material resources, the presence of various political channels, and diverse beliefs and feelings, players such as protest groups must decide what to do within those constraints but also about those constraints. Their primary strategies have to do with changing all those aspects of their environment. They try to mobilize resources, alter the arenas in which they operate, and persuade other players (and various “publics”) of their beliefs and morals. For many movements, their most lasting impacts are on cultural attitudes and the rules of arenas, including rules of access.

But how to do this? Strategic decisions are difficult because each one involves a number of dilemmas (Jasper 2004, 2006). Each action brings with it a series of potential benefits, known and unknown costs, and risks that are difficult to anticipate. Because of the complexity of each set, options are hard to compare directly, and groups instead fall back on familiar routines that they develop soon after their founding (Blee 2012). But even if a group ignores a dilemma, it still operates as a trade-off behind their backs.

One of the most common dilemmas is what I call “naughty-or-nice”: strategies that break accepted rules may get what you want in the short run by intimidating or surprising other players and authorities, but there is a cost in your long-run reputation as a moral player and in potential repression by the state (Jasper 2006: 106). In general it makes sense for a player to opt for aggression if they can gain something that is important and difficult for their
opponents to reverse, like union recognition or a revolution. (Police face the same dilemma: they can beat up protestors, dispersing them today, but this aggression may backfire by outraging far larger numbers of citizens who then join tomorrow’s protests.) Different players and audiences may disagree about what tactics are acceptable, so that protestors may choose to please some audiences while ignoring the opinions of others. A deeply unpopular group may forego efforts to improve its image and aim for other gains instead through aggressive tactics.

Naughty-or-nice is often linked to the organization dilemma: Is it worth devoting time, energy, and financial resources to building formal organizations that will provide long-run stability? In the case of poor people, who lack sufficient resources to build robust organizations, Piven and Cloward (1977) famously argued that they should instead aim for disruption. Formal organizations tend to take on a life of their own, so that their survival becomes an additional goal; leaders of the new organization develop interests that diverge from those of its members (Michels 1915 [1911]).

In dilemmas like these we notice several things about strategic decision-making. Questions about what to do are closely entwined with questions about who you are as a player, and with what subplayers are most influential within the movement. Aggressive tactics often favor young men who can climb fences and survive fights with the police. Trained bureaucrats can gain leadership positions in formal organizations, but not necessarily in street fights; they are more skilled at exploiting rules and persuading others.

Most dilemmas have something to do with short- versus long-run gains and losses, simply because strategic interactions unfold over time. There are many patterns. One obvious trade-off is that resources spent today cannot be invested for later returns, quite literally in the case of nongovernmental organizations with endowments – part of the organization dilemma. More frequently, today’s action arouses tomorrow’s reaction from other players, or even from one’s own team. For instance, a victory for protestors may inspire opponents to counterattack, and their action may be more effective than the protestors’ original action (Jasper and Poulsen 1993). Or in contrast a victory may create momentum, as our supporters are energized and bystanders become allies. When we see politics as a constant flow of interactions, we see every action as a reaction to what others have done. The permutations are infinite. Most have to do with underlying emotional dynamics.

Not all strategic choices have to do with engaging players external to the movement or organization. Internal engagements, in which factions and individuals battle over what strategies to use, are far more numerous than external engagements with opponents, authorities, and other players. We know little about how meetings unfold (cf. Haug 2013), but who calls meetings, sets agendas, and runs them will influence what a player does. Some choices succeed and others fail, and it is not always possible to judge if a tactical choice was smart or simply lucky. In the process of making decisions, players
turn into arenas, in which different factions and individuals are subplayers trying to influence the broader player’s statements and actions. In what I call the Janus dilemma, leaders must balance how much time and attention to devote to external interactions versus how much to internal processes. They hope to influence the world, but to do that they must keep their members happy.

Because internal democracy has interested so many recent social movements, it has also attracted the attention of scholars. Partly under the influence of Jürgen Habermas, the global justice and related movements have tried hard to deliberate in “undistorted” ways, in which each participant has an equal voice or influence regardless of economic and ascriptive traits (della Porta 2009). Various social forums have worked out elaborate rules for speaking order, translation (Doerr 2012), and interaction, often aiming for ultimate consensus (although there is, naturally, disagreement over the definition of consensus). Most left-leaning movements since the 1960s have agreed that participatory democracy is different from, and superior to, the representative democracy of elections and legislatures (Breines 1989; Polletta 2002). Movements to occupy squares and other public spaces have had the time—and the affective ties—to experiment with many forms of democracy (Graeber 2012; Maechelbergh 2009), and they have even had some influence on electoral politics, as in participatory budgeting (Baiocchi 2005).

Modern social movements emerged in the late eighteenth century to promote and take advantage of new forms of democracy, so it is unsurprising that they have continued to deepen and develop additional forms in their own internal practices.

INTERACTIONS WITH OTHER PLAYERS

Despite the Janus dilemma, protestors ultimately aim to influence other players in strategic arenas. In the structural vision, the state is by far the most important player with which protestors interact, as it permeates so many aspects of life in the modern world. Its decisions and transformations help inspire movements by generating grievances and providing opportunities. It is the arena in which most protestors pursue their goals, and the player whom they usually must overcome.

Among nonstate players, protestors frequently target corporations. They tend to select corporations they perceive as vulnerable on a number of dimensions: sympathetic CEOs (Briscoe, Chin, and Hambrick 2014); external board members (Barnea and Rubin 2010); governance structures favorable to shareholders (Vasi and King 2012); visibility and size, which often means that the corporation sells to consumers rather than to other businesses (Florida 1996); and the cultivation of a reputation as a good corporate citizen (King and McDonnell 2015). If a firm makes a blunder, such as getting caught in a public lie, it becomes more vulnerable (Jasper and Poulsen 1993). Some of these factors have to do with corporate players’ preexisting rules and resources, others with the preferences of internal subplayers, and still others arise out of
strategic interactions with protestors. Corporations do more than respond to protest groups by accommodating or resisting their demands; they engage in their own reputation work, hire spies, and file lawsuits against critics.

Corporations demonstrate the complicated interactions we see in most strategic arenas. Protestors may appeal directly to corporate managers, or they may try to pressure them via consumers, in the popular tactic of boycotts (although in fact most boycotts operate via the media, not consumers, as corporations dislike the bad publicity long before they feel the pinch of the bottom line). Protestors try to change corporate practices via state interference, as in environmental regulations, but they also sometimes use corporations to influence state policies— or in the famous case of divestment from South Africa, protestors used nonprofits, especially universities, to pressure corporations to withdraw, thereby squeezing the profits of Apartheid (Soule 2009).

The media are another set of players whose attention social movements try desperately to attract, in the hopes that the media will spread their message to new audiences. Even when this sometimes happens, the attention is not always what protestors hope. News media may convey the message but portray protestors themselves in an unflattering light. Or the media may distort or water down the key issues of a movement. In the 1960s they anointed several leaders as media stars, with unpleasant results (Gitlin 1980). Media-centric strategies pose a number of dilemmas, and Soberiaj (2011) attacks them virulently, in part because so few groups manage to attract any attention at all.

A variety of other players, or potential players, appear in the arenas that protestors enter, from unions and religious groups to intellectuals and professional associations. Activists may hope to influence “bystanders,” either because they may vote or because their views are aggregated into a “public opinion” that can influence politicians (Burstein 2014; Han and Strolovich 2015). Today, foundations are players in the world of social problems, offering seed money to new protest groups and raising awareness of new issues, thereby going far beyond simply aiding existing movements (Walker 2015). Consulting companies can provide the semblance of grassroots mobilization for any client, including entirely self-interested customers such as politicians and corporations (Walker 2014).

But the various players that make up the state have remained the main targets of recent social movements. Even more than political parties, police officers are probably the most common state player with whom protestors interact, and many researchers have studied how these two sides engage one another. During the 1980s and 1990s, in the US and Europe, these interactions seemed to become more peaceful. Della Porta and Reiter (1998) suggested that protest policing in democratically accountable regimes had shifted from a strategy of escalating force, in which protest is criminalized and treated harshly, to a strategy of negotiated management that encourages advance planning and communication between police and protestors. The exception seems to be the intense policing to protect economic summits such as the WTO or G7 that
emerged after embarrassments in Seattle (1999) and Genoa (2001); police try to incapacitate a small number of protestors they consider dangerous, especially the anarchist black bloc (della Porta, Peterson, and Reiter 2006).

Ultimately, many social movements – especially the most memorable ones – have aimed to transform the state through revolution, and during the heyday of the structural paradigm this was a popular topic of research. Revolutions link mobilization to state transformations in a way that fuses – but sometimes confuses – the fields of movements and political sociology.

Goodwin (2001) lays out the most complete theory of revolutions based on the nature of the state. Drawing from postwar revolutions in Latin America, Southeast Asia, and Eastern Europe, he finds that revolutionary movements are more likely to form against regimes that are weak (in their ability to enforce laws, extract resources, and police their territory), exclusive (unable to incorporate new groups), and repressive (governing through force rather than legitimacy); they are more likely to succeed against inflexible, personalistic rulers. Foran (2005) adds cohesive ideologies and emotions of outrage (often linked to economic downturns) to the list, providing some sense of revolutionary agency on top of structural shifts.

The study of revolutions has faded as scholars have delved into the details of strategic interactions; the explanandum disappears with sequences as complex as revolutions. In criticizing counterfactuals as a valid form of identifying causality, John Levi Martin (2011: 42, emphasis in original) asks, “Was ‘the Russian Revolution’ an event? Five events? Five thousand events?” As we break a revolution down into its components, these become easier to explain theoretically (say, if there are five or 50 events), but harder to measure empirically (especially if there are 5,000, or 500,000, events). It may not be easy to explain why a crowd storms a palace, but logically this must be easier than explaining a revolutionary sequence that includes that storming, along with a hundred other equally complex events.

Attention to strategic interaction helps us solve one of the paradoxes of the structural perspective: the effects of repression on protest. Every sort of relationship has been hypothesized and observed: repression dampens protest; it increases protest; very low and very high levels of repression dampen it while medium levels increase it; even complicated S-shaped curves have been seen (Francisco 1995). Unfortunately, most measures of repression have been structural indicators of repressive capacity such as spending on the police, instead of strategic measures of choices made about whether to deploy those forces. Possessing tanks or tear gas is one thing; deciding to use them is quite another. Repression can take different forms in different arenas and be deployed against different players: some protestors can be eliminated at the same time that others are encouraged (Boudreau 2004). In addition, interactions involve emotions, which are part of the answer: some forms of repression outrage citizens enough to involve them; others frighten them enough to keep them
home. Repression dampens protest when it arouses more fear than indignation, but it backfires when indignation is greater.

States and other targets of protest include strategic players who fight back. The state can use repression and other forms of policing. But the state – along with corporations and other targets – also deploys cultural tools to persuade various publics. Just as corporations spend vast quantities on public relations, so state agencies try hard to reframe protestors and their claims. In doing so they often face dilemmas such as whether to incorporate or to marginalize social movements (Peña and Davies 2017). A fully strategic perspective acknowledges a sweep of players using different tactics.

**GAINS AND LOSSES**

Few social movements get all of what they want; even successful revolutionary movements face many unanticipated outcomes, to put it mildly. When a movement fails to attain its central, stated policy goal, activists and scholars often look for other outcomes, such as cultural changes, impacts on participants themselves, and the creation of protest infrastructure that may be useful to future efforts. It is not hard to find such legacies, even decades later (McVeigh, Cunningham, and Farrell 2014; Pagis 2014).

In the structural vision, which harbored a Whiggish view of history as a series of progressive incorporations of new groups into the polity, it was natural to ask why a movement of the oppressed emerged when it did, and why it succeeded or failed. (The same answer – political opportunities – was often given to both questions.) When success and failure came to appear too subjective, a language of outcomes and consequences replaced them, but the idea remained that “a movement” had a small number of intended and unintended impacts. Like other collective identities, that of a social movement is a convenient fiction for protestors who wish to present themselves as stronger and more unified than they are.

Amenta (2006: 28) distinguishes outcomes at different phases of the policy process: agenda setting, content, passage, and implementation (also Burstein, Einwohner, and Hollander 1995). Each occurs in a different set of arenas, which Amenta suggests operate in a fixed sequence but which can also operate simultaneously. We can look at media coverage, legislative committees, courtrooms, and administrative bureaucracies for the interactions and outcomes that occur in each. Note that there is usually no unified “movement” operating as a player in all of these arenas, but distinct subplayers in each, usually corresponding to different (if allied) organizations.

The cultural consequences of social movements, once ignored, have received lots of recent attention. Social movements do more than petition states for access or policies; some movements ignore policy in favor of cultural impacts. Protest inspires art and literature that then have a life of their own, available for discovery by later generations (Eyerman and Jamison
Social movements can redraw collective boundaries by creating and redefining identities (Polletta and Jasper 2001). They can even help inspire or finance technical knowledge, such as renewable energy sources, toxicity tests that do not require live animals, and the conduct of clinical trials for new drugs (Epstein 1996). Utopian communities and other countercultures are designed to embody alternative values and practices; new words and other forms of language spread; and movements generally promote new ways of viewing the world (Rochon 1998). Changes like these can be pervasive even when they are subtle.

As researchers came to relax the reification of movements into cohesive players, they noticed that individuals are changed through participation, often in ways that persist throughout their lives. Those who were active in the 1960s, the best-studied case, tended to remain left-leaning and politically engaged later in life (Vestergren, Drury, and Chiriac 2017), a tendency they passed on to their children (Pagis 2014). Some have careers in and out of protest organizations and related nonprofits (Fillieule 2010). Taylor (1989) writes of the women’s movement in abeyance, but it was primarily a single organization, sustained by close affective bonds, that survived the “doldrums” of the mid-twentieth century.

Individuals are not the only players who survive the collapse of movements. Various organizations, face-to-face groups such as affinity groups, and informal networks also continue, frequently moving intact to new alliances that seek the label of social movement. Some of these players may make gains through movement activity while others experience losses. For instance, radical flanks sometimes destroy themselves while giving credibility and bargaining power to more moderate groups. The police may tolerate one group or one tactic while repressing others (Boudreau 2004).

Amenta (2014: 27) suggests that we view protest movements as one political player among many. Rather than asking what are the impacts of social movements, we had better try to explain political outcomes, recognizing that there are many players who interact to produce various changes. “The transformation of movements from something to be explained, to an explanation of political phenomena, means starting from politics and working back to movements, without losing sight of them. After all, these are not ‘movement outcomes’ as the literature often claims, but political outcomes that may sometimes be influenced by movements.” In part, these outcomes occur in different arenas, complicating the picture even more. The result of this reorientation could be the reintegration of social-movement research back into political sociology.

NEW DIRECTIONS

New understandings and empirical materials come continually from countries and parts of the world that have been less studied or ignored altogether by
researchers in the United States and Europe, especially the Global South (Nilsen 2016). The global justice movement that flourished beginning in the late 1990s made this point, bringing insights into the global networks that nourish much protest and circulate ideas. Postcolonial nations such as India have yielded many scholars with alternative perspectives, partly because their nations are themselves the recent products of social movements and revolutions (Ramnath 2011). Processes of nation building, the incorporation of revolutionaries into states, and the creation of cultural heroes are more easily studied in these nations.

Intellectual trends inevitably reflect political trends, and successive theories of social movements have always arisen in reaction to specific movements. Recent political tendencies, especially the neonationalism, populism, and authoritarian leanings in places such as Hungary, Russia, Poland, and Turkey and in events such as Brexit and Donald Trump’s election, will inspire new ways to understand the intricate dance between political parties, states, protest movements, and other players (Gagyi 2015; Piotrowski 2015). Given the rapid growth of antidemocratic regimes, it is urgent that we give scholarly attention to these developments despite the field’s long-standing tendency to focus on left-leaning social movements.

Another trend is the antipolitical party, such as Grillo’s Five Star movement in Italy, Iceland’s Best Party, and various Pirate parties. Some governments have grown out of movements such as the US Tea Party, while others represent a law-and-order backlash against protest and democracy, but all suggest that we need to examine a variety of players engaging each other across many arenas. There is broad indignation over career politicians, their corruption by corporations, and the power of expertise. (Indeed, in the 1960s social movements feared expertise as a threat to democracy; today democracy seems a threat to expertise, in issues such as global warming and genetic modifications.) In the US Trump won the Republican nomination in 2016 by appealing to the party’s nihilist wing, with its hatred of the federal government.

But underneath these broad geopolitical trends, new directions in social movement theory are likely to look a lot like current directions (just like the weather in an hour is likely to look like the weather now). Researchers will continue to probe the meanings and feelings behind various players’ actions, in greater and greater detail. Emotions will continue to be analyzed alongside more cognitive dynamics, especially since the same feeling-thinking processes generate them both (Barrett 2017; Jasper 2018). But even while we fill in the micro-dynamics that do the real work in broad macro-level correlations, there will continue to be a backlash in the form of structural and Marxist arguments about the importance of capitalism (Hetland and Goodwin 2013) or social totalities (Barker and Krinsky 2009). And there will be new syntheses, as micro-level researchers show why and how big structures affect players and arenas – and vice versa.
Scholars have paid attention to the biographical consequences of activism, but there are other ways that individuals matter. Fillieule (2010) and others have begun to trace the careers of activists, who move in and out of organizations and even in and out of movements, producing lives that are engaged without allowing that engagement to completely define them. Viterna (2013) has examined the pathways that women took into the Salvadoran revolutionary movement, but also what they did after the war (and how they were frequently excluded from political and government jobs). Individuals also matter as leaders, a topic ripe for revival.

CONCLUSIONS

Social science progresses when we replace vague concepts with more precise mechanisms. Social change becomes a series of events. The state is replaced by a language of specific players and arenas. Social movements are displaced by specific organizations, informal groups, networks, and individuals – all of them players in a number of arenas. The resonance of frames is broken down into dozens of cognitive and emotional processes (feeling-thinking processes) that can be traced to see if a frame succeeds or falls flat. Observable micro-processes replace unobservable macro-processes (Jasper 2010).

Social movements are hard to identify, in part because they are loose networks of coherent players, not coherent players themselves. Social movements are not natural organisms that are born, expand, wither, and die. The very idea that they can be studied on their own proves how easy it is to reify them, missing the players who form them (and the rest of politics). Once they are broken down into their component players, these can be integrated into the study of politics across many political arenas.

As this kind of precision has spread in the study of social movements and in political sociology, the fields have moved potentially closer. When we observe concrete players in strategic engagements we no longer need to ask theological questions such as whether they are social movements or interest groups or parties (Burstein 1998). All sorts of players enter strategic arenas in various roles, and we need to understand how they interact to produce outcomes of interest.

But when we observe interactions in arenas and in backstages, we should not reify those arenas either, making them into structures that explain everything without ever changing. A desire for rigor should not tempt social movement scholars into a new structuralism. Instead, political sociologists need to take seriously the creativity, the individuals, the cultural points of view, the feeling-thinking processes that have made social movements a lively subfield in recent years. Whether the result is synthesis or simply dialogue, these two subfields need to reengage, a process that was salient in the 1970s but faded in the years since.
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Political Parties

*From Reflection to Articulation and Beyond*

Johnnie Lotesta and Cedric de Leon

Political articulation is a new approach, albeit with classical roots, that seeks to bring the study of political parties back into sociology. It is a theory of how the components of the social are stitched together, centering on the role of political parties in the formation of social identities and interests. Though Max Weber, Robert Michels, Paul Lazarsfeld, and Seymour Martin Lipset produced the foundational texts in the field, sociologists from the late 1960s onward ceded party politics to political scientists. To the degree that sociologists studied institutional politics at all, they tended to follow the lead of Lazarsfeld and Lipset, who held that social “cleavages” – or divisions within the electorate such as class, race, and religion – determined the content of party politics (Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet 1948 [1944]; Lipset 1960; Lipset and Rokkan 1967). Gone was the critical edge of Weber and Michels, whose analytic focus was on the party organizations themselves and their tendency toward oligarchy.

At the same time, the ensuing shift away from parties and voting to the state and social movements produced an orientation that is essential to the idea of political articulation, namely, the autonomy of the political. Against Marx’s claim that “the executive of the modern state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie,” Neo-Weberian sociologists like Theda Skocpol, Peter Evans, and Diedrich Rueschemeyer argued that states could “pursue goals that are not simply reflective of the demands or interests of social groups, classes, or society” (Marx and Engels 1998 [1848]: 37; Skocpol 1985: 9).

Political articulation grew out of a dissatisfaction with both the older critical approach to parties and Lazarsfeld’s cleavage approach, at the same time drawing inspiration from sociologists who dared insist that politics could not be reduced to social antagonisms. Political articulation argues that parties do not merely reflect social cleavages, class conflict, or the will of ambitious politicians. Rather, parties “articulate” or naturalize social cleavages in their
struggle to remake the social order. In this, parties vie for, and use, the prerogatives of state power, but they are relatively autonomous from the state itself.

Below we briefly outline the theoretical motivations and major tenets of the political articulation approach before moving quickly to the research that has been conducted since its advent. First, we address attempts by Barry Eidlin, Edwin Ackerman, and others to place social structural scope conditions on the ability of political parties to articulate social cleavages. Second, we look at a synoptic turn in political science to theorize parties as loose coalitions of politicians, interest groups, and activists who work together to achieve policy change through the state. Next, we examine efforts by Stephanie Lee Mudge and Johnnie Lotesta to synthesize political articulation with the sociology of knowledge and expertise, thereby drawing attention to what Antonio Gramsci (1971) called the “intermediary element” of party politics. The chapter ends by assessing political articulation’s utility, using the framework to address the ascendancy of ethnic nationalism around the world – from Brexit in the United Kingdom and the election of Donald Trump in the United States to political Islam and Hindu nationalism in Turkey and India, respectively.

ARTICULATION’S BACKDROP: PARTIES AS REFLECTIONS OF VOTERS, STATES, AND MOVEMENTS

The articulation approach grew in response to three social scientific literatures of the mid- to late twentieth century, all of which underappreciated political parties’ roles in social formation and change. The first of these perspectives was the long-dominant sociological approach to party formation, which originated in the work of Seymour Martin Lipset and Stein Rokkan (Lipset 1960; Lipset and Rokkan 1967; Rokkan 1999). In line with rational choice theories of voting behavior (Downs 1957), Lipset and Rokkan’s theoretical model was grounded in the idea that parties originate in and reflect “social cleavages” in democratic societies. For instance, Lipset and Rokkan (1967) located the origins of Western European party systems in the interwar conflicts between center and periphery, state and church, and land and industry. As parties developed to reflect these cleavages, they came to serve an “expressive function,” translating the interests and demands of conflicting social groups into the system of democratic political representation.

The forbears of the articulation approach – Cedric de Leon, Manali Desai, and Cihan Tuğal – rightly observed that the social cleavage perspective tended to reduce parties to mere reflections of voters and social groupings (2009, 2015). In other words, the theoretical model first advanced by Lipset and Rokkan left insufficient space for the possibility that party leaders might participate in the construction of political identities and group interests. Rather, these identities and interests were believed to exist a priori and
It was against these theoretical backdrops that the articulation approach emerged as a means to conceptualize the contingent relations between party,
state, and society. If parties are not reducible to voters, states, or movements—that is, if they hold a degree of “relative autonomy” (Poulantzas 1973)—then we require a theory of the relationships among these entities. In particular, the articulation approach takes to task the cleavage approach, which de Leon, Desai, and Tuğal (2009) argued was hard pressed to explain (1) why such cleavages become salient at one moment in time but not at others and (2) why one cleavage or set of cleavages becomes politically salient, while others remain dormant or marginal. For example, India has had a majority Hindu population since its independence from Britain in 1947: Why then is Hindu ethnoreligious identity only becoming politically salient now? Further, caste and socioeconomic inequality continue to be socially and politically salient as indeed they have been for quite some time. So why is Hindu nationalism supplanting or perhaps subsuming these other cleavages based on caste and class?

Political articulation solves the twin puzzles of timing and salience by suggesting that certain parties—namely, “integral” parties—elevate particular social cleavages to the exclusion of others in their bid to transform the social order.1 The approach originates with Antonio Gramsci’s (1921) claim that “The masses don’t exist politically, if they are not framed in political parties.” Some version of this fundamental suspicion of primordial social divisions can be found throughout the Western Marxist tradition, especially in Althusser (1971), Przeworski (1977), and Laclau and Mouffe (2001 [1985]), though non-Marxists like Sartori (1969), Redding (2003), and Gerteis (2007) also understand race, class, and other identities as the effect of partisan struggle.

Political articulation may be read as a synthesis of these precursors. On the one hand are party-centered accounts of class formation. Against Karl Kautsky and the theorists of the Second International who insisted that class consciousness emerged organically from workers’ structural position in the relations of production, Przeworski, for instance, famously insisted that “ideological struggle is a struggle about class before it is a struggle among classes” (1977: 371). Giovanni Sartori likewise cast doubt on Lipset’s (1960) claim in Political Man that modern party systems were at bottom the expression of class struggle. Sartori wrote, “To put it bluntly, it is not the ‘objective class’ (class conditions) that creates the party, but the party that creates the ‘subjective’ class (class consciousness)” (Sartori 1969: 84). On the other hand are attempts to disrupt political sociology’s inherited preoccupation with class. Though they sidestepped the role of parties in framing political struggle, Laclau and Mouffe sought to advance a new political project—radical democracy—that could unite the “struggles against sexism, racism, sexual discrimination, and in

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1 As opposed to “traditional” parties that address minor questions posing no threat to the status quo, “integral” parties pursue questions that could fundamentally transform the social order (e.g., the prohibition of slavery, the recognition of labor unions, designations of citizenship by race, ethnicity, or class). For a more detailed discussion, see Chapter 1 in de Leon, Desai, Tuğal (2015).
the defense of the environment” with the struggles of workers (2001 [1985]: xviii, 134). They did so by suggesting that all politics are in fact a play of discursive “chains of equivalences” that link and naturalize multiple identities into blocs. In the American context one such chain of equivalence might be “women, people of color, workers, immigrants, the LGBT community, and environmentalists” against, say, “rich, white, bigoted, homophobic, climate change-denying men.” Political articulation marries the institutional emphasis on parties in the class formation literature with the more flexible theorization of bloc building and social identities in Laclau and Mouffe.

In addition to this important synthesis, political articulation also specifies multiple “means of articulation” beyond rhetoric itself. Because parties in democratic and nondemocratic polities alike tend to control the reins of state power, they have a variety of tools at their disposal to naturalize social groups and divisions. These include but are not limited to patronage, tax, trade, and social policy, as well as war-making and other forms of violence.

The ability of integral parties to articulate novel cleavages or recuperate old divides increases in unsettled times such as war, economic downturns, and internal social upheaval. This is because the means of articulation available to a given hegemonic party may become compromised. For instance, in wartime, the tax cuts that a party once used to integrate a particular class may need to be revoked in order to fund war efforts. Likewise, in the midst of a recession, the government jobs that may have been given to party supporters can dry up and make the latter available for recruitment by competing parties.

Thus, the approach is not only about the successful articulation or naturalization of social cleavages, but also the failure of parties to do so, another area of inquiry that receives scant attention from the theory’s precursors. This process, which we call “disarticulation,” is also sometimes referred to in Gramscian terms as a “crisis of hegemony,” in which the political establishment loses the consent of the masses to govern. A crisis of hegemony may result from external contingencies such as an economic downturn. It may also emerge from internal dynamics such as leadership succession or intra-party conflict. The upshot of disarticulation, however, is failure: either to maintain an existing hegemonic project or to recalibrate institutional politics along novel lines.

This bears on the aforementioned distinction between traditional and integral parties. The former do not seek to alter the social order, but rather compete over which party or faction can best execute the promise of the current hegemonic political project (e.g., neoliberalism, socialism, Islamism). Integral parties, though not always successful to be sure, have more far-reaching objectives. Namely, they seek to transform the very basis of social organization itself, say, from a secular state to a theocracy or from an authoritarian regime to a neoliberal democracy.

As such, political articulation is more than just reversing the relationship between parties and their constituents. It is about the partisan sources of social
organization. Parties are not the exclusive source of the latter – exponents of the approach do not seek to supplant one form of reductionism with another. Nevertheless, they insist that successful articulation is essential to the naturalization of what Parsons once called the “social system,” though he misrecognized the Keynesian New Deal order as a functional necessity rather than the outcome of an epochal political struggle. Conversely, disarticulation – the processes by which once powerful social divisions lose salience – produces a situation of normlessness akin to Durkheim’s concept of anomie.

SILENCES AND NEW DIRECTIONS

Since de Leon, Desai, and Tuğal first advanced their theoretical framework in 2009, three distinct lines of investigation have emerged promising new directions for the articulation program. While some emerged in direct response to the authors’ original claims, others developed in tandem. Each builds on the articulation approach in distinct ways, identifying three avenues for future research.

Specifying the Conditions of Articulation

The first line of investigation, and that most directly related to the articulation program, modifies the concept of political articulation by placing constraints on the constitutive power of political parties. This line of investigation comes from sociologists sympathetic to the articulation program, but who have sought greater clarity regarding the conditions under which political articulation may occur (Riley 2015; Patros 2016). Specifically, these scholars ask: What historical circumstances make political articulation more or less likely? How do class structures, existing identities, or institutional arrangements transform possibilities for political bloc formation?

For instance, both Barry Eidlin (2016, 2018) and Dylan Riley (2015) have argued that the articulation program risks overstating parties’ influence on social and political formation. Eidlin (2016) in particular argues that parties face specific constraints to political incorporation, including institutional arrangements, material conditions, and existing identities. These constraints present a range of possibilities that must be negotiated by political parties, and it is this process of negotiation that constitutes political articulation. In other words, articulation is retheorized from whole-cloth identity formation to the process of mediating among, politicizing, and suppressing already existing constituencies.

Eidlin (2016) finds it was the major parties’ contrasting responses to militant farmer–labor alliances that explain the formation of an independent labor party in Canada but not in the United States. While both states experienced increased labor–agrarian militancy during the Great Depression, the Democratic Party evoked the idea of the “forgotten man” and deployed policy promises to
incorporate farmer–worker alliances into the New Deal coalition. In Canada, by contrast, both the Liberal and Conservative parties responded to farmer–labor militancy with force, leaving them available for articulation by an independent labor party. Edwin Ackerman (2017) provides a convincing explanation for the geographically variable formation of Mexico’s Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI) by showing how the erosion of traditional agrarian structures and the presence of unions and civic associations in some parts of postrevolutionary Mexico facilitated the parties’ ability to incorporate peasant constituencies. Conversely, the persistence of traditional agrarian structures in other areas precluded such incorporation. Similarly, Riley’s (2010) account of the rise of fascism in Europe could be reinterpreted as a failure on the part of Italian, Romanian, and Spanish parties to articulate a unifying national interest, creating crises of representation from which fascism developed as a response.

Seen in this light, articulation becomes a convincing framework for explaining party and class formation. It draws our attention to party agency in the formation of political blocs and prompts us to identify the conditions that facilitate successful political integration. This research program is especially timely given the current rise of ethnic nationalism around the globe, as we discuss below. With its twin focus on the constitutive agency of parties and the mobilizing power of identity, the articulation approach is uniquely situated to explain the solidification of ethnonationalist blocs at a time when publics are by and large disarticulated from party politics.

Nonparty Actors and the Construction of Political Coalitions

If the political incorporation literature has placed scope conditions on the articulation framework, this next line of research clarifies how parties are structured organizationally and where we must look to examine the process of articulation. Indeed, for a program so committed to the study of parties as autonomous actors, the articulation approach is surprisingly silent on the question of who or what parties actually are (cf. de Leon 2014). This dilemma is being addressed by a recent movement within political science to redefine the bounds of party organizations. In comparison to the Downsian view of political parties as discrete, politician-centered organizations, political scientists Kathleen Bawn, Martin Cohen, David Karol, Seth Masket, Hans Noel, and John Zaller (2012), among others, have argued that parties ought to be understood as diffuse networks of politicians, interest groups, funders, and activists who work together to achieve shared political goals. For instance, Marty Cohen and coauthors define parties as coalitions of “interest groups, social group leaders, activists, and other ‘policy demanders’” who work together to “gain control of government on behalf of their goals” (Cohen et al. 2008: 6). Koger, Masket, and Noel (2006) echo this definition in their concept of the “extended party network,” as does Seth Masket’s (2009)
informal party organization,” Mildred Schwartz’s (1990, 2006) “party network” and “party movement,” and de Leon’s (2014) “omnibus parties.” The key takeaway is that parties are not the sole purview of ambitious office seekers, as some would contend (Aldrich 1995). Rather, the limits of the party must be expanded to include the campaign funders, public relations professionals, social movements, and policy wonks who make party organization possible.

These theoretical developments are relevant to the articulation approach in that they broaden our analytic lens to examine the articulatory role of the civil society organizations, social movements, interest groups, and professionals who provide the resources and ties necessary for party operation, even as they reside outside the bounds of formal party organizations (e.g., Lotesta 2016). Political action committees (PACs) and moneyed donors back political campaigns (Mayer 2016; Skocpol and Hertel-Fernandez 2016). Interest groups organize grassroots mobilizations, vet candidates for adherence to ideological programs, and provide professional staff and valuable political expertise (Bawn et al. 2012; Masket 2009; Skocpol and Hertel-Fernandez 2016; Skocpol and Williamson 2016). Think tanks synthesize expert advice, provide policy guidance, and draft legislative proposals (Hertel-Fernandez 2019; Lotesta 2016, 2018; Medvetz 2012). All of this suggests that nonparty actors are in fact central to understanding what, why, and how parties do what they do.

This research highlights several empirical avenues of investigation for the articulation program. The first is the process of political coalition building itself. Political coalitions are of empirical concern, because they have real consequences for parties’ ability to further their political programs. Mildred Schwartz goes so far as to suggest that there would be no party organization without coalitional ties (1990: 9). This claim is based on her study of Illinois Republicans, in which Schwartz finds that extra-party civil society organizations hold the Republican Party together through four “media of transaction”: decision-making authority, patronage, ideology, and contributions. Similarly, in her analysis of the Rhode Island Democratic Party, Johnnie Lotesta (2016) demonstrates how private interest groups occupy central positions within the party-in-the-legislature, serving as brokers of the knowledge and relationships necessary to coordinate legislative activity. Given that parties’ capacity to articulate coherent blocs and further political programs depends on their coalition-building activities, it is imperative to examine the processes by which these coalitions are built, maintained, or unraveled.

A second avenue for investigation is the post-1970s disengagement (or disarticulation) of publics from party politics, a phenomenon observed not just in the United States but in other nations as well (Dalton and Wattenberg 2009 [2000]; Katz and Mair 2009). Dan Slater (2015) uses the articulation approach to explain the severe fracturing of the Indonesian political sphere
since the country’s democratization in the late 1990s – a trend he attributes to Indonesian parties’ preferences for power sharing over politicizing religious and antiregime cleavages. Josh Pacewicz (2016) provides a telling description of disarticulated politics in the contemporary Midwestern United States, describing how post-1970s US federal policies encouraged community leaders to disengage from traditional partisan politics. As a result, community politics became avidly apolitical while party politics, now dominated by activists, polarized and separated from community life. Read through the lens of articulation, Pacewicz’s account can be interpreted as a failure on the part of party activists to articulate convincing forms of partisan identity or to deploy effective forms of political recruitment. His account of American community life – and the cross-national decline of party identification more broadly – suggests the articulation program can be put to good use by investigating the public retreat from party politics.

Knowledge and Expertise: Investigating the Mechanisms of Articulation

A third line of investigation integrates the articulation perspective with the sociology of knowledge and expertise to specify the mechanisms through which articulation occurs. While supportive of the articulation approach, these authors argue that the program tends to overlook the importance of other, third-party actors in mediating party, state, and society (Mudge 2018). In particular, authors pursuing this line of investigation seek to understand how the styles of reasoning, knowledge products, and institutional positions of professionals, intellectuals, and experts shape what parties do, how they do it, and their ability to secure the consent to govern.

In her cross-national analysis covering 22 Western countries, Stephanie Mudge (2011) finds a general neoliberalization of center-left and center-right party platforms beginning in the 1970s. In her more recent work, Mudge argues this widespread neoliberalization is to be explained by the evolving relationships between party politicians and economic experts. In the case of the United States, Mudge shows how the declining legitimacy of Keynesian economists undermined the liberal–labor alliance, making room for the ascendancy of neoclassical economists and professional strategists within the party ranks. It was this reconfiguration of expertise that led to the Democratic Party’s pro-market and pragmatic turn by century’s end (Mudge 2018).

Lotesta (2018) further demonstrates how the work of policy professionals embedded in the party network prompted Rhode Island legislative Democrats to move the state’s economic development policy in a neoliberal direction. Though Rhode Island Democrats were long known for their embrace of New Deal liberalism, Lotesta shows how, in the wake of the 2008 Great Recession, policy experts’ deployment of economic devices contributed to the constitution of what she calls the “myth of the business friendly economy,” a symbolic
narrative that presented “business friendly” policies as the solution to Rhode Island’s economic stagnation. By integrating “business unfriendliness” into collective understandings of Rhode Island’s economic failure, defining policy reform as a moral imperative, and projecting a vision of the ends toward which reform should be oriented, this myth prompted Democratic lawmakers to enact a series of neoliberal reforms explicitly designed to remake the Ocean State in the interests of capital.

This turn toward knowledge and expertise extends the articulation program by drawing attention to the work academics, policy experts, and professionals perform to mediate the party–society relationships and to define party programs. Future inquiry might continue this work by investigating precisely what kinds of expertise influenced partisan and policy shifts at key historical moments. In particular, the work of Mudge and Lotesta suggests that different types of experts – economists, public relations strategists, and policy professionals – become significant within party apparatuses at different points in time for specific organizational and historical reasons. We might therefore ask under what conditions these various types of expertise become important and what, if any, are the implications for party programs and policy outcomes.

ARTICULATION AT WORK: A CRITIQUE OF THE SCHOLARSHIP ON ETHNIC NATIONALISM

Research on ethnic nationalism has reached a fever pitch of late, due largely to the ascendency of such politics across the globe, from the rise of Donald Trump and Brexit in the US and UK, to that of political Islam in Turkey and Hindu nationalism in India. Existing explanations of ethnic nationalism, like those of political behavior in general, are reflection theories asserting that nativism expresses socioeconomic change, cultural shifts, or the preferences of voters on the ground.

One problem with such theories is that they are unable to account for the timing of ethnic nationalist ascendance. They can often explain the formation of the far right, usually by pointing to the initial impact of economic, social, or cultural change. But given the fact that such shifts (e.g., globalization, changing norms and values) have been at play at this point for one or two generations, existing theories leave a crucial puzzle unanswered: Why is the far right coming to power only now?

This is not to say that inequality or other problems facing real people are irrelevant. However, as variables they are poor predictors of far right success both in the United States and elsewhere. We can see this by examining data collected by the World Bank on inequality, immigration, unemployment, and crime – all hot-button issues in far right rhetoric. In the United States, the Gini coefficient, a widely used measure of inequality, has increased modestly since the mid-1980s but leveled off and even decreased slightly between 2007 and
2013, just in time for Donald Trump’s epic rise. One can observe the same moderate up-and-down pattern in places where the far right has failed, as in Canada. Immigration, another centerpiece of Donald Trump’s campaign, is equally problematic as a predictor of far right popularity. Since its peak in 1997, immigration to the United States has been in free fall and now matches levels of immigration from 1992, when Americans elected the Democrat Bill Clinton to office and rejected the populist candidacy of Ross Perot. By contrast, in Canada, immigration has actually risen steadily in the same period, yet the far right there was isolated and absorbed into the mainstream party system (Ellis 2005: 176; World Bank 2017).

Much the same can be said of crime and unemployment, which have also been on the decline in the United States. In France, where Marine Le Pen’s nativist and Euroscptic Front National posted its largest ever vote share in the 2017 presidential election, unemployment rose steadily from 7.5 percent in 2008 to 10.4 percent in 2013 but has since leveled off. In 2016 it dipped below 10 percent to roughly 2012 levels, when the French elevated the socialist François Hollande to the presidency. France’s homicide rate, like that of the United States, has been in steady decline since 1995 (World Bank 2017).

Even the crime of terrorism is an inconsistent indicator: the far right has substantial support in countries not only where terrorist activity is relatively high like India, the UK, and France, but also where terrorism is relatively low, like Hungary and Belgium (Global Terrorism Database 2017).

There are other studies that focus on the economic side of the story. Take, for example, Mabel Berezin’s (2009) excellent book, Iliberal Politics in Neoliberal Times. Berezin traces right-wing populism to the European Union, which, she argues, compromised the economic security that ordinary Europeans used to feel in their individual nations. In doing so, the new economic order gave rise to a rhetoric of fear and insecurity. This is a plausible and indeed convincing account of the rise of the far right in Europe, but it is silent on two issues. First, and this is in part because the book was written a few years too early, it does not explain why the far right is now winning instead of merely emerging as important third parties. Second, Berezin’s account does not fully address the political parties whose rhetoric and practices built and maintained mass support for the EU in the first place. As these parties now appear to be losing ground, the question becomes why their narratives of an integrated European community are receding in comparison to the nationalist appeals of the far right.²

² Similarly, in The Populist Explosion John B. Judis (2016) traces the twin triumph of Donald Trump and Brexit to the wage stagnation and corporate irresponsibility that lead up to the Great Recession. In our view, Judis goes back to the right time but looks in the wrong places. Real wage growth for the typical American worker, for example, stalled out in the 1970s and has been a consistent feature of the economic landscape ever since (Bivens et al. 2014). The question, once again, is why ethnic nationalism has not upended American and British politics until now.
Studies that look to culture for answers suffer from similar problems. Ron Inglehart (1977, 1990), for example, argues that by shielding workers from the worst effects of capitalism (e.g., unemployment, infant mortality), the welfare state gave rise to “postmaterialist” values, principles based less on class inequality and power, and more on personal well-being and environmental protection. This then generated a new cleavage between authoritarian anti-postmaterialist parties (i.e., the far right) on one side and postmaterialist parties (e.g., the Greens) on the other. The first problem with this approach, as with other reflection arguments, is once again the problem of timing. Assuming that Inglehart and his associates are correct, then the postmaterial “culture shift” has been under way for quite some time and therefore cannot explain why the far right has only recently begun to form governments. A second and related problem is the assumption that the “culture shift” translates seamlessly into a polarized political landscape with stark lines drawn between parties representing old and new values. There is little acknowledgement that parties themselves play an active role in cultivating and politicizing values that divide the electorate (Veugelers 1999).

Cultural accounts of American politics are equally problematic. Arlie Hochschild’s (2016) book, Strangers in Their Own Land, traces grassroots polarization to an “empathy wall” that divides the white conservatives of the Louisiana bayou from the white liberals of Berkeley, California. The former are Tea Party activists; the latter are true blue Democrats. However, as Cihan Tuğal, an originator of the articulation approach, points out, a key question remains unanswered: “Who puts the bricks together?” (Tuğal 2017: 138). Missing from Hochschild’s account is the strategic work of party activists to frame lived experiences and drive wedges between members of the public. What of the Republican Party’s Operation Dixie, which won over southern whites by capitalizing on their anxieties over racial integration and civil rights (Carter 1996; Kabaservice 2012)? What of conservative grassroots movements like the John Birch Society, the Freedom School, and Young Americans for Freedom, who, in the 1950s and 1960s, evangelized the values of the free market and mobilized conservatives across the nation against the “communist threat” of progressive government (Mayer 2016; McGirr 2015)? And what of the think tanks – the American Enterprise Institute, Cato, the Heritage Foundation, and their state-level equivalents – who created a “conservative counter-intelligentsia” to legitimize and diffuse libertarian ideas (Hertel-Fernandez 2019; Mayer 2016: 93–94; Medvetz 2012)?

Our view is that ethnic nationalist parties create their base by stitching together supporters from different social backgrounds and policy areas into a

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3 This is not to suggest that cultural explanations are in and of themselves problematic. Rather, it is the assumption that culture emanates from the mass electorate instead of being co-constructed with parties in struggle.

4 For a similar approach see Ignazi (1992).
governing bloc. Donald Trump won the 2016 presidential election in part by blaming mass unemployment and crime on certain key culprits (e.g., undocumented immigrants, trade deals). Trump thereby brought together divergent groups that were concerned with jobs and security. Rachel Quade, a Trump supporter from Indiana, expressed concern for what she believed was insufficient immigration screening. As she stated of her choice to vote for then presidential candidate Trump, “People are coming in, we don’t know who they are, what their intent is, what they’re bringing with them. It’s scary. And I think it’s crazy that our politicians have allowed that to happen” (USA Today Network 2016). Others, like Amy Honeycutt of Louisiana, fearing Muslim terrorists, supported Trump, because he would “take America back from the grips of radical Islamic terrorists” (USA Today Network 2016). Still others—the so-called “white working class”—blamed trade deals like NAFTA for unemployment and stagnating wages (Tankersley 2016). These constituents voted for Mr. Trump, because they came to see a common cause and solution in his campaign, not because they were merely compelled to do so by their social background.

Splitting the difference with Berezin’s explanation of the far right in Europe, we argue that Mr. Trump’s appeal was that he spoke to the underlying problem of economic and national insecurity that the political establishment apparently had no ability or inclination to fix. Put differently, economic and social conditions on their own were insufficient to cause ethnic nationalist ascendency in the United States. They required interpretation and framing to orient and motivate political action in that direction. Trump’s message— populist, racist, masculine, antiestablishment, or otherwise—was fundamentally one of nationalist redemption. It created a “chain of equivalence” (Laclau 2005) that pitted the “Ellis Island-patriot-Christian-All Lives Matter-former auto worker-straight shooter” against the “illegal-terrorist-Muslim-Gay-Black Lives Matter-corrupt elite.”

Consider Mr. Trump’s statements on undocumented immigration from the US–Mexico border. During the announcement of his presidential candidacy in June 2015, Trump infamously stated, “When Mexico sends its people, they’re not sending their best . . . They’re sending people that have lots of problems, and they’re bringing those problems with us. They’re bringing drugs. They’re bringing crime. They’re rapists” (Kopan 2016). Against this frame is thrown the image of the virtuous American worker “crushed” by “horrible and unfair trade deals”—citizens who, Trump claims, “work hard but no longer have a voice” (Politico 2016). Trump thereby appeals to the blue-collar worker left unemployed by outsourcing, the suburbanite who fears drugs and crime might infiltrate their community, and the business owner who believes her tax dollars are being eaten up by illegal immigrants. He drives a wedge between the virtuous, hardworking, white American citizen and the vile, brown “illegal” who threatens the American way of life. Through his promise of a wall and renegotiated trade deals, Trump presents himself as the leader who will protect
the former and, in the words of one Trump supporter, “make America first again” (USA Today Network 2016).

The articulation approach thus solves the puzzle of timing in relation to ethnic nationalism by conceiving of the far right as an active and relatively autonomous counterarticulation to a self-styled “left” or putatively “inclusive” form of neoliberalism, which until recently has been the hegemonic political project of the countries in question. In this, the 2008 Great Recession is critical to understanding far right ascendency, not because it has an elective affinity for such politics, but rather because ethnic nationalists have filled this moment of political uncertainty and economic insecurity with a coherent alternative.

CONCLUSION

Against the long-standing dominance of the cleavage approach, and inspired by neo-Weberians’ insistence on the autonomy of the political, the articulation program brings parties back in to sociology as objects of analysis in their own right. It argues that parties “articulate” or naturalize social divisions by integrating disparate or otherwise unorganized constituencies into coherent sociopolitical blocs. As such, it recognizes political parties as among the most important constitutors of the social.

In this chapter, we described the theoretical origins of the articulation approach and highlighted its key propositions. We then summarized three strands of research that have emerged in its wake: the party formation literature that has placed analytic constraints on the constitutive power of political parties, the synoptic turn in political science toward the study of political coalitions, and recent efforts within the sociology of knowledge and expertise to examine the intermediary role of experts, intellectuals, and professionals within party apparatuses. In a third section, we put the articulation approach to the test by using it to interrogate the recent rise of ethic nationalism around the globe. The articulation approach provides a more satisfactory explanation than reflection models pointing to economic, demographic, or cultural factors. In the ascendancy of Donald Trump, for example, it was not merely economic recession or national insecurity but rather Trump’s message of national redemption which, in the absence of a convincing alternative, politicized class, ethnoracial, and gender divisions to mobilize support for a Trump presidency.

By way of conclusion, we wish to highlight four avenues for future research in the spirit of the articulation program. The first is to continue the work of Eidlin, Ackerman, and Riley to investigate processes of party, class, and social group formation. The cleavages that polarize a population at any given moment in time are only a few of the many possible distinctions that may be used to divide individuals into social groups. The question thus becomes how and why particular distinctions become politically significant at specific moments in time, as opposed to others. Investigating this question through the lens of
articulation would contribute to a research program which explains such divisions not as demographically or economically predetermined but rather as the contingent outcomes of strategic political projects.

Future inquiry might also examine more closely the process of coalition building itself. If the new “network perspective” within political science has demonstrated the significance of extra-party actors to party organization and operation, then the question becomes how such coalitions are built and how they are sustained over time. While the articulation approach to date has provided a convincing frame for understanding the party–society relationship, there is room to theorize how and under what conditions parties are able to build the many other ties essential to their survival.

More research should also be done on the question of “disarticulation,” or how publics become dealigned from party programs and political blocs. This question is of both scholarly and political concern. In the first instance, the failure of parties to articulate clear fault lines may lead to the failure of political programs, the disintegration of social-political blocs, or, in other words, a “crisis of hegemony.” In this sense disarticulation may provide a more convincing explanation for the rise of new political formations than articulation itself. For instance, Donald Trump’s outsider appeal, tough-talk, and rogue politics did not develop in a vacuum. They emerged against decades of postracial neoliberal hegemony in which pacification and third-way politics ruled supreme. Such programs promised much to many, but in fact delivered very little. It remains an empirical question whether and how much a failure on the part of the left to articulate its own durable political blocs contributed to the rise of the far right.

Lastly, the articulation program can be extended through further investigation of what Antonio Gramsci identified as the third, “intermediate” element of parties. Such inquiries would take seriously the articulation program’s claims regarding the constitutive power of parties, but would also address a prominent silence by incorporating into analysis work of academics, experts, and professionals in the production of party programs, platforms, and truth claims. Such investigation is especially timely given the historic rise of professionals within the political sphere and the disengagement of voters from democratic politics the world over.

REFERENCES


IV. Civil Society: Roots and Processes


Machine Politics and Clientelism

Manali Desai and Rashmi Singh

The party “machine” is one of the few concepts that has become relevant in the scholarship of widely different political systems, with often divergent normative meanings associated with it. Although the term originated in the turn-of-the-century United States to describe the political structures that evolved in the context of mass migration, scholars have found similarities with party functioning in cases across Europe, South and Southeast Asia, Africa, and Latin America. The concept of the party machine has traveled as much geographically as it has theoretically. Starting from its implied roots in immigrant cultural ethos, it came to be employed in a more comparative, institutional, and sequential approach that took into account the timing of bureaucratization, democratization, and the mobilization of the working classes particularly across Europe. Over the past decade the party machine concept has moved beyond its Eurocentric and rational choice origins, and has been reinvigorated in a more anthropological direction, which views patronage and clientelism as expressions of exchange within the complex moral economies of political fields, drawing on increasing numbers of case studies from postcolonial and non-Western contexts. Questions about the use of resources and the underlying political economy of clientelism have been raised throughout the literature, albeit in different ways.

THE ANTEBELLUM PARTY MACHINE IN THE US

The party machine – as concept and organization – is generally held to originate in the antebellum years of social and political ferment in the US, at a time when mass immigration created tremendous flux in the existing class and occupational structures. Cities, where most migrants settled, began to evolve new political forms in a context that was defined by the collapse of the American party system, and rise of the Republican Party. The machine was said to reflect the conflicting political norms and exigencies of fragmented
politics that occurred as migrant ethnic groups with a different political ethos brought new forms of bargaining, favors, and patronage to the ongoing political flux. However, we argue that there the exchange logic of politics is neither specific to the US, nor can we consider its evolution through a stagist approach that is generally adopted in the canonical literature. Clientelism is found across vastly different political contexts ranging from contemporary party politics in the West, to Peronism and beyond in Argentina, to the Congress and BJP in India. It is not simply an expression of particular cultural values or political ethos.

Early literature on machine political and clientelism locates urban machine politics in nineteenth-century America, which was based upon extensive patronage through which bosses controlled the government. One of the best-known discussions of this new form of city machine politics is Banfield and Wilson’s *City Politics* (1966), in which they attribute the machine to a distinctly immigrant and therefore “particularistic” ethos of conducting politics by accepting corruption and personal favors as the norm of such transactions. These norms and values were seen as contrasting with those of white, middle-class Anglo-Saxon and Protestant citizens, who paid attention to the greater public good. In a controversial and racist argument that prefigured cultural arguments about the persistence the “culture of poverty” among African Americans, Banfield and Wilson argued that immigrant and, by association, “lower” and working-class people held a “private-regarding ethos” that put their self-interest above the public good. Upper-middle-class Anglo-Saxons, on the other hand, displayed an “attitudinal structure” that was “public-regarding” and supportive of expenditures that did not have immediate self-interest as their motive.1 As Daniel Patrick Moynihan (1993) observed about Tammany Hall (a New York City based machine founded in 1789 with a large immigrant base), with no small degree of awe:

In their politics as in their race and religion, the Irish brought many of their traits from the Old Country . . . . The Irish managed to make it somehow charming to steal an election – scoundrelish, rascally, surely not to be approved, but neither to be abhorred . . . . The Irish also brought to America a settled tradition of regarding the formal government as illegitimate and the informal one as bearing the true impress of popular sovereignty.

The “ethnic ethos” theory of machine politics has not gone unchallenged, although arguably it has not received the level of scrutiny and critique it deserves. Arguably the dichotomy between universalism and particularism

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1 They attempted to moderate this claim in “Political Ethos Revisited,” suggesting that cultural origins of different groups may be less important than the experience of immigration, and that all groups may have conceptions of the public good that vary according to what they define as or consider “public” (Wilson and Banfield 1971).
runs through much of the canon, and is closely connected with the major associations (Western democracy versus eastern despotism) that run through the literature in various forms. On antebellum politics Bridges (1987: 4) writes that ethnicity was one among several factors, notably class conflict, that produced a sense of chaos and uncertainty. Taking the example of New York City, she shows how social and class ferment produced a less orderly politics, one in which factions and parties vied for control of the city. City politics no longer merely mirrored national politics, but rather acquired a life of its own. The Working Man’s Party and Whigs employed a distinctly class language, defending the “working man” and “commercial classes” respectively. “The largest demonstrations in the 1850s in Philadelphia, New York, Newark, Baltimore, and Boston were by working men and women demanding ‘work or bread’ from municipal administrations,” she argues (1987: 4). Furthermore, according to Bridges, it is the timing of industrialization and mass suffrage together, itself a distinct feature of the American political landscape in the nineteenth century, which better explains machine politics. Unlike in Europe, the first generation of the American working class had the vote; the ability to combine the strike and ballot meant that class and party were connected early on. Thus ethnicity in fact coded these class differences. In Bridges’ view the opposition between Democrats and Republicans in the city was led by the mass immigration of the Irish after the famine, and the pairing of nativism with Whigs prompted a response that associated anti-nativism with the working man’s concerns.

In their canonical but problematic study, Banfield and Wilson (1966) suggested that party patronage in the form of material incentives such as jobs, cash, and food suited the short-term horizons of a primarily working-class clientele and was therefore a key aspect of the machine’s function. In turn, the party became embedded in a transaction mechanism that ensured relative stability of its base over time. James Scott (1969: 1151) argued similarly that:

By exploiting the public purse to provide posts that may be dealt out according to political criteria, the machine party gains a staple means of maintaining internal discipline and cohesion. The diverse groups and individuals comprising the party are linked together by such material rewards as patronage, while these posts supply the party with a cadre of political workers who are constantly available to the organization and who will be responsive to commands from the leadership. It is precisely the diversity of groups within the party that renders this pool of available jobs an indispensable basis of organization. The effectiveness of patronage as a means of co-ordination hinges, of course, on … a clientele for whom jobs are of central importance.

Scott cited research showing that the Martin machine in Philadelphia had placed 15,000 people in office and “each of these 15000 persons was selected for office because he could deliver votes, either by organizations, by parties, or by families” (1969: 1152).
MACHINES AND URBAN GOVERNANCE

By the mid-twentieth century the machine as organizational form was understood by most scholars to be in relative retreat in the US. A skeptical view, however, is offered by Wolfromer (1972: 366–367), whose detailed description of New Haven politics shows just how important the traditional concerns of patronage were in the city:

A new administration taking over New Haven’s city hall had at its immediate disposal about 75 politically-appointed policy-making positions, about 300 lower-level patronage jobs, and about the same number of appointments to boards and commissions. Summer employment provided around 150 additional patronage jobs. In the winter, snow removal required the immediate attention of hundreds of men and dozens of pieces of equipment. A hundred or more jobs in field offices of the state government were filled with the advice of the party’s local leaders. The City Court, appointed by the governor with the advice of the local dispensers of his patronage, had room for two or three dozen deserving people.

New Haven was in fact the site of Robert Dahl’s classic study Who Governs? (1961), a book which weighed into the debate between elite and pluralist paradigms of politics. Dahl’s argument was that the city was not ruled by a single business class that decided its priorities, but rather it was the mayor and his aides that decided these priorities and sold them to the wider public including the business community. Molotch’s (1976) description of the city as a “growth machine” echoes the connections drawn between local government and businessmen, with the latter functioning as agents that seek to “wheel and deal” in the interest of overall growth. The ideology of growth becomes a hegemonic ideal that links various factions within the city, and connects them to citizens who are not directly involved in these decisions but nevertheless buy into the “we” feeling that creates the notion of a collective interest. In Molotch’s argument, notably, partisan politics are less important than the overall hegemony of the ideology of growth in explaining how city machines function.

Scholars of urban machines have argued that once opportunities for patronage declined during the 1970s, community leaders moved away from partisan politics (Aldrich 1995; Key 1952; Schattschneider 1942; Ware 1985). Civil service reform, open primaries, and eventually good governance models, they argue, served to reduce graft in the system, and dissolve the machine. However, Pacewicz (2015) points to a crucial flaw in this argument, namely, that community leaders moved away from partisan politics well before the reforms of the 1970s and 1980s. Progressive era reformers had introduced civil service reforms, and eventually the New Deal established service delivery bureaucracies that sidestepped the patronage link. Pacewicz is one of several authors that exemplify a shift in the way that machines in city governance have been theorized since the 1990s; the emphasis moves away from the transactional nature of ties between specific socioeconomic groups and local
government, toward a revisionist appreciation for the importance of machine-like organization for the governance of cities, and hence for its persistence in local politics.

**BEYOND THE US: COMPARATIVE, INSTITUTIONAL, AND SEQUENTIAL APPROACHES**

The narrative of decline in party machines has been debunked by comparative work showing the key salience of clientelism in Europe and Latin America (Helmke and Levitsky 2006; Kitschelt and Wilkinson 2007). As de Leon (2014: 95) notes, the idea of a party machine is usually linked to forms of urban governance thought to be in decline, whereas clientelism is used to describe the robust systems of political patronage that are practiced in the developing world. But in reality, as he notes, the distinction is unclear because both terms refer to the use of material incentives to secure the loyalty of clients toward the state and ruling party. The persistence of these forms of incentives across the world, not simply in developing countries, suggests that patronage is an important link between state/party and society with varying degrees of strength and prevalence depending on the political circumstances of a given society. As Kitschelt and Wilkinson (2007: 3) suggest, patronage is a key aspect of party–society linkages in a range of societies, and shows no sign of disappearing. In the new democracies in particular, they argue, the left–right ideological dimension does not necessarily hold traction among voters. Instead, programmatic packages display a degree of diffusion and erratic patterns, while drawing widespread support “even when emotional ties of ‘party identification’ or a past record of competent management of economic growth appear to be unlikely sources of citizen–politician linkage.” Piattoni (2001: 2) suggests that clientelism and patronage are strategies for the acquisition, maintenance, and aggrandizement of political power on the part of patrons, and strategies for the protection and promotion of their interest, on the part of the clients . . . [I]t should not be surprising, then, to find these phenomena in a variety of political systems characterised by allegedly rather different (political) cultures and social structures, and to observe their ebb and flow within the same political system.

Piattoni thus challenges the common assumption that politics is divided into particular and general interests, suggesting that politics is inherently particularistic.

This comparative insight was developed further in Shefter’s (1994) institutionalist and sequential approach that linked the rise of clientelism to the timing of party formation, amidst processes of bureaucratization and democratization. He argues that parties that are “internally mobilised” by elites within prevailing regimes tend to use the spoils of government toward partisan goals. Examples include the major political parties in the US, and conservative and centrist parties in Europe. Shefter further argues that where
the creation of a mass electorate preceded the rise of civil service and recruitment into bureaucracy, politicians gained access to patronage to build the party. On the other hand, “externally mobilized parties,” that is, parties that mobilize the interests of politically excluded groups, do not have patronage as an option, and thus tend to use ideologically programmatic appeals. Many European socialist and Third World nationalist parties fall into this category. Shefter suggests that “externally mobilized parties” play on futuristic appeals and also tend to be more universalistic in their appeals compared to “internally mobilized parties” (1994). In addition, where civil service recruitment was enacted prior to the rise of mass parties, bureaucrats had autonomy to prevent politicians from “raiding the bureaucracy.” In such circumstances, argues Shefter (1994: 15), politicians “were compelled to build mass-based party organizations that did not depend on patronage.” This would explain why parties in Sweden and Germany have not adopted clientelism, while in Greece and Spain they have done so.

**CLIENTELESM AND DEMOCRACY: BEYOND THE WEST**

Clientelism and democracy make strange bedfellows, but it is clear that they are intertwined. As Auyero (2008: 8) notes, clientelism is as far away from Simmelian sociability as one can imagine, with the dominant imaginary being one of relations of hierarchy and bonds of dependence and control. The term “patronage” was used in peasant studies in Latin America and scholars dismissed it as a sentimentalization of class inequality. Yet, others suggested that clientelism and patronage did not merely portray bonds of loyalty and solidarity as myths to conceal harsh exploitation, but were in fact constituent of these relations. They enabled social mobility and political participation, and were a crucial link between the underdeveloped peripheries and national state, between marginalized ethnic communities, tribes and peasants, and the resources of the central government. This ambivalent treatment of clientelism in the literature reflects the paradox at the heart of clientelism – its hierarchical and controlling features, as well as its embodiment of solidarity, loyalty, and exchange. It is also what accounts for its enduring power in modern democracies. The more indifferent the state bureaucracy appears to citizens in the context of need and the poverty of service provision, and the greater the levels of social inequality, the more important such networks of loyalty and solidarity are to the clients of parties.

It is perhaps no surprise, then, that it is in the so-called developing world where clientelism is used prodigiously for explaining a range of outcomes from underdevelopment to corruption. Clientelism as a concept stands in for the pathologies of the state and bureaucracy, and the deviation of these non-Western pathways from the progression of democracy (and alleged shedding of clientelism in the West). This implicit narrative was particularly evident in earlier scholarship on parties in non-Western contexts. In his earlier writings
James Scott (1969), for example, argued that the conditions that gave rise to machine parties in the mid-nineteenth-century US were still present in a large number of countries undergoing democratic transitions during the mid–late twentieth century. There was, he argued, a broad similarity between the fragmentation of power that characterized turn-of-the-century urban authority in the US, and states in the newly emerging, often postcolonial democracies in Asia and Africa. The relative weakness of political structures, particularly the weak legislative capacity of states to absorb demands emanating from ethnic or religious blocs, gave a significant boost to the machine form. Mass suffrage and mass democracy were a precondition for this – parties needed to get the vote out to win, and machine politics was organizationally suited to the task. Using Shefter’s theory one could argue that mass suffrage and democracy preceded the rise of bureaucracy in the developing world. In these cases machines were neither class-based programmatic parties, nor led by charismatic leaders; rather they were “a non-ideological organization interested less in political principle than in securing and holding office for its leaders and distributing income to those who run it and work for it” (Scott 1969: 1144). Thus informal bargains and contracts were key to the local party leader’s ability to secure cooperation with these divided powerholders. Bargaining, corruption, and the provision of various rewards for votes ranging from jobs to electricity and other favors were simply the mechanisms that connected party to people in the absence of ideologies or programs.

This leitmotif of informality becomes more salient in contexts where formal labor organizing either failed to spread or went into decline, and, more importantly, where the majority of the workforce is employed in the informal sector – a trend that was exacerbated in the context of structural adjustment, decline in trade unions, and neoliberal growth models. As Levitsky (2003: 4) shows, the decline in labor unions during the 1980s and 90s across Latin America and South America, and the rise of an urban, informal working class with relatively weak class identities were key to the rise of clientelist party networks. The traditional mechanisms of labor support for Peronism in Argentina, for example, were dismantled in favor of a machine organization that gave greater autonomy to party leaders, enabling them to draw support from the middle classes and eliminate intra-party opposition to Menem’s market reforms. At the same time the Peronists retained the support of the working- and lower-middle-class base through the clientelist networks that had been consolidated. The “side payments” in exchange for votes appealed to voters such as these, he argues, who eschew longer-term goals for short-term material benefits, and often lack access to government services (2003: 9). According to Levitsky, clientelism is more programmatically flexible than class-based organizations, and therefore tends to be more compatible with market transitions because clientelistic ties provide a mechanism for the distribution of material resources to those sections that tend to lose out in
these transitions. On the other hand, clientelism can hold significant risks for political parties because they are associated with corruption, and therefore “vulnerable to reformist or ‘clean government’ challenges, particularly in areas with large middle-class electorates” (2003: 9). Yet overall the scholarship has moved in the direction of treating clientelism as a crucial mechanism in the connection between mass parties and poor constituencies, and as a potential distributive mechanism provided there is a culture of democratic demand.

One could argue that the literature on clientelism has failed to recognize mass support for ideologically driven (left-communist), and programmatic parties (broadly left) that won power in many regions of Latin America, South America, as well as Asia and Africa. Examples include the Communist Party of India (Marxist), Uruguay’s Frente Amplio, and other broadly socialist regimes that won power in the immediate aftermath of Independence. It is important to ask, therefore, why some parties more explicitly choose clientelism as the mainstay of their vote-winning strategies, while others do not. One argument could be the availability of resources. If, as it has been argued, clientelism is an inherent feature of the modern state because of the fiscal resources that are at political parties’ disposal (van de Walle 2007: 3), then it becomes possible to ask whether variation in the availability of resources can explain the extent to which parties rely on clientelist mechanisms to garner support.

Van de Walle (2007: 4) suggests that the wealth of the economy and the resources available to the state condition the scope of clientelism, regardless of the nature of the political regime. In poor states that cannot afford mass patronage, clientelism is more likely to be limited to the distribution of elite offices. On the other hand, patronage is more likely in rich states overseeing substantial and diversified economies, which are more likely to be able to afford a large and expensive state.

For example in poorer African states, mainly in sub-Saharan Africa, clientelism is largely restricted among elites because there are fewer resources and less money to distribute patronage. This type of “prebendalism” also restricts competition among parties, and is based most often on one-man rule. Van de Walle contrasts this type of clientelism with the Western variant, which is legal; in the former, state agents subvert the law for personal gain and for the enrichment of a few friends and kin. In the richer African states, however, mass patronage is often employed without necessarily compromising the effectiveness of the state. These are of course ideal types, and in reality both elite and mass forms of clientelism coexist in most states. Yet the elite form of patronage is also associated with authoritarianism; the growth of democratization, van de Walle argues, will gradually lead patronage in African states to resemble patronage in more mature democracies, which works further down the economic ladder and creates access to services for
poorer constituencies. The viability of this system greatly depends, however, on the continuing fiscal availability to boost these resources as well as the deepening of democratic culture which may lag behind the advent of formal democratic processes.

The relative limits on patronage resources raise the question of how party machines choose the specific constituencies to offer patronage to. As Stokes (2005: 315) asks, even if parties optimize their returns by choosing to distribute patronage among poor constituents, how do parties decide which of the many such constituencies to target? Citing the example of a machine operative in Argentina, who has 40 such constituents but only ten small bags of food to distribute to secure their votes – which of her neighbors should she choose? Her answer is to choose those constituents whose ideological commitment to the party is not secure, and whose future support is in doubt. Machines, according to Stokes, play a crucial role in discerning what voters’ intentions are in any given election, and the different dispositions of blocks of voters in a given neighborhood. Machines have a grassroots character that enables close connection with voters; with their ear to the ground they can detect changes in the mood and future intentions of voters. Such information also becomes more valuable with the rise in democratic competition between parties.

Auyero (1999) has also challenged the “negative” image of clientelism as both externalist and exclusively anchored in material, objective factors, which he suggests fail to understand clientelism “from the client’s point of view” (1999: 299). His ethnographic research in a shantytown in the city of Cospito, Argentina, tried to explain why the majority of its poor inhabitants vote for the Peronists. Clientelism, he argues, needs material resources but these were an insufficient condition for the smooth functioning of the Peronist system. Drawing on Merton’s point that the political machine must humanize and personalize the assistance it delivers, Auyero argues that the type of goods being distributed mattered, and their frequency (daily or weekly) highly depended on the skill and effort of brokers who in turn developed specific types of relationships to clients. It was therefore not the good per se, but the “act of giving” (drawing on Mauss’ analysis of the gift) which in turn generates the trust, solidarity, or familial relations that are invoked for the brokers and clients. Auyero thus collapses the dichotomy between ideology and interest that has animated a generation of writing on political clientelism to argue that the services, favors, and problem solving, such as laying down sewers, connecting electricity or drinking water, are part of an “ideological machine” in which a contingent social relationship is transformed into a trusting and more sentimentally driven, lasting one. What is solidified is a balance of forces, a hierarchy that nevertheless feels like a legitimate relationship. It thus becomes what he calls a “doxic relationship.”

By taking the research on clientelism in a subjective direction, Auyero shifted the core question from one of the interests driving clientelism to the question of why clientelism works. What kind of political work is necessary to sustain
clientelist relations both ways? The asymmetry or hierarchy of relations between broker and client is double-edged; clients are political actors who can shift their loyalties, especially with increasing competition between parties. Indeed, while it is often assumed that clientelism feeds the stability of party systems by creating longer-term loyalties, there are a variety of ways in which patronage can be associated with contention, including violent contention. Patronage and nonroutine or collective action can work together in many cases, and are not necessarily at odds. As numerous studies have shown apparent ethnic or gang violence, for example, is often underpinned by struggles between local patronage networks (Auyero 2008; Brass 2004). Democratic transitions, on the other hand, may also loosen patron–client ties, which in turn generates violence, as Villarreal’s (2002) research on Mexico shows. Patronage is thus akin to the “moral economy of the poor” that E. P. Thompson and James Scott have shown to be central to riots and other forms of collective resistance. In other words, when paternalist authority fails to adhere to the norms of assistance and obligations of protection, the relationship is ruptured and there is potential for a violent response from the poor. Clientelism is thus not simply a one-way street; it stands in for a doxic relationship of mutual obligation which can both strengthen the party–client relationship, but equally renders it vulnerable to rupture. Auyero’s emphasis on the moral economy of clientelism raises the question of what difference the social or class location of client and broker makes to sustaining the relationship. This question is not directly posed, but the general assumption is that brokers are local actors who can speak to clients in the shared language of their mutual social location. It is also assumed that this kind of transaction has generally positive effects on growth and distribution of resources to those in the lower economic strata. However, research on clientelism in India has demonstrated that it is the “intermediate classes” that monopolize the state’s clientelist networks, influencing the disbursement of rents in the form of licenses, subsidies, and resources and blocking attempts to remove unproductive rents (Jeffrey 2002; Khan and Jomo 2000; Wade 1985). These intermediate classes also monopolize the local government bodies, known as panchayats, and broker the relationship between the poor and the state (Jeffrey 2002). In this context, low-level corruption functions as an everyday mechanism of transaction with the state. It is clear, therefore, that clientelism derives its meaning from the system in which it functions, and through the actors that use it toward particular ends.

The concept of the political machine falls, therefore, into a theoretical bind as we explore it further between the tiers at which clientelism operates (or is observable to researchers). On balance, political scientists are still disposed to considering clientelism as a remnant of a “traditional” societal authority that undermines democratic values. Quantifying the level and extent of clientelism as it continues to persist in democratic practices has not increased its acceptance by mainstream political science as a universal by-product of electoral
bargaining. In one of the carefully articulated explorations of the concept, Grigori V. Golosov (2013) argues that the difficulty in demarcating the concept of the “political machine” derives from its being inductively created from a number of empirically observed cases, rather than a more theoretical exploration of the concept. This definitional quandary leads to different conclusions and applications of the concept, depending on how the relationship between political bargaining and democracy is understood or observed in the contemporary period.

For Golosov and others (see Stokes 2005 for instance), a political machine is a political organization that captures electoral power through trading particularistic material benefits for votes. However, organizationally, political machines diverge from political parties because despite providing patronage to their members in the same way that political parties do, political machines do not have any programmatic components as such. Thus, the political machine is a very specific development of a complex “clientelistic exchange” formed through “chains of broker relationships” (Golosov 2013: 463) that operate largely in the political context of electoral authoritarianism. This type of exchange has been traced in countries which underwent the second wave of democratization, and where enfranchisement was early and massive; widespread poverty and slow development of programmatic parties made particularistic exchanges thrive in this context, and also in post-communist countries where subnational electoral politics came to be controlled through largely clientelistic exchanges as it was fused with national politics. This definition therefore limits the application of the machine concept to contexts where democratic institutions are seen to operate mainly nominally, and where intense involvement of either political elites or the national political regime restricts voter autonomy in electoral contests. What this definition also does is separate political machines from national parties and makes a distinction between national parties that have machine-like attributes in their subnational manifestations, but cannot be compared to political machines, as their approach is not hinged mainly on particularistic appeals to the electorate.

This further problematizing of the “political machine,” however, still precludes us from understanding the moral nature of clientelistic exchanges in the context of elections, and everyday politics. Particularistic exchanges during election cycles are difficult to separate from programmatic appeals that broadly all political parties make. As political anthropologists have argued, patronage and clientelistic relationships are hardly a sign of political failure; as Anastasia Piliavsky (2014) writes for the South Asian context, patronage is thriving alongside democracy in postcolonial contexts, in “one of political modernity’s busiest laboratories” (2014: 3) which can scarcely be included among “traditional societies unfamiliar with electoral practices of any kind” (Golosov 2013: 463). Piliavsky writes further that patronage has been ascribed a low denominator in political analyses because a moral aversion to
its presence has prevented liberal political theorists from assimilating it as a subject worthy of research, viewing it, rather, as a leftover from the past that is likely to disappear with modernization. The fact that patronage coexists and even propels democratic mobility for disenfranchised groups remains inexplicable within the bounds.

Gilmartin (2014: 125) suggests that “unequal reciprocal exchange” captures the inherent paradox in the exchange of particularistic goods and patronage for votes in electoral contexts in such countries. The sites and the forms of this exchange have varied immensely over time; however, the centrality of exchange and its valuation by the “clients” are crucial to how the democratic market operates. Here, particularistic exchanges are a part of the status differences and asymmetries that exist in society; more than the image of the “desperate system” that the concept of political machine conjures up for these contexts, they are also sites of moral evaluation wherein a complex set of conventions determines the endgame of these exchanges (Piliavsky 2014). Any patron involved in this exchange is “continuously steering between the dangers of two opposing poles of action, one of which threatens his efficacy and the other his legitimacy” (Gilmartin 2014: 125). The display of patronage therefore rests on creating the impression of largesse and benevolence, and the clients in this exchange also come to rely on the partiality of these exchanges to hinge their support on patrons who are able “to get things done” for them, thereby making not just a transactional choice but also a moral one in terms of preferred political leadership (see Berenschot 2010; Chatterjee 2004; Piliavsky 2014).

The attribution of these exchanges with a moral logic, conversely, rests on different explanations. While for some anthropologists the display of generosity and its supplementary idioms is part of the political language and self-fashioning, for some others, like Berenschot (2010), it is the fragmented nature of state sovereignty that necessitates intervention by politicians to capture state resources for their constituents, who in turn judge these politicians on the basis of their capacity to provide for them. The political machine in this setup, specifically urban Gujarat (India), resembles teams of “street-level” politicians who step in for an ineffective bureaucracy, and provide much needed political mediation by facilitating exchange of information and particularistic goods for the citizens by putting pressure on the state through these informal exchanges. These local-level politicians also operate in an urban context similar to early American cities where massive pressure of urbanization and adult universal franchise created chains of broker networks that distributed patronage in a systematic way. These networks also act as institutionalized riot machines when the situation changes in the same areas, when the state and the majority community attack other minority communities which they project as internal enemies by casting them as burdens on the existing economies of patronage (Berenschot 2009). The same networks therefore come to occupy different roles in scarcely shifting broker networks that stay in place for access
and patronage, and do not disappear or cease the political mediation work even out of election terms.

CONCLUSION

While the patron–client relationship has ended up as an enduring institution in the different types of political exchanges, the concept of the political machine represents only one type of such exchange, and its applicability still needs to be tested across various situations. Is the political machine a particular type of patronage system that only occurs in politically testing situations for democracy, or is its link to urbanization and brokerage a key dynamic of its operation? Second, the moral evaluation of these exchanges vis-à-vis democratic principles could be better integrated in discussions of its operation in different contexts. While the political anthropologists have argued for bringing patronage back into political discussion – hinging their claim on the need for sociality that normative evaluations of democracy rests on (which they claim has been pushed to the side by rational choice theorists) – the question remains as to how much bargaining power exists in these particular relationships, and what the results are for new forms of political organizations.

REFERENCES


The Good, the Bland, and the Ugly

Volunteering, Civic Associations, and Participation in Politics

Sara Compion and Thomas Janoski

The value of volunteering and associational groups for social political life has long interested scholars studying modern democratic societies. Since Alexis de Tocqueville published his seminal work on *Democracy in America* in the 1830s (2001), much focus has been on the good that volunteering in civic associations does for fostering pro-social behavior and for building public participatory processes in democratic governments. A more recent and critical view asserts that the work of civic associations can also be socially corrosive, paternalistic, intolerant of outsiders, geared toward corporate self-interest, and actively antidemocratic. In addition, much volunteering in civic groups is shallow, menial, apolitical social activity that holds little, if any, transformative social potential. Civic volunteering, as a process of social engagement, can thus have either good, trivial, or even negative repercussions for democratic life. Contemporary theories of political action and the public sphere have often failed to fully consider these varied outcomes. In this chapter, we will examine the *good* aspects of volunteering that lead to positive political and pro-social outcomes, the *bland* aspects of volunteer work that have little or indirect political implications, and the *bad* aspects of volunteering that have negative political impacts and corrode civil and democratic life.

We use a broad definition of civic associations that includes nongovernmental organizations (NGOs); voluntary associations (VAs); nonprofit leisure and cultural groups; professional associations; informal volunteer collectives; town meetings; social movements; as well as civic entities that may have paid employees like trade unions, business associations, and advocacy and lobby groups. This category also includes bureaucratic advisory councils and political dialogue forums. Volunteering in the civic sphere goes well beyond relatively routine and

* This chapter has benefitted by comments by John Wilson, Thomas Boje, Lars Svendberg, Jeffrey Alexander, Cedric de Leon, and Joya Misra.
sometimes temporary duties, to include leadership roles, positions on boards of
directors, government advisory councils, or works councils. Volunteering has
political influence that extends beyond campaign work like voting, stuffing
envelopes, getting petitions signed, or sending mass emails. It can include other,
more direct forms of political involvement where decisions are made.

This chapter has three parts. The first part addresses the good, bland,
and bad aspects of volunteering. The second part considers the same issues
but in contexts where the volunteering is explicitly for pro-democratic
activities like town hall meetings or advisory councils. This includes
seven key forms of political participation and how to evaluate them
according to criteria concerning the advancement of deliberative
democracy. The third part presents a process model of civic participation
to show the political relevance of volunteering across three different levels
of the public sphere.

**VOLUNTEERING: THE GOOD, THE BLAND, AND THE UGLY**

**The Positive Aspects of Volunteering and Civic Association Membership**

Volunteering and civic association membership are often portrayed as an
absolute positive force in democracy, which they can be. Scholars have argued
that involvement in civic organizations – including voluntary groups – is
essential to the advancement of national democratic systems (Alexander
2006; Almond and Verba 1965; Fleming 2000; Putnam 2001). This view
treats volunteering and voluntary group membership as a resource for
expanding democratic capacity by increasing collective participation in civic
decision-making from the grassroots up, because a deliberative democracy
gains legitimacy from egalitarian institutions that encourage open dialogue
1840]) provides the most foundational argument for a positive connection
between voluntary associations and the birth of democracy in North America.
He argued that local voluntary acts, such as neighbors coming together to raise
a new barn, and small parochial community-based voluntary associations did
much to build democracy in America. At that time, most governmental affairs
were localized, and constituents could demand elected officials pay attention to
them, while the national government was mainly concerned with defense or
acquiring new territories.

However, between 1850 and 1950 in the United States and most of the
industrialized world, political interests leaned more toward state-building
enterprises, and civil society responded with the formation of large,
membership-based voluntary associations that aimed to secure advantage
primarily for their members. Focused interest groups like labor unions,
professional associations, women’s and fraternal groups, and voluntary
business associations worked to expand their scale nationally (Gamm and
Putnam 1999: 523–528; Skocpol 2004). After the 1950s, the US Civil Rights movement, the War on Poverty, and the global decolonization and independence movements sparked a gradual shift in the international civic sphere toward civic associations that sought to secure rights for previously excluded populations and to expand democratic access to more people (Salamon, Sokolowski, and Associates 2004; Skocpol 2004: 5–6; Skocpol and Fiorina 1999).

Inglehart (2018) argues that as the West stabilized after the Second World War, it created a cultural security that allowed for the flourishing of self-expressive values, which “emphasize gender equality, tolerance of gays, lesbians, foreigners and other groups, freedom of expression and participation in decision-making in economic and political life” (Inglehart 2018: 1–2). A marked shift in cultural values caused civic organizations to focus on these expressive concerns. Across the world, trade unions, counterhegemonic groups, and political pressure groups rallied around antiwar efforts, divestment campaigns, racial solidarity, and national independence. These important movements positively shaped more open and inclusive democracies and were often spurred on by emerging religious, business, and professional groups that could quickly mobilize people and resources due to their organized structures.

After the 1990s, the civic sphere transitioned away from membership to issue-based associations (Inglehart 2003, 2018; Inglehart and Baker 2000; Skocpol 2003). For example, in the United States, voluntary associations that focused on education, health, identity, poverty, and state and local government issues almost doubled in number from 14.5 percent of all groups in 1981, to 32.4 percent in 2011 (Schlozman, Brady, and Verba 2018; Salamon et al. 2004; and Skocpol 2003). The rights revolution for minorities, a burst of state-sponsored funding, increasingly liberal political space, and new fund-raising technologies facilitated a rapid rise of professional nonprofits in the global civic sphere. Furthermore, as service-based economies grew, professional associations and service groups slowly replaced labor and trade unions as prominent allies of the welfare state (Clawson 2003; Fantasia and Voss 2004). Many of these newer nonprofit entities had a middle-class base, operated from a centralized national office, employed professional staff, and generated revenue through direct mail, internet support, or large grants. Face-to-face membership waned.

The shrinking average membership size of voluntary associations has prompted a debate about whether the importance of voluntary associations is declining in society. In the United States, volunteers as a percentage of the population has continuously declined from 26.8 percent in 2011 to 24.9 percent in 2015 (US-BLS 2016; Rotolo and Wilson 2004, 2014). Robert Putnam (2001) famously proclaimed that Americans are gradually “bowling alone” as voluntary associations shrink. Putnam fiercely values the face-to-face interaction of voluntary associations. In his study of social capital formation in Italian provinces (Putnam, Leonardi, and Nanetti 1993), he argued that regions
with higher voluntary association membership were able to solve many different problems and were more prosperous because collective groups bring together folks from diverse backgrounds, strengthening both bridging and bonding social capital. He theorized that greater social capital led to more consensus. However, while membership is diminishing, the number of voluntary associations has not in fact declined; they have simply morphed into new forms that still hold sociopolitical importance—whether good or bad.

Evidence is conclusive that democratic institutions are arguably stronger when they can draw on diverse voluntary associations to promote trust and the development of mature identities—thus, integrating different groups within a “good society” (Bellah et al. 1996 [1985], 1996; Wuthnow 2004, 2011, 2018). Volunteering in these civic groups remains a vital aspect of modern democratic society because they provide a buttress against powerful state and market forces (Habermas 1989; Lewis, Loril, and Kramer 2013; Musick and Wilson 2007). People who are involved in voluntary groups are also usually more politically active, informed about politics, in favor of democratic styles of governance, and engaged in democratic behaviors such as voting and community affairs (Almond and Verba 1965; Putnam et al. 1993; Skocpol 2003). Working with others, contacting officials, taking part in elections, and identifying with political parties “inculcate normative loyalty to the democratic regime” as well as other positive pro-social traits vital to democracy, such as “internal efficacy and cognitive engagement with politics” (Mattes 2007: 17).

Verba, Schlozman, and Brady (1995) show how voluntary associations are training grounds for political activity. For example, volunteers can transfer the reading of epistles, standing up and bearing witness, or organizing fund-raising activities from church to the political realm with ease. Having a ready-made network in the religious congregation, the experienced church volunteer can easily move to politics. The group involvement also strengthens collective values that fuel social solidarity (Dekker and Halman 2003). These benefits are more common in heterogeneous groups. In homogeneous groups, there is a risk of ideological clustering, which breeds intolerance, parochialism, and ethnocentrism (Lichterman and Eliasoph 2014).

Volunteering is generally determined by: (1) subjective dispositions like personality, motives, values, attitudes, and norms; (2) individual resources like class, income, education, time, health, gender, and race; (3) social context including life course, social resources, volunteer recruitment strategies, school and congregational membership, community and geographic setting; (4) cross-national differences and cultural trends over time; (5) the organization of volunteering in terms of tasks and roles; and (6) the consequences of volunteering on occupation, income, social mobility, health, and citizenship (van Ingen and Wilson 2017; van Ingen and Kekker 2011). Although there are many reasons for volunteering, three factors are most influential: education, socioeconomic status, and social connectedness. Almost universally, university education and higher socioeconomic status increase the probability of formal
volunteering (Musick and Wilson 2007). They also increase the chance that such volunteers will gain leadership positions in voluntary associations (DiMaggio and Garip 2012). In African countries, the poor are more likely to join voluntary associations and to engage in helping strangers but education and connection to other social collectives, such as religious groups, are still the strongest determinants of volunteering (Compion 2017).

Social networks also matter. Marc Musick and John Wilson point out that while resources and values help explain an individual’s volunteer behavior, what really matters is “who they know and who they mix with on a routine basis” (Musick and Wilson 2008: 218). The diversity and spread of contacts found in peer groups (2007: 232–236), informal social arrangements of friends and family (2007: 268–270), and broader social networks (2007: 190–191, 206–214, 267–286, 470–492, and 528–529) impact how likely a person is to be asked to volunteer, how likely they will respond affirmatively, and their eventual ability to actually carry out the volunteering. Belonging to one type of voluntary association dramatically increases the probability of being asked to volunteer for another group; while not belonging reduces the chance of ever being asked. In addition, empathic people generally have more friends and larger social networks (Kardos et al. 2017), and an appreciation of the rights of others (Hunt 2008), and so empathetic people often volunteer more (Reed and Selbee 2003). As empathy decreases (Chopik, O’Brien, and Konrath 2017; Inglehart 2018; Konrath, O’Brien, and Hsing 2011), so may volunteering and political involvement because people will politically polarize into opposing camps (Baldassarri and Gelman 2008).

Organizations also matter in the sense of providing the opportunity “to be asked to volunteer.” In the US, belonging to a church is one of the strongest organizational forces in getting people to volunteer (Wilson and Janoski 1995; Ruiter and de Graaf 2006). In northern Europe, however, most volunteering comes through labor unions and employee associations, and, as a result, this type of volunteering is much more connected to where people work (Curtis, Baer, and Grabb 1992, 2001; Schofer and Fourcade-Gourinchas 2001).

The Bland, Trivial, and Apolitical Aspects of Volunteering and Associational Membership

Much day-to-day volunteering in cultural or leisure voluntary groups, unions, professional associations, and veterans’ groups has little effect on politics and is merely beneficial for the individual or the organization. For example, some people may volunteer only to gain social status, to solicit job information, to be involved in social activities, or to know more about how to get government benefits or participation stipends (Janoski and Wilson 1995). Much of this is market, not altruistic volunteering. Work like cleaning, greeting, doing office administration, or singing in the choir may certainly lead to personal growth and do much to promote valuable “within-group” solidarity, but they do little
to advance sociopolitical consciousness and tolerant cross-group contact, or to critique the status quo. Inglehart (2003: 68) shows that across 30 European countries, less than 10 percent of all volunteering is related to politics and roughly 8 percent is sport and recreational activity (see also Inglehart and Baker 2000; Borgonovi 2008).

Some people volunteer to promote their own self-interest. The prime example is students and adults in the labor force who volunteer to pad their resumes, find a job, or make friends. They seek out key volunteer activities that will aid in their own upward job mobility. Others are simply uncommitted and disinterested, like indifferent teenagers forced to participate in a voluntary park clean up activity for a school project (Janoski, Wilson, and Musick 1998). Another example includes elite fund-raising soirées for social causes where guests may be obliged to “voluntarily” participate because they are either celebrities, employees, or special invited guests. The vast majority of regular volunteering in religious organizations like synagogues and mosques is also nonpolitical – even when such organizations take a socially progressive or pro-political stance in particular times and contexts (Wilson and Janoski 1995; Wilson 2000, 2012; Wilson and Musick 1997; Wuthnow 2004, 2011, 2018).

While volunteering generally exposes people to others and creates occasions to interact with different groups and associations – usually helping to promote tolerance and trust that has positive effects on democracy – in certain settings, social cross-pressures can actively discourage political dialogue (Katz and Lazarsfeld 1955; Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet 1960 [1948]; Lipset and Rokkan 1967; Keller and Berry 2003; Mutz 2002a). When representatives from different voluntary associations meet in the civic sphere, this ideally leads to a “polycentric model of civic coordination based on horizontal solidarity” that prompts people to moderate their conflicting positions and to coordinate in solving problems cooperatively (Baldassarri and Diani 2007: 735, 772). The resulting cross-pressure brings a greater understanding of other ideas, groups, and the government. This builds trust and legitimacy in the democratic process (Almond and Verba 1965; Huckfeldt, Mendez, and Osborn 2004; Lipset 1981; Mutz 2000a, 2000b; Mutz and Martin 2001). However, if the cross-pressures are traumatic or generate discomfort, they can cause some to withdraw from the public sphere, others to avoid deliberating on political issues, and, in general, deter political action (Liu and Lucas 2005; Mutz 2002b, 2006; Nilson 2002, Wiertz 2016).

Religious messages can be political and lead to volunteering for social welfare causes, or for political gains. But, in some countries like the US, religious congregations have nonprofit, tax exempt status, which can be revoked if they openly endorse political campaigns or issues (US-IRS 2018). In contrast, German churches actually receive state funds from a church tax to implement government-mandated public health services (Lang 2016; Henneghan 2019). Religious congregations are also highly segregated by class and race, creating silo environments that can breed narrow-mindedness and intolerance.
Cross-pressures in volunteer settings may cause some people to retreat from political engagement. In the current Information Age, some people may be overwhelmed by the sheer quantity of news media and the political information received from fellow volunteers. It may cause some to withdraw or abstain from political life altogether, or to silo their viewing and reading preferences, wallowing in their own media bias (Mutz and Martin 2001). While voluntary groups are seldom totally polarized, political elites are. Examples like the Koch brothers or Art Pope in America are powerful financial donors and strong opinion leaders, which in turn influences volunteers (Baldassarri and Bearman 2007). Baldassarri and Goldberg (2014) suggest that when listening to strong opinion leaders who present crosscutting ideas, citizens are either “agnostics,” or they are “alternatives” who simply agree on most issues, or they are “ideologues” who will retreat when confronted with crosscutting pressures (Baldassarri and Bearman 2007; Baldassarri 2013). In the civic sphere, this response is inert and has little sociopolitically transformative power, rendering volunteer outcomes bland and trivial for political life.

The Bad Aspects of Coerced Volunteering and Co-opted Civic Associations

De Tocqueville’s later work recognized a darker potential for volunteering and grassroots civic associations to cause social harm in America’s democracy. After 1840, he grew increasingly disillusioned with the unregulated nature of voluntary entities, and with the ability of unchecked market forces and power elites to intrude on, and shape, civic life in negative ways (Craiutu and Jennings 2004; Skocpol 1997). He saw the corruption of voluntary groups by greedy capitalist interests, and the manipulation of racist rhetoric used to strip land from indigenous peoples, to justify forced migration, and to maintain slavery. More contemporary scholars have also raised concerns about negative aspects of the voluntary sector.

One concern is that inequality polarizes the civic sphere. First, it creates a dual disincentive for poor people to volunteer in a sustained way because people who work multiple jobs to survive do not have enough time to volunteer, and it may not be a financially viable activity. Eliasoph (1998) gives an example of how low-income members of the Buffalo Club in the US disparage any form of political activity because they believe things will simply never change. Schlozman et al. (2012: 8) show that voluntary associations in the US are persistently unequal because education and socioeconomic status determine who volunteers when and where, and the likelihood of attaining leadership positions. In the US from 1960 to 2008, the highest-earning 20 percent of citizens, compared to the lowest 20 percent of wage earners, voted nearly twice as much, were 15 times more likely to participate in organized interest groups, were four times more active in campaign participation, and were six and a half times more likely to be politically active online (Schlozman et al.
While some see small donations on the Internet as a great equalizer, Schlozman et al. (2018) argue that the massive differences in donations made to political campaigns by wealthy elites, compared to ordinary citizens, has defined a new “gilded age” of stark inequalities in politics.

Another concern is that neoliberal states across the globe are retreating from welfare provision and are relying instead upon public–private partnerships with civil society organizations to deliver services. Critics argue that the neoliberal privatization of welfare not only burdens citizens and civic associations (Moyo 2008), but it also reinforces social inequalities (Hirschmann 1998; Jackman 1994), reduces the supply of high-quality services (Staab 2009), and causes volunteers undue emotional stress and financial strain (Akintola 2006, 2008; Boesten, Mdee, and Cleaver 2011). It also arguably undermines processes of democratic accountability because these welfare partnerships are poorly regulated (see e.g. Helsley and Strange 1998; Mbembe 2000; and Wallace 2002). Eliasoph (2013) argues that outsourcing to service-based nonprofits in the US weakens relations because volunteers and beneficiaries seldom form close bonds with each other, and that these organizations constantly feel the need to legitimize their cause by having a “needy” population to serve. She also questions the power of government centralization of these partnerships for allowing a truly free political and participatory civic sphere (Eliasoph 2013: 94–128).

Corporations and privately held companies are also progressively backing political parties and coercing their workers into politics in order to simulate “grassroots” movements, influence elections, and promote policies that benefit the company’s financial interests (Hertel-Fernandez 2018; Walker 2014). Edward Walker (2014) illustrates how Fortune 500 firms employ elite Grassroots for Hire consultants who use innovative technologies to commercialize participation and influence citizens to become active for corporate interests. These consultants rally mass support against regulations that negatively affect corporate bottom lines, and they create backlashes against social movements trying to stop corporate actions in their communities. Even legitimate advocacy groups will outsource their organizing efforts to these so-called “AstroTurf” consulting groups (Walker 2014). Hertel-Fernandez (2018: 210–228) shows that executives mobilizing their employees is a highly effective way to get employees politically involved – better than campaign contributions or electoral advertising on television – but it is clearly coercive and a bastardization of the voluntary and activist process in a democracy. Furthermore, the US Supreme Court has made any corporate political contributions to political campaigns legal, under the classification of “citizen free speech” (see Citizens United v. The FEC case 2010). As such, financially wealthy citizens and corporate stakeholders can steer politics, like the Koch brothers keeping alive the Tea Party’s influence over the Republican Party (Skocpol and Williams 2016), or others who
donated millions of dollars to the Trump campaign, effectively buying politicians and votes (Saul and Hakim 2018).

In the Global South, scholars are especially concerned about the role of foreign nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in shaping localized nonprofits and the civic sphere. The fear is that foreign civic associations can have a negative effect on civic life in less developed countries. For example, Neocosmos (2017) questions the ability of NGOs to have an emancipatory role in the politics of postcolonial democratizing nations, especially because many of these NGOs are notoriously ingrained with cultural identities and political loyalties (Kew and Oshikoya 2014: 9) and are deeply embedded in neopatrimonialism (Neocosmos 2017). James Ferguson (1994) argues that so-called “development” NGOs in Africa are problematic because they are overly technocratic, project-not-progress-focused, and that they act to serve political elites while appearing to engage in apolitical, neutral activity. From Latin America, Mary Jackman (1994) makes the case that philanthropic giving through voluntary NGOs simply maintains economic inequality while producing no real economic change at the structural level. In addition, Monika Krause (2014) suggests that the focus of most NGO relief agencies is to produce projects and promote themselves, and they do so by helping those who are easiest to help. These agencies sell projects to key institutional donors, and, in the process, “the project” and its beneficiaries become commodities (Fernandes 2018). In an effort to demonstrate efficiency and results, the leaders of NGOs try to help the easiest cases in order to demonstrate measurable outcomes, while those who are hardest to help often receive no assistance at all. The poorest of the world are made to compete against each other to become projects – and in exchange they offer legitimacy to aid agencies and donor governments.

From Asia come strong concerns that a powerful state can control civic associations, which undermines free civic and political participation, and democracy. For example, China effectively had no legal NGOs until a 1990 Communist Party law allowing them – but all NGOs must be registered with the state, must submit to supervision by a government-sponsoring agency, and must abide by strict fiscal regulations (Long 2013; Lei 2017; Zhang 2003). However, many civic associations and independent movements like Falun Gong are still heavily persecuted, blocked on the Internet, declared heretical, or have their leaders imprisoned (Jacobs 2009). Foreign NGOs like the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations are very closely watched and, in 2017, Supreme Leader Xi Jinping passed a new security measure giving police sweeping powers over foreign NGOs (Backer 2017; Gan 2017). The Chinese state has also declared a monopoly on trade union representation, and a monopoly on political parties making meaningful opposition unlawful (Geng and Meijs 2016).

Elsewhere in the world, the voluntary sector and free civil society are also under threat. Russia and Zambia require NGOs to register as “foreign agents”
Hungary passed a law penalizing NGOs that support migration (van Gulik 2018). In Venezuela, the former populist president Hugo Chávez has crafted participatory NGOs, called Bolivarian democratic groups, that “heel” when told to do so (Smilde 2011). In 2017, the presidents of Bolivia and Uganda rewrote their constitutions in order to stay in power, and criminalized any outright media opposition, effectively stifling the free press. In Cambodia, Hong Kong, and Zambia, opposition parties have recently been shut down, or their members kept out of parliament on technicalities. Even the USA passed laws criminalizing certain public protests if they involve terrorism or communism. In its annual State of Civil Society report, CIVICUS notes that the detention of activists across the globe in 2017 was the most common violation of citizen rights, indicating a crackdown on political volunteering. The report mentions key issues facing global civil society today including: the role of polarizing politics in dividing societies; personal rule that undermines democratic institutions; increased attacks on journalists reporting on corruption and public protests; and a growing manipulation of opinion that betrays the promise of social media (CIVICUS 2018).

Finally, some civic associations and volunteering are simply divisive and antidemocratic. Groups, like the Alt-right, Ku Klux Klan, anti-Semitic, Jihadist, and segregationist entities also rely on volunteers, but they do not cultivate democratic broad-mindedness or tolerance of others in diverse society (Lichterman and Eliasoph 2014; Wiertz 2016). Since 2012, uncivil society is on the rise throughout the world, even in Sweden and Germany (Lührmann et al. 2018), despite the fall of communism and the rise of democracy in Poland and Hungary.2 It is no longer safe to assume that decision-making processes and public politics are available to voluntary civic groups that believe in fundamental rights, that pursue the common good, or that advocate for the needs of excluded people. It is now possible for ultra-conservative forces to claim space and political traction in civil society, to channel nationalist and xenophobic ideas, and to promote market fundamentalism for the benefit of corporations. These regressive forces working within the civic sphere are becoming increasingly emboldened (CIVICUS 2018). They usually result in ideological clustering that breeds narrow parochialism and ethnic homogeneity (Mann 2005), and this only serves to amplify social inequalities and distrust of others (Eliasoph 2011; Kraus 2014).

**VOLUNTARY POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND DELIBERATION**

The civic sphere consists of varied platforms where people can volunteer or where voluntary associations can exist. As discussed above, the outcomes of this

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2 V-Dem’s measures of world electoral, egalitarian, participatory, and deliberative indexes have declined since 2012 (Lührmann et al. 2018: 71, 75, 83, 87, and 91).
volunteering more generally can be either good, bland, or ugly for democracy. However, many people choose specifically to volunteer and participate within the political arena in order to advance the pro-democratic experiment. This is a process whereby citizens seek out ways to directly participate in policies that directly affect their lives. We argue that there are at least seven forms of democratic participation that occur in the civic sphere of most contemporary democratic states: (1) direct democracy in face-to-face assemblies, (2) civic forums and mini-publics, (3) direct legislation creation through referenda, (4) democracy in political parties, (5) bureaucratic advisory councils, (6) democratic participation at work, and (7) electronic democracy (Thompson 2008; Fishkin and Laslett 2003; Fishkin and Luskin 2005). In each of these instances, the voluntary participation of individuals is essential for achieving a truly deliberative atmosphere (Hilger 2010; Smith 2009). A deliberative atmosphere is crucial because many scholars have argued that true democracy only exists if speech situations, political platforms, town hall meetings, advisory boards, deliberative polls, and assemblies, etc. allow for honest and open dialogue that promotes communicative rationality, rather than autocratic or technocratic rationality (e.g., Fishkin 2011; Habermas 1996; Janoski 1998).

In this section, we examine the strengths and weaknesses of these seven forms of voluntary democratic participation and deliberative democracy using six evaluative criteria including:

- the extent to which diversity or inclusiveness is promoted;
- the level of popular power;
- the strength of deliberation or judgment;
- the level of transparency;
- efficiency and timeliness of decisions; and
- scope or transferability of the practice.

Table 26.1 lists the seven forms of democratic participation in rows and they are evaluated by the given criteria in the adjacent columns (items 1–6). We draw on examples from Brazil, Canada, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, the UK, and the US (see Table 26.1).

Face-to-Face Assemblies

The first type of direct political participation occurs in face-to-face assemblies such as town meetings, participatory budgeting, and community policing councils. These types of assemblies date back to the Roman and Greek Empires and are found across the world from the Kgotla in Botswana to the Swiss Cantons, and from New England town hall meetings to the Brazilian participatory budgeting assemblies. Face-to-face participatory assemblies are generally open to all members of the community and thus in our evaluation are the strongest in terms of increasing diversity and inclusiveness (item 1 on Table 26.1), affecting power (item 2),
### Table 26.1 Evaluation of seven types of organized participatory practices in a democratic civic sphere

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Participation</th>
<th>(1) Diversity or Inclusiveness</th>
<th>(2) Power or Popular Control</th>
<th>(3) Deliberation of Judgments</th>
<th>(4) Openness or Transparency</th>
<th>(5) Timeliness of Decision</th>
<th>(6) Scope or Transferability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1 Face-to-Face Assemblies</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) Town Meetings</td>
<td>Strongest</td>
<td>Strongest</td>
<td>Strongest</td>
<td>Strongest</td>
<td>Strongest</td>
<td>Weak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Participatory budgeting: Brazil &amp; Spain</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Weak, but growing in Brazil &amp; Spain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Community Police Councils</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2 Assemblies with Random Selection or Mini-Publics</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) Deliberative Polls</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Weak to advisory</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Moderate to weak</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Weak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Dutch Civic Forum</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Weak to advisory</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Weak</td>
<td>Weak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) British Columbia Civic Assembly</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Weak to moderate (rejected)</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Weak</td>
<td>Weak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) Ontario Citizen Assembly</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Weak to moderate (rejected)</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Weak</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 3 Legislation through Referenda

a) UK, Brexit  
Strong, votes | Strong | Moderate | Weak, campaign | Strong, vote | Strong

b) California  
Strong, votes | Strong | Moderate | Weak, campaign | Strong, vote | Strong

### 4 Party Democracy

a) US Parties:  
– Ballots on leaders in primaries  
Weak | Weak | Weak | Weak, secret | Strong | Strong

– Ballots on policies  
Weak | Weak | Very weak | Weak, none | Weak, none | Weak

– Conventions*  
Weak | Weak | Very weak | Weak | Slow to n/a | Weak, fading

b) German Parties:  
– Ballots on leaders  
Strong | Strong | Strong | Strong, published | Strong | Strong-extensive

– Ballots on policies  
Strong | Strong | Strong | Strong, published | Strong | Strong-extensive

– Conventions*  
Strong | Strong | Strong | Strong, published | Strong | Strong-extensive

### 5 Bureaucratic Advisory Councils

a) US Food & Drug Administration, Drug Panels  
Weak, experts | Strong, advisory | Strong, science | Open since 1972 | Weak, slow | Moderate

b) US Education Department Statistical Advisory Council  
Weak, experts | Strong, advisory | Strong, statistics | Open since 1972 | Weak, slow | Moderate

(continued)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Participation</th>
<th>Six Criteria for Evaluation for Democratic Participation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>6 Democratic Workplaces</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) Codetermination</td>
<td>Employee reps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Works Councils</td>
<td>Employee reps</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **7 Electronic Democracy** |                                                         |
| a) 21st Century Town Meetings, “Listening to the City” | Moderate | Weak | Moderate | Moderate | Moderate | Strong |
| b) MN-POLITICS          | Moderate | Weak | Moderate | Moderate | Moderate | Moderate |

* American party conventions are only every four years and they have increasingly become media events with leaders already selected in the primaries. German parties have conventions every year, with many of their decisions being printed in a yearly convention handbook.

*Sources:* Smith (2009); Qvortrup (2017, 2018); Bolin et al. (2017); Turner (1998); Moffitt (2014); Painter (2013).
promoting deliberation (item 3), being open and transparent (item 4), and they can result in relatively quick decision-making (item 5). However, their main weakness is that they are not practical when large numbers of people are involved, and the process is not easily transferable to larger segments of the polity (item 6) (Mansbridge et al. 2012).

An important example of this type of meeting comes from Porto Alegre in Brazil, where participatory budgeting processes draw in large crowds to engage in collective deliberation about communal finances. These efforts are very successful and attract even the poorest and most vulnerable in society. Smith (2009: 45) shows that almost 30 percent of the very poorest of the city participated in such negotiations, and women represented half of the participants. However, Rebecca Abers (2000) found that while women did attend, they faced gender discrimination and often lacked self-confidence to speak out at the meetings. Participatory budgeting attracts on average 15–20 percent more participants than other forms of community finance meetings (Baiocchi 2005: 43; Fung and Wright 2003) and its popularity has spread beyond Brazil to Spain and other parts of the world (Baiocchi 2005: 154; Baiocchi and Ganuza 2016; Smith 2009: 65; Trajan 2016). Likewise, Chicago’s Community Police Councils have had similar success in including the poor in a process of deliberative democracy around community safety issues and police–community interactions (Fung 2006).

**Mini-Publics and Deliberative Polls**

Another type of face-to-face assembly are mini-publics, where not all the members of a community are involved, but rather a random selection process chooses the participants. The best example includes so-called “deliberative polls,” where a representative sample of the population is selected to participate in a series of discussions about set political issues over a short time period. James Fishkin has run deliberative polls in the US and UK with the largest poll in the US hosting 459 citizens. About another 50 such polls have been run in the Netherlands, across Europe, Australia, Canada, and China – called by different names such as civic forums, civic assemblies, and citizen assemblies (Smith 2009). While such mini-publics are moderately diverse and inclusive (item 1), strong in terms of deliberation and decision-making (item 3 and 5) and at times they have openly publicized the results (item 4). Their actual power to enact political influence is nil (item 2), and their occurrence on a regular basis is weak (item 6). For example, the recommendations of the two Canadian deliberative polls were publicized but then defeated in referenda (Smith 2009: 73–75). Thus, a well-deliberated recommendation may be annulled by a popular vote. These mini-publics have the strongest forms of deliberation, where ideas and coalitions develop over time, but they are episodic and are not institutionalized in any country (Smith 2009: 108–109).
Legislation Enacted through Referenda

A third form of participatory democracy takes place via referenda in order to enact legislation. Issues are listed on a ballot for the citizenry to consider and vote up or down. The most prominent of this electoral process is exemplified by the recent election in the United Kingdom regarding Britain’s position within the European Union (Brexit). Such elections are inclusive (item 1), have strong political power (item 2), and promote much public deliberation (item 3) through voter campaigns, media dialogues, radio show discussions, etc. The transparency of the process is questionable due to the nature of secret ballots and the technical obscurity of the ballot counting processes (item 4). The strength of this approach is that size does not discount the possibility of holding referenda that can accommodate millions of people (item 6), but there are fears that wealthy elites can “buy” an election outcome by flooding the media with advertisements, and the courts may declare outcomes unconstitutional (Smith 2009: 120).

Democracy in Political Parties

Within democratic states, most political parties themselves ideally function under democratic structures. This allows for deliberative processes from the ground up to occur within parties. However, Robert Michels (1966) showed that the Social Democratic Party in Germany around 1910 was in fact quite hierarchical, and in the US, political party democracy has been weakened by the populist nature of presidential campaigns and by large corporate donors backing candidates in the primaries. Originally, party conventions in the US were designed to allow for both open and then more behind-the-scenes dialogue where members and candidates could address the merits of various policies on the floor and in back-rooms. But now, US conventions are increasingly irrelevant democratic rituals except for the candidate’s acceptance speech, which the mass media actually covers. This may be part of the reason why Americans are not joining political parties (Hajnal and Lee 2011). Further, in the US, the use of superdelegates formalizes aspects of elite control within the Democratic Party. The US federal government and Constitution does not regulate political parties, and, as such, party democracy is weak on the many parts of our evaluation (items 1–4). However, in terms of electing party leaders, the timeliness of decision-making, and the scale of the decisions, aspects of the primary system of elections are large and still strong (items 5 and 6).

In contrast, Article 21 of the German Basic Law (constitution) requires political parties to operate according to democratic processes. The result is that parties hold an annual “Party Congress” with the representatives of the Länder provinces to elect the national party leader and to set the terms and details of their policy platform, which they then publish in openly available reports (van Biezen and Piccio 2013; Niedermayer 2000; Roberts 2000). The
yearly congress is critical during election years when policy statements are especially important for campaigning. Many political parties in Europe use party-wide ballots to elect their leaders, and a number of parties in Belgium and Germany use ballots to make decisions about policy issues such as joining the EU, conscription, mergers, and the Euro Insurance Fund. In 2013, the Social Democratic Party (SPD) held a ballot for its coalition agreement with the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and Christian Social Union (CSU) (Scarrow 2015) and did the same in 2018 with its controversial “Jamaica Coalition” (CDU, Free Democratic Party, and Greens) and with its eventual grand coalition with the CDU/CSU (Reuters 2018; BBC 2018). In this way, German political party democracy is strong on all fronts according to our evaluation criteria (item 1–6). The strongest political party democracy is in the UK, which has the highest ranking on intra-party democracy (column 1 in Table 26.2) (Bolin et al. 2017). Also, among political parties, the Greens and the Social Democratic parties are the most democratic (column 2 in Table 26.2).

Bureaucratic Advisory Councils

Advisory councils are an institutionalized way for citizens to participate in deliberative democracy without seeking political or bureaucratic appointments. These councils are composed of expert members of the public who serve to advise and counsel a particular bureaucratic office/department. For example, in the US from 1972 to 2010, there have been about 1,000 federal advisory committees (Moffit 2014: 129) such as the council advising the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The FDA uses participatory committees to examine the effects of new drugs. The participation of public professionals, scientists, and corporate representatives gives the FDA strong evidentiary support and expert opinion, but without the participation of public scientists, these councils can be biased toward approving drugs as soon as possible in favor of corporate interests, not the public interest. Because these councils are composed of experts they are generally not very diverse (item 1), but they do have strong advisory power at the political level (item 2), and good deliberative processes (item 3). They tend to be fairly open to public scrutiny (item 4), but slow in effecting decisions (item 5), and they remain small in membership number and scope (item 6).

Democratic Workplaces

The democratization of workplaces is another way to inculcate a culture of deliberative democracy into a society. In the US, labor unions are required to abide by democratic structures because they are membership-based entities, but there are no particular requirements for companies and firms to offer their employees a democratic voice in a similar way. The situation in Germany is different, where the federal government has passed legislation (in 1950s and 1970s) requiring two forms of democratic participation in public and private
firms. First, businesses with over five employees must enact works councils that are composed of elected employees who can make decisions about human resources policies, technology, hiring and firing, grievance procedures, retraining, and downsizing (Addison, Teixeira, and Zwick 2010; Mueller 2012; Thelen 1993; Turner 1998). Second, businesses are required to give employees a nearly equal number of seats on the company’s management board. Similar works councils are found in other Western European countries, but codetermination on corporate boards is less popular (European Commission 2008; Lecher et al. 2002, 2015). Works councils and codetermination policies are moderate to strong on our evaluation criteria (items 1–5) but their spread to neoliberal and Anglo-Saxon countries is quite limited (item 6).

Some countries have attempted to democratize the workplace in other ways by legislating affirmative action and equity hiring policies, or requiring the

### Table 26.2 Average intra-party democratic processes index for countries and parties

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Intra-Party Index</th>
<th>Party Index</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>Greens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>Social Democrats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>Liberals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>Left Socialists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>Conservatives/CDU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>Far Right</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Column 1 is the average index for all political parties in each country.
* Column 2 is the average index for all parties among all participating countries.

Source: Bolin et al. (2017).
impacts of employee empowerment schemes that encourage egalitarian practices—see South Africa’s 2007 Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment policy as an example.

Electronic Democracy

A much newer way to participate in democratic practice in the civic sphere is via the Internet. New information and communication technologies have widened the possibilities of accessing and creating online democratic engagement platforms because so many new audiences can be reached (item 6). For example, America Speaks has organized numerous electronic, or 21st Century Town Meetings, such as “Listening to the City: Rebuilding Lower Manhattan,” which attracted over 5,000 participants (Lukensmeyer, Goldman, and Brigham 2005). However, the Internet is certainly not the great equalizer because low-income or marginalized populations cannot always access new technologies (item 1). Schlozman, Verba, and Brady ask if electronic democracy is not really the “weapon of the strong?” (2012: Chapter 16). The flood of information available can also overwhelm people and cause them to retreat. Online platforms for civic engagement and deliberation, such as MN-POLITICS, a Minnesota online forum for political activists, often make decisions relatively quickly, thus limiting deliberation (item 3), and while these meetings have moderators, the discussions can sometimes become unmanageable. MN-POLITICS attracts a high number of participants (item 6) and as such it plays an important agenda setting role in the state (item 2) (Smith 2009: 147). While the strength of electronic democracy is often its reach (item 6), its weakness is that many people do not have the time, confidence, or equipment to participate in such forums (item 1). In sum, these excellent innovations only reach a very small percentage of the population, and, consequently, they must be labeled “weak” in the table.

These seven forms of political and civic engagement allow for a broadening of the civic sphere and increase opportunities for more deliberative democracy. However, they depend heavily upon the involvement of volunteers and civic groups. There is also an alternative view arguing that democratic participation processes are actually bad. Edward Walker, Michael McQuarrie, and Caroline Lee state that “certain new forms of apparently ‘empowering’ public participation may be doing more to reinforce authority than to challenge it” (2015: 4). By setting agendas and structuring possible choices to eliminate those not on the corporate agenda, various deliberative polls and referenda

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3 As an NGO existing on soft money, America Speaks organized many participatory events for citizens in an effort to raise their awareness of community and political problems. Its workhorse was the 21st Century Town Meeting. Unfortunately it closed its doors in 2014 (America Speaks 2014).
can actually legitimate elite interests with a democratic imprimatur. Of course, Philip Selznick’s *TVA and the Grass Roots* is the classic example of co-optation of grassroots groups (1953). Walker, McQuarrie, and Lee recommend that researchers more thoroughly investigate such schemes within historically specific political environments and tie them to trends in equality and then reevaluate the “promise of participation,” given that results are complex and often mixed (Walker et al. 2015; Lee et al. 2015). The following section discusses the process of volunteering and political participation throughout different levels of the civic sphere.

A CONTEXTUAL PROCESS MODEL OF VOLUNTEERING IN CIVIL SOCIETY

One way to understand volunteering as having political influence in the civic sphere is through a process model. A process model suggests that people become politically active by interacting with a person of influence in their social networks, who directs them to more formalized group activity. This theory was first proposed by Paul Lazarsfeld and his team from the Columbia School who examined how individual public opinion led to voting and then to political activity in the 1940s (Lazarsfeld et al. 1960 [1948]; Berelson, Lazarsfeld, and McPhee 1954). They found that friends, family members, neighbors, and work colleagues often voted in similar ways because they relied on information from the same key opinion leader in their social networks. An opinion leader is that individual who is able to consume large amounts of news and political information and then filter it into coherent arguments of their own. Such a person becomes increasingly influential in their informal social network by interpreting news content for the others.

Since the 1990s, political scientists and communications scholars have sought to update this model of political influence to explain other forms of civic engagements, to include feedback loops in the model, and by suggesting that people actually consume news and information in diverse ways. People do not rely on a single source to shape their opinions but rather draw on the viewpoints of many different opinion leaders and news forms, in an interactive and less hierarchical way. First, people read newspapers and magazines, watch television, and search the Internet, which are strong ways for gaining exposure to opposing views (Mutz and Martin 2001). Second, there are often multiple opinion leaders in a social group: one person may be an opinion leader about health care issues, another person influential about economic subjects, and another about foreign affairs. And third, people seldom exist in homogeneous groups, and they talk to each other about what

---

4 Political scientist Robert Huckfeld, James Druckman, Joshua Robinson, Diana Mutz, and the 23 authors in Alan Zuckerman (2005) have been at the forefront of this movement. To our knowledge, only Delia Baldassarri represents sociologists in this area.
is in the media, shaping each other’s opinions (Beck et al. 2002: 68; Jeffres, Atkin, Neuendorf 2002: 414).

Mutz and Mondak (2006) show, for instance, that most employment settings tend to consist of crosscutting social circles where different people intermingle. It is in these workplace encounters that diverse political dialogue often takes place through: (1) the simple exposure to opposing views, and (2) the discussions that occur when someone mentions the strength of their side or the weakness of the other regarding recent news events. These casual conversations, like “what did you think of Donald Trump’s tweet this morning” or “did you see Angela Merkel’s interview with the BBC last night?” are mostly civil because of the formal nature of work relations, and while they may be positive or negative, they do impact how people form attitudes and opinions that eventually shape their civic behavior (Oskamp and Schultz 2005). These kinds of interpersonal interactions also help explain how people get interested in volunteering or why they join voluntary groups that have political influence.

In this section we modify the Lazarsfeld process model – to incorporate the role of multiple opinion leaders and of social networks – in order to explain the political relevance of volunteering and voluntary association (VA) membership across a layered civic sphere. Our approach integrates foundational concepts and ideas from Jürgen Habermas (1989), Jeffrey Alexander (2006), and Sidney Verba, Kay Schlozman, and Henry Brady (1995) into a multilevel process model that connects volunteering and voluntary association membership more broadly to political activity and civic engagement at three levels of interaction: the individual, the group, and the regulative (Schlozman et al. 2013, 2018; Janoski 2009, 2010; Alexander 2006). Figure 26.1 maps out these three layers of the civic sphere and shows how individual, opinion leader, and family interaction at the first level flows into interaction at the group level, and then into larger actions at the regulative level. But these activities at higher levels also flow down to the individual level.

Level 1 – from Individual Identity to Informal Groups

Individual-level interaction is at the heart of the civil sphere and is placed at the beginning of Figure 26.1. It is where families converse over dinner about daily issues, where friends share opinions and debate about local politics, or where colleagues confront and learn from each other regarding recent news topics. Interaction circles, which inform expected behavior, have much to do with individual identity such as gender, age, ethnicity, and race; and with ascribed membership in social categories, which are informed by class, religion, education level, or life stage. They are also shaped by the status of citizenship and views toward the governing state.

In these social circles and interaction networks, a person might engage in normative discussions about what is enjoyable, important, or difficult about volunteering and participation. It is where they might be asked to engage
civically by volunteering, joining an association, voting, or protesting. If one’s social network contains people who are active in the community, such as regular churchgoers or union members, it is highly likely that the person will be asked to participate or to volunteer. The social network thus becomes an interpretive community regarding opportunities for volunteering that shapes “good” and “bad” civic engagement (Druckman and Nelson 2003; Druckman, Levendusky, and McLain 2017; Robinson, Leeper, and Druckman 2016).

Within the social network, persons who have volunteer experience or who are leaders in voluntary associations often become opinion leaders that talk about the association and activities and who can pass along relevant information for others.
to become engaged. This process results in a flow of volunteer-related information from the volunteer organization source via interpretive opinion leader to members of the informal social group. The opinion leader also recruits new volunteers into civic activity – whether intentionally or not.

While the nature and composition of personal social networks matters a lot, the eventual decision about whether to volunteer or join a voluntary group depends on an individual’s own motivation, values, capacity, and resources (Verba et al. 1995). Items 1, 2, and 3 in Figure 26.1 reflect that at the individual interaction level the chance that a person joins a group or engages in group activity depends upon their personal motivation and interest in the cause/activity (item 1); their capacity in terms of time, money, skills, and ability to actually participate (item 2); and their level of embeddedness in their social network (item 3). However, individual-level interaction often morphs into group-level interaction because of new events and the opinion leader’s influence.

Level 2 – from Informal Arrangements to Formal Groups

Level 2 on Figure 26.1 focuses specifically on so-called intermediate change groups or voluntary associations which try to improve some aspect of political or social and democratic life. People volunteer in all sorts of groups that build prepolitical skills (Verba et al. 1995). These groups can include anything from churches to parent-teacher associations in schools, and from trade unions to social movement and interest groups. Groups may allow people to learn and practice valuable civic skills, such as public speaking, event organizing, resource mobilization, and adherence to a set of governing principles. Nearly all civic organizations engage in some sort of fund-raising and member/volunteer recruitment, which causes people to ask others to participate. This creates a reservoir of volunteers and association members in intermediate groups that usually vote, participate in service, and often contribute to their own communities and political life. However, not all civic groups promote democratic ideals, support inclusive social causes, or are themselves democratically structured. While many people volunteer for politically “neutral” groups such as leisure groups, sports fan clubs, and choral groups, these do little to change society, but they do provide a socially cohesive, stabilizing function. Volunteers may also support the growth of social groups that are exclusionary, intolerant, separatist, and sometimes violent such as the “anti-immigrant” Freedom Party in Austria (FPÖ), Boko Haram in West Africa, or the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) in the American south. Many of these groups are also autocratic so members and volunteers are beholden to the power of one person and are unable to exercise popular control. More generally, it is the challenging social movements, trade unions, citizen movements, and interest groups, and welfare service providing groups that help move forward the social political needle of civil society, even if they are sometimes contrarian (Edwards 2009: 19).
Group-level interaction may be used to push for regulative change in the political sphere. However, the good, bland, or bad impact in sociodemocratic terms is dependent upon the idea or cause being promoted (item 4 on Figure 26.1); on the ability to mobilize resources (item 5); and on the strength of group coalitions (item 6). Opinion leaders within these groups are vital for articulating a group’s core ideas and translating this to a wider audience to spark momentum (Alexander 2006). In many ways, the ability of an opinion leader to repackage a particular group message in a strong, universalistic way is as critical to gaining political traction as is how much positive attention the group receives in the press or on social media. Moreover, social movements, parties, and groups need effective organization and cooperation in order to mobilize human and financial resources to get their messages across, and to sustain their campaigns (Lizza 2007; 2008). This requires sound, decisive leadership so that the group can have an impact in the regulative civic sphere and can effect real policy change.

Level 3 – from Formal Groups and Movements to the Larger Regulative Sphere

The third level in the civil sphere (Figure 26.1) consists of regulative institutions of the state or government that pass legislation, while being influenced by pressures from the intermediary change groups. These regulative entities include courts and legal processing bodies, the media, economic entities, and even political parties that shape and determine social policy and public regulation. They also have a strong impact on economic changes and are central to the public opinions, discourses, and debates involving changes in a country. At this level of the civil sphere, discourse and debates have important sociopolitical and economic outcomes and level-2 groups often compete for regulators’ attention. For instance, employers, labor unions, and economists will be concerned about labor market policies in a labor market field or domain. Identity, LGBTQ, and racial groups, churches, and political representatives may be more concerned about civil rights policies. Hospital and medical associations, insurance companies, and welfare nonprofits may be more concerned about medical policy. State departments, veterans’ groups, disaster relief and international aid charities, or the military might be most concerned about foreign policy. Not all members of each sphere are involved in the discourse over a certain policy. Instead, there is a policy field or domain that privileges certain interests for a particular discussion (Knoke et al. 1996).

Finally, Figure 26.1 represents a process model of civic engagement and shows how volunteering is integrated across three levels of the civic sphere in ways that can result in either good, bland, or bad outcomes for democratic civic life. We have pictured the process from the grassroots to the national polity, but the reverse process from corporations and political parties can also go in the opposite direction. There are also four different processes that flow through each of these levels: civil repair, civil adjustment, civil maintenance, and civil degradation (Alexander 2006). Volunteering that results in civil repair and
maintenance produces positive solidarity and cohesive stability, but at times it can be quite bland. Volunteering that adjusts society in favor of creating more inclusive, participatory, and sustainable outcomes for democracy is good. Moreover, volunteering that erodes or degrades participation leads to negative effects on society.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter we have shown why volunteering needs more attention in scholarly work that seeks to theorize and explain political engagement in civil society. We examined three aspects of volunteering: the good aspects that lead to positive pro-social and democratic outcomes, many of which may be political; the bland outcomes that consist of volunteering that has trivial or at least indirect connection to the political (i.e., being prepolitical); and the bad outcomes that use volunteering and civic association in a negative way to undermine the political and democratic realm. Our argument is that volunteering cannot simply be understood in uniform terms as good for society. We then examined seven different political volunteer activities and weighed up their strengths and weaknesses for advancing deliberative democracy. Finally, we provided a model that explains volunteering and nonprofit voluntary associations as facilitating civic interaction at three different levels: the interpersonal, the group, and the regulative.

This approach highlights two important aspects about the sociopolitical bases and relevance of volunteering. One is that opinion leaders are not only people who have influence at the political level for shaping public policy; they are also individuals who, in daily social interaction, can influence others to volunteer and become civically engaged. Second is that the public sphere is organized in both horizontal and vertical ways that support volunteering at all levels, which can either serve to maintain democratic social order, or challenge established political processes. Thus, volunteering and civic associations, in the political sense, can have good, bland, and ugly impacts on the processes of civil repair, civil adjustment, civil maintenance, and civil degradation (Alexander 2006; Habermas 1989, 1998; Janoski 1998). The processes and multilevel structure of the public sphere facilitate different forms of interaction that create opportunities for mobilizing people to volunteer and to participate in politically relevant ways. We suggest that opinion leaders and informal groups, at every level and in every context of the public sphere, are important to understanding how volunteering and political participation are socially mobilized.

REFERENCES


The Politics of Economic Crisis

From Voter Retreat to the Rise of New Populisms

Marco Giugni and Jasmine Lorenzini

Throughout its history, Europe has gone through various phases of economic downturn. A major one, known as the Great Recession, started out in 2008, first as a financial crisis and then as one of the deepest – if not the deepest – economic crises European countries have had to face so far. Europeans are still struggling with its negative effects. As citizens try to cope with such negative effects in their everyday lives, economic crises also have political effects. At the most basic level, two possible reactions may be mentioned. On the one hand, economic hardship may lead to a decline in political participation and civic engagement as the experience of economic difficulty can certainly be understood as draining resources from political participation. On the other hand, we may also observe the opposite, namely, that tough economic conditions generate grievances which people may seek to redress through political participation and stronger political engagement, including through recourse to protest.

Political reactions to economic crises, however, are not limited to the choice between retreating from public life and political engagement. There is a range of other possible responses. Citizens may choose different channels and strategies to make their voices heard (Giugni and Grasso 2018). They may engage in political action and more specifically in protest, but they may also seek access to justice at various levels or take part in the associational life of their community. Economic crises, in addition, may also open up new opportunities for political parties, including right-wing populist parties, which voters might consider as providing attractive solutions to coping with the negative consequences of the crisis.

This chapter deals with the politics of economic crisis. Focusing above all on Europe, it reviews works on citizens’ reactions to economic crises in the electoral and nonelectoral arenas, and suggests a number of research avenues that cut across these fields. Following previous calls in this direction (Heaney and Rojas 2013; Heaney 2013; McAdam and Tarrow 2010, 2013), we stress the need to combine the study of political parties and voting with the analysis of social movements and protest. We suggest that, in times of economic crisis even
more than in “ordinary times,” we must seek linkages between electoral and nonelectoral arenas. Economic crises – particularly deep ones like the Great Recession – may be catalysts reinforcing and giving visibility as well as resonance to the crisis of representation. This may reflect in higher levels of dissatisfaction with politics and mistrust in political institutions, but also in protest activities as well as in the failure of traditional parties and the rise of new parties. In order to understand these linkages, we need to get a better grasp on what is happening in both the electoral and nonelectoral arenas. Therefore, we first look at works addressing citizens’ reactions to economic crises in the voting behavior and social movement literatures. Then we discuss a number of aspects relating to the crisis of representation and citizens’ influence over policy decisions which crisscross both arenas. Here we focus on the rise of new political actors in times of economic crisis and discuss in particular right-wing populism, the “left of the left” mobilization, the emergence of new political parties, and the role of leadership.

POLITICAL REACTIONS TO THE ECONOMIC CRISIS

Reactions in the Electoral Arena: Political Parties and Voting

The dominant approach to the study of the electoral consequences of the crisis relates to the economic voting literature and suggests that citizens will punish incumbents in times of economic downturn for their poor economic performances (see Lewis-Beck and Stegmaier 2000 for a review). Research on the Great Recession has tested the economic voting hypothesis in a variety of countries (Bellucci 2012; Costa-Lobo and Lewis-Beck 2012; Fraile and Lewis-Beck 2012; Marsh and Mikhaylov 2012; Scotto 2012), finding different results. Some studies suggest that the effect of economic voting may be stronger in times of crisis (Hernandez and Kriesi 2016). Others, however, have questioned the centrality of the economy in determining the vote choice. Singer (2011), in particular, suggests that not all the voters cast their vote based on economic considerations and shows that the salience of the economy is not constant, but varies across individuals and contexts. He finds in particular that the most economically vulnerable citizens pay more attention to the economy and that the latter plays a greater role in the less developed countries. Moreover, other issues such as war, terrorism, corruption, and moral questions may divert attention from the economy (Bordignon and Ceccarini 2013; Nezi 2012). This suggests that citizens’ reactions to economic crises in the electoral arena are issue based.

Others suggested to focus on citizens’ personal experience of the economy in order to address the problems related to the assumption that there is an objective economic situation (see Curtis 2014 for a discussion of the rationale behind the focus on pocketbook effects). This also makes sense in the context of the Great Recession, as its impact may vary across social groups, certain groups
having more crisis-related grievances than others. For example, youth and the unemployed have been among the most strongly hit by the crisis in Southern countries. Yet, research on electoral behavior does not find strong evidence for an impact of egocentric variables on voting (Brody and Sniderman 1977; Kinder and Kiewiet 1979). This suggests that citizens do not use their personal experience of the economy, but rather the overall state of the economy, to make their vote choice. However, Curtis (2014) found that in times of crisis egocentric factors do account for the vote choice, but only among the more sophisticated voters. Furthermore, Duch and Sagarzazu (2014) show that poor voters are less likely to consider their own economic situation in making their vote choice than rich ones. Thus, even in times of crisis, it may not necessarily be the citizens most affected by the economic crisis who punish the incumbents for their bad economic performances.

Political attitudes, values, and ideology are also likely to mediate the effects of grievances on voting. Not all economic issues are valence issues; some are positional or partisan issues (Lewis-Beck and Nadeau 2011). As a result, not all the voters punish incumbents in bad economic times because they disagree with the party’s approach to solve economic problems. Instead of punishing it, some voters may support the incumbent because they share values or opinions that are reflected in proposed ways to handle economic issues such as unemployment and inequalities (Wright 2012). Thus, we may expect partisanship and ideology to shape the way in which citizens perceive and evaluate the economy and economic performances of parties (Weyland 2003).

Partisanship, however, may be further undermined by economic hardship as well as by widespread dissatisfaction with how democracy works and with the political elites. For example, Greece experienced a long-lasting and deep economic crisis coupled with drastic austerity measures that resulted in rising unemployment, poverty, but also pessimism about the future and reduced mental and physical health (Angouri and Wodak 2014; Roushas 2014). In this context, the gap between citizens who bear the costs of the crisis and see grim future prospects, on the one hand, and the optimism of the political class, on the other, is a source of grievances per se. Furthermore, grievances related to high unemployment and rising poverty have been shown to be related to the rise of the radical right in Greece (Roushas 2014), where those facing financial difficulties were more likely to vote for Golden Dawn (Vasilopoulou and Halikiopoulou 2013). Thus, some dissatisfied citizens voted against the government, even more than that they cast a protest and antisystem vote. In Spain, one of the core grievances of protesters did not concern the economy, but rather democracy, as citizens demanded “real democracy” (Browne and Susen 2014). This suggests that, in times of crisis, punishing incumbents results from a combination of both economic and political grievances. Economic voting theory is linked to blame attribution. The latter, in turn, relates to the institutional design and how easy or difficult it is to ascribe responsibility for political decisions. For example, Kriesi (2014b) found that voters tend to
punish the incumbents more often in majoritarian regimes, where the attribution of responsibility is easier. In a similar vein, Wagner (2013) suggests that the impact of emotional reactions may be stronger in systems where responsibility is clearer. He shows that, in Britain, citizens experienced either fear of the potential consequences of the crisis or anger for the actions taken and which led to it, depending on whether or not they blamed someone for the crisis.

Dynamics of blame attribution, however, are more complex once we consider individual perceptions. In this vein, Cramer (2014) argues that, when making sense of the economic crisis, “causal stories are less a product of facts than of social categorizations and social identities” (2014: 92). The people she talked to about the crisis tended to blame in particular the civil servants. They perceived them as lazy and inefficient workers who were paid by their hard-earned money through taxes, and, as part of the government, they were seen as failing to respond to their demands and needs. Moreover, they were perceived as being defended by greedy trade unions. These findings suggest that, even in times of crisis, voters need to identify whom they can blame for the current economic situation in order to cast a vote against the governing political parties. In other words, the incumbents are not automatically blamed for the crisis. Furthermore, one should consider that, in addition to national actors, the presence of supranational institutions may blur responsibilities and blame attribution (Alonso 2014).

A further important question concerning the way in which citizens react to economic crises in the electoral arena is whether voters turn to the right or to the left. Bartels (2013, 2014) argues that there is no ideological voting in times of crisis: parties from the right and from the left were equally punished during the Great Recession. However, Lindvall (2014) maintains that there are short- and long-term effects of an economic crisis: voters tend to turn to the right at first, but in the medium to long run they tend to favor the left. The process of Europeanization, furthermore, contributes to blurring the divisive left–right cleavage as mainstream parties, both from the right and from the left, tend to be pro-European, while radical parties on both sides tend to be anti-European (Halikiopoulou, Nanou, and Vasilopoulou 2012).

Therefore, it is difficult to conclude whether we should expect the Great Recession to result in a shift to the left stressing social rights and economic redistribution. This is all the more true as empirical evidence is poor, suggesting a shift only in the long run (Lindvall 2014) or a reduced importance of ideological preferences (Bartels 2014). The crisis may also result in a shift to the right, not only in the short term (Lindvall 2014), but set in long-term social transformations resulting in demands for national preference and protectionism as key measures to solve the current economic crisis as well as other social problems. This suggests that, in times of crisis, voters do not consistently vote for the right or for the left, but they turn away from mainstream political parties and support new challengers instead.
Reactions in the Nonelectoral Arena: Social Movements and Protest

Students of social movements have paid increasing attention to movements and protests which emerged or were reactivated during the Great Recession and in the context of the crisis of neoliberalism, particularly antiausterity movements and protests (Ancelovici 2015; Ancelovici, Dufour, and Nez 2016; Bernburg 2016; Castells 2012; della Porta 2015; della Porta and Mattoni 2014; Flesher Fominaya and Cox 2013; Flesher Fominaya and Hayes 2017; Gamson and Sifry 2013; Giugni and Grasso 2015; Pickrell and Krinsky 2012). These works have not only spurred a renewed interest in the role of capitalism and the class cleavage for the study of social movements (della Porta 2015), whose disappearance was questioned by some observers (Hetland and Goodwin 2013), but they also led to a rediscovery of the role of grievances and hardship in social movement theory (see Buechler 2004). For example, Bernburg (2015) has revisited relative deprivation theory, showing how experiencing economic loss has influenced protest behavior during the Icelandic economic crisis. Similarly, Shefner and Stewart (2011) have shown how the size, scope, and density of the hardship created by the Mexican state’s failure to protect people from declining wages and increasing unemployment, coupled with its cutting subsidies, united a multiclass coalition demanding political change, playing a role in the country’s democratic transition. Borland and Sutton (2007) show how the economic crisis of the early 2000s in Argentina has fostered activism by challenging gendered everyday practices and expectations. Scholars, however, also note that grievances may lead to protest, but not single-handedly. Thus, Shefner (1999) found in his study of urban poor in Mexico that political alliances and sponsorship might play an important role – positively or negatively – for urban popular movements. Similarly, Shefner, Pasdirtz, and Blad (2006) found that socioeconomic hardship induced by austerity policies led to protest when accompanied by political opportunities. More generally, studies on Latin America suggest that a combination of factors – including hardship, perceived threats, and political alliances – should be taken into account to explain collective action in response to neoliberal globalization (Almeida 2007; Johnston and Almeida 2006).

In its simplest form, grievance theory leads to the expectation that protest increases in times of crises and sustained economic recession, that those individuals who are most affected by the crisis are more likely to engage in protest activities, and that those social groups that are most deeply affected by the crisis are more likely to form social movements in response to difficult economic conditions. Yet, economic crises may provide the political space and motivation for the mobilization of those seeking to criticize what are perceived to be unjust patterns of wealth distribution in advanced capitalist democracies and to draw attention to the fact that not all sections of society bear the costs of economic crisis evenly. Therefore, just like there is no mechanical
relationship between being most affected by the crisis and punishing the incumbent in elections, it is questionable whether it is those people with the most serious grievances to redress who actually engage in protest action, even though the economic crisis might have been the spur for political mobilization and the focus of antiausterity protest.

Rüdig and Karyotis (2014) found that relative deprivation was a significant predictor of potential protest in Greece, but did not play any role in terms of who takes part in strikes or demonstrations. Previous protest participation seems to be key to explaining actual participation. Economic grievances have been found to trigger protest at the aggregate level in various European countries (Quaranta 2016) and around the world (Caren, Gaby, and Herrold 2017). However, focusing on specific sets of grievances allows uncovering the impact of hardship on the propensity of citizens to engage in protest activities (Galais and Lorenzini 2017). Citizens protest not only because of economic losses and hard prospects for the future, but also because they are losing status and rights at the workplace and in terms of welfare state provisions. Thus, austerity triggers a wide range of grievances that need to be analyzed in detail in order to understand who is mobilized in times of economic crisis. Importantly, economic grievances have the potential to activate political grievances in triggering pro-democracy protest (Brancati 2014). Citizens are ready to accept poor governance as long as their governors are able to provide economic well-being. Yet, when political authorities fail to provide economic returns the likelihood that citizens start protesting increases.

Citizens’ antiausterity mobilization benefitted from online social networks that facilitated the sharing of information and the organization of protest (Anduiza, Cristancho, and Sabucedo 2013; Castells 2012). In some venues, they also opened opportunities for the renewal of labor movements and their involvement in antiausterity protest. In Eastern Europe, for example, where trade unions faced delegitimation after the fall of the Soviet Union, they were able to mobilize citizens in antiausterity protest events (Kahancová 2015; Varga 2015). Similarly, Cristancho (2015) has shown the importance of social movements and unions in framing the crisis and emphasizing different dimensions of the conflict in the Southern European context. Furthermore, his findings suggest a relevant role for parties in providing ideological cues for making sense of the crisis and of the role of governments in austerity policy. He finds that partisan attachments are related to accounts of blame for the crisis and are consequently a central factor in shaping individual understandings that can lead to choosing between potential solutions. This suggests that contentious reactions to economic crises are more likely when oppositional parties succeed in framing the crisis in terms of specific responsibilities of the government.

Almeida’s (2007) work on protest in authoritarian settings also stresses the role of organizations, as well as that of resources, in the case of popular movements against economic adjustment policies in Latin America. He argues that threats stemming from state-attributed economic problems, erosion of rights, and state
repression, which usually should discourage protest, may lead to greater levels of collective action and resistance if the recipients of those threats are resourceful and have organizational infrastructure. His study also points to the role of political opportunities for the emergence of protest in times of economic crisis. Similarly, a recent study shows how the effect of relative deprivation on protest behavior is conditional upon the presence of contextual macro-economic and policy factors that open up political opportunities to translate individual grievance into political action (Grasso and Giugni 2016). More generally, political opportunity theory leads to the general hypothesis that protest in times of crisis should be more likely if and when opportunities arise within the institutionalized political arenas. Such opportunities may take the form of changing political alignments, the emergence of an institutional ally, or sudden expressions of repression on the part of the state. They can also stem from public policy (Meyer 2004). This aspect appears as crucial for understanding popular responses in times of economic crisis. Thus, recent works have argued that it is not so much the fact of experiencing the crises and the associated hard times that spurs protest, but the policies and measures enacted by the political elites in relation to the crisis (Beissinger and Sasse 2014; Kriesi 2014b; Kriesi et al. forthcoming). In other words, “dramatic political reactions to the Great Recession were associated less with the direct economic repercussions of the crisis than with government initiative to cope with those repercussions” (Bermeo and Bartels 2014: 4; emphasis in original). This suggests that protest in times of crisis is related to policy measures – in particular, austerity measures – in response to the crisis rather than to its effect on individual conditions.

Kriesi (2014b) advances a further hypothesis concerning the impact of the context. He maintains that protest addressing austerity measures is more likely to emerge when no other institutional channels are available. He refers in particular to the existence of direct democratic instruments, but the argument can be made more general by including other institutional and conventional channels of interest intermediation such as neocorporatist arrangements and the possibility to act through lobbying. Thus, we may expect contentious reactions to hardship to be stronger in contexts where no other institutional channels for expressing discontent are available.

**Dynamics of Long- and Short-Term Processes:**

**The Crisis of Representation and the Rise of New Political Actors**

Economic Crisis, Austerity, and Citizens’ Influence over Policy Decisions

In their work on cartel parties, Katz and Mair (1995, 2009) have shown how the ideological convergence of political parties relates to the growing influence of supranational institutions, such as European institutions. As policy decisions are increasingly taken at the supranational level, legislative bodies lose power over
the executive and the latter, in turn, shifts to a more technocratic exercise of
government in order to comply with supranational regulations. This ultimately
results in a convergence of political parties in the exercise of national and
supranational responsibilities, as well as in a diminished representation of
citizens. In the context of the Great Recession, examples of this transformation
can be found in relation to the public saving of banks, when governments decide
to make private debts public, thus forcing their country into a long-lasting period
of austerity. In Ireland, for example, the bailout was presented as inevitable and
was endorsed by all political parties (Mair 2013), thus making politics a game
with no alternatives. In so doing, the governing parties limited the possibilities for
any future government to take any policy decision that would not comply with
the agreed rescue plan. This reinforces a longer-lasting trend identified by Schäfer
(2013) as “permanent austerity,” which limits government policy options and
citizens’ choices at election time.

Another example of the convergence of political parties and the loss of
citizens’ representation is the establishment of technocratic governments in a
number of European countries. In 2011–2012, Greece and Italy were led by
technocratic governments appointed to overcome the country’s financial
difficulties and to avoid a default of payment in the Eurozone (Verney and
Bosco 2013). These governments were not elected, yet they were supported by
the major political parties and by national leaders of other EU countries. As a
result, the adoption of drastic austerity measures resulted in high levels of
citizen dissatisfaction and in protest voting (Verney and Bosco 2013). In Italy,
a large share of the voters turned away from mainstream parties and supported
a new contender, the Five Star Movement (M5S) (Baldini 2013), while in Greece
they either abstained from voting or supported radical parties from the left
(Syriza) and from the right (Golden Dawn) of the political spectrum (Dinas and
Rori 2013).

The replacement of elected bodies with technocratic governments raises
important questions about citizens’ role in the democratic process and in
providing political answers to the economic crisis. Future research should
analyze how citizens perceive such technocratic governments and how the
latter contribute to political learning, in particular through their impact on
political attitudes such as trust, satisfaction with democracy, and support for
mainstream political parties and the European Union. The adoption of a
techocratic government may be analyzed as a form of passive revolution
borrowing from Gramsci’s political thinking (Simon 1991). In other words,
this is an instance when the political elite sponsors reforms that are far-reaching
without citizens’ consent.

The limited influence of citizens over policy choices is due, among other
things, to the growing influence of supranational institutions over national
policy decisions. Supranational institutions often lack popular support and
largely fail to represent European citizens, as shown by the low levels of
electoral participation in European elections. As Scharpf (2013) has noted, in
addition, in the course of the Great Recession European institutions, which have long been lacking input legitimacy, have also lost part of their output legitimacy. National political parties and elected bodies represent citizens both at the national and supranational levels. However, as they become more accountable to supranational institutions, converge to the center, and comply with austerity measures, mainstream political parties no longer address citizens’ demands and grievances (Alonso 2014). As such, they might lose their capacity to organize society by politicizing existing divisions and, consequently, to mobilize the electorate (de Leon, Desai, and Tuğal 2015; Przeworski and Sprague 1986).

In light of cleavage theory, religion and class have lost much of their salience as a basis of electoral behavior, and a new structuring division opposing the “winners” and the “losers” of globalization has emerged (Kriesi et al. 2012). This process may be accelerated by the crisis, especially in Southern Europe (Hernandez and Kriesi 2016). Indeed, in Greece (Dinas and Rori 2013; Vasilopoulou and Halikiopoulou 2013), Italy (Bordignon and Ceccarini 2013), and Spain (Chari 2013; Martín and Urquizu-Sancho 2012) citizens have withdrawn their support for the main political parties in the latest elections.

These findings resonate with studies of inequalities that highlight the withdrawal of poor citizens from politics (Bartels 2009; Jacobs and Skocpol 2005; Offe 2013; Schäfer 2013). McCarty (2012), for example, shows that the financial crisis and the Great Recession have reinforced polarization in US politics and that elected bodies have become more prone to defend the interests of the more well-off. The economic crisis may increase dissatisfaction with the political elites and produce political cynicism, inasmuch as it reinforces the perception that policy actors are unresponsive to the demands, needs, and grievances of a majority of citizens and defend only the interests of the most powerful lobbies (Offe 2013; Schäfer 2013).

Thus, economic crises bring to the fore the question of what choices are offered to citizens in the electoral arena and what is their influence over policy decisions. This calls for further research on citizens’ influence over economic policy decisions. In times of crisis, economic policies are closely associated with citizens’ worries. Yet, if national political parties have a very limited leverage on economic policies, political representation in this important sector of politics may be challenged. This might affect both voting and protest behavior. In times of crisis, political dissatisfaction may spread from the so-called “losers” of globalization to broader sectors of the middle class and result in a major political realignment. According to the economic voting theory, citizens will punish incumbents. However, cleavage theory suggests that citizens would turn away not only from incumbents, but from all established political actors and support new contenders. This suggests that economic crises reinforce and broaden dissatisfaction with governments and established political parties due to the perception of their unresponsiveness. In line with works that have
stressed the importance of the division between the “winners” and the “losers” of globalization (Kriesi et al. 2008, 2012), this may in turn lead voters to support antiestablishment or new parties and favor the emergence of new populisms. Right-wing populist parties take the lion’s share in this context.

Right-Wing Populism

Populism has arguably characterized the years of the economic crisis (Kriesi and Pappas 2015). This applies to the left and, especially, the right of the political spectrum. Both are not new phenomena, although in the European context left-wing populism has recently taken on a new dimension, as witnessed for example in the electoral breakthrough in 2015 of Syriza in Greece and Podemos in Spain. The populist right, in particular, has been gaining visibility and influence in Europe since the mid-1990s. Its emergence is part of a long-term process and is not solely due to the economic crisis (Kitschelt and McGann 1995). Yet, the populist right’s electoral success may be accelerated by the crisis (Kriesi 2014a). In this regard, the populist right illustrates quite well the interplay of long- and short-term dynamics.

Working-class voters have decreasingly supported the socialists as their dissatisfaction with their policies has been growing and as structural changes resulting from the postindustrial transformation of the labor market reduced the strength of class identities (Mayer 2014). Fear of downward mobility and rising intolerance toward immigrants have turned working-class voters away from the left to the benefit of the populist right. Yet, this is most visible among those who do not have a strong leftist ideology – the right-wing working class, those who are neither from the left nor from the right, and those who are politically disaffected – and among young people (Mayer 2014). Berezin (2013) observes that voters are confronted with the inability of mainstream parties from the right and from the left to answer their demands for security in terms of employment, welfare protection, and cultural identities. Populist parties seize the opportunity to mobilize on such issues and increasingly put forward a political agenda around the idea of welfare chauvinism (Betz 2015; de Koster, Achterberg, and van der Waal 2013).

Together with its anti-European stance, immigration is arguably the key issue traditionally mobilized by the populist right in recent years (Mudde 2007). This issue has become even more salient during the economic crisis. Right-wing populist parties, in particular, try to exploit anti-immigrants’ sentiments by framing economic concerns with issues pertaining to immigration and citizenship, hence connecting the former with the latter by promoting welfare chauvinism (de Koster et al. 2013). Furthermore, such a connection between the economic crisis and immigration is increasingly also made by mainstream parties in an effort to instrumentally counter the rise of right-wing populist parties in the electoral competition (Schumacher and Kersbergen 2016). These efforts, however, are more successful in certain...
countries than in others, as the ability to mobilize around immigration issues – and therefore to link the economic crisis to immigration – might depend, among other things, on the presence of favorable discursive opportunities deriving from the prevailing model of citizenship and by the dynamics of electoral competition (Giugni et al. 2005).

Thus, unaddressed fears related to social, economic, and cultural grievances drive support for the populist right from voters who are most strongly hit by the economic crisis or who are more threatened than others to lose their socioeconomic status in times of crisis. France and Greece are two cases in point, albeit with different modalities. In France, the radical right is set in a long-term trend of increasing influence, whereas in Greece the rise of Golden Dawn is more directly linked to the economic crisis and the related collapse of the two parties which have dominated the Greek political scene over the last decades. Although Golden Dawn has been active in electoral politics since the early 1990s, it obtained its major electoral breakthrough during the economic crisis (Ellinas 2013). The Great Recession has favored its rise by showing the economic incompetency of mainstream parties and their implications in the processes that led to the bailout of Greece. Furthermore, austerity measures stopped clientelist practices of political parties, which therefore lost electoral support. The degree of citizen dissatisfaction with the political elites and with corruption practices was extremely high, leading to massive protests in the street and to rising support for the radical right (Ellinas 2013). This calls for further research on how the economic crisis fosters opportunities for the populist right in as much as it contributes to increasing grievances of specific groups of unrepresented citizens (Kriesi 2014a, 2014b). In this context, the electoral success of the populist right is probably linked to its capacity to take up economic issues abandoned by the left in times of crisis.

“Left of the Left” Mobilization

Students of social movements have studied the sociodemographic characteristics – including the class basis – and political values of participants in antiausterity protests (Gamson and Sifry 2013; Grasso and Giugni 2015; Pickerill and Krinsky 2012). To be sure, the latter displays a number of differences with participants in other types of movements. For example, a higher share of citizens having working-class occupations or working-class identity take part in antiausterity demonstrations (Hylmö and Wennerhag 2015). Similarly, in terms of political values, antiausterity movement participants are closer to new social movement participants concerning the economic left–right dimension, while being different from both old and new movement participants concerning the social authoritarian–libertarian dimension (Grasso and Giugni 2015). However, these works generally tend to conclude that antiausterity protesters are not fundamentally different from the core constituency of the new social movements. In particular, Hylmö and
Wennerhag (2015) maintain that the recent wave of antiausterity protests in Europe has not only brought the lower classes to the streets, but these protests still attract mainly the well-educated middle class. We may therefore expect that economic crises do not bring into the streets fundamentally different constituencies than those mobilizing during periods of economic growth. At the same time, however, social movements may be able to address in the nonelectoral arena grievances specifically relating to the economic crisis.

Trade unions are key actors in the mobilization of the left. Recent studies show that, although economic strikes are declining, general or political strikes are increasing across Europe (Gall 2013; Hamann, Johnston, and Kelly 2013; Lindvall 2013). In the last decades, trade unions have opposed policy choices taken by governments through general strikes, bringing the political conflict to the streets. The likelihood of observing general strikes in a country depends on the strength of trade unions, and this relationship is curvilinear: where unions are weak, or unions strong and established partners have access to decision-making arenas, general strikes are unlikely, but where they are neither weak nor strong they are most likely to use general strikes as a means to influence policy decisions (Lindvall 2013). Moreover, the color of the government also affects the propensity to call on general strikes: the latter are less likely when the left is in power (Hamann et al. 2013). However, this may change in times of crisis. Lastly, trade unions organized protests—not only strikes, but also mass demonstrations and other forms of protest (Accornero and Ramos Pinto 2015; Varga 2015). Research on the specific role of trade unions in times of crisis is still sparse, but trade unions may be able to mobilize beyond their traditional constituencies and to renew their political strength in times of crisis. Lastly, more research is needed on the links between revitalized trade unions and new parties on the left of the political spectrum like Syriza and Podemos.

From Social Movements to (A)political Parties

The Great Recession has not only facilitated the electoral breakthrough of the populist right and activated or reactivated sectors of the left, but also led to the emergence of new political parties. This offers another opportunity to reflect on how contention may move from the nonelectoral to the electoral arena. In Italy, for example, the convergence of the economic crisis and widespread, deeply rooted dissatisfaction with the political elites created a fertile ground for the rise of the M5S. The latter existed previously as an online activist network centered around its charismatic leader, former comedian Beppe Grillo, who organized highly symbolic protest events in several Italian cities (Bordignon and Ceccarini 2013). The M5S became a contender in local elections in 2009 and obtained its first electoral success in 2010 at the local level. It then became the second largest party in Italy. People adhering to the movement were, originally, highly educated youth living in cities and using the Internet more than average
citizens, but as the movement obtained its first electoral success it became closer to the average citizen (Bordignon and Ceccarini 2013). Followers of the M5S tend to be center-left, but at the same time they face difficulties in situating themselves on the traditional left–right axis. As the party grew, it attracted more voters from the center-right and protest voters outflowing from other parties, resulting in the party having two distinct constituencies: a leftist one and a rightist one (Bordignon and Ceccarini 2013). Yet, the party refuses to position itself either on the right or on the left and displays an atypical mix of environmental protection, workers’ protection (but against trade unions), and anti-immigration positions, which makes it difficult to classify on the left–right axis.

The Italian example reflects a broader trend consisting in blurring the left–right division and stressing the division opposing pro- and anti-European positions. In fact, it appears that the radical right and the radical left in Europe are converging on a number of issues: nationalism is shared by both camps (Halikiopoulou et al. 2012) and the radical right embraces economic protectionism (Berezin 2013) as well as welfare chauvinism (Betz 2015; de Koster et al. 2013). Citizens who perceive both cultural and economic ethnic threats, in addition, are more likely to vote for the radical right (Lucassen and Lubbers 2012). Although existing studies do not always consider the effect of the crisis on the economic positioning of the radical right, we may expect these trends to be reinforced by the economic crisis.

More recently, during the 2014 European elections and the 2015 general elections in Spain, the two main political parties have faced an electoral setback as both the Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE) and the Partido Popular (PP) lost considerable shares of votes to the benefit of smaller and emergent political parties. In particular, the newly created party Podemos attracted votes and media attention. Similarly, new parties are formed in Greece, such as To Potami, led by a renowned journalist who converted to politics during the crisis. However, it is still too early to know what will happen in the long run with these political parties resulting from the crisis.

The emergence of new political parties in the shadow of the economic crisis in Southern Europe suggests that the crisis may result in a deep transformation of the political system in countries confronted at the same time with an institutional crisis. However, we do not know at this stage whether voters will continue to support these parties. In the light of existing research, we may hypothesize that they will lose support once they share government responsibilities (Corbetta and Vignati 2013) or that they will establish themselves as relevant political actors resulting from broad socioeconomic transformations, just like the Greens emerged from the new social movements in the 1970s and 1980s. Support for new political parties, in addition, is related to the fate of the main contenders. Voters may continue to support these new political parties if established political parties do not manage to bring their countries out of the recession, at least in the voters’ perception.
The Role of Leadership

In their definition of populism as a political strategy – rather than ideology – Kriesi and Pappas (2015) refer to the charisma of the leader as a defining feature of populist parties. Indeed, populist parties present themselves as direct representatives of the people’s will. In his study of the electoral success of Hugo Chávez in Venezuela, Weyland (2003: 825) has stressed the importance of a charismatic leader in times of crisis: “people have particularly exalted hopes in prominent political leaders when facing severe crises, whereas under more normal circumstances, expectations pinned on leaders – even those with good, promising track records – are quite moderate.” We may thus expect charismatic leaders to become more influential in times of crisis and prolonged recession.

Charismatic leadership has proven to play an important role in other contexts as well. For example, the founder and leader of the Italian M5S, Beppe Grillo, presents himself as an outsider, a victim of the media system, which is seen as being as corrupted as the political system and politicians, as a whistleblower denouncing the misdeeds of elected politicians and political parties, and as an indignant citizen fighting to be heard and represented (Bordignon and Ceccarini 2013). Reliance on charismatic and powerful figures may be related to the crisis, since “When exogenous threats to the system occur, most people, independently of the ideological labels they espouse, are likely to retreat to ‘authority’, or, more colloquially put, pleas for law and order” (Berezin 2009: 34). Thus, periods of economic crises and recession may increase the appeal of charismatic leaders who propose to solve economic and social problems related to the crisis with simple formulas and sometimes in undemocratic ways. This is especially true in the case of radical right-wing populism. Indeed, a radical right ideology can be characterized by a limited dedication to the rule of laws, the division of power, and the defense of minorities rights, in brief, by an illiberal conception of democracy (Kriesi 2014a).

To be sure, the increased personalization of politics is a long-time trend in Europe, perhaps most visible in the Italian case first with the highly prominent figure of Silvio Berlusconi during two decades and, more recently, with the role played by Beppe Grillo in the movement he launched in the late 2000s. But the economic crisis has reinvigorated this trend and put charismatic leaders at center stage. Yet, a number of questions remain about how the Great Recession has contributed to this process. Future research should address how the combination of dormant political dissatisfaction and the economic downturn resulted in or accelerated trends related to the rise of charismatic and populist leaders. In this context, the literature on personality and in particular on submission to authority provides important cues for advancing hypotheses that could be tested in relation to the crisis (see Jost et al. 2003 for a literature review and meta-analysis).
The changing role of leadership, in addition, not only relates to the personalization of politics, but also refers to the new organizational models adopted by recent social movements, including the movements of the crisis (Castells 2012). Such models stress horizontality and decentralization rather than verticality and centralization, as it was most common in traditional movements such as the labor movement. Relatedly, scholarship has pointed to the changing conceptions of democracy in social movements, whereby participatory and especially deliberative views and practices have become popular within certain movements (della Porta 2013; della Porta and Rucht 2013). Again, these are not completely new trends, as both horizontal organizational structures and participatory views of democracy have characterized various movements that emerged in the 1970s and 1980s (Polletta 2001). However, the economic crisis might have put particular pressure for new meanings and practices of leadership and organization on social movements.

CONCLUSION

Research on the relationship between economic crises and political engagement usually stress mechanisms taking place either in the electoral or in the nonelectoral arenas, while rarely pointing to interactions between the two domains. The study of economic crises provides an opportunity to shed light on the interplay between electoral and nonelectoral mobilization. Building on two bodies of literature – the one on political parties and voting, on the one hand, and the one on social movements and protest, on the other – that have long followed separate tracks, in this chapter we suggested a number of avenues for future research on the politics of economic crisis that combine both strands of research. These avenues establish the basis for thorough analyses of the dynamics at play in the reinforcement of crisis of representation in times of economic crisis and citizens’ influence over policy decisions.

Social movements and protest activities may provoke polarization in the institutional arena (McAdam and Kloos 2014; McAdam and Tarrow 2013) and reinforce two forms of dealignment: citizens’ quest for more radical parties or a radicalization of political parties while their constituencies remain more moderate. Citizens may move away from established political parties and, instead, support so-called protest parties or new parties that better reflect their views on the crisis. These parties might build on citizens’ demands for economic and social protection promoting welfare chauvinism, antielitism, or a renewal of the labor movement with trade unions’ quest for new constituencies and new political alliances. We need to better understand how citizens’ demands for economic and social protection are articulated within and across political arenas in order to explain the rise of these new political actors. Furthermore, citizens who seek clear-cut answers to the long-lasting recession may support charismatic leaders in both the electoral and nonelectoral arenas.
In this case, citizens may place their hopes in the renewal of the political elites and more specifically in the hands of a strong leader who has a clear political stance on how to solve the problems created by the economic crisis and promises solutions that are easy to understand. That such solutions are problematic in democratic contexts, as they often go against the basic rights of certain groups such as migrants and endanger the existence of democratic institutions, is not something that seems to worry much those who have been most deeply affected by the crisis and its consequences.

Citizens, however, may not be as radical as the political parties in support of whom they might cast a protest ballot at the height of the economic crisis. Social movements who have radical views on specific issues that become highly salient may foster support for parties sharing their diagnosis of the situation as well as defending their prognosis (McVeigh et al. 2014). Often movements have radical views on a few issues, while parties have more moderate views on a larger set of issues (McAdam and Tarrow 2013). Movements that manage to gain widespread support among citizens in periods of economic downturn may use this leverage to push political parties toward more radical views on specific issues, such as restricting civil and social rights for migrants. This is more likely to occur in times of crisis, when social movements can build on growing grievances and mobilize broad sectors of the population in the streets. Thus, while the electorate and the broader public stay largely in the center of the political spectrum, social movements drive political parties away from the center and toward more extreme positions (McAdam and Kloos 2014). In this perspective, polarization is mostly an elite-based process which is not coupled with a polarization among citizens.

When studying the consequences of economic crises, we should distinguish between their short- and long-term effects (Lindvall 2014). So far, research has focused on the short-term consequences, as the crisis and its effects are still unfolding. Future research should aim to disentangle short- and long-term effects. This holds in particular for the emergence of new political parties and new forms of protest, as they may be immediate yet ephemeral responses to economic crises, but at the same time have important political repercussions in the long run. It is too early to say whether citizens will show sustained support to new or protest parties, whether they would call for more radical political stances, or whether they would tone down their political demands. Similarly, we do not know yet the long-term political stances of these new or protest parties. They might either keep a social movement perspective, maintaining radical positions, or become more moderate in a quest for institutional legitimacy, especially so if and when they will take power and therefore governmental responsibility. The future of both parties and movements is open to different scenarios and looks more fluid that one might think. However, we can already see that economic crises may reinforce crises of representation and processes of dealignment between political elites and citizens. They may trigger transformations in the party system, with the rise of new parties challenging established parties who
seek to maintain their political legitimacy, lead to social movements’ quest for new alliances with parties, or to the adoption of hybrid organizational forms, for example along the lines of “movement parties” (della Porta et al. 2017), with one foot on the street and one in the electoral arena.

While our discussion has focused above all on Europe and, as such, cannot easily be generalized, we may observe similar dynamics in other contexts. We might think for example of the US presidential election of 2016, when the “unwanted” Republican candidate Donald Trump upset even his own party’s leadership in the primaries and went on to win the election, also thanks to an increasing personalization of politics, signaling a problem of political representation. We might also think of the Middle East region, where voters’ retreat does not necessarily or simply stem from repression, but is also linked to dynamics similar to those we discussed for the European context involving economic crisis and a crisis of representation (Brancati 2014). Studying such dynamics in these as well as other contexts and comparing them with the European context will deepen our knowledge of how citizens react to economic crises as well as the interplay of electoral and nonelectoral factors in shaping those reactions.

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The Influence of Public Opinion and Advocacy on Public Policy

Controversies and Conclusions

Paul Burstein

Social welfare, protecting the environment, discrimination, health care – these are the sorts of big, widely discussed issues that social scientists study when they want to understand policy change. Other important issues – taxes, infrastructure, defense, energy – are studied less often. And many issues that don’t seem especially important, don’t create a lot of headlines, and don’t connect to long-standing concerns in sociology, political science, and economics – for example, the drug approval process, foreign trade, transportation safety, public lands, and patents – are seldom studied. What we know about the policy process we have learned mostly by studying a small and unrepresentative sample of the issues policy-makers address.

This chapter examines how strongly public policy is affected by public opinion and by advocacy organizations – nongovernmental organizations other than political parties that act to support or oppose specific policies (Burstein 2014: 8). Scholars disagree. Some believe that public opinion powerfully influences policy, others that it does not. Some see advocacy organizations as powerful, others do not.

The chapter proceeds somewhat unconventionally, on two tracks. The first track describes what we know about policy change, and highlights how our findings are affected by theoretical and methodological concerns being addressed by participants in current debates. The second track considers what we might find were we to study a random sample of issues, with an eye to generalizing about the policy process.

Our conclusions, it turns out, depend tremendously on which track we follow. Were we to study a random sample of issues, controversies extremely important in extant research would matter less. We now study issues on which

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the public is very likely to have opinions. On most issues, however, the public has no opinions – and therefore public opinion can’t possibly determine policy. Similarly, the issues we study are those on which advocacy organizations are especially likely to try to influence policy. Yet if we take Mancur Olson’s (1971) theory of collective action seriously, we might expect that on most issues there would be little organizational activity, and therefore little organizational impact on policy. Studying a random sample of policies, with a view to generalizing, might force us to rethink our views of the political process.

Research on the determinants of policy change is often motivated not only by theoretical and empirical concerns, but by normative concerns as well. The conventional view – called the “folk theory” of democracy by Achen and Bartels (2016: 1), and espoused by many social scientists as well as ordinary citizens – is that if democratic governments respond primarily to public opinion, they are working as they should. If, in contrast, governments respond strongly to advocacy organizations, something is wrong – it is not the public that rules, but, rather, powerful organizations. If the analysis presented in the second track is correct, however, on many issues governments cannot respond to public opinion, not because advocacy organizations are so powerful, but because public opinion doesn’t exist. The conventional standard of democratic performance – that democratic governments should respond primarily to public opinion – may be so unrealistic that it should be abandoned.

PUBLIC OPINION


One of the first and most influential attempts to answer these questions was Page and Shapiro’s 1983 article, “Effects of Opinion on Policy.” They did a massive search for public opinion questions about policy preferences, and found over 3,000 asked of national samples of Americans. To discover how often public opinion caused policy change, they focused on 357 issues about which the public was repeatedly asked identical questions, and changed its views substantially over time. When public opinion shifted, did policy follow? When opinions and policy both changed, the answer was yes; they moved in the same direction two-thirds of the time, and even more often when the issues were salient to the public and changes in opinion were large. They concluded (1983: 189), with suitable caveats, that “public opinion, whatever its sources
and quality, is a factor that genuinely affects government policies in the United States.”

Page and Shapiro did so well at stating their problem, creating a comprehensive dataset, presenting theoretical arguments, analyzing their data, and considering alternative explanations for their findings that their article remains a model for work on public opinion and policy even today. But what of their findings? Have their conclusions stood the test of time? Shapiro (2011: 999) says they have. His recent, comprehensive review of the literature leads him to write that “the overall evidence – qualifications, contingencies, and all – provides a sanguine picture of democracy at work.”

Page, however, disagrees. He and a coauthor (Gilens and Page 2014: 577) conclude that “our analyses suggest that majorities of the American public actually have little influence over the policies our government adopts.”

Other recent literature reviews similarly vary in their conclusions. Barabas (2016: 455) contends that while Page and Shapiro may have been correct as of 1983, “the trends seem to be moving in the wrong direction from the standpoint of democratic theory – that is, people seem less and less likely to get what they say they want from government.” Canes-Wrone (2015: 159–160), in contrast, seems to agree with “Effects of Opinion on Policy.” “A variety of studies,” she writes, “show that when mass opinion moves in a particular direction, policies that reflect that direction become significantly more likely.” Yet she also agrees with Barabas: “the divergence between policy makers’ views and those of constituents,” she concludes, “is large and growing.”

Thus, 35 years of research have neither solidified Page and Shapiro’s conclusions nor overturned them. Why not? Why haven’t advances in theory and methods, the collection of vast amounts of additional data, and intense debate made it clear whether democratic governments do what the public wants?

There are two main responses to this question. The first is that the study of opinion and policy suffers from significant methodological problems; as these are resolved, researchers will be more likely to agree on how responsive government is to the public. The second is that on most issues responsiveness is impossible because so few people have policy preferences to which governments might respond.

The major methodological problems include the measurement of opinion and policy, how to gauge the relationship between the two, how to take other hypothetical determinants of policy into account, and generalization.

**Measuring Opinion.** For data on public opinion, we are at the mercy of survey organizations. As Page and Shapiro (1983: 189) noted, we have data only on issues they choose to ask about. Is this a serious problem? Yes – according to Barabas (2016: 445–446), “over three quarters of issues on the [national] policy agenda are not covered in national polls” (emphasis in original; also see Burstein 2014: 56; Oehl, Schaffer, and Bernauer 2017).
For the issues survey organizations ask about, our knowledge is limited by how they phrase their questions. Often they ask about issues in very general terms, not about policy preferences. For example, though the American public was asked about the Vietnam War many times, people were not asked what they wanted the government to do, but rather about whether entering the war was a mistake and whether they approved of how the government was dealing with it (Burstein and Freudenburg 1978; McAdam and Su 2002). Similarly, in many policy domains, the public has often been asked its opinions about government action, but the questions often focus on federal spending rather than specific policies (Agnone 2007; Johnson, Agnone, and McCarthy 2010; Soroka and Wlezien 2010).

Some scholars argue that those interested in the impact of public opinion on policy should not focus on specific issues, but should instead develop aggregate measures of opinion across a wide range of issues. Researchers could thereby free themselves from the need to get opinion data on any specific issue; they could describe broad trends in public opinion, such as whether the public is becoming more liberal, or less. The development of comparable measures of policy then enables them to determine whether opinion change precedes policy change (Erikson, MacKuen, and Stimson 2002; Stimson 1999). Such research sometimes finds a very high degree of responsiveness, but at a cost. It cannot say whether the public gets what it wants on any specific issue; it cannot take into account what people do to influence specific policies; and it cannot say whether their efforts succeed.

To learn about the impact of opinion on policy, it would be desirable to see if the public’s views on particular issues influence policy on those issues. But we seldom have data on policy preferences, and therefore rely on opinions supposedly related to preferences on specific issues, or lots of issues, instead. It would be good to know whether variations in how opinion is measured affect findings about responsiveness. Apparently, though, no one has addressed this question.

**Measuring Policy.** Whatever problems there are in measuring the public’s policy preferences, they pale in comparison to problems in measuring policy itself. There is a large literature on the measurement of public opinion; on the measurement of policy there is not. Policy and policy change are measured in a great many ways, including expenditures, enactment of specific laws, the number of laws enacted in a policy domain, what laws say about specific topics, and indexes of many laws categorized as liberal or conservative (Burstein 2014: Chapter 2).

There have been very few attempts to consider the measurement of policy per se (see Burstein 2014; Wilkerson, Smith, and Stramp 2015), and no one has attempted to ascertain whether apparent responsiveness is greater when policy is measured one way rather than another. When one study finds opinion influencing policy, and another does not, are we finding substantive
differences between them, or only that results depend on how policy is measured?

The Relationship between Opinion and Policy. There are two standard ways to describe the connection between opinion and policy (Lax and Phillips 2012: 148). “Responsiveness” is the correlation between the two – how tightly linked is change in one to change in the other? “Congruence” is whether policy “actually matches majority opinion.” Both measures are useful – it seems important to know both whether the government is moving in the same direction as the public, and whether policy reflects majority preferences.

But the two measures can be inconsistent, complicating our efforts to interpret the connection between opinion and policy. Policy may be responsive without being congruent – for example, defense spending would be described as responsive to public opinion if it goes up when increasing proportions of people want it to, but not as congruent if only a minority of the public wants an increase. And policy may be congruent without being responsive – for example, if defense spending increases when a majority wants it to, even though the proportion favoring an increase is declining (from 70 percent to 55, for example).¹

It can matter greatly whether the connection between opinion and policy is assessed in terms of responsiveness or of congruence. Often responsiveness seems easier to achieve than congruence. For example, in their study of 39 policies in US states, Lax and Phillips (2012: 164) find that there is a high degree of responsiveness – “policy-specific opinion . . . is indeed a key driver of policymaking” – even though policy reflects majority opinion only about half the time. Gilens’ (2012: 42–43) review of some major studies similarly shows that focusing on responsiveness produces better results – opinion and policy seem more strongly connected – than emphasizing congruence. Gilens and Page’s (2014: 564) conclusion that “average citizens . . . have little or no independent influence” on US government policy is the product, at least in part, of their decision to focus on congruence rather than responsiveness.

Other Determinants of Policy. Among the forces influencing policy other than public opinion, interest groups have long been a target of special concern for both social scientists and the public. Interest groups, it is feared, may have more impact on policy than the public does (Gilens and Page [2014] briefly summarize these concerns). To ascertain the relative power of interest groups and public opinion, research must include both. Yet it seldom does (Rasmussen,

¹ Unfortunately, the terms “responsiveness” and “congruence” are not always used consistently. “Responsiveness” can refer specifically to a correlation between opinion and policy, but the term is also used to refer to the influence of the public on policy more generally, as when Barabas (2016: 439) first distinguishes between the two without labeling them, and then describes both together as gauging responsiveness; see also Gilens 2012: Chapter 1; Weissberg 1976; and Page and Shapiro 1983.
Partly this is due to disciplinary traditions. In political science, the study of interest groups is one subfield, the study of public opinion another; and in sociology, public opinion was virtually ignored for decades (Manza and Brooks 2012).

But it is also very difficult to study public opinion and interest groups—or, more broadly, advocacy organizations—simultaneously. Some research designs make doing so virtually impossible. Broad measures of policy (e.g., “policy change” [Erikson et al. 2002: Chapter 8] and “welfare state effort” [Brooks and Manza 2007]) are created by combining government actions on many specific policies over substantial periods of time. Yet organizations that try to influence policy typically focus their efforts on specific policies. There is a fundamental mismatch between what organizations are trying to influence (specific policies) and what the researchers are trying to explain (broad measures aggregating many policies).

Many studies attempt to gauge the impact of advocacy organizations on a single policy, but few estimate their impact on many policies, perhaps because so much work would be necessary. For example, Lax and Phillips (2012) attempt to consider the impact of both interest groups and public opinion on 39 issues, but the magnitude of their task is such that they don’t include any data on interest group activity. Instead, they begin with lists of interest groups seen as powerful by experts in each state, and then “identified which of them would normally be associated with each policy [being analyzed], and likely position on them” (2012: 159, emphasis added)—that is, they made educated guesses about whether each group might have a position on each issue, and what the position might be.

Gilens (2012: Chapter 5) and Burstein (2014: Chapter 4) both attempted to collect data about organizations trying to influence a substantial number of policies, the former for an immense number—1,779—for which public opinion data were available, and the latter for a small random sample of policy proposals—60—considered by the 101st Congress. Gilens and Page (2014: 572) found that interest groups had a “substantial independent influence on policy,” while Burstein (2014: Chapter 5) found they had none. So little research analyzes opinion and organizational activity simultaneously that no one can speak with any confidence about their relative impact (Rasmussen et al. 2018: 2).

Generalization. Page, Shapiro, Gilens, Barabas, and Canes-Wrone all examine the results of many studies of the impact of opinion on policy. But while they can summarize research on the impact, they cannot generalize.

To generalize about the connection between opinion and policy, researchers would have to define a broad population of policies, select a random sample or the equivalent, find public opinion data on the sample of policies, and analyze the relationship between opinion and policy for the sample. Unfortunately, this
is impossible, because we have public opinion data only on policies that survey researchers consider worth pursuing.

Researchers know this; they acknowledge that their findings may be affected by their lacking a probability sample of policies (e.g., Page and Shapiro 1983: 189; Gilens and Page 2014: 568). But they rarely try to estimate what that effect might be.

Barabas (2016) does. In contrast to most researchers, he began data collection with policies rather than public opinion. He found 2,818 issues on the US national policy agenda between 1947 and 2000. Public opinion data were available for only 658 of these, however (2016: 445), providing some indication of how much is missed by researchers who study only issues for which opinion data are available. He then used multiple imputation to estimate what public opinion would have been, had polling been done (2016: 450), and compared his findings about the relationship between opinion and policy to those of two major studies that studied only issues for which opinion were available (with their findings adjusted to make them comparable to his; Binder 2003; Gilens 2012). His cautious conclusion (2016: 455): studies that consider only issues for which public opinion data are available “paint a picture of responsiveness,” while for studies that begin with a broader set of policies, “the landscape looks different – and less cheerful.”

So does public opinion influence public policy? Arguably not very strongly – a disappointment for those evaluating democratic governments in terms of how strongly opinion influences policy.

But there may be a more fundamental problem. Here we transition to the second track: What would we find out if we studied a random sample of issues?

Barabas’ imputation of opinions to the public only makes sense if we assume that the public has opinions on issues survey organizations hadn’t asked about. This view is widely held (Gilens and Page 2014: 576; Page and Shapiro 1992), but is it true? What if on many issues the public may be said to lack meaningful policy preferences to which the government might respond?

If asked to imagine circumstances in which public opinion influences policy, many people would imagine members of a legislature preparing to vote on a bill, ascertaining their constituents’ policy preferences, and voting accordingly.

But we have very little data on how often this happens. To some extent, this is for practical reasons. No one has the resources to poll constituents on even a small fraction of the policies being voted on.

More fundamentally, though, even if the resources were available, it would make no sense to try to find out what the public wants on most bills, because most people would have no preferences (Achen and Bartels 2016; Hacker and Pierson 2005: 36–37). Increasingly, research shows that except for a handful of highly salient issues, few people would know that a vote was taking place; fewer

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Footnote:

2 Using a different approach, Burstein (2014: Chapter 2) found that no public opinion data were available for 40 percent of the policy proposals he studied.
would know what the bill says; and even fewer could have meaningful preferences, because they know little or nothing about the issue the bill is addressing (Soroka and Wlezien 2010: Chapter 2).

Even on major policy proposals receiving a huge amount of media coverage, much of the public is oblivious; when the 2002 National Election Study asked respondents whether they favored or opposed the huge and controversial tax cuts enacted the previous year, or “haven’t thought about” it, more than 40 percent said they hadn’t (Bartels 2005: 20). Even highly educated citizens very interested in politics cannot be aware of more than a tiny fraction of bills on the legislative agenda; even members of Congress know little about many of the bills and amendments they vote on (Curry 2015: Chapter 1). How likely is it that many people had opinions about bills that became law during the 114th Congress (2015–2016), such as the United States-Caribbean Strategic Engagement Act of 2016 (Public Law 114–291), the Consumer Review Fairness Act (PL 114–258), and the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (PL 114–198)?

Were we to study a random sample of issues, the implications of the public’s lack of opinions would be obvious. If the public has no opinions on most bills being voted on, what could researchers claim about the impact of opinion on policy?

But researchers do make such claims. How? Mostly by ignoring or downplaying the problems described above. In some ways, proceeding as they do makes sense – researchers are doing the best they can with the data that are available. Yet it is difficult to know what their findings mean. When we discover that measures of opinion not about any particular policy are correlated with measures of policy that are also not about any particular policy, we seem to be learning something, but it is not exactly clear what (Wlezien 2017).

One might reasonably ask why, after decades of quantitative research on policy change, so little attention has been paid to the measurement of policy or to sampling, given that many social scientists appreciate the importance of both measurement and sampling. Some progress is being made in taking seriously the need to sample (Baumgartner et al. 2009; Burstein 2014), but there is still considerable resistance to the idea; on the measurement of policy, no one is even trying to develop a general approach. There is a real mystery here.

Why, if public opinion is unlikely to have much impact on policy because so often it doesn’t exist, has so much effort just been devoted, above, to outlining specific problems with work on opinion and policy? Because the effort reflects the field. Most researchers believe the effort to link public opinion and public policy is meaningful; perhaps if they improve their work along the lines suggested above, their findings will become increasingly convincing.

Even among those who believe that opinion strongly influences policy, few believe it is all-powerful (Erikson, Wright, and McIver 1993 and Erikson et al. 2002 are exceptions). Other factors must also influence policy. Which matter most? The most common answer: interest groups, particularly those acting on
behalf of the rich, powerful, and highly motivated. But other types of organizations, including social movement organizations (SMOs), may matter as well. It is to their impact that we now turn.

ADVOCACY ORGANIZATIONS

When the government does not do what the public wants, what does it respond to instead?

A key answer: to advocacy organizations.

In conventional accounts, there are two types of advocacy organizations – interest groups and SMOs – and controversies about the impact of each.

Interest groups, in the opinion of journalists, much of the public, and many social scientists, have a tremendous impact on policy. They have such substantial resources, are so well organized, and understand the policy process so well that they are able to get what they want even when they oppose a majority of the public. This standard view is strongly normative. To the extent democratic governments are influenced by public opinion, that’s good; when they are influenced by interest groups, that’s bad.

Research on the impact of interest groups on policy follows a pattern: the belief that interest groups get what they want is so powerful that when a study finds them having little impact, the findings are attributed to defects in the research; when subsequent, better-designed studies reach the same conclusion, the process is repeated. As Leech (2010: 696) writes, “the search for a definitive statement about the power of lobbyists has become the Holy Grail of interest group studies. All seek it, but are forever being led astray. ... Almost everyone believes that interest groups are influential, and yet systematic studies have as often pointed to the limits on interest group influence as have concluded that strong influence exists.” As Lowery (2013: 19) writes, “the dirty little secret” of the lobbying literature is that “lobbying is often not very effective” (for more on the difficulties involved in assessing impact, see de Figueiredo and Richter 2014).

The controversy about the impact of SMOs is different. SMOs are typically seen as organizations of outsiders who lack regular access to policy-makers. For those who created what has become the dominant approach to the study of social movements, beginning back in the 1970s, there was a real question as to whether SMOs had any impact on policy at all (Burstein 1998). And if they had no impact, why should those interested in policy even study them?

Gamson’s (1975) The Strategy of Social Protest provided the justification for studying SMOs (which he called “challenging groups”) – his study of a random sample of SMOs showed that they regularly did have an impact.

Over time, the expectations of those studying SMOs changed dramatically. Few doubt that SMOs affect policy; indeed, it is usually assumed that they do (Amenta et al. 2010; Burstein 2016). Findings are far from definitive, however. A relatively recent review (Amenta et al. 2010) seems to go back and forth on
SMO impact. On the one hand, “about 70% of the relationships [between movements and policy] show reasonably high movement influence” (2010: 293). On the other, “It is worth discussing why so often research finds that movements exhibit little or no influence” (2010: 293).

Thus, controversies about the impact of interest groups and of SMOs share something important: the belief that they both influence policy (interest groups more strongly than SMOs) and the finding that often they don’t.

What about the impact of other types of advocacy organizations? Work on the impact of organizations on policy implicitly assumes that all advocacy organizations are either interest groups or SMOs. Though nomenclature isn’t entirely consistent – researchers sometimes refer to the organizations they study as “organized interests,” “social movement groups,” “interest organizations,” and so on – no other type of organization is defined in contrast to interest groups and SMOs.

Yet many researchers who study the impact of organizations on policy do not describe their organizations as either one. Instead, they describe their research as assessing the impact of businesses (Jenkins, Leicht, and Wendt 2006), churches (e.g., Budros 2011), nongovernmental organizations (Vasi 2007), other types of organizations (Best 2012), and specific organizations, such as the ACLU (Vasi and Strang 2009). Other scholars may consider such organizations to be either interest groups or SMOs, but they have no basis for doing so. There are no definitions of interest groups and SMOs so widely accepted that they may be imposed on researchers who choose to categorize organizations differently (Baumgartner and Leech 1998: 25–30; Burstein 2016; Hart 2004).

How much impact on policy do such organizations – advocacy organizations that are neither interest groups nor SMOs – have? We have no way to find out. No one is going to do a review of the literature on “advocacy organizations that aren’t interest groups or SMOs.” And if literature reviews simply categorize organizations as interest groups or SMOs, regardless of how they are categorized by researchers, any differences among types of organizations will be lost.

How may disagreements about the impact of advocacy organizations be resolved? As with public opinion, there are two main responses to this question. The first is that overcoming methodological problems may lead to greater agreement among researchers. The second – analogous to what has been said about public opinion – is that with regard to very large numbers of issues, advocacy organizations cannot have much impact, because there is too little organizational activity to matter.

The major methodological problems include how advocacy should be measured, how additional determinants of policy should be taken into account, and how findings may be generalized. The measurement of policy is also a concern, but it has been addressed above.
Measuring Advocacy. As with public opinion, estimates of the impact of advocacy may depend heavily on how advocacy is measured. The problems with measuring advocacy, however, differ from those associated with measuring public opinion.

For researchers who want to study the impact of public opinion retrospectively, the issue of data availability is straightforward. If appropriate data are available, their research can proceed; if not, there is nothing they can do (Oehl et al. 2017).

Advocacy is different. Rarely are data available in a readily usable form. Yet it is often possible for researchers to create their own datasets.

Sometimes they use data that have already been collected and transform them in line with the goals of their research. For example, they can compile data in official records of PAC contributions and lobbying, and organize them to gauge the activities of advocacy organizations.

And sometimes they collect data themselves. Research on the impact of protest, for instance, often extracts data on protest from newspaper accounts, using methods carefully developed over several decades (Earl et al. 2004; Soule and Earl 2005). By compiling data collected by others, and collecting their own data, researchers are able to create datasets on more issues, over a longer period of time, than is possible for public opinion.

Yet there are often problems with these data as well. Data on campaign contributions and lobbying may be available only for limited periods. And, as with public opinion, there may be a mismatch between the data on factors hypothetically influencing policy, and the policy itself.

Data on campaign contributions and lobbying often cannot identify the extent to which either the campaign contributions or the lobbying are directed at any particular policy change. In fact, they are often aimed at winning legislators’ favorable attention in a general way, rather than at trying to influence their actions on specific legislation.

Data collected from newspapers and other publicly available sources are often problematic as well. Though we would expect policy-makers to be affected by efforts to influence them – that is, by activities – researchers often collect no data on activities, focusing on attributes of organizations instead – how many are concerned about an issue, how many members they have, etc. (e.g., Johnson et al. 2010; McAmmon et al. 2007; Sutton 2013). When data do refer to activities, they often fail to identify whose activities, making it difficult to estimate how strongly organizations influence policy. And activities are often identified with broad policy domains – protests about environmental policy or civil rights, for example – but not as focusing on particular policy proposals; the data tell us nothing about what people are doing to influence the content or enactment of specific policies (Burstein 2014: Chapter 4).

Some of these problems may be remediable, others perhaps not. It may be possible to find out about lobbying on specific issues by surveying lobbyists and coding written position statements made by interest groups (Baumgartner et al. 2017).
2009; Dur, Bernhagen, and Marshall 2015; Mahoney 2007; Nelson and Yackee 2012), but lobbyists can be surveyed only with regard to issues currently on the political agenda. Newspaper accounts of protest may include information about the organizations involved as well as the protest itself, but not necessarily.

And protests may be organized simply to draw attention to an issue in a general way, without necessarily trying to influence action on any particular policy proposal.

It is easy to imagine that activities directed at specific policies would have more impact on those policies than less-focused activities. Unfortunately, few studies identify such activities, so we don’t know whether this is the case (Burstein and Linton 2002; Burstein 2016).

Other Determinants of Policy. Above we considered how the impact of public opinion on policy was affected by advocacy organizations when the two are seen as competing for influence. Here there are two other concerns: first, whether advocacy activities may enhance (rather than reduce) the influence of public opinion on policy; and second, whether advocacy organizations may influence public opinion, meaning that an apparent relationship between opinion and policy is spurious.

Because advocacy activity and public opinion are so often seen as being in opposition to each other, few researchers contend that advocacy activities enhance the influence of public opinion on policy. But some historical and theoretical work argues that they do. Research on the early development of interest groups sees them providing a voice to those previously unrepresented in the policy process, making government responsive to a wider segment of the public (Clemens 1997; Hansen 1991). Leech (2010: 550) suggests that interest groups provide elected officials with information about constituency preferences, helping them to win reelection by enabling them to be more responsive to their constituents. McCarthy and Zald (1977: 1217–1219) define a social movement as “a set of opinions and beliefs in a population,” and see SMOs as trying to promote those preferences.

Little research asks whether advocacy activities enhance the impact of opinion on policy, but some findings suggest that they may. Burstein (1998: 86–87) showed that civil rights demonstrations increased the impact of pro-rights attitudes on Congress. Agnone (2007) concluded that protest on environmental issues increased the impact of public opinion on policy. And Rasmussen et al. (2018) find that for a sample of 50 issues in five European countries, greater support for policy on the part of advocacy organizations and individuals is associated with an increase in the impact of public opinion. These findings certainly warrant further research as to whether advocacy activities enhance the impact of public opinion on policy.

The possibility that advocacy organizations manipulate public opinion is taken more seriously by researchers than the possibility that they will enhance its impact. There is much concern that correlations between opinion and policy
may be spurious – that rather than being “a completely autonomous force” (Page and Shapiro 1992: 355), public opinion may be the product of manipulation by advocacy organizations and government (see, e.g., Bennett 2016; Domhoff 2006; McGraw 2002; Page and Shapiro 1992: Chapter 9; Weissberg 1976: Chapter 10). If that happens regularly, the apparent connection between public opinion and policy means little. As Page and Shapiro (1992: 355) write, “if the public is systematically manipulated, deceived, or misled, one should draw little normative satisfaction from the translation of its mistaken wishes into policy.”

How serious a problem is this? It is very difficult to tell – indeed, it may be impossible.

Public opinion can’t come out of nowhere. People base their opinions on information available in their environment, such as the views of others whose opinions they value and, potentially, information provided by organizations they are connected to. If we want to know whether the public is being manipulated, it has been argued, we must distinguish between information that informs or educates, and information that manipulates (or tries to). “Good” information – the kind that informs and educates – may enable the public to improve their understanding of public policy and express their views more satisfactorily. “Bad” information – the kind that manipulates, often through lies and a variety of rhetorical devices – may lead people to act against their own interests (Hacker and Pierson 2005: Chapter 2; Jacobs and Shapiro 2000; Kollman 1998: Chapter 1; Page and Shapiro 1992: Chapter 9).

Unfortunately, while it is sometimes obvious that advocacy organizations are trying to mislead the public, very often it is not. Those involved in political debates all try to be persuasive. How does one identify the point at which attempts to persuade become attempts to mislead? What’s more, disagreements are often not about facts, but about how issues are framed, or about morality. Is health care a right owed to everyone living in a country? Or is it simply a good available for purchase? Those who try to distinguish between education and manipulation, wrote Page and Shapiro (1992: 357), “can easily wander into minefields of confusion and controversy.” It’s not that public opinion is unaffected by efforts to change it; it’s that distinguishing between education and manipulation may often be exceedingly difficult, and sometimes impossible.

Generalization. There are more studies of advocacy than of public opinion that attempt to generalize about their impact on public policy – at least five rather than one (Baumgartner et al. 2009; Burstein 2014; Dur et al. 2015; Lewis 2013; Mahoney 2007).

Burstein tries to answer a simple question: Do advocacy activities affect the enactment of policy proposals? For his data, the answer is no (though they do affect what committees do with the proposals [Burstein 2014: Chapters 5–6]). Lewis (2013), in contrast, finds that, for the Wisconsin legislature, the answer is
yes. The analyses by Baumgartner et al., Dur et al., and Mahoney are more complex than Burstein’s and Lewis’s, and do not lend themselves to a yes–no answer. Nevertheless, it is possible to say something about the general thrust of their findings. Baumgartner et al. (2009: 206) conclude that most measures of the financial resources and membership of lobbying organizations have no impact on policy success, and “the most fundamental result of our initial review of the linkages between money and power is that there is not much to talk about. The links, to the extent we see any in this bivariate analysis, are extremely weak.” Mahoney (2007: 45) arguably finds more impact: 23 percent of American lobbyists and 17 percent of European lobbyists fully attained their goals, and another 20 and 43 percent, respectively, had partial success. Dur et al. (2015: 967) find that “citizen groups” are more influential than businesses, getting what they want, by some measures, more than half the time. These results may be seen as roughly in line with recent reviews of the literature: sometimes some impact, but often little or none.

As with public opinion, though, it is important to step back and consider not only the issues being studied, but all issues – that is, it is important to follow the second track and ask what we would find were we to analyze a random sample of issues. Doing so wouldn’t be easy.

Baumgartner et al. (2009) and Mahoney (2007), for example, draw their samples from data on the activities of lobbyists, and can say nothing about the many issues that don’t attract lobbyists; Dur et al. (2015) and Lewis (2013) consider only lobbying as well.

With regard to issues on which there is lobbying, there is a striking finding: across issues, lobbying is extremely skewed. In a study of a sample of 137 issues on which there was lobbying, Baumgartner and Leech (2001: 1200) found that “the vast majority of issues generate only a very small amount of lobbying activity.” The top four issues accounted for a third of all lobbying, while the bottom 10 percent accounted for just 1 percent (2001: 1202).

Burstein did not limit his sample to policy proposals with advocacy activity; he chose the policy proposals first, and then sought data on advocacy. His findings are even more skewed than Baumgartner and Leech’s. For the 60 proposals he studied, 31 prompted no advocacy activity at all, and the bottom 48, 5.2 percent of the total; 52 percent of all advocacy activities were generated by just three proposals (2014: 94).

Theoretical work on public opinion concludes that on most issues the public cannot be expected to have opinions. On most issues, therefore, public opinion can have no impact on policy. A similar argument can be made about advocacy activity. In The Logic of Collective Action, Olson (1971: Chapter 1) considered whether people will contribute resources to organizations seeking policies that would provide them with public goods. The answer is generally no.

Because public goods are available to all, regardless of whether they worked to get the policies enacted, rational individuals will not support advocacy organizations.
Olson (1971: 159) limited his analysis to economic issues, but thought that “logically, the theory can cover all types of lobbies” except for those whose supporters are not rational in his sense – for example, those who support advocacy organizations benefitting others rather than themselves, or those supporting organizations for religious reasons. Nevertheless, if one takes seriously the notion that his logic would apply broadly, there should be few advocacy organizations and little advocacy activity.

Olson seemed to think that the data proved him wrong – there were actually a great many lobbying organizations. He felt he therefore had to elaborate on his theory to discover the exceptional circumstances in which lobbying organizations would be formed.

But were there really a lot of lobbying organizations? He mentions (1971: 141) that when he was writing there were 1,247 lobbying organizations registered with Congress. This may seem like a large number, and certainly from the point of view of members of Congress being lobbied, the number could seem overwhelming. Yet in 1970 there were roughly 136 million Americans over the age of 20, meaning that there was one lobbying organization per roughly 109,000 adults. It may very well be the case that few people support advocacy organizations, just as Olson originally argued. Burstein, in fact, concluded that in his data advocacy had no impact on congressional action because there was too little to matter (2014: Chapter 6).

SOME IMPLICATIONS

The analysis above suggests that current research on the influence of public opinion and advocacy on policy suffers from problems with regard to conceptualization and measurement, the range of independent variables included in any particular study, and generalization. What might happen were we to make progress in solving the problems?

With regard to conceptualization and measurement, we have a great many measures of policy, but we have almost no idea as to whether decisions about measurement affect our findings. More generally, we rarely consider whether some measures might be better than others, whatever that might mean in a given context. I would suggest two criteria that could be useful.

First, does a proposed measure of policy seem intuitively to be a good measure – does it have face validity? For example, measures of what policy proposals or laws say seem excellent – the measure of policy is essentially the

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3 Many studies of advocacy activities claim that such activities are pervasive, but their data often suggest otherwise (Burstein and Sausner 2005). For example, Johnson et al.’s (2010: 2278) analysis of the impact of advocacy activities on congressional action on the environment found that between 1961 and 1990, instances of “institutional influence activity” on the environment averaged 11.4 per year, nationwide, and the number of protests, 5.5. In a study of lobbying during the federal rule-making process, Haeder and Yackee (2015: 513) found that of the 1,526 proposed rules they studied, there was no lobbying at all on 91.7 percent.
policy itself (e.g., Burstein 2014; Lax and Phillips 2009). Some widely used measures may not gauge actual policies, but under some circumstances could be seen as reasonably good proxies for the general direction of policy – for example, expenditures (Soroka and Wlezien 2010). Other measures used as proxies for policy seem problematic because they have nothing to do with policy itself, such as how often Congress votes (e.g., Fassiotto and Soule 2017; McAdam and Su 2002).

Second, can a measure plausibly be incorporated into a causal model? It is easy to imagine, for example, how policies on the right to vote and on family leave could be influenced by public opinion, protest, and lobbying on those issues (Kittilson 2008; Santoro 2008).

Measures of expenditures in broad policy domains would be less satisfactory, because total expenditures would be the sum of expenditures on a large number of specific programs, each with its own causal story – total defense expenditures being the sum of money spent on the acquisition of multiple kinds of weapons, the pay of people in the military, the maintenance of military bases, and so on (Soroka and Wlezien 2010). Even more problematic would be very broad indexes of policy, such as whether state or national policies are becoming more liberal or more conservative (Erikson et al. 1993, 2002). It would be very difficult to gauge the impact of advocacy on such indexes, because advocates try to influence action on specific policies, not whether public policy as a whole moves in one direction or another.

For public opinion and advocacy, the two criteria would essentially become one. The more easily a particular measure could be seen as a cause of policy, the better it would be. Hypothetically, public opinion on specific policies or sets of policies (as in Lax and Phillips 2009; Rasmussen et al. 2018; and Soroka and Wlezien 2010) should have a substantial impact on policy (if theories about the impact of public opinion on policy are correct), a smaller impact if the measures of public opinion just pertain broadly to a policy domain (Brooks and Manza 2007), and smaller yet if the measures are not about policy proposals at all (Burstein and Freudenburg 1978; McAdam and Su 2002). On advocacy, we would expect measures of advocacy targeting specific policies to matter the most (Burstein 2014), advocacy activities that are less targeted and less specific to matter less, and measures of advocacy that don’t get at activities at all to matter the least.

normally, we expect that measurement error reduces the apparent strength of relationships between variables. Were measurement of policy, public opinion, and advocacy to be improved, therefore, we would expect to find estimates of the impact of public opinion and policy to be stronger than we have generally found.

With regard to the variables included in our causal models, it is not difficult to identify those considered especially important, just by looking at the number

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4 No one has actually studied whether there is a relationship between measurement and findings.
of studies of each – public opinion, advocacy activities of various kinds, the party balance, and so on. But it is difficult to find studies that take into account very many of the hypothetically important variables simultaneously. Were we to do so more regularly, we know what we would find – many independent variables will be correlated with each other as well as with policy, so that as more variables are added, the strength of the relationship between each of them and policy will go down.

Efforts at generalization, as noted above, seem likely to have a dramatic effect. As those who study opinion and policy have often pointed out, our studies tend to focus on issues on which the impact of public opinion is likely to be especially strong. Similarly, the issues we study seem especially likely to stimulate advocacy activity, at least making it possible for such activity to matter. Were we to study a random sample of issues as part of an effort to generalize, however, often there will be neither public opinion nor advocacy, and hence no influence on policy by either. We would be likely to find opinion and advocacy having much less impact than previous research tends to show.

It’s important to include here a word about how we usually interpret findings of no effect, and how the usual interpretation contrasts with the analysis here. Normally, when we discover public opinion or some kinds of advocacy – SMO activity, for example – having little influence on policy, we suggest that the reason must be that there are factors that prevent opinion and advocacy from having an influence, such as the power of economic elites or structural features of government (excessive power granted to less-populous states in the US Senate, first-past-the-post elections, primaries that magnify the power of extremists, etc.).

This chapter does not deny the possible impact of such factors, but the emphasis here is very different. It’s not so much that policy-making is insulated from public opinion and advocacy. Rather, across a wide range of issues, there may be no public opinion or advocacy activity to be insulated from.

There is a potentially serious objection to this view: it seems absurd. If neither public opinion nor advocacy activities call for policy change, how much change could there be? Seemingly, not very much.

Could this be true? We have no objective standard for deciding whether the policy change we see around us amounts to a little or a lot, but there’s some plausibility to the claim that it’s a little.

Consider, for example, laws enacted by Congress. In the 106th and 107th Congresses (1999–2002), 11,021 bills were introduced in the House, and 6,251 in the Senate (Grossman and Pyle 2013: 99). During those two Congresses, 957 public laws were enacted. Some were probably reasonably consequential – the Department of Transportation and Related Agencies Appropriations Act of 2001 (PL 106–346), the National Science Foundation Authorization Act of 2002 (PL 107–368), and the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (PL 107–296), for example – but many were probably not – the law designating “the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 500 North Washington Street in Rockville,
Maryland, as the “Everett Alvarez, Jr. Post Office Building” (PL 106–336), the Lincoln County Land Act of 2000 (PL 106–298), the Product Packaging Protection Act of 2002 (PL 107–307), and so on. Indeed, Maltzman and Shipan (2008: 257–258) contend that between 1954 and 2004, the number of “important laws” enacted per year averaged just under six. Why so few, both relative to the number of bills introduced and in an absolute sense?

Political scientists have come to argue that there is a tremendously powerful “status quo bias” in democratic politics (Baumgartner et al. 2009: 247–250; Baumgartner and Jones 1993, 2015; Jones and Baumgartner 2012; Jones, Sulkin, and Larsen 2003; Kingdon 2011). When there is a conflict between competing views regarding policy proposals, those supporting the status quo are considerably more likely to get their way than those supporting change. There are a variety of reasons for this, including the fact that current policy is the product of forces likely to remain in equilibrium for a considerable time; the difficulty of winning attention to any issue; the enactment of new legislation requiring a conjunction of circumstances unlikely to occur very often; and political institutions having been designed to make change difficult. This chapter would propose another contributor to status quo bias: if we look at the policy process more generally, and not just at issues being actively debated, we might say that the status quo is likely to persist because on most issues there is little demand for change.

This is not to say that the visible conflicts over policy that occupy most of our attention are unimportant. But it is to say that by focusing only on the most visible conflicts, we arrive at a very misleading sense of what the political system as a whole is like.

CONCLUSIONS

How strongly do public opinion and advocacy influence public policy? With regard to public opinion, estimates range from substantial to minimal. With regard to interest groups, on the one hand, “Almost everyone believes that interest groups are influential,” yet on the other, “systematic studies have as often pointed to the limits on interest group influence as have concluded that strong influence exists” (Leech 2010: 696). As to SMOs, there are claims of both “reasonably high movement influence” and “little or no influence” (Amenta et al. 2010: 293).

There is thus considerable debate about the impact of both public opinion and advocacy, but much agreement on how findings should be interpreted. If public opinion has a great deal of influence, that’s good – democracy is working well. If advocacy organizations have a great deal of influence, that’s bad – democracy is working badly.

Reviews of work on the impact of opinion and advocacy proceeded on two tracks. The first took extant work on its own terms, identifying problems, providing suggestions as to how they might be addressed, and
predicting how improvements might affect what we would likely find in future research.

The second track began with the observation that what we know about policy change is based almost entirely on analyses of a small and unrepresentative sample of issues. What would happen if we attempted to generalize about policy change, beginning by selecting a random sample of issues to study? The implications of following the second track could be dramatic – it was suggested that the impact of public opinion and advocacy on policy would necessarily be very low, because for so many issues there would be no public opinion and little or no advocacy.

If this turns out to be true – and the very small amount of evidence available points in that direction – then our interpretation of our findings must change. It would make no sense to imagine that democratic governments could be highly responsive to public opinion, and then find all governments defective by comparison. Nor could we expect democratic governments to be highly responsive to advocacy activities, and to be negatively evaluated accordingly. The normative framework that so strongly affects both our research designs and our interpretation of our findings would cease to be especially relevant.

It has been argued that an effort to generalize should be made central to research on policy change. People do, after all, want to understand the policy process in general, and not just how it manifests itself on particular issues.

But there is certainly no claim that research on specific issues is unimportant. People will continue to study issues that matter to them, and will add to our understanding of the policy process by doing so. Case studies cannot be used to test theories when theories are probabilistic, as they are in the social sciences (Lieberson 1992: 10), but theories can be very helpful in explaining specific outcomes, and case studies, in turn, can suggest ways in which theories can be improved. How strongly might we expect public opinion to affect policy, we can ask, for those policies where public opinion exists? – after we clarify what we mean when we say that public opinion does or doesn’t exist, and consider the possibility that “existence” may be a continuum, and not a matter of yes-or-no.

It is to be hoped that the near future will see continuous improvement in those aspects of the study of policy already being addressed regularly, more attention to concerns that are just coming into view – such as generalization – and innovative efforts to address problems that seem to be on virtually no one’s research agenda, such as systematic approaches to measuring policy.

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Not a day has gone by in these past several years without nationalism appearing in the headlines. Let us, for the sake of this chapter, limit ourselves to the period since 2008, the year of the Beijing Olympics. The event signified Chinese nationalism’s coming of age; it was in no uncertain terms and very publicly presented to the world. The world, unaware that Chinese nationalism existed at all, was caught by surprise, from which it still, over a decade later, cannot quite recover. The rise of nationalism in China was an extremely important development in the history of nationalism in general. It opened a new page: the spread of an essentially Western form of consciousness beyond the limits of its original, monotheistic civilization, or the actual globalization of nationalism. This momentous trend, the significance of which, insofar as the destiny of the world is concerned, can hardly be exaggerated, was later confirmed by the reassertion of nationalism in India. But although Europe and North America were impressed in 2008, albeit momentarily, they have been too preoccupied with themselves to pay this seismic change the attention it demanded.

In our small part of the world, that is, Europe and North America, in the meantime, the most important political events also had to do with nationalism. First, Russia was back on its nationalistic, predatory, imperialist track. Without so much as a peep from leading Western societies, it occupied Crimea and has been steadily pushing into the territory of the Ukraine, which it refuses to see as independent. To the west of the Community of Independent States (of so quickly erased memory) Europe was seething simultaneously with minority nationalisms, encouraged by the existence of the European Union (Catalan in Spain, Northern in Italy, Flemish in Belgium, Scottish in the UK), and majority nationalisms, chafing under the tutelage of the European Union and demanding their sovereignty back in France, Britain (England), the Netherlands, and elsewhere. In the English-language media these latter nationalisms have been
generally referred to as “right-wing” or “populist.” They crested in Brexit, the electoral surge (despite the loss to Macron) of the French “Front National,” and the recent Italian elections. It has been less obvious how to characterize the simultaneously resurgent traditional nationalism in Eastern Europe (in Poland or Hungary, for instance), as, though it is clearly reminiscent of the ethnoracist nationalism of the 1930s and 1940s, it is neither anti-European Union, nor antiintellectual. Anti-Semitism is no longer the distinguishing characteristic of “right-wing” nationalism, which the English-language media, instead, generally identify at present with opposition to unvetted Muslim immigration. After the 2016 presidential Trump victory in the United States, a new synonym of “right-wing” nationalism emerged—“white nationalism.” The media coverage clearly recognizes these heterogeneous political developments since the late 2000s as expressions of nationalism. There is also no mistaking the generally negative attitude toward these expressions, at least, in Western Europe and the USA. What is far less clear is how to explain them.

THE STATE OF THE FIELD

The understanding of nationalism today remains as blurred as it was in 1983, when, after a four-decade-long hiatus, nationalism again emerged as a subject of academic discourse. This reemergence was announced by the publication of Ernest Gellner’s Nations and Nationalism and Benedict Anderson’s Imagined Communities, which three years later were joined by Anthony Smith’s The Ethnic Origins of Nations. These three texts have reigned over the field of nationalism studies until today, ostensibly representing two opposed positions (Gellner and Anderson—modernist, and Smith—primordialist or perennialist or, as it was later called, ethnosymbolist) but otherwise virtually unopposed. All three were theories in the sense that they represented speculative elaborations of the long-established and generally accepted as unquestionable fundamental philosophical narratives underlying the social sciences—narratives dating back to nineteenth-century German philosophy, in particular, and its peculiar mixture of materialism and idealism, rooted in Romanticism and Hegelian (left and right) historicism. All three theories appeared before the disintegration of the Soviet Union into the many separate nations, for 70 years kept together by the iron grip of Russia to the great chagrin of the rest of them, again brought nationalism to the attention of Western intellectuals, who, after the Second World War, had generally treated it as a phenomenon of distant past, surviving only in underdeveloped societies of little interest to the audience these intellectuals addressed. The connection between these theories and the empirical reality of nationalism, therefore, was rather tenuous. Gellner dispensed with empirical phenomena altogether: his theory was “substantiated” by the cases of blue

people, on the one hand, and Ruritanians and Megalomanians, on the other, while Anderson and Smith selected only the examples to which their theories appeared to apply. Only appeared to apply, as the examination of Latin American cases, on which Anderson’s argument focused, demonstrated that his argument did not apply even there (Eastwood 2006).

It is not even certain that the three theorists of nationalism were interested in nationalism as such; it might have been posited as a straw man in an ontological polemic essentially unrelated to it. Anderson, it will be remembered, opened Imagined Communities with a discussion of a “fundamental transformation” within Marxism and Marxist movements, for which the persistence of nations has proven “an uncomfortable anomaly” (if not representing “Marxism’s great historical failure,” as argued Tom Nairn, whom Anderson quoted). The declared aim of his book, thus, was “to offer some tentative suggestions for a more satisfactory interpretation of the ‘anomaly’ of nationalism” – an interpretation more satisfactory from the point of view of the Marxist theory, obviously, that would make nationalism fit in it and eliminate the anomaly (Anderson 1983: 1–4). Anderson wished to save Marxism from embarrassment, not to understand nationalism. Anthony Smith’s ruminations on nationalism were inspired, in the first place, by his family’s fate in the Holocaust (in which 80 percent of his relatives perished) and his own experience of anti-Semitism in post–Second World War England, which naturally made him interested in the history of the Jewish people. Before he emerged as a theorist of nationalism, he studied classics. His familiarity with and personal investment in ancient Israel and ancient Greece predisposed him to question the staunchly modernist position of his teacher, Gellner. Combined with this background, the psychological dynamics of the relationship between Smith, the doctoral student, and his adviser in a way overdetermined the evolution of the primordialist/perennialist theory of nationalism. Again, it was not the interest in nationalism as such, but the importance of a particular way of interpreting it for bolstering an independent historical-anthropological paradigm that was responsible for the nature of the theory.

In fact, the difference between the modernist and ethnosymbolist positions was a difference in emphasis only. All three theorists agreed, on the one hand, that the origins of modern nations were ethnic. At the same time, they also agreed that nations, as such, were modern, under conditions of modernization ethnicity becoming far more effective as a basis of mass mobilization in the service, or oriented toward the establishment, of a separate state, in turn

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2 Consider Gellner’s successive statements on p. 1 of Nations and Nationalism: the postulate in the opening paragraph that nationalism is “a political principle, which holds that the political and national unit should be congruent,” followed several lines later by a modified reiteration that “nationalism is a theory of political legitimacy, which requires that ethnic boundaries should not cut across political ones.” What can this mean but that “national unit” equals “ethnically bounded unit” (Gellner 1983: 1)?
dedicated to serve the systemic needs of modern economy. The entrenched beliefs in a ubiquitous, deep-rooted psychological and ultimately biological allegiance to a species-like, natural primordial community (ethnie) and economic determinism – sociopolitical formations reflecting (and required by) stages of economic development – were seamlessly combined. But, while Gellner and Anderson stressed structural conditions of this development – modernization – Smith placed the emphasis on the raw – ethnic – material out of which modernization fashioned nationalism and nations.

The collapse of the communist order in Eastern Europe a few years after the publication of the three classic discourses forced an entire subdiscipline of various social sciences – Sovietology – to morph into studies of nationalism. By mid-1990s, study of concrete nationalisms in political science and sociology came into fashion, then turned into a mighty industry. Most of the case studies produced were in the manner of natural history in biology before Darwin: description and cataloguing standing for analysis. Knowledge accumulated without deepening understanding; in this sense, the new field was basically atheoretical. It was not perceived as such, however: it was believed that the three speculative theories, those of Gellner, Anderson, and Smith, provided the necessary theoretical framework for it. The theories of nationalism and nationalism studies existed in parallel, having no bearing on each other. The theorists were widely quoted and their arguments never examined critically.

In 2005, the chapter on nationalism in the original Handbook of Political Sociology tried to call attention to this state of affairs in the field of nationalism studies (Greenfeld and Eastwood 2005). It examined the three theories against the political events which were then at the center of public discussion – still preoccupied with the bitterly disappointed but still hoped-for “transition to democracy” following the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Communist bloc, but mostly focused on organized terrorism and its sources in the Muslim Middle East – and argued that they obscured nationalist causes behind the former and altogether blinded one to nationalist causes behind the latter. Its arguments were read and mostly disregarded: the dominant beliefs were proving resistant to logical criticism and to being contradicted by empirical evidence. Their very dominance, the familiarity which made them appear self-evident, has protected them. The case studies which avoid citing Gellner, Anderson, and Smith, though the citations clarify nothing in the data presented and contribute very little to their organization, have been as few since, as before then. The title of Anderson’s book, believed to sum up his theory, “imagined communities,” is probably the most commonly quoted phrase in the literature on nationalism to this day. It explains nothing. All human communities beyond primary groups, as the 2005 chapter already pointed out, are imagined precisely in the sense Anderson ascribes to this word, “imagined,” that is, “because the members . . . will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion” (Anderson 1983: 6). Not a distinguishing
characteristic of any particular kind of human group, being imagined is not a distinguishing characteristic of nations, yet, one author after another, grateful for being able to identify any characteristic (in this case, shared with almost all other communities), feels obliged to cite this truism and pay homage to the great man who elevated it to the position of a theoretical principle.

The dominant theories remain equally irrelevant to the current surge of nationalism. What can Gellner’s scheme of needs of the economy leading to the state leading to uniform education leading to nationalism contribute to the understanding of Brexit or pro-EU but anti-Semitic nationalism in Poland? How does Anderson’s print-capitalism help us to explain “white nationalism” in the US or the spread of nationalism in China? How are we to connect the appeal of the “Front National” or Narendra Modi in the second decade of the twenty-first century to the medieval or millennia-old ethnies which presumably contain the keys for the understanding of the French and Indian nationalisms? The answers to these questions are: Nothing. It doesn’t. We can’t. These theories cannot aid us in any way. The nationalism they speak of is imaginary – not in the sense of being actually imagined by millions of people, and therefore experienced by them and affecting their lives, defining their very reality, but in that of being the product of certain “theoretical” fantasies. It is a theoretical construct and not an empirical phenomenon. But nationalism around us is an empirical phenomenon, and its understanding requires that it be studied as such.

WHAT IS NATIONALISM?

As social scientists have been instructed already by Durkheim, to be understood, social facts must be approached as things (i.e., without theoretical preconceptions) and systematically through history (Durkheim 1964). Unless we know that a characteristic of human social arrangements is universal – in which case it is not a social fact but, rather, a fact of biology – we must assume that it is a product of historical contingency, that, in other words, it emerged at a particular place at a particular point in history. We know that nationalism is not universal, because numerous societies around the world, including all known societies before the early modern period, offer no evidence whatsoever that either the word itself or the institutions (i.e., ways of thinking and feeling, to quote Durkheim [1964: 142] again) associated with it were known to them. Therefore, we must start with finding where and when these indicators of the phenomenon first appeared. It is not good enough to focus arbitrarily on one of the places where they happen to be known today (or, for instance, in the eighteenth century, as Anderson does with Latin America); we must start in the beginning. Only in identifying the place and time of its emergence can we sufficiently control the context, analyze all the relevant circumstances, and answer the question why it emerged – that is, go beyond descriptive “natural history” and attempt a causal explanation. Such identification of the time and
place of birth, in addition, makes possible the development of the initial
definition of nationalism, which, in comparison with later cases, helps to
separate its essential features from those of its particular expressions and to
trace the evolution of historical types.

As one of the authors of the present chapter has argued on numerous
occasions, nationalism emerged in England in the early sixteenth century, the
analysis of the new English concepts and institutions of that period making clear
that the phenomenon was essentially a new form of consciousness. This
consciousness, later named national consciousness, by the end of the sixteenth
century, in England had replaced the religious consciousness of the feudal society
of orders and, instead, implied a secular (focused on this world) image of
sociopolitical reality as consisting of sovereign communities of fundamentally
equal members. Sixteenth-century English called such communities nations –
thus, the name of the phenomenon: nationalism.

The institutions which reflected the revolutionary principles of popular
sovereignty and fundamental equality of membership that lay at the core of
the new consciousness included such hallmarks of modernity as the fluid system
of stratification founded on achievement-based characteristics, transferable
between families, such as money and education, which allowed and
encouraged social mobility; the impersonal form of government, called the
state, in which positions were open to men irrespective of birth, and civil
society – forms of legitimate political participation outside the state; the
economy oriented to growth, rather than subsistence, later called capitalism;
marriage based on personal choice; the new concept of individual as an
autonomous agent and a completely new valuation of the human life. All of
these were connected to the transformation effected by nationalism of personal
identity among those who developed the new consciousness. The image of the
world as consisting of sovereign communities of fundamentally equal members
made the personal identity of every human individual, sharing in the sovereignty
and equal to every other member in one’s community, dignified and further
added to the dignity of the members of dignified communities. If before, in the
society of orders, only members of narrow upper strata knew dignity, with
nationalism dignity became the possession and experience of all.

It was this implication of dignity that made nationalism so appealing,
ensuring the conversion of the population en masse to the new, national,
consciousness within less than a century since its first appearance in England,
and then, as it was observed and imported in the course of the following
centuries, the conversion to it of at least the educated strata in other societies.
And it has been dignity that furnished the bone of contention in all the political
conflicts both within and between nations. Within nations, the focus of conflict
has always been the share of different groups in the sovereignty of the
community and the degree of equality with other groups a particular group
actually enjoyed: a group that suspected that it has not been given its fair share
and enjoyed less than full equality necessarily feeling wounded in its dignity.
The conflict between nations has focused on the degree of respect paid to the aggrieved nation, which initiated the conflict, by the international community relative to the other nation(s) by which it considered itself aggrieved, reflected in the subjective sense of national inferiority of the former vis-à-vis the latter. The other side of this emphasis on dignity has been envy, specifically existential envy, or ressentiment\(^3\) – incessant comparison between one’s own community and that of the (significant) others, which, experienced as humiliating, would lead to the desire to humiliate, if not to eliminate altogether, these others. *Ressentiment* was the central psychological factor in the formation of many nationalisms from the eighteenth century on, but it is important to note that it is not characteristic of nationalisms outside of the monotheistic civilization, such as Japanese or Chinese.

This empirically grounded understanding of nationalism accounts for every instance of nationalism, including those in the headlines today and in the past decade. Underneath them, too, lies preoccupation with dignity and, very often, the sense of wounded dignity accompanied with envy. It is these psychological dynamics that lie behind the recent law against mentioning the complicity of Poles in the Holocaust in Poland and the election results in Italy, behind the reassertion of Russia’s imperial ambitions and revisiting the cooperation with the SS in the Ukraine, the “Front National” in France, Brexit, and demands for independence in Catalonia, the rise of China and growing ambivalence regarding globalization in the United States, and so on and so forth. Characterizing these developments in terms of left, right, white, black, or, in general, positive or negative does nothing to clarify their nature. Unfortunately, it is this “line of analysis” that seems to be preferred by most specialists.

**MOVING BETWEEN LEFT AND RIGHT OR MUSICAL CHAIRS**

A cursory glance at discussions of nationalism in the print and online media, which reveals it as a subject of intense preoccupation, also makes it clear that nationalism in Europe and the United States today is largely identified as a phenomenon of political right, nativism, chauvinism, even racism. A new type of nationalism (often referred to as “populism”) seems to have been discovered – “white nationalism,” quite different from “black nationalism,” for instance, that was never interpreted as a form of racism and was generally placed on the left of the political spectrum.\(^4\) The attitude to nationalism as a right-wing phenomenon was initially provoked by events in Western Europe, related to the growing dissatisfaction with the European Union (e.g., Brexit) and policies regarding immigration from the Middle East, but became especially evident with President Trump’s victory in November 1916. This attitude is not new: it is similar to the one which prevailed around the Second World War and in its

\(^3\) For more discussions on *ressentiment*, see Greenfeld (1992: 15–17).

\(^4\) For a comprehensive survey, see H-Nationalism, issues from March 5, 2016 to August 19, 2017.
aftermath. But it is very different from the view of nationalism that followed the collapse of the Soviet Union: then nationalism seemed to express the desire for the open society, the spirit of revolt against tyranny. This also was not new. During the period known as “the Spring of the Nations,” when Marx was penning his famous manifesto, it was easy to mistake nationalism for communism: in 1848, socialism, communism, and nationalism generally stood for the same thing; communism was only the most radical form of nationalism; and nationalism was, fundamentally, a movement of the left.

Where does nationalism belong – on the left or on the right? Does it change sides? And what can we learn from the evidently changing, and thus confusing, relationship between right, left, and nationalism?

Posing the first two questions (as well as the identification of nationalism with either of the two sides of the political spectrum) presupposes that nationalism is a uniform phenomenon, which is not so. Analysis of empirical cases of nationalism demonstrates that nationalism exists in at least three varieties, very different in their political sympathies and implications. The first lesson from the examination suggested by our questions, therefore, is that the very discussion in such general terms is misleading. It may be asked further: Which type(s) of nationalism belong to the left, and which to the right? But it turns out that, pursuing this line of questioning, we learn much more about the nature of left and right than about nationalism, though we do learn that the political spectrum and nationalism are tightly connected. Rather than being defined (or characterized) by belonging to the one or the other side of the political spectrum, however, nationalism defines the entire spectrum itself: in fact, our political spectrum can only exist in the framework of nationalism.

The familiar terms of “left” and “right” first acquired their political meaning in 1789, at the start of the French Revolution. This pivotal event in many ways inaugurated the Age of Nationalism and was the first collective expression of national consciousness in France. France itself was the first society into which this new spirit was imported from Britain, where it was born. The Revolution was inspired by nationalism and represented an attack on the prenational form of the social order – ancien régime – and the social consciousness on which it was based. This, old regime, social consciousness was religious, monarchical, and hierarchical, thus presupposing the obedience of the secular world to divine authority, differences of fundamental nature between social strata, and corresponding differences in rights between them. In distinction, national consciousness is secular, democratic, and egalitarian, presupposing popular sovereignty and an egalitarian community of identity, inclusive of the entire population of the country. As noted above, because England, where this consciousness emerged, called such community “nation,” “nationalism” is the name for the related complex of phenomena.

5 The three types of nationalism are: individualistic and civic, collectivistic and civic, and collectivistic and ethnic. For more details, see Greenfeld (2016a: 33–34).
The use of “nation” and related terms became common in France only in the second half of the eighteenth century. At the same time, discussions of the proper constitution of society (that it was supposed to be constituted as a nation) and of the nature of a legitimate government (which had to respect popular sovereignty) dramatically increased, with the new terms replacing the traditional vocabulary of political discourse that stressed the royal prerogative and the distinction of ranks. The motto of the Revolution, *Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité*, symbolized this shift and captured the essence of the new consciousness: the inclusive nature of the community, the fundamental equality of all its members, and the right of every member to participate in its government. Precisely the same republican and secular thinking was reflected in the decision to name the assembly of the Third Estate (i.e., the commoners) as the “National Assembly.” It is interesting that the representatives of the Third Estate (who were all notables, if not nobles, thus members of the privileged strata) chose to identify themselves with an entirely new entity – the nation. In England, from which the idea was imported, since the sixteenth century, when the word “nation” first came into general usage, it was the synonym of the word “people” (and it was this equation which made the nation an inclusive community of identity). But in France, in 1789, “people” still had the connotation of the lower classes, the rabble, and the revolutionaries in the assembly were reluctant to openly declare themselves representatives of the uneducated, uncouth masses, to which the word referred (Greenfeld 1992).

In the National Assembly, groups with similar views, or parties, seated themselves apart from the groups with which they disagreed, and eventually ideological positions became identified with positions in the building of what had been the royal riding academy, in which the assembly met. The radicals, those who believed that all the vestiges of the old, prenational, order had to be swept aside, became known as *the left*, the moderates, who thought that some elements of the old order, such as religion or, however redefined, monarchy, were integral to the French nation, and therefore should be kept, as *the right*. Those in the middle, or the center, who did not make up their mind one way or the other, incidentally, were called “the swamp.” In other words, originally, both those of the left and those of the right were nationalists; they all represented the new force of nationalism, while the terms “left” and “right,” in revolutionary politics, stood for radical and moderate forms of nationalism. Radical nationalists, specifically, were more eager to equate the nation and the common people; the left nationalism, therefore, could be called populism (Billington 1980).

The radicals had a clear agenda, were more activist, and acted, while the moderates mostly reacted to their actions. This identified the left with moving forward, and the right with reaction. The radicals wished to destroy the old order in its entirety; the moderates wanted to preserve parts of it. As a result, the left came to represent orientation toward the future, change for the better, progress, and the right – holding on to the past, conservatism. The revolution
was inspired by nationalism. It represented the triumph of and the conversion of the French to national consciousness. Because it was a result of a conversion, like in parallel religious experiences, this consciousness appeared to the converts as the only true, natural consciousness. The newness of nationalism thus disappeared from the sight of the participants and they were no longer aware that it shaped the political positions of both the radicals (the left) and the moderates (the right). The British observers of the Revolution, converted to the new consciousness since the sixteenth century, and British colonists in America, who brought it with them to the New World, were also oblivious of that. Thus, the left and the right became cognitively separated from nationalism, different forms of which (radical and moderate) they represented.

Nationalism redefined the good and the just. It now appeared patently unjust, unnatural, and evil, if a social order did not correspond to the way a nation was supposed to be organized – as a sovereign community of fundamentally equal members, an inclusive community of identity. Every relic of such injustice demanded immediate correction; it could not be tolerated. The demand for such immediate correction and every action undertaken to promote it was natural and good, while every effort to slow it down unnatural and evil. By the mid-nineteenth century such correction was identified with the direction of History: it was, in the words of Marx, “recognized necessity”: History itself demanded reconstruction of politics and society in accordance with national – that is, egalitarian and respectful of popular sovereignty, democratic – consciousness. All other views were false consciousness, while freedom was defined as willingly following History’s direction.

This transformation of consciousness was reflected in several tropes (i.e., absolutely self-evident truths which require no analysis and admit of no questioning) which frame our thinking until today: all change is progress, desire for change is progressive, progressive is good, clinging to the past is bad, conservative is clinging to the past, reaction to change is bad, conservative is reactionary is bad; the left is progressive, the right is reactionary and conservative; the left follows the direction of history, the right opposes it; the left is good, the right is bad. One can see these tropes in the fact that parties of the left have had no problem in identifying themselves as of the left, while those of the right have been generally very reluctant to class themselves with the right. In politics, “left” is a term of approbation and “right” of opprobrium. At the same time, the specific meanings of “progressive” and “conservative,” of “the direction of history” and “reaction,” constantly change and the connection of all modern political agenda with nationalism is hidden from view.

As the idea of the nation was imported from the place of its birth, three types of nationalism appeared, depending, on the one hand, on whether the national community was defined as an association of individuals or as a collective individual, and, on the other hand, on whether membership in the community was believed to be voluntary or biologically determined. The individualistic conception of the nation and voluntary membership produced the original,
English (later British, American, Australian) *individualistic and civic* type of nationalism. The collectivistic conception of the nation and voluntary membership resulted in the *collectivistic and civic* type, adopted by France. Most of the nations which were formed after the French Revolution combined the collectivistic definition of the nation with the belief that membership was determined by blood and developed the *collectivistic and ethnic* type of nationalism. The interpretation of the core values of nationalism—liberty, equality, and fraternity—differed along both axes. Individualistic nationalisms, in general, put the stress on liberty, specifically, the freedom of choice, and interpreted equality as equality of opportunity; collectivistic nationalisms emphasized equality, interpreting it mostly as equality of result. Civic nationalisms, in principle implied that the nation was an open society, while nationalisms of ethnic type limited fraternity to the born members of the presumably biological, naturally self-enclosed grouping (Greenfeld 1992, 2016a).

Throughout the nineteenth century, political categories of “left” and “right” were generally inapplicable to individualistic nations. England, the original nation, broke with the past more decisively and much earlier than any other society, and was inherently geared for change and forward-looking, without the need to articulate these national attitudes in elaborate ideologies. It was definitely on the side of progress, but defined progress mostly in economic terms and in terms of science and technology. Modern economy—the economy oriented to growth, later called “capitalism”—which constantly increased the wealth of the nation, was a product of this understanding of progress. In collectivistic nations, by contrast, progress was defined in terms of social justice, the equal share of all the members in the collective pie, however stationary. The orientation to this goal went by the names of “socialism” and “communism,” which were, in effect, radical—that is, left—forms of collectivistic nationalism. Though fundamentally political, this orientation implied opposition to private property, to those who had a lot of it, and to the pursuit of profit in the abstract. Thus, socialism became identified with anticapitalism, making capitalism an economy and its political correlate, liberalism, the doctrine of individual freedom and equality of opportunity, anti-socialism, and, therefore, of the right. This, second phase in the relationship between left, right, and nationalism was, to a large extent, a product of Marx’s reinterpretation of the struggle between nations for national prestige as the fundamentally economic class struggle between the proletariat, working class (for Marx, embodied by Germany), and the moneyed capitalist class, or Capital (represented in his view by France and England).  

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This Marxist reinterpretation had a particular effect in Russia. The Russian Revolution of 1917, which occupied a place in the twentieth-century Western imagination similar to that which the French Revolution held in the imagination of the nineteenth century, was called the Socialist Revolution, and its declared antagonist was Capitalism. The categories of “left” and “right” in this conflict continued to resonate with the intelligentsia in Western Europe, this time traveling also to the United States, for American educated elites disliked capitalism for their own reasons. But the inspiration behind the Russian Revolution was, again, nationalism, which the sympathizers from abroad failed to notice. Lenin, in particular, was quite clear that its task was to redeem the honor of the Russian nation, proving that, rather than stuck in deep feudalism, it was the most progressive nation of all. The immediate ancestor of Lenin’s party was the movement of worshippers of the people – Narodniks – “Populists” in English. The people (narod) in question was the Russian people, defined by blood. However, Russia ruled over a huge empire, and it was not in the interest of Russian nationalists (Socialists as they were) to give it up. To advance Russia’s national agenda, they had to co-opt the left in the numerous non-Russian nations within its imperial dominions. In the country of victorious socialism, nationality (i.e., Russian, Georgian, etc.) defined by blood, as a race, was the most important social category: only nationality, not class or religion, was inscribed in the internal passport of every Soviet citizen. But, ostensibly, the Soviet Union stood for internationalism.

Which brings us to the next phase in the relationship between left, right, and nationalism – the phase in which left and right congregated in socialism and for a while applied only to varieties within it. The reason for this was the socialist revolution in Germany. For, while the triumph of National Socialism was not referred to as a revolution, it certainly was one by definition, presupposing and achieving a radical transformation of the entire social and political order in accordance with an explicit ideological blueprint. The choice of the Jewish people as the enemy of German socialism and the systemic violence of its anti-Semitism apart, there was very little difference between German and Russian nationalisms (both belonged to the collectivistic and ethnic, i.e., racist, type) and, consequently, between their varieties of socialism. Goebbels, in fact, originally considered the sobriquet “National Bolshevism” for the German movement, but it sounded too obviously borrowed. Instead, National Socialists depicted both Bolshevism in the East and Capitalism in the West as Jewish inventions, deployed by the Jews in the interest of achieving world domination (Lane and Rupp 1978).

As, in the eyes of the world, the Soviet Union was the country of the left – the geopolitical embodiment of the left vision – the confrontation of the two

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8 “Anti-Semitism,” German socialists said, was “socialism of the simple-minded,” see Pulzer (1988: 262).
socialist (collectivistic nationalist) regimes logically placed both German socialism and nationalism, which in its case was explicitly acknowledged and emphasized (while in the Russian case, it was only implicit and rhetorically concealed), on the right. Still, the very concept of socialism of the right was awkward: it undermined too many political tropes. Thus, it was systematically occluded: its opponents took care never to spell out the acronym “Nazism” and to group the phenomena to which it referred not with socialism but as a variety of Fascism – a contemporary political movement, whose appellation, derived from Latin *fascis* (Italian *fasci*) – a word used in ancient Rome for a ceremonial bundle of rods – in no way disclosed its nature.

Remarkably, in Italy, *fasci* was originally used for syndicates, political organizations equivalent to guilds or trade unions. Moreover, the founder and acclaimed leader of the Revolutionary Fascist Party (which later became the National Fascist Party of Italy and stood at the helm of Italian Social Republic), Benito Mussolini, before becoming a fascist leader was a prominent Socialist – the editor of the Italian Socialist Party’s newspaper *Avanti!* – and certainly admired Lenin much more than he would ever admire Hitler (Talmon 1981).

A gulf separated Fascism from Nazism, which reflected the profound difference between Italian and German nationalisms: both were collectivistic (the tendency to Socialism), but Italian nationalism was civic, while German – ethnic (or racist). One of the greatest heroes of the Second World War, who in occupied Budapest managed to save the lives of some 6,000 Jewish children, women, and men, audaciously spiriting them from Eichmann’s very clutches, was an Italian fascist, Giorgio Perlasca. He accomplished this with the help of the representative of Fascist Spain, Angel Sanz Briz (“the Angel of Budapest”). When asked, long after the war, how come, a fascist, he risked his life to save Jews, he said: “I was an anti-Nazi” (Deaglio 2013).

The word “fascism,” however, conveniently for socialists of the left, concealed all this. The tropes that organize our reality were preserved: Socialism is good, therefore it is of the left; National Socialism is bad and, as such, of the right, therefore it is Fascism and not Socialism.

After the Allied victory in the Second World War, faced by the reality of the Holocaust and embarrassed by the de facto acquiescence of the West to it, Western intelligentsia desperately desired to be on the side of the good. The intelligentsia blamed the acquiescence to the Holocaust on classical liberalism, with its stress on individual freedom, which implied the right to be indifferent to the suffering of others and the right to use one’s strengths to outcompete the weaker, which now appeared woefully inadequate – in fact not that different from fascism itself. Specifically, in the United States, this dramatically increased the appeal of Marxism, socialism, communism, anticapitalism, prompting leading sections of the intelligentsia to self-identify as the left. At the same

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9 How explicit this was may be seen in Eugenia Ginzburg’s *Krutoi Marshrut (A Journey into the Whirlwind)*, Book Two, Chapter 12.
time, nationalism as such (not a particular type of nationalism) was associated with gore and brutal primeval instincts and defined as the very opposite of what was progressive and followed the direction of history. For some 40 years, it was banished from discourse (among others, academic) and considered completely irrelevant to the life of nations. History equaled progress and was perceived by the majority of intellectuals as leftward oriented – just as Marx originally predicted – toward inter- and, in effect, trans-nationalism.

Paradoxically, inside the United States, this coincided with growing concern with the rights of ethnic and racial minorities and soon other groups underrepresented in the elites – women above all – constituted as groups by physical, genetic, characteristics. These groups were presumed to be separate (in this sense, exclusive) inclusive (i.e., cutting through lines of status and class) communities of natural identity, in exact parallel to the way in which exclusive, ethnic nations were imagined in the framework of collectivistic-ethnic nationalisms, such as German and Russian. They all were presumed to be opposed to and suffering under the heel of the privileged or majority group, also naturally (biologically) constituted and also representing an inclusive community of identity – that of white heterosexual males. (Interestingly, the Jewish people, whose genocidal persecution, with the shocking fact that the United States turned a resolutely deaf ear to it, lay at the root of this concern with the suffering of the oppressed, was not included among the suffering minorities, but, by dint of the whiteness of its European members, was associated with the privileged majority.)

In addition, the left-leaning intelligentsia’s predilection for transcending the retrograde national loyalties coexisted with the sympathy for national liberation movements and revolutions – namely, nationalism, struggle for national sovereignty – in what emerged after the war as the Third World. Also viewed as anti-imperialism and anticolonialism, Third World nationalism, whose standard-bearers were regularly educated in Moscow’s Institute of the Peoples’ Friendship, named after Patrice Lumumba, generally identified as Marxist and were politically and militarily backed by the Soviet Union. But there was a contradiction between Marx’s insistence on the solidarity of the working masses across national borders and efforts to create inclusive blood-based communities in total disregard of such exclusive proletarian class loyalty. Class warfare was, in effect, forgotten.

The end of the Cold War made this transformation of consciousness explicit and cleft the American society into two openly warring sections. So long as the Soviet Union existed, there was a threat to the American way of life and a concern for it: it was valued. The moment the threat to it disappeared, the way

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10 This is the period between the publication of Hans Kohn’s The Idea of Nationalism: a Study in its Origins and Background (1944) and the 1983 books by Benedict Anderson (Imagined Communities) and Ernest Gellner (Nations and Nationalism) that made nationalism a subject for academic discussion again.
of life itself lost its value for large sectors of the American population and they, it may be said, lost the sense of their national identity. Though their consciousness is still national consciousness – they still see the world as divided into sovereign communities of fundamentally equal members – this consciousness no longer reflects the specifically American, individualistic and civic, nationalism. Today, close to 50 percent of college students prefer socialism – though no longer identify with the working class and its struggle – to capitalism, an opinion shared by over 40 percent in the millennial generation (born between 1981 and 1997) in general.\textsuperscript{11} The loss of confidence and pride in the American way of life reinforces the sense of, and greatly contributes to, America’s decline as a superpower, which began almost immediately after its so-called victory over the Soviet Union. Both this decline and the outspoken contempt for American individualistic values offend those Americans who still identify as Americans above all – the less educated people in Middle America – and they reassert their national identity. This national identity is the only thing they have to be proud of, the only quality that justifies their claim to dignity.

As already noted above, the appeal of nationalism rests on endowing personal identity with dignity to the extent no other cultural framework or form of consciousness does. This personal dignity is the function of the presumption that nations are sovereign communities of fundamentally equal members, which makes every individual member equal in human worth to every other member, sovereign, and their own maker. To denigrate one’s national identity (in this case, one’s being an American), to deny this fundamental equality of individuals in human worth, whether for the reason of different individual achievements or for the reason of belonging to different subnational groups, is to deprive one of dignity. For many people, especially for those who have little else, dignity is more precious than any economic benefit.\textsuperscript{12} This explains the rise of (mostly but by no means only white) working-class nationalism in the United States. It also explains its resurgence in Western Europe.

The effect of the end of the Cold War in Western Europe, less stark than in the United States for obvious reasons, has been similar and was exacerbated by the anemic nature of the European Union – its inability to make British, Dutch, French, and Italian people feel better about themselves, in other words, add to their dignity. This disparity between the leading European nations and Europe as a whole in \textit{dignity capital}\textsuperscript{13} has been behind the inability, despite concerted effort, of the European Union to construct a common European identity (White 2010; Sassatelli 2009). It is, after all, these nations’ membership in it that makes


\textsuperscript{12} This, indeed, is the reason why the poorest Americans, regardless of race or sex, are the most patriotic. See Duina (2017). See also in this connection Vance (2018).

\textsuperscript{13} For more discussions on this concept, see Greenfeld (2016a).
Europe what it is in the eyes of outsiders. It is because Europe is home to Britain, France, Italy, and the Netherlands, that Russian leaders since the eighteenth century insist on Russia’s being “a European nation,” and that the support for the Union is so much stronger in Eastern Europe. Eastern European nations and Russia, with its enormous riches and most of its colossal territory in Asia but low international prestige nevertheless, wish to share in the dignity capital of the leading Western European nations, but to common members of these nations, who do not want to increase the sphere of their influence (economic, intellectual, political), because they have none to begin with, European membership adds nothing.

Dignity differentials explain much in the identity politics of specific European societies (as they do of societies elsewhere). It is the lack of national dignity capital that explains why Germany is so invested in the European Union: its individual national past condemns Germany to shame – its leadership of Europe offers the nation a new life. Unfortunately for Germany, redemption of its dignity depends on its Western neighbors’ sharing its enthusiasm for united Europe: there is not much honor in leading Poland or even Greece. Similarly, it is a problem with dignity that lies at the root of Catalan nationalism, Catalans finding more dignity in their separate identity than in the common Spanish one: the unwillingness of the Spanish government to treat Catalonia with respect commensurate with this sense of dignity fanned what were initially demands only for a greater autonomy into current calls for independence. It remains to be seen how recent attacks in the province by Islamic terrorists, which unite Madrid and Barcelona in a common cause, will affect the mood.

To return to the discussion of nationalism and the political spectrum, characterizing nationalism as left- or right-wing does not help us to understand nationalism but, instead, obfuscates it. The political concepts of left and right emerged in the framework of nationalism and because of it; they have no meaning outside this framework. Very early on in the history of their use, they became cultural tropes, left standing for good, and right for bad. It is because these are tropes that the terms “left” and “right” remain evocative and appear sufficient as explanations, however changeable and confusing their actual meanings are. In terms of these actual meanings, “left” and “right” today refer to the very opposite of what they referred to at different times in the past. “Left” – the good, the progressive – originally referred to radical nationalism, the veneration of the common majority of the nation, “populism.” “Right,” in contrast, stood for moderate nationalism, the defense of the freedom to differ, rights of minorities, including elites, and respect for outsiders. Then “left” became specifically identified, as “socialism,” with class struggle, the working class, and the interests of the leading “proletarian nation” – Russia – while the “right” stood for international, in fact, globalizing, “capitalism.” Later still, “left” became the name for internationalism and defense of universal human rights, and “right” was connected to dividing humanity into groups defined by blood or their (ultimately biological) nature. Today “left” stands for the rights of such
biologically defined, exclusive groups, on the one hand, and for economic globalization – international capitalism – on the other.

GLOBALIZATION OF NATIONALISM: CHINA

The relationship between nationalism and globalization is at least as misunderstood as the one between nationalism and the political spectrum. Globalization is believed to bring the countries of the world closer together in a network of economic interdependence, making war irrational and, as a result, promoting peace. Every day we see this belief refuted in the news around the globe. At the same time, the countries of the world are being, indeed, united in a common cultural framework. This cultural framework is national consciousness; what we are witnessing is globalization of nationalism. In the decades after the end of the Cold War, nationalism was reasserted in Russia, spread in China and India, grew more explicit in Latin America, and is daily gaining new converts around the world. The reason for its globalization is that, by making common individual shareholders in, and contributors to, the dignity of their nations, it dignifies their personal identities. Wherever it spreads, nationalism makes societies competitive. International competition is, above all, competition for prestige, standing in the world. It is pursued through all the means available: cultural, economic, political, military. As the competition for prestige is a zero-sum game (prestige gained by one party is necessarily lost by another), it is far more likely to promote conflict than peace.

The most spectacular change in the political arena in the last quarter of a century, which resulted in the essential redrawing of the entire political map, has been the rise of China. China’s coming out occurred at the 2008 Beijing Olympics, where the debutante presented herself aglow with national pride and confidence, announcing in no uncertain terms that it was now ready to demand for itself a place commensurate with its enormous cultural and human resources. This meant that the country was fully motivated to compete with the United States, in particular, and wrestle from its hands, the status of the only superpower, which, it was still believed, the United States enjoyed unchallenged since the collapse of the Soviet Union. This unmistakable competitive motivation reflected the spread of the national consciousness throughout the many hundreds of millions of Chinese. This motivation was new and caught the world by surprise.

Nationalism itself was new in China, but not that new. It was brought there by the humiliating defeat in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–1895, taking root within the narrow (but, given that this was China, numerically very large) stratum of intellectuals, civil servants, and army officers. The conversion of

the educated elite to national consciousness in China was very rapid: already in 1911, it led to the establishment of the Republic (in accordance with the nationalist principle of popular sovereignty and fundamental equality) and quickly after that to the split of the nationalist movement into the explicitly named Nationalist Party – the Kuomintang – in 1919, and the Communist Party in 1921, which would successively rule over China until today. The efforts of the elites to instill national consciousness in the population, however, throughout most of the twentieth century, were not successful: Continuous paternalistic government, supported by a Confucian tradition thousands of years old, also instilling the belief that one’s worth was determined by one’s actual achievements and not the divine spark immanent in humanity itself, made Chinese masses indifferent to the values of popular sovereignty and fundamental equality of membership.\(^{15}\)

The situation changed dramatically after 1978, with the implementation of Deng Xiaoping’s so-called “Reform and Open-up” policies. Nationalist literature proliferated\(^{16}\) following the 1995–1996 Taiwan Strait Crises, during which international attention was briefly caught by the unusually assertive position of the Chinese government against the ambiguous American attitude regarding Taiwan’s independence; in 1999, the accidental bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade provoked student protests across China, and so on (Fong 2004). Understanding what in Deng Xiaoping’s reforms made the Chinese population warm to national consciousness and enthusiastically embrace it after a delay of three-quarters of a century and indifference to the calls of their government, finally allowing this colossal breakthrough in nationalism’s globalization, could not only offer us a clue to the nature of nationalism in China, but also deepen our understanding of the phenomenon in general. Unfortunately, so far no one focused on this groundbreaking moment in Chinese history. After it was no longer possible to disregard Chinese nationalism, its study promptly fell victim to the same problems that have plagued the study of nationalism in the West. The most common guiding principle in the existing scholarly literature on the subject, apparently, is Benedict Anderson’s proposition that a nation is an imagined community (Carlson 2009).

Though very few people watched the development of Chinese nationalism before 2008, even in China itself, this literature accumulates. According to the publication records provided by China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI), the only scholarship on Chinese nationalism to appear between the

\(^{15}\) This is not to say that national consciousness did not spread at all: it is likely that it penetrated, for instance, broad sectors within the membership of the Nationalist and the Communist parties. For an argument that nationalism spread among the masses, see Wei and Liu (2001).

\(^{16}\) For example, Song Qiang et al., *China Can Say “No”* (*Zhongguo ke yi shuo bu*) became the best seller. For other examples, see discussions in Lee (1995); also see more recent discussions in Tan (2010) and in Hughes (2011).
mid-1950s and Deng Xiaoping’s reforms in mainland China was some guarded discussion of the thought of early nationalists, such as Liang Qichao and Sun Yat-Sen.\textsuperscript{17} Outside China, according to Allen Carlson, nationalism was simply not on China scholars’ radar screen throughout the 1980s, and the literature on it until the mid-1990s remained sparse (Carlson 2009: 21–22). Within the next decade, Chinese scholars Zhao Suisheng and Zheng Yongnian, and Western authors Edward Friedman, Geremie Barmé, Peter Gries, and Christopher Hughes characterized Chinese nationalism as “aggrieved” and attributed it to the “humiliation century,” beginning with the Opium Wars – the counterpart of Western colonialism in other regions (Zhao 1998; Zheng 1999; Friedman 1994; Barmé 1994; Gries 2004; Hughes 2006). At the same time, they doubted the authenticity of recent Chinese national sentiment, interpreting it as state-led, a product of the so-called “patriotic education campaign” launched by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) after the Tiananmen Square incident of 1989. Opinions differed regarding the authenticity of state nationalism itself: Were the concerns of state actors with national dignity and humiliation sincere, or was nationalism just a tool in the hands of the government, used pragmatically either to legitimize the rule of the Communist Party or as a bargaining chip with foreign powers, such as the US and Japan?

Studies after the 2008 Beijing Olympics mostly confine themselves to the description of the situation. They stress China’s growing confidence, expressed in the assertiveness of the government in foreign relations, and pay close attention to the changing official narratives, which are clearly taking greater pride these days in China’s past. Former Chinese president Hu Jintao’s advocacy of Confucian ideas of “harmonious society” is followed by current president Xi Jinping’s postulation of the “Chinese Dream” (by analogy to the American dream). This reaffirmation of China’s past and cultural specificity is seen by scholars as more nationalistic than Deng’s calls for the “invigoration” or “rejuvenation” of China (Callahan 2014). A Chinese author, based in the US, Wang Zhen, explains that the Chinese Dream conveys hope and glory, instead of focusing on failings and shortcomings, requiring correction (Wang 2014). After 2008, scholars also notice the change in the attitudes of Chinese public to the West and Japan. It has been argued that the CCP official narratives about the West changed quite dramatically from pro- to anti-Western already after the Tiananmen Square Incident in 1989 (Zhao 1998; Tan 2010). But among the populace the admiration for Western society (and Japan) as societies to look up to persisted until the Beijing Olympics, which caused the Chinese to perceive their country’s strength and notice that both the West and Japan were declining (Liu and Hong 2010; Li et al. 2010). Some scholars note that attitudes to these countries remain contradictory (not surprising, given how recent is the change): urban Chinese youth, on the one hand, embraces Western popular culture and

consumer goods, and, on the other, resents Western political ideologies. Chinese authors characterize this contradiction as “consumerist behaviour,”\textsuperscript{18} apparently limiting themselves to this by the way of interpretation. However, Neil Diamant, a Western scholar, doubts the seriousness of nationalism expressed in this way, calling the young Chinese who take to the streets or cyberspace to protest one day but then apply for US visas the next, “Caffè Latte” nationalists (Diamant 2012: 494–499).

In these descriptions of the current situation, “cybernationalism” is considered to be a meaningful concept, a “new arrival” in the field of nationalism studies, and its common deployment is seen as a mark of analytical sophistication. The use of the Internet and various social media is believed to contribute to China’s “democratization” (as it was also believed to reflect in the events of the “Arab Spring,” so soon eclipsed by the brutal heat of the Syrian Civil War and the struggle with ISIS). Democratization, like in Eastern Europe after the collapse of the Soviet Union, is identified with nationalism (as, indeed, it should be), which leads to the optimistic prediction that technology will increase the influence of public opinion on CCP policies and to the conclusion, remarkable in its complete independence from logic, that the development of Chinese nationalism is a result of the interaction between state and society (Cheng 2011; Weiss 2014; Cairns and Carlson 2016).

Though current literature on Chinese nationalism does not contribute much to our understanding of the phenomenon, it contains a great deal of empirical data and has other merits. Nationalism has been a politically sensitive subject in China, because, among other things, it suggests separatist aspirations among minority ethnicities in Tibet and Xinjiang, desires for actual independence in Hong Kong, and the possible legitimacy of the independent Taiwan (unacceptable for Beijing). The very word “nationalism” would be often considered politically incorrect, requiring euphemisms which could not but obscure discussion. As elsewhere under similar circumstances, this prevented an open and objective scholarship. The rapid spread of national consciousness following Deng’s reforms prompted translations into Chinese of central Western texts in nationalism studies, while focus on Chinese nationalism in the West after 2008 allowed ever more numerous Chinese scholars and students to come and study it abroad. However derivative, current literature provides continuous inspiration for and keeps the discussion ongoing.

At this point in time, its shortcomings stem mainly from excessive reliance on the dominant approach to nationalism in the West. As mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, the greatest problem with both the modernist and perennialist/primordialist theories is that nationalism in them is not adequately defined, which makes these theories empirically unfocused, logically inconsistent, and untestable – in short, depriving them of scientific validity. This lack of definition, among other things, allows for desultory discussions of

\textsuperscript{18} See, for example, Han (2015).
“patriotism,” “xenophobia,” and “separatism” (Chinese nationalism, foreign nationalism, and nationalism of ethnic minorities in China). It also leads to simultaneous treatment of Chinese nationalism as a natural function of the country’s 5,000 years of uninterrupted cultural traditions (the outgrowth of the Chinese ethnie à la Smith), as a similarly natural psychological reaction to the “century of humiliation,” following the presumably naturally offensive Opium Wars (the awakening of ubiquitous psychological forces à la Ignatieff [1994]), and modern, fundamentally economic in character, development, in accordance with the structuralist argument of Gellner, Anderson, etc. Having no notion of what nationalism as such is, students of Chinese nationalism attempt to capture the character of their specific subject with the help of descriptive epithets, possibly believing that this way they are creating a typology. Common epithets of nationalism include: defensive, reactive, assertive, confident, face, pragmatic, pessimistic, antiforeign, anti-Japanese, anti-imperialist, antidemocratic, official, state-led, popular, Han, and Confucian. None of them helps in the understanding of the subject, some (“antidemocratic,” for instance) clearly demonstrate its misunderstanding. None distinguishes Chinese nationalism from other nationalisms (Is the role of the state in it different from what it has been in German or Russian cases? Does its antiforeign stance have qualities absent from the antiforeign expressions of American or Japanese nationalisms? Does its assertiveness place it in the same category with Arab nationalism of ISIS?). In short, these modifiers mean no more than the characterizations of left and right: upon examination, like Prime Minister May’s “honorable nationalism,”¹⁹ these are simply terms of approbation or disapprobation, expressing the feelings of those who use them toward their subject, which remains baffling.

Researching nationalism without establishing what it actually is naturally leads China scholars (as it would anyone) to disregard what it actually is. Like the dominant Western theories on which studies of Chinese nationalism uncritically rely, these studies are misled by their materialist assumptions. These assumptions blind them to the essentially cultural, that is, symbolic and mental,²⁰ nature of the phenomenon of nationalism, in general – the fact that nationalism is, above all, a form of consciousness – and, therefore, despite the often-paid lip service, to the profound difference between Chinese culture and those of the monotheistic (whether Christian or Islamic) societies in which nationalism has developed before reaching China.²¹ Understanding how consciousness develops, for instance, might focus the attention of China scholars on the question of the appeal of nationalism: What causes people


²⁰ For the analysis of the nature of cultural phenomena, see Greenfeld (2013: 35–114).

²¹ With the extremely important exception of Japan, which, unfortunately, also escapes the attention of these scholars.
originally seeing reality in a completely different way suddenly to adopt the nationalist image of reality? Every other case demonstrates that the appeal of nationalism rests on the dignity with which it endows personal identity. Why did the Chinese population, beyond the narrow leadership stratum, not feel this appeal until the economic reforms of Deng Xiaoping? Could it be for the same reason that made German burghers remain aloof until Friedrich List’s clarion call of economic nationalism finally welcomed them into the dignified circle of contributors to the nation’s glory, and made the economic classes, previously denied dignity by the traditions disparaging money-making, main shareholders in the collective dignity of the nation? Given the prodigious effects of China’s conversion to nationalism, this is certainly a possibility worth considering.

Globalization of nationalism into China also requires careful examination of the fundamental presuppositions of Chinese civilization, in some cases radically different from those of the “Western” (in fact monotheistic) civilization. As already demonstrated by the case of Japan, the importation of nationalism from one civilization into another is likely to significantly affect the nature of nationalism. It is already clear, for instance, that, while in its original civilizational framework (whether defined by Christianity or Islam), dignity, which is paramount for the sense of life-satisfaction in a nation, is directly dependent on the implementation of the egalitarian principle within the nation, in addition to the nation’s international prestige, in both Japan and China only international prestige matters. So long as the collective dignity is preserved, both Japan and China, apparently, consent to live with rather high degrees of inequality inside their societies, not identifying inequality with injustice. Egalitarianism, essential for the sense of inclusive identity in the West, in other words, is not a cardinal principle of Japanese or Chinese nationalism. This, among other things, makes for far less division in Japanese and Chinese societies than in the West. It would be hard to underestimate the effects of this difference in the very nature of nationalism for international politics – or the destiny of the world. To address them with all the attention they require, however, scholars of Chinese nationalism would have to be weaned from their excessive reliance on speculations of dominant “theorists” and turn to the investigation of empirical reality.

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ESTABLISHED AND NEW STATE POLICIES AND INNOVATIONS
Fiscal and monetary policy are among the most basic tools governments use to manage their economies. These tools have evolved in dramatic fashion during the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. This chapter examines that evolution and its implications for socioeconomic performance. I begin by explaining what these tools are. Second, I discuss the basic debates about how they ought to be used and how the general approach to fiscal and monetary policy evolved from the Keynesian era beginning roughly in the 1930s to the neoliberal era beginning in the late 1970s. My intention is not to delve into the intricacies of economic theory or the minutiae of economic policy but rather to summarize these things with broad strokes. Neoliberalism came to dominate much economic policy-making over the last 40 years or so. It has been highly contested politically in many countries. In the United States neoliberalism became a lightning rod for ideological confrontation and political gridlock. For these reasons, thirdly, I review how neoliberal fiscal and monetary policy affected socioeconomic performance and contributed to the 2008 financial crisis. Finally, I explore how the crisis affected fiscal and monetary policy going forward. My focus is primarily on the United States but with frequent reference to other advanced capitalist countries too.

THE BASICS OF FISCAL AND MONETARY POLICY

The purpose of fiscal and monetary policy is to regulate the macro-economy to facilitate growth, employment, and innovation without causing excessive inflation. The tools involved are straightforward. Fiscal policy involves manipulating government spending and taxing with those ends in mind (Lindert 1976: Chapter 7). For instance, if policy-makers want to stimulate economic growth and create jobs they may do so by spending money to improve roads, bridges, and other infrastructure. Not only would this create
construction jobs in the short term but it would also improve the country’s transportation system, which could help improve commerce and trade later. If policy-makers wanted to stimulate innovation they might spend money on subsidies for technology firms or military contractors in the hope that it would encourage them to develop new technologies or improve old ones as the United States has done since the 1940s with tremendous success in aerospace, information technology, pharmaceuticals, and many other industries (Weiss 2014). Taxes can be used in the same way. For example, by providing the right sort of tax breaks governments can encourage firms to hire people thus reducing unemployment, and invest in new plant and equipment or engage in more research and development thus stimulating innovation and economic growth. Tax breaks can also create incentives for people to spend more on houses, education, child care, and a host of other things. Lowering personal income tax rates can leave more money in people’s pockets that they can spend in ways that also spark economic growth. Of course, reducing spending, raising taxes, and eliminating tax breaks can have the opposite effects, thereby constricting the economy.

The targets of fiscal policy can be very precise, focusing on a firm or industry, or more general, focusing on an entire economic sector or the economy overall. For instance, in the aftermath of the Second World War the French precisely targeted fiscal policies to turn certain firms and industries into “national champions.” The Italians used tax subsidies to facilitate the development of small and medium-sized enterprises. The Americans were prone to policies with much broader reach, such as manipulating the personal income tax code to stimulate aggregate demand throughout the economy. The Swedes were known for their hefty welfare expenditures, which served similar purposes (Shonfield 1965; Weir and Skocpol 1985; Weiss 1988). That said, these and most other advanced countries use various combinations of fiscal policies to achieve a variety of goals depending on the political and economic circumstances at hand.

Monetary policy works a bit differently (Lindert 1976: Chapter 10). The idea here is to manipulate the money supply. Increasing the money supply stimulates the economy by making it easier for people and firms to borrow and therefore spend. The government can do this either by printing more money or by its central bank lowering interest rates, making it less expensive for others to borrow and spend. Taking money out of the economy, such as by raising interest rates, which tends to deter borrowing, has the opposite effect. Governments often sell bonds, which is another way to take money out of the economy. Buying them back pumps money into the economy. The US government does this by buying and selling US Treasury bonds. To depoliticize monetary policy and make it more effective, the trend since the 1980s has been to grant government central banks more independence in their decision-making (Franzese and Hall 2000). In this regard, monetary policy has become less subject to the whims of politicians than fiscal policy.
The trick for policy-makers is to use these tools in a way that stimulates economic growth, innovation, and employment but without generating too much inflation. All else being equal, the more governments pump money into the economy through fiscal and monetary policy the greater will be the demand for goods and services. To the extent that demand outpaces supply, sellers will have the advantage and be able to raise – that is, inflate – their prices. Of course, exogenous shocks can also trigger inflation.

Too much inflation can tear an economy to shreds. In the mid-1970s the OPEC countries suddenly quadrupled the price of oil on world markets sending many oil-dependent economies into a tailspin because higher energy prices quickly translated into higher prices for just about everything else. Economic growth stalled and unemployment rose. For example, in the United States, as Figure 30.1 shows, annual inflation more than doubled from about 5 percent in 1970 to 13 percent by about 1980, and unemployment jumped from 5 percent to 8 percent by the mid-1970s. The robust growth of the early 1970s stopped during the second half of the decade and early 1980s. In Europe inflation averaged 6 percent in 1970 but skyrocketed to about 12 percent within five years, and unemployment went from 2 percent in 1970 to about 10 percent by the early 1980s (Harvey 2005: 14). But this paled in comparison to the triple-digit hyperinflation that hit Latin America during the 1980s, making it impossible for average families to maintain their standards of living because even the most basic commodities rapidly became too expensive for them to afford (The Economist 1998; see also Babb 2001; Dezalay and Garth 2002). On the other hand, too little inflation can be bad too. If prices are falling people will be more likely to defer their purchases, say for a car, television, or house, until they think that prices will go no lower. If that behavior persists long enough, demand dries up, sellers can no longer sell their products, and the economy goes into a recession from which it is difficult to recover. This happened in Japan in the 1990s (Krugman 2009: Chapter 3). So, some inflation is desirable but not too much, which is why effectively managing all this is tricky for policy-makers.

Things are even trickier because governments do not necessarily have complete discretion over how they use fiscal and monetary policy. First, when they get into economic trouble, such as rampant inflation or exorbitant levels of debt as occurred in Latin America in the 1980s and in Eastern and Central Europe after the collapse of communism in the early 1990s, they often turn to international organizations like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and sometimes other governments for assistance. Help often comes with strings attached (Babb 2009; Pauly 1997). In Poland, for instance, during the early 1990s government deficits, debt, and inflation soared.\(^1\) The new post-communist government turned to the IMF for help, which it received in the

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\(^1\) Deficits are the shortfall between what a government spends and what it receives in taxes and other revenues in a year. Debt is the amount of money the government has had to borrow in order to cover its deficits as they accumulate year after year.
form of loans but only if the government agreed to dramatically cut government spending to check inflation (Campbell 2001).

Second, when the euro was introduced in 2000, countries belonging to the European Monetary Union (Eurozone) dropped their national currencies and relinquished control of monetary policy to the European Central Bank (ECB). As a condition of membership, they also agreed to keep their budget deficits under 3 percent of GDP. This put significant limits on their use of fiscal as well as monetary policy. Other countries are constrained by the fact that they peg their currency to another one. The Danes, for instance, pegged the value of the kroner to that of the euro and before that the deutschmark. Forsaking monetary policy to Brussels has been perceived by many as impinging on national sovereignty and, as a result, has generated an anti-European backlash in some European countries, which is one reason why the Danes did not join the Eurozone in the first place (Campbell and Hall 2015: 86–91).
Third, as the world economy became more tightly integrated after the 1970s and it became easier for capital to move quickly across borders, countries increasingly faced the so-called impossible trinity or policy trilemma (Fleming 1962; Mundell 1963). This was a policy trade-off whereby countries could achieve only two out of three desirable policy goals: independent monetary policy, a fixed exchange rate (currency stability), and an open capital market (no capital controls). For instance, countries joining the Eurozone achieved an open capital market – capital mobility among member countries – and a stable exchange rate but at the expense of independent monetary policy. Developing countries until the mid- to late 1980s and China nowadays have had independent monetary policy and exchange rate stability but at the expense of open capital markets. The United States has had a floating exchange rate policy since the 1970s, which afforded it monetary policy independence and open capital markets but not currency stability (Aizenman 2011). The point is that if countries wanted to become more integrated financially in the global economy, their ability to control either monetary policy or their exchange rate was constrained.

One very important caveat is in order. Since the end of the Second World War, thanks to the Bretton Woods agreements in 1944, which laid the foundation for the postwar international financial order, the United States has enjoyed the privileges of seignorage. In other words, because the dollar was designated the world’s reserve currency the United States has been able to print dollars and otherwise manipulate its monetary policy with impunity in ways that other countries in the capitalist world can only dream of (Campbell and Hall 2015: 27–28). Moreover, because of America’s uniquely strong financial position in the world economy it provided a safe haven for investors, especially during turbulent times. This made it particularly easy for the US government to borrow money on the international capital markets to finance deficits associated with its fiscal policies – something it did to an increasing extent after the early 1970s as the world became awash in money from the oil-producing countries and China seeking investment opportunities. By 2013 US government debt had grown to $16.6 trillion of which $5.5 trillion was held by foreign entities, with China being the largest, holding 23 percent ($1.3 trillion) of all of America’s foreign debt (Campbell and Hall 2015: 105–106).

THE EVOLUTION OF FISCAL AND MONETARY POLICY

There are serious debates about how fiscal and monetary policies should be used. These rest on equally serious debates among economists about the fundamental nature of market economies, which need not concern us here.

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2 There is a vast empirical literature on the determinants of fiscal policy, and tax policy in particular (e.g., Allen and Campbell 1994; Campbell 1993; Campbell and Allen 1994; Martin, Mehrotra, and Prasad 2009).
(e.g., Fourcade 2006, 2009). In the broadest terms, the battle lines distinguish two camps. On one side are followers of John Maynard Keynes, the famous British economist, who saw fiscal policy as a means of extricating countries from the depths of recession and deflation. In contrast to classical economics, which held that markets were automatically self-correcting, Keynes believed that they were not and that governments should regulate spending to counteract a market economy’s inherent instability. How? During economic downturns governments should keep money cheap (i.e., interest rates low) and keep public or publicly influenced investment high enough to sustain demand – even if this meant borrowing money and incurring budget deficits in the short term. Furthermore, when investment and growth stalls, governments should reduce income inequalities thereby increasing the propensity for everyone to consume and stimulate aggregate demand. During economic boom times governments should do the opposite to avoid inflation. Over all, then, governments should strive to modulate aggregate demand in ways that keep the economy growing and unemployment low but without creating excessive inflation (Skidelsky 2009; see also Krugman 2009; Stiglitz 2010). The assumption is that there is an inverse relationship between unemployment and inflation: lower unemployment increases demand, which leads to higher inflation, and vice versa.

On the other side are those subscribing to more conservative views less sanguine about the ability of government to use fiscal and monetary policy to promote growth. They believe that markets tend to be self-correcting and that governments would do well to leave them alone for the most part even when they run into trouble. Otherwise policy-makers might make things worse. Milton Friedman (1962: Chapter 3) championed this view in the postwar era. He argued that Keynesianism’s emphasis on fine-tuning the economy was a fool’s errand: impossible to do for all sorts of reasons including the fact that aggressive monetary as well as fiscal policy are subject to long and variable lags that undermine their effectiveness (Alt and Chrystal 1983: 62–66; Klamer 1983: Chapter 1). As a result, the role of government should be restricted largely to ensuring a steady and predictable growth of the money supply to maintain the “natural” (i.e., stable) rate of unemployment. Others followed in his footsteps developing, for example, rational expectations theory, which held that people are adept at anticipating government policy interventions based on experience. As a result, they adjust their behavior in advance of those interventions thereby undermining the intended effects of government policy (Lucas 1972). Public choice theory dovetailed with this insofar as it argued that policy-makers were less interested in serving the public interest than serving their own interests or the rent-seeking interests of various lobbies and constituents, which meant that government policy was often inappropriate and ineffectual (Amacher, Tollison, and Willett 1976). The policy implications of all this were clear: government’s role in economic management should be minimal, which meant that government spending, taxing, and regulation should be pared to the bone to let markets operate freely and efficiently.
Keynesianism’s heyday in policy-making circles stretched from the late 1930s through the mid-1970s. Many advanced capitalist governments struggling in the throes of the Great Depression and the aftermath of the Second World War turned to Keynesianism to reduce unemployment and rebuild their economies. Even countries like the United States and some of the Nordic countries that had escaped the worst ravages of the war embraced Keynesianism. It seemed to work. However, the adoption of Keynesianism was not like a blanket spread uniformly across the globe; its adoption varied across countries because of different political traditions, institutions, and the relative political strength of business and labor (Eichengreen 2008; Hall 1989). In the United States, for instance, Keynesianism largely took the form of massive amounts of military spending supported by a relatively progressive tax regime. In the Nordic countries, it tended to take the form of welfare spending supported by a relatively regressive tax regime (Kato 2003; Weir and Skocpol 1985).

Most people agree that Keynesianism worked well for a while. The European and Japanese economies were rebuilt to the point where by the mid-1960s they were becoming competitive again in international markets. The United States experienced a period of unrivaled economic hegemony. And in retrospect we now see the decades of the immediate postwar period as a Golden Age where prosperity was spreading throughout the advanced capitalist world and living standards for most people were rising. However, this would not last.

In the wake of the 1973 OPEC oil crisis the trade-off between unemployment and inflation that Keynesians had assumed broke down. As noted earlier (see Figure 30.1), the OPEC crisis ushered in a period of stagflation where both unemployment and inflation rose in lock step during the 1970s while economic growth sagged badly. Keynesianism was thrown into question, economists and policy-makers searched for answers, and more conservative approaches carried the day, often referred to as neoliberalism or market fundamentalism (Block and Somers 2014; Campbell and Pedersen 2001; Crouch 2011; Kotz 2015; Mudge 2008). As a result, policy-makers in the United States cut taxes, particularly on the wealthy and corporations, not so much to stimulate aggregate demand, as Keynesians would have wanted, but to spur investment through what is often referred to as supply-side economics. It was argued that cutting taxes on the wealthy and corporations would supply them with more money to invest in ways that would spur job creation and economic growth without boosting aggregate demand and exacerbating inflation. Furthermore, thanks to the ruminations of economist Arthur Laffer, it was believed that the revenue lost today through lower tax rates would be more than made up for by revenues generated later from the economic growth engendered by the lower rates. Policy-makers also cut government spending to reduce government borrowing that was believed to be crowding out private actors from the capital markets thereby stifling investment and growth. Spending was also cut
to diminish mounting budget deficits that became an obsession with both political parties (Bowles, Gordon, and Weisskopf 1983: Chapter 3; Edsall 2012). Policy-makers also cut business regulations, which were reputedly expensive for firms to comply with. Finally, policy-makers used monetary policy to wring inflation out of the economy. In the United States, for instance, the Federal Reserve under the direction of Paul Volcker jacked up interest rates to double-digit levels during the 1980s for that purpose.

Let me clarify what I mean by neoliberalism because the term is used in a variety of often confusing ways (e.g., Boas and Gans-Morse 2009). To begin with, neoliberalism is a package of policies intended to let the free market operate with minimal government interference. In addition to fiscal and monetary policy it also involves minimizing government regulation of the economy; liberalizing trade and capital flows across borders; and privatizing state-owned assets. Liberalization and privatization were prominent features of neoliberalism in developing countries during the 1980s and many post-communist countries during the 1990s (Dezalay and Garth 2002). Poland, for instance, embraced neoliberal “shock therapy” in the early 1990s, including rapid privatization, liberalization, deregulation, and cuts in government spending and taxation (Campbell 1996, 2001).

Second, a government or organization can be hawkish on inflation without necessarily being neoliberal in orientation. During its early days, the International Monetary Fund pushed governments to use fiscal and monetary policy to keep inflation in check but it wasn’t until the late 1970s and 1980s that it also began pushing for privatization and liberalization of capital flows (Pauly 1997: Chapters 5 and 6).

Third, as noted, neoliberalism is often equated with supply-side economics. Beginning in the late 1970s this logic informed much thinking in US politics and eventually became the mantra of the Tea Party, congressional Republicans, and the Trump administration. However, not all supply-side arguments are neoliberal. Many people have argued for and demonstrated the benefits of government supplying many of the inputs required for economic innovation, growth, and prosperity (e.g., Hall and Soskice 2001; Krugman 2009; Matzner and Streeck 1991; Stiglitz 2010). Linda Weiss (2014), for instance, shows how the US government has long supplied massive amounts of venture capital to the private sector to facilitate many technological innovations that have spurred economic growth.³

Neoliberalism was championed rhetorically by Ronald Reagan in the United States and Margaret Thatcher in Britain. But when it came to actual policy-

³ Neoliberalism should not be confused with German ordoliberalism, which has influenced EU and ECB policy in varying degrees. Ordoliberals believe in maximizing the potential of the free market too but that the state should take a strong role in achieving that goal, including providing supply-side inputs when necessary. This is the basis for the German concept of the social market economy.
making, while Reagan cut taxes and some welfare spending, he boosted military spending and drove up fiscal deficits nearly threefold – something more in line with the US military Keynesianism mentioned earlier than neoliberalism (Bunch 2009). And despite Thatcher’s promises to impose draconian cuts on the welfare state, her ambitions fell far short of the mark (Pierson 1994). In any case, neoliberalism eventually came to dominate much policy-making in the advanced capitalist countries (Mudge 2011). It did much the same among less developed countries thanks to the so-called Washington Consensus, an international version of neoliberalism stressing fiscal and monetary austerity, balanced government budgets, reduced capital controls, trade liberalization, and privatization, which in the early 1980s was adopted and pushed by the IMF and World Bank (Harvey 2005). But as with Keynesianism, the way in and the extent to which neoliberal fiscal and monetary policies were pursued varied a lot across countries (Blyth 2002; Campbell and Pedersen 2014: Chapter 7; Fourcade-Gourinchas and Babb 2002; Prasad 2006). In the advanced capitalist world, they were embraced most fully in the countries that were already inclined toward lower taxes and welfare spending, notably the English-speaking liberal market economies (Campbell 2004: Chapter 5; Swank 2002).

The rise of neoliberalism involved much experimentation by political regimes on both the left and right – not surprisingly since policy-makers of all ideological stripes were searching for solutions to the unfamiliar problem of stagflation. For instance, in the United States the first neoliberal tax cuts occurred not under a Republican regime but late in the Carter administration when the Democratic Party controlled Congress and the White House. More draconian cuts followed when Reagan took office. But when it became apparent that they had contributed to sharply rising budget deficits they were partly rolled back in 1982 only to be pursued again with a vengeance by the George W. Bush administration (Campbell 2004: Chapter 5). Similarly, experiments with neoliberalism began in Britain during the mid-1970s with the Labour government, years before Thatcher and the Conservative Party came to power in 1979. Even though the Labour government continued to espouse Keynesian doctrine it experimented with neoliberal monetarism to cope with inflation (Hay 2001). And, as mentioned earlier, in both countries the rhetoric of neoliberal reform often exceeded its actual practice due to a variety of political and institutional factors that mitigated how far policy-makers could go in implementing neoliberal reforms, at least in the early going (Pierson 1994). The point is that the shift from Keynesian to neoliberal fiscal and monetary policy was a messy process, neither smooth, linear, and consistent nor sharply divided into two distinct periods by a clear break between policy paradigms.

**NEOLIBERALISM AND SOCIOECONOMIC PERFORMANCE**

Did neoliberalism work as promised? One of the best summaries of the vast research on this question was published by Jon Bakija and his colleagues, who
studied several countries and reviewed dozens of research studies (Bakija et al. 2016: Chapter 3). They focused on fiscal policy and found that neoliberalism fell short in many ways. To begin with, their analysis revealed that for the 182 countries for which they had data from 2002 to 2011 there was a positive correlation between taxes as a share of GDP and economic growth measured as real GDP per capita – that is, higher taxes were associated with better, not worse, economic outcomes. Out of curiosity I plotted in Figure 30.2 the relationship between tax revenue as a percentage of GDP and GDP per capita for 35 developed capitalist countries in 2014, the most recent year for which OECD data are available for all these countries. As Bakija and colleagues would suspect, the trend line suggests that higher levels of taxation are associated with higher GDP per capita. Moreover, their analysis of 13 advanced capitalist countries found that over the last 100 years higher levels of taxation were not significantly associated with economic growth one way or the other. Why was there so little support for the neoliberal thesis? They surmised that increased taxation was often associated with government spending that stimulated rather than retarded economic growth, such as by supplying investments for infrastructure, education, resolving market failures, and contributing to the general welfare of the population in ways that improved worker productivity. Indeed, most of the econometric literature they reviewed involving international comparisons over time were also skeptical that higher taxes and more government spending undermined economic growth. Erring on the side of caution, they concluded that “The most reasonable interpretation at this point is that the net economic costs of the growth in government in rich countries have so far been, at worse, quite modest” (Bakija et al. 2016: 134).

This was corroborated when Bakija’s team analyzed states in the United States. They found that the only time state governments with low taxation and spending seemed to have risen toward the national average in terms of economic growth was between 1940 and 1973 when the small-government southern states reaped the benefits of extensive military and aerospace spending from the federal government. Incidentally, the state of Kansas famously experimented with deep neoliberal supply-side tax cuts assuming revenues would not decline. It was a disaster that triggered a fiscal crisis so bad that the legislature had to raise taxes in 2017 (Frank 2004: 101–102).

One difficulty in testing the neoliberal predictions is that it is extremely hard to measure and statistically isolate all the possible factors affecting economic performance. For example, it is well known that foreign direct investment can be an important source of economic growth. According to neoliberal doctrine an important way to attract such investment is to offer low tax rates to potential investors. However, researchers have discovered through statistical analysis and interviews with corporate decision-makers that levels of corporate taxation and government spending have little effect on foreign direct investment. Instead what really matters is the quality of a country’s political institutions, such as having well-developed property rights, the absence of
political risk (e.g., the possibility of nationalization), and other things including access to customers, good infrastructure, and a quality labor force (Jensen 2006). Most governments seem to realize this insofar as there has been little evidence of a “race to the bottom” in terms of countries trying to compete for business by lowering taxes and government spending (Campbell 2004: Chapter 5; Jensen 2006; Swank 2002).

Bakija’s team also examined other fiscal policy effects (Bakija et al. 2016: Chapter 2). They concluded that higher levels of government spending on social welfare programs tended to be associated with less income and gender inequality, less government corruption and smaller government budget deficits, all without any clear loss in GDP. They argued that this was because countries with more extensive taxing and spending tended to manage fiscal policy more efficiently than other countries. They also held that high spending tends to improve human capital and therefore


AU=Australia; AT=Austria; BE=Belgium; CA=Canada; CL=Chile; CZ=Czech Republic; DK=Denmark; EE=Estonia; FL=Finland; FR=France; DE=Germany; GR=Greece; HU=Hungary; IS=Iceland; IE=Ireland; IL=Israel; IT=Italy; JP=Japan; KR=South Korea; LV=Latvia; LU=Luxembourg; MX=Mexico; NL=Netherlands; NZ=New Zealand; NO=Norway; PL=Poland; PT=Portugal; SK=Slovak Republic; SI=Slovenia; ES=Spain; SE=Sweden; CH=Switzerland; TR=Turkey; GB=Great Britain; US=United States

**Figure 30.2 Economic prosperity and taxation in the OECD, 2014**
productivity and economic growth. It also tends to enable women to work more easily thanks to the availability of child care and elder care among other things.

The problem of inequality deserves special mention because it cuts to the heart of the debate between neoliberals and Keynesians. Neoliberals argue that inequality is beneficial for growth because the wealthy are the principal source of investment. The larger their income share, the more investment and, therefore, growth there will be. Keynesians disagree and say that the wealthy tend to save more than the rest so the larger their share of national income, the less consumption there will be, which can be as debilitating for growth as weak investment. Lane Kenworthy (2004; see also Pontusson 2005) reviewed the extensive literature on the subject and then examined the debate by analyzing OECD data from the 1980s and 1990s. He found that on average low income inequality and better living standards for those at the bottom of the income distribution can be sustained in ways that do not have to impede economic growth and employment. How? By government pursuing fiscal policies that encourage employment opportunities, especially for women, such as through universal child care; that facilitate labor force mobility, such as through universal health care and active labor market policies; and that improve human capital formation, such as through universal early education. The rewards, he argued, in higher employment and economic growth can be significant. Other researchers agree and find as well that higher inequality reduces the overall revenue stream, which means less money for public investments in infrastructure, technology development, and education thus compromising economic innovation and growth. It also leads to more disgruntled workers, limited social mobility, and worse health outcomes, all of which undermine productivity. Again, fiscal policy could be geared toward solving these problems if policy-makers chose to do so (Stiglitz 2012; see also Putnam 2015; Wilkinson and Pickett 2009).

Kenworthy’s (2014) more recent work offers insights into how fiscal policy affects inequality. He finds that increased government spending for things like health care, sickness insurance, unemployment insurance, paid parental leave, and other programs substantially reduce income insecurity and inequality in the advanced countries. Tax policy can too. For example, the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) in the United States subsidizes the earnings of low-wage workers falling below a certain threshold and is an especially effective – and politically popular – means of reducing inequality and poverty. Nevertheless, except for the EITC, compared to other OECD countries the United States is a laggard in many of these policy areas for reasons that have much to do with differences in political systems across countries (see also Brady 2009). Other researchers have found that income tax policy also affects inequality. Tax reforms from 1970 to 2004 tended to reduce the average share of income paid in federal taxes across the board in the United States. However, these
reductions disproportionately benefitted those at the upper end of the income distribution, and especially those at the very top. This contributed to greater income inequality, especially after 1980 when neoliberalism began to hit its stride among policy-makers (Mishel et al. 2012: 84–94).

Inequality and fiscal and monetary policy conspired in the United States in particularly insidious ways that contributed to the 2008 financial crisis. Rising inequality in America coincided with a prolonged period of wage stagnation beginning in the late 1970s and in turn declining purchasing power among working- and middle-class Americans (Leicht and Fitzgerald 2014). In the late 1960s and early 1970s real wage growth averaged 2.5 percent per year. Since then, however, with a brief respite during the second half of the 1990s when the economy was booming, wages grew barely at all (Mishel et al. 2012: 179). To compensate and maintain their standards of living many Americans began to borrow. As a result, as Figure 30.3 illustrates, average household debt rose steadily from the early 1970s to 2007. This included especially mortgage debt, which rose from about 40 percent to 101 percent of disposable personal income during that time and increased sharply beginning in the late 1990s (Mishel et al. 2012: 405; see also Leicht and Fitzgerald 2014: Chapter 5). Fiscal policy was partly responsible for this insofar as the tax code allowed people to deduct the interest on their mortgages from their federal income taxes – a policy adopted specifically to encourage more home ownership in America. Monetary policy contributed too as the Federal Reserve kept interest rates low. Partial deregulation of the banking industry was also an important factor – and another neoliberal move. The problem was that easy access to mortgage credit pumped up prices in the real estate market nationwide creating an enormous housing bubble in the early 2000s. When it collapsed in 2007 and 2008 some of the biggest banks in the country, notably Bear Stearns and Lehman Brothers, went bust, giant mortgage lenders like Countrywide collapsed, and AIG, one of the largest insurance companies in the world, nearly went bankrupt. As a result, the country was suddenly plunged into the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression.

Fiscal and monetary policy also played havoc in Europe. The European Monetary Union introduced the euro in 2000. By joining the Eurozone, countries with weak credit profiles, like Portugal, Ireland, Greece, and Spain – the so-called PIGS – suddenly found instant access to cheap credit. Germany was one of the strongest economies in Europe when the euro was first introduced and, as a result, had one of the lowest debt yields on its government bonds of all the Eurozone members.4 Throughout the 1990s yields on ten-year government bonds, which at first varied widely among European countries, began to converge toward the low German rate. This meant that the other members were effectively endowed with Germany’s

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4 The “yield” is the difference between what someone pays for the bond and what they receive when it is redeemed at maturity. Low yields indicate low risk of default.
very favorable credit rating. Ireland, for example, had much higher yields on its bonds than Germany before it was announced that it would join the Eurozone, but once the announcement was made those yields fell nearly as low as those paid by Germany. Why? Because it was assumed that the ECB would back all outstanding government debt regardless of the country issuing it. After all, everyone was now using the same currency (Blyth 2013: Chapter 3). Moreover, European interest rates were low thanks to the ECB’s monetary policy. The result, as in the United States, was to make credit readily available to governments, banks, and regular folks. Sometimes this facilitated foolish fiscal policy. The Greek government borrowed and spent lavishly to bolster patronage and win elections more than improve the economy. More important, thanks to easy credit and the willingness of big German, French, and other banks to borrow and invest at home and abroad, real estate bubbles emerged in several European countries, including Ireland and Spain. Sometimes fiscal policies were involved too. In Ireland, the government offered generous tax incentives to real estate

![Household Debt as a Percent of GDP](image)

**Figure 30.3** Household debt in the United States
Data Source: Kirk 2016.
developers. It also gave cash subsidies to individuals that were eventually used to buy housing and, therefore, further exacerbate the Irish real estate bubble. When the US financial crisis hit it quickly reverberated throughout Europe. Housing bubbles burst, banks were suddenly in deep trouble, and policy-makers everywhere scrambled to save their economies from disaster (Campbell and Hall 2017).

THE FINANCIAL CRISIS AND ITS POLICY EFFECTS

The heart of the 2008 financial crisis was the development of the subprime mortgage market in the United States where people were encouraged to buy adjustable rate mortgages that they could ill afford, especially if interest rates rose. This contributed significantly to the US housing bubble. Much to their dismay, many of these people discovered that their mortgage interest rates were adjusting upward just as the real estate bubble was collapsing. Suddenly not only were their houses worth less than their mortgages but they were unable to make their mortgage payments. Mortgage defaults began to mount. Banks, hedge funds, and investors who held these mortgages quickly realized that their investments had turned sour. And, thanks to securitization, nobody knew for sure who held these toxic mortgages so banks stopped lending for fear that those to whom they extended credit would not be able to repay it later. In turn, credit markets froze at home and abroad sending shock waves through much of the world economy (Campbell 2011). Real estate bubbles collapsed in Ireland, Spain, and elsewhere. But the damage was not limited to countries with collapsing real estate bubbles; it also involved Switzerland, Iceland, and others whose banks had invested heavily in the foreign mortgage markets and securitized assets (Campbell and Hall 2017: Chapters 3 and 4).

In fact, much of the world economy was caught up in the devastation caused by the US financial crisis. Many countries were pushed into serious recessions, rising unemployment, and in some cases potentially deflationary spirals. As policy-makers struggled to fix the situation it appeared momentarily that Keynesian fiscal and monetary policies were making a dramatic comeback. In the United States, for instance, the Bush administration and Congress passed the Troubled Asset Relief Program in late 2008 – a $700-billion package designed so that the government could buy toxic subprime mortgages from banks thereby providing them with capital to resurrect lending. When the Obama administration came to power in 2009 it spent $80 billion to bail out and

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5 Securitization is a process where debt obligations like mortgages are bought up by a bank or other financial intermediary, divided into pieces, and mixed and combined into bonds, which are then sold to investors who expect that the monthly payments on the debts involved will provide them with a steady income stream. One such bond is a mortgage-backed security.
partly nationalize the US automobile manufacturers General Motors and Chrysler. It also spent an initial $85 billion to effectively nationalize AIG, the insurance giant, and another $185 billion to take over Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, two huge government-sponsored entities that had long purchased mortgages from other lenders – another fiscal stimulus that fueled growth of the subprime housing market. Except for Fannie and Freddie, the nationalizations were temporary because the government eventually sold the assets it had purchased in these companies. In addition, Congress extended unemployment benefits and passed the Affordable Care Act, which included billions of dollars in health insurance subsidies for low-income people. All of this was classic fiscal stimulus designed to resuscitate an economy on the verge of total collapse. So was the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, passed in 2009 and budgeted for roughly $850 billion to stimulate economic recovery through a combination of individual and corporate tax incentives, financial aid to low-income and unemployed workers, and government investments in transportation, communications, energy, and other infrastructure. Although estimates suggest that by 2019 the program will have contributed $836 billion to the deficit it will have significantly improved GDP, reduced unemployment, and increased employment all with little inflationary effect (US CBO 2015). There is debate, however, over whether the effects justify the amount of money spent.

Many other countries pursued fiscal stimulus too, including those outside the advanced capitalist world like Brazil and China. Many governments also took over troubled mortgage assets and infused their distressed banks with fresh capital. This happened in different ways in different countries. For instance, the Irish government guaranteed all its troubled banks at tremendous cost to the Treasury – a decision that by 2010 precipitated a state fiscal crisis that required a massive bailout from the IMF, ECB, and European Commission. The Danish government also guaranteed its troubled banks – but the guarantee would only take effect if the banking industry’s insurance fund ran dry after recapitalizing its troubled members. Moreover, the Danes benefitted from some of the strongest Keynesian automatic stabilizers in the European Union, such as extensive unemployment insurance, housing support, and other subsidies, which kicked in without requiring any decisions by policy-makers. The Swiss national bank took over the troubled assets of its largest bank, UBS, and helped arrange for private financing to bolster Credit Suisse. Switzerland did not suffer a housing bubble like the Americans, Irish, and Danes did, but these two large banks were heavily exposed in the US subprime mortgage market. The Swiss could do this in part because of their historically low government deficits – the product of their so-called debt brake rule, which legally mandated in classic Keynesian fashion that when the economy was strong the government would reduce its deficits and the debt it had incurred when the economy needed help. But it is worth noting as well that these European governments and others received assistance from the US Federal Reserve through swap lines, which in
effect provided loans to the other central banks to help them recapitalize their banks and, in some cases, defend their currencies (Campbell and Hall 2017). In short, state central banks pursued aggressive monetary policies as the lenders of last resort within their countries – and the Fed was the lender of last resort to them all!

Countries also pursued other Keynesian-style monetary policies to counter the Great Recession. The Fed and other central banks quickly reduced interest rates close to zero in the hope that this would trigger borrowing and boost consumerism and aggregate demand. When this failed in the United States the Fed pursued more creative and unorthodox methods – a prolonged period of quantitative easing. The Fed spent hundreds of billions of dollars buying all sorts of bank debt, mortgage-backed securities, and Treasury notes to inject more money into the economy to stimulate growth. The Fed’s holdings of Treasury securities and mortgage-backed securities jumped from $476 billion at the beginning of 2009 to nearly $3 trillion by mid-2013. Britain embarked on a similar program.

Given that banking deregulation and other neoliberal policies were blamed for much of the crisis, and given the massive infusions of government money spent in the advanced capitalist countries to resurrect the banking industry and restore economic order, some believed that neoliberal fiscal and monetary policy had run its course and that Keynesianism had returned triumphantly (Skidelsky 2009). They were wrong. Within about a year of the so-called return of Keynes, much of Europe resorted to a regime of neoliberal austerity policies quite the opposite from what Keynesianism prescribed. There were several reasons for this. One was the mistaken belief among many policy-makers including those at the ECB that the recession was due to profligate government spending and budget deficits (Blyth 2013). This, of course, was a continuation of neoliberal thinking, which remained stubbornly resilient (Crouch 2011; Hall and Lamont 2013; Schmidt and Thatcher 2013). Another was the ECB’s fear that government spending would trigger inflation and destabilize the euro. The Germans after all, long fearful of rampant inflation given their experience in the 1920s and 1930s, enjoyed considerable sway over ECB policy and pushed hard for anti-inflationary austerity measures. The fact that the ECB blamed government profligacy and not banks for the trouble was clear given that it cracked down on government fiscal policy but kept its interest rates close to zero, making it easy for banks to begin lending again. Nor did it demand that investors in troubled banks take haircuts – that is, financial losses.

Austerity involved reducing wages, prices, and public spending, which was supposed to restore economic competitiveness. This was allegedly best achieved by cutting the state’s budgets, deficits, and debt, which would inspire business confidence and therefore stimulate investment and economic growth. Austerity was carried out in many Eurozone countries, notably the PIGS. But as Mark Blyth aptly showed, it did not work because except for Greece the core problem was not government fiscal profligacy but the failure of banks and financial
markets, which had borrowed heavily to invest in real estate and other things. As late as 2010 Eurozone banks still had a collective exposure of $727 billion in Spain and $402 billion in Ireland – countries that experienced serious real estate bubble collapses (Blyth 2013: 86).

Despite pursuing austerity, economic growth in the Eurozone remained weak and unemployment stayed high compared to just before the crisis. Furthermore, European austerity fared worse than American Keynesianism in handling the crisis. Figure 30.4 shows that although average GDP growth in the Eurozone was stronger than in the United States before the crisis hit, it was worse afterward, particularly after 2011 when austerity had really kicked in. Similarly, Figure 30.5 shows that unemployment was worse in the Eurozone than it was in the United States especially after 2011. That said, some European countries managed to do better than others. This is especially clear when examining the PIGS, which were all hit especially hard by austerity policies thanks to pressure from the ECB and IMF. For instance, Figure 30.5 also shows...
that unemployment in Greece and Spain remained well over 20 percent in 2015 while in Portugal it hovered around 12 percent. Greece suffered the worst, having been forced to undergo extreme austerity measures, including eliminating thousands of government jobs, trimming the state budget, and raising taxes in ways that exacerbated an already miserable economic situation (Angelos 2015). Ireland was a pleasant exception. Beginning in 2013 Ireland experienced a dramatic recovery with greatly improved GDP growth and unemployment rates (see Figures 30.4 and 30.5). However, its recovery was due less to austerity and more to the return of foreign direct investment looking for a well-educated English-speaking labor force, entrée to the European market, and a strong dollar, which facilitated exports to the United States (Campbell and Hall 2017: Chapter 3).

The political ramifications of much of this were stark. In Greece, extremist parties on both the left and the right gained influence. The left-wing Syriza party came to power in 2015 with strong nationalist appeals to the voters, reminding them that the current hardship was due to the Germans, who had ravaged Greece during the Second World War without paying any reparations and

![Figure 30.5 Unemployment in the United States and Eurozone](data:image/png;base64,iVBORw0KGgoAAAANSUhEUgAAAAEAAAABCAYAAAAfFcSJAAAADUlEQVR42m38SvDeVRoQgAAAAABJRU5ErkJggg==)
who were now calling the shots at the ECB. Nationalist parties also gathered
strength in France, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, and other countries
in part due to bad economic conditions following the financial crisis. And, of
course, in the United States Donald Trump won the presidency by charging
with considerable nationalist innuendo that the Democrats under Obama had
undermined America’s former greatness. Trump’s presidency combined with a
Republican-controlled Congress promised a dramatic return to neoliberal
reductions in taxes, spending, and regulation (Campbell 2018). Keynes may
have returned for a while but by 2016 he had apparently left the building
again!

CONCLUSION

Why is neoliberalism so resilient in the face of so much evidence that it does not
deliver the goods as promised? There are many possible answers to this question
(Crouch 2011; Hall and Lamont 2013; Schmidt and Thatcher 2013).
Neoliberalism is deeply ingrained in the sort of conventional classical economics
many people learn in university, so it is familiar and rings true vis-à-vis people’s
basic understanding of market economies. Neoliberalism is also simple to explain
and understand whereas Keynesianism is often not. Furthermore, neoliberalism
resonates with the basic values of many advanced capitalist countries, which hold
freedom, individual choice, and unfettered private enterprise in high regard. Finally,
neoliberalism has captured the imagination of much of the economics profession
around the capitalist world. Insofar as economists occupy key positions advising
governments on fiscal and monetary policy it is not surprising that much policy-
making is still in sync with the neoliberal creed.

Despite the resilience of neoliberalism, the evidence presented above offers
some pretty obvious lessons. First, at least a modicum of state intervention is
always necessary to keep capitalism afloat – laissez-faire is a myth. Second,
states are still the lenders of last resort when economies get into trouble. Third,
fiscal and monetary policy are indispensable tools for crisis management not to
mention macro-economic management during normal times. Karl Polanyi
(1944) famously wrote that capitalist development involves a double
movement: as markets develop so too do states – the two go hand in hand.
Why? Because the consequences of unbridled self-interest can be devastating,
ripping markets to smithereens and destroying capitalism from within. States
develop fiscal and monetary policy to guard against such devastation – and
ameliorate it if it occurs.

Whether politicians and governments have really grasped this lesson since
the financial crisis remains to be seen. The United States continues to balk at
raising taxes despite its mounting public debt, which is now almost $20 trillion.
The Trump administration’s calls for renewed tax cuts if enacted will likely
make it worse. All this is consistent with neoliberalism. So is the
administration’s call for less regulation and less spending on social and health insurance programs. What is not consistent with neoliberalism, however, particularly insofar as its supply-side logic is concerned, is the call for more restrictions on free trade and immigration – that is, the free flow of goods and people across the border. Curiously, this policy move may restrict rather than facilitate the supply of inputs to the economy that neoliberalism would seem to favor.

This raises an important issue about the politics of fiscal and monetary policy. Traditionally, debates over this pitted the left against the right – liberals favored more intrusive fiscal and monetary policy while conservatives favored less. But now a second dimension has taken hold that intersects the conventional left–right one. It concerns globalization (Campbell 2018: Chapter 8). In the last US presidential election cycle, Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders represented the antiglobalization view – both vehemently objected to free trade regimes – although Trump was on the right and Sanders was on the left. Hillary Clinton, the Democrat, and Gary Johnson, the Libertarian, were both pro-globalization, although she was on the left and he was on the right. The globalization dimension is also now prominent in European politics. The Brexit referendum in Britain, Marine Le Pen’s strong showing in the 2017 French presidential election, and the increasing strength of nationalist parties throughout Europe raise several questions about globalization, or at least Europeanization. Fiscal and monetary policies are often implicated. Le Pen’s National Front opposed relinquishing monetary policy to the ECB and affording immigrants access to welfare benefits, including those associated with Keynesian automatic stabilizers. Greece’s nationalist parties also object to ECB-controlled monetary policy. As in France, the nationalist Danish People’s Party favors restricting immigrants’ access to welfare benefits. The Brexit referendum passed thanks to opposition to Brussels controlling immigration policy, which in the eyes of Brexit supporters was tantamount to losing control of the supply of labor to the labor market. The point is that understanding the politics of fiscal and monetary policy has become much more complicated.

Therein lies an opportunity for political sociologists to tackle new and important questions. For instance, how does this new dimension in national politics affect the willingness of governments to continue supporting welfare and other fiscal policies that may benefit immigrants? Why do some nationalist movements favor liberal fiscal and monetary policies while others do not? In the wake of the Brexit referendum and, as of this writing, Britain’s impending withdrawal from the EU, will nationalist movements opposing austerity cause the IMF and ECB to relax their demands for fiscal and monetary austerity? Will nationalist opposition to austerity finally relegate neoliberalism to the trash heap of history? If so, what will replace it? This is all fertile territory for political sociology that should not be ceded
to economists, who until now have dominated discussions of fiscal and monetary policy.

REFERENCES


Welfare State Policies and Their Effects

Stephanie Moller and Tengteng Cai

The term “welfare state” reflects the portfolio of social welfare policies and programs within countries. Welfare state scholarship in the early twentieth century focused primarily on sources of welfare state development and expansion. By the turn of the century, the literature shifted toward examining the effects of welfare states, and the policies that compose them, on societal outcomes. Initially, this research examined the effects of welfare states on aggregate levels of poverty and inequality. More recently, as power resource theory and intersectional theory gained traction as important predictors of income and inequality, scholars increasingly turned their attention toward examining the differential effects of welfare states and their constituent policies on inequality between and within subgroups in society, and they expanded the types of outcomes studies, moving beyond income-based measures.

At the same time, economic changes associated with globalization and postindustrialization shifted the attention toward employment policies with an emphasis on what some scholars have called the third wave of the welfare state, where the primary function of the welfare state has moved from social protection to social investment. Yet, despite each of these advancements in knowledge and theory, there is limited cross-fertilization among these theories. Each study in this broad research tradition has moved us toward the current state of knowledge that is both comprehensive and theoretically disjointed. This provides an area of opportunity for future research.

Social Rights of Citizenship and Welfare State Regimes

Modern research on welfare state effects is motivated by T. H. Marshall’s (1950) classic work on the rights of citizenship. According to Marshall, rights have evolved over time culminating in the social rights of citizenship, namely,
the right to participate fully in society and to have a minimum level of economic security. The welfare state is the primary mechanism through which social rights are granted to individuals.

Yet, the rights granted to individuals through the welfare state vary across countries. Indeed, Esping-Andersen’s (1990) seminal publication *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism* identified unique articulations of the social rights of citizenship across countries. According to Esping-Andersen, countries cluster into three primary regime types that help clarify the rights offered to citizens through welfare states. Esping-Andersen argued that welfare states differ in the extent that they decommodify individuals, or reduce their reliance on the labor market for autonomy; welfare states also differ in the extent that they promote or minimize stratification in society. Finally, welfare states institutionalize different social solidarities by establishing which groups are supported by the state.

In response to Esping-Andersen’s ground-breaking research, scholars increasingly focused on welfare state effects, paying disproportionate attention to income inequality. Researchers have widely concluded that the size and shape of the welfare state are among the strongest predictors of income inequality across countries as welfare states redistribute income across the income distribution (Bradley et al. 2003; Moller et al. 2003; Smeeding, Rainwater, and Burtless 2001; Wang, Caminada, and Goudswaard 2012). To illustrate, Figure 31.1 presents the Gini Index for individuals 18–64 years old across countries, based on data from the Luxembourg Income Study (Brady, Huber, and Stephens 2014). It also presents the proportional reduction in income inequality across countries due to taxes and transfers. The Gini Index is a summary measure of inequality that ranges between 0 and 1, where 0 reflects an equal distribution of income across all families, and 1 indicates a scenario where one family controls all of the income in a country. Pretax and transfer income inequality is lowest in Japan (with a Gini of 0.35) and highest in Ireland and France (with Ginis of 0.43). Posttax and transfer inequality is lowest in Norway and Denmark (at 0.25) and highest in the United States (at 0.36). Clearly, the dispersion of income inequality across countries is greater for posttax and transfer income than it is for pretax and transfer income as welfare states are differentially effective in redistributing income across families.

Patterns in redistribution across countries correspond closely with the regime typology developed by Esping-Andersen. The most redistributive countries are the Nordic countries, including Norway, Denmark, and the Netherlands. These countries are classified as social democratic by Esping-Andersen, meaning that they focus on universal transfers to citizens, they promote full employment, and they permit autonomy from the labor market. The least redistributive countries include Spain, Greece, and Italy. These countries are mostly classified as conservative or Christian Democratic as they have developed welfare states

\[\text{Redistribution is measured as } (1 - \frac{\text{post/pre}}{100}).\]
that fortify the status quo, including traditional family norms and existing nodes of stratification. These welfare states reinforce rather than ameliorate income inequality.

The liberal welfare states, including the United States and the United Kingdom, also offer limited redistribution because these countries prioritize market autonomy over public welfare. In liberal countries, high levels of redistribution are perceived to interfere with the market by either discouraging workers from seeking employment or by undermining economic growth. Thus, there is limited income redistribution through the welfare state as this may alter labor market effort.

The assumption that generous welfare states undermine economic growth has generated widespread attention in the literature (Barro 2008; Fölster and Henrekson 2001). Some scholars argue that generous welfare states create an equity–efficiency trade-off as generous welfare states reduce incentives for individuals to invest and to work (Allegrezza, Heinrich, and Jesuit 2004; Bell and Freeman 2001). As a result, society becomes less productive. Yet, other researchers have found that generous welfare states may not stunt growth.
In fact, Kenworthy (2004) found that high tax revenues appear to slow growth, but this results from a combination of multicollinearity and outliers. Once modeling problems are corrected, generous welfare states do not slow growth. Despite inconclusive results regarding the link between the welfare state and economic growth, policy-makers across countries have responded to recent economic downturns by implementing policies that foster flexible labor markets, a strategy that once primarily defined the liberal welfare states (Moller, Misra, and Strader 2013). This shift in welfare state strategies has permitted and possibly generated a precarious workforce across countries, and may ultimately increase income inequality (Fredman 2004).

COMPONENTS OF THE WELFARE STATE

At the turn of the twenty-first century, numerous scholars reacted directly to Esping-Andersen’s regime typologies (for a summary of this literature see Arts and Gelissen 2002; Hicks and Esping-Andersen 2005). Scholars have assessed whether countries are properly classified, whether three regimes are sufficient to capture the variation in welfare states across countries, and whether the methodological approach was adequate (Ferrera and Hemerijck 2003; Ferragina and Seeleib-Kaiser 2011; Scruggs and Allan 2006).

Much of this research examined theorized outcomes, such as redistribution, in light of regime types, or focused on broad measures of the welfare state, such as overall welfare spending. As scholars continued to clarify how policies and social rights vary across regimes, they began to decompose welfare states into their constituent parts, namely, their specific policies. These policies may be grouped into social transfers, which provide direct support to individuals and families to minimize risks of insecurity; work-family policies that permit families to combine the conflicting roles of parenting and working; wage policies that set minimum income floors for workers; and labor market policies that facilitate employment. By decomposing welfare states into their component policies, scholars have clarified how welfare states protect the citizenry from risks at different points in the life course.

Cash Transfers

Retirement is a potentially risky period for individuals’ social welfare. Indeed, one of the most widely used and redistributive policies found across welfare states are pensions, or cash benefits for the aged. Country-specific pension programs vary in the minimum pay-in, length of employment required, industries covered, and age of payout (Gornick et al. 2008). This includes, for example, Old Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance (OASDI) in the United States, a pay-as-you-go system financed through both employer and employee taxes. The normal retirement age is 64 in the United States, and benefits are
earnings related. Individuals of retirement age who do not have sufficient work history to qualify for OASDI may apply for Supplemental Security Income, a means-tested program that offers limited financial support. In contrast, the Netherlands offers a universal pension that is funded through payroll taxes, and benefits are tied to residency. The normal retirement age is 65. Individuals without assets and who have not resided in the Netherlands for 50 years may apply for a means-tested program (OECD 2015).

Table 31.1 presents pension wage replacement rates for average wage workers. Arrows reflect whether the country is above or below the mean pension wage replacement rate of 54.1. In this table, countries are organized in ascending order according to levels of posttax-and-transfer income inequality (i.e., the Gini Index). In 2014, the average pension wage replacement rate for men ranged from less than 40 percent in the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, Ireland, Japan, South Korea, and Canada, to more than 75 percent in the Netherlands, Spain, Austria, Russia, and Luxembourg. With the exception of Norway, the arrows suggest that countries with the lowest levels of income inequality in 2014 also have above average pension wage replacement rates. Indeed, scholars have found that pensions redistribute income across the life course, helping to minimize the risk of economic insecurity upon retirement (Wang et al. 2012).

Child-bearing also places burdens on individuals and their families, and the child-bearing years are a period when women are at a relatively high risk of exiting the labor force. Most countries offer family and child allowances to subsidize the costs of raising children. This is particularly important because child-bearing increases the risk of poverty, particularly for single-mother families (Cancian and Danziger 2009; Casper, McLanahan, and Garfinkel 1994; Misra et al. 2012; Rainwater and Smeeding 2005). The characteristics of family allowance policies vary considerably across countries and over time. For example, some countries offer universal programs. In Switzerland, families receive 200 Swiss francs a month per child. In Germany, taxpayers also receive a child allowance for each child, and German civil servants receive an additional family allowance. In contrast, the United States offers a targeted, means-tested program entitled Temporary Assistance to Needy Families that provides limited support to qualifying families for a fixed term. Generous child and family allowances lower risks of poverty and levels of inequality (Misra, Moller, and Budig 2007; Moller et al. 2003; Wang and Caminada 2011).

Targeting programs to the poor is a particularly salient strategy in liberal welfare states. Yet, in instances where targeted programs serve clients that are perceived as undeserving, these programs are more likely to be stigmatized (van Oorschot and Roosma 2017). The perceived deservingness of different groups is remarkably comparable across European and North American countries, as the aged are widely perceived to be highly deserving of social support, while immigrants and single mothers are perceived to be the least deserving (Misra, Moller, and Karides 2003; van Oorschot 2006).
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Note: Numbers in parentheses reflect rankings; N/A: country does not offer a national minimum wage.

Sources: 1 OECD 2017a; 2 OECD 2017b; 3 OECD 2017c; 4 OECD 2017d; 5 Visser 2011; 6 OECD 2017e; 7 OECD 2017f. gini data are measured in 2012 for Japan and 2011 for Russia.

Arrows reflect values relative to the mean
Across countries, tax systems complement cash transfers to support families. For example, while some countries offer universal family allowances, the United States relies on programs such as the Earned Income Tax Program to subsidize the financial burden of raising children, and this generates a lower risk of poverty (Hotz and Scholz 2003; Neumark and Wascher 2000). Additionally, countries with more progressive tax structures place a greater tax burden on higher-income groups, resulting in a slight redistribution of income and lower income inequality (Duncan and Sabirianova Peter 2012). Table 31.1 presents the top personal income tax rate across countries. While this measure only reflects a single component of tax structures, the data illustrate large differences across countries in the tax burden faced by the highest income groups. The lowest top personal income tax rates in 2015 are found in Slovakia, Norway, and Switzerland, at 25 percent, 39 percent, and 41.7 percent, respectively. The highest tax rates are found in Sweden, Japan, and France, at 57 percent, 55.9 percent, and 54.5 percent, respectively. While progressive taxes that place a greater tax burden on the top of the income distribution are perceived to redistribute income, the evidence is only partially supportive of this perception (Bird and Zolt 2014; Duncan and Sabirianova Peter 2012; Prasad and Deng 2009). Instead, the overall amount of taxes collected by governments provides the potential for redistribution through welfare states (Kenworthy 2011).

Work-family Policies

In addition to taxes and transfers, work-family policies help reduce inequality and the risk of poverty by supporting working parents, primarily mothers, as they negotiate the conflicting roles of working and caring (Budig, Misra, and Boeckmann 2012; Misra, Moller, and Budig 2007; Misra et al. 2012; Moller et al. 2016; Pettit and Hook 2005, 2009). This line of research emerged out of gender scholars’ criticisms of Esping-Andersen and other welfare state scholars for ignoring gender and care work. Gender critics posited that women do not have the same access to employment as men, and regime typologies that prioritize decommodification, or the extent that welfare states reduce reliance on employment, are male-centric and overlook the idea that women must be commodified before they can be decommodified (Lewis 1992, 1997; Orloff 1993; Sainsbury 1999). Thus scholarship missed an important component of social rights, namely, women’s rights to work with minimal work-family conflict (Orloff 1993; Sainsbury 1999).

The two most notable policies that facilitate employment among parents are public child care and family leave. Public child care, particularly for young children, enables women’s return to work shortly after childbirth by minimizing the cost of employment for the family (Gornick and Meyers 2003). Some countries, like the United States, target public child care to only the poorest mothers; while other countries provide more universal child care (Boeckmann, Budig, and Misra 2012).
Maternity leave also facilitates parental employment by legislating women’s right to leave the labor force for a limited time period for childbirth without fear of termination. Like most policies, the parameters of maternity leave vary considerably across countries. Some countries legislate compulsory leave. Some countries offer generous wage replacement levels. Yet other countries offer limited or no benefits. Additionally, the length of leave varies dramatically across countries (Boeckmann et al. 2012). As examples, the United States does not require paid maternity leave; Germany, in contrast, offers 100 percent wage replacement for 14 weeks of leave (Boeckmann et al. 2012).

Scholars have extensively examined the effects of work-family policies on employment, fertility, and income inequality. Researchers have established that child care policies generally encourage employment and longer working hours, while maternity leave policies have disparate effects depending on the length of leave because long leaves discourage continued employment (Boeckmann, Misra, and Budig 2014; Gornick and Meyers 2003; Misra, Budig, and Moller 2007; Misra, Budig, and Boeckmann 2011; Pettit and Hook 2005). Additionally, scholars have argued that work-family policies limit women’s access to higher-skilled, higher-paying positions, and they disproportionately benefit the least-skilled, at the expense of highly skilled women (Mandel and Semyonov 2006; Mandel and Shalev 2009; Mandel 2012; for a critique of this perspective, see Grönlund and Magnusson 2016).

Researchers have also identified work-family policies as a facilitator of declining fertility rates across countries. Indeed, the presence of work-family policies, notably greater access to child care, lessens the burdens associated with work-family conflict, enhances individuals’ intentions to have a second child, and ultimately generates higher fertility (Billingsley and Ferrarini 2014; Hilgeman and Butts 2009; Rovny 2011). Yet the relationship between the welfare state and fertility has puzzled some researchers. Countries that emphasize traditional gender roles and have relatively low labor force participation among women, such as Italy, have lower fertility rates than countries with greater women’s labor force participation (Hilgeman and Butts 2009). This suggests that greater labor force participation generates higher fertility, a clear paradox (Brewster and Rindfuss 2000). Yet, Hilgeman and Butts (2009) found that once individual-level characteristics are controlled, fertility rates are lower when women’s employment rates are higher, but childcare weakens this relationship, possibly by reducing women’s labor force exit. Country’s with high labor force participation among women also tend to have more resources to balance work and family. Thus, fertility may be lower in countries that emphasize traditional gender roles because these countries do not offer extensive support for women’s employment.

Researchers have also assessed the extent that work-family policies alter the risks of poverty and aggregate income inequality. They consistently find that widespread availability of child care enhances women’s labor force participation and reduces their risk of poverty (Misra, Moller, and Budig...
Yet, the association between maternity leave and income inequality is more complex because leave enhances labor force attachment and reduces the risk of poverty, but it also creates gender earnings gaps (Mandel and Semyonov 2005; Misra, Moller, and Budig 2007; Pettit and Hook 2005). Additionally, long leaves may undermine mothers’ labor force attachment and undermine the antipoverty effectiveness of maternity leave (Boeckmann, Misra, and Budig 2014; Misra, Moller, and Budig 2007).

Table 31.1 presents combined spending on family allowances and work-family programs as a percentage of gross domestic product (GDP). The data include family and child allowances, parental leave benefits, public spending on child care and early education, tax exemptions, and child tax allowances. Countries that spend the largest percentage of GDP on family allowances and work-family programs include the United Kingdom, Sweden, Luxembourg, Ireland, Finland, and Norway (at 3 percent or more of GDP). The countries that spend the least on these policies and programs include the United States, South Korea, Canada, Japan, Spain, the Netherlands, and Italy (at less than 1.5 percent of GDP). Again, the arrows suggest that with the exception of Korea, countries with below-average levels of income inequality have above average spending on family allowances and work-family programs.

Wage Policies and Strategies

Many countries also ensure a minimum standard of living for workers through coordinated wage systems and minimum wage policies that set income floors (Bluestone and Harrison 1982; Volscho Jr. 2004). Some scholars argue that minimum wages enhance the market position of low-income workers and this effect trickles up to enhance wages at higher levels in income distributions (Card and Krueger 1997; Neumark and Wascher 1999). Yet other scholars argue that higher minimum wages generate higher unemployment, particularly for young workers (Meyer and Wise 1983). This functions to increase income inequality.

As researchers further assess the effects of minimum wages, this policy strategy should be considered in tandem with wage coordination as they may work together to influence income inequality. Wage coordination reflects the extent that labor, business, and the government collaborate to set worker wages (Kenworthy 2001; Visser 2011). While wage coordination is not necessarily a policy strategy, centrally coordinated systems have strong government involvement in wage setting. Scholars have found that wage dispersion and ultimately market-generated income inequality are lower in the presence of a system of coordinated wages (Bradley et al. 2003; Mahler 2004; Pontusson, Rueda, and Way 2002).

Most countries have either a more coordinated wage structure or a national minimum wage, and some countries have both more centrally coordinated wages and a national minimum wage. Table 31.1 presents real minimum wages in 2015 US dollars and levels of wage coordination across countries.
The United States offers a minimum wage of approximately $15 k. Israel and Spain legislate a lower minimum wage than the United States, as do all of the East Asian and Eastern/Central European countries. Yet, five countries legislate a minimum wage that is greater than US$20 k: Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Australia, Germany, and France. For wage coordination, a value of 1 reflects decentralized bargaining at the firm level. A value of 2 includes a mixture of firm and industry bargaining. A value of 3 reflects more centralized guidelines for bargaining. A value of 4 reflects centralized bargaining with peak associations, and a value of 5 reflects a centralized bargaining system (Visser 2011). Four of the five countries with the lowest levels of income inequality in 2014 also have a system of more centrally coordinated wages, despite the absence of a national minimum wage. These countries include Finland, Norway, Austria, and Sweden. The countries with the highest inequality offer more decentralized wage negotiations and have relatively low minimum wages. For example, Israel and the United States legislate a national minimum wage that is below the average, and wage negotiations are decentralized at the firm and industry level. Considering both coordination and minimum wages in tandem when discussing welfare state outcomes should more thoroughly capture their effects.

Labor Market Policy

Another component of welfare states’ policy portfolios is labor market policy, including a combination of cash assistance for the unemployed and labor market activation policies. Cash assistance, widely termed unemployment insurance, protects the unemployed from temporary spells of unemployment. Eligibility criteria have become stricter over time in many countries, yet unemployment insurance remains critical for supporting incomes of the unemployed (Immervoll and Richardson 2011). Activation policies, also known as active labor market policies, provide opportunities for the unemployed to acquire new skills or education to adapt to a changing labor market (Fullerton, Robertson, and Dixon 2011; Iversen and Stephens 2008; Madsen 2004; Wilthagen and Tros 2004). These policies are considered key strategies to support workers and minimize income inequality as economies and labor markets adjust to the pressures of globalization (Ilsøe 2007; Viebrock and Clasen 2009).

In fact, shifting labor market policies have formed a new policy model, known as flexicurity (Madsen 2004; Viebrock and Clasen 2009). Flexicurity has three components. Welfare states permit flexible labor markets so that employers can quickly adapt to rapid global economic shifts. Welfare states provide cash support to workers who often find less secure employment in these labor markets. These benefits are often distributed through unemployment insurance programs. Finally, countries implement active labor market policies that retrain workers to adapt to the changing skill demands of constantly shifting labor markets (Campbell and Pedersen 2007; Ilsøe 2007).
Labor market policies have important implications for both happiness and income inequality. Unemployment is widely understood to decrease life satisfaction. Yet, the effect of unemployment on life satisfaction is potentially mitigated by active labor market policies, assuming that training programs are perceived to bolster opportunities for future employment without degrading the unemployed (Wulfgramm 2011). Passive labor market programs, such as unemployment insurance, do not provide the same benefits in terms of happiness (Jakubow 2016). This is just one example of how welfare states affect life satisfaction and happiness (see also Flavin, Pacek, and Radcliff 2014; Ono and Lee 2013; Pacek and Radcliff 2008; Radcliff 2001).

Public spending on labor market programs as a percentage of GDP is presented in Table 31.1. Spending includes a broad range of labor market programs, including employment services, hiring subsidies, public sector job creation, unemployment benefits, and administration. Only one country, France, spends 3 percent of GDP on labor market programs. An additional three countries spend at least 2.5 percent of GDP on labor market programs: Finland, the Netherlands, and Spain. Numerous countries spend less than 1 percent of GDP on labor market programs: the United States, Japan, Slovakia, Israel, South Korea, Australia, Canada, and Norway. The table illustrates that countries with lower spending on labor market programs are more likely to have high levels of income inequality.

Clearly countries have implemented very different welfare state policy portfolios that have unique effects on the income distribution. One notable trend illustrated in Table 31.1 is the importance of a variety of welfare state policies for maintaining low income inequality. Indeed three of the five most equal countries fall above the mean for all policy variables listed. Clearly, Slovakia and Norway are outliers as income inequality remains low in the presence of uneven spending across programs. The most unequal country, the United States, falls below the mean on all policy measures. Thus, the compilation of policies found across welfare states (i.e., the shape of the welfare state) are important for reducing income inequality. It is important to note, however, that while various policies are effective at redistributing income, they do not necessarily alter systems of stratification. Indeed, while some welfare state policies are effective at redistributing income across education groups, a key component of socioeconomic status, welfare state policies do not shift relative income rankings among these groups. Thus, the welfare state does not fundamentally alter stratification (Moller et al. 2016).

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE WELFARE STATE

Development and Redistribution

While scholars sought to understand individual policy effects, they also sought to apply theories of welfare state development to welfare state outcomes. Indeed, if welfare states are developed to redistribute income then theories of
welfare state development should influence outcomes, such as income inequality, via the mechanism of social policy. During the middle of the twentieth century, the vast majority of welfare state research focused on welfare state development, with sporadic research on welfare state effects. Structural functionalists posited that industrialization is a prerequisite for welfare state development. Industrialization created both the need for state support and resources via tax revenues for welfare state development; once demand and capacity emerged, welfare states developed (Flora and Heidenheimer 1981; Wilensky 1975). Power resource theorists argued that different types of welfare states emerged at similar levels of development and undermined the utility of structural functionalist theory. Instead, they argue that the size and shape of the welfare state reflect the nature of class conflict within countries as the classes approach the state with different power resources (Korpi 1983; Stephens 1979). For the working class, power resources include left parties, unions, and other forms of mobilization (Huber and Stephens 2001; Kimeldorf 1991; Korpi 1983). For the elite, power resources are direct as economic power translates directly into political power (Kimeldorf 1991). In contrast, pluralists argue that voting blocs, independent of class, develop in countries and this shapes welfare state development (Pampel and Williamson 1988). State-centric theorists criticized structural functionalists, power resource theorists, and pluralists for treating the state as an empty box (Skocpol and Amenta 1986; Skocpol 1992). Statists argue that political actors have individual interests and once policies and bureaucracies are in place future policy development is path dependent (for reviews of the literature on welfare state development, see Hicks and Esping-Andersen 2005; Quadagno 1987; Skocpol and Amenta 1986).

The extant literature includes minimal research that offers support for structural functionalist, pluralist, and statist explanations for welfare state outcomes (Bradley et al. 2003; Brooks and Manza 2006; Chung and Meuleman 2017). Yet, researchers have found consistent support for power resource theory as an explanation for welfare state effects (Bradley et al. 2003; Huber et al. 2009).

**Power Resource Theory**

Power resource theorists posit that class cleavages are an important component of welfare state development and the different classes have different resources to yield power. Within the working and middle classes, power is primarily wielded through unions and left parties. Theorists have generally found, in favor of power resource theory, that countries with strong unions and left parties are more redistributive (Bradley et al. 2003; Moller et al. 2003). Yet, some scholars argue that the salience of class-based conflict to welfare state outcomes is declining due to a variety of factors including new social cleavages and labor market shifts associated with globalization (Edlund and Lindh 2015; Pierson 2001).
As new social cleavages develop, left organizations have multiple, sometimes conflicting constituencies, and this shapes welfare state outcomes. For example, in the United States, the effects of the left party on occupational segregation are dependent on a coalition with strong unions. Without this coalition, other cleavages, regional and race-based, may impede the ability of the left party to generate equitable outcomes (Moller and Li 2009). Similarly, researchers found that in southern Spain, unions have different constituencies than the left party, and the left party is divided. As a result, the left party is not supportive of its traditional constituency, namely, the working class (Watson 2008). Edlund and Lindh (2015) argue that class-based divisions are present across countries and other cleavages have not necessarily outpaced class cleavages. However, liberal countries do not have a proper alignment between groups (i.e., union and parties). Therefore, class cleavages in liberal countries do not necessarily affect welfare state outcomes because they do not translate into political cleavages.

Some theorists include public opinion as a power resource (Brooks and Manza 2006), arguing that the public’s policy preferences are important determinants of welfare state spending and outcomes (Brooks and Manza 2006). Public support for redistribution is often class based, but the class basis of support for redistribution is more muted in countries with a generous welfare state and lower inequality (Carriero 2016; Kulin and Svallofs 2011). Public sentiment toward redistribution is also associated with labor market vulnerability as temporary and part-time workers are more supportive of redistribution, particularly at high levels of education (Häusermann, Kurer, and Schwander 2014). Support for the welfare state is fluid and is higher during economic downturns particularly among individuals who experience unemployment (Blekesaune 2007; Naumann, Buss, and Bähr 2015; Owens and Pedulla 2013).

Intersectionality

Toward the end of the twentieth century, feminist scholars increasingly criticized theories of welfare states and welfare regimes for treating citizens within nations as monolithic groups. Intersectional theorists argue that components of individuals’ identities, such as race and gender must be understood in tandem, not as unique concepts but as intricately linked identities forged within overlapping power structures that shape all individuals’ lived experiences (Browne and Misra 2003; Collins 2002). Intersectionality theory was developing among Black Feminist Scholars at the moment that Esping-Andersen published his seminal book. Much of the early cross-national research on welfare state outcomes, including the work of Esping-Andersen, neglected the important roles of intersecting power structures, instead focusing primarily on class.

Gender scholars quickly applied the major tenets of intersectional theory to cross-national comparative welfare state research. They effectively convinced
welfare state scholars that citizens uniquely interact with the state depending on various factors, including class, gender, age, and ethnicity. The nature of this interaction varies across welfare states depending on the compilation of policies in place. For example, countries that rely heavily on social insurance, such as Social Security in the United States, base eligibility and levels of support on employment history. Individuals who experience multiple or long-term spells of unemployment, individuals who work in agricultural industries, and mothers who remain out of the labor force are not fully covered by this and comparable programs. Therefore, they interact with the state differently.

Applications of intersectional theory to comparative cross-national research helped spawn a shift in welfare state research as welfare state effects were examined across subgroups. The subgroups are designed to reflect different power structures in society. Initially, scholarship focused primarily on the intersection between family structure and gender, with an emphasis on women’s employment (Gornick and Jacobs 1998; Mandel 2012; Misra, Budig, and Moller 2007; Misra, Moller, and Budig 2007). More recently, scholars have focused on the intersection of gender and class, finding that work-family policies have differential effects on mothers depending on their class background (Mandel 2012; Moller et al. 2016).

Table 31.2 presents 2010 posttax-and-transfer relative poverty rates for households with children for two-parent and single-mother households. Countries are sorted according to the gaps between two-parent and single-mother families. Table 31.2 clearly illustrates disparate poverty rates across countries among these subgroups. The distribution of poverty rates for two-parent families largely follows the distribution of income inequality found in Table 31.1 as the countries with the lowest levels of aggregate income inequality (see Table 31.1) generally have below-average poverty rates among two-parent families (see Table 31.2). Cross-national variation in poverty rates among single-mother households and gaps in poverty rates between two-parent and single-mother households do not follow the pattern for aggregate income inequality as closely as found for two-parent households. This suggests that disaggregating households by family structure provides greater insights into cross-national income inequality.

Comparing Tables 31.1 and 31.2 highlights the important role of work-family policies for poverty among single-mother households. Sweden, Finland, and Norway have the lowest rates of poverty among single-mother households as less than 10 percent of single mothers are poor (see Table 31.2). These countries also fall above the mean on work-family spending as a percentage of GDP (see Table 31.1). Single mothers experience high poverty rates (>25%) in Japan, the United States, Israel, and Canada. These countries fall below the mean on work-family spending as a percentage of GDP. Furthermore, countries that have the greatest gaps in poverty between single-mother and two-parent families (>20%) also fall below the mean on work-family spending as a percentage of GDP. With the exception of Slovakia,
countries that have the smallest gaps in poverty between two-parent and single-mother households (< 5%) also fall above the mean on work-family spending as a percentage of GDP.

These trends corroborate existing research. Scholars have found that the redistributive nature of welfare states varies across groups within and across countries (Fraser 1994; Misra, Budig, and Moller 2007; Misra et al. 2012; Moller, Misra, Wemlinger, and Strader 2013; Orloff 1993; Sainsbury 1999). Public child care is more effective at reducing the risk of poverty and enhancing the income position of single-mother families, and the expansion of public child care over time has reduced the relative income gaps between single-mother and two-parent households (Moller et al. 2016). Paid leave also reduces the risk of impoverishment, and this is particularly notable for single mothers (Misra, Moller, and Budig 2007).

Recently, scholars argue that we must disaggregate groups even further to best understand the consequences of interacting power structures. Just as citizens within nations are not homogeneous, subgroups such as single mothers are not homogeneous. Indeed, Zagel (2013) suggests in a study of Great Britain and West Germany that single mothers are a complex group,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Two Parents</th>
<th>Single Mothers</th>
<th>Gap</th>
<th>Single Mothers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>2.1 (4)</td>
<td>5.5 (1)</td>
<td>3.4 (1)</td>
<td>743 (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>5.8 (12)</td>
<td>10.1 (4)</td>
<td>4.3 (2)</td>
<td>434 (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>6.2 (2)</td>
<td>4.4 (3)</td>
<td>335 (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>5.6 (11)</td>
<td>11.5 (5)</td>
<td>5.9 (4)</td>
<td>2,392 (18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>1.7 (2)</td>
<td>8.0 (3)</td>
<td>6.3 (5)</td>
<td>12,723 (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>11.8 (18)</td>
<td>18.5 (10)</td>
<td>6.7 (6)</td>
<td>447 (14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>13.0 (20)</td>
<td>20.9 (13)</td>
<td>7.9 (7)</td>
<td>820 (16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>14.3 (7)</td>
<td>10.0 (8)</td>
<td>384 (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
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<td>15.3 (8)</td>
<td>10.0 (8)</td>
<td>383 (9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>17.6 (21)</td>
<td>29.2 (19)</td>
<td>11.6 (10)</td>
<td>433 (19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korea (S)</td>
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<td>17.5 (9)</td>
<td>12.0 (11)</td>
<td>975 (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>14.1 (6)</td>
<td>12.7 (12)</td>
<td>489 (12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>5.9 (13)</td>
<td>20.2 (11)</td>
<td>14.3 (13)</td>
<td>1,511 (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>20.8 (12)</td>
<td>14.9 (14)</td>
<td>1,560 (16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
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<td>27.1 (18)</td>
<td>14.9 (14)</td>
<td>554 (20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>4.7 (7)</td>
<td>21.1 (14)</td>
<td>16.4 (16)</td>
<td>415 (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luxembourg</td>
<td>5.4 (9)</td>
<td>24.9 (16)</td>
<td>19.5 (17)</td>
<td>369 (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>7.0 (15)</td>
<td>26.6 (17)</td>
<td>19.6 (18)</td>
<td>1,317 (12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>3.0 (5)</td>
<td>24.3 (15)</td>
<td>21.3 (19)</td>
<td>657 (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>10.1 (17)</td>
<td>36.7 (20)</td>
<td>26.6 (20)</td>
<td>6,084 (21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>7.2 (16)</td>
<td>40.8 (21)</td>
<td>33.6 (21)</td>
<td>71 (14)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Relative poverty is calculated as 50 percent of median equivalized disposable income; excludes the Self-Employed; numbers in parentheses reflect ranking. ‘Data for Sweden are measured in 2005. Arrows reflect value relative to the mean.
Source: Authors’ calculation from Luxembourg Income Study Microdata.
and studies of single mothers’ labor force attachment must consider stage in the life course. Additionally, Western, Bloome, and Percheski (2008) disaggregated changes in US inequality over time to changes between groups (e.g., differences in average income between two-parent and single-parent families) and changes within groups (e.g., changes in inequality among two-parent families). They found that half of the increase in inequality in family income between 1970 and 2000 is found within groups. Clearly, intersectionality theory has profoundly shaped the direction of research over the last two decades.

Globalization and Postindustrial Employment

Broad conceptualizations of globalization define it as the increasing transfer of human capital, capital, information, and technology across countries. Both intersectional and globalization scholars have argued that welfare state research should consider the experiences of immigrants as cross-country migration is a core component of globalization. Researchers found large gaps in poverty rates between immigrants and natives in many countries. Table 31.3 presents relative poverty rates for natives and immigrants and the percentage point gap in poverty rates between immigrants and natives. Just as cross-national variation in poverty rates for two-parent families follows a similar pattern as the variation in overall income inequality, the variation in poverty rates across countries for native residents follows a similar pattern (see Table 31.3). The variation in poverty rates for immigrants and native-immigrant poverty gaps are more complex. In fact, countries with the lowest levels of overall inequality and poverty for natives also have above average gaps in poverty between immigrants and natives. This includes Norway, Austria, Sweden, and Luxembourg.

As previously noted, immigrants are not perceived in most countries to be deserving of assistance from the welfare state and this is remarkably consistent across countries. Scholars argue that greater migration creates feelings of insecurity among the native population resulting from group conflict and this creates “welfare chauvinism” where support for welfare spending and redistribution declines (Mewes and Mau 2013; Reeskens and van Oorschot 2012). Indeed, a number of scholars have illustrated that immigration generates more muted public support for welfare state policies in the context of an expanding inflow of migrants, particularly when the economy is weak (Alesina and Glaeser 2004; Nagayoshi and Hjerm 2015; Nannestad 2007; Schmidt-Catran and Spies 2016). Yet, attitudes toward social policy and individuals’ willingness to help immigrants are enhanced in the context of increasing immigration and greater global connectedness (Brady and Finnigan 2014; Koster 2007).

The level of ethnic heterogeneity in a country also helps explain perceptions of support for immigrants. Indeed, individuals are more likely to apply positive attitudes toward income redistribution to migrants when the country is already ethnically diverse (Reeskens and van Oorschot 2012). Yet, it is widely
acknowledged that the most redistributive welfare states are also the most ethnically homogeneous. As an example, Kesler (2015) studied migrant/nonmigrant poverty gaps in Germany, Sweden, and the United Kingdom, finding that the poverty gap is highest in Sweden. Although, it is important to note that immigrant poverty rates in Sweden remain below those in both Germany and the United Kingdom.

While some scholars argue that increased immigration dampens public support for the welfare state, other scholars argue that migrants are lower skilled and as a result they receive automatic income support in generous welfare states, and this drives up spending. Empirical results are mixed. Immigration generates greater social welfare spending in European countries (Brady, Beckfield, and Seeleib-Kaiser 2005), yet unemployment benefits are lower in the presence of greater migration (Soroka et al. 2016).

In addition to increasing migration of individuals and families across borders, globalization generates instability in employment and dispersion of income with notable declines in income at the bottom of the income distribution. Indeed, globalization is in part responsible for economic shifts from industrial to postindustrial. Postindustrial economies are characterized by more limited job security as the competition for jobs transcends country boundaries.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Relative Poverty Rates</th>
<th>Sample Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Natives</td>
<td>Immigrants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>1.7 (1)</td>
<td>10.8 (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>3.3 (4)</td>
<td>14.7 (10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>1.7 (1)</td>
<td>7.5 (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luxembourg</td>
<td>3.3 (4)</td>
<td>11.2 (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>6.0 (7)</td>
<td>10.8 (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>7.0 (8)</td>
<td>17.4 (12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>8.7 (11)</td>
<td>7.0 (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korea (S)</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>4.9 (6)</td>
<td>8.9 (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>7.3 (9)</td>
<td>14.3 (9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>2.5 (3)</td>
<td>7.6 (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>12.5 (12)</td>
<td>17.8 (13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>--</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>7.4 (10)</td>
<td>9.7 (5)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>12.9 (13)</td>
<td>29.7 (15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>--</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>21.7 (16)</td>
<td>15.2 (11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>16.5 (15)</td>
<td>13.3 (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>14.7 (14)</td>
<td>24.4 (14)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Relative poverty is calculated as 50 percent of median equivalized disposable income; excludes the Self-Employed; numbers in parentheses reflect ranking. 1Data for Sweden are measured in 2005. Arrows reflect value relative to the mean. Source: Authors’ calculation from Luxembourg Income Study Microdata.
Initial scholarship on globalization and the welfare state debated whether globalization leads to welfare state retrenchment or expansion. Given the increase in demand for welfare state services due to employment instability, globalization could lead to an expansion of the welfare state. Yet, globalization also theoretically undermines the power of the government, potentially leading to retrenchment. Many scholars found that globalization has important implications for welfare states and their effects (Pierson 2001; see Brady, Beckfield, and Zhao 2007 for a review of the relevant literature). More recently, scholars have suggested that globalization does not dramatically alter the overall size of the welfare state (Brady et al. 2005); instead, the shape of the welfare state is transformed. Indeed, in response to the increased need for employment flexibility, policy-makers across countries have shifted welfare state strategies to permit labor market flexibility, without undermining worker security. This is accomplished through a combination of cash assistance to the unemployed and active labor market policies (Andersen et al. 2007; Jorgensen 2009).

EMERGING AND EXPANDING AREAS OF RESEARCH

Findings from research on welfare regimes and discrete policy effects, accompanied by insights from power resource, intersectional, and globalization theories have helped policy-makers identify policy priorities while welfare state scholars continue to study these policy shifts. In fact, scholars have recently identified a new wave of welfare state development, arguing that the welfare state has shifted from emphasizing social support to social investment (Hemerijck 2013). In the social investment welfare state, policies are designed to complement economic and demographic shifts. The current global, knowledge-based economy demands a flexible labor force that is properly trained and in large supply. Yet, over the last two decades, the ageing of the population and declines in fertility limit the supply of laborers. Furthermore, scholars have found that different factors over the life course can generate labor market exits, and policies have shifted to address life course risks (Birnbaum et al. 2017). Child-bearing increases the risk of labor market exit, particularly for women. Spells of unemployment also increase the risk of permanent labor market exits, particularly for older adults as they may not have the necessary knowledge demanded by the shifting knowledge economy (Hemerijck 2013, 2017; Morel, Palier, and Palme 2012). Furthermore, the liberal ideology that suggests that welfare states promote labor market exit by offering cash-based transfers has gained increasing traction cross-nationally.

The social investment welfare state supports economic growth by ensuring a trained supply of laborers through education spending during youth and life-long skill development for older adults, as found in active labor market policies (van Kersbergen and Hemerijck 2012). The social investment welfare state also
encourages women’s labor force participation by offering work-family policies, including child care and family leave, to ease the conflict between work and family. Finally, the social investment welfare state continues to provide direct support to individuals to help workers as they transition between jobs (Hemerijck 2018).

As researchers seek to understand the implications of the third wave of welfare capitalism, they are also continuing down a path that considers a broader array of outcomes. Indeed, it is quite reasonable to assess whether welfare states affect social welfare directly, as has been conducted in voluminous studies, and indirectly, through factors long understood to impact individuals’ positions in stratification systems. Indeed, scholars have established that welfare states also influence social capital, an important component of stratification (Pichler and Wallace 2008). Research on social capital is theoretically relevant because structural functionalist scholars have argued that industrialization weakened the family and enhanced the need for state support. Theoretically, the welfare state could either undermine the development of social capital by replacing the family and community, or it could promote social capital by presenting a strong political system (Kääriäinen and Lehtonen 2006). Research on the relationship between the welfare state and social capital presents mixed results. For example, van Oorschot and Finsveen (2009) found no relationship between welfare states and social capital, while Kääriäinen and Lehtonen (2006) found that some forms of social capital are promoted in different welfare regimes. Bonding social capital, such as family ties, are stronger in welfare state regimes that promote the family. Bridging social capital, including civic engagement, and generalized trust, are strongest in the social democratic regime. Furthermore, Ellwardt et al. (2014) found that the impoverished aged have broader social networks when public spending on elder services and health is more generous.

Welfare states may also affect health. Many health scholars in medical professions have referenced social science research on the welfare states and income inequality to better understand the variation in health outcomes across countries. The expansion of research on the relationship between the welfare state and health outcomes is a logical extension of existing research given that income inequality is a strong predictor of health disparities, and the welfare state is a strong predictor of income inequality. Researchers have found that health outcomes vary across welfare regimes due to policy configurations (Eikemo et al. 2008; Richter et al. 2012). In fact, some of the negative effects of the rise in precarious work on health are moderated by the welfare state (Kim et al. 2012). Research on health outcomes generally focuses on broad policy configurations, taking the regime approach. Further research will undoubtedly decompose regimes into their constituent policies to examine policy effects.

Additionally, there is ample opportunity to expand research to better incorporate countries across the world. Welfare state research has primarily focused on advanced industrialized countries because theories of welfare state
Welfare state scholars have pioneered new ground since the turn of the century by focusing on welfare state effects in light of intersectionality theory, globalization theory, and theories of welfare state development, notably power resource theory. This shift in modal research is a logical extension of
research on welfare state development because early scholars clearly argued that the welfare state provides social rights to residents within countries. Yet, it was not until Esping-Andersen’s ground-breaking publication that scholars turned en masse to explaining welfare state outcomes.

As scholars have attempted to understand the effects of welfare states, they have also worked diligently to link theories of welfare state development to their outcomes. The shift in research toward explaining welfare state outcomes has advanced the welfare state, stratification, and health literatures. Once power resource theory and other theories of welfare state development were considered in tandem with intersectionality and globalization theory, new insights into the redistributive nature of the welfare state emerged. Indeed, the social rights of citizenship are distinct for different individuals in society, and welfare states institutionalize these rights. Thus, degrees of redistribution vary across groups in society depending on power structures that define individuals’ roles in society. Additionally, scholars have found that welfare states are incredibly powerful predictors of cross-national variations in income inequality, a common finding that has been embraced by stratification scholars who previously neglected the role of the state in discussions on stratification. Scholars are currently assessing the extent to which welfare states affect other predictors of stratification, such as employment, occupational segregation, and social capital. At the same time, health scholars are assessing the effects of stratification on health outcomes. Given the importance of the welfare state to stratification, they are also following a logical path of testing welfare state effects on health outcomes.

New ground is also emerging as scholars apply theories and patterns of redistribution to East Asian and Central and Eastern European countries. Major political and economic shifts have created opportunities to test theories. Clearly these nascent welfare states are following unique paths, but it is highly debatable as to whether they are following different paths to known outcomes (i.e., perhaps toward a liberal regime) or if they are forging new paths. There is plenty of opportunity for theoretical insights into these emerging welfare states, and once these insights are gleaned theorists will be better poised to explain welfare state outcomes in post-socialist and post-communist welfare states. Yet, one could argue that the question of where these countries will end up is beyond the realm of welfare state research. Indeed, all welfare states may be moving toward a single model. The shift toward flexible employment and active labor market policies in some countries could be a sign of this, or perhaps not. A better approach to understanding nascent welfare states would be to compare them with established welfare states at similar points in each country’s development of social rights.

As scholars continue down the path of examining the logical effects of the welfare state on various outcomes, we run the risk of becoming atheoretical. Structure matters, power matters, and the state matters, but we need further theoretical insights to explain how and why different power and institutional
structures work together to explain welfare state outcomes. Indeed, current research on the third wave of the welfare state has benefited tremendously from gender research, but current studies widely fail to incorporate the theoretical insights of gender scholarship into discussions of welfare state reforms. For example, as Saraceno (2015) clearly articulated, the social investment strategy prioritizes paid work but generally fails to account for gender inequality in the labor force. Furthermore, the new strategy promotes both employment (for all workers) and reproduction (in response to declining fertility). This continues to pose a conflict for families, primarily mothers. Scholars are amassing a wealth of information on welfare state outcomes that should help generate new theoretical advancements, but scholars across traditions must consider both the empirical and theoretical insights of other research strands.

REFERENCES


Gender, gender identity, and sexuality permeate interactions, institutions, and societies, including the organization of the political sphere, as well as the policies that states enact (Connell 1990, 2009; Orloff 1993; Risman 2004; Walby 2002). Expectations and norms around gender, gender identity, and sexuality vary from place to place, over time, and even within the same society, and play a central role in organizing all societies. Such cultural expectations are instantiated in the organization of the state, through its laws, policies, and institutions.

Laws and policies may either protect people from discrimination or may institute discrimination on the basis of gender, gender identity, and sexuality; and they often do both of these things in uneven and contradictory ways (Bose 2012; Jackson 2006; McClintock 2013; Orloff 1993). Taking an intersectional perspective (Choo and Ferree 2010; Collins 1990; Misra 2018) makes it clear that gender, gender identity, and sexuality intersect with other statuses, such as race, ethnicity, nationality, documentation, and age in complex ways. As a result, as we demonstrate, laws and policies often provide greater benefit to those within the matrix of domination (Collins 1990) who are already relatively more privileged. Some policies simultaneously provide advantages to some traditionally marginalized groups while disadvantaging other marginalized groups. Furthermore, law and policy are often inadequate and incomplete tools for addressing multiple forms of oppression simultaneously.

By gender, we refer to principles that reflect ideas about masculinity and femininity that any given culture associates with a person’s sex assigned at birth (in most countries, male or female). Sex generally refers to how a person is placed, based on physiology and genetic materials, into categories of male and female. Yet, sex categorization at birth is not straightforward for many and the criteria by which sex is assigned at birth have changed over time. Infants with ambiguous genitalia or who are intersex have often been subject to surgical
intervention to force their bodies into a binary categorization of male or female (Davis 2015; Davis, Dewey, and Murphy 2016; Dreger and Herndon 2009; Kessler 1990; Turner 1999). Gender identity refers to how individuals identify their gender, which may match their sex assigned at birth (cis men and cis women), or may not, categorizing them as gender minorities (Mayo 2013). Some gender minorities may express or perform a male or female gender identity (e.g., trans man or trans woman), but others reflect more fluidity (e.g., nonbinary or genderqueer) (Monro 2003). Transgender itself may be defined as a “broadly inclusive rubric for describing expressions of gender that vary from expected norms” (Currah and Stryker 2014: 5). Finally, sexuality can be defined as including “identities and roles, sexual orientation, eroticism, pleasure, intimacy, and reproduction” (World Health Organization, quoted in Bernstein, Marshall, and Barclay 2009). This means that gender and sexuality intersect in complex, nonlinear ways (Jackson 2006), as bodies, gender, sex, and sexuality help constitute one another (Currah and Stryker 2014; Erickson-Schroth 2014; Pfeffer 2014). Much of the research on gender and policy focuses on binary gender categories; similarly, much of the research on sexuality and policy focuses on sexual orientation. We seek to extend this literature to incorporate recognition of gender identity and sexuality more broadly.

Recognizing the state as a complex, uneven, and dynamic actor is critical to theorizing how it reflects and shapes gender, gender identity, and sexuality with its policies. Laws and policies are often partial, incomplete, and poorly implemented, leading to claims of competing rights, illustrating what sociolegal scholars call the limits of rights discourse (e.g., Smart 1989; Bernstein, Barclay, and Marshall 2009). For example, Indian political systems include gender quotas (Paxton and Hughes 2015), and India’s constitution outlaws discrimination against women (Kannabiran 2013), even as women continue to face violence and sexual assault based on their gender (Panda and Agarwal 2005; Roychowdhury 2015). Same-sex relationships in India are criminalized, but there are some protections in place for third-gender people (hijras), despite substantial exclusion (Boyce 2014). In the US, the Equal Rights Amendment never passed and women’s political representation is low, but women’s employment rights are somewhat protected (Mansbridge 2015; O’Connor, Orloff, and Shaver 1999; Paxton, Kunovich, and Hughes 2007). US women also still face high rates of violence and sexual assault (Brush 2003, 2011) and state policies continue to be ineffective at reducing such violence.

1 While human rights violations were once understood as violations committed by state actors, since 1990, international feminist human rights activists have argued that the state’s failure to protect women from violence committed by private citizens is also a violation of women’s rights. Such an understanding has been incorporated into international human rights treaties such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which defines violence against women as a form of discrimination (Merry 2006).
Even after the right to same-sex marriage was extended nationwide, state legislatures enacted a number of limitations on the rights of sexual and gender minorities, and the US president called for a ban on transgender people in the military (Gerstmann 2017), which has now gone into effect (National Center for Transgender Equality 2019). Opponents of same-sex marriage and of LGBT rights more generally utilize the Religious Freedom and Restoration Act to argue that their religious freedom justifies their refusal to provide services to lesbians and gay men (e.g., Liptak 2017). Thus, states do not act in coherent, monolithic ways, but instead pursue a range of strategies that may both undermine and support equality on the basis of gender, gender identity, and sexuality; advantage some subgroups, while disadvantaging others; create claims to competing rights; and be poorly or unevenly implemented.

Understanding the role of politics in shaping, ignoring, and reflecting ideas about gender, gender identity, and sexuality is critical in the twenty-first century. State policies effectively criminalize acts, identities, and relationships, provide circumscribed rights, or act as a lever for change – and they may do all of these things at the same time (Alexander 1994; Bernstein and Naples 2010; Brown 1992; Connell 1990; Haney 2017; Misra and Akins 1998). Social movements and political actors – aimed at preserving “traditional” gendered and sexual arrangements as well as those aimed at supporting more diverse gendered and sexual arrangements – work to influence state laws and policies. Because the state plays central roles in regulating and constructing gender, gender identity, and sexuality, feminist scholars must pay attention to the state. Yet political sociologists must also recognize that politics reflect assumptions and prescriptions about gender, gender identity, and sexuality that are embedded in a wide variety of laws and policies.

State policies that impose criminal penalties for particular behaviors may indirectly confer a criminal status on particular identities. For example, banning same-sex sexual activity in private between consenting adults may effectively criminalize lesbian, gay, or bisexual identities (Bernstein 2005; Halley 1994). Similarly, where abortion or certain abortions are criminalized, women who obtain these abortions, or those who provide them, may find their status criminalized (Flavin 2008; Solinger 1998). Where these statuses are criminalized, the state may itself commit violence against and ignore assaults and killings of members of these groups. Such laws can be used to deny other rights to members of these groups.

Other state policies and laws limit the rights and opportunities of people based on gender, gender identity, and sexuality. For example, laws requiring transgender individuals to use bathrooms based on their sex assigned at birth limit the rights of trans people in public spaces and thus their ability to participate equally in society (Westbrook and Schilt 2014). Labor laws that limit women’s right to employment when pregnant usually do not criminalize pregnant women (they will not be fined or punished for working) – but circumscribe women’s right to employment when pregnant (employers are
free to fire them for becoming pregnant) (Chester and Kleiner 2001; Vogel 1993). Yet laws protecting pregnant workers may focus on pregnant women, leaving pregnant trans men unprotected (Karaian 2013). Laws governing marriage may allow different-sex but not same-sex couples to marry. Even when laws allow same-sex couples to marry, they may not provide them with the same rights in terms of adoption, surrogacy, or parental recognition to which different-sex married couples are entitled and sometimes marriage makes it even harder for same-sex couples to form legal parental ties with their children (Badgett 2009; Bernstein and Naples 2010; Bernstein, Naples, and Harvey 2016; Bernstein and Reimann 2001; Bernstein and Taylor 2013; Platero 2007). Some countries, such as Iceland or France, provide alternative statuses to marriage for both same-sex and different-sex couples (Bernstein et al. 2016).

Yet, laws can also open opportunities to women, gender minorities, and sexual minorities. Women’s suffrage gave women the right to vote, and increased women’s political representation (Paxton et al. 2007; Ramirez, Soysal, and Shanahan 1997). Some countries have further created quotas for women’s representation in legislatures (Franceschet and Piscopo 2008; Krook 2006; Paxton and Hughes 2015). Marriage rights may provide governmental recognition for same-sex relationships, and equalize rights between different-sex and same-sex couples (Bernstein and Naples 2010; Gerstmann 2017). Regulations that allow birth certificates or other identifying documents to note “intersex,” or to simply not include a categorization by sex or gender, may increase freedom among gender minorities (Mottet 2013). Currently, only a handful of nations, such as Australia, Germany, Nepal, India, and New Zealand, allow third-sex categorizations (Bochenek and Knight 2012; Rellis 2007; Stafford 2013).

Laws can also reinforce existing inequalities and pit the rights of different groups against each other. For example, laws around adoption, surrogacy, reproductive technologies, and access to fertility services may reinforce inequalities based on class, race, sexual orientation, nation, and colonial legacies (Fixmer-Oraiz 2013; Gamson 2017). Countries differ and laws are quickly changing regarding whether commercial or altruistic surrogacy is permitted (Perrett 2011). Laws regulating surrogacy may give greater rights to surrogates, or to expectant parents, and vary considerably across countries (Hofman 2008; Pande 2015; Perrett 2011; Sirola 2006). The poverty of some surrogates raises questions about whether becoming a surrogate reflects coercion or “free choice” as laborers (DasGupta and DasGupta 2010; Pande 2010). Thus the rights of women who are surrogates and the rights of gay men and others seeking commercial surrogacy (which may include women) may be at odds and the result of economic inequities (Riggs and Due 2010, 2013, 2017).

Those with more power within the matrix of domination (Collins 1990) tend to benefit more from changes in laws and policies designed to ameliorate various forms of inequality. Incremental improvements often benefit part of a group and
can come at the expense of others within the more broadly defined group who have relatively less power, or only benefit part of the aggrieved group. For example, women’s and gay rights are promoted (at least discursively) at times by conservatives as a way to pursue anti-Muslim policies (Abu-Lughod 2002; Mepschen, Duyvendak, and Tonkens 2010). Attending to how gender, gender identity, and sexuality intersect with other identity statuses is important. For example, migration policies that limit employment opportunities for migrant women may benefit native-born families, by channeling migrants into low-paid care work (Misra, Woodring, and Merz 2006; Ruhs and Anderson 2010). In another example, while masculinity may often be associated with greater rights, men from disadvantaged groups, such as racialized gay migrants, may be targeted by damaging policies (Cantú 2009). In this chapter, we recognize states as both reinforcing and challenging traditional ideas about gender, gender identity, and sexuality, while recognizing that the state treats groups of women or sexual and gender minorities differentially, according to their class status, race and ethnicity, nationality, citizenship status, and other identities. Our goal is to theorize the complex and contradictory nature of social policies related to gender, gender identity, and sexuality.

POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS, SOCIAL MOVEMENTS, IDEOLOGY, AND HISTORY

In every society, gender and sexuality are created and recreated through interactions, structures, and politics. Ideas about gender, gender identity, and sexuality are deeply embedded in political systems and policies. While some policies may be clearly focused on gender and sexuality (e.g., policies around gay or trans members of the military), almost all policies have implications that reflect gender, gender identity, and sexuality (e.g., support for military families, which may be differentiated depending on marital status, number of children, etc.).

We view four major factors as playing central roles in how state policies and laws are related to gender, gender identity, and sexuality: political institutions, or the structure of the state and civil society; the strength of interest groups and social movements, which may reflect a variety of perspectives on gender and sexuality; cultural and religious ideologies that prevail in society and among policy-makers; and cultural legal, social, political, and economic histories, including the state’s capacity to make and enforce policies. These four factors may reflect the mechanisms through which state policies are crafted that regulate gender, gender identity, and sexuality, as well as mediating or reinforcing inequality by gender and sexuality.

Political institutions play a central role in determining how states legislate gender, gender identity, and sexuality. For example, authoritarian governments may be less likely to engage in opening up rights about gender and sexuality
than democracies, though pro-democracy attitudes, efforts at modernization, and secularism are not necessarily linked with attitudes about more progressive gender politics (Beer 2009; Gorski and Altinordu 2008; Rizzo, Abdel-Latif, and Meyer 2007; Yavuz 1998, 2009). Furthermore, policies and conflicts governing women’s bodies and women’s rights, such as women’s right to wear the headscarf in public institutions like parliament or universities in Turkey are often stand-ins for broader political cleavages (Gurbuz and Bernstein 2012). Women’s or LGBT representation in government may lead to more attention to policy issues that affect these groups (Bauer and Burnet 2013; Haider-Markel, Joslyn, and Kniss 2000; Kollman and Waites 2009). While some countries have developed policies aimed at ensuring women’s representation (Hughes and Green 2006; Paxton et al. 2007; Paxton and Hughes 2015), no countries have quotas for representation by sexual or gender minorities. Even where LGBT rights are guaranteed in a country’s constitution, as in South Africa, following colonial legislation that ignored traditional values around sexuality and relationships, LGBT people may experience different levels of citizenship (van Zyl 2011).

At the same time, party politics matter. In a country where conservative religious parties are powerful, policies are likely to reflect more traditional ideas about gender and sexuality, and may criminalize gender and sexual minorities, and limit reproductive rights (Razavi and Jenichen 2010). Some countries have ministries devoted to the rights of women; these may also work toward rights for sexual and gender minorities; gender mainstreaming also has created more inroads for increased rights, though effects are varied (Goertz and Mazur 2008; Mazur and McBride 2012; Moser and Moser 2014; Walby 2005). These ministries tend to be more effective at supporting the rights of women, gender minorities, and sexual minorities when party politics are favorable – as in when progressive parties are in power (Bernstein and Naples 2015). Even when women are in power, either as political leaders or through state ministries, they may embrace conservative politics and policies that do not grant rights to these groups (Jeffery and Basu 2012; Schreiber 2008), or take part in “governance feminism.”

In most countries, interest groups and social movements play a role in politics – with these movements reflecting a wide array of political positions on the rights of women, and sexual and gender minorities. The configuration of political institutions structures the extent to which states are permeable to social movements and specific issues. The structure of political institutions affects both the pathways and timing of social change (Smith 2008; Halfmann 2011). Women’s movements, and LGBT social movements, have clearly played an important role in advancing the rights of women, gender minorities and sexual minorities, although these movements also may adopt different tactics and identify different key principles (Armstrong and Bernstein 2008; Banaszak, Beckwith, and Rucht 2003; Kuumba 2002; Misra 1998). Conservative movements aimed at countering women’s and LGBT movements also play an
important role in many societies. Women and sexual minorities may mobilize in right-wing, fundamentalist, and nationalist movements (Jeffery and Basu 2012). Proponents and opponents of the rights of women, and gender and sexual minorities may be oriented toward local society, but may further be engaged in global and transnational movements (Buss and Herman 2003; Ferree and Tripp 2006; Paternotte 2016; Thoreson 2014). States may shift their sponsorship of civil society organizations over time from those promoting greater equality to those creating less equality for women, gender minorities, and sexual minorities, as is currently the case in much of Europe, especially Central and Eastern Europe, where gender equality policies are increasingly challenged and weakened (Krizsan and Roggeband 2018; Roggeband 2018; Verloo 2018).

Historically, women’s and LGBT movements, as well as socialist movements, have helped push toward policies supportive to at least certain groups of women, gender minorities, and sexual minorities. At times, certain issues leap to the forefront of a social movement agenda to the surprise of long-standing activists. For example, achieving same-sex marriage in the US once seemed inconceivable, but when the Hawaii state supreme court seemed on the verge of allowing same-sex marriage, activists quickly mobilized (Bernstein and Taylor 2013). Opponents of same-sex marriage also mobilized to ban it at the state level, leading to even stronger LGBT advocacy for marriage equality in response (Stone 2012). Some LGBT activists who want to emphasize other issues, such as preventing violence against trans people or ending poverty and homelessness among LGBT people, have decried the movement’s emphasis on same-sex marriage (Spade 2016). Others also note that middle- and upper-class LGBT people are more likely to access and therefore benefit from marriage than are groups with lower rates of marriage, such as poor people and people of color (Stein 2013). Yet, despite lower rates of marriage, lesbian and gay African Americans show strong support for same-sex marriage (Bernstein 2018; Lee 2019; Hull and Ortyl 2013; Moore 2011; Battle, Pastrana, and Daniels 2012). Furthermore, with the adoption of same-sex marriage in the US, support for laws protecting LGBT people from discrimination in jobs has increased (Kazyak and Stange 2018).

State policies often produce contradictory outcomes because state recognition and regulation are inextricably linked. Petitioning the state for greater recognition or freedom from discrimination may stimulate regulation by the state (Gordon 2012; Misra and Akins 1998). Many queer activists, for example, fear that legalized same-sex marriage will result in increasing regulation of same-sex relationships and stigmatization of those who choose not to marry; they argue instead for the legal recognition of a variety of relationship forms (Polikoff and Bronski 2009). Yet even recognizing a variety of nonmarital relationships may increase regulation and have unintended consequences. For example, once Australia legally recognized same-sex couples as “de facto” (similar to common law) relationships, a
same-sex couple’s combined income was considered for the purposes of receiving social welfare benefits, making it harder to obtain such benefits; whereas prior to legal recognition, the same-sex partner’s income was not counted (Bernstein 2015). The legal denial of marriage rights to same-sex couples may have led to more freedom in how they define their relationships (Green 2013) or in who they considered family (Weston 1991). Yet marriage can guarantee certain important rights, particularly related to establishing legal ties with their children, economic benefits, and even access to divorce (Andersen 2009; Bernstein et al. 2016; Bernstein and Reimann 2001; Chambers 2001).

Social movements often adopt or co-opt discourse that has significant cultural resonance in order to argue for social change. Such arguments, however, are also potentially risky. For example, some women’s movements in Europe and the US historically suggested that women should be political leaders because they are essentially more moral and nurturing than men (although others emphasized women’s equality with men); such strategies may unintentionally limit women’s opportunities (Baron 2005; Bock and James 2005; Glass and Fodor 2007; Misra 1998). Progressive social movements aimed at addressing inequality, then, may reinforce inequality, at least for certain groups. And movements may claim that they aim to support women – through right-wing policies. The current growth of populist and nationalist movements worldwide reflects efforts to uphold notions of the “traditional” family, which may limit women’s roles in society, and work to criminalize sexual minorities and gender minorities (Blee and Creasap 2010; Lafont 2001; Moghissi 2016; Puri 2008).

Political institutions and social movements further reflect prevailing ideologies, including those related to gender, gender identity, sexuality, marriage, and religion (Gal and Kligman 2012; Pfau-Effinger 2017). The platforms of political parties tend to reflect dominant ideologies, whether they are conservative and religiously based or progressive and based in feminist ideals. Ideologies reflected in political structures and parties are in turn strengthened because they are officially embraced by the state. Economic ideologies – such as global ideologies promulgated by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund – also deeply influence the rights of women, sexual minorities, and gender minorities. Where market fundamentalism pushes against social spending, those from vulnerable groups are more likely to suffer; where social spending is viewed as central to an inclusive society, women, sexual minorities, and gender minorities tend to do better (Ewig 2011; Lombardo, Meier, and Verloo 2009). The rise of nationalist and religious movements worldwide has led to – in many contexts – rollbacks on rights for women, sexual minorities and gender minorities; many of these movements aim to “return” to “traditional” values around gender and sexuality. While these movements may reflect economic tensions, they often play out on a stage that focuses attention on cultural ideas about the place of women and sexual/gender minorities (Kim-Puri 2005; Puri 2008).
Finally, cultural, legal, social, political, and economic histories shape the potential for state policies around gender, gender identity, and sexuality (Ayoub 2013; Ferree 2009; Halfmann 2011; Kollman 2009; Misra 2003; Smith 2008; Winter, Forest, and Sénac 2018). For example, a history of colonialism, or of anticolonialist nationalism, may be deeply embedded in politics and policy (Bose 2011, 2012; Mohanty 2003). Ideas about gender, gender transgression, and sexuality have been shaped by colonial discourses, and reflected in colonial and postcolonial policies (Blackwood 2005; Oyèwùmí 1997). As Lugones (2016: 27) aptly argues, “The gender system introduced was one thoroughly informed through the coloniality of power.” Long-standing historical patterns of women’s engagement in work or politics, or cultural recognition of sexual minorities and gender minorities, may also influence the growth of legal rights for these groups (Tilly and Scott 1987). Ideas about masculinities may reflect nationalist discourses developed in response to colonial antagonisms (Hooper 2012; Morrell, Jewkes, and Lindegger 2012). Opposition to LGBT rights can become another way to contest colonial power and that of Western countries, which are derided as effeminate and bourgeois because of their association with sexual minorities (Adam, Duyvendak, and Krouwel 2008; Currier 2012). Economic power also matters; where the state has more resources, they may do more, for example, to support working mothers, with subsidized child care and paid maternity leaves (Rao and Kelleher 2005; Wood and Gough 2006); though the lack of family policy in the wealthy US makes clear that resources do not necessarily lead to supportive policy (Gornick and Meyers 2005).

Ideas about the rights of women, gender minorities, and sexual minorities reflect both historical ideologies, and transnational learning, such as the growth of laws supporting same-sex marriage across the globe (Badgett 2009; Winter, Forest, and Sénac 2018). Indeed, international feminist and LGBT organizations have played a key role in promoting the growth of broader rights (Keck and Sikkink 2014; Thayer 2009; Thoreson 2014). Yet these ideas around women’s rights, abortion, or same-sex relationships may also be viewed as counter to local ideologies, which can help strengthen resistance in certain contexts. Historical, legal, and cultural processes may also support more regressive policies. For example, abortion rights in some Eastern European countries have vacillated, with greater rights under earlier communist regimes, and more restrictions in recent years (Gal and Kligman 2012). In Russia, where consensual sex acts between adults have been decriminalized, lesbians and gay men face staunch opposition because they are seen as challenging dominant understandings of gender and thus they do not organize significantly around sexual orientation (Essig 2012).

Understanding the politics of gender, gender identity, and sexuality, then, requires being attentive to the ways in which politics reflect the structure of the state and civil society; the strength of interest groups and social movements, which may reflect a variety of perspectives on gender and sexuality; cultural and religious ideologies that prevail in society, and among policy-makers; and legal,
social, political, and economic histories, including the state’s capacity to make and enforce policies. These varied mechanisms that shape politics and policies help explain why state policies have complex and at times contradictory approaches to gender, gender identity, and sexuality.

GENDER, GENDER IDENTITY, AND SEXUALITY IN POLICY ARENAS

In the next several sections of this chapter, we describe the politics of identity, relationship recognition, and fertility; employment politics; and the politics of social welfare, drawing out how these policies impact women, gender minorities, and sexual minorities across a range of wealthy and developing countries. While we could use a range of other policies to illustrate our argument, we circumscribe our focus to these few fields, to show how central gender, gender identity, and sexuality are to politics around the globe.

Politics of Fertility, Abortion, and Adoption

State policies regulate families through fertility, abortion, and adoption policies in myriad ways that provide advantages and disadvantages to groups based on their relative power and position in the matrix of domination (Collins 1990; Roberts 2014). Intersectional approaches allow us to recognize that some women may be sterilized without their knowledge, while others have greater choice about how they control their bodies. Some women may have access to abortion, while others do not; straight couples may be granted opportunities to adopt or use reproductive technologies, while same-sex couples may face greater restrictions. Class, race, gender identity, sexuality, nationality, coloniality, region— all play a role in state regulation of parenthood. Rather than playing a neutral role, then, the state intervenes quite systematically in women’s health, as well as reproductive and adoption policy. These interventions may be guided through political institutions such as party politics or courts, and through social movements and interest groups, cultural and religious ideologies about gender and sexuality, as well as legal, social, political, and economic histories, which, for example, guide whether abortion and birth control are covered by health insurance.

Fertility policies may work to reduce population size, as through population control strategies aimed at sterilizing groups of women, or through pro-natalist strategies aimed at increasing fertility among certain groups of women (Briggs 2003; Castles 2003; Flavin 2008; McDonald 2002; Pande 2015; Roberts 2014; Schoen 2005). While such policies often constrain all women’s choices, the adverse consequences of such policies are generally worse for women and families from groups that are already more marginalized. Antinatalist and pro-natalist policies almost always work to limit fertility and child-rearing among certain groups deemed undesirable—the poor, racial and ethnic minorities, immigrants, LGBT—while supporting fertility among dominant
groups. Conservative and punitive ideologies about gender, gender identity, sexuality, and reproduction can lead to contradictory policies, such as when poor women who are otherwise dissuaded from and punished for having children are denied access to abortion because they cannot afford to pay for the procedure, or minors who are also generally viewed as unfit parents are denied access to abortion without parental consent. While US states have judicial bypass procedures that allow pregnant minors to access abortion without parental consent or notification, those bypasses are punitive and difficult to access. Restrictions on federal funding of abortion particularly disadvantage Native American women, who comprise one of the poorest groups in the US (Gurr 2015; Gurr and McGary 2009). Most population policies have focused primarily on women’s role in reproduction, rather than, for example, promoting men’s sterilization, and men’s role in reproduction has gone unrecognized in many cases (Inhorn et al. 2009).

Family planning approaches tend to emphasize birth control through contraception or sterilization, although in some contexts abortion is also used. Poor women, whether they live in wealthy or developing contexts, tend to bear the brunt of these policies, and can experience consequences, such as forced or uninformed sterilization, being paid to undergo sterilization, and being given contraceptives known to be dangerous or still in the process of being tested for safety (Briggs 2003; Csete and Cohen 2010; Pande 2015; Roberts 2014; Schoen 2005). Some transgender people undergo sterilization in order to have their identity recognized (Mottet 2013). Rather than focusing broadly on women’s health, or on women’s choices, these approaches tend to emphasize meeting quantitative goals for limiting population growth (Dixon-Mueller and Germain 2007). These policies also may not recognize the cultural meaning of motherhood and fertility to women. Feminist engagement in fertility has pushed for broader approaches that include promoting education and employment, access to contraception, as well as promoting the health and well-being of parents and children, which can lead to lower fertility rates. International coalitions of feminists have made a difference in reshaping population policies in this way, although they have not been entirely successful.

In some contexts – primarily wealthy countries – population policies aim to encourage certain women’s fertility (Castles 2003; McDonald 2002). These policies provide incentives to families with children, but may also lead to the criminalization or hindering of abortion and contraception, and may reflect conservative and colonial or nationalist ideologies that aim to restrict women’s engagement in the labor force, and focus on women’s roles as “reproducers of the nation” (Glass and Fodor 2011; Lafont 2001; Luker 1996; Razavi and Jenichen 2010). States may also provide incentives that mean that the state bears some of the costs of having children (Misra 1998; Misra and Akins 1998) for some women and disincentives for other women’s reproduction, as in punitive welfare policies that limit women’s reproductive options (Kelly and Grant 2007). Thus, pro-natalist policies may increase or limit women’s choice
and opportunities, depending in part on the motives of political parties involved in creating the policies, and the broader ideological support for women’s employment rights versus caregiving focus.

Access to contraception varies both cross-nationally (Schalet 2011) and across groups within a given nation, as in the US (Solinger 2005) where abstinence-only education has been promoted on and off for decades. Requiring insurance to pay for contraception under the Affordable Care Act is a recent development that has been subject to multiple court challenges resulting in some corporations gaining exemptions from covering contraception under the ACA (Sonfield and Pollack 2013). Thus mandatory coverage of contraception is in jeopardy in the US. While abortion may be linked to population control (where it may be promoted for some groups), or to pro-natalist policies (where it may be prohibited for others), abortion rights may also be at the center of a different set of political concerns. Abortion rights are restricted in most countries; in some countries, these abortion rights have increased, in part due to pressure from feminist movements, but in others they appear to be decreasing, in part due to the pressure of nationalist and religious movements (Sánchez Fuentes, Paine, and Elliott-Buettner 2008; Solinger 1998; Klausen 2010).

Policies around adoption may reflect particular ideas about who should be parenting (Brodzinsky and Patterson 2002; Graham 2001; Kahan 2006; Kay 2002). Transnational adoption may also reflect ideas about who should parent both in the location from which the child comes, as well as the location in which the intended parent or parents reside. In the US, adoption agencies have tended to give preference to white, married different-sex couples, active in a church, close to family, and in which the woman planned to stay at home and care for children (Kahan 2006). Religious and cultural expectations also shape these policies; for example, adoption agencies with religious affiliations may be less likely to place children with same-sex couples (Brodzinsky and Patterson 2002).

Substantial research has explored whether children raised by same-sex couples are disadvantaged. Meta-analyses of the data as well as reanalyses of flawed analyses show no disadvantages to children being raised by same-sex couples when compared to children raised by comparable heterosexual parents (Cheng and Powell 2015; Stacey and Biblarz 2001; Biblarz and Stacey 2010), although the flawed research continues to be used by opponents of same-sex marriage and LGBT rights (Moore and Stambolis-Ruhstorfer 2013). Notions of who constitutes “suitable” parents shifted in the 1990s to include families headed by lesbians and gay men, in response to the large number of children needing foster care or adoption (Esposito and Biafora 2007). As a result, lesbians and gay men are far more likely than their heterosexual counterparts to serve as foster parents or to be raising adopted children (Gates 2013; Moore and Stambolis-Ruhstorfer 2013), although some agencies continue to discriminate (Bergstrom-Lynch 2016). In the US, surrogacy is the least likely path to parenthood for gay men because of its limited availability and expense.
(Moore and Stambolis-Ruhstorfer 2013), although it remains a sought-after service in many countries (Riggs and Due 2017; Naples and Bernstein in press).

At times, only one parent in a same-sex couple is legally recognized as a parent; in some cases, the other parent may legally become a second parent through what has been termed “co-parent” or “second-parent adoption,” without terminating the first parent’s legal status as parent. These legal challenges can influence feelings of security in children, their ability to receive economic benefits from both parents, as well as custody arrangements awarded by courts in the case of relationship dissolution (Butterfield and Padavic 2014; Moore and Stambolis-Ruhstorfer 2013). Even after the legalization of same-sex marriage across the US, legal uncertainty exists around whether the courts will automatically grant parental status to children conceived in the context of a same-sex relationship and whether legal recognition of same-sex marriage might be revoked. Thus many lawyers urge married same-sex couples with children to obtain co-parent adoption as an extra layer of protection for their families (Baumle and Compton 2015).

Employment Politics

State policies regulate employment, and may attempt to mediate employment inequalities, but may also allow certain groups to face exploitation and discrimination. In this section, we discuss the role that states play in facilitating as well as limiting employment and employment discrimination by gender, gender identity, and sexuality. We also describe policies aimed at addressing conflicts between care and employment. While political institutions, such as ministries of labor, or parties that have pro- or antilabor agendas, impact these policies, other important mechanisms include social and labor movement activism, cultural and religious ideologies, as well as legal, social, political, and economic histories. For example, where labor movements have included active women’s branches, policies that support women’s employment might have been enacted; where cultural and religious ideologies reflect fear and antipathy toward LGBT populations, there may be relatively few antidiscrimination policies protecting the rights of LGBT workers.

Throughout the world, workplaces reflect normative ideas about gender, gender identity, and sexuality. In many regions, women are less likely to engage in paid employment, although women’s paid employment has grown enormously over the course of the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries (Rubery, Smith, and Fagan 2003; van der Lippe and van Dijk 2002). Women remain more likely to be involved in informal sector work, which is not regulated by the state, including subsistence agricultural work, and domestic and caregiving work (Chen 2001; International Labor Organization 2009). Yet, women also have high levels of engagement in service sector work, and increasingly in professional work (Freeman 2000; Moghadam 2003). In all types of work, however, women tend to work in different jobs than men, and
are often paid less (ILO 2009). At the same time, research on sexual orientation suggests that LGBT workers earn less when they are identified, and may also be segregated into certain positions (Antecol, Jong, and Steinberger 2007; Badgett 1995; David 2015; Waite and Denier 2015). Indeed, bisexual workers may pay a particular penalty in the workplace (Mize 2016). Research on men who are transgender finds that, on average, their salary increases after they transition from female to male, suggesting that employer discrimination accounts for a large part of the gender wage gap (Schilt and Wiswall 2008).

While in earlier decades development targeted men, development policies have increasingly recognized the central economic roles played by women. Even though colonialism robbed women of their economic power in many parts of the world, development policies now target women’s engagement (Benería, Deere, and Kabeer 2012; Boserup 1970; Lugones 2016; Oyèwùmí 1997; Pyle and Ward 2003). Yet these policies do not always “empower” women. For example, in Bolivia, Hippert (2011) points out that development policies aimed toward women’s employment do not recognize their many existing care responsibilities – or how their families might benefit from opportunities for men’s employment. Development policies now, for example, encourage micro-credit for women, though micro-credit still puts the emphasis on women building their own economic capacity, rather than state policies aimed at developing high-quality job opportunities for workers (Isserles 2016; Jurik 2005), while women’s successful micro-enterprises also tend to be taken over by men (Isserles 2016). While development policy uses the language of women’s empowerment, the state remains less responsive to meeting the economic needs of women (Isserles 2016; Kabeer 2003; Pyle and Ward 2003).

Neoliberalism generally refers to an idea that free markets, with little government intervention or regulation, are preferable; neoliberal approaches include privatizing and cutting social spending. Neoliberal policies, which have reduced public sector employment and social welfare programs, and have focused on deregulation and trade liberalizations, do not generally create opportunities for good jobs. While the neoliberal rhetoric has been women’s “empowerment” through employment, women face poor working conditions, low wages, and relatively little opportunity for advancement in many regions of the world (Charles 2011; Pyle and Ward 2003; Sharma 2008). Women have had to increase their engagement in subsistence work, informal work, and low-wage work as social welfare programs have been cut back. Government policies in some regions have also emphasized attracting capital investment based on low labor costs for “industrious” women workers (Salzinger 2000; Sassen 2000). Women also work as subcontractors, in work that is often almost entirely unregulated. Too few government policies are aimed at supporting union organizing, and ensuring that working conditions, wages, and benefits are reasonable, and too many are focused on attracting employers based on low labor costs (Benería, Berik, and Floro 2015; Pearson and Sweetman 2011; Pyle and Ward 2003).
Even where men and women share similar educational achievements, there remain substantial differences in the kinds of jobs they take, and their compensation for their work (Antecol 2001; Blau and Kahn 1996; Charles 2011; Charles and Grusky 2004; Misra and Murray-Close 2014; Weichselbaumer and Winter-Ebmer 2007). At the same time, LGBT workers also experience lower wages, and a tendency to be segregated into certain fields (Antecol et al. 2007; Badgett 1995; Schilt 2010), such as transgender workers in call centers in the Philippines (David 2015).

Policy attempts to equalize opportunities can have unexpected results. For example, Shireen Ally has shown how the South African constitution aimed to give Black South African women greater rights, including modernizing and recognizing domestic employment as work deserving of protection (Ally 2011). Yet, the labor policies aimed at ensuring reasonable wages, leave and unemployment insurance weakened labor unions and women’s mobilization, and did not radically change domestic workers’ circumstances. Attempts to mediate inequality through law and policy often do not yield the outcomes for which vulnerable workers hope.

In wealthy countries, there are often a number of antidiscrimination policies in place, meant to equalize employment opportunities. Yet policies around antidiscrimination, positive action (also referred to as affirmative action), and sexual harassment do not necessarily create a level playing field. For example, women’s employment varies substantially, even across wealthy countries with highly educated populations (Boeckmann, Misra, and Budig 2015; England, Gornick, and Shafer 2012; Misra, Budig, and Boeckmann 2011; Nieuwenhuis, Need, and van der Kolk 2012; O’Connor et al. 1999; Pettit and Hook 2009).

Antidiscrimination policies tend to focus on unequal access and treatment, discrimination in hiring and promotion, and may also work toward diversifying occupations (Gates 2009; Lewis 2009). Positive action to redress inequalities gives preferential treatment to women and minority racial/ethnic groups who have the same qualifications (Bacchi 2004; Gates 2009; Goertz and Mazur 2008). Sexual harassment policies are designed to reduce discrimination on the basis of gender and sexuality, by addressing conduct that adversely affects employment, workers’ performance, or their work environment (Saguy 2002, 2003; Zippel 2004, 2006). In some countries, antidiscrimination policies apply to men and women; in others, they also explicitly address discrimination by sexuality and gender identity. In the US, the majority of states do not ban discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity (National Gay and Lesbian Task Force 2014). The Amsterdam Treaty of the European Union as well as decisions by the European Court of Human Rights have prohibited discrimination on the basis of sexuality, defining lesbian, gay, and bisexual rights as human rights (Kollman 2009). Yet, countries tend to implement all of these policies selectively.

These policies are also less effective, for the most part, at addressing occupational segregation by gender, gender identity, and sexuality. Jobs
dominated by women, and jobs with higher proportions of LGBT workers, tend to pay less. Even as jobs once dominated by men become feminized, these jobs begin to pay lower wages (Budig 2002; Mandel 2013). Flexible employment policies have also had the effect of segregating women into part-time noncareer-track jobs with lower wages and benefits in many countries (Jacobs and Padavic 2015; Warren 2010).

Work-family policies also may work toward equalizing opportunity, though gendered cultural assumptions about men’s and women’s care responsibilities may underlie or counteract the effectiveness of these policies (Budig, Misra, and Boeckmann 2012; Mandel 2010; Pettit and Hook 2009). For example, policies aimed at helping women address care needs through long or unpaid leaves may in fact reinforce gender differences, and help maintain lower employment and wages for mothers; policies aimed at encouraging men’s leave taking, and providing subsidized child care for young children, help encourage women’s employment and equalize wages (Boeckmann et al. 2015; Budig et al. 2012; Misra, Budig, and Moller 2007). Around the world, most countries provide maternity benefits, though these can be disincentives to women’s employment (Earle, Mokomane, and Heymann 2011; Gornick and Meyers 2005; Heymann 2006; Morgan 2009). Moderate-length, well-compensated care leave policies, which apply to all genders, are most successful at promoting equity. Linking masculinity to fatherhood discursively as well as institutionally can have powerful effects on promoting gender equity (Hobson 2002); where paternity leave is recognized and encouraged, women’s wages are more comparable to men’s (Budig et al. 2012). Child care provided and subsidized by the state also tends to equalize opportunities by gender, though, in some settings, may subsidize women’s wages in export-oriented zones, rather than equalizing opportunities (Staab and Gerhard 2011). For success in gender equality, as work opportunities are equalized, care responsibilities (for children, the elderly, and the disabled) are also equalized (Gornick and Meyers 2008; Haas and Rostgaard 2011).

Policies, thus, can benefit women and sexual or gender minorities; but they may benefit some groups at the expense of others, depending on their relative position within the matrix of domination, which reflects the extent to which such groups are seen as deserving or undeserving (Collins 1990). As middle-class women have entered the workforce in larger numbers in both developing and wealthy countries, the increased need for care has drawn more working-class and poor women into paid care work. This has implications both within countries, and across countries. For example, migration policies aimed at exporting women workers may benefit the migrant workers somewhat, but may benefit their native-born employers even more (Anderson 2000, 2007; Bowman and Cole 2009; Malhotra, Misra, and Leal 2016; Misra et al. 2006; Oishi 2005; Parreñas 2001; Ruhs and Anderson 2010). These policies may help support migrant women workers, for example by ensuring a certain level of wages, but may also help promote low-wage and exploited work (Choo 2013; Parreñas 2001).
Sex work is another critical location. In some countries, sex work is legalized; in other countries, sex workers and clients face criminal punishment; and in other locations, only clients face criminalization, in recognition of the obstacles sex workers may experience (Bernstein 2007; Outshoorn 2004). The policy of criminalizing sex work does not eliminate sex work and can make it less safe for prostitutes, pushing them into the hands of exploitative managers for protection or, out of fear of arrest, reducing the time they have to assess whether a potential client is safe (Kuo 2002). Furthermore, criminalization has little impact on street prostitution where working conditions are already the most dire for sex workers (Weitzer 2000). In contrast, the decriminalization of prostitution in the Netherlands has led prostitutes to have greater control over the labor process and increase their safety (Kuo 2002). Employment discrimination in the wider economy can be interconnected with the organization of sex work for women, gender minorities, and sexual minorities. The transition to a service economy can be linked to an increase in the exchange of emotional labor rather than solely sex acts in some sectors of prostitution (Bernstein 2007; Hoang 2011). Sex work is also linked to the global economy in multiple ways (Bernstein 2007). For example, Vietnamese businessmen may enlist sex workers to help develop trust, bond with other men, and secure capital investment, constructing a sense of nationalism (Hoang 2015).

State policies, including those influenced by international nongovernmental organizations, continue to shape gendered patterns of employment in both Global North and Global South locations. While women’s formal workforce participation has risen, protections have not consistently followed.

Politics of Social Welfare

Linked to employment is social welfare, as social welfare policies are aimed at filling in the gaps left by the market, providing assistance to those unable to support themselves through earnings. Because women and LGBT people are more likely to have trouble finding good jobs, and may have care responsibilities, they are also more likely to experience poverty (Albelda et al. 2009; Badgett, Durso, and Schneebaum 2013; Brush 2011; Chen 2005; Goldberg 2009; Kabeer 2003; Misra et al. 2012). Welfare state policies aim to address poverty due to unemployment, old age and/or poor health, and disabilities, as well as address health care, housing, and family responsibilities that are made more difficult with low wages. Once again, the key mechanisms through which social policies are adopted include political institutions, social movements, cultural and religious ideologies shaping popular and policy-maker perspectives, and legal, social, political, and economic histories. For example, the historical beginnings of the US welfare state as exclusionary by race, class, and gender continue to bolster strong individualist ideologies and weak party support for expanding the welfare state, making the US consistently exceptional among wealthy countries in its weak social supports.
Social welfare policies may be universal, employment-related, or means-tested. While universal programs for all citizens are generally more popular and receive stronger political support, some countries provide welfare through means-tested programs, for only those who have the greatest need, or through employment systems, where benefits depend on the length of employment and/or earnings. Welfare policies also provide strong clues as to which citizens states see as deserving of support, and which are undeserving, which helps identify how different statuses reflect the matrix of domination (Collins 1990; Gordon 1994, 2012; Mallon 1998; Mink 1996, 1999). For example, if domestic workers cannot receive pensions – and most domestic workers are women of color or immigrant women – the state signals a devaluing of this labor and these workers. If gay families cannot receive health insurance through one parent, simply because they are gay – the state signals a devaluing of this family form. Yet social welfare policies may also be used to ameliorate inequalities between groups. Social welfare policy is often riddled with contradictions, with some groups covered but regulated, and other groups left out entirely, especially when we consider how race/ethnicity, class, ability, nationality, age, and other factors intersect with gender, gender identity, and sexuality (Lewis 2000; Mink 1996, 1999; O’Connor et al. 1999; Spade 2015). Welfare policies also often link with policies around family and fertility and employment, yet they are not articulated in consistent ways.

While most countries have some social welfare provisioning, the welfare state is strongest in wealthy countries in Europe, North America, East Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America, and somewhat weaker or targeted to relatively few in the Middle East, Asia, and Africa (Folbre 1994; Gough and Wood 2004; Haggard and Kaufman 2008; Kwon 2005; Moghadam 2003). Neoliberal adjustments aimed at strengthening the market have led to increased poverty in many parts of the world, particularly for women and other vulnerable groups (Craig and Porter 2006; Kingfisher 2013). In the twenty-first century, the state provides fewer social safety nets, and instead works to stimulate economic participation for men and women.

Social welfare policies, for example, are now more likely to carry with them expectations that men and women engage in paid work in order to receive benefits (Brush 2011; Jessop 1996; Kautto et al. 2001; Peck 2001). Housing is a large expense in many areas around the world. While some countries have housing benefits to help support particular groups, sexual minorities and gender minorities are less likely to be able to access support, and women with children also may face particular challenges accessing housing (Addis et al. 2009; Burnham 2001; Cochran et al. 2002). Because some LGBT youth are not supported by their families, there are very high rates of homelessness among this group, particularly transgender youth, in many countries, and few state policies aimed at supporting gay and transgender youth (Cochran et al. 2002; Keuroghlian, Shtasel, and Bassuk 2014; Spade 2015; Yu 2010). Criminal justice policies that disproportionately target certain groups, such as African-
American men in the US, result not only in longer sentences, but coupled with prison policies that include considering condoms and needles to be contraband result in adverse health effects such as higher rates of sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV, for inmates which are then transmitted to their communities upon release (Stephens 2009). Furthermore, policies in the US ban people with felonies from receiving housing assistance, contributing to a host of negative outcomes (Alexander 2012).

Old age security is another challenge. In many countries, old age benefits are tied to employment, including wages, which means workers (such as women) who earn lower wages also receive lower benefits (Arenas de Mesa and Montecinos 1999; Meyer and Herd 2007; Smeeding and Sandstrom 2005). For workers in the informal economy, benefits may not exist at all. For the most part, women and LGBT people are more likely to fall into poverty during old age. Even in death, inequalities are reproduced, as in many countries, survivor benefits from a partner who dies often exclude LGBT people (Butler 2004; Cahill and South 2002).

Health policies also tend to be riddled with inconsistencies. While many countries do provide universal health care systems, in many parts of the world, access to health care is limited to relatively few (Marten et al. 2014; Moreno-Serra and Smith 2012). Health care systems may also ignore entire populations, including women, sexual minorities, and gender minorities (Bauer et al. 2009; Vissandjee et al. 2001). Indeed, in some countries where being a sexual minority or gender minority is criminalized, this may also be categorized as a disorder. Alternatively, in some countries, gaining access to gender-confirming services requires a diagnosis and/or treatment by mental health professionals (Scherpe 2015). Such policies as well as homophobia may lead to migration for some (Cantú 2009), or to health tourism, so that those with resources to do so can gain access to the services they need (Wilson 2010). Health policy around HIV and AIDS, for example, differs dramatically from country to country; where policy is more limited, outcomes are worse for women, as well as for sexual minorities and gender minorities (Askew and Berer 2003; de Cock, Mbori-Ngacha, and Marum 2002; Higgins, Hoffman, and Dworkin 2010).

Family policies also differ around the world. In some settings, where countries are eager to promote fertility (at least among certain groups), there are more supports for families with children, including tax breaks, and subsidies for housing, school expenses, and child care (Castles 2003; Chesnais 1996; Gauthier 1998, 2002). Some countries provide particular supports for single mothers. Poverty tends to be higher for families headed by single mothers, since women often earn less, and balancing care and employment can be challenging (Bimbi 1997; Brady, Fullerton, and Cross 2010; Edin and Lein 1997; Gordon 1994; Hobson and Takahashi 1997; Lewis 1997). In some countries, social welfare policies have made enormous strides toward lowering poverty rates among this group; in others, like the US, poverty rates for these families are very
high, as single mothers are viewed as crises, and few resources are devoted to addressing the needs of these families (Brady, Fullerton, and Cross 2009; Casper, McLanahan, and Garfinkel 1994; Christopher 2002; Misra et al. 2012; Moller et al. 2016). LGBT families may also find it difficult, if not impossible, to access state resources for caring for children (Lind 2004).

The neoliberal policies of the twenty-first century have affected social welfare across the world. Wealthy countries have increasingly privatized care, sending care provision to private and nonprofit sectors thus marketizing the state provision of care (Arenas de Mesa and Montecinos 1999; Ascoli and Ranci 2002; Blomqvist 2004; Kamerman and Kahn 2014; Ochiai 2009; Petersen and Hjelmar 2014; Wood and Gough 2006). Where, for example, universal child care once enrolled children across class levels, now, state policies subsidize the hiring of nannies by wealthy families. Where social welfare policies once helped families, micro-enterprise now forms the “social safety net” for poor families. These changes have had the effect of deepening inequalities among different groups of women, divided by class, race, ethnicity, and nationality, as well as for sexual and gender minorities.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter, we have argued that state policies are integrally related to dominant ideologies about gender, gender identity, and sexuality. Such ideas permeate and structure policies and political institutions, which in turn regulate gender and sexual minorities as well as reflect and shape ideas about gender, gender identity, and sexuality. Through a discussion of relationship recognition and parental policies, employment policy, and social welfare policy, we have shown that state policies often work in contradictory ways. Ideologically, those who are relatively more disadvantaged are also discursively constructed as less deserving. Public policies meant to ameliorate inequality based on gender, gender identity, and sexuality tend to provide greater benefits to those who hold more power and are already relatively more advantaged in the matrix of domination (Collins 1990). Those policies that limit rights based on gender, gender identity, and sexuality tend to fall harder on the more disadvantaged. While some policies such as women’s suffrage may benefit all women of voting age to some extent, other forms of voting restriction may adversely affect women of color and poor women, making it harder to access that right. In short, laws and policies are often partial, incomplete, poorly implemented, and open to competing rights claims. Such laws and policies often exacerbate long-standing forms of inequality including race, gender, class, nation, sexuality, disability, colonial legacy. While laws and policies are shaped by the relative distribution of power and resources and result from larger meaning systems about gender, gender identity, and sexuality, they are also a key maker of those meanings.

Social policies reflect shifting ideas about gender, gender identity, and sexuality and are influenced by four main factors: political institutions,
interest groups and social movements, cultural and religious ideologies, and a state’s cultural, legal, social, political, and economic histories. Transnational political and economic forces also shape social policies and are a central locus through which ideas and political strategies are spread.

Policies distinguish between what they consider deserving and undeserving groups. Increasingly, same-sex couples are being granted access to marriage, moving them, in many countries, into the realm of acceptable family forms. Policies also regulate reproduction and shape family structure by promoting birth among groups considered more deserving, such as women from higher-class or caste backgrounds, while working to limit birth among the poor and racial/ethnic minorities, sometimes using incentives such as parental leave or child care subsidies, sometimes taking more punitive approaches such as placing restrictions on welfare benefits. Employment and social welfare policies are imbued with assumptions about gender and what constitutes proper families and the roles various family members should play. Thus some countries’ policies provide greater protection from discrimination based on gender, gender identity, and sexuality, while others provide less protection or outright disincentives to women’s paid labor as a way to keep women in the private sphere of the family.

Discrimination as well as shifts in global and local economies and neoliberal economic policies contribute to ongoing inequality in the workplace as well as work-family conflict. Such shifts influence everything from the structure of the sex industry to family leave and immigration policies. Although some countries have policies to mitigate work-family conflict, these policies are uneven and may benefit certain groups of women at the expense of other women. Economic policies such as health insurance, welfare, and old age policies support some groups, such as middle-class women, but not others, such as domestic workers, who are often immigrant women or women of color.

While the rights of women, gender minorities, and sexual minorities have increased tremendously over the past 50 years in many places, policies to support them remain uneven, contradictory, and poorly or selectively implemented. Such policies will continue to be significant areas of conflict as they are related not only to ideologies about gender, gender identity, and sexuality, and political structure, but to broader structural conflicts rooted in the intersection of political and religious ideologies, race, class, and nation.

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Migration studies focuses on people who cross international borders that delimit sovereign states. After crossing, migrants come to hold diverse legal statuses, ranging from naturalized citizens to those without papers. This status affects their access to rights, services, and benefits. Migration status also shapes people’s relations with government, their interactions with other people and institutions in society, and their sense of membership in the receiving community. Researchers who study migration must therefore understand the political sociology of states, power, and law.

Migration is substantively important, as well as analytically rich. The United Nations (2016) estimates that in 2015, 244 million people (3.3 percent of the world population) lived outside their country of birth. This represents a 60 percent increase in the number of migrants since 1990. Much of the increase has occurred since 2000, despite persistent public opposition to large-scale migration and increasing border control efforts. Contemporary migration also touches all corners of the globe. Whereas the nineteenth century’s great migrations were largely from Europe to the Americas, Australia, and New Zealand, today migration involves people of much more diverse cultural, ethnic, and religious backgrounds. Migrants’ motivations also range widely, from economic flows of “high-skilled” and “low-skilled” migrants, to those fleeing violent conflict, poverty, and environmental crises.

This chapter focuses on the policies that structure migration and migrants’ lives rather than the lived experiences of refugees or immigrants. It distinguishes, in broad strokes, two sets of policies. The first concerns the rules, procedures, and barriers to entry into a state’s territory. This includes “immigration,” or the legal admission of people for some period of residency (temporary or permanent), and “asylum,” a particular subcategory of entry that occurs when people make a humanitarian claim, usually by invoking international law. Because no country allows unrestricted access to its
territory, the politics of entry always entails policies of exclusion: who is not allowed into the country, and why? How can states control borders, territory, and people? States – especially advanced democracies in the West – are increasingly turning to high-tech documentation, surveillance, and even “remote control” strategies to keep migrants away from their jurisdiction, with its attendant domestic legal regime and advocacy networks. Yet migration continues and, in some places, is encouraged. Why do liberal states have difficulty shutting the door to new migration, especially in the face of hostile public opinion? Conversely, why do many advanced capitalist countries favor the free movement of goods, services, and capital, but balk at the free movement of people?

A second set of policies encompasses programs and laws related to settlement, both permanent and temporary. An important characteristic of twenty-first-century migration is the multiplicity of legal statuses held by migrants, each associated with diverse rights and prohibitions. Some academics argue that liberal democracies are “hard” to migrants on the outside, when it comes to entry, but “soft” on the inside, once people reside in the territory and fall under domestic law. Indeed, some contend that the extension of human rights norms and guarantees make state-defined membership categories less important than before, a process of denationalization also spurred by transnational networks, diasporic identities, and the contemporary ease of long-distance communication and travel. Still other scholars document how legal status affects life chances, or how the “war on terrorism” and rise of Islamophobia erode liberal democratic norms.

We distinguish two sets of policies under the heading of “settlement.” The first seeks to incorporate migrants into the receiving society. Such policies can focus on immigrants’ actions to adapt to the society, such as taking steps to master the majority language, learn the country’s history and political institutions, adopt common social practices, and so forth. Policies can also focus on the actions taken by receiving societies, as in debates over multicultural policies that accommodate and recognize migrants’ diverse backgrounds. A second set of settlement policies involves membership, notably the laws and procedures to access citizenship. Among Western democracies, the fullest set of rights and the greatest security of residence are attached to citizenship. Without citizenship, even long-term immigrants face the possibility of deportation and they are often barred from core political rights, such as the ability to cast a vote in national elections or stand for office. In studying both entry and settlement policies, observers debate whether countries are converging toward a common policy stance and what drives convergence, or variation.

Distinctions between entry and settlement policies can blur. Immigrant settlement can generate new entry via “chain” migration, through official family reunification policies or social networks that provide information and assistance to newcomers, including clandestine migrants or asylum seekers. Conversely, when countries engage in strict integration demands and
exclusionary membership policies, it is often with an eye to deterring entry or reversing it. For instance, a few countries mandate that migrants demonstrate ability in the receiving country’s language before entry. Alternatively, some countries attempt to make some settled migrants’ lives so difficult that they will engage in “self-deportation.”

Our chapter concentrates on migration to advanced liberal democracies, reflecting academics’ overwhelming attention to this type of migration. The majority of migrants, over 140 million, live in what the United Nations labels “developed regions” of the world, forming over 11 percent of the population in these rich countries. Among the ten countries with the largest international migrant populations are the United States, Germany, the United Kingdom, Canada, France, Australia, and Spain. But, rounding out the top ten are Russia, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates. When rich countries deflect migrants or refuse them entry, many end up in poorer countries, as is the case for millions of refugees today. Indeed, the biggest single flow of migrants in 2015 was of people moving within the Global “South.”

Migration among developing countries is thus a critical area for future scholarship. Do arguments developed in studying Western countries work elsewhere? If, for example, liberal democracies are somewhat constrained by human rights norms or international agreements in dealing with migrants and asylum seekers, are such protections absent in authoritarian countries? Conversely, richer countries with developed bureaucracies might be better able to exclude, contain, deport, or assign differential rights to unwanted migrants than resource-poor countries.

Below, we outline the diverse set of analytical tools that researchers employ to understand policy processes and politics. We do this in the context of immigration policy, but many approaches can be extended to asylum or settlement, as we show subsequently. We then dive deeper into each policy area, highlighting key debates or paradoxes. We conclude with suggestions for future research.

ENTRY

All states regulate the entry of foreigners. Entry can be on the basis of migrants’ perceived economic contribution to the country, their family ties to current residents, their membership in a particular ethnic or religious group, or on the basis of humanitarian need. It can be short-term, as for tourists, temporary workers, or international students, or migrants can be granted “permanent” residence or “indefinite” leave-to-stay. Permanent residents can stay contingent

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1 Entry restrictions based on race or national origin were prevalent during the first half of the twentieth century, but such policies are largely absent today (de Haas, Natter, and Vezzoli 2016; FitzGerald and Cook-Martín 2014). Some countries do offer preferential entry to coethnics, former colonial subjects, or those who share a religious faith (e.g., Israel’s Law of Return).
on not committing a crime or not leaving the country for an extended period. In many countries, those with permanent status have the option to naturalize and become citizens.\(^2\)

Debates in the public sphere and among academics regularly distinguish between “economic,” “family,” and “humanitarian” migrants. However, individuals’ motivations often straddle and combine these categories. States also further classify people within the broad categories of economic, family, and humanitarian migrants. For example, under US law, a refugee is a person living outside their country of citizenship who has been selected for resettlement because they meet specific legal criteria for humanitarian assistance. An asylee is someone who arrives and then makes a humanitarian claim to entry without preselection. Motivations are not necessarily reflected in a person’s legal status. Migrants may hold a recognized legal status or not, or shift between statuses, moving from a tourist visa to undocumented, or from undocumented to a family-sponsored permanent status. Yet irrespective of motivations or experiences, policies often reify legal classifications, drawing distinctions among people that carry consequences for rights, long-term residency, and access to citizenship. As we elaborate below, scholars debate whether models used to explain migration policy for economic or family migrants apply to refugee and asylum policy, or whether we need distinct explanatory frameworks.

**Immigration Policy**

Several questions organize debate among scholars of immigration policy. Why do liberal, democratic states accept unwanted immigration? To what extent do international human rights and domestic rights frameworks constrain states’ ability to control borders? Is there policy convergence across migrant-receiving countries or are there different national models? These are all variations on one overarching question: Why does immigration policy take the form it does?

Researchers take diverse theoretical and analytical approaches to answering these questions. They differ in how much their explanations focus on the agency of individual or collective political actors, or on the constraints imposed by institutions, law, international norms, and cultural idioms of nationhood. In balancing agency and structure, researchers take distinct positions on what drives policy-making and implementation. Some researchers think that economic motivations or power relations explain policy-making; others are more drawn to sociolegal or cultural explanations. The scope and focus of analysis also vary and are influenced by the researcher’s discipline and the

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\(^2\) Migration depends not only on entry, but also on people’s ability to exit their countries of origin, an important point highlighted by Aristide Zolberg (1999). His discussion of twentieth-century migration policy underscores how global migration was curtailed when communist countries, from the Eastern bloc to China and Cuba, prevented their citizens from leaving, at times at gun point. In the twenty-first century, few countries use violence to prevent emigration.
states they study. Some researchers examine domestic factors such as public opinion or the give and take of electoral or interest group politics, while others focus on the international arena, emphasizing foreign relations or global norms.

A simple political model views migration policy as the outcome of power relations between competing domestic actors. Power relations can be centered in electoral contests embedded in pluralistic politics or embedded in a capitalist system that favors concentrated economic power over a simple tally of democratic votes. Gary Freeman’s (1995) influential approach starts with a pluralist model in which politicians are vote-maximizers interested in winning and holding office. This model is then modified by the political economy of migration and the limited, unequal information held by political actors. He argues that the benefits of immigration are concentrated among particular businesses or economic sectors and that these groups have the resources and organization to be an influential interest group, sometimes in partnership with ethnic lobbies seeking to help compatriots gain entry to a country. Conversely, he contends, the costs of migration are diffuse. Those who compete with immigrants in the labor market have weak political organization and few resources. Thus, through a type of interest group or clientele politics, pro-immigrant groups convince politicians to adopt expansive entry policies despite restrictionist public opinion.

This interest-based model implies that public opinion about immigration largely stems from individuals’ sense of economic threat or opportunity (e.g., Scheve and Slaughter 2001). Yet the bulk of research on public opinion and immigration suggests that restrictionist orientations are not strongly tied to one’s personal economic situation or the level of immigration in a country, but rather to the overall state of the economy (Wilkes, Guppy, and Farris 2008). Even then, the economic factors driving public opinion are weak. More salient are people’s cultural concerns, their prejudice toward minorities or outsiders, or the degree to which they feel that migrants change a country’s national values or identity (Burns and Gimpel 2000; Hainmueller and Hopkins 2014; Lie 2008; Shevel 2011; Sides and Citrin 2007).³

Some scholars consequently envision immigration politics as driven by cultural concerns and economic interests that cut across traditional “right” or “left” party orientations (Tichenor 2002; Zolberg 1999, 2006). In the United States, organized labor was against large-scale immigration throughout much of the twentieth century, fearful of job competition and lower wages, while big business favored temporary or permanent labor migration. However, within the Democratic Party, cultural progressives and cosmopolitans favored minorities and diversity, and thus took a different position than labor. Within the Republican Party, pro-immigrant businesspeople faced social conservative

³ Reviewing the extensive literature on public opinion on immigration, Hainmueller and Hopkins (2014) call the economic self-interest argument a “zombie theory,” seemingly immune to the evidence disproving it.
groups worried about demographic and cultural change. The result, according to Aristide Zolberg (2006), is a long history of “strange bedfellows” in US immigration politics. Within the institutionalist framework of Daniel Tichenor (2002), this means long periods without policy-making disrupted by episodic passage of an important immigration bill as fleeting coalitions come together. In the twenty-first century, Tom Wong (2016) argues that cross-cutting politics have ended: US political parties have taken entrenched partisan positions on immigration, rooted in views on ethnoracial diversity and the long-term payoffs of a demographically changing electorate. The implication is that bipartisan agreement on US immigration policy is more elusive than ever. Peters (2017) also argues that the interest group landscape has shifted dramatically due to globalization, as many business interests move factories overseas rather than push for low-skilled migration, leaving room for nativist groups to push for restriction.

Many who study elections, public opinion, and domestic politics acknowledge a curious failure in a simple electoral model of immigration policy: the number of immigrants entering and settling in a country tends to be higher than the public wants. Wayne Cornelius, Philip Martin, and James Hollifield (1994) labeled this the “control gap” paradox and posited that Western democracies are converging to a similar, somewhat open set of immigration policies. A primary reason, they argue, is the ideology of liberalism. Applied to markets, this means opening borders to trade – as with the North American Free Trade Agreement or the European Union – but also to the free movement of people. In addition, liberal values lead courts to uphold migrants’ rights in a host country, even in opposition to governments that seek to restrict noncitizens’ entry and settlement. FitzGerald and Cook-Martín (2014) challenge this inclusive view, documenting liberal democracies’ tendency to racial exclusion well into the twentieth century. The subsequent decline of racially restrictive immigration policies is, according to them, not a tale of liberalism triumphing over racism, but rather one spurred by the rise of global institutions and geopolitical strategic concerns.

A focus on law, discourse, and ideology offers an alternative way to understand entry policy and explain the “control gap.” For example, some scholars underscore that Germany, which long denied being a country of immigration, allowed the settlement of hundreds of thousands of asylum seekers in the 1990s and 2010s due to its Basic Law protecting those fleeing persecution and the belief it must offer refuge in reparation for its Nazi past. Other Western states also face difficulty barring or deporting family members

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4 This argument is part of a larger debate in political sociology and political science over the extent to which states are losing control over their sovereignty due to globalization, international capitalism, human rights norms, and supranational institutions. Anthony Messina (2007) counters that although states might appear to lose control of migration at particular moments – as former colonial subjects enter in large numbers, or a wave of asylum seekers arrives – politicians and bureaucrats do reassert sovereignty, including through tightening entry.
when courts intercede. Scholars differ in whether they believe judicial rulings are shaped mostly by domestic administrative or constitutional norms (Joppke 1998; Guiraudon and Lahav 2000) or by supranational law and institutions (Sassen 1996; Soysal 1994), but either way, this research contends that courts are critical actors shaping entry policy. More recently, scholars with a constructivist legal approach argue that courts have not been judicial activists, but rather quite moderate, and that the influence of legal decisions is overstated, whether in the United States and France (Kawar 2015) or in German family migration law (Bonjour 2016). Still, these researchers believe that rights language and the selective appeal to court decisions by politicians and civil society actors can be influential.

Paying attention to courts raises broader consideration of how political institutions shape or constrain immigration policy-making. The “control gap” hypothesis assumes that all liberal democracies face the same legal and normative constraints in keeping immigrants out; their common liberalism and belief in the rule of law lead to policy convergence. But other scholars point out that countries vary in their policies, both in the number permitted entry and the types of immigrants (permanent or temporary; economic, family, or humanitarian). Tichenor (2002) argues that the United States has particular problems passing immigration law because of the multiple institutional “veto points” that allow opponents to block reforms through pressure on the executive, legislative, or judicial branches of government. Ellermann (2013, 2015) argues that administrative experience, elites’ ability to isolate decisions from public scrutiny, and path dependence from prior decisions generated distinct policy trajectories for Swiss and German temporary labor recruitment in post–Second World War Europe. These perspectives argue that policy change occurs within a particular institutional and historical dynamic.

Surveying the research on immigration politics, James Hampshire (2013) offers a synthetic framework centered on four constitutive features of the liberal, democratic state: representative democracy, constitutionalism, capitalism, and nationhood. He argues that the politics of immigration (as well as integration and citizenship) can be explained by the competing interests and norms embedded in each feature: “Mobilization through majoritarian democratic institutions, often based on claims about the protection of national identity and values, generates pressure for more restrictive immigration and integration policies, whereas employer demand for migrant labour and appeals to universal rights both generate pressure for more open, inclusive policies” (2013: 3). What some might see as failures of immigration governance are rather, in this view, unsurprising – even inevitable – responses to competing legitimacy imperatives faced by decision-makers.

Are these same legitimacy imperatives at play in resource-poor democracies, new democracies, or nondemocratic countries? Racial and cultural chauvinism embed the histories – and arguably current electoral politics – of advanced capitalist settler states, but such dynamics can also play out in non-Western
countries. Klotz (2000) describes a “non-racial xenophobia” that drives entry policy in South Africa, and racial hierarchies imbue East Asian migration policy (Chung 2014). The Japanese case is an anomaly if we assume advanced capitalist states accept larger numbers of immigrants; its immigrant population is very small, in part because of racial concerns over the entry of non-Japanese. The power of courts to push back against exclusions in South Africa or East Asian democracies is unclear, but such pushback is virtually absent in nondemocratic states. Sater (2014) argues that many Gulf states—among countries with the highest percentage of migrants in their populations—recruit labor migrants into the bottom of a rights hierarchy to subsidize the quality of life for citizens. Future scholarship needs to examine whether arguments developed in Western immigrant-receiving countries work elsewhere.

A wider range of countries is also important for questions of policy convergence or divergence. Entry policy in early post–Second World War Europe was highly differentiated: nonexistent in countries that were historically countries of emigration (e.g., Southern Europe), determined by bureaucrats hoping to solve labor problems in guestworker countries such as Germany and Switzerland, part of decolonization politics for former colonial empires (e.g., the United Kingdom, France), or some combination of the two (e.g., the Netherlands, with colonial migration and guestworker programs). More recently, there is evidence of policy convergence. Analysis of family-based and economic immigration policy across 33 OECD countries from 1980 to 2010 shows a liberalization in entry and, simultaneously, a move to greater control to monitor migrants and prevent clandestine entry (Helbling and Kalkum 2018). European convergence has often been linked to the European Union, but appears to go beyond Europe. De Haas, Natter, and Vezzoli (2016) report similar convergence trends also in Latin America, Eastern and Central Europe, Africa, and the Middle East since 1945. Ghezelbash (2014) argues that policy convergence is driven by the dual factors of cooperation and competition. Receiving states cooperate and share best practices to achieve more effective migration management through formal regional bodies like the European Union and Mercosur in South America, and informal consultative processes. At the same time, Ghezelbash also finds competition in recruiting migrant talent for “beneficial migration outcomes” that further lead destination states to emulate each other’s policies (2014: 145).

An open question is whether, post-2010, we are witnessing a more definitive shift to restriction. Anti-immigrant politicians have made headway throughout the West, from the electoral successes of Donald Trump, Geert Wilders, and Marine Le Pen, to the UK vote to leave the European Union, which turned in large part on stopping EU migration. If restrictive policies are enacted and stick, we return, almost full-circle, to electoral models of immigration policy. These suggest that if politicians are able to concentrate and heighten the public’s concerns over migration, they can reap political rewards.
Still, electoral politics must be grounded in attention to institutional arrangements. Politicians’ ability to win office or advance their projects also depends on the electoral system of the country. Proportional representation systems tend to allow more extreme parties to win seats in parliament (as in the Netherlands or Scandinavian countries), while first-past-the-post parliamentary systems (as in the UK) or two-stage run-off systems (as in France) tend to depress the national success of such parties. Similarly, institutions that allow direct democracy through referenda or ballot measures will allow nativist public opinion to express itself more strongly (as in Switzerland) than in states that do not. Systems with more veto points can make executive action more difficult (e.g., courts blocked President Trump’s early executive orders), as can federated systems where subnational governments might enact or execute policy differently from the national level (as in Germany or the USA). But where more centralized government coincides with nativist public sentiment and weak courts, change can be rapid. This is arguably the case in many East European countries today.

Restrictionism has also found new outlets in recent years. The global “war on terrorism” has introduced a security angle to migration control. We find increasing use of high-tech border control, from surveillance technologies (infrared scanners, motion detectors, drones) to bio-coded documents (retina scans, fingerprints). We also see a sharp rise in border externalization or “remote control” policies, as popular destination countries outsource border control to neighboring buffer states (Casas-Cortes, Cobarrubias, and Pickles 2011, 2015). Examples include Mexico’s Programa Frontera Sur, through which the United States helps fund enforcement efforts at Mexico’s border with Guatemala, and Australia’s Pacific Solution, which diverted maritime arrivals to Papua New Guinea to avoid landing on Australian territory. These initiatives reveal the degree to which wealthy states are willing to spend money to deflect unauthorized arrivals and maintain some degree of control over admissions.

Asylum Policy

Contestation around deterrence is especially acute in the case of asylum seekers. The term “asylum seeker” refers to any kind of migrant (legal, undocumented, or a temporary arrival on a business, student, or tourist visa) who applies for refugee status after arriving in a host country. Asylum policy includes both the procedures that allow people to apply for refugee protection, and the measures that screen or deter people from entering a country where they might file an asylum claim. Each receiving state that has signed on to the 1951 UN Convention on the Status of Refugees or the 1967 Protocol to the Convention has pledged to process and adjudicate asylum claims made within their borders. The convention defines a refugee as someone with a “well-founded fear of
persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion,” and who therefore is unable, or unwilling, to return to their country of origin. Most receiving states use this definition, or something close to it, to adjudicate asylum claims. Many countries also offer other paths to humanitarian protection based on the UN Convention Against Torture or on domestic priorities (e.g., protecting victims of crime or human trafficking).

Because refugee status usually puts people on the path to citizenship, it is a coveted status that states are reluctant to distribute widely. Further, because one cannot apply for asylum without being physically present in the host state, asylum seekers often attempt clandestine arrival, and are indistinguishable from other unauthorized migrants as they cross borders. Each state has its own distinct “refugee status determination (RSD) regime” that screens asylum seekers and implements asylum policy across many institutional actors, such as enforcement agencies, administrative tribunals, and courts (Hamlin 2014).

The Western media often report on asylum seekers when they arrive in large numbers in Europe, North America, or Australia. However, the vast majority of asylum seekers arrive and remain in developing countries. Lebanon, Jordan, Ethiopia, and Kenya are hosting massive numbers of refugees representing up to a third of their total populations (UNHCR 2016). Yet the RSD regimes of developing states are highly constrained in their capacity to process large numbers of claims and to provide benefits to people granted refugee status. Thus, developing countries must wrestle with making difficult policy trade-offs between providing basic subsistence to many asylum seekers or more comprehensive protection to a few (Betts 2010). Despite the challenges faced by resource-poor countries, the large-scale movements of asylum seekers often only become constructed as “crisis” when they reach the West (Chimni 1998). And even in a wealthier country, like Greece, the capacity to provide an RSD process that meets basic standards of procedural justice has been severely tested in recent years by large-scale arrivals across the Mediterranean (Cabot 2014).

Many rich, Western states avoid these trade-offs because they are more geographically removed from regions with very high mobility, and because they invest in deterrence, blocking access to their territory and thus preventing people from filing an asylum claim.

Various scholars point to convergence in deterrence efforts among wealthy receiving states (Dauvergne 2008; Gibney 2006; Mountz 2010). Some deterrence policies, such as border externalization and high-tech surveillance, are generalized control strategies, but they leave receiving states vulnerable to

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6 People can get refugee visas if their claim is processed, usually by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, in a refugee camp. These migrants then wait for a host state to resettle them. Because they arrive holding refugee status, they are not considered asylum seekers.
accusations that they are not fulfilling their obligations under international law because these measures screen out people likely to be granted refugee status. Other deterrence policies are aimed specifically at asylum seekers, such as mandatory detention while asylum claims are being processed, or so-called Safe Third Country agreements, which prevent people from applying for refugee status anywhere but in the first “safe” country that they reach (Gammeltoft-Hansen 2011).

Rather than deterrence policies, other scholars focus on a markedly different convergence: the spread of international norms of refugee protection. One hundred and forty-six states are party to the Convention or Protocol, and therefore have pledged to provide RSD to asylum seekers on their territory. When asylum seekers’ claims are successful, they serve as a mechanism by which internationalism leads to expansionism. As with economic and family-based entry policy, research reveals a liberalization in asylum acceptance, though one paired with increased control (de Haas et al. 2016; Helbling and Kalkum 2018). One way to understand this seeming contradiction is to realize that if deterrence policies limit the number of people who apply for asylum in wealthy states, these states can maintain relatively high acceptance rates among the small number of people who access their RSD regimes. These states can then embrace internationalism and restrictionism simultaneously.

When asylum seekers pursue their claims in court, they represent the domestication of international law. However, other domestic factors remain highly salient. After asylum seekers access RSD regimes, there is striking variation in acceptance rates between receiving countries, even holding asylum seekers’ country of origin constant. Hamlin (2014) argues that this variation occurs because countries have developed distinct institutional models for conducting RSD, leading asylum policy in some countries to be more insulated from the general immigration politics of border control than in others. For instance, Canada has embraced a more generous asylum policy more closely in line with the guidance of the UNHCR, while Australia is highly reliant on externalization and adopts a very narrow reading of the Convention definition. American asylum policy tends to be particularly influenced by foreign policy objectives (Salehyan and Rosenblum 2008).

Beyond cross-national variation, scholars also document internal variation in RSD decision-making. Internal inconsistency occurs everywhere, but especially in the United States; a few large-scale quantitative studies reveal extraordinary variation in RSD outcomes. Ramji-Nogales, Schoenholtz, and Schrag (2009) and Miller, Camp Keith, and Holmes (2014) demonstrate that the individual decision-maker to whom an asylum seeker is assigned is the single biggest determinant of being granted refugee status. Even when applicants’ country of origin is held constant, some decision-makers reject almost every claim while their peers accept the vast majority of claims they hear. Ramji-Nogales and colleagues (2009) term this phenomenon “refugee roulette.”
Asylum policy can also change and evolve over time, as asylum seekers are categorized and conceptualized more like refugees in some political moments, and more like illegal immigrants in others (Hamlin 2015). For example, prior to the end of the Cold War, scholars emphasized the significant influence of foreign relations on US refugee and asylum policy, which welcomed those fleeing communism and refused the claims of those fleeing regimes allied with the United States (Loescher and Scanlan 1986; Zucker and Zucker 1991). After the Cold War, acceptance rates declined and deterrence policies proliferated, causing some researchers to suggest that asylum seekers had become less valuable to Western states once they lost their geopolitical strategic power to critique communism (Chimni 1998; Hamlin 2012). Other scholars insist instead that the so-called “new asylum seekers” are genuinely different from those of the past, more like economic migrants, and thus legitimately subject to restrictive border control policies (Martin 1988). Debates continue to rage over the degree to which the UN Convention definition of a refugee can cover the claims of people who are victims of gender- and sexuality-based persecution, or who are victims of nonstate actors such as drug gangs. These are not traditional types of asylum claims, but as they have increased in number, the UNHCR has issued guidance encouraging states to consider them. Unsurprisingly, states vary in their adherence to such guidance.

In a post–Cold War period and “war on terror” landscape, asylum politics highlight the fragility of the West’s commitment to humanitarianism, the contingency of international law, and the constructedness of categories like “refugee.” But how different is asylum policy from entry policy? Can the same theories and frameworks apply? Economic interests are assumed to be less important for asylum policy than entry policy, and so one of the “expansionist” pressures on migration is not central (Hampshire 2013). However, foreign policy considerations are very important to both entry policy generally and asylum policy specifically (FitzGerald and Cook-Martin 2014; Salehyan and Rosenblum 2008; Zucker and Zucker 1991). It is also often extremely difficult to know whether a particular policy is a general entry policy or an asylum policy, since people with multiple motivations for migration arrive using the same channels. Moving forward, we believe that asylum policy should be analyzed using the same frameworks as entry policy, and not marginalized as a specialized area of study.

SETTLEMENT POLICIES
A full political sociology of migration policies also requires attention to integration and citizenship policy, that is, policies that facilitate (or impede) migrants’ settlement, the rights they hold, and the rules that govern the path to citizenship. Increased politicization of entry policy has fed debates about whether and how countries should police membership or encourage it. We suggest that some of the analytical lenses used to understand entry policy can
also apply to policy on integration, multiculturalism, and citizenship. We find similar debates over whether policy evolution is characterized by convergence or cross-national variation, whether policy evolution represents attempts to control newcomers, and disputes over the political drivers of policy evolution, although the relative influence of political actors appears to differ whether we consider entry, integration, or membership policy.

Integration and Multicultural Policies

Integration policies are almost always articulated as seeking to promote the best interests of immigrants and the greater cohesion of the receiving society. According to Sara Wallace Goodman, “Civic integration policies consist of cultural requirements, namely language and knowledge of society, that empower individuals to act independently in their host society . . . [and] are also designed to foster cohesion and imbue newcomers with a sense of belonging” (2014: 16). Countries vary in the degree to which immigrant integration is viewed primarily as the responsibility of the individual, whether it should be mandated and evaluated by the receiving government, or whether it requires partnership between immigrants, government, and civil society. The United States is an example of an individualist “laissez-faire” system: the federal government provides almost no funding and no national integration policy (Bloemraad and de Graauw 2012). Denmark is the opposite type, with mandated government testing of immigrants’ integration (Goodman 2014). Canada illustrates a mixed, public-private system: multiple levels of government award contracts to private, nonprofit organizations to provide voluntary language, citizenship, and job training classes, and private citizens assist in refugee resettlement.

Current scholarship provides little evaluation and no consensus about which approach produces the most successful integration outcomes. Bloemraad (2006) argues that Canadian integration and multicultural policies encourage immigrants’ citizenship and political incorporation more than the United States’ laissez-faire system. In Europe, scholars debate whether civic integration policies drive cross-national convergence to a norm of inclusive, civic, and liberal incorporation (Joppke 2017), or whether such policies are advanced, at times, as part of right-wing political agendas that patronize newcomers or attempt to police them and exclude them from full membership (Goodman 2014; Triadafilopoulos 2011). Indeed, unlike the Canadian case, European countries appear to adopt either extensive civic integration policies targeting immigrants or multiculturalism policies seeking to diversify the civic sphere, but seldom both.7

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7 Bloemraad and Wright (2014: S302) find a significant and strongly negative correlation (−0.54) between the number and coerciveness of a country’s civic inclusion policies and national multiculturalism policies as of 2010.
Scholars document an expansion in integration policies, both voluntary and mandatory, helpful or punitive, since the 1990s, especially in Europe. In 1997, few European countries had such requirements; those in existence were almost exclusively linked to citizenship acquisition. By 2013, however, more countries required immigrants to prove civic integration at earlier stages in the migration process, even before they entered the country in some cases (Goodman 2014). Requirements ranged from Sweden, where there is no language prerequisite for citizenship, to Denmark’s highly demanding and coercive standards, where family migrants must pass language exams and take integration classes to secure permanent residency.

If integration policy focuses on immigrants’ adaptation to the receiving society, multicultural policies emphasize how receiving societies should recognize and accommodate immigrant diversity. Scholars have constructed indices to measure multicultural policies cross-nationally.\(^8\) The Multiculturalism Policy Index (MCP) scores official affirmation of multiculturalism; school curricula; ethnic representation/sensitivity in public media and licensing; exemptions from dress codes in public laws; acceptance of dual citizenship; funding of ethnic organizations’ cultural activities; funding of bilingual and mother-tongue instruction; and affirmative action for immigrant groups.\(^9\) By this measure, Austria, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, and Switzerland rank among the Western countries with the fewest multicultural policies, while Australia, Canada, and Sweden have adopted the most. Immigrant-oriented multicultural policies can also be found beyond Western democracies, sometimes strategically advanced to gain status as a modern, developed state (Kim 2015).\(^10\) But although countries such as South Korea or Japan may articulate public commitment to multiculturalism, the term can have very different meanings and implications for practice on the ground (Chung 2010). The MCP places Japan at the bottom of the multiculturalism scale, with Denmark.

Debate over multicultural policy became particularly fierce in the twenty-first century. In 1997, longtime skeptic Nathan Glazer wrote, “We are all multiculturalists now.” But shortly thereafter, a significant “multicultural backlash” developed (Brubaker 2001; Joppke 2004; Vertovec and Wessendorf 2010). Especially in Europe, far-right parties won seats in parliament in part by opposing immigration and multiculturalism, and even centrist political leaders pronounced multiculturalism a failure or a danger because, they claimed, it undermines immigrant integration and perhaps encourages terrorism. Surprisingly, given political rhetoric and academic

\(^8\) See Helbling (2016) and Koopmans (2013) for detailed discussion of the range of multiculturalism policy indices.


\(^10\) We specify immigrant-oriented multiculturalism because various non-Western democracies have multicultural policies that target long-standing native-born groups in order to manage inter-ethnic relations or religious differences, such as in Singapore or India.
claims of a multicultural retreat, 12 countries saw an expansion in multicultural policies from 2000 to 2010, nine experienced policy stability, and only three countries had fewer multicultural policies (Banting and Kymlicka 2013). The data thus show policy resilience, even as the term “multiculturalism” falls from favor. As with entry policy, we find a gap between inclusive practices on the ground and restrictionist policy views articulated in the public sphere.

Champions of multicultural policy contend that by valorizing and accommodating cultural specificity, minority communities will feel increased connection to and engagement in their new society (e.g., Berry 2005; Kymlicka 1995; Modood 2013). Critics claim that excessive emphasis on diversity reifies differences, undermines collective identity, and hinders common political projects (Gitlin 1995; Goodhart 2004a, 2004b; Miller 1995; Scheffer 2000), or that multiculturalism can encourage illiberal, “non-Western” values or promote cultural isolation in self-segregated communities that impedes majority-language learning and socioeconomic integration (Ersanilli and Koopmans 2010; Huntington 2004; Koopmans 2010; Okin 1998). Surprisingly, there is limited research evaluating the impact of multicultural policy on immigrants’ integration or native-born citizens’ sense of social cohesion. One review finds a modest, positive correlation between living in a country with more robust multicultural policies and greater citizenship acquisition and national identification, as well as reduced feelings of exclusion or discrimination, among immigrants (Bloemraad and Wright 2014).

There is much more limited scholarship on the adoption, spread, or repeal of multicultural policies as compared to research on entry policy. There is no strong evidence that multicultural policies arose from majority voters’ preferences or extensive lobbying by immigrant-origin groups. Rather, policy development among early adopters – Canada (1971), Australia (1973), and Sweden (1975) – was often elite-led by politicians, civil servants, academics, and civil society leaders, including some (often European-origin) ethnic communities. The general aim, advanced with support among left and conservative parties, was to develop a domestic integration strategy that negated prior assimilation or “racial purity” policies. Each story of policy adoption also has country-specific elements, related to indigenous populations, fears of separatism, and development of the welfare state. Diffusion mechanisms likely include international networks of academics and elite policy-makers embedded in regional institutions such as the European Union, as well as changing legitimacy norms linking multiculturalism with a modern approach to minority relations (Kymlicka 2004; Kim 2015). Just as with courts’ effect on entry policy, the role of courts in advancing cultural or group rights, through domestic law or within the European Union, is disputed (Joppke 2010; Koopmans, Michalowski, and Waibel 2012).

11 On Canada, see Triadafilopoulos (2012) and Winter (2011); on Australia, see Lopez (2000) and Koleth (2010); and on Sweden, see Borevi (2013a, 2013b).
Understanding the politics of backlash requires greater attention to electoral considerations than with multicultural policy creation and diffusion. Some observers argue that far-right political entrepreneurs politicized multiculturalism for electoral gain within a general frame of anti-elitism and fear of economic globalization (Entzinger 2014; Helbling, Reeskens, and Stolle 2015). Backlash also gained ground as some on the political left raised “the progressives’ dilemma”: a concern that diversity might undermine support for the welfare state (Goodhart 2004a, 2004b; Scheffer 2000) and that identity politics deflect attention from other progressive causes (Gitlin 1995). Muslim immigrants are regularly targeted as bringing illiberal values into host nations, especially over gender equality, which can spur feminists to mobilize against multiculturalism (Thomas 2006).

The persistence of multicultural policies is somewhat mystifying given these critiques. One reason might be the influence of immigrant-origin voters. If multicultural policies facilitate immigrants’ citizenship and access to the vote, they may generate a constituency for persistence (Bloemraad 2012, 2015; Koopmans et al. 2012). Immigrant-inclusive multicultural policies might also find support linked to pluralist policies recognizing long-standing minority groups, such as African Americans or indigenous communities, and when they become part of national identity. This seems to be the case in Canada, where 56 percent of the public now believe that multiculturalism is “very important” to Canadian identity (compared to 47 percent for hockey); the most patriotic Canadians are more likely to support immigration and multiculturalism (Bloemraad 2012; Citrin, Johnston, and Wright 2012). Unlike with entry or citizenship policies, courts or international institutions are rarely a strong bulwark against domestic multicultural backlash. As such, the processes driving adoption of integration and multicultural policies might differ from processes of policy change or retreat.

**Citizenship Policy**

Citizenship is a form of legal membership in a political and geographic community controlled by a sovereign state. At a basic level, citizenship provides access to a state’s territory and protection against deportation. Noncitizens, including legal permanent residents, can be expelled from the country in which they live. In 2016, at least ten million people globally held no recognized citizenship and were legally stateless.¹² Beyond legal status, citizenship is also frequently studied as a bundle of rights, as a national identity, or as a mode of participation in a political system (Bloemraad and Sheares 2017; Bosniak 2006).

Scholars who study citizenship policy are often motivated to do so because citizenship can be a source of rights. Hannah Arendt argued that without citizenship, people lose the very “right to have rights” (1962: 295). Similarly, T. H. Marshall (1950) linked citizenship to rights in his influential narrative of the extension of civil, political, and social rights in the United Kingdom. But, as critics of Marshall have noted, there is no necessary link between holding citizenship and accessing rights or benefits. All current democracies restricted the right to vote at one time or another by some combination of gender, property ownership, religion, ethnoracial background, indigeneity, education or literacy, mental competency, criminal record, and age. Conversely, most liberal democracies today accord basic civil and human rights to all people in their territory, regardless of citizenship, from due process rights in criminal proceedings to the provision of emergency health care. The imperfect match between citizenship status and rights has led political sociologists, legal scholars, and political theorists to advance “postnational” arguments about the decoupling of rights from citizenship (Soysal 1994), to envision citizenship as “hard” at the border but “soft” within liberal states (Bosniak 2006), or to elaborate the idea of “semi-citizenship” based on rights constellations (Cohen 2009).

Citizenship and integration policies are linked. Politicians, pundits, and the public debate whether citizenship should be awarded at the end of successful integration, or somewhere along an integration pathway. The first view implies that immigrants must wait many years before becoming citizens because they need to prove their full incorporation. The second view suggests that acquiring citizenship may catalyze further economic, social, and political integration. A small body of research suggests that becoming a citizen at an earlier age and without a long residency requirement does improve migrants’ integration (Hainmueller, Hangartner, and Pietrantuono 2015, 2017; Vink, Prokic-Breuer, and Dronkers 2013).

Citizenship can also be a source of social identity. Modern citizenship often connotes membership in a national community. Someone is thus “American,” not just a US citizen. These “imagined communities” are shaped by the spread of print-capitalism, mass education, depictions in museums or maps, and through collective experiences of war, among other factors (Anderson 1983; Gellner 1983; Weber 1976). Scholars debate how “thick” or “thin” national identities need to be to sustain sufficient solidarity to support taxation, military service, civic engagement, and trust in common institutions (Miller 1995). Scholars also study how states use citizenship as a form of normative boundary policing, only bestowing the legitimacy of full citizenship on those whose behavior or values are deemed deserving of inclusion (Brandzel 2016; Stokes-DuPass and Fruja 2016).

Researchers of citizenship study the content, cross-national variation, and temporal change in citizenship policies. The main pathways to citizenship are through administrative or legal application (naturalization), birth within the
territory (jus soli), or via “blood” descent (jus sanguinis). Of the three, most immigrants in Western nations access citizenship through naturalization. The process usually requires a period of residence, no criminal record, an administrative fee, and a test to demonstrate knowledge of the country’s language(s), government, history, or social practices. Some states deny citizenship to applicants who receive public benefits or who have not renounced their prior citizenship. The naturalization of a family member can secure citizenship for others, often children and sometimes spouses. On average, across 15 OECD countries, 61 percent of working-age immigrants with at least ten years of residence held citizenship where they lived, with the proportion ranging from 35 percent in Switzerland to 89 percent in Canada (Liebig and von Haaren 2011). This significant cross-national variation is partly due to differences in naturalization law and regulations (Dronkers and Vink 2012; Janoski 2010).

Jus soli offers another path to citizenship, for those born to noncitizen parents. Automatic birthright citizenship is prevalent across the Americas (FitzGerald and Cook-Martín 2014). Virtually all children born in the United States acquire citizenship under the Fourteenth Amendment, even if their parents are undocumented, tourists, or temporary residents, making it one of the country’s most powerful mechanisms of formal legal inclusion. In contrast, no European country currently provides unconditional birthright citizenship. Thomas Janoski (2010) argues that a true nationality rate for immigrants must include naturalization and jus soli citizenship.

Contemporary citizenship politics raise similar questions as with entry policy: Are states converging to common policies, or is this policy arena defined by difference? Early on, scholars mapped jus soli and jus sanguinis citizenship onto inclusive “civic” and exclusionary “ethnic” nationhood, respectively (Brubaker 1992), highlighting variation between countries. Other analysts subsequently critiqued a simple dichotomy, underscoring the mixture of laws in any one country (Goodman 2014; Howard 2009; Koopmans et al. 2005; Vink 2017). Despite this messiness, there is some evidence of convergence. As with integration and multiculturalism policies, researchers have developed comparative citizenship indices. Surveying citizenship policy from the 1980s to 2016, Howard and Goodman (2017) find that the 15 early EU countries have become more similar and inclusive over time, with some extension of jus soli citizenship, reductions in minimum years of residence for naturalization, and greater tolerance of dual citizenship. However, the bulk of

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13 Citizenship can also be extended through legislative or executive decree, as a result of military service, or other specialized reasons. See the EUDO Observatory on Citizenship, available at http://eudo-citizenship.eu/, retrieved October 4, 2016.

14 The only exceptions are for the children of diplomats or similar officials.

15 See Helbling (2016), Goodman (2015), and the Eudo Citizenship website (http://eudo-citizenship.eu/, retrieved April 12, 2019) for a discussion of some of these indexing efforts.
liberalization occurred before 2008, and considerable variation remains, from very liberal policies in Sweden to long residency requirements and a lack of *jus soli* citizenship in Austria and Denmark.

Some scholars argue that following the Second World War, international diffusion of equality norms expanded citizenship access even among authoritarian countries in Latin America or post-Soviet successor states (FitzGerald and Cook-Martín 2014; Shevel 2017). There may be limits to such diffusion, however: analysts observe an exclusionary trend among some African and Middle East states (Manby 2016; Joppke 2017). Many postcolonial states embraced inclusive territorial citizenship upon independence, to solidify claims over land and facilitate nation-building out of diverse populations. However, subsequent fears over borders and migration – fed by populism or the desire to restrict the pool of people who could claim state resources – have increasingly restricted citizenship to those who can demonstrate descent from a country’s “founding” residents or to particular tribal and ethnic groups (Joppke 2017; Manby 2016; Sadiq 2017). At the same time, Sadiq (2008) argues that citizenship in the developing world can be more easily acquired than in the West due to widespread paperwork fraud; it thus has less of a symbolic meaning, and even perhaps less material benefit, given limited resources. Shevel (2017) argues that drafting citizenship law in new states is fundamentally different from the experiences of Western countries with more settled constitutions. Citizenship law must establish independence and sovereignty in a short period, in a context of potentially destabilizing dual citizen populations within and outside the state. And even for more settled countries in East Asia, blood descent remains the primary pathway to citizenship (Chung 2017). All of this raises important questions about the breadth of liberalization and convergence.

What produces convergence or variation? While accounts of entry policy in Western countries are often attentive to voting, public opinion, and economic interests, business interests do not necessarily embrace citizenship or expansive rights for migrants, resulting in an entry/rights trade-off (Ruhs 2013). Scholars of citizenship policy tend instead to focus on historical trajectories that are path dependent due to institutional or ideational legacies, including national identity attachments. In an influential account, Rogers Brubaker (1992) argues that cultural idioms of ethnic nationhood rooted in histories of nation-building closed off citizenship to immigrants in Germany by largely restricting citizenship to *jus sanguinis*, whereas idioms of civic nationhood rooted in state-building led to more inclusive *jus soli* citizenship in France. Others argue that Anglo-settler countries and European colonizing states have more open citizenship policy than noncolonial European states, not due to lofty ideals or cultural norms, but because of the political and military necessities of colonization and controlling empires (Howard 2009; Janoski 2010).

The importance of history, institutions, and ideas – inclusionary and exclusionary – is also evident in research on race and citizenship. Viewing
courts more conservatively than scholarship on entry policy, researchers examining legislative debates, court cases, and administrative decisions reveal how racial ideologies historically produced exclusionary citizenship (Haney López 2006; FitzGerald 2017; Smith 1999). Combining attention to ideas and democratic institutions, FitzGerald and Cook-Martín (2014) argue that the early spread of mass democracy, along with epistemological communities of scientific racism, produced stronger exclusion of nonwhite immigrants in the United States and Canada than in other countries in the Americas into the 1950s. Following the Second World War, the diffusion of equality norms by international organizations and thought leaders, as well as the exigencies of geopolitics, expanded citizenship access (FitzGerald and Cook-Martín 2014; Joppke 2010).

Because all liberal democracies have some process by which (certain) immigrants can become citizens, we believe that entry policy and citizenship are linked, perhaps increasingly so. Evidence for policy convergence suggests that states are not absolutely tied to historic legacies. Indeed, studies of contemporary citizenship underscore the role of electoral politics in determining policy. James Hampshire (2013) suggests that frameworks for understanding the politics of entry can apply equally to citizenship. We may, however, see fewer coalitions of “strange bedfellows” around citizenship policy. Business interests in right-of-center parties often support labor migration, but they may give way to social conservatives worried about demographic and cultural change when it comes to citizenship policy. These dynamics help explain why contemporary political parties on the left tend to favor inclusive citizenship and those on the right call for more stringent language and knowledge tests, longer residency requirements, or higher fees to access citizenship through naturalization (Goodman 2014; Howard 2009; Janoski 2010; Joppke 2003). Further, since immigrant-origin voters tend to favor left-of-center parties (McCann and Chávez 2016; Messina 2007), conservatives might also oppose generous citizenship policy for fear of losing future elections (Wong 2016). Almost all countries link formal political participation in national elections to citizenship status.16

A few researchers find evidence for reinforcing feedback loops: countries with more inclusive citizenship and higher proportions of immigrants may find it harder to take a restrictive turn on entry, membership, and diversity policy due to a growing immigrant-origin electorate (Bloemraad 2012; Koopmans et al. 2012; Wong 2016). Others see democratic, majoritarian politics as inherently exclusionary, with equality norms or international and supranational institutions serving as the main checks against populist desires for “thicker” nation-state

16 At least two dozen countries in Europe and Latin America provide noncitizens with voting rights in local elections, but almost no country extends suffrage universally to noncitizens in national elections (Beckman 2012). For detailed information on electoral rights, see the EUDO Citizenship database at http://eudo-citizenship.eu/electoral-rights, retrieved April 28, 2019.
membership (Hampshire 2013). Particularly potent is populist mobilization of restrictive sentiment through far-right parties or referenda (Howard and Goodman 2017). With populist narratives prominent in the 2016 US presidential election and other electoral contests across Western democracies, future scholarship must tease apart the relative importance of domestic politics, historical legacies, normative ideals, and institutional constraints.

CONCLUSION

The study of migration and citizenship will offer rich terrain for political sociologists for years to come, merging themes of sovereignty and belonging, continuity and change. Many scholars of immigration and citizenship believe that policies were converging from the 1960s through the late 1990s. They posit diverse reasons, such as economic globalization and capitalism, liberal ideologies, internationalism, or the spread of human rights norms. Ideas are important in many of these accounts, as are economic imperatives or the political lobbying of groups that benefit from immigration. The smaller—and largely separate—literature on asylum policy also told a story of convergence: countries signed UN conventions and when the Cold War ended, the importance of particularistic foreign policy considerations faded. If these convergence stories have validity, future research needs to look more closely at how convergence and policy diffusion work. Scholars often make vague references to “globalization” or “norms,” failing to give a fine-grained account of the mechanisms behind these processes. Some scholars believe judges and courts play this role, but the evidence for a determinative or uniform judicial influence is limited. The idea of “rights” might matter, but we do not know enough about how such ideas circulate and what makes them resonate in one setting but not another.

Well into the second decade of the twenty-first century, trends toward convergence and inclusive liberalism are less clear. Some identify a continuing Western trend to “light,” noncoercive civic integration and citizenship; others see a common turn to exclusion in entry and settlement policies. Still others argue for persistent variation, fueled by party politics that move in both inclusive and exclusionary directions, and are shaped in unique ways by countries’ distinct political institutions and policy legacies. Regardless of viewpoint, most observers agree that immigration, asylum, integration, multiculturalism, and citizenship are now highly politicized and volatile issues, requiring attention to elections and party politics as well as international norms, courts, and institutions. Pressing questions include the effect of populist, anti-immigrant politics on international protections like the Refugee Convention or free-movement pacts such as the European Schengen

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17 Focusing on the Americas, FitzGerald and Cook-Martín (2014) argue that convergence occurred slightly earlier.
Agreement. In the wake of the Brexit vote and US president Trump’s executive orders restricting refugee admissions, both appear under considerable strain.

As states grapple with citizens’ concerns over immigration juxtaposed against the continuing arrival of diverse migrants with varying skills and needs, the policy instruments to deal with entry and settlement have expanded and become more complex. These include attempts at “remote control” barriers to entry, but also the extension of integration logics testing migrants’ language ability or “values,” even sometimes before they arrive. Future scholarship should explore how border externalization changes the way we think about sovereignty and territoriality. Our hunch is that it does not make sense to study and theorize refugee and asylum policy separately from entry policy. Border control policies affect many kinds of migrants, and contemporary restrictionist politics do not seem to distinguish between them. We also need to ask whether integration and citizenship policies have become new control strategies. Are the dynamics fueling decisions on membership policies similar from entry policy? If not, why do they differ?

Future scholarship should also take a more global approach beyond the narrow set of rich, Western democracies that feature in most studies of migrant policy. The global South does not just produce emigrants; it also receives significant numbers of humanitarian and economic migrants. There is some evidence that dual trends of convergence in the West – to greater liberalism and inclusion in entry and settlement policy, coupled with enhanced control with differentiated entry tracks – characterize other countries, too. Such similarities lend support to globalist arguments around either norms or markets, or both. However, there are also arguments for why Western states might constitute a class of countries distinct from resource-poor democracies or nondemocratic countries. Various scholars argue that the civic, liberal values of Western countries, combined with human rights norms, constrain states’ worst xenophobic or racist impulses. On the whole, advanced liberal democracies treat immigrants better and provide them with more protections than immigrant-rich Middle East oil states or underresourced developing countries. Yet democracy is not antithetical to nativism and targeted exclusion; indeed, the two might combine in harsh ways, especially if political leaders make populist appeals to existential threats in a “war” against terrorism. Furthermore, it is easier to be relatively generous to a small number of immigrant and asylum seekers when rich states use their resources to keep unwanted migrants out, deflecting them to resource-poor countries. The politicization of migrant policy raises important questions about the breadth and depth of humanitarianism, racism, and Islamophobia in Western societies.

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Cosmopolitanism and Political Sociology

World Citizenship, Global Governance, and Human Rights

Mark Frezzo

This chapter examines the implications of cosmopolitanism for the subfield of political sociology. Owing to its roots in ongoing debates on how globalization has altered power relations in the contemporary world, cosmopolitanism cuts across the subfield of political sociology in instructive ways. Though interdisciplinary in nature, cosmopolitan research contains important insights for the sociological study of politics at the global, national, and local levels (Archibugi 2003; Brown and Held 2010). While this chapter focuses on how cosmopolitanism contributes to our understanding of world citizenship, global governance, and human rights, it nonetheless points to the roles of states (in their foreign and domestic policies) and civil society actors, including social movement organizations (SMOs) and NGOs, in advancing (or blocking) cosmopolitan objectives.

Cosmopolitans aim to cultivate cooperation not only among states, but also among nonstate entities to achieve the following objectives: to create the conditions for both negative peace (i.e., the cessation of interstate war and armed civil conflict) and positive peace (i.e., the implementation of measures to eliminate the structural violence that precipitates interstate and civil war); to reduce inequalities of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, and other identity characteristics; to improve the treatment of transnational migrants; to fight disease and promote health; to strengthen labor laws, establish fair trade practices, and promote alternative development; and to counteract environmental degradation and climate change. Three of these objectives – the advancement of public health, the implementation of alternative development policies (based on bottom-up, culturally sensitive, gender inclusive, and ecologically sustainable models that deemphasize economic growth and consumerism), and collaboration to address global climate change – entail a nuanced defense of research in the natural sciences, medicine, and the social sciences against anticosmopolitan forces. Why must
there be a nuanced defense of science? While cosmopolitans recognize the need to protect vulnerable populations and the earth itself from the abuses of science and technology, they also affirm the utility of science and technology for promoting the well-being of humanity. Accordingly, cosmopolitans place humanist values at the core of scientific research. This is consistent with Article 15(1)(b) of the 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), which articulates the human right to enjoy the benefits of scientific research and technological advancement.

For this reason, cosmopolitan research involves the social scientific analysis of value-laden practices, laws, policies, and institutions. At the same time, cosmopolitans use their expertise to advocate for policy change and institutional reform. In linking social scientific inquiry to the advocacy of new policies (to be implemented at the national level) and new institutions (to be created at the global level), cosmopolitans shed light on the origins, evolution, and impacts of transnational norms. In the process, these scholars reflect on the ideational innovations of SMO–NGO coalitions pursuing global justice, while addressing recurring issues in political philosophy and social theory (including debates on the “good state” and the “good society”). Consequently, this chapter draws on the findings of the literature on transnational norms in political life (Khagram, Riker, and Sikkink 2002; Risse, Ropp, and Sikkink 1999). Though distinct from cosmopolitan research, the transnational norms literature offers tools for studying the transmission of cosmopolitan values not only across national boundaries, but also across different sectors of society. In a similar vein, the literature on transnational civil society proves helpful for navigating the space of cosmopolitan action (Florini 2012; Price 2003).

In principle, cosmopolitanism would seem to offer plenty of fodder for emerging approaches to political sociology (Glasberg and Shannon 2011; Nash 2010; Orum and Dale 2009). Phrased differently, cosmopolitanism – understood as a way of intervening in debates on how to use global political structures to promote nonviolent conflict resolution, equality, inclusiveness, and ecological sustainability – offers significant insights not only into how worldviews, ideologies, and framing practices shape collective action, but also into how popular-elite mobilizations reflect and affect the conduct of intergovernmental organizations (whether directly or through the mediation of national governments). Among intergovernmental organizations, the UN stands as the most responsive not only to pressure from popular-elite mobilizations, but also to the work of cosmopolitan academics. For its part, the UN merits further sociological inquiry for its status as a forum for debate on cosmopolitan values, its knowledge-producing functions, and its collaborations with NGOs and community-based organizations. Far from being monolithic, the UN system is a zone of contestation, as Sylvanna Falcón (2016) has demonstrated in a study of antiracist and feminist activism surrounding the 2001 World Conference Against Racism.
This chapter sets up a conversation between interdisciplinary cosmopolitan scholars and recent interventions in the subfield of political sociology. In treating cosmopolitanism as a school of thought or an epistemic community – namely, something between a broad intellectual tendency and a fully formed social scientific paradigm – the first section identifies the major characteristics of cosmopolitanism: the argument that globalization has created a cosmopolitan condition (marked by widespread awareness of the economic, political, social, cultural, and environmental connections among the world’s peoples); the inclination to attach an analytic framework (diagnosing the cosmopolitan condition) to a normative stance (proposing ways of strengthening cosmopolitan currents, while constraining nationalist and parochial reactions); and an attentiveness to the roles – sometimes complementary, sometimes contradictory – of SMOs, NGOs, and UN entities in promoting (or failing to promote) diverse expressions of the cosmopolitan ethos.

It is worth noting that efforts by cosmopolitans to connect an analytic framework (establishing the reality of the cosmopolitan condition) with a normative stance (expressing a preference for certain values to inform policy solutions) – though intellectually coherent – necessitate further reflection. Fittingly, this issue has an analogue in the sociology of human rights, a domain in which most – but not all – participants envisage a connection between scholarship on and advocacy of human rights. In affirming a linkage between scholarship and advocacy, human rights sociologists defend empirically informed social science. In both cases – that of cosmopolitanism and that of the sociology of human rights – scholars face related methodological issues. While cosmopolitan values and human rights are by definition global in their origins and applications, their impacts vary according to political structure and culture. For example, cosmopolitans’ support for social programs and human rights sociologists’ advocacy of economic and social rights would lend support to different types of policies and institutions in liberal, corporatist, and social democratic welfare states.

In crystallizing the contributions of the epistemic community, the second section focuses on the most efficacious cosmopolitan values: the belief that meaningful citizenship ought to be accorded to all members of the human community regardless of nationality or geographic location; and the belief that the institutions of global governance ought to be more participatory, responsive, transparent, and accountable.

The third section demonstrates how cosmopolitan research on world citizenship and global governance converges with sociological studies of human rights. In a thoroughly cosmopolitan fashion, sociologists of human rights tend to: approach norms, policies, and institutions holistically, with the understanding that norms provide an ideational context for policy-making and institution building; affirm the importance of balancing a concern for social scientific rigor with a commitment to civic engagement; and acknowledge the need to reconcile universalism and pluralism (Armaline, Glasberg, and...
On the last point, cosmopolitan scholarship – though not focused on human rights – provides useful clues for sociologists who wish to investigate how universal human rights can find expression in local cultural contexts. Human rights–oriented sociologists ought to follow these clues in grappling with the universalism–pluralism dilemma.

### COSMOPOLITANISM AS AN EPISTEMIC COMMUNITY

Where shall we look for a lens through which to view cosmopolitan scholarship? Is there an important antecedent to the cosmopolitan school? In principle, scholars might draw on intellectual historians and sociologists of knowledge who have examined the Frankfurt Institute for Social Research and its lineage (Jay 2008; Wiggershaus 2007). Given certain commonalities – including interdisciplinarity, an abiding interest in political philosophy and social theory, a complex and conflicted relationship with the legacy of the European Enlightenment, a commitment to critical social science, and a willingness to grapple with significant normative questions – such contributions to intellectual history and sociology of knowledge might serve as models for a future inquiry. Moreover, David Held (1980) and other prominent cosmopolitans have published on the Critical Theory of the Frankfurt School and its heirs (Jones 2001). This includes Jürgen Habermas, whose critiques of postmodernism and post-structuralism have acquired new resonance in the contemporary period, in which prominent political figures and substantial sectors of society have questioned the extent to which science should inform social policy. Yet we should not take the comparison between the Frankfurt School and the cosmopolitan tendency too far. Cosmopolitan scholars have operated as a network, as distinguished from a research institute. Contemporary cosmopolitan scholars have not labored amidst an unprecedented world historical crisis to match the Great Depression or the Second World War.

Setting aside a potentially fruitful exercise in intellectual history and sociology of knowledge, let us address the most fundamental question: How might we characterize the interdisciplinary literature on cosmopolitanism? Far from constituting a philosophical system or social scientific paradigm, cosmopolitanism meets the definition of an epistemic community offered by Peter Haas (1992). He has identified four defining traits of epistemic communities:

1. a shared set of normative and principled beliefs
2. shared causal beliefs
3. shared notions of validity – that is, inter-subjective, internally defined criteria for weighing and validating knowledge in the domain of expertise
4. a common policy enterprise – that is, a set of common practices associated with a set of problems to which their professional competence is directed, presumably out of the conviction that human welfare will be enhanced as a consequence. (Haas 1992)
The cosmopolitan school demonstrates each of these characteristics. Having emerged in the mid-1990s amidst profound changes in the global economy, the interstate system, and the global public sphere, the cosmopolitan epistemic community addresses not only the lived experience of shrunken geographic space and accelerated historical time, but also the norms, policies, and institutions associated with economic, political, social, cultural, and environmental integration. With intensified contacts across national boundaries – mediated by advanced communication technologies – human beings find themselves in a cosmopolitan condition marked by a growing awareness of the rest of the world (Szerszynski and Urry 2006; Weenink 2008). In characterizing cosmopolitanism as a condition, scholars do not commit themselves to a teleological view of human history (Brown 2009). On the contrary, they explore the role of human agency – manifested in both elite and popular forces – in promoting competing forms of cosmopolitanism. By definition, cosmopolitan scholars grapple with the implications of the condition for recurring disputes on civic responsibility, the relationship between civil society and the state, humanitarianism (versus “humanitarian interventionism”), democracy and democratization, the limits of state sovereignty, the regulation of transnational corporations, and the principles of international relations (Beck 2007; Corlett, Norzagary, and Sharpless 2010; Reeve 2016).

Though marked by the circumstances of its emergence – particularly the exhaustion of the debate on postmodernism and postmodernity and intensified interest in globalization (and its alternatives) – the cosmopolitan epistemic community revisits older concerns. Drawing in innovative ways on ancient and Enlightenment era reflections on the obstacles to and prospects for a genuinely global yet inclusive human community, the cosmopolitan epistemic community is much more than an outgrowth of the globalization debate (Appiah 2006; Nussbaum 1997). With both analytic and normative dimensions, the cosmopolitan epistemic community relegates globalization to its proper place in the long-term history of capitalism, while highlighting the need for research on the question of how to design an architecture for a better planet without repeating the mistakes of the past (Cheah 2006; Harvey 2009). This entails examining the following processes: the trajectories of welfare, former socialist, and development states amidst capitalist restructuring; the pressures on the UN and other intergovernmental organizations to handle conflicts stemming from increasing inequality, instability, and environmental degradation; and the role of human rights norms, policies, and institutions in regulating (or failing to regulate) human activity.

If we conceptualize cosmopolitanism as both an analytic framework and a normative stance, we must nevertheless recognize that there exists a tension – albeit a generally constructive one – between the two major aspects of the project. If we take measures to ensure that the desire for a more cosmopolitan world does not override our evaluation of the patterns and opportunities of globalization, we can isolate applications for such bread-and-butter political
sociology topics as: citizenship and budgetary challenges plaguing welfare, post-socialist, and development states; obstacles to more democratic, transparent, and accountable intergovernmental organizations; popular responses – on both the left and the right – to increasing integration and interdependency among economies, states, and public spheres; and the role of human rights – defined as a highly contested set of norms, policies, and institutions – in the contemporary world. In articulating the analytic with the normative, cosmopolitanism rejects positivist pretensions to value neutrality. Nevertheless, cosmopolitanism does not entail a commitment to a specific political platform (whether green, social democratic, liberal, or otherwise). Cosmopolitans occupy vastly different positions on the political chessboard. Furthermore, there is considerable debate within the epistemic community about how and when to produce policies and institutions to match the normative precepts of cosmopolitanism. Arguably, this points to the need for greater engagement between cosmopolitans and sociologists of human rights. Accordingly, let us turn our attention to cosmopolitan values.

COSMOPOLITAN VALUES

Long before the invention of the West – a long-term process instantiated in the scholarly and artistic products of the Renaissance, the Protestant Reformation, and the Enlightenment – philosophers meditated not only on the relationship between the local and the global, but also on the benefits and responsibilities associated with membership in the human community (Kleingeld 2014; Nussbaum 1997; Toulmin 1990). Clearly, ancient Greek and Roman thinkers exerted considerable influence on two lauded works of Immanuel Kant: the 1784 “Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Perspective” and the 1795 “Toward Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch” (Kant 2006; Kleingeld 2014; Nussbaum 1997; Toulmin 1990). Fittingly, the celebration of the 1995 bicentennial of the latter text served as a platform for cosmopolitan thought, with scholars from across the world finding new relevance in Kant’s proposals, written in ironic mimicry of the peace treaties of his time, for a just and enduring international system (Rauscher and Perez 2012). Doubtless, the reconfiguration of the interstate system (with the collapse of the state socialist regimes in Eastern Europe, Yugoslavia, and the Soviet Union and the concomitant end of the Cold War antagonism between the two superpowers), the end of the Apartheid regime in South Africa, and the advance of the European Union (with the entry into force of the Maastricht Treaty in 1993) inspired philosophers and social scientists to return, albeit with a critical eye, to Kant’s vision of a global community.

As peace studies scholar David Cortright (2008: 241–242) has noted, “Kant’s theory of peace was based on three fundamental principles, which he called ‘definitive articles’: (1) democratic governance; (2) a federation of nations; and (3) the ‘cosmopolitan law’ of mutual respect and interdependence.” While
contemporary cosmopolitans reject certain aspects of Enlightenment thought (including its assertion of the inevitability of progress and its neglect of non-Western cultures), they nevertheless build on Kant’s basic framework. For example, Cortright (2008) extrapolates and refines Kant’s theory of peace by adding women’s rights and social justice as fundamental precepts. According to Cortright, “Empirical evidence suggests that the political, economic, and social empowerment of women is a significant influence in reducing the tendency of governments to utilize military force” (2008: 255).

Like its ancient and Enlightenment predecessors, contemporary cosmopolitanism hinges on the espousal of a set of values. These values have been informed not only by the implementation and expansion of the UN system after 1945, but also by the accumulated successes of social movements. In the contemporary period, cosmopolitan values are as follows: the regulative ideal that everyone ought to be treated as an equal citizen of the world, regardless of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, religious affiliation, or other identity characteristics; and the regulative ideal that more democratic, transparent, accountable, and binding global governance institutions hold the key to a more egalitarian, peaceful, just, and sustainable planet. At first glance, the neo-Kantian language that suffuses cosmopolitan research may seem outdated. However, it is immediately apparent that the neo-Kantian inspiration has been modified and supplemented by: major currents in contemporary social theory, including Critical Theory in its various instantiations, feminism, postcolonial theory, and subaltern studies; analyses of disputes on development (and its alternatives) within the UN system; lessons from the legislative agendas of green, socialist, social democratic, and labor parties (especially in the European Union); assessments of multiculturalism in the welfare states of the Global North; and insights from SMOs and NGOs pushing for global justice. In fact, popular mobilizations for global justice have exerted considerable influence on the work of cosmopolitans. Accordingly, it is important to mention the relevant insights of the literature on the global justice movement (de Greiff and Cronin 2002; Pogge, Menko, and Moellendorf 2008; Smith 2008; Tarrow 2005). In addition to capturing the processes by which SMOs and NGOs frame their appeals to cosmopolitan values, such studies explain how transnational activists instantiate what Tarrow (2005) has termed “rooted cosmopolitanism.”

In addition to attracting the attention of an array of social movement scholars, the global justice movement has exerted a palpable influence on the cosmopolitan school (Archibugi 2003; Brown and Held 2010). Why is this the case? Though far from monolithic, the global justice movement has focused its attention primarily on resisting neoliberal policies – including fiscal austerity, privatization, deregulation, financial liberalization, and free trade – prescribed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank (IBRD), and the World Trade Organization (WTO) and implemented, albeit in various ways, by national governments across the globe. In calling for solidarity in their conflicts
with the IMF, the IBRD, and the WTO, global justice activists appeal to cosmopolitan values. In the process, they intervene actively in debates on the prospects for improved global governance institutions. Global justice activists have transformed the ideational context of proposals for new-and-improved global governance institutions.

Chief among the strategies of the global justice movement has been the organization of countersummits, designed to borrow the mass media attention accorded to regularly scheduled IMF/IBRD, WTO, Group of 8, and World Economic Forum (WEF) meetings. Inaugurated in 2001 as a countersummit to the WEF, the World Social Forum (WSF) – a literal and virtual venue for SMOs and NGOs to collaborate in the pursuit of global justice – can be interpreted as an ongoing experiment in cosmopolitanism (Ponniah 2003; Santos 2006). The WSF is cosmopolitan not only in its structure (as a genuinely transnational, multicultural, and pluralist arena for civil society actors), but also in its normative perspective. Operating under the motto, “Another World Is Possible,” the WSF serves as a cauldron for cosmopolitan values, policy proposals, and institution building. Accordingly, the WSF finds itself in a useful and interesting dialogue with the UN system, with the UN Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) – a regular participant at WSF events – serving as an important intermediary. It would be worthwhile to examine UNESCO as a setting for cosmopolitans and human rights specialists.

In a similar vein, scholars have contributed to cosmopolitanism by excavating non-Eurocentric epistemologies in the Global South (Barreto 2014; Mignolo 2012; Santos 2007; Zeng 2014). Though underexplored by many cosmopolitan scholars, such exercises in social epistemology hold considerable promise for debates on world citizenship, global governance, and human rights. Taken together, these studies highlight the importance not only of popular coalitions (with or without elite allies) across the global landscape, but also of the knowledge-production role played by constituencies from the Global South. In pointing to global cognitive justice as a precondition for a more humane, egalitarian, and inclusive global order, such studies complement inquiries into the contributions of African, Arab, and Asian delegations to such major UN documents as the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the 1966 ICESCR (Burke 2013). As we have seen, the knowledge-production function may transpire within the UN system or within alternative arenas like the WSF. In short, the pursuit of cognitive justice – a process of dismantling Eurocentrism and restoring non-Western and indigenous ways of knowing the world – proves consistent with the values defended by the cosmopolitan epistemic community. As we shall see, the call for a non-Eurocentric ideational framework relates directly to the universalism–pluralism dilemma in human rights. This is the case because a genuine universalism would need to be shorn of Eurocentric assumptions about: pathways of development; the conduct of science in the service of development; and the meaning of such culture-laden terms as “democracy” and “freedom.”
COSMOPOLITANISM AND HUMAN RIGHTS

This section examines the implications of cosmopolitan research on world citizenship and global governance for sociological inquiries into human rights. What are the connections among world citizenship, global governance, and human rights? To address this question, we must first situate cosmopolitanism in relation to accumulated scholarly wisdom on globalization. Given remarkable flows of human beings (including economic migrants and refugees fleeing human rights abuses), information and cultural artifacts, commodities, conflicts, and deleterious environmental impacts across national boundaries, there is something approaching a scholarly consensus on two major points. First, the post–Second World War system of sovereign states faces serious challenges (from left and right, above and below). This is clear not only from research on the fiscal, monetary, and trade problems confronting welfare, former socialist, and development states, but also from inquiries into the accumulated effects of cultural marginalization and environmental degradation (Appelbaum and Robinson 2005; McMichael 2017). Second, the emergence of transnational civil society – a space distinct from the global economy and the interstate system – has altered power relations, thereby creating the preconditions for enlarged world citizenship (Batliwala and Brown 2006; Price 2003). Yet it remains to be seen how world citizenship would be given substantive content. Moreover, to say that the preconditions exist is not to say that expanded world citizenship is guaranteed. Political parties and civic groups proffering the false prospect of “returning to a harmonious past” – one that existed before globalization – rally their troops by scapegoating racial and ethnic minorities, members of minority religions, immigrants, and other vulnerable populations.

In fact, resurgent nationalisms, religious fundamentalisms, and expressions of xenophobia, which can be understood as reactions to globalization, create obstacles to the expansion of world citizenship. The point is proven not only by the rise of far right movements (both within and beyond the confines of European and US political parties), but also by networks of religious extremists (spanning the divide between the Global North and the Global South). Paradoxically, both far right movements and networks of religious extremists make ample use of transnational civil society – especially by using advanced communication technologies – to transmit and actualize profoundly anticosmopolitan sentiments. Among the anticosmopolitan sentiments expressed by both extreme right-wing groups and religious fundamentalists is an antipathy to women’s rights and LGBTQIA rights – not least because these movements have tended to affirm diversity and inclusiveness while spanning national boundaries.

As Stephen Bronner has noted in his exposition/critique/extrapolation of the Critical Theory of the Frankfurt School and its heirs: “Human rights, tolerance, cosmopolitan ideals, (and even science) are almost everywhere under siege – or, at
least, contested — by forces of religious fanaticism, cultural provincialism, and authoritarian reaction” (2011: 109). In sum, the bleak underside of globalization — transnational movements that use the Internet to cultivate anticosmopolitan sentiments (including a desire to roll back the achievements of the women’s movement and the LGBTQIA movement) — contributes to the sense of urgency among participants in and fellow travelers of the cosmopolitan epistemic community. The same urgency exists among human rights sociologists.

Given the scope of the crisis, cosmopolitan scholars have figured prominently in discussions of how to create new global governance institutions to meet the needs of the current period (Held and Koenig-Archibugi 2004; Held and McGrew 2011). Yet cosmopolitans have tended to avoid revisiting post–Second World War disputes on the prospects for a world government, as distinguished from a denser meshwork to facilitate cooperation among sovereign states. Thus, they have drafted blueprints for: a reformed UN system, with a reduced role for the Security Council and an expanded role for the General Assembly; a strengthened International Labor Organization to implement and enforce a worldwide living wage, along with workplace safety regulations; a World Parliament, facilitated by electronic deliberation and voting; a Global Truth and Reconciliation Commission to implement restorative justice in postconflict areas; a global entity to ensure fair trade (and thereby to replace the WTO); and a World Environment Organization to move beyond the Paris Agreement Under the UN Framework and Convention on Climate Change by implementing and enforcing stringent worldwide standards on carbon emissions, water pollution, and soil contamination (Blau 2017; Falk 1995; Monbiot 2006; Patomäki and Teivainen 2004; Tabb 2004).

Since the UN serves as the centerpiece not only of the existing web of global governance, but also of many cosmopolitan proposals for a new architecture, sociological studies of activism surrounding UN conferences offer significant insights to cosmopolitans (Falcón 2016). Since the WSF serves as an interlocutor of the UN, sociological inquiries into its annual meetings shed light on cosmopolitanism-from-below.

Where does this leave us? Although cosmopolitans have focused primarily on world citizenship and global governance, they have created the conditions for a productive dialogue with human rights scholars. What form would this dialogue take? We might define world citizenship in terms of: the freedom to send and receive information across national boundaries; the freedom to benefit from cultural and scientific exchanges; the freedom to travel for leisure; the freedom to migrate for personal reasons and/or to sustain a transnational family; and the freedom to receive protection from interstate war, civil conflict, and persecution for personal identity characteristics. These components of world citizenship would be conceptualized as universal human rights.

Similarly, we might define global governance in terms of a transnational regime that not only cultivates cooperation and limits conflicts among states, but also creates a framework for deliberation on transnational norms. Thus,
global governance would be considered a universal human right in the same way as the right to due process of law. Furthermore, global governance institutions would be endowed with the capacity to promote and enforce such agreed upon civil and political rights as the rule of law, the right to vote in free and fair elections, to right move freely about society, the right to assemble in the public square, the right to speak freely, and right to have a free press. Global governance would be marshaled to guarantee such economic and social rights as paid parental leave, child care, education, health care, housing, social security, unemployment insurance, and disability benefits.

It is in the realm of collective rights to cultural and environmental goods that the criterion of pluralism would be met. More precisely, global governance would be used to implement such cultural and environmental rights as the right to speak a minority language, the right to use ancestral lands and waterways, the right to protect and nurture non-Western and indigenous forms of knowledge (including farming and healing practices), the right to inhabit a clean environment, and the right to be protected from the effects of global climate change. As a superstate covering 28 countries, the European Union provides both a model and a cautionary tale for cosmopolitans. It offers a model insofar as it has inscribed respect for cultural, linguistic, and religious diversity in Article 22 of the European Charter of Fundamental Rights. At the same time, the European Union presents a cautionary tale insofar as it has fallen prey to burgeoning nationalism and xenophobia. Consequently, the European experiment serves as a bellwether for cosmopolitanism.

From the side of human rights scholarship, Kate Nash (2009: 186) argues that “Human rights activists construct cosmopolitanism-from-below as a project that simply aims to bring state actors to account in the name of a political community of global citizens which already exists as a consequence of rights and obligations that are clearly laid out in international law.” What is happening here? In effect, activists cite human rights legislation as evidence of an existing cosmopolitan community, even though such legislation remains highly contested (2009: 186). Furthermore, human rights legislation can be interpreted not only as an outcome of past struggles (in which popular–elite coalitions collaborate and/or collide with state policy-makers and UN officials), but also as a platform for future struggles. This is what it means to say that the doctrine of human rights is a social construct.

Scholars and activists tend to reject the idea of a theological foundation of human rights. In addition, they tend to acknowledge that psychology, psychiatry, and the brain sciences are not currently in a position to isolate a biological foundation of human rights. Yet there is a strong consensus on the following point: the doctrine of human rights, as institutionalized (albeit incompletely and imperfectly) in the UN system and as elaborated by scholars and jurists since 1945, serves as normative wellspring for activists across the world. It is through the process of contestation that “new rights” are established.

To date, sociologists have paid insufficient attention to the applications of the cosmopolitan perspective to human rights values, laws, and institutions. Yet
this might be easily corrected given (a) the role of the WSF, several human rights NGOs, and a large number of university programs in promoting the ideal of world citizenship, and (b) the status of the UN as the centerpiece of the existing framework of global governance. Greater familiarity with the cosmopolitan school would assist human rights-oriented sociologists in addressing a significant dilemma in the field: the reconciliation of universalism (defined as the embrace of globally binding norms that apply to all states, societies, and individuals) and pluralism (defined as the recognition of local cultures and individual identities) (Frezzo 2011, 2014). The cosmopolitan elaboration of world citizenship affords us a better understanding of what it means to be an equal member of the human community. Meanwhile, cosmopolitan proposals for a new system of global governance give us concrete advice on institution building.

CONCLUSION

Bracketing shopworn disputes on globalization, cosmopolitan scholars have elucidated the challenges and promises stemming from interconnectedness and interdependency in the contemporary period. The cosmopolitan epistemic community addresses globalization not only as a highly contested and contradictory process, but also as an opportunity for transnational cooperation in the service of shared values (de Greiff and Cronin 2002; Pogge, Menko, and Moellendorf 2008). Cutting across philosophy, law, political science, international relations, sociology, anthropology, cultural studies, peace studies, geography, and environmental studies, cosmopolitanism emphasizes connections—both actual and aspirational—among the world’s peoples. Phrased differently, cosmopolitanism is characterized not only by the employment of philosophical and social scientific tools to analyze the linkages among diverse human communities, but also by the invocation of normative arguments for the construction of a more egalitarian, peaceful, just, and sustainable world (Archibugi 2003; Brown and Held 2010).

This chapter has argued that the cosmopolitan tendency both testifies to and pushes for the reconciliation of universalism (understood as the embrace of globally binding norms that apply to all states and societies) and pluralism (understood as the recognition of local cultures and individual identities). In other words, cosmopolitanism holds the key to resolving one of the central dilemmas confronting sociologists of human rights.

REFERENCES


States were the quintessential containers of modernity (Giddens 1985). Although states never completely contained “their” society (Held 1996: 350–351), states did carve up (with modest exceptions) the entire planet into mutually exclusive geographic areas, and within “their” domain, states exerted institutionalized and legitimate power. Over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, states penetrated society in unprecedented ways and took on an expanding role in coordinating educational, medical, infrastructural, and social welfare services (Mann 1993, 2012). Bauman makes the case that with globalization giving rise to liquid modernity, the stability and power of the state no longer depend on direct control of society and its institutions. The state’s challenge is to navigate and channel flows that emerge and operate beyond its control (Bauman and Haugaard 2008). This transformation of states and their challenges has direct implications for military organizations and warfare. And, in turn, this transformation poses challenges for political sociology (and other social sciences) attempting to come to terms with war and militarism in the twenty-first century.

Tilly pushed political sociology to shift attention away from the characteristics of social entities and toward the flows of resources and power across individuals, social organization, and states. When reflecting on state breakdown and revolution, Tilly (1995) presented an analogy to hydraulics. In this analogy, the state is a basin, and the pressures on the state are comparable to fluids flowing into and out of the basin. The stability of this basin does not rest on its ability to keep fluids out – its stability is tied to channeling flows in and out of a basin, that is, avoiding a catastrophic collapse and rapid outflow. The durability of states is not first and foremost their ability to close off “their” society from outside contact; their durability resides in an ability to channel and manage flows across national frontiers. Seen in this light, Giddens’ observation that states were the quintessential “containers” of the modern era says more about the global context than it does about states. Until late in the twentieth
century, the logistics of transportation, finance, and communication coupled with international agreements governing trade and capital flows served to limit the movement of goods, people, (to a lesser extent) capital, and ideas across national frontiers. As technologies, logistics, and international accords facilitated global flows, the insightfulness of Tilly’s analogy to hydraulics becomes more apt still.

Zygmunt Bauman emphasizes flows when assessing the transformation of societies and states in the latter decades of the twentieth century. In fact, he draws a contrast between the “solid modernity” of past centuries with the “liquid modernity” that has emerged in recent decades. While there have been ongoing and consequential improvements in transportation and communication technologies over several centuries, Bauman places primary emphasis on the digital revolution in the closing decades of the twentieth century.1 “Power can move with the speed of the electronic signal – and so the time required for the movement of its essential ingredients has been reduced to instantaneity. For all practical purposes, power has become truly exterritorial, no longer bound, not even slowed down, by the resistance of space” (Bauman 2000: 11, emphasis in original). The instantaneity of power does not erase the materiality of social life; the disruption it causes plays out differently within and across nation-states (Bauman 2000). This overview of political sociology’s challenges and accomplishments in the study of war and militarism draws lessons from Bauman, emphasizing that a state’s viability is even more dependent on its ability to anticipate and manage flows (cultural, human, economic, and military) that are beyond its direct control. This review will highlight the accomplishments of political sociology in understanding war and militarism in an era of solid modernity and will identify the challenges that loom in an era of liquid modernity.

POLITICAL SOCIOLOGY AND THE STUDY OF WAR: ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND CHALLENGES

Political sociology was once faulted (and justifiably so) for overlooking and discounting the importance of war and war-making (Hooks and Rice 2005). However, there has been an outpouring of research on these topics – theoretical, comparative historical, qualitative, and quantitative. While gaps and inconsistencies remain, a fair assessment would acknowledge the contributions

1 Bauman does not offer a specific date when solid modernity transformed into liquid modernity. However, it would be fair to say that 1980–2000 was a transition period and that liquid modernity was largely in place (at least in the Global North) by the dawn of the twenty-first century. This estimation is based on (1) the emphasis that Bauman placed on digital technologies that allow power to be exercised instantaneously and at great distances, and (2) his examination of transformation of social institutions, communities, and individual identities over this period (Bauman 2000).
made and insights that have been garnered. For example, Collins (1995) argues convincingly that sociology has made a significant and unique contribution to the study of revolution because it brings a robust understanding of the domestic structures and processes that impinge on states. By simultaneously considering the domestic and the geopolitical, sociology has made an important contribution to the study of revolution.

The challenges confronting political sociology no longer center on addressing absolute oversights and deficits. Still, they are daunting. In an era of liquid modernity, states are navigating and attempting to channel flows beyond their direct control. This also transforms war and warfare. In an era in which states approximated durable containers, acquiring and holding territory were central objectives. In an era in which flows of people, capital, information, and resources are ascendant, wars (and warlike actions) are being transformed. In this sense, the overriding challenge confronting political sociology is not to understand the military as a separate and autarkic institution; it is (adopting Mann’s framework) to understand the flows and interdependencies across networks of military, economic, political, and ideological power. In important respects, political sociology’s accomplishments highlight successes in an era of solid modernity; the challenges center on coming to terms with liquid modernity.

War-Making and State Building in an Era of Solid Modernity

“War made the state, and the state made war” (Tilly 1975: 42). Clearly, European states were forged through warfare. Over the course of several centuries, prevailing (surviving) in a war required larger and better-equipped military forces. Moreover, the major powers of Europe promoted economic and technological advancements in pursuit of geopolitical objectives. In the nineteenth century, late-developing states (with Germany, Japan, and, to a lesser extent, Russia being important examples) subsidized, guided, and championed rapid industrial growth focused on heavy industries. While authoritarian, patriarchal, ethnocentric (and often racist), nationalistic, and militaristic, these top-down initiatives brought widespread economic change and modernization.

Bauman’s contrast between “solid” and “liquid” modernity can be used to update Tilly’s assertion about the links between war-making and state-making. In the era of solid modernity, space was understood to be “solid and stolid, unwieldy and inert” – modernity brought innovations in the means of transporting goods and people (Bauman 2000: 9). As Weber’s classic definition of the state reveals, even the most powerful organizations and people were constrained and defined by space: “a state is a human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory” (Weber 2014 [1946]: 3–4, emphasis in original). And, reinforcing the emphasis on the spatiality of the modern state, Weber adds the
following sentence: “Note that ‘territory’ is one of the characteristics of the state” (2014 [1946]: 3–4). In Bauman’s framework, the unrivaled power of states was rooted in their ability to conquer and control space. Due in large measure to their unmatched prowess in waging war – conquering, controlling, and administering territory – states were the unrivaled political organization of the nineteenth and twentieth Centuries (Tilly 1990). As will be discussed (see below), Bauman makes the case that the centrality of conquering and holding territory – for power holders, especially states – waned in the final decades of the twentieth century, ushering in a transition to liquid modernity. Specific to the era of solid modernity, political sociology’s notable accomplishments in the study of war and militarism built on, challenged, extended, and enriched Weber’s definition of the state, including this emphasis on conquering, controlling, and administering territory.

The very real power of states and their profound impact on human history notwithstanding, twentieth-century social theory reified them. Scholars drawing on and contributing to world-system theory (Wallerstein 1989) emphasized this reification and argued that the world-system – not states – must be the unit of analysis. Even in an era when states were unrivaled as the pinnacle of political organizations, the behavior of states was ultimately determined by the dynamics and imperatives of the world-system. In parallel fashion – albeit with an emphasis on culture – the world polity school also emphasized and critiqued the reification of states (Meyer et al. 1997). But the reification of the state is also highlighted by Michael Mann – a scholar who has played a pivotal role in placing war and militarism on political sociology’s agenda. His (1986) framework emphasizes that the geographic reach of networks of political, economic, cultural, and military power do not coincide. A reified view of the state (and society) assumes that these four power networks are contained by a nation-state and controlled (if indirectly) by the state. But this has never been the case. Taking Europe 1000 to 1300 CE as an example, economic power was quite localized and concentrated in fiefdoms, while cultural power (in the form of the Catholic Church) transcended fiefdoms and states. States claimed dominion (political and military power) over expansive areas, but this power was quite diluted, with the aristocracy largely autarkic within their fiefdoms (Elias 1982[1939]).

States displayed prowess in waging war. However, prior to the twentieth century, most wars did not pit states against one another (Tilly 1990). Instead, history has been marked by wars of conquest in which states and empires overwhelmed less formal social organizations. Nation-states eventually prevailed in wars against expansive empires as well (Mann 2012; Tilly 1990; Wimmer 2013). Until the latter half of the twentieth century, the world was not made up of nation-states. Rather, the world was made up of empires and nation-states with overseas empires. A minority of the world’s population were citizens, most were subjects.

Political sociologists – especially Michael Mann and Charles Tilly – successfully championed the “bellicist” analysis of state building. Over the centuries that
modernity implied solidity and states exerted tangible control over the flow of people and resources into and out of “their” societies, the pursuit of war was intimately tied to an intensification of governance. Of course, this characterization only applies to the geopolitical winners – the states that prevailed at war and maintained actual control over “their” territories and “their” societies. For the major powers of Europe (and subsequently North America and Asia), the interplay of state-making and war-making persisted into the twentieth century (Mann 2012, 2013). In the context of the twentieth century’s mass industrial wars (the First and Second World Wars), the size of military forces grew exponentially, as did the logistical demands placed on armed forces and society (Hooks 1991; van Creveld 1989, 1991). States felt compelled to build and improve the physical infrastructure (roads, ports, railroads, telegraph, telecommunications, and aviation) and guided a sharp increase in industrial output. The state’s voracious consumption required more than quantitative growth in taxing and spending. Instead, states expanded their role in and assumed responsibility for monetary and fiscal coordination more generally. In parallel fashion, states advanced far-reaching industrial, regional, and science policy under the banner of national security (Hooks 1990, 1991, 1993, 2016; Hooks and Getz 1998; Hooks and McLauchlan 1992).

The preceding paragraphs implicitly highlighted the experience of states that prevailed on the battlefield and survived. For many European nations and peoples, militarism and war-making brought hardship, dislocation, and misery. States that lost were conquered and forcibly annexed, stripped of territories and resources, and forced to accept onerous terms of surrender. Beyond Europe, the impact of war was even worse. Colonialism, imperialism, and slavery linked European militarism to underdevelopment and distorted development in other regions of the world (Mann 2012, 2013). Even if war-making contributed to both state building and broad economic and technological advances in a handful of states, these dynamics were neither innocent nor reproducible. The imperialism attendant to the rise and consolidation of militarized European states was by no means an internal process. The material foundation of military strength and economic prosperity was forcibly extracted from the nations and peoples of what would be referred to as the underdeveloped world in the twentieth century.

Tilly’s famous quote – linking war-making and state building – captures the experience of only a handful of states, most located in Europe. Even among European states, wars often contributed to state breakdown and collapse, and wars undermined the ability of individual states to control their own borders (Goldstone 1991; Skocpol 1979). Losing a war compromised a state’s sovereignty and often gave rise to a crisis of legitimacy. While an authoritarian state pursuing militaristic goals might encourage economic growth and investment in the armed forces, it is far from clear that this state would pursue an inclusive, democratic, and developmental agenda. Especially if the military is set apart from (as opposed to embedded in) social institutions, it is
quite likely that a militaristic state will be predatory as opposed to developmental (Collier 2008; Evans 1989).

It is unwise to use “such an idiosyncratic experience as early modern Western European for the construction of universalistic paradigms” (Centeno 1997: 1598). Centeno’s skepticism is well founded. In nineteenth-century Latin America, states repeatedly pursued war-making but this “did not make states” (Centeno 1997: 1598). These Latin American military forays did not consolidate and legitimate taxing capacity, nor did they lead to robust and coherent state bureaucracies. Rather, the “best states could do was to survive wars” (Centeno 1997: 1598). These dynamics are currently playing out in postindependence Africa. Herbst (1990) laments that African leaders might overestimate the benefits of war and underestimate the risks for their state and society. Unfortunately, the twenty-first century has given rise to warfare in Africa on a scale that Herbst feared – and with the damage to political and social institutions that he predicted. In the late twentieth century and at the dawn of the twenty-first century, warfare is concentrated in poor and middle-income countries. These wars are corroding social institutions, eroding legitimacy, and crippling developmental initiatives. With these disastrous outcomes in mind, war is seen to be development in reverse (Collier 2008; Walter 2010).

The preceding discussion centered on an era in which the state was the quintessential container. Both domestically and internationally, the ability to conquer, control, and administer space was the foundation of the state’s unrivaled power. The link between war-making and state building was manifest for the leading powers of Europe. Internationally, military force was deployed to fend off or to conquer rival states. Domestically, states relied on their inimitable military force to enforce their monopoly over the means of violence. In an era of solid modernity, maintaining boundaries – between states, between civilian and military and civilian agencies, and between the state and civil society – was of vital importance. As will be emphasized when examining the era of liquid modernity, these clear demarcations are being blurred.

**New Wars in an Era of Liquid Modernity**

Bauman is neither the only, nor is he the first to recognize sweeping changes and challenges coming with globalization. Moreover, a number of scholars (Dunne and Wheeler 1999; Sassen 1998) have raised questions about the state’s centrality and viability. Castells (1997) makes a forceful case that new information technologies undermine the autonomy and sovereignty of states. Many economic transactions are no longer physically located in one place but are instead enmeshed in a global financial and economic network (Castells 1997: 245; Held 1996: 343). Of course, states were never able to dictate to corporations – but the rapid shift toward a global, networked, and information-based economy dilutes the state’s coercive and administrative capacity to
guarantee de facto economic power. The nation-state no longer contains the economy, but the nation-state is constrained and dependent upon a global economy. States also face challenges of legitimacy and governance. Held (1995) spells out the dilemmas for polities under these circumstances. Democracy allows the enfranchised to exercise a measure of control over political decisions. However, as globalization proceeds, many economic, political, and environmental processes emerge and operate beyond a nation-state’s borders, leaving states unable to control them.

For Bauman, the most important change centers on the ability to wield power at a distance. With a global web of interconnected computers (including smart phones) and communication devices, economic transactions are executed at the speed of light. Political and military directives are issued and monitored over an integrated network as well. For Bauman, this transformation in the speed that power can be deployed has induced a social transformation: it has ushered in and is the foundation of the shift from solid to liquid modernity. In contrast to the era of solid modernity, exercising power no longer requires ongoing engagement, supervision, and control of territory and the people residing therein. “The prime technique of power is now escape, slippage, elision and avoidance, the effective rejection of any territorial confinement with its cumbersome corollaries of order-building, order-maintenance and the responsibility for the consequences of it all as well as the necessity to bear these costs” (Bauman 2000: 11). Military power cannot be deployed instantaneously, but speed and mobility are of decisively greater importance. “The game of domination in the era of liquid modernity is not played between the ‘bigger’ and the ‘smaller’, but between the quicker and the slower. Those who are able to accelerate beyond the catching power of their opponents rule” (Bauman 2000: 188).

“Blows delivered by stealthy fighter planes and ‘smart’ self-guided and target-seeking missiles – delivered by surprise, coming from nowhere and immediately vanishing from sight – replaced the territorial advances of the infantry troops and the effort to dispossess the enemy of its territory – to take over the land owned, controlled and administered by the enemy” (Bauman 2000: 11). In addition to avoiding responsibility to administer conquered territory, the risks and the horrors of war are transferred from the affluent and powerful onto the least powerful people and places (Shaw 2002, 2005). Hooks and Smith (2012) have extended this reasoning to address environmental degradation and inequality. Just as entire societies (noncombatants and armed forces alike) in the Global South are systematically exposed to injury and death during war, these same peoples and societies are confronting severe environmental trauma and risks during and after hostilities. For the citizens and rulers of the Global North, the action is far away, with the exception of measures taken against terrorists at home, which are used to justify killing abroad. But ferocity has been exported to its proxies... Westerners shudder at the thought of slavery, torture, dueling, rape, and extreme forms
of cruel punishment inflicted on human bodies. They shudder at body-on-body ferocity—but not when it is exported or replaced by callous, long-range killing. (Mann 2018: 54)

In this context, the organizational forms and the means of supporting armed forces have changed decisively, especially in the Global South: “a multiplicity of types of fighting units both public and private, state and non-state, or some kind of mixture” (Kaldor 1999: 92). These include guerrilla armies, heavily armed drug cartels, paramilitary forces, and terrorist organizations. Whereas a well-institutionalized state can rely on taxation to sustain a robust military force, informal military organizations raise revenues through a range of criminal activities (Kaldor 2012). Military organizations maintain predatory relations with direct producers, resulting in unsustainable and damaging environmental practices. Collier (2008) offers a harsh and pessimistic assessment of irregular military organizations relying on coercion to secure the resources needed to support a war effort. He makes the case that emancipatory rhetoric too often obscures kleptocratic realities, giving rise to a cycle of violence and destruction of institutions and resources needed for development.

In the twenty-first century, intrastate and interstate wars are concentrated in the Global South, often rooted in tensions and dynamics internal to these societies. As Wimmer (2013) documents, nationalism has played and continues to play a prominent role in the spiral toward war. The establishment of a state that rules in the name of one ethnic or religious group all but ensures heightened nationalist identity and resentment among excluded groups, making challenges to this state more likely. Developing stable political arrangements to accommodate multiple ethnic and religious groups has presented and continues to present daunting challenges. As colonial boundaries were drawn arbitrarily relative to ethnic groupings, the now independent states in the Global South are often home to a wide range of nations, ethnicities, and religions. These cleavages sustain internal fault lines that prove difficult to manage. These tensions become still more difficult to reconcile in the context of regional wars, especially if coethnics in neighboring nation-states become activated.

In many cases—most cases in Mann’s (2018) view—the affluent nations of the Global North directly contribute to violence in the Global South. Many civil wars in the world’s poorest nations are proxy wars supported by distant and affluent nations insulated from ongoing carnage. In other instances, the role played by rich and powerful nations is indirect. For instance, in Latin America, the United States has pursued a militarized war on drugs—a war that amplified and shifted the risk of violence to nations producing drugs. Through militarized interdiction efforts and eradication of coca and marijuana plants, the United States destabilizes villages, forces residents to migrate, and heightens the risk of violence throughout the region (Parenti 2011; Smith, Hooks, and Lengefeld 2014). Environmental sociologists (Downey 2015; Downey, Bonds, and Clark 2010; Gedicks 2001, 2003, 2014) have documented the extra-constitutional violence perpetrated by multinational corporations extracting resources in the
Global South. And, they document the complicity of leading military powers in legitimating and perpetuating this violence.

In his provocative and optimistic book, *The Better Angels of Our Nature: Why Violence Has Declined*, Pinker (2011) examines trends over time and across societies and concludes that there are fewer murders, assaults, and rapes internal to societies; and the risks of warfare have declined as well. Pinker reminds us of past violence. From Paleolithic evidence to written accounts of earlier civilizations, Pinker asserts that there were remarkably high levels of violence (interpersonal and intersocietal). Mann (2018) challenges these claims arguing that Pinker accepts the highest (and sometimes preposterous) estimates from earlier periods while understating casualties in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Mann concludes that there is very little evidence that wars have declined, but there is considerable evidence that the form of warfare has changed; there is a sharp divide in exposure to and experience of war and violence. To the extent there has been a decline in violence, this has not played out uniformly across nations. Instead, residents of affluent nations tend to be insulated from domestic violence and war, while residents of the world’s poorest nations face disproportionate exposure (Hooks 2016; Collier 2008). Worse still, civilians are killed and injured at a much higher rate than soldiers (Rhodes 1988). In the twenty-first century, the world’s leading military powers have refined technologies for transport, logistics, and communications to support the deployment of significant military forces at great distances and to inflict devastating damage at a distance.

Table 35.1 details three countries – Afghanistan, Iraq, and Pakistan – that have been the focus of the “war on terror” that the United States has waged since the September 2001 terrorist attacks. In each case, “National Military and Police” (109,154) have endured heavy casualties as have “Opposition Fighters” (109,396–114,471). Foreign troops (“US Military,” “US Contractors,” and “Other Allied Troops”) suffered far fewer casualties (approximately 16,235 across the three countries). In Pakistan, no US or allied soldiers have died. Instead, US interventions have come in the form of missile and drone strikes (see below). Civilians – especially Iraqi civilians – have paid the heaviest cost for these sustained wars. In each case, civilian deaths far outstrip casualties experienced by US and allied troops. Moreover, as this estimate is focused on direct war deaths only, it only begins to capture the human misery endured by civilians. Indirect deaths refer to the loss of life that results from lack of access to water, food, health care, and other necessities. Were indirect deaths included, the number of civilian deaths would be higher still (Crawford 2018: 2). Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iraq are not the only majority Muslim nations experiencing devastating warfare. As in Pakistan, in Yemen the United States has few (if any) troops on the ground, but it has launched hundreds of drones. The Syrian Civil War is on track to be the bloodiest war in the region (I Am Syria 2018; Syrian Observatory for Human Rights 2018).
While among the more vicious, these Middle Eastern wars are not the only wars of the early twenty-first century. The multifaceted war(s) in central Africa and the drug-fueled wars and indiscriminate violence in the Andean region and in Mexico are bloody and ongoing. The wars in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iraq are highlighted here because they shed light on several of the distinctive and troubling dimensions of warfare in the era of liquid modernity. First, the United States pursued wars in these three nations in response to terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 that resulted in the deaths of approximately 3,000 people. The United States and its allies pursued war in these three countries to punish the perpetrators of the September 11 attacks and to prevent future attacks. In callous fashion, in response to 3,000 deaths caused by a terrorist attack, the United States pursued a military response that contributed (directly and indirectly) to the deaths of more than one million people in distant lands. Second, a wide range of military organizations participate in these wars, and the dividing line between formal military organizations and criminal enterprises is quite blurry (Kaldor 2012). Raising revenues through predatory (and often illegal) economic activities is intimately tied to military prowess (opium production and sale for the Taliban in Afghanistan and oil revenue for the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant in Syria and Iraq). Third, the United States and allies are not trying to conquer and control these countries. They are intervening to alter the balance of power, while taking minimal responsibility
for governance of these war-torn lands. Among the fighting forces, the United States and its allies suffered the lowest level of casualties, while national polices and military forces and opposition forces suffered significantly higher losses. Given the reliance on airstrikes (where possible) and low levels of ground troops deployed, this is unsurprising and entirely consistent with the projection of power from great distances. Civilians have paid a heavy price (see Airwars.org).

Finally, with Pakistan offering the clearest example (see Table 35.1), future wars may be even more lopsided. In Pakistan, the United States has not deployed troops. It has, however, launched missile and drone attacks targeting suspected terrorists and those opposing the Afghanistan government. In these attacks, US soldiers launching and controlling the drones face no exposure to hostile fire, while residents of Pakistan (including noncombatants) live with the ongoing threat of an attack at any moment. The Bush administration deployed drones in the immediate aftermath of the September 2001 attacks, and reliance on drones accelerated in the remaining years of the Bush presidency. “The US drone war massively expanded under President Barack Obama. Responding to evolving militant threats and the greater availability of remote piloting technology, Obama ordered ten times more counter-terror strikes than his predecessor George W. Bush over the course of his term” (Purkiss and Serle 2017). And, the number of countries also expanded to include Pakistan, Yemen, Libya, Somalia, Iraq, and Syria. While drones have been deployed in support of combat operations in Iraq and Syria, many (most) drone strikes have not been linked to combat; they have been launched to kill suspected terrorists and opposition fighters. Summary executions of detainees violate international law. Calhoun (2015) extends this reasoning to the use of drones, that is, using drones to kill suspected enemies (without trial) is a clear violation of international law, and this violation is aggravated by the collateral damage to associates and civilians in proximity to those targeted by drones. Calhoun’s criticisms were leveled at the Obama administration, despite its efforts to provide some transparency and continued expression of concern for human rights. President Trump and his administration have loudly rejected human rights constraints while boasting of the US’s expansive drone capabilities. Unsurprisingly, the Trump administration has displayed still greater reliance on drones, a still lower regard for human rights, and a still higher tolerance of civilian casualties (Hume 2017; Newton 2018; Tayler 2017).2

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2 In the twenty-first century, drones and other forms of automated warfare may well take center stage, a development consistent with Bauman’s understanding of liquid modernity. The introduction of drones, robots, and other automated weapon systems will not only amplify the callousness of warfare, it will likely induce a qualitative change in the social organization of warfare. For preliminary assessments, observations, and speculation, see Calhoun (2015), Gregory (2011a, 2011b), and Tarrow 2018.
Just as the First World War brought to an end a century of relative peace among European powers, the absence of all-out war among and between the world’s leading military powers in recent decades does not guarantee that leading military powers will be insulated from future wars (Mann 2018). Should leading military powers wage all-out war in the twenty-first century – assuming (unrealistically and optimistically) that only conventional explosives are used – the damage to urban infrastructure will be extensive and civilian deaths would be horrific. If weapons of mass destruction (nuclear, chemical, or biological) are used, the consequences would be catastrophic for the belligerents and for the entire planet.

FROM SUBJECTS TO CITIZENS TO SUBJECTS AGAIN

Military power rests on a concentrated and violent display of force; it rests, first and foremost, on coercion, not consent. In the wake of military defeat, residents lose their prewar political membership; they become subjects of a victorious power. Nevertheless, over the course of centuries and for the European cases that have received extended coverage in political sociology, consent gradually replaced coercion. Just as a case can be made that war-making contributed to state building in Europe, it can also be argued that war-making contributed to the institutionalization and enrichment of citizenship. For most of the modern era – especially when modernity suggested solidity and unilinear progress – the ascent of states and their military institutions followed a well-trodden path – a path that political sociology has examined critically.

From Subjects to Citizens in an Era of Solid Modernity

States established a monopoly of violence in the territory they controlled, and under the Westphalian international order, states acknowledged the sovereignty of one another. Over the course of centuries, a professionalized military increasingly set apart from society responded to international threats. Military force was deployed internally to establish the monopoly of violence and to suppress revolution. But, in a well-institutionalized and legitimate state, overt deployment of military force at home was rare.

Despite – not because of – the intentions of political and military leaders, war-making contributed to an expanded social contract in Europe. For standing armies and during times of military mobilization, states focused on upgrading the skills of soldiers in arms. But these investments and concerns were prominent in peacetime as well. War-making induced states to contribute to human capital formation, education, and public health. Among the leading belligerent nations of the First and Second World Wars, the state consumed a significant share of all social resources and conscripted a large portion of the male population. In the wake of these wars, citizens demanded and (often) received an expanded set of rights. After the First World War, the electoral
franchise was extended to the working class and/or to women across many countries of North America, Europe, Australia, and New Zealand. The years immediately following the Second World War became known as the “golden era” for the establishment of the welfare state (Huber and Stephens 2001; Janoski 1998). It is true that the horrors of these wars and the broad mobilization for them fueled calls for an expanded and more inclusive understanding of citizenship (Huber and Stephens 2001). But militarism and warfare did not guarantee the adoption of an enriched social contract. Rather, these policies were made possible by the displacement of militarism. In the post–Second World War years, Western European nations spent relatively less on defense, and civilian (not military) leaders controlled the state.

While states and nation-states were rare circa 1500 (empires were far more influential), nation-states were common by the twentieth century. In the wake of Asian and African decolonization after the Second World War, nation-states were ubiquitous. It was nearly impossible for social actors (or political sociologists) to conceive of an alternative polity (Meyer et al. 1997). A world society founded on the carving up of territory became institutionalized. States became the principal actors in defining the rights of individuals (as citizens) and the guarantors of these rights. In world society, the global understanding and recognition of sovereignty dictated that states would be granted considerable autonomy in defining and managing rights. Through treaties, global cultural linkages, and diffusion, global norms for human rights emerged, albeit with weak and contested enforcement mechanisms. With the profound flaws, contradictions, inconsistencies, and hypocrisies acknowledged, the path to improve the human condition seemed clear in an era of solid modernity – and this path went through states. With each state assigned primary responsibility to acknowledge and guarantee human, social, political, economic, and civil rights of “its” citizens, world society would gradually push for enhanced rights for all citizens. The US story is told in these terms. Although delayed by centuries and contested at every step, citizenship rights have been extended to women, African Americans, people of color, and Native Americans.

Founded in the wake of the Second World War and its many atrocities, one of the first agreements passed by the United Nations was the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948). There is much to criticize about the halting and ineffective interventions in support of human rights. Large and powerful nation-states have jealously protected their sovereignty – and have resisted the imposition of a supranational definition of human rights. Still, even if the dream of human rights guarantees remains elusive, states are now operating in a very different environment. At a discursive level, even the world’s major powers are under greater scrutiny and do feel some pressure to comply with international norms of human rights. The discursive context has been transformed by the presence and action of the transnational human rights community (including the UN Commission on Human Rights and a host of nongovernmental organizations), the ubiquity of televised news coverage, and the ability of
endangered populations to document human rights abuses in real time over the
Internet (Castells 1997; Meyer et al. 1997).

As summarized in the preceding paragraphs, there is ongoing debate as to if
and how war-making directly contributed to the emergence of broad and
inclusive citizenship (with an expanding bundle of social, economic, and
political rights). However, it is beyond dispute that war-making played a
direct role in creating “subjects” around the globe. People do not volunteer to
“join” an empire. They are coerced into becoming subjects, often in the wake of
a war. As Tilly (1990) observed, circa 1500 – at the dawn of the modern era –
nation-states were relatively rare and decidedly unimportant on the world stage.
Empires were far more important both in terms of geopolitics and the lives of
individual people. The subjects of empires possess few rights, but empires
governed loosely, they rarely “penetrated” into the day-to-day lives of citizens
and local communities (Mann 2012). The wars and geopolitical rivalries among
the Great Powers of Europe played out across the globe. With the carving up of
Africa in the nineteenth century, nearly the entire globe was divided into
expansive empires or under the control of Great Powers. Thus, the Great
Powers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were not self-contained
nation-states. They were nation-states with extensive colonial holdings. The
expanded social contract negotiated with citizens at home did not alter the
reality that colonial subjects had few rights and limited leverage to bargain for
them.

For the citizens of Great Powers, the era of solid modernity suggests a
promising narrative, one in which military power recedes from view in
domestic affairs. Instead, as states penetrate “their” societies to provide a
range of infrastructural and social services, agencies providing for economic
and infrastructural management, public health, education, and social welfare
take on increasingly prominent and visible roles. For subjects (the vast majority
of humanity), however, military force and coercion never receded from view.
The United States offers an example. At its inception, the United States
foreshadowed the future – a world dominated by nation-states. The founding
documents articulated a conception of nation-state and citizens, laying out and
justifying a set of “inalienable” rights enjoyed by citizens. These founding
documents also identified those excluded from citizenship (Binder 2017).
Although exposed to the violence of war – and often targeted by armies
(Enloe 1990) – women could not be soldiers. Women and children enjoyed
limited rights – derivative of male family members. Only in the twentieth
century did women secure the right to vote.

Even as the United States committed itself to citizenship (albeit limited and
flawed), these same founding documents defined other individuals as subjects.
Slavery was enshrined in the same documents that proclaimed that all (people)
are created equal. The fate of slaves was delegated to the white citizens who
owned them. For the enslaved subjects of the American state, wars, militarism,
and coercion were pivotal and ubiquitous. Most slaves were abducted by
heavily militarized African empires and sold (directly or indirectly) to European and North American slavers. Slave owners were granted wide discretion to control, punish, and coerce. Slave owners exercised this discretion forcefully and cruelly. When individual slaves escaped and when slaves collectively resisted, the full might of US military and police forces was deployed to subdue and exact retribution. Modernity offered no gradual improvement, there was no gradual enhancement of the “social contract” with slaves. Rather, slaves became citizens in the course of a civil war that pitted the dominant class of the North against the dominant class of the South (Moore 1966). Long after slavery ended, the majority of African-American citizens enjoyed a compromised set of rights, and they were tied to and trapped in the nondemocratic Jim Crow states. Only in the wake of the Civil Rights reforms of the 1960s did the citizenship enshrined in the nation’s founding document apply to the descendants of slaves.

Nor were indigenous people citizens. “Indians” are mentioned several times in the US Constitution. But they were not among the citizens who were created equal with inalienable rights. Rather, they were subjects/citizens of Indian tribes. At the time of the nation’s founding, tribes and alliances of tribes were formidable relative to the limited military capacity of the newly formed United States. Still the United States violated treaties with impunity. The forced relocation of the Cherokee (and other eastern tribes) was in direct violation of a treaty between the United States and the Cherokee nation. Reflecting the pain and hardship, this relocation became known as the Trail of Tears. Using military force and pursuing a policy that would be defined as ethnic cleansing in the twentieth century, this painful trek was imposed on most eastern tribes. Indigenous people who survived forced relocation from the East and the American Indian tribes of the West confronted a potent, aggressive, and expanding United States. In the wake of military defeat, tribes were forced to accept treaties with onerous terms. And, the United States frequently violated the terms of these treaties. Despite the shrinking resources and power at the command of tribes, the United States continued to maintain that individual American Indians were not citizens; their tribe was responsible for their well-being.

For citizens of institutionalized nation-states, the state’s ability to “penetrate” society was coupled with an expanding bundle of rights. For the indigenous peoples of North America (and for the indigenous peoples of Alaska and Hawaii), modernity did not see militarism and coercion recede, nor did it bring a steadily expanding bundle of rights (Chomsky 1993; Steinman 2011). Instead, modernity fueled the waxing of United States military power and the devastation of American Indian societies. At the dawn of the twentieth century, the Native American population reached its nadir (due to war, disease, and poverty), and cultural genocide intensified. The pretense of tribal sovereignty and governance eroded. American Indians were subjects. Native children were kidnapped and forced to attend boarding schools. Indigenous languages,
religions, and civic traditions were violently suppressed. Foreshadowing South Africa’s Apartheid – and reflecting their status as subject, not citizens – American Indians needed official approval (a pass) to leave their reservation and traverse the United States (Binder 2017). For the indigenous people of North America, citizenship was only granted grudgingly and haltingly over the course of the twentieth century. Political sociology (and sociology more generally) is only beginning to consider the manner in which colonialism and empires were woven into nation-states and the differences between citizens and subjects. And, with the larger discipline, political sociology is only beginning to examine the manner in which the discipline’s founding theories incorporated colonialist assumptions (Connell 1997; Steinmetz 2014).

Mann (1993) examined the “dark side of democracy.” A democratic nation-state guaranteed its “people” a bundle of rights and processes to protect them. But simply living in the domain controlled by a state did not guarantee that an individual was included among the nation-state’s “people.” In the twentieth century, genocidal policies were deliberately pursued by several states, including (but not limited to) Turkey, Germany, Rwanda, and Cambodia (Falk 1999; Mann 1993). Bauman (2001) provides evidence that the Holocaust was the manifestation of modernity and formal rationality – it was a manifestation of modern Germany, not an aberration. In the same vein, Hooks and Mosher (2005) argue that the abuses at Abu Ghraib and extensive human rights abuses (including torture) perpetrated by US personnel were not isolated aberrations; they stem from a rationalized system that had been put in place over the course of decades. Genocides, politicides, and human rights abuses are not anachronisms of a barbaric past: they are manifestations of modernity. Having penetrated deeply into society, modern states are well equipped to enumerate, isolate, slaughter, and torture citizens and subjects under their control.

From Citizens to Subjects in an Era of Liquid Modernity

In the early twenty-first century – in an era of liquid modernity – subjects are once again taking center stage. People are on the move – with war (especially “new wars”), violence, and climate change playing prominent roles in setting this migration in motion. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (hereafter UNHCR) monitors “persons of concern,” including refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced persons, returned refugees, stateless persons, and others who have insecure citizenship rights. “Persons of concern” have grown precipitously in the twenty-first century. From 1993 to 2003, there were approximately 20 million persons of concern (see Figure 35.1a), but this number more than tripled by 2017. As of 2018, there were more than 71 million persons of concern. The rate of growth is not only striking but the total now represents a significant share of the world’s population. If this were the population of a country, it would rank twentieth
in the world (United Nations 2017: 29). Disaggregating this total (Figure 35.1b) reveals that the number of internally displaced persons has grown more than eightfold from 2003 to 2018 (4.6 million and 39.1 million, respectively). Whereas there was a modest increase from 2003 to 2013, the number of
refugees and asylum seekers and refugees nearly doubled between 2013 (12.9 million) and 2018 (22.9 million).

The “new wars” of the twenty-first century are making life intolerable for people caught in the crossfire. “Over two-thirds of the world’s refugees originated from just five countries: Syria, Afghanistan, South Sudan, Myanmar and Somalia” (UNHCR 2017: 15). With the exception of Myanmar, each of these countries has experienced a prolonged and multifaceted war. The next six countries have been directly impacted by the prolonged wars in eastern (Somalia, Sudan, and Eritrea) and central Africa (Democratic Republic of the Congo, Central African Republic, and Burundi), bringing the cumulative share of the world’s refugees to 82 percent (UNHCR 2017: 15). When examining internal displacement, the UNHCR (2017: 33) places emphasis on “armed conflict, generalized violence, or human rights violations.” Two countries ravaged by multisided civil wars – Colombia (7.7 million) and Syria (6.3 million) – account for 36 percent of all displaced persons, adding the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Iraq, the top four war-torn countries account for more than half (54 percent) of all internally displaced persons (UNCHR 2017: 33–34). In the case of refugees, people are often fleeing sustained, chaotic, and vicious violence in their countries of origin. In so doing, they are forfeiting citizenship rights, becoming subjects in refugee camps, and (too often) unwanted migrants in other nations. While internally displaced persons nominally retain citizenship rights, most are caught in the lawless crossfire of multisided conflict. In fleeing for safety, they forfeit their means of livelihood and the secure political enfranchisement of home villages and communities.

There have been assertions that migration contributes to conflict and war, implying that migrants take up arms to claim resources or otherwise disrupt institutions needed for stable governance. This line of argument received a great deal of attention in debates over climate change. Reports prepared by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in the early 2000s linked migration spurred by climate change to national security threats. Reflecting these concerns, the “United Kingdom and Germany … pushed for climate change to be recognized as a security issue by the UN Security Council and the Council … held three debates on the issue” (Gleditsch and Nordas 2014: 82). However, more recent research and more recent reports prepared by the IPCC cast doubt on the purported “climate change-conflict link” (Gleditsch and Nordás 2014: 89; see also Selby et al. 2017; Seter 2016; Raleigh, Jordan, and Salehyan 2008). Migrants displaced by climate change have few resources, are not trained in combat, and include large numbers of noncombatants. “Environmental degradation, insofar as it causes displacement of people, is more likely to generate exploitation rather than acute conflict. Those who are victimized by environmental change are also weak and numerically few” (Surhke in Raleigh et al. 2008: 37). It is clear that climate change will contribute to forced migration on a vast scale (see Dunlap and Brulle 2015).
and this flow of migrants will create humanitarian crises; but there is little evidence that these migrants have or will pose a national security threat.

The reemergence of subjects raises questions and concerns about human rights, interrogation, and abuse. Whereas citizens are afforded protections from egregious abuse at the hands of the state – at least on paper – subjects enjoy only nominal protections. Especially in the context of multifaceted wars, civilians are often caught in a merciless crossfire, forced to flee, forcibly recruited to serve in armed forces, and bought and sold as unfree workers in domestic, sex trade, and other economic activities supporting the war effort. Creative legalisms are used to skirt international protections. While international treaties afford some protection to soldiers of formal military organizations and to civilians caught in the crossfire, the United States made the case that “unlawful combatants” are not prisoners of war as defined by the Geneva Convention. Following this controversial and dubious reasoning, the United States justified a range of human rights violations in the early 2000s, including torture, disappearances, and extended incarceration without trial (Human Rights Watch 2004: 4–5; see also Hooks and Mosher 2005). President Trump has loudly and infamously proclaimed his support of torture and related violations of human rights accords.

Buduburam is a refugee camp, located in Ghana, built to house and protect refugees from Liberia’s civil war (Holzer 2015). While the goals for the camp were unambiguously humanitarian, this did not change the reality that the residents of the camp were subjects – not citizens. When women residing at the camp demanded changes in living conditions and a voice in running the camp, they met sustained resistance. They were guests (subjects, not citizens); they did not have a “right” to exercise control over their living conditions. Buduburam (Holzer 2015) is a best case scenario – a camp committed to welcoming and protecting refugees. Elsewhere, refugees have confronted a harsh welcome. In the 2010s, Hungary (United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights 2015) and the United States (Amnesty International 2018) provide egregious examples, defining migrants (including asylum seekers, legal migrants, and undocumented migrants) as national security threats is all too common. Military forces have been deployed to impede entry into the country and to manage migrants who have gained entry. In the United States, the state-sanctioned kidnapping of children – separating them from their parents – is condemned as the antithesis of everything the country stands for. Sadly, with the treatment of Native Americans and slaves in mind, the United States has a long history of dealing with “subjects” in harsh fashion. While Hungary and the United States provide the clearest examples of authoritarian and coercive choices, the flow of people that characterizes liquid modernity is challenging aspirations of inclusivity and assimilation in the established welfare states of Europe and North America. As of 2018, these events and the dynamics that drive them are so recent and turbulent that the social sciences are grappling to come to terms with them. Sociology – especially political sociology focused on
war and militarism and sensitive to the importance of human flows and blurring boundaries – has unique insights to offer. These insights can be sharpened by cross-fertilization with other areas within sociology, including environmental sociology, migration, demography, and sociology of development to name a few.

CONCLUSION

This review of political sociology’s examination of war and militarism has drawn on Bauman’s distinction between solid modernity and liquid modernity (Bauman and Haugaard 2008). In the era of solid modernity, the image of the state as a container resonated. In an era of liquid modernity, the image of the state as a container obscures more than it reveals. Instead, the image of basin – with the emphasis on the flows – is far more helpful (Tilly 1995). Adopting Mann’s framework (1986), a robust state does not set itself apart from political, economic, military, and ideological flows beyond its direct control. Instead, the state navigates and channels them. Political sociology offered valuable insights into the role of the military and the importance of war in an era of solid modernity. The challenge is to adapt these insights to understand the changing face of war and its social consequences in the era of liquid modernity.

In the era of solid modernity, major wars were fought on the terrain of the world’s leading military and economic powers (e.g., the First and Second World Wars). Political sociology offered insights into the manner in which mobilizing for war contributed to state building and how these sacrifices spurred political mobilizations that demanded a more secure and broader social contract. Political sociology theorized and provided historical and empirical evidence that state building, more intensive domestic governance, and the expansion of enfranchisement and the broadening of citizenship rights were tied to war and the mobilization for war.

In the early twenty-first century, the social organization of war is being transformed. The affluent nations of the Global North have developed the means and displayed a fierce commitment to rely on risk transfer militarism. Affluent nations have mobilized formidable technological and scientific resources to avoid fighting wars on their home soil, and they have sharply reduced the casualties suffered by their troops. But bloody and destructive wars have been fought – and continue to rage. These wars have been concentrated in impoverished countries of the Global South; in several instances repeated rounds of war have been fought in the same country. It is not simply the case that affluent military powers have shielded their nations from the horrors of war. They have callously imposed the costs of war on weaker and impoverished countries (Mann 2018; Smith et al. 2014).

In these “new wars,” there is a blurring of the boundary between criminal and military organization – with ruling regimes becoming kleptocracies and
contending military forces exerting lawless control over civilians and economic resources (Collier 2008; Kaldor 2012). Instead of making citizenship more inclusive and broadening the rights enjoyed by citizens, the new wars of the twenty-first century have given rise to an unprecedented surge in the number of people without citizenship rights. Using UNCHR (2017) terminology – “persons of concern” – the social sciences are only beginning to come to grips with the forces generating the rapid rise and the eventual fate of persons of concern. Political sociology – alone and in concert with other social sciences and other subareas in sociology – can and should take the lead in examining these dimensions of twenty-first-century warfare.

Political sociology can and should make important contributions to our understanding of wars and their impact in an era of liquid modernity. With a focus on new wars and the disruption they cause, political sociology can highlight the new organizations and organizational forms that become involved in war, and political sociology can shed light on the people, ecosystems, and institutions that are caught in the crossfire (see Holzer 2015; Viterna 2013). Research into the most affluent nations with most professionalized and institutionalized military forces will remain important. However, a full understanding demands a shift toward the Global South where the wars of the twenty-first century are being waged. And, this will require drawing from and contributing to a range of literatures, including but not limited to development sociology (Almeida 2014, 2016; Hooks 2016; Viterna 2006, 2013), environmental sociology (Clark and Jorgenson 2012; Downey 2015; Downey et al. 2010; Dunlap and Brulle 2015; Hooks and Smith 2004; Jorgenson, Clark, and Givens 2012; Smith et al. 2014), and gender (Enloe 1990; Höhn and Moon 2010; Holzer 2015; Viterna 2006, 2013) and migration studies. Equally important, to understand the emerging causes and consequences of war, it will be important to deemphasize images of states as robust containers, and emphasize instead the flow of resources, people, information, and military force across permeable borders.

REFERENCES


3 Although not addressed in this review, globalization and the connectedness made possible by the Internet have transformed propaganda and expanded the range of cyberwarfare. Russia’s successful attack on the United States, an attack that may have altered the electoral outcome of the 2016 election, is a visible example (Lipton, Sanger, and Shane 2016). To the extent that cyber-attacks should be considered acts of war (and there is a compelling case to do so) further blurs the boundary between civilian and military, and further highlights the importance placing an emphasis on flows (instead of containers) and recognition that waging war is diffused across public and private organization (see Robinson, Jones, and Janicke 2015; Shakarian et al. 2013).


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VI

GLOBALIZATION AND NEW AND BIGGER SOURCES OF POWER AND RESISTANCE
World-systems analysis is a holistic and critical social science approach that proposes the study of social change focusing on whole systemic human interaction networks. The general theoretical approach is based on institutional materialism that is inspired by classical sociology and anthropology (Chase-Dunn and Lerro 2016). The world-system perspective emerged in the 1960s and 1970s to explicate the nature of the core–periphery hierarchy over the last five centuries. Its originators were Immanuel Wallerstein, Samir Amin, Andre Gunder Frank, and Giovanni Arrighi (Amin 1980a; Arrighi 1994; Frank 1966, 1967, 1969; Wallerstein 2011 [1974]). Wallerstein (2000: 74) says: “We take the defining characteristic of a social system to be the existence within it of a division of labor, such that the various sectors or areas are dependent upon economic exchange with others for the smooth and continuous provisioning of the needs of the area.” According to Wallerstein’s formulation, whole historical social systems are clusters of individuals, organizations, and polities that are strongly interconnected with one another. These interaction networks have not always been global (earth-wide). In the past, when transportation and communication technologies were less developed, world-systems were smaller (Wallerstein 2000: 75–76). What makes a whole system is not the amount of space it encompasses but rather the degree of interconnectedness, such that what happens in one place has considerable consequences for what happens in another place (see also Tilly 1984). When transportation and communication technologies limited long-distance interactions the consequences of events fell off with remoteness, and so whole systems were smaller. Only with the development of the capitalist world economy did the modern world-system become global. A hierarchical division of labor emerged linking the European core states with their colonial empires in Africa, Asia, Oceania, and the Americas. This global division of labor was organized as a system of fighting and alloying sovereign states in the core and
a noncore composed mostly of colonies of the core powers. Waves of
decolonization since the eighteenth century extended the system of
theoretically sovereign states to the noncore.

**ONE LOGIC OR FOUR?**

Global political sociology\(^1\) recapitulates a long-standing debate between
historians and social scientists regarding the advantages and dangers of
emphasizing either systemic structures on the one hand, versus particularity,
uniqueness, and conjunctural complexity on the other. Focusing on the global
does not resolve this debate one way or the other, but a reasonable compromise
can be made based on the recognition that some aspects of human social change
are, indeed, open-ended and conjunctural whereas other aspects are more
systemic, structural, and predictable.\(^2\)

Among the systemists there are continuous debates about the nature of
systemic logics and how they may or may not have changed over time. Realist
international relations theorists assume the existence of a timeless geopolitical
power logic in which competing states try to conquer one another or keep
themselves from being conquered. Formalist economists see a timeless logic of
competition among rational individuals to acquire valuables. Evolutionary
Marxists see transformations of systemic logics. Normatively integrated
kinship systems were transformed into systems based on institutionalized
coercion in the tributary (state-based) modes of accumulation and then into
capitalist accumulation based on the acquisition of profits from commodity
production and financial transactions. World-system analysts have argued that
the underlying logic of the modern global system combines the geopolitics of the
interstate system with the logic of capitalist accumulation (Chase-Dunn 1998:
Chapter 7).\(^3\) This formulation is based on the idea that the multipolar interstate
system and the capitalist world economy reproduce one another. The
international migration of capital prevents global state formation.
Nationalism and the system of competing states undercut political movements
that challenge the rule of capital (Chase-Dunn 1998: Chapter 7). This is the link
between geopolitics and capitalism that shows that these are a single logic of
reproduction rather than two separate logics.

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1 In global political sociology the state is understood as an organization that claims jurisdiction
over a territory. Nations are collective identities that are like ethnicities, clans, and lineages.
Nationalism refers to the sentiments and beliefs that constitute and reinforce a nation.
2 Immanuel Wallerstein’s use of the idea of “historical systems” is intended to point to the
awareness of this compromise between idiographic historicism and nomothetic generalization.
3 Ekholm and Friedman (1982) call this capital-imperialism and they contended that this became
the predominant mode of accumulation in the Bronze Age. Frank and Gills (1993) agreed and
they emphasize the continuity of this logic and deny that there was a transformation in systemic
logic that accompanied the rise of European hegemony.
Michael Mann (2016) contends that many important sociocultural developments that have shaped world history and prehistory have been conjunctural accidents that were not predictable by theories of sociocultural evolution, though he admits that some developments are best understood as evolutionary. Mann’s work on modern social change (1986, 2004) applies his Weberian schema in which four institutional realms develop somewhat separately, with occasional important interactions with one another. The four realms are economics, politics, the military, and ideology. Mann explicitly denies that there is a single modern global system and his critiques of those he calls “hyperglobalists” are often trenchant. He prefers to describe the major institutional changes occurring in his four realms separately to produce his world historical narrative. His work is a valuable structural account of modern world history despite his refusal to see a single systemic logic operating at the level of the whole world-system.

**Core–Periphery Hierarchies**

The idea that there are system-wide socially structured hierarchies in whole world-systems is a central notion for world-systems analysis. This is the main idea that implies that the political sociology of inequality must take into account structuring processes that stem from the larger system. The comparative and evolutionary version of world-systems analysis developed by Chase-Dunn and Hall (1997) makes the issue of the existence or nonexistence of a core–periphery hierarchy an empirical issue for each system based on the finding that some small-scale systems had very mild forms of core–periphery hierarchy (Chase-Dunn and Mann 1998).

The modern core is composed of many internally and externally strong states that are home to the headquarters of global firms and that have economies based on capital-intensive production using highly skilled labor. The contemporary core states are in Western Europe, North America, and include Japan. The periphery consists of states that are internally and externally weak in which production consists of agricultural and mineral raw material exports and low-productivity agriculture. The periphery is composed of former colonies in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. The semiperiphery is composed of two different kinds of states: small states with middle levels of development (e.g., South Korea, Israel, South Africa, and Taiwan), and large states that include both developed and little-developed regions (e.g., China, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Brazil, Argentina, and Russia).

The institutional basis and nature of core–periphery relations change over time, but they are always a mix of institutionalized political coercion and economic comparative advantages that undergird unequal exchange in which the core extracts resources from the noncore. Tributary empires extracted taxes and tribute from conquered territories and subaltern polities. Capitalist core states have obtained favorable terms of trade from formal colonialism and then
from semi-monopolization of products in which they have a comparative advantage, and from foreign investment and financial centrality. The neocolonial core–periphery hierarchy which has emerged following decolonization combines interstate clientelism with foreign investment and financial services to extract profits from the noncore. Technological rents and international financial institutions such as the International Monetary Fund and global banks are increasingly relied upon.

THE MODERN WORLD-SYSTEM

The modern world-system emerged in Europe and its colonies in the long sixteenth century between 1450 and 1640 CE (Wallerstein 2011). Though capitalism in many forms had existed since the Bronze Age, the modern system was the first whole network in which the capitalist mode of accumulation became predominant. The endless accumulation of capital, which is the primary principle around which capitalist accumulation is organized (Arrighi 1994), produces a world-economy that is based on exploitation, monopolization, and unequal exchange. Military, political, and cultural forms of organization are used to successfully accumulate capital in a competitive and hierarchical system. In the fifteenth century, Genoa and Portugal made an alliance based on this logic of accumulation that resulted in the emergence of the Europe-centered world-system (Arrighi 1994). The United Provinces of the Netherlands followed suit in the seventeenth century, emerging as a far-reaching capitalist nation-state that joined characteristics of earlier capitalist city-states in a federation that facilitated the invention of joint stock companies, a stock exchange, and a far-reaching colonial empire based on profit taking rather than tribute or taxation (Wallerstein 1984). A great struggle for global domination between the British and the French in the eighteenth century eventuated in the nineteenth-century hegemony of the United Kingdom of Great Britain, which was then followed, after another period of interimperial rivalry, by the twentieth-century hegemony of the United States.

According to Wallerstein, the modern world-system is different from earlier world empires such as ancient Rome and China because no single state has conquered the whole world economy and transformed into a world empire. Instead, the core has remained organized as group of competing states in which hegemons have risen and fallen but no single state has taken over the whole system. The global capitalist class expanded their trade networks in search for needed labor and raw materials, which led to the colonization of most of the rest of the world by Europeans. The modern world-system is structured as a hierarchical international division of labor that consists of three zones: the core, the semiperiphery and the periphery. Andre Gunder Frank (1966) developed the idea of “the development of underdevelopment” to explain the reproduction of the core–periphery hierarchy. The periphery provides raw materials and cheap labor for the expanding production of the
system, while at the same time it functions as a marketplace for the commodities produced in the core zone. Semi-peripheral polities sometimes reduce core–periphery antagonisms by facilitating trade but some challenge core powers militarily and/or economically. Immanuel Wallerstein (2000) contends that the semiperiphery is essential for assuring the political stability of the system. The core–periphery hierarchy is one of the most important structures of the current world-system. In the modern world-system this structure has been reproduced over centuries despite upward and downward mobility of a few national societies. The basis of power in the current system is the concentration of innovations in innovative industries and in military and organizational technologies that affect the relative power and capacities of firms and states.

STATE-CENTRISM AND CORE–PERIPHERY HIERARCHY

Core–periphery hierarchies have always been organized as class structures as well as interpolity relations. Classes have been both regionally nested within national societies and transnational. Samir Amin (1980) produced a structural analysis of global classes long before the hyperglobalists discovered transnational capitalist and working classes. The core–periphery hierarchy is not just a tripartite stack of zones that contain states. There has always been a system-wide class structure in which both national and transnational class relations were important. And world-systems have had system-wide class since the emergence of class relations in complex chiefdoms. The theorists of a global stage of capitalism have disparaged the “state-centrism” of world-systems but world-systems theorists were among the first to challenge the state-centric analysis of separate national societies as if each were on the moon. In the world-systems perspective polities (including states) are not all-encompassing and disconnected whole social systems. The state is an organization in the field of social interactions that includes other states and all the transnational interactions that cross state boundaries. Sovereignty is a legal theory about jurisdiction, not a true description of autonomous existence. State policies differ with respect to their efforts to attain autonomy, but all states in the system, including the core states, are heavily influenced by processes that are occurring in the larger system. The global class structure is intertwined with the interstate system, such that workers in the core states have a rather different relationship with capital than do workers in the noncore. And this changes over time as the class struggle interacts with core–periphery relations. The primary sectors of core workers were able to become included in the Keynesian developmental project after the Second World War but were “peripheralized” back into the precariat with the rise of the neoliberal globalization project. National and transnational class relations have been, and continue to be, important for understanding the evolution of global capitalism (Robinson 2014).
WAVES OF ECONOMIC GLOBALIZATION AND DEGLOBALIZATION

A study of the extent of economic integration based on trade (structural globalization) shows periods of economic globalization and deglobalization since the early nineteenth century (Chase-Dunn, Kawano, and Brewer 2000). The great nineteenth-century wave of economic globalization peaked in 1880 and declined to a trough in 1900 (see Figure 36.1).

There was a bumpy recovery that peaked briefly in 1920 and then another period of deglobalization that bottomed out in 1945. Since then there has been a bumpy upswing of trade integration that has continued to the present. This is the period that most studies of structural globalization see as an upward trend of connectedness. But most scholars of globalization are unaware of the earlier periods of deglobalization and what these might portend for the future. The post–Second World War upward phase may be coming to an end and we may be entering another long phase of deglobalization, but the evidence from the recent global trajectory of trade integration is mixed. There was a downswing in 2009 (the financial crisis), a recovery, then another downswing in 2015 and 2016 and then another recovery in 2017.4 The long upswing since the Second World War may yet

4 The estimate for 2018 is not yet available from the World Bank.
continue though the upward trend has been rather wobbly since 2008. If the long-term past is a clue, another phase of deglobalization will arrive sooner or later.

**THE EVOLUTION OF GLOBAL GOVERNANCE: POLITICAL GLOBALIZATION**

Although the world-system perspective emerged to comprehend the Europe-centered modern world-system since the sixteenth century CE, some scholars have expanded the theory to examine continuities with earlier periods (e.g., Frank and Gills 1993) or to compare the modern system with earlier regional systems (Chase-Dunn and Hall 1997). These have interacted with theorists of global capitalism and international relations theory in political science to produce a new political sociology of world-systems that examines the evolution of world politics in the context of political and economic globalization.

As anthropologists and world historians have long noted, the scale and complexity of political organization has increased over the long run, albeit in waves. Figure 36.2 shows the territorial sizes of the largest polities in Europe and East Asia between 1500 BCE and 2010 CE.
The recent decline in the sizes of the largest polities is due to the decolonization of the colonial empires, the demise of traditional territorial empires, and the extension of the interstate system to the noncore. But the sizes of the modern hegemons have continued to increase (from the Dutch to the British to the US hegemony) and so the long-term trend toward eventual global state formation has continued. The current decline of US hegemony indicates the emergence of a new multipolar interregnum that will likely be followed by the rise of a new hegemon or global state formation.

The new political sociology needs to comprehend the long-term trends as well as recent developments in the evolution of the global polity. The modern world-system is somewhat similar to earlier regional world-systems in that there is a cycle of the rise and fall of powerful polities. The existing system of global governance is based on a mixture of institutions that developed within formerly separate regional international systems. In the nineteenth century the European international system merged with the system that had long existed in East Asia (Arrighi, Hamashita, and Selden 2003; Hall, Kardulias, and Chase-Dunn 2011). The European Westphalian interstate system surrounded and engulfed the trade-tribute system of East Asia (Arrighi 2006). In the twentieth century the last great wave of decolonization extended the system of sovereign national states to the rest of the noncore (Figure 36.3).

Thus, the system of colonial empires that had been a major structure of global governance since the rise of the West came to an end. But the institutional means by which core countries could dominate and exploit noncore countries did not end. Colonial structures were replaced by neocolonial institutions such as financial indebtedness and foreign direct investment. This neocolonial regime

**Figure 36.3** Waves of colonization and decolonization, 1415–1995 CE
Source: Henige (1970) (number of colonies established and number of decolonizations).
was organized after the Second World War around international institutions such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and what became the World Trade Organization. But the rise and fall of hegemonies that had long been a characteristic of the European system (Arrighi 1994; Wallerstein 1984) continued as the major structural basis of global governance. The British hegemony declined and the US hegemony rose.

The rise and fall of hegemons intermittently supplies global regulation for the world-system, but the method of choosing leadership has been by means of a contest in which the winners of global wars become the hegemons. This is a form of leadership selection that humanity can no longer afford because of the development of weapons of mass destruction.

There was also a continuation of a trend that had begun with the Concert of Europe after the Napoleonic Wars – the emergence of both general and specialized international political organizations that began the formation of a world state. The League of Nations was followed by the more substantial United Nations (UN).

The long-term trends over the past two centuries have included the extension of national sovereignty to the Global South because of the decolonization movements (Figure 36.3 above), the growing size of the hegemon in the transition from the British to the US hegemony (Figure 36.4 below; Chase-Dunn et al. 2011), and the emergence of still-weak but strengthening global-level political institutions. This has been a long-term process of political globalization in which global governance is becoming more centralized and more capacious because of the increasing relative size of the hegemon and the emergence of global proto-state organizations. Of course, there have also been countermovements and periods in which the long-term trends reversed. We are in such a period now because US hegemony is in decline (Chase-Dunn et al. 2011; Wallerstein 2003) and support for the United Nations is also in decline because the US has been its main supporter.

The current period is similar in many important ways to the period just before the outbreak of the First World War. The hegemon is in decline and powerful potential challengers are emerging. In all earlier periods of this sort a world war among the contenders has settled the issue of who should be the next hegemon (Chase-Dunn and Podobnik 1995).

We shift now to speculation about the future of global governance. Humanity can no longer afford to use global war as the mechanism of leadership selection because a war among core states using weapons of mass destruction would be suicidal. Thus, the system of global governance must develop an effective mechanism for managing uneven development and interstate conflicts without resort to major wars. No current single state is large enough to replace the United States in the role of hegemon. The system is moving toward a multipolar structure in which the US hegemony is slowly declining and challengers are rising. In the past this has been a prelude to world war. What is needed to prevent violent interimperial rivalry is a structure of
global governance that can effectively resolve future conflicts without resort to violence (Chase-Dunn and Lerro 2014; Chase-Dunn et al. 2012).

But there are also several important differences between the current period and the period of decline of the British hegemony. Britain was never as economically large relative to the size of the whole world economy as the United States has been. And Britain never had such a preponderance of military power. Even at the height of British hegemony there were other core states that had significant military power. Giovanni Arrighi (2006) noted that the period of British hegemonic decline (1870–1914) moved rather quickly toward conflictive interimperial rivalry because economic competitors such as Germany and Japan could develop powerful military capabilities that were used to challenge the British. US hegemony has been different in that the United States ended up as the single superpower after the demise of the Soviet Union. Some economic challengers (Japan and Germany) cannot easily play the military card because they are stuck with the consequences of having lost the last world war. This, and the immense size of the US economy, will probably slow the process of hegemonic decline down compared to the rate of the British decline.

And the decline of Britain took place during the transition from the coal energy regime to the oil energy regime (Podobnik 2006), whereas US decline is occurring as the world may be approaching its peak production of fossil fuels and when global climate change is threatening to disrupt the world-system. These developments parallel, to some extent, what happened a century ago, but the likelihood of another “Age of Extremes” (Hobsbawm 1994) or a Malthusian correction such as what occurred in the first half of the twentieth century could be exacerbated by some new twists. The number of people on earth was only 1.65 billion when the twentieth century began, whereas at the beginning of the twenty-first century there were 6 billion. Moreover, fossil fuels were becoming less expensive as oil was replacing coal as the major source of energy. It was this use of inexpensive, but nonrenewable, fossil energy that made the geometric expansion and industrialization of humanity possible.

Now we are facing global warming as a consequence of the spread and rapid expansion of industrial production and energy-intensive consumption. Energy prices have temporarily come down because of fracking and overproduction by countries that are dependent on oil exports, but the low-hanging “ancient sunlight” in coal and oil has already been picked. “Peak oil” is probably approaching in the coming decade. “Clean coal” and controllable nuclear fusion remain dreams. The cost of energy will probably go up no matter how much is invested in new kinds of energy production. None of the existing alternative technologies offer low-cost energy of the kind that made the huge expansion possible. Many believe that overshoot has already occurred in terms of how many humans are alive, and how much energy is being used by some of them, especially those in the core. Adjusting to rising energy costs and dealing with the environmental degradation caused by industrial society will be difficult, and the longer it takes the harder it will become. Ecological problems are not new, but this
time they are on a global scale. Peak oil and rising costs of other resources are likely to cause more resource wars that exacerbate the problems of global governance. The war in Iraq that began in 2003 was both an instance of imperial overreach and a resource war because the US neoconservatives thought that they could prolong US hegemony by controlling the global oil supply. The Paris Agreement on greenhouse gas emissions reached in December of 2015 was good news, but compliance will be difficult, and withdrawal by the US Trump administration slows down the coordinated effort to reduce global warming.

And the British government still had a colonial empire that it could tax in order to support its military position, whereas the shift from colonialism to clientelism (Go 2011) means that the US can only legally tax its own citizens to support its global military preponderance. This may be seen progress, but it is also a factor that is eventually likely to destabilize the structure of global military power.

Political globalization and the rise and fall of hegemons have been driven, in part, by a series of world revolutions – periods in which social movements, rebellions, and revolutions within countries – have clustered in time. We have studied the emergence of the New Global Left (Chase-Dunn et al. 2007 and www.irows.ucr.edu/research/tsmstudy.htm) and now are giving attention to the nature of the New Global Right (Chase-Dunn and Dudley 2018). The world revolution of 1917 included the Russian, Mexican, and Chinese revolutions and the rise of organized social movements based on the labor movement and anti-imperialism. During the 1920s and the 1930s – the “age of extremes” – fascist movements emerged in many countries.

![Figure 36.4 Shares of world GDP (PPP), 1820–2006 CE](image_url)

Source: Chase-Dunn et al. 2011.
The New Global Right, like the New Global Left, is a complex conglomeration of movements. Radical Islam harkens back to a mythical golden age of God-given law in reaction to the perceived decadence of capitalist modernity. Neoconservatives advocate the use of US military superiority to guarantee continued access to inexpensive oil. Populist nationalists reject the universalism of neoliberalism and the multiculturalism of the global justice movement. They hark back to religious, racial, and national golden ages and seek protection from immigrants and the poor of the Global South. Politicians mobilize support from those who have not benefitted from neoliberal capitalist globalization, often using nationalist or racial imagery. The New Global Right is both a response to neoliberal capitalist globalization and to the New Global Left. And the New Global Left is increasingly responding to what many perceive to be the rise of twenty-first-century fascism. The interesting world historical question is how the New Global Right is similar to and different from the Global Right that emerged out of the World Revolution of 1917, in the 1920s, and 1930s. Fascism (nationalism on steroids) was a reaction to the crisis of global capitalism that occurred in the first half of the twentieth century. Strong fascist parties and regimes emerged in several core and noncore countries (Goldfrank 1978), and there were even efforts to organize a international fascist movement (Laqueur and Mosse 1966). Fascist movements were driven in part by the threats posed by socialists, communists, and anarchists. And, in turn, the popular fronts and united fronts that emerged on the left in the 1930s were partly a response to the threats posed by fascism. The New Global Right is mainly populist nationalism now, but if another, deeper, global economic, and political crisis emerges it could morph into true fascism.

FORMAL NETWORK STUDIES

The hierarchical structure of the world-system and its systemic boundaries can be empirically studied using formal (quantitative) social network methods. The method of formal network analysis is appropriate because world-systems analysis is based on interrelations among sets of actors in which both direct and indirect connections are important. Perceiving the world-system as a global network of local and transnational interactions among individuals, organizations, states, and international organizations (Wilkinson 1987, 1991) warrants the application of network methods to describe the system and to test hypotheses. In this section, we review some of the research that has used formal network analyses to study the modern world-system.

The world-system functions as a network of entities that are involved in a variety of different kinds of interactions. Social network science is a relatively young approach (Granovetter 1973; Wellman 1983). The application to world-system research dates back to David Snyder and Ed Kick’s (1979) study of world-system position and the economic growth of nation-states. The relational understanding of economic growth among nations has been
central in the theories of the founding fathers of political economy (see Smith 1977 [1776]). Ricardo’s principle of comparative advantage was premised on a concept of dyadic relations among pairs of nations (2001 [1817]). As such, it postulated that a nation will draw maximum benefit if it exchanges goods and services produced at a lower cost by another nation. In this dyadic exchange, the greatest goods will be optimized for the greatest number of people. The classical economists such as Smith and Ricardo did not contextualize exchanges between dyads of nations when developing this formulation. Dyadic exchanges occur within a complex structure of indirect connections. These complex structures of direct and indirect connections are the reality behind hierarchical core–periphery relations. A nation’s position in this global hierarchy has consequences for its economic development but also its political forms and social welfare outcomes, which are usually disadvantageous in the noncore. These structural consequences can be better captured by treating international and transnational relations as networks of direct and indirect ties.

A social network refers to connections among a set of entities, which can be individuals, nation-states, firms, or other types of actors (Wasserman and Faust 1994). World-systems analysis emphasizes the hierarchical positionality of global relations without offering ways to operationalize these concepts (Snyder and Kick 1979). Social network analysis (SNA) offers a way of empirically testing hypotheses about the consequences of positionality by means of its mathematical algorithms for deriving characteristics of whole networks and of network nodes from information about all the direct and indirect connections among nodes. SNA provides a mechanism to explain how entities in social systems are connected to each other directly as well as how the disparate parts of the network can affect each other through indirect linkages (Borgatti et al. 2013). Because of these advantages SNA has been used by a growing number of researchers for studying the world-system (Lloyd, Mahutga, and de Leeuw 2009).

The world-system studies applying SNA methods use network algorithms to assign countries and cities to their proper positions such as in the core, the periphery, and the semiperiphery. These methods portray the boundaries between these structural positions with a great accuracy and indicate whether or not these conceptual categories are empirically separate from one another (Arrighi and Drangel 1986) or are just labels for different positions on a continuous hierarchy (Chase-Dunn 1998: Chapter 10). The core–periphery structure in the SNA approach has its own unique concept. According to Borgatti and Everett (1999), the network core–periphery model is based on the notion that the core nodes are connected to other core nodes in a maximal sense and they are only loosely connected to the periphery nodes. An SNA core–periphery structure reveals patterns of interaction among entities constituting the core and periphery and the extent to which advantages are accrued to the core by these connections.
The SNA studies of the world-system test the notion of structural hierarchy but they also assess the unequal exchange relations between the zones and the extent to which there is mobility between zones. The most common method used is to identify roles and positions of each entity in a network of relations (Borgatti et al. 2013; Wasserman and Faust 1994). This approach proceeds from a relation or set of relations to predict the degree of similarity among nodes based on “equivalence criteria” assigning entities to equivalent groups or blocks (Lloyd et al. 2009).

World-system studies using SNA employ two different approaches for identifying the role and position of a nation-state: structural equivalence and regular equivalence (structural isomorphism). These algorithms assume that a node’s position in a set of relations should be defined by its connections with other nodes (Borgatti and Everett 1992). Structural equivalence is a very strict criterion, as it requires structurally equivalent nodes to have identical relationships with other nodes. In terms of countries, two nations would be structurally equivalent with one another if they have exactly the same trading partners. This approach is not useful for assessing the structure of the global system because the requirement of exact structural equivalence is almost never met (Smith and White 1992). Because of this SNA studies of the world-system usually use regular equivalence. In this case the US and Belgium occupy the same position in the world economy even though they do not necessarily trade with the exactly the same nations.

A strict structural equivalence criterion was first used in Snyder and Kick’s (1979) classical block-model study, which analyzed the world-system structure using both economic and noneconomic ties – trade flows, diplomatic relations, military interventions, and conjoint treaty membership – among nations spanning the 1960–1967 period to examine the structural positions of the whole system. They found that the structural core–periphery relationship was more evident in trade relations. Snyder and Kick discovered a more refined world-system structure in which there were three partitions within the semiperiphery and six within the periphery. They used their SNA-derived position measures in a cross-national regression to examine differences in rates of economic growth. Their OLS regression analysis showed that the differential economic growth among nations was attributable to their position in the world-system such that the core tended to grow more than the lower tiers. This contradicted the notion that linkages to the developed nations bring modernization and development. A more recent study using structural equivalence criterion (Kick and Davis 2001) confirms that the core primarily consists of Western industrial nations.

Studies employing regular equivalence (Nemeth and Smith 1985; Smith and White 1992) also analyze the core–semiperiphery/periphery structure and the extent to which there is mobility across these categories. Smith and White (1992) examined the trade data for industrially sophisticated commodities at three different time points: 1965, 1970, 1980. Their block model of regular
equivalence yielded five different world zones: core, strong semiperiphery, weak semiperiphery, strong periphery, and a weak periphery. Their results indicated that higher zones of the world-system produce capital-intensive manufactured goods while lower zones produce labor-intensive commodities. Their analysis of trade data for 1965 and 1980 revealed more upward mobility than downward mobility in the world division of labor (Smith and White 1992). Their findings implied that the categories of the world-system are more continuous than categorical.

The most recent studies have a mix of results, sometimes confirming the results of the earlier studies and at other times contradicting them. For example, Mahutga (2006) constructs five sets of block models that contain several zones: core, strong periphery, strong semiperiphery, weak semiperiphery, strong periphery, and periphery. Analyzing economic data spanning 1965 to 2000, he concludes that the international division of labor based on the unequal exchange between the core and periphery remains intact, with upward mobility being evident in only a few countries. A study by Kick and Davis (2001) found that the classical three-tiered structure had been replaced by a core, a semi-core, a semiperiphery, and a periphery. Kim and Shin (2002) explain this trend as due to a dynamic process of globalization. Looking at commodity trade networks from 1959 to 1996, they argue that the world became increasingly globalized. The growth in the number of trading partners allowed poorer peripheral countries to become more integrated into a world economy that was becoming less hierarchical (Kim and Shin 2002).

Other studies (Kick et al. 2011) have found there are multiple cores but that the core/semiperiphery/periphery structure as formulated by Wallerstein (2011) remains intact. Contrary to this finding, Clark and Beckfield’s (2009) trichotomous partition model based on the international trade network during the 1980 to 1990 decade found an expanded core and a set of upwardly mobile states from the semiperiphery and the periphery. They also found an expanding core, a semiperiphery, and stagnating periphery but they also show that the network as a whole still exhibits a core–periphery hierarchy.

The hierarchical nature of the modern world-system is found to be a persistent characteristic in other studies that use social network analysis but that focus on nodes other than nation-states. These studies examine networks of intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), international nongovernmental organizations (INGOs), and cities. Beckfield (2010) applied social network analysis to the evolution of membership in intergovernmental organizations from 1820 to 2000 to test the world polity theory, which states that there is a high level of isomorphism among states because they are integrated by networks of exchange, cooperation, and competition within a singular cultural system (Boli and Thomas 1997; Meyer et al. 1997). The world polity evolved in the post–Second World War period as the number of INGOs greatly increased (Boli and Thomas 1997), imposing its cultural models of economic development, citizenship rights, equality, health care, technological innovation, and
environmentalism on all the nation-states (Meyer et al. 1997). Beckfield’s (2010) network study of membership in IGOs reveals a fragmented relational network of states and organizations. While the IGOs that formed for political reasons, such as the United Nations, have been inclusive, supporting the world polity perspective, the increasing number of regional IGOs such as the European Union, the Group of 7 (now the G8), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) reveals a world society that is both centralized and multipolar (Beckfield 2010).

Those who study the early modern world-system noted the importance of cities as primary nodes through which goods and services flowed and the importance of finance capital and its relationship with state power in the core (Arrighi 1994; Braudel 1984). Although the global city network in recent decades is hierarchical, with “world cities” at the top (Friedmann 1986; Sassen 2001), according to Alderson and Beckfield (2007) this hierarchy does not mirror the tripartite core–semiperiphery–periphery hierarchy because the network of the world cities has decoupled to some extent from the geopolitical network of states over the course of globalization. But, contrary to the neoliberal claim that there is a level playing field (Friedman 2006), the structure of the world city system has not become less hierarchical across the era of globalization (Alderson and Beckfield 2007). In fact, the world city network became more unequal when some cities, such as New York, London, and Tokyo, gained more control over the functions of the world economy relative to other megacities such as those in Latin America (Timberlake and Smith 2012).

Global political sociology benefits from the use of formal network analysis to better understand the trajectories of political and economic globalization. Knowledge of both the attributes of entities and their direct and indirect connections is relevant for describing and explaining the trajectories of global change. The formal network studies reviewed above have generally confirmed the utility of world-systems concepts for describing and explaining global social change in the last several decades.

Conclusions

Global governance can be understood as a general concept that refers to the institutions and structures of political and military relations in a world-system however they may be organized. All hierarchical world-systems have experienced a cycle of centralization and decentralization, and the constituent polities have gotten larger and fewer over the long run. This long-term trend, and a probably temporary reversal by the modern waves of decolonization, is a topic of great interest to global political sociology. Political globalization has produced an earth-wide system of theoretically sovereign states, while the institutional mechanisms of core–periphery exploitation have continued to evolve, reproducing uneven development and
global inequalities. Another period of interimperial rivalry is emerging with the decline of US hegemony and the rise of challenging powers. The main trial of global political sociology will be to theorize, and help to implement, a multipolar global polity that can resolve conflicts peaceably so that humanity does not descend into another Age of Extremes of the kind that happened in the first half of the twentieth century.

REFERENCES


Liberalizing Trade and Finance

*Corporate Class Agency and the Neoliberal Era*

Michael C. Dreiling

Political sociology has an important role in explaining the history, development, and consequences of neoliberal globalization. Specifically, our methods and theory are equipped to address the role of states and the political economy in shaping processes and outcomes of globalization, but also to examine specific forms of collective action aimed at building neoliberal institutions – or challenging and transforming them. This chapter addresses the ways that the collective action of US corporate leaders ushered in neoliberalization through trade policy, closely interacting with state officials and institutions. As Hopewell (2016: 18, emphasis in original) further qualifies, neoliberal globalization “is an *institution-building project*” geared to the construction of new rules, regulations, and institutions with the aim to expand markets globally. Treating neoliberal trade policies as part of a historical project – made and remade by collective actors – offers a framework for exploring the intersection of class and state actors in the emergence and transformation of neoliberal globalization.

Using the case of US trade policy at its hegemonic heights (Arrighi 1994), this chapter differentiates the political action of corporations from nation-state actors to specify conditions where corporate class actors become political drivers of neoliberalization. First, trade policy theory is summarized to point out the relative silence of corporate collective action as a driver of US trade liberalization across successive periods. Second, the chapter revisits a critical moment in the late 1960s to reveal the political role of US corporate leaders acting collectively to upend the postwar Keynesian monetary order and dramatically enlarge trade liberalization. This expands on Harvey’s (2005) assertion that neoliberalism was “a class project” and Arrighi’s (1994) explication of the world historic shift in the US hegemonic project toward neoliberalism domestically and internationally. Third, the chapter offers a glimpse at the collective action of corporations that brought class actors into
the trade policy apparatus of the US state’s executive branch, from the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) to trade liberalization with China and beyond. In the larger context, the political project of neoliberal globalization by US corporate elites ushered in a deepening of financialization (Fairbrother 2014; Krippner 2005, 2011), growing inequality (Piketty and Goldhammer 2014), and, amidst US hegemonic decline, geographic shifts in economic power toward the emerging BRIC economies of Brazil, Russia, India, and China (Hopewell 2016; Lachmann 2014).

Elites in the BRIC nations have marshaled various models of neoliberal economic governance, in some cases explicitly rejecting the political liberalism of the G7. Meanwhile, authoritarian and ethnonationalist politics in the G7—exemplified in Brexit and the election of US president Trump—have melded with ultra-conservative corporate factions to advance a hyperneoliberal economics while debasing political liberalism. Do these transformations spell an end to a corporate neoliberal consensus and deepening fractures among corporate elite? In the US, following Mizruchi (2013), the contradictions of neoliberalism introduced an era of heightened political contest among major world powers as well as conflicts among US billionaires and corporate elite. Concluding that research on corporate networks has much to offer, the chapter suggests avenues for more analyses of corporate class (re)alignments and factions in relation to ongoing sociopolitical change, especially research on the crises of and challenges to neoliberalism.

NEOLIBERALISM AND CORPORATE CLASS ACTION

Neoliberalism—which promises to efficiently generate wealth while disciplining states and bureaucracies with market forces—took shape over the course of decades. As a kind of governing philosophy, it has been offered, variously, as a remedy for economic stagnation, bureaucratic bloat, corruption, inflation, and more (Bourdieu 1999; Harvey 2005; Mirowski and Plehwe 2009; Mudge 2008; Prasad 2006). From the early 1980s onward, it provided the basic policy framework for “structural adjustment” in the Global South, for “rescuing” the welfare state in the Global North, and as a vision for a global economy unbound from centrally planned markets, dying industries, or rent-seeking interest groups. Domestically and internationally, neoliberal trade proposals were generally presented in tandem with calls for privatization, deregulation, and a reduction in the size of government (nonmilitary) spending as a share of GDP.¹

¹ As critics of neoliberal trade policy have argued for decades, the policy choice is not necessarily between market intervention and pure markets. Instead, one key goal of international trade agreements and institutions is to codify production standards, among many other rules and regulations about commodities, and form a baseline for the construction of markets characterized as “free” (Quark 2011).
Although a large and varied group of economists, policy elites, and government leaders supported the general principles of neoliberalism, the “market fever” of the 1980s did not spread simply because certain individuals espoused free trade and domestic deregulation. The fact that many of these noncorporate actors assume a central role in many popular and academic accounts of this era does not resolve some important questions. In particular, the problem with this “triumphant” vision of neoliberal history is the manner in which the very engines of capital behind the market mania – globalizing corporations – appear as liberated historical agents acting out their market freedoms, not as class political actors foisting new institutional realities on the world. This chapter builds on Dreiling and Darves (2011, 2016) to ask, from a US-centered view, which historical actors liberalized international markets and then worked to build transnational trade institutions. Was it the fever pitch of a new policy ideology acted out by government partisans and policy-makers committed to its mantra? Or did the very economic actors benefiting from market liberalization act politically and concertedly to unleash it?

The broadly held assumption that the diverse economic interests of large corporations create atomistic political interests contributes to a seeming paradox. In the extreme version of this perspective, competitive market dynamics are thought to create permanent divisions among corporations and their managing elite; only autonomous political elites that identify with the rationality of free trade orthodoxy are capable of creating rational systems to govern international transactions and capital flows (Lindblom 1977; Block 1977, 1987). Corporate political action, within this framework, is reduced to a multiplicity of competing economic interests incapable of sustaining political unity to press broader classwide aims. In the end, classwide business interests detach from the political behavior of corporations, leaving state actors and associated private regulatory agencies to determine international trade policy. This perspective – where states direct a fragmented private sector toward trade liberalization – creates a rupture in political theories of globalization and, in particular, confuses the relative historic roles of class and state actors.2

Similar theoretical dilemmas are found in approaches that locate shifts toward neoliberalism within economic and structural crises in the late 1960s and early 1970s (Dicken 2007; Harvey 1989, 2005). In Capital Resurgent, Dumenil and Lévy (2004) situate the shift toward a neoliberal order in the crisis of accumulation and profitability beginning in the late 1960s. This well-documented pattern of declining US profit rates, which continued into the 1980s, is also the basis for the argument that neoliberal restructuring reflected

2 In Prasad’s (2006) comparative study, the US case is cited to advance a state and political party centered approach to the rise of neoliberalism, referencing instances of business opposition to Reagan’s tax policy. In contrast, Mizruchi’s class-oriented approach cites broad corporate support for business tax cuts, even though instances exist where business leaders were divided on tax cuts to individual income earners (Mizruchi 2013).
a (relative) ascent of finance capital and the trend toward financialization of the
global economy (Foster and Magdoff 2009; Howard and King 2008; Inoue
2011; Krippner 2011). While these arguments convincingly suggest that a
structural crisis in capitalism compelled financialization and a reordering of
social and class power as business sought ideological and political strategies to
increase profits by cutting corporate taxes and labor costs, corporate class
agency is generally not discussed within this genre of scholarship. In
economistic accounts, the contradictory logic of capital accumulation is
thought to foist upon history the need for financialization and market
liberalization. Corporate class action is implied, but remains invisible or
narrated on a case-by-case basis. While Dumenil and Lévy (2004, 2011), for
example, offer an explicitly Marxist account of recent economic crises, their
focus remains on the aggregate economic conditions of accumulation and, by
extension, the impetus for abstract capital to liberate markets (and finance) in
its search for renewed profitability.

In Dicken’s (2007) highly popular overview of the economic dimensions of
globalization, transnational corporations are examined for their economic and
administrative dynamics. Yet surprisingly, multinational corporations (MNCs)
are portrayed almost entirely as singular, atomistic forces within their
surrounding political systems. Only “east Asian” firms are examined for their
political linkages, particularly in the case of the Japanese keiretsu, and then only
to dispute the “convergence thesis,” which states that global corporations adopt
similar organizational features. Even in the chapter devoted to the relationships
between states and MNCs, there is little discussion of the political organization
and mobilization of MNCs within their countries of operation. Excluding the
political force of MNCs, especially as collective actors, tends to reproduce the
assumption that global corporations are mostly fragmented actors incapable of
sustained, collective political activism. Common to these and a wide variety of
other approaches, especially in trade policy and international relations
literature, is a dearth of efforts to conceptualize corporate collective action as
a political force behind neoliberalization.

TRADE LIBERALIZATION AND THE STATE

Outside of sociology, the growth of world trade is often treated as a purely
economic phenomenon. World growth in merchandise exports is viewed as an
important proxy for deepening networks of economic exchange and integration
(see Figure 37.1). The expansion of activities by multinational corporations,
including intra-firm trade, and the global development of value chains,
contribute to this economic globalization. While growth in the trade of goods
and services is certainly a facet of globalization, concluding that this growth is
mostly a function of economics, not politics, is a mistake. To put the matter
plainly: markets cannot exist apart from the active participation of states
(Polanyi 2001 [1944]; Fligstein 2001). Whether one views capitalist markets
positively or negatively is quite secondary to this basic observation about the role of the state and its function with the project of liberalizing trade and financial markets.

The most straightforward manner in which states transform the conditions for international trade is through import and export tariffs. Economists have long noted the negative relationship between tariffs and international merchandise trade. For example, Garret (2000), using World Bank data, found a strong negative correlation (−0.89) between annualized trade taxes for all countries and the total value of world trade. As tariffs steadily dropped in the postwar era, the volume of world trade expanded. While international trade flows linked to large firms were a key expression of this process, the genesis of these changes can be clearly traced to changes that occurred within states. Professional economists and technocrats often construct specific rationales for market liberalization programs like NAFTA, but it is ultimately the authority exercised by the state that transforms trade rules (Fligstein 2001; Fourcade 2006). The substantial increase in world trade from the early 1970s to the present thus requires an understanding of US corporations and trade policy.

Nearly all studies of US trade politics consider the 1934 Reciprocal Trade Agreements Act (RTAA) the most important piece of trade legislation ever passed by Congress (Chorev 2007; Cohen, Blecker, and Whitney 2003;...
Destler 2005; Duina 2006; Milner 1988). Because the US Constitution delegates authority over tariffs and other matters of international commerce to Congress, there was, prior to the RTAA, relatively little executive branch participation in trade policy formation. Whereas other industrialized countries tended to place authority over trade policy under the head of state or various executive-level departments, in the US only Congress could enact changes in tariff rates following bilateral or multilateral trade negotiations (Cohen et al. 2003: 113).

While in the short run the RTAA was seen as a victory for internationally expanding corporations, institutional theorists also focus on long-run transformations in the domestic trade policy apparatus that the policy precipitated—transformations that materialized over the course of years and decades, not months (Chorev 2007; Ikenberry, Lake, and Mastanduno 1988). Among these various transformations, institutionalists highlight two in particular. First, as policy authority was shifted from legislators to various executive agencies, such as the State and Commerce Departments, new organizational interests and centers of expertise were developed within the executive branch (Haggard 1988: 93). A cadre of bureaucratic trade policy experts was assembled who, over time, instituted the forward-looking, “rationalized” trade program that Congress had lacked the competence and, most crucially, the “autonomy” to develop (Chorev 2007; Cohen et al. 2003; Haggard 1988).

Second, the RTAA significantly altered the structure of state–firm relations in trade policy formation. Prior to the RTAA, direct constituent pressures and institutional norms of reciprocity ensured ongoing congressional support for protectionist trade policies (Haggard 1988). The RTAA, however, led to a redefinition of the trade policy issue. Whereas trade policy had previously been viewed as a distributive issue—a mechanism to influence the costs and benefits of trade—it was increasingly defined as a more general regulatory problem (Haggard 1988). As trade negotiations became more open to public scrutiny, cleavages in domestic industry were exposed. Tariff and quota provisions, once buried in a complex host of legislative amendments and riders, were now scrutinized by technocratic officials who were attentive to the broader costs and benefits of trade policy. Because these officials in the State and Commerce Departments were said to be averse to protectionist trade policies, the internationalists found a new and enduring base of institutional support within the executive branch.3

While some dispute the extent to which the RTAA signified an expansion of “state autonomy” (Woods 2003), most analysts concede that the RTAA set the major institutional framework for subsequent trade policy conflicts (Chorev 2007; Cohen et al. 2003; Destler 2005; Duina 2006; Haggard 1988: 91–93).

3 As Domhoff (1990) notes of the 1934 RTAA and Chorev (2007) notes of the 1974 Trade Act, increased support for trade liberalization in the state was the intended outcome of corporate internationalists.
Most trade legislation subsequent to the RTAA has affirmed and expanded the central role of the executive branch in trade policy negotiations. It is often said that delegation of authority to the executive is strongly favored by Congress because it allows legislators to use protectionist rhetoric to appease constituents while lacking the political capacity to intervene on their behalf (Cohen et al. 2003; Destler 2005).

By also making it more difficult and costly for import-competing firms to receive trade relief, the RTAA decreased the political influence of protectionist forces (Haggard 1988), which, as Chorev (2007) argues, was the intended outcome by globalizing corporate forces. While the RTAA changed the institutional context of trade policy formation the political power of MNCs also grew in proportion to their growing share of domestic production (Cohen et al. 2003). Milner (1988: 15), for example, makes a compelling case that US trade policy became less protectionist after the Second World War because dominant firms and sectors were more integrated within the international economy and not as a result of prior institutional transformations that enhanced executive autonomy. In this view, the US’s growing support for liberal trade was a by-product of the ascendance of MNCs and was not significantly influenced by changes in the locus of policy authority precipitated by the RTAA. Given the arguments and evidence presented by Chorev (2007), however, the transformation of state institutions under the RTAA and the growing economic prominence of multinational corporations worked synchronously to facilitate the expansion of post–Second World War trade liberalization (Dreiling and Darves 2016).

Immediately after the Second World War state and corporate leaders in the US successfully founded the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) (see Domhoff 2013). While state actors are featured prominently in historical accounts of these developments, Domhoff (2013) and Chorev (2007) argue the Bretton Woods and GATT institutions were not just the product of political leaders. Instead, corporate leaders in the Business Council, the Committee for Economic Development (CED), the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), and US delegates to the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) were all instrumental in the development of the GATT and the Bretton Woods institutions. These same organizations and their leaders worked closely in the decades that followed to open the world trading system and, later, to reform the international monetary system. Expanding global economic power and market opportunities were thus driven not only by the state elite, but also by the corporate elite, who worked closely with the state during and after the Second World War.4

Support for lower tariffs continued well into the 1960s, when corporate profitability and trade balances began to decline. The first major trade
initiative of the decade, the Trade Expansion Act of 1962, largely affirmed the post-RTAA consensus in favor of liberalized trade relations. The act mainly authorized the Kennedy Round of GATT negotiations to cut tariffs with participating countries by up to 39 percent (Lovett, Eckes, and Brinkman 1999: 81). The Kennedy Round evoked considerable condemnation by Congress, labor, and import-competing producers (Chorev 2007; Lovett et al. 1999). Many contended that the trade concessions were asymmetric, favoring Japanese producers in particular.

The resurgence of support for protectionism in the late 1960s had many causes. First, many industries and unions were reacting to a surge of Japanese and German imports that were beginning to undermine the historic trade surplus enjoyed by the US following the Second World War. This was especially evident in the trade imbalance with Japan, which grew from 17 percent to 50 percent between 1967 and 1977 (Canto 1983: 682). The US’s deteriorating balance of payments also contributed to its growing inability to support the gold standard (along with a protracted war and budget deficits).

Most trade policy theories predict that protectionist trade policies are more likely to be enacted during periods of economic decline, particularly when the decline is associated with losses incurred through import competition (Cohen et al. 2003; Destler 2005; McKeown 1984; Milner 1988: 4). This raises an important question: Why did the tumultuous economic conditions of the 1970s and 1980s coincide, not with a return to widespread protectionism, but with further liberalization that dropped tariffs to their lowest levels in US history?\footnote{Certainly protectionist initiatives occurred during the 1970s and 1980s, but, as Chorev (2007) points out, these were selective within a larger set of compromises that deepened trade liberalization.}

Despite a growing trade deficit, weak US dollar, a recession, and flagging private sector profitability, Congress enacted the Trade Act of 1974 that renewed and expanded the US’s commitment to reduce tariff and nontariff barriers to trade on a reciprocal basis. Chorev (2007: 102) persuasively argues that the 1974 Trade Act, “just like the one in 1934, was the deliberate creation of internationalists and their supporters in the administration, precisely in order to curb protectionist demands.”

The section below builds on Chorev’s point in a brief historical narrative to reveal that it was not just the executive branch or the growing share of multinational corporations in the economy that tilted the political economy to neoliberalization; it was also the collective action of globalizing firms. This brief narrative, drawn from Dreiling and Darves (2016), expands on, and validates, other scholarship on the neoliberal transition. As Harvey (2005: 31) posited, if “neoliberalization has been a vehicle for the restoration of class power, then we should be able to identify the class forces behind it.” A political sociological
account of the power structure of US trade policy illuminates corporate class forces at play.

WHERE CLASS ACTORS MEET THE STATE

A little-known political mobilization began in 1967 as a response to a number of economic forces and reached its height as Watergate unfolded in the Nixon administration. The multiyear initiative reshaped the voice of large corporations and the authority of the president in US trade policy. Steel and textile industries, once comfortable allies with the larger corporate community in the postwar hegemony of Keynesianism, New Deal liberalism, and American global “free enterprise,” now faced stiff import competition and began to demand new protections. Amidst heightened business conflicts over American trade policy, a new political moment was opening for economic conservatives at the American Enterprise Institute (AEI), who had been promoting neoliberalism as an alternative to the New Deal and Keynesianism (Domhoff 2013). By the late 1960s, interindustry splits created a political opportunity for leaders in the AEI and other conservative groups to align with free trade globalizers. Describing this period, Chorev (2007) and Destler and Odell (1987) highlight the stark and growing divide between “internationalist businesses”’ intent on trade liberalization and the increasingly marginal voices of declining domestic industries, such as steel and textiles.

Concurrently, many corporate leaders whose operations expanded internationally after the Second World War complained how the international monetary system posed growing challenges to their activities in international markets. Bankers were particularly motivated to change the Bretton Woods system of pegged currency valuations to a floating system. For example, David Rockefeller of Chase Manhattan Bank understood the benefits that accrued to the US with the gold-backed fixed exchange system, but in 1961 laid out the steps for abandoning the dollar’s link to gold: “remove the requirement that gold be held against the note and deposit liabilities of the Federal Reserve Banks” (Rockefeller 1963: 153). Because, Rockefeller continued, New York’s large banks are a “major part of the financing of our exports and imports of goods and services” the “United States must exercise a role of leadership in international financial matters” (Rockefeller 1963: 158). A few years later, Arthur Watson, vice-chair of IBM and son of the founder, reasoned similarly. As incoming president to the International Chamber of Commerce and chairman of the US delegation, Watson outlined the interdependence between the world financial system and world trade to the gathering of world business leaders: “It matters little to free world industry whether the monetary system is ultimately based on gold, paper or sea shells. It matters a great deal that we have

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6 The International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) was formed in 1919. In 1945, the US delegation to the ICC adopted a new organization, now known as the US Council for International Business.
a system that will allow fairly wide swings in debt and credit. Trade is expanding and it must have an international monetary system that expands with it” (Jones 1967: F43). Watson’s prescriptions for changing the world monetary system were linked to his perception of an urgent need for a more robust system of multilateral trade liberalization.

Internationalist corporate leaders, unlike protectionists, sought unfettered movement of capital, goods, and services globally – a reliance on market mechanisms. Like their economic conservative counterparts at AEI, they perceived the need to let markets work and this meant restructuring the Bretton Woods monetary arrangements and a transformation of national economic agendas rooted in Keynesianism. Furthermore, and unlike protectionist leaders, the positions among business leaders at the ICC were bolstered by the recent conclusion of the latest GATT tariff reductions worldwide – averaging a reduction of 40 percent among industrial nations’ manufactured goods. These leaders increasingly sought a multilateral market framework unbound from such national prerogatives.

President Johnson was faced with growing balance of payments problems, and pressure on the dollar, both of which incentivized policy-makers to restrict imports and curb outward flows of capital stock in manufacturing investments. This condition was unacceptable to globalizing industries in finance, technology, and diversified manufacturing. Indeed, as much as these efforts helped internationalize and stabilize financial markets, administering fixed exchange rates became increasingly onerous “in the face of huge amounts of private foreign debt and volatile short-term capital movements” (Panitch and Gindin 2013: 130). Increasingly, the free play of the market would be seen as the antidote to the challenges of administering a pegged currency system. Resolving the burden of administering the fixed exchange rates would come – tenuously – when Nixon’s Treasury abandoned the dollar’s link to gold in 1971. But a political fight over trade came first.

At the center of the push against protectionism and toward a “single world market” was the Emergency Committee for American Trade (ECAT), formed after a 1967 meeting between David Rockefeller, IBM’s Arthur Watson, and several US “business leaders . . . concerned that a new worldwide trade war was in the making” (ECAT 2008). Alongside the older organizations associated with the promotion of free trade, especially the National Foreign Trade Council and the US Council for International Business (USCIB), ECAT organized and educated corporate leaders about foreign markets and current policy developments at annual conventions. Officially, the USCIB also served for decades as the official conduit between globally oriented corporate leaders in the US and the ICC. But ECAT was different, and the mandate was strategic and activist. Prominent presidents and chairs of major corporations – George Moore, David Packard, Henry Ford II, H. J. Heinz, and other corporate leaders – joined as cofounders of ECAT (see Table 37.1 for positions and corporations) (Jones 1968: F10; Dreiling and Darves 2016).
To deal with domestic economic problems, an international agenda was needed. For Nixon’s advisers, the “central policy dilemma ... became how to maintain the system of fixed exchange rates that revolved around the dollar without jeopardizing both economic growth and the momentum towards liberalized trade and capital flows” (Panitch and Gindin 2013: 123). To further buttress internationalist corporate interests and manage these policy tensions, President Nixon drew heavily from the network of conservative corporate leaders (Chorev 2007; Domhoff 2006). Alongside other corporate elite from the Committee for Economic Development (CED) and ECAT in the Departments of Commerce and Treasury, President Nixon appointed to the position of Special Trade Representative a CED leader, William Eberle (Dreiling and Darves 2016). In 1970, President Nixon also formed the Williams Commission, a group composed primarily of conservative business leaders tasked with forging

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<tr>
<th>ECAT Founder</th>
<th>Corporation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rockefeller, David</td>
<td>Chase Manhattan Bank</td>
<td>President</td>
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<td>Watson, Arthur</td>
<td>IBM</td>
<td>Chairman</td>
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<tr>
<td>Moore, George S.</td>
<td>First National City Bank</td>
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<td>Hewitt, William A.</td>
<td>Deere &amp; Co.</td>
<td>Chairman</td>
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<td>Ingersoll, Robert S.</td>
<td>Borg-Warner Corp.</td>
<td>Chairman</td>
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<tr>
<td>Linen, James</td>
<td>Time, Inc.</td>
<td>President</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Packard, David</td>
<td>Hewlett-Packard Co.</td>
<td>Chairman</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peterson, Peter G.</td>
<td>Bell &amp; Howell Co.</td>
<td>President</td>
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<td>Bank of America</td>
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<td>Powers, Jr., John J.</td>
<td>Chas. Pfizer &amp; Co. Inc.</td>
<td>President</td>
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<td>Roche, James M.</td>
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<td>Taylor, A. Thomas</td>
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<td>Wilson, Joseph C.</td>
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<td>Allen, William M.</td>
<td>Boeing</td>
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<td>Ball, George W.</td>
<td>Lehman Brothers International</td>
<td>Chairman</td>
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<td>Blackey, William</td>
<td>Caterpillar Tractor Co.</td>
<td>Chairman</td>
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<td>Dean, R. Hal</td>
<td>Ralston Purina Co.</td>
<td>President</td>
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<td>Chairman</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grace, J. Peter</td>
<td>W. R. Grace and Co.</td>
<td>President</td>
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<tr>
<td>Haggerty, Patrick E.</td>
<td>Texas Instruments Inc.</td>
<td>Chairman</td>
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resolutions to both trade and currency exchange issues. On the Commission were executives from nine CED member corporations and several CED trustees. Albert L. Williams, who chaired the commission, was a former President of IBM and at the time of the commission’s founding a director on the boards of the Mobil Corporation, General Foods, Eli Lilly, and Citibank. His corporate inner circle status (Useem 1984) was as an asset to initiatives aimed at advancing multilateral trade liberalization (Dreiling and Darves 2016).7

By the time the Williams Commission was formed, a group of conservative business leaders, which included ECAT cofounders, assumed an important role in Nixon’s administration. The Williams report also had the effect of spurring debates in policy circles, such as the CFR and the CED, which elevated promises of trade liberalization to new heights among large corporations, ECAT, and the older US Council for International Business. By 1973, these efforts crystallized with the mobilization of business groups, including the newly formed Business Roundtable (BRT), and internal efforts by the Nixon administration to open new opportunities for a strategic dialogue about trade in a changing global economy (Cohen, Paul, and Blecker 2003; Chorev 2007). Two ECAT cofounders were also appointed to the commission. Another ECAT cofounder and conservative CED trustee, Pete G. Peterson, was appointed by Nixon in 1971 to be the assistant to the President for International Economic Affairs (and chair of the Council of International Economic Policy). In 1972 he was named Secretary of Commerce and, as such, was the chief executive branch authority presiding over the Special Trade Representative (STR). The fact that Nixon’s secretary of commerce was a cofounder of ECAT ensured that the voice of globalizing corporations would be heard in future action on trade. In fact, as lobbying for the 1974 Trade Act began, Peterson proved vital. With his ties to ECAT, the CED, and the CFR, he and others “advocated the amendments exactly to limit the congressional role in trade policy formulation” (Chorev 2007: 70).

On August 15, 1971, the US withdrew its pledge to convert dollars into gold (Destler 2005: 57). Two years later, by early 1973, amidst a spate of reports of a jittery Europe and following years of negotiations, the resulting fiat currency began to float against other major currencies. Just as the program for the liberalization of currency markets unwound, a resolution to the dilemmas for trade policy came forth. The birth of neoliberal globalization as a distinct shift in trajectory had begun. Freeing the monetary system of pegged exchange rates and instituting a floating exchange rate system corresponded to the reordering of US international trade priorities, particularly among the leaders of the MNCs that came to dominate elite class networks at the time.

Chorev’s (2007: 102) analysis concludes that the institutional shift in the 1974 Trade Act “allows us to identify the actors who were behind the globalization project: in the United States, this was a tight coalition of top

7 The Williams Commission was composed of representatives from 18 large corporations, three academics, and two union representatives.
administration officials and the leading associations representing the largest internationally oriented corporations” whose “goal was ... to allow those protectionist measures that do not disturb the project as a whole.” The Nixon administration, stacked with leaders from the CED and ECAT, created opportunities to not simply influence legislation, but to transform the structure of the state itself. In doing so, an institutional environment more conducive to the pursuit of the globalization project was developed. Shifting trade policy away from Congress and toward the executive branch reflected a political strategy by internationalists to thwart protectionist opponents and consolidate a new form of strategic power within the state (Chorev 2007).8 Chorev rightly characterizes trade as “selective protection.” Even the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA), supported by the internationalists, was considered an important tactic to secure legislative support for further market opening initiatives and institutional changes that increased the power of the president and the US trade representative. Several industries, for example, lobbied successfully for selective protection in steel, auto, and sugar between the 1970s and early 1990s.

As widely noted by scholars and journalists, it was the early 1970s in particular when “business was learning to spend as a class” (Blythe 2002: 155; see also Akard 1992; Court 2003; Clawson, Neustadtl, and Weller 1998; Domhoff 2006, 2013; Edsall 1985; Harvey 2005; Mizruchi 2013; Peschek 1987; Useem 1984). Well-funded think tanks, new corporate advocacy groups, targeted endowments to universities, and other activities characterized a well-documented pushback from corporate America, one that increasingly chimed the chords of deregulation, free trade, and shrinking the welfare state. The American Enterprise Institute (AEI) – a neoliberal think tank – rose to new prominence on the right just as the newly founded BRT shaped a new corporate political center, displacing the moderate-leaning CED as the hub for domestic economic policy discussions.

The creation of the BRT marked an event of historic proportions, analogous to the role of the Business Council, the CED, and the CFR during the interwar years. Rather than adhering to Keynesian strategies of macro-economic regulation, the BRT endures as a tireless advocate of neoliberal strategies of market deregulation domestically, and free trade globally. According to Burris (1992, 2008), the BRT remains the most central policy and lobbying organization in the corporate policy network. The well-documented rightward turn of corporate leaders during this time helped fuse domestic free market conservatives with the more established free trade internationalists – a nexus that ultimately consolidated a dominant corporate class faction uniting the ascendant neoliberal banners of individual liberty, free trade, and deregulation (Gill 1990). Mizruchi (2013: 157) explains how the BRT

quickly became a part of the conservative resurgence, backing organizations such as the AEI and committing itself to the primary conservative goals of the period: reducing government regulation of business, limiting the power of unions, and reforming the corporate tax code.”

By 1976, “the Business Roundtable was clearly at the center of the corporate financed policy planning network in terms of interlocking directors” (Domhoff 2013: 214). By the 1980s, the unabashedly supply-side focus of the BRT and its vigorous advocacy for domestic deregulation, corporate tax cuts, and global free trade signaled a class realignment of historic proportions, one unquestionably inflected with neoliberal ideology. Pouring resources into Reagan’s victory in 1980, the CEOs in the BRT led the conservative economic reforms of the era, abandoning Keynesian economics and New Deal policy priorities while aggressively attacking “labor unions, federal social welfare programs, and government regulation of the economy” (Phillips-Fein 2009: xi). Reagan appointed scores of AEI and Heritage Foundation members to his administration. With the AEI rising to prominence among think tanks, the BRT retained its central place in the larger corporate network. By the end of the 1980s, ECAT and BRT, and their member-CEOs, would also emerge at the center of a trade policy network geared toward challenging trade and investment restrictions in the US and abroad.

INSTITUTIONALIZING NEOLIBERAL TRADE: NAFTA, THE WTO, AND BEYOND

McMichael (2005: 58) argues that with “the collapse of the Cold War in 1991, the stage was set for a universal application of liberalization, under the leadership of the US and its G-7 allies.” The crisis in the Soviet Union created political opportunities for accelerating the promotion and experimentation with neoliberal prescriptions already tested in the heavily indebted Global South (e.g., privatization, increased FDI, and restrictions on public sector investments).9 As others point out, the adoption of neoliberal economic policies within developing states involved both active coercion by international finance (via the International Monetary Fund’s structural adjustment programs) and by the incorporation of neoliberal technocrats into leading government positions (Babb 2009; Fourcade 2006; Campbell and Pedersen 2001). With the conclusion of NAFTA (1993) and the creation of

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9 Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) is a measure of capital flows into a country by international economic interests. FDI includes investments by multinational corporations in service or manufacturing sectors in host countries and the purchase of assets (public or private) in host countries. FDI is often used as an indicator for many features of national development, including how much a local economy is penetrated by and dependent on foreign, or outside capital; how attractive a national economy is to foreign business investment; and how competitive a national economy is relative to others in attracting international capital.
the World Trade Organization (WTO) following the conclusion of the GATT Uruguay Round (1986–1994), a robust transnational apparatus to enforce market governance took shape. The possibility for newly “open” markets in Eastern Europe and Russia further consolidated neoliberalism as a global economic modality (Campbell and Pedersen 2001) as efforts intensified in implementing what Robinson (2004) refers to as a “revolution from above.” From the Maastricht Treaty, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), NAFTA, and the WTO, the liberalization of regional and global markets accelerated in the early 1990s, though with regionally distinct legal and institutional signatures (Duina 2006).

Within the US, a neoliberal corporate coalition successfully advanced the Caribbean Basin Initiative and the US–Canada Free Trade Agreement prior to initiating a multiyear campaign for NAFTA with President George H. W. Bush. Dreiling (2000, 2001) demonstrates that leadership in the pro-NAFTA corporate coalition was predicted by membership in the Business Roundtable, among other factors. This campaign formed a broad business coalition named “USA*NAFTA” that coordinated congressional testimony, press releases, and frequent lobbying. The Wall Street Journal announced that “the USA*NAFTA” group was one “set up by … members of the Business Roundtable” (Davis 1993: A20). Groups closely affiliated with the roundtable, such as ECAT and the National Foreign Trade Council, testified regularly before Congress and organized hundreds of lobbying sessions involving the CEOs of companies as influential as General Motors and AT&T (Dreiling and Darves 2016). Meeting directly with President Clinton for “regular” briefings by White House officials, BRT members of USA*NAFTA worked closely to select Lee Iacocca (former Chrysler CEO) as the president’s “NAFTA Czar.” These frequent associations with prominent decision-makers stem from the unique structural location afforded to inner circle corporate leaders.

In spite of significant opposition to NAFTA from the left and the right, its passage in 1993 was declared a “realization … of David Rockefeller’s original vision when founding the Council of the Americas” [in 1958] (Council of the Americas 1994: 5). Just one year following the passage of NAFTA, the corporate coalition was reorganized and renamed to focus on the successful completion of the Uruguay Rounds of the GATT and the creation of the WTO (see Dreiling 2001). Over the next several years, a neoliberal corporate coalition continued to advance trade liberalization through transnational neoliberal institutions and US trade policy, highlighted by the monumental effort to liberalize trade with China, beginning in 1998.

Figure 37.2 plots a network of the 45 largest ECAT members from 1998. Given their common membership in ECAT, the figure plots the connections of the corporate executives to the Business Roundtable and to the appointed

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10 The Wexler Group and Arthur Anderson & Co. were retained by the USA*NAFTA. Each have a history of providing regular accounting and public relations services to the Business Roundtable.
Figure 37.2 Overlapping networks of ECAT members in the Business Roundtable and Executive Branch Trade Advisory Committees, 1998
Source: Author data and analysis. Image drawn with NodeXL (Smith et al. 2010).
advisory posts under the US president on trade policy that were created in the 1974 Trade Act. Figure 37.2 depicts a specific confluence of class and state actors in the making of neoliberal trade policy in the US. All 45 companies in Figure 37.2 are members of ECAT. Those companies in the lower left corner are isolates (denoted by square shapes); that is, they are members of ECAT but did not have a top executive at the Business Roundtable or as appointees to the trade advisory committee system in the US executive branch in 1998. Firms approximately in midsection of the figure share their common membership in ECAT with all firms in the graph, but also have a membership in the Business Roundtable and the trade advisory committee system, linking corporate and state institutional spaces via these overlapping memberships. Of the companies affiliated with the trade advisory system, all but four are also Business Roundtable members (in addition to their membership in ECAT).

This simple network heuristic identifies patterns consistent with the expectations of a class cohesion approach to corporate political action (Burris 1987, 2001, 2005; Domhoff 2006, 2013, 2014; Mizruchi 1992); that is, class-inflected corporate associations facilitate the creation of stable networks between corporate leaders and the state—networks that ultimately yield a concerted field of action responsible for the promotion of neoliberal trade policy and trade institutions.

Consider the class and state dynamics involved in the China Permanent Normal Trade Relations (PNTR) campaign, where a multipronged strategy involving the Clinton White House and leading corporate policy and lobbying organizations was pursued in order to swing votes in congressional districts throughout the country. Despite an energized opposition from the left and the right, the corporate campaign would ultimately outstrip its opponents in what some observers have termed the most expensive lobbying campaign in US history (Woodall et al. 2000). Because PNTR was coupled to China’s entry into the WTO, interests among large US corporations were magnified by hopes of market opportunities that an opening of China’s economy would harbor (Cohen et al. 2003). Business leaders structured several new organizations for this fight, and many of these leaders relied on extensive connections with current and former government officials. Their campaign was swift and successful, working all faces of the state (Dreiling and Darves 2016).

Normalizing trade with China has been nothing short of a world historical shift in the geography of global manufacturing. Economists from a variety of theoretical persuasions identify trade liberalization with China as the key factor in the dramatic drop in manufacturing employment in the US, plummeting from 17,000,000 in 2000 to 11,500,000 in 2010 (Autor, Dorn, and Hanson 2012). As a share of world manufacturing output (measured in value), the trend put China on track to surpass the US in 2011 and become the world’s largest manufacturing economy. Economists estimate that China PNTR and China’s entry into the WTO, net other factors, reduced the manufacturing sector in the US by about three million jobs over seven years, with more than the 900,000

The transformation in global manufacturing associated with China’s entry into the WTO revealed the significance of political action, namely, neoliberal trade policy, in shaping the contours of the world economic order. Specific forms of corporate collective action and class agency can be observed in these events. For example, we find ECAT leaders testifying that they “can be justly proud of the many accomplishments of US trade policy, including the Tokyo Round Agreement, the Uruguay Round Agreements, the North America Free Trade Agreement, Permanent Normal Trade Relations with China, and the GATT/WTO system itself” (ECAT 2003: 1). ECAT, usually with the Business Roundtable and the USCIB, led every major transformation in US trade policy during the three decades prior. Decades after its founding, ECAT persists as a powerful lobby for a neoliberal trading system. We are thus reminded that economic activity and mobility of capital alone do not lead to the kind of market transformations observed here. Capital mobility hinges on institutional protections. For this reason, class political agency works in concert with state initiatives to construct the institutional frameworks that secure capital mobility through trade and investment. Furthermore, the changes precipitated by this class–state action also generate lasting political consequences.

Challenges to US-led Neoliberal Institutions

Conflict over the implementation of NAFTA continued for several years and was followed by a series of political actions in North America, beginning with the Zapatista mobilization in Chiapas, Mexico, and followed by numerous actions gathering steam at the transnational level (Harvey 1998). These conflicts over NAFTA and the formation of the WTO in 1995 stimulated on the political right anti-immigrant and ethnonationalist reactions and on the political left an expansion of global justice networks that included various movement actors, transnational governance structures, and countermovement networks (Dreiling 2001; Smith 2010). Even as the corporate neoliberal coalition mobilized for PNTR with China, a global justice movement was emerging as well.

The intense and focused mobilization against the 1999 and 2003 ministerial conventions of the World Trade Organization in Seattle, Washington, and in Cancún, Mexico, respectively, exemplified emergent transnational political forces mobilized around transnational neoliberal institutions. Beginning in Seattle, the “neoliberal network” that was led by corporate and political elites from the US and the EU (Smith 2010) faced combined opposition from below by a democratic global justice movement as well as challenges from within the WTO by neoliberal elites of several developing countries (Hopewell 2016).
These conflicts intensified over several years, escalating in Cancún at the WTO’s Fifth Ministerial in 2003. Instead of a manifesto for international trade liberalization, the 2003 talks collapsed as unified opposition from developing countries surfaced and massive protests occurred in the streets. Over 80 of the poorest WTO member countries along with Brazil and India called on the trade body to develop a more transparent and democratic process so that their voices could be heard (Dreiling and Silvaggio 2009; Hopewell 2016). The situation enabled nations of the Global South to gain negotiation leverage as a bloc against the US and EU.

Frustrated with frictions, and prior to the Cancún ministerial meetings of the WTO, the Business Roundtable explained their hopes for deepening US “leadership” in the world. Their press release “sent a warning that foot-dragging behavior in the WTO can be countered by bilateral and regional negotiating tracks.” The press release went on to explain how “the CEOs that comprise the Business Roundtable are increasingly working with companies and business associations in other countries that share our support for the WTO and our aspirations for new and ambitious market-opening initiatives” (Business Roundtable 2003). Corporate neoliberalists in the US sought access to markets globally, even as developing countries sought greater access to markets in the EU and US for agricultural, service, and manufacturing exports.

Where Cancún represented a setback for US and European Union hegemony in global trade negotiations, the failure to open negotiations for a Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) in Miami represented a major blow to US designs in the Western Hemisphere. Opposition in Latin America was widespread, and the US walked away from negotiations after failing to get the biggest economies, Brazil and Argentina, to sign on to the agreement. As the US and Canada sought greater market access for services, finance, and intellectual property, the developing countries of the Americas, led by Brazil, rejected the hypocrisy of agriculture subsidies in the US and Canada, raising the same rift that plagued the Doha Rounds of the WTO. Instead, the common market among several South American countries, Mercosur, found opportunities to expand by introducing a formal parliament one year after the failed FTAA talks.

With the passage of China PNTR and China’s accession to the WTO, massive amounts of FDI poured into China while exports surged. A world historic economic transition was underway, and this economic context added new pressure on US corporations operating globally to press the US state for more aggressive investor protections for corporate interests in the growing economies of Asia. These efforts encountered resistance by capitalist interests and national governments of the emerging BRICs, whose growth altered the balance of power.

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11 In 2001, the WTO ministerial meetings were held in Doha, Qatar, launching the Doha Rounds of negotiations that concluded without resolution in 2015. Activists commonly remarked that the “Battle in Seattle” was the reason that the 2001 meetings were held in Doha, where opportunities for protest were severely curtailed.
in the global trading system and the WTO. Though these national governments were not rejecting neoliberal globalization and its institutions, they were attempting to insert themselves, on their terms, and via their respective national power structures, into neoliberal global institutions (Hopewell 2016).

As a result, trade globalization produced new centers of economic power which contributed to a stalemate over the Doha Rounds, leaving frustrated US leaders to increasingly work outside of the WTO and pursue bilateral agreements – consistent with the BRT’s threat in 2000 – and “mega-regional” trade agreements, such as the proposed Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) between the US and EU, and a 16-member Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). In 2009, some wondered if the presidency of Barack Obama, who urged a renegotiation of NAFTA and other trade deals during his 2008 candidacy, would bring a turn in US trade policy from a neoliberal to a more selectively protective trade agenda. This did not happen. Instead, ECAT, the Business Roundtable, and USCIB consulted directly with President Obama to press neoliberal trade globalization agendas domestically and internationally. By 2011, the former Republican governor of Michigan, John Engler, left his role as Executive Director at the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM) to become president of the Business Roundtable. In that same year, along with the smaller ECAT, they initiated a campaign for a TPP. They wrote a letter to President Obama outlining the desire to move the TPP (which tentatively began under President Bush) to the front of the agenda on trade negotiations and dramatically expand investor protections. Specific concern was expressed about several “agreements between ASEAN and China and ASEAN and India, reflecting the deepening of commercial ties between key emerging-market partners across Asia, which leave the US at risk of being excluded from these vital growth markets” (ECAT 2011: 1). The prospect of the US being excluded from emerging economies rattled corporate and political leaders and motivated the negotiations for the mega-regional agreements, outside of the confines of the WTO.

Hopewell (2016) concludes that US hegemonic decline, coupled with the growing economic power of emerging economies, especially China, has disrupted but not ended the WTO (see also Lachmann 2014). With years of stalled negotiations, what began as the Doha Rounds of the WTO in 2001 ended without resolution (Smith 2010). Analyses of how emergent corporate class networks and state trade-related initiatives shape trade strategies and responses to global institutions, from within the BRICs, presents a promising area for future research (see Fairbrother 2007). As conditions globally (and domestically) continue to erode US hegemony in neoliberal institutions, what do recent political events bode for the neoliberal class project?

CORPORATE CLASS (RE)ALIGNMENTS

Many questions arose following the 2016 Brexit vote and the election of US president Trump. President Trump appointed a quintessential corporate
conservative, inner circle cabinet, including long-time BRT policy committee leader Rex Tillerson to Secretary of State. First as a presidential candidate and then as president, Trump resurrected ethnonationalist and protectionist rhetoric of conservative reactionaries, like Patrick Buchanan, from 25 years earlier. Like Buchanan in the 1990s, Trump blasted NAFTA on economic nationalist and ethnoracist grounds, offering a seemingly hostile and incompatible view to the neoliberal trade system. However, as the New York Times reported in May of 2017, the actual priorities around NAFTA renegotiation are less economic populist and much more in line with an agenda pursued by ECAT and BRT for years, with a heavy focus on updates to intellectual property, digital services, and investor protections. As President Trump’s US trade representative, Robert Lighthizer put it: “NAFTA was negotiated 25 years ago ... and while our economy and businesses have changed considerably over that period, NAFTA has not” (quoted in Davis 2017). Simultaneously, evidence also points to an interest in significant rollbacks for rules of origin and content provisions for a revised NAFTA. Such an initiative by the US – which has been opposed by Mexico and Canada – could unravel NAFTA. For many observers, it is difficult to discern conflicting policy positions from the politics of the Trump administration.

In general, the parameters for renegotiating NAFTA, which were outlined by the Trump administration in July 2017, do not appear to be protectionist in any significant way. Indeed, the lessons of 2016–2017 require greater effort at discerning between the ethnonationalist politics of the right from the more aggressive and even coercive demands for neoliberal policies in the economic sphere, including trade negotiations. The gross inequalities and economic woes spurred by neoliberal globalization are creating persistent crises in political legitimacy for governments. We know that political authoritarianism from the right melds with economic liberalism as a strategy to advance political legitimacy; indeed it is not new (Bruff 2014; Hall 1988). Ultra-conservative corporate elite and the overwhelmingly white conservative base that elected Donald Trump to the presidency did not reject neoliberalism per se, but as Nancy Fraser argues (2017: 2), rallied against “progressive neoliberalism ... an alliance of mainstream currents of new social movements ... on the one side, and high-end ‘symbolic’ and service-based business sectors (Wall Street, Silicon Valley, and Hollywood [where] progressive forces are effectively joined with the forces of cognitive capitalism, especially financialization.”

Ultra-conservative elite embraced a political fix to the legitimacy crises of neoliberalism, relying less on consent, namely, markets as efficient or desirable in other ways, and increasingly on coercive and punitive strands of exclusion, racism, misogyny – in short, authoritarianism – to advance neoliberal economic agendas (see Wacquant 2009). Right-wing efforts to address legitimation problems through coercive and punitive policy frameworks also embrace the most extreme ideological elements of economic liberalism, for example, the US Tea Party. Bruff’s (2014) conceptualization of “authoritarian neoliberalism”
fits Trumpism and suggests the emergence of an intra-elite contest for political hegemony between two political strands of neoliberalism, playing out domestically and globally on the world historical stage. Do the combined pressures of global power shifts (e.g., BRICs) and domestic differences among the corporate rich portend an end to or significant transformation in the neoliberal trading order and the corporate unity that advanced it? Can the forces of authoritarianism and ethno-nationalism upend the neoliberal era?

Mizruchi (2004) argues that the success of the corporate offensive over several decades had a paradoxical effect of undermining the two social forces—labor and the state—that had previously “disciplined the business community and contributed to its longterm focus” (2004: 607). The consequence of fewer checks by labor and the state was a more reckless corporate class. Mizruchi’s book *The Fracturing of the American Corporate Elite* (2013) laments the demise of a moderate segment of corporate elite in the American business class in the decades that followed their 1970s “vigorous counteroffensive.” Those moderates were replaced by short-term, self-interested corporate leaders in several areas of national public policy. Mizruchi is correct in explaining that, unlike in the postwar years, we no longer find broad commitment among America’s corporate elite to, for example, robust public education. The absence of corporate moderation in national policy for health care, tax and fiscal deficits, or the environment may simply mean that among the leadership, priorities have changed (Dreiling and Darves 2016; see also Murray 2017). It could also mean that factional differences have widened. Domhoff (2014) suggests as much, arguing that these orientations are more a function of differences in neoliberal policy convictions between “moderate-conservative and ultra-conservative” factions than symptoms of deep corporate fragmentation. Are we looking at fracturing or widening factionalization? And is there a difference?

In recent decades, corporate political action has been highly unified in a push to liberalize trade and globalize the economy. Mizruchi (2013) did not grapple with this particular empirical issue, with research showing corporate unity on NAFTA and China trade liberalization (Dreiling 2000; Dreiling and Darves 2011, 2016) and an expanding social science literature on transnational corporate board and policy networks (Carroll 2004, 2010; Kentor and Jang 2004; Murray 2017; Murray and Scott 2012; Nollert 2005; Sklair 2001; Staples 2006, 2007, 2012). While evidence shows a relative decline in the board of director network and specifically in the role of banks as central arbiters in the board of director network (Chu and Davis 2016; Davis and Mizruchi 1999; Mizruchi 2013), evidence also shows these board networks transnationalizing (Carroll 2004, 2010; Murray 2017; Murray and Scott 2012). Murray confirms that the “transnational intercorporate network facilitates … political unity” in campaign contributions within US congressional races (2017: 1659).

Responding directly to the argument by Mizruchi (2013) that welfare retrenchment or polarization on national health care policy indicates an
absence of corporate unity and collective action, Murray (2017: 1060) asserts that his “evidence of persistent unity facilitated by transnational networks necessitates a consideration that these problems may actually be a result of corporate elite influence on behalf of transnational interests, rather than a consequence of a lack of corporate unity.”

Still unresolved, and requiring further analyses, including longitudinal study of transnational and domestic corporate networks, are questions about the future of neoliberal globalization in the post-Trump political universe. Does “authoritarian neoliberalism” offer a legitimation strategy that will hasten the social and ecological crises associated with neoliberal globalization? Are politically liberal neoliberal factions capable of reestablishing hegemony in capitalist democracies? Do factional alignments and disputes among national corporate elite shape transnational affiliations among similarly aligned corporate class factions elsewhere?

CONCLUSION

Beginning with the exploration of the 1934 RTAA, and then the rise and mobilization of a neoliberal coalition of free trade internationalists from the 1970s through the 2000s, this chapter advanced a class agency model of trade liberalization. To grasp this shift in political economy and trade politics, it was argued that the emergence of the 1974 Trade Act helped focus the political activity of large, globalizing corporations toward new structures within the state, facilitating a collaborative, class–state process of institutional change to respond to rising import competition, domestic stagnation, and declining US profitability. Seeking to remove constraints on profits, such as the historically negotiated wage rates in the US (O’Connor 1984) and expand public and environmental regulatory initiatives (Bowles, Gordon, and Weisskopf 1990), these globalizing corporate leaders worked to unite conservatives and moderates around an emerging hegemony of domestic deregulation, tax cuts, privatization, and accelerated trade liberalization (Blythe 2002; Mizruchi 2013). Joined closely to the liberalization of currency markets, the passage of the 1974 Trade Act bridged new expressions of corporate policy activism with existing state projects to reform US trade policy. In doing so, it opened the possibility of fusing an agenda of trade liberalization with the incipient ideology of neoliberalism. Ultimately, it permitted highly organized corporations to forge a neoliberal trade agenda in concert with the state.

With respect to neoliberalization and financialization, the theory of financial control remains relevant (Mintz and Schwartz 1985), and recent evidence suggests that the relations between financial capital and corporate control take form in specific “variations of capitalism” (Scott 1997). Data and analyses have been gathered well into the 2000s, both nationally and transnationally, show growing financial control of large MNCs (Carroll 2010; Heemskerk, Fennema, and Carroll 2016; Murray 2006, 2014; Peetz and Murray 2012; Thacker 2000; Vitali, 2017: Liberalizing Trade and Finance

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Glattfelder, and Battiston 2011; Vitali and Battison 2014). Scott’s work with Murray (Murray and Scott 2012) applies his broad network conceptualizations of corporate relations to research on a transnational corporate class. Outside of sociology, but in a similar vein, a group of systems analysts published a groundbreaking study of global corporate ownership, showing that “nearly 4/10 of the control over the economic value of TNCs in the world is held, via a complicated web of ownership relations, by a group of 147 TNCs in the core, which has almost full control over itself” (Vitali et al. 2011: 6). This dense cluster or “super-entity” (Vitali et al. 2011) of corporate ownership is centered within the world’s largest financial institutions and produces a social and organizational network that parallels the imagery presented by the Occupy Wall Street movement. Interestingly, many of the postulates raised by Fennema (1982) nearly 30 years earlier are validated by this big data analysis. Indeed, financialization and trade globalization remain linked.

The two proximate conditions identified by Prechel (2000) for business influence – business mobilization and state restructuring to advantage capital within the state apparatus – play out in the trade policy arena over the course of decades. State actors acted to shape the state to facilitate business organization at the same time that corporate elites mobilized to change the conditions for capital accumulation. Certainly struggles occur among factions of business for access to state institutions, as Prechel identifies in his research. This is why Prechel’s theory may be applicable for analyses of apparent realignments in corporate class factions circa 2010–2016. Since Brexit and the election of Donald Trump as president of the US, there are strong indications that a faction of far right corporate billionaires, often with wealth rooted in forms of predatory and extractive industries, are willing to challenge the moderate corporate neoliberal coalition – and liberal political institutions as well. Bruff’s (2014) depiction of “authoritarian neoliberalism” captures this connection between predatory forms of capital and the fusion of authoritarian politics with neoliberal economics. We should similarly consider how changing corporate class alignments may contribute to (and reflect) the transformations and crises in neoliberalism, with the potential for new forms of state authoritarian neoliberalism rooted in predatory forms of capitalist accumulation.

REFERENCES


VI. Globalization, Power, and Resistance


VI. Globalization, Power, and Resistance


Since its first publication in 1986, Racial Formation in the United States by Michael Omi and Howard Winant has been arguably the most important theoretical text on race in sociology. In some real sense, the three decades between the first and the third editions were the age of racial formation theory. Over 12,000 citations ago, however, the book’s initial reception in the discipline was less than auspicious. Reviews in sociology journals were few and mixed (Driver 1988; Gordon 1989; Nagel 1988), but more than anything, disinterest prevailed. Omi and Winant (2012: 306–307) later recalled,

The first edition of the book Racial Formation in the United States appeared in 1986. Then came disappointment. We were dismayed that our work was ignored for several years by the very social scientists we sought to influence. Anti-racist activists took no notice. Much to our surprise, our initial fans were from other academic disciplines, notably history, literary studies, and law.

Although the little red book was decidedly geared toward sociology, addressing mostly sociological theories and debates, the general indifference of its target audience made sense in retrospect: a book intent on a paradigm shift rather than a more moderate revision could expect ignorance or resistance from established quarters that it was frontally taking on.

In fractal fashion, Omi and Winant’s thoughts on the racial state received far less attention than other parts of the book. Of the two concepts, and the two eponymous chapters that composed the book’s theoretical contribution, racial formation captured the sociological imagination in a way that eluded the racial state. Since the racial state, “increasingly the pre-eminent site of racial conflict,” lay at the heart of Omi and Winant’s (1986: 76) racial formation theory, the relative lack of response was curious, all the more so since their insistence on the centrality of the state coincided with political sociology’s peak moment of “bringing the state

* This chapter revises and extends Jung and Kwon (2013).
back in” (Evans, Rueschemeyer, and Skocpol 1985). The subsequent cultural turn in the study of the state hardly effected the missing theoretical engagement between the sociologies of race and state (Steinmetz 1999).

In this chapter, we fix our attention on the exceptions: theoretical developments in sociology on the racial state since the appearance of *Racial Formation in the United States*.¹ Like the book, we focus on the United States, for it has been, by far, the primary muse and object of inquiry.² After briefly reviewing Omi and Winant’s theory, as outlined in the first two editions of their book, we survey the major subsequent works in sociology. To conclude, we reframe the field through the concept of *empire-state* and point toward promising future directions, drawing especially on the upsurge of article-length studies that have emerged in the past decade, with which the latest edition of *Racial Formation in the United States* seems to be more, if not entirely, attuned.

**THE RACIAL STATE IN RACIAL FORMATION THEORY**

Omi and Winant define the state as being “composed of *institutions*, the *policies* they carry out, the *conditions and rules* which support and justify them, and the *social relations* in which they are embedded.” They assert that “every state *institution* is a racial institution,” although race is variably significant to each. State institutions are not racial in the same way or to the same degree, and their aims and practices may not be mutually parallel or compatible. State institutions implement various policies that are “explicitly or implicitly racial,” again, to varying degrees and effects. Conditions and rules may perhaps be usefully thought of as a kind of generative grammar structuring state institutions and policies – “a set of political rules about who is a political actor, what is a political interest, and how the broad state/society relationship is to be organized.” By social relations, Omi and Winant mean the complex entanglements between state institutions and “society,” as well as the broader “cultural and technical norms” that affect state and nonstate actors alike. Despite the intricacies and contradictions, they argue that there is an “overall unity” to the racial state. Internally, top “policy makers” and “decision rules” of legislatures and the courts supply a measure of coherence. Externally, under ordinary conditions, the state’s “interpenetration with society” sets limits on political conflicts (Omi and Winant 1986: 78–80; 1994: 83–84; emphases in original).

Anticipating a couple of our arguments below, we make a quick preliminary observation about Omi and Winant’s concept of the state. A comparison with Charles Tilly’s (1990: 1) definition is revealing: states are “coercion-wielding

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¹ For similar reviews by political scientists of their discipline, see Dawson (2012) and King (2016).
organizations that are distinct from households and kinship groups and exercise clear priority in some respects over all other organizations within substantial territories”; it echoes Max Weber’s famous definition – “a human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory” (1946: 78, emphasis in original) – but dampens the criteria on monopoly and legitimacy. Whereas Tilly and Weber foreground coercion and territory, Omi and Winant do not mention either in their definition. We are not suggesting that they do not view the racial state as coercive and territorially bounded. Rather, we note how the omissions reflect a deemphasis of these dimensions: coercion fades from their analysis of the postwar era, the principal period under consideration, and territory remains in the untheorized background, in the theoretical unconscious.3

For Omi and Winant, “the state from its very inception has been concerned with the politics of race,” a statement that even the most Panglossian take on US history could hardly deny (1986: 75; 1994: 81). From its earliest prehistory as English colonies to the mid-1960s, briefly interrupted by the short-lived Reconstruction, the United States was a racial dictatorship – a white collective despotism in which people of color were oppressed and excluded: they were subjected to racial rule in which they had no or little say. Then, indelibly shaped by the Civil Rights movement (CRM), the postwar period has been one of “transition from racial dictatorship to racial democracy,” albeit “far from complete.” Borrowing from Antonio Gramsci, Omi and Winant argue that in this era, “hegemonic forms of racial rule – those based on consent – eventually came to supplant those based on coercion” (1994: 66, 67). Racial rule increasingly depended on the inclusion of the formerly excluded.

Though not entirely absent previously, the primary racial dynamic in the current period revolves around the dialectic between social movements and the state. Again, borrowing from Gramsci, Omi and Winant conceptualize “the US racial order as an ‘unstable equilibrium’” secured and maintained by the state (1986: 78–79; 1994: 84). Social movements can disrupt this equilibrium, making demands on the state. If a movement applies sufficient pressure, the state responds through absorption and insulation, incorporating moderate reforms and personnel and isolating changes to less consequential spheres. Likewise, a rearticulated dominant ideology assimilates elements of the opposition. In this fashion, the state establishes a new unstable equilibrium, a new hegemonic racial order.4

Overall, Omi and Winant contend that the US state is “inherently racial” and that “race will always be at the center of the American experience.” By

3 Conversely, as one reviewer pointed out, race remains in the theoretical unconscious of Tilly’s and Weber’s conceptualizations.

4 Again, as above, we note an implicit deemphasis on state coercion as a possible reaction to social movements, which is also evident in Omi and Winant’s recounting of the “great transformation” (1994: Chapter 6).
“inherently,” they mean that the US state does not merely “intervene” in racial matters from the outside. Rather, the state is itself structured by race through and through (Omi and Winant 1986: 6, 76; 1994: 5, 82; emphasis in original). We flag these claims, to be discussed further, not because we disagree but because they do not follow from the theory. If the first paragraph of this section is a faithful summary of Omi and Winant’s “model of the racial state” (1986: 76; 1994: 83), we see nothing that necessarily implicates the US state as inherently racial, other than the assertion that all state institutions are racial institutions. There is no doubt that the US state, and perhaps all of its constituent institutions, has been racial, but that is an empirical statement about history. On what basis do Omi and Winant theorize the US state as inherently and always racial? How is the “far from complete” racial-dictatorship-to-racial-democracy trajectory that they track immanently bridled from continuing on to completion?

THE RACIAL STATE IN AND SLIGHTLY BEYOND SOCIOLOGY SINCE 1986

Since the publication of Racial Formation in the United States, no sociologist we could identify has offered a similarly comprehensive theory of the racial state that takes on the US state as a whole. One partial exception is a literature review by David James and Kent Redding (2005) that, in addition to surveying the landscape, offers theoretical pointers.\(^5\) They recognize the virtual blank slate that initially greeted Omi and Winant’s theory:

Most research in the political sociology of race does not attempt to develop a theory of the state…. Just as the heated debate on theories of the state subsided in favor of mid-level theories addressing issues of policy formation and implementation, few attempts to develop a theory of the incorporation of race into state institutions have been attempted. In fact, all of the classic works in the state theory debates essentially ignored the causes and effects of state enforced race discrimination (e.g., Barrow, 1993; Carnoy, 1984; Evans, Rueschemeyer, and Skocpol, 1985; Jessop, 1990; King 1986; Laumann and Knoke, 1987; Miliband, 1969; Poulantzas, 1973; Skocpol, 1985). (James and Redding 2005: 193)

While acknowledging Omi and Winant’s originality in “attempt[ing] to remedy the blindness of state theory to problems of race,” James and Redding disagree with them in a fundamental way. James and Redding contend that racial formation theory defines the racial state by its “effects,” not its “internal structure” (2005: 193, 187).\(^6\) At first glance, this criticism could be seen as endorsing our comment above that, in spite of their insistence to the contrary,

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5 Discussed below, Bracey (2015) is another article-length exception.
6 James and Redding (2005: 187) cast the same charge at Goldberg (2002a), discussed later in the chapter.
Omi and Winant do not make a compelling theoretical case that the US state is inherently racial. But James and Redding’s point is altogether different. They are troubled by the sentence, “Through policies which are explicitly or implicitly racial, state institutions organize and enforce the racial politics of everyday life” (Omi and Winant 1994: 83, emphasis in original), specifically the phrase “explicitly or implicitly racial.” By their reading, Omi and Winant mistakenly categorize the state as a racial state as long as there are racial inequalities that are linked to the state in some way; for example, in the post-CRM era, “extending citizenship rights to all without regard to race” does not exonerate the US state from the category of racial state, because it allows racial inequalities to persist. For James and Redding (2005: 193), only states that implement explicitly racial policies would count.

Omi and Winant, through their capacious conceptualization, allegedly classify all states as racial states. In contrast, James and Redding distinguish racial states from liberal democratic states: the former, which can also be “democratic,” explicitly “incorporat[e] race criteria within the fabric of state institutions as the basis for enforcing state policies,” whereas “liberal democratic state policies, by contrast, must be color-blind” regardless of their effects (2005: 195). Expressly collapsing race and ethnicity, excluding nondemocratic states, and drawing on Smooha (2002) and van den Berghe (2002), they further differentiate among three types of “democratic” racial states: consociational, ethnic, and herrenvolk. Consociational states use ethnic/racial categories to “ensur[e] proportional allocation in resource allocation, power sharing, and veto power to the ethnic groups recognized by the state.” Ethnic and herrenvolk states diverge from each other by degree: an ethnic state grants certain rights to all citizens but a subset to only the dominant ethnic group; in a herrenvolk state, the dominant exclusively enjoy citizenship rights and deny them to others (James and Redding 2005: 196–197). According to this scheme, the United States underwent a shift from an antebellum herrenvolk racial state (at least in the South) to a postbellum ethnic racial state (at least in the South) to, after the CRM, a multicultural form of liberal democratic state with, to the degree affirmative action exists, a dose of consociational state. Overall, James and Redding complicate Omi and Winant’s category of racial dictatorship and dispute the idea that a liberal democratic state that enforces formal “colorblind” equality in citizenship rights can be a racial state at all. How this more nuanced typology – without, for example, attendant theoretical elaboration on how one type of racial state

7 Given James and Redding’s (2005: 190) erasure of the analytical distinction between race and ethnicity, naming ethnic state as a type of racial state is awkward.

8 Rather than the US state as a whole, James and Redding (2005: 196) refer to “antebellum South” and “postbellum South” as examples of herrenvolk and ethnic states, respectively. They do not explain how the South constituted a separate state and to which types the other US regions belonged.
can turn into a different type or a liberal state – affords more “analytical leverage” remains to be worked out (James and Redding 2005: 194).

Earlier, James (1988) had already drawn the main distinction between liberal democratic states and racial states through a historical study of the US South. In that study, he points out that prevailing state theories, as of the late 1980s, overstress the “national state” and thereby cannot explain how national policies play out disparately at subnational scales. Taking the South of the pre-CRM era as his case, he identifies what he calls the southern racial state, which, after slavery and Jim Crow, is “dismantled … during the 1960s” (James 1988: 192). The organizational structure of this racial state is never spelled out precisely. It appears to include all governments of the South at the state, county, and other scales, but whether and how they collectively constitute the southern racial state go unstated. In any case, James (1988: 197) focuses on “local” states, which, before the CRM, enforced racial domination of Black people in three ways: segregation, defense of the interests of landlords and employers against sharecroppers and workers, and disenfranchisement – the last being “the key to the stability and effectiveness of the racial state.” Through a statistical analysis of voter registration, he concludes that “cotton planters and white farmers were the chief architects and beneficiaries of the racial state” (James 1988: 205). Regina Werum (1999) employs and further develops James’ notion of the southern racial state by incorporating elements of the social movements literature. Through a case study of the local implementation of the 1917 Smith–Hughes Act in three southern states, she not only affirms James’ findings on the significance of local white elites but also demonstrates that Black political mobilization, through the church, made a difference in rendering vocational training more accessible to Black people. The implication is that Black political agency cannot be ignored in studies of the racial state, even in inhospitable contexts like the South well before the CRM.

Though laudable for its explicit development of the racial state concept and its theoretical attention to the “local” level and to class structure, James’ (1988: 206) “local-state” theory leaves other questions open. How is the local or regional racial state/s, if it/they can be characterized as state/s, articulated to the US state as a whole, and what is its racial character? The theory also does not explain the crises that bring about change to, and eventually dismantlement of, the racial state: they emanate largely from beyond the theory’s purview – from outside the South, for example. Werum’s (1999) incorporation of social movement theories may help us to think more about how endogenous forces, such as subaltern mobilization, can restructure the racial state. Another question concerns “colorblind” policies: if they are the hallmark of liberal democratic states, how does James’ theory reconcile, for instance, the southern racial state’s “mechanisms of black disenfranchisement [that] had to be ‘color blind’ in form but color sensitive in substance” (James 1988: 197)? Since this is precisely how Omi and Winant and many others characterize the US racial state of the contemporary post-CRM moment, James’ (1988) and his and
Redding’s (2005) conceptual cleaving of racial and liberal states may require rethinking. Finally, whereas racial meanings are central to Omi and Winant’s theory, they are absent in James’ (1988). The semantic content of anti-Black racism is implicitly assumed while the theory concerns itself with how the state enforces anti-Black policies favorable to powerful white class actors.9

Though, like James, concerned with the racial state at a more local level, Noel Cazenave (2011) shifts the focus from the Jim Crow to the CRM era and from the rural South to the urban North, disabusing any assumption that the US racial state is confined to the pre-CRM South. Working at the intersection of what he refers to as urban, racism, and racial state theories, he develops the concept of urban racial state. He acknowledges Omi and Winant, and James, but laments the “slow” and “intellectually disappointing” progress of theories of the racial state: “Much of the work in the area is descriptive, with little attempt to flesh out what precisely is meant by the racial state, how it works, and why” (Cazenave 2011: 22). Narrowing the object of inquiry to cities, he proceeds to build correctives into his definition of the urban racial state: “political structure and processes of a city and its suburbs that manage race relations in ways that foster and sustain both its own immediate political interests, and ultimately, white racial supremacy.” Beyond city government, his political structure includes “numerous links to other organizations and institutions that overlap with the state and are essential to its operations (e.g., courts, city and regional commissions, school districts, private foundations, university-based research centers, various agencies of the federal racial state and of state-government-level racial states, etc.).” The urban racial state “regulat[es] ... race relations within its borders” to maintain and further white racial supremacy.10 It does so in three mutually nonexclusive modes: racially oblivious, racially ameliorative, and racially repressive (Cazenave 2011: 25–26, 30).11

Though scarcely citing it, Cazenave’s theory is largely concordant with Omi and Winant’s. For example, the latter’s notion of an unstable equilibrium grafts onto the urban racial state’s racially oblivious mode, while absorption and insulation are what happens in its racially ameliorative mode. But aside from the different scales, the United States as a whole versus cities, there are three

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9 Given the state-centered theories prevailing in the 1980s, the lack of attention to meaning was not atypical. The cultural turn in state theories would not take off until the 1990s (Steinmetz 1999). As noted already, this cultural turn, however, did not much entail a turn toward a serious engagement with race.

10 Cazenave defines white supremacy as “the highly organized system of color and ‘race’ based group privilege that was established and is maintained through both force (e.g., the police and the court system) and hegemonic means (i.e., widely held beliefs that provide the ideological justification for the attainment and sustenance of the racial status quo)” (2011: 24–25).

11 Although he does not theorize the racial state in explicit terms, Leland Saito’s (2009) detailed study of three US cities analyzes the seeming paradox of racial exclusion through race-neutral public policies in the contemporary moment.
major differences regarding the how and the why of the racial state. By concentrating on the executive branch of governments of two relatively small cities – Syracuse, NY, and New Haven, CT – from the mid-1950s to the late 1960s in relation to community action programs, Cazenave (2011: 29) gives a fine-grained analysis of the dynamics between the urban racial state, “African American protest,” and “white backlash” that goes beyond ideological qua political conflicts at the heart of Omi and Winant’s empirical application of their theory. As can be seen above, he also considers state coercion, or repression, as a continuing, routine mode of racial governance and not an increasingly outmoded one. Finally, Cazenave much more explicitly names the raison d’être of the racial state: the maintenance and advancement of white supremacy.

Taking this last idea further, Glenn Bracey II, in a 2015 article, outlines a “critical race theory of state” that challenges Omi and Winant head-on. Against any notion of state autonomy, relative or otherwise, he “adopts an instrumentalist position”: “the state is a tool created, maintained, and used by whites to advance their collective racial interests” (Bracey 2015: 558, emphasis in original). Making explicit the various implicit insights of critical race theory, rooted in legal studies (e.g., Bell 1992, 2004; Crenshaw 2011; Delgado and Stefancic 1994, 2001; Gotanda 1991; Matsuda 1987), and developing them in express contradistinction to racial formation theory, he advances five additional “tenets” of his theory: “Every aspect of the state is racialized”; “The state is white institutional space and, thus, inherently white racist”; “With respect to racial justice, the state only changes in accordance with the principles of interest-convergence”; “Boundaries … between state and non-state … actors are fluid and contingent”; “Each of these elements is permanent” (Bracey 2015: 563–564).

Strangely undiscussed by Cazenave (2011) is the work of Jill Quadagno (1990, 1994, 2000), specifically The Color of Welfare, which also examines community action programs, among other policy measures. One reason may be that Quadagno’s (1994) well-known study of the War on Poverty does not explicitly theorize the racial state; the only references to it are through James (1988). Yet there is a robust implicit theory. In the concluding chapter, she writes in the broadest terms about the character of the US state: “I believe that only Gunnar Myrdal has correctly identified the more important motor of change, the governing force from the nation’s founding to the present: the politics of racial inequality. The upheavals that periodically alter the nation’s institutional arrangements stem from the contradictions between an egalitarian ethos and anti-democratic practices that reproduce racial inequality” (Quadagno 1994: 188). Even confined to “political theorists who attempt to

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12 For a review of books on race and the welfare state that were published in the mid to late 1990s, most of which did not directly address the racial state, see Manza (2000). For a more recent racial analysis of New Deal and Fair Deal social policies, by a political scientist, see Katznelson (2005).
trace the grand panorama of American politics,” the “only” status attributed to Myrdal rings hyperbolic, but the overall point is generally in step with Omi and Winant’s claim about the US racial state.

Focusing on the welfare state, however, Quadagno addresses a different literature, and her periodization follows a different rhythm. As bound up as welfare has been with race, she observes that the scholarly literature on the welfare state disregards it. One school relies on the long prevalence of antistatist, individualist liberal values to explain the underdevelopment of US welfare programs. Another faults the political weakness of the working class, as evidenced by the lack of a labor party. A variation is that because the United States “democratized before it industrialized” (e.g., “universal” suffrage), the working class failed to mobilize around a fight for rights, including social rights. While granting the explanations’ partial utility, Quadagno points to the elephant in the room: in each case, the seemingly unignorable force of race is ignored.\(^{13}\) The liberal-values argument does not account for the important counterexamples of big-government social programs and public mobilizations for them, the varying outcomes hinging largely on race. The political weakness of the working class stems to a great extent from racial divisions. And the so-called early democratization is only true for white males: seen in this light, “instead of being one of the first nations to democratize, the United States was among the last” (Quadagno 1994: 7).

Starting from the premise that welfare states not only reduce but also produce and reproduce social inequalities, Quadagno reviews how the New Deal capitulated to the dominant white interests of the South and deepened racial inequalities through its housing, labor, and social insurance policies, for example, exempting agricultural and domestic workers – categories to which most Black people belonged – from the main benefits of the Social Security Act of 1935. She interprets the War on Poverty, heavily influenced by and in many ways merged with the CRM, as an effort to redress the racial inequalities of the New Deal. But a “white backlash” thwarted community action, housing, job training, and child care programs and prevented the extension of full social citizenship to Black people. Overall, Quadagno would agree with Omi and Winant and others that the US racial state still obtains: “Among the distinctive features of American state formation, none is more salient than the failure to extend full citizenship to African Americans.” Yet perhaps not unlike Omi and Winant’s ambivalent mix of optimism and pessimism about the future of the US racial state, her conclusion appears to hold out the hope, and possibility, that US

\(^{13}\) In his study of the Housing Act of 1934, Kevin Fox Gotham (2000) follows a similar strategy. Through the concept of racialization, he critiques and synthesizes three major perspectives on the state that have ignored race: business dominance, state-centered, and Marxist theories. The study leans heavily on Omi and Winant (1994), as well as Bonilla-Silva (1997), in its discussion of racialization but disavows the notion of an “inherently” racial state. Whether and to what extent a state is a racial state is purely a historically contingent matter (Gotham 2000: 294). Jarvis A. Hall (2003) outlines a more elaborate synthesis.
state formation can “live up to the values of the American creed” (Quadagno 1994: 191, 197).

Beyond sociology, there are two major theories of the racial state that overlap with and are in close conversation with Omi and Winant’s. Political scientists Desmond King and Rogers Smith (2005; see also 2011) posit a theory of US political development that eschews the concept of the racial state but nonetheless shares the same empirical object of analysis. The theories differ in a few ways. Whereas Omi and Winant stress the struggle between social movements and the state as the central dynamic in racial politics, King and Smith see the opposing forces as racial institutional orders – two shifting, rival political coalitions made up of many state and nonstate actors: a white supremacist order and an egalitarian transformative order. As a consequence, King and Smith find the state to be much less unitary in relation to race. They also do not share Omi and Winant’s view that the US state is inherently racial (King and Smith 2005: 75; 2011: 31). Like many others, they find that the struggle between the rival orders or, as later redesignated, policy alliances has undergone three distinct phases: slavery, Jim Crow, and modern.14 Like other liberals, King and Smith hold out the “hope to make E Pluribus Unum not just its venerable national motto, but also its twenty-first-century achievement.” Staking out a centrist position, they locate the hopeful path as lying somewhere in between rival policy alliances – in “combined, compromised policies” (2011: 12, 31).

The scope of philosopher David Theo Goldberg’s thoughts on the racial state is grander, encompassing temporally the entire modern era and geographically the world over: “I argue that race is integral to the emergence, development, and transformations (conceptually, philosophically, materially) of the modern nation-state. Race marks and orders the modern nation-state, and so state projects, more or less from its point of conceptual and institutional emergence.” In this historical expanse, he identifies the mainspring of the racial state: its “commitment to homogeneity” and power to exclude racially (Goldberg 2002a: 4–5).15 Racial states are not in any sense narrowly political. “Oversee[ing] a range of institutional, definitive, and disciplinary practices,” they seep and pervade:

For one, racial states define populations into racially identified groups . . . more or less formally through census taking, law, and policy, in and through bureaucratic forms, and administrative practices . . . . Second, racial states regulate social, political, economic, legal, and cultural relations between those racially defined, invariably between white citizens and those identified as neither white nor citizen, and most usually as black (or

14 In King and Smith (2011), they rename their central concept, from racial institutional order to racial policy alliance. Smith’s (1997) earlier study of citizenship endorsed a “multiple traditions” framework with three competing strands: liberal, republican, and ascriptive.

15 Agreeing with and extending Goldberg on this point, Pem Davidson Buck (2012: 105) adds an emphasis on contemporary United States “as enforcer of global corporate empire.”
more or less with blacks) . . . Relatedly, racial states govern populations identified in racial terms . . . Fourth, racial states manage economically . . . Finally, racial states not only regulate but also claim to mediate relations between those (self-)identified as “white” or “European” and those declared “nonwhite” or “Native.” (Goldberg 2002b: 242–243, emphases in original)16

Loosely resembling King and Smith, Goldberg identifies two racial traditions in both theory and practice of state formation: naturalist and historicist. The former defines the racially dominated as naturally inferior, while the latter assumes them to be historically, developmentally behind. No state or era is wholly naturalist or historicist, but less coercive states and more recent times, since the mid-nineteenth century, bend toward the historicist (Goldberg 2002a: 74–75). Further, the past century, especially in the postwar period, coincides with the rise of raceless states, racial states that purport to be colorblind (Goldberg 2002a: 74–75, Chapter 8). No exception to his theory, the United States is “the quintessentially modern state,” which is to say the quintessentially racial state (Furumoto and Goldberg 2001: 111).

THE RACIAL STATE IN A POSSIBLE SOCIOLOGY

In most, particularly liberal, works examined thus far, there is a certain optimism, whether a glimmer or a glow, for the future of the US state that exceeds justification in its actual past and present.17 Most manifestly, King and Smith seek and see the prospect of a postracist tomorrow in some third-way compromise between already existing politics, at least as of the early 2010s. As noted above, even avowed leftists Omi and Winant (2015) subscribe to an overall narrative of freedom and progress, from racial dictatorship to racial democracy, albeit somewhat more equivocally in the third edition of their book.18 This underlying sanguinity is, we suspect, related to what is common not only to the works reviewed above but to the social sciences in general: the assumption that the United States has been and is a nation-state.

16 Anthony Marx’s study of South Africa, United States, and Brazil undertakes a broadly similar project of seeing how “race making was tied to the imperative of nation-state building and challenges to it.” However, his conceptualization of the role of race in nation-state formation is more circumscribed and instrumentalist: white elite’s “consolidation of state institutions and popular loyalty to them to ensure stability and development, using race selectively as a means to that end” (Marx 1998: 181).

17 The most obvious exception is Bracey (2015).

18 Holding on to the progress narrative but tempering it, with more attention to ongoing state violence, Omi and Winant add, for instance, “In the old days, the racial state could be more overt and violent. In the ‘post-civil rights’ era, the racial state cannot merely dominate; it must seek hegemony . . . Yet state violence, confinement, and aggressive and repressive policing of people of color all continue; this is how hegemony and subalternity are maintained: through a combination of repression and incorporation” (2015: 147; emphasis in original). See also Winant (2015).
To take the most well-known definition, nation is an “imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign.” It entails direct membership and “is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship” (Anderson 1991: 6–7, emphasis added). Hyphened coextensively to any number of definitions of the state, like Tilly’s or Weber’s, nation-state implies a politically uniform population of members or citizens, and the territory over which the nation-state claims sovereignty is, as a corollary, also politically uniform. Of course, no actual nation-state fits this ideal type precisely, but our contention in relation to the United States is that the misfit is not a matter of degree but of kind: the United States has been and is intrinsically at odds with it.

In place of the false hope of a nation-state resolving its “American dilemma” by making good on its promise, we propose a radical shift to reconceptualizing the United States as an empire-state. In contrast to nation-states, empire-states are not horizontally uniform but hierarchically differentiated (Cooper 2005). They entail the usurpation of political sovereignty of foreign territories and peoples. They encompass spaces of unequal political status and, through de jure and de facto practices, peoples with differential access to rights and privileges. In a study of constitutional law, for example, the first author (Jung 2015: Chapter 3) demonstrates how US state formation has always, from the very beginning, entailed the racial construction of colonial spaces (e.g., incorporated and unincorporated territories, Indian reservations) and the racial subjection of various colonized peoples (e.g., Native Americans, Puerto Ricans) and noncolonized peoples (e.g., Black people, Chinese).

If the modern state is equated with the nation-state, as Goldberg expressly posits, his statement on its formation may be plausible: “Homogeneity, it turns out, is the centralizing force, the grounding assumption, of modern state formation” (2002a: 250). But nation-state has only recently, in the postwar era, overtaken empire-state as the dominant political form in the world (Cooper 2005), and the United States goes on as an empire-state, both colonial (i.e., territorial, formal) and imperial (i.e., nonterritorial, informal). To be clear, this approach does not deny the existence or significance of “American” nationalism but instead argues that the misrecognition of the United States as a nation-state and the concomitant denial of empire, foremost by the state itself, are an integral part of it.

An empire-state approach to the United States is historically more apt and establishes a different and firmer footing for the claim that the United States is inherently a racial state: racial domination and inequalities are not anomalies, betrayals, relics, or contradictions to be overcome by an ever more perfect nation-state but the basic building blocks and products of a modern empire-state. The sine qua non principle of empire-states is not horizontal homogeneity but hierarchical heterogeneity. From this theoretical vantage point, that

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19 On the distinction between colonialism and imperialism, see Steinmetz (2005).
boundaries of citizenship, body politic, democracy, nation, civil society, and hegemony are not, and are not designed to be, coextensive with those of the state becomes obvious and readily visible. The former intrinsically fall short of the latter, and the shortfall is racial. Put differently, the US state is founded on death – the “social death” of enslaved Black people and the genocide of Native American peoples. A condition defined by “the permanent, violent domination of natally alienated and generally dishonored persons” (Patterson 1982: 13), the social death of slavery, by the modern era, had become for Europeans “a fate worse than [physical] death and, as such, was reserved for non-Europeans,” Africans singularly above all (Eltis 1993: 1409). Structured by the “logic of elimination,” genocidal practices of US settler colonialism have ranged from literal extermination to assimilation – from “The only good Indian is a dead Indian” to “Kill the Indian in him and save the man,” in the infamous words of two nineteenth-century military officers (Wolfe 2006: 397).

The “color line” between life (and liberty and the pursuit of happiness) and these unnatural deaths is violence, and the legitimacy of that violence, as should be clear, does not derive from those subjected to it. Their consent is beside the point. For radical theorists in Black studies such as Saidiya Hartman (1997), Jared Sexton (2010), Hortense Spillers (2003), João H. Costa Vargas (2008), and Frank Wilderson III (2003, 2008), all notably outside sociology, post-1865 marks less a time after slavery than slavery’s “afterlife” (Hartman 2007: 6), and coercion, not consent or hegemony, continues to paradigmatically define Black people’s relationship to the state.21 In other words, beneath the surface currents of history, the ebbs and flows of freedom gains and losses, is the deep-water current of “white-over-black.” “Slavery is with us still,” Anthony Paul Farley reminds us. “We are haunted by slavery. We are animated by slavery. White-over-black is slavery and segregation and neosegregation and every situation in which the distribution of material or spiritual goods follows the colorline” (Farley 2004: 221, emphases in original).

With regard to race and US “democracy,” Bill Strickland asks and answers, At bottom, the question that underlies such an inquiry is quite simple: since public policy and constitutional law in America have sanctioned slavery, segregation, discrimination, and institutional racism, how is it possible to reconcile the democratic theory of the state with the Black civic experience? . . . [A]lthough a taboo subject in conventional American appraisals, the chief means employed by the state and society to

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20 Nearly silent on racial slavery and settler colonialism, despite thriving subfields of historical sociology and sociology of race, sociology is particularly ill-equipped to reckon with the implications of these self-evident truths. For a notable exception that acknowledges both seriously, see Glenn (2015); on racial capitalism and settler colonialism in relation to Palestine and South Africa, see Clarno (2017).

21 Reflecting on the meaning of Trayvon Martin’s slaying, Marshall (2012) thinks with many of these authors to analyze the “criminalization of blackness . . . as a political institution of the post-enslavement liberal order.”
Coercion is not the only method at the racial state’s disposal, but it is also far from exceptional. The criminal justice system, particularly its recently and rapidly expanded carceral wing, is gaining attention both within and beyond sociology; studies that explicitly mention the racial state include Alexander (2010), Behrens, Uggen, and Manza (2003), Berger (2013), Gilmore (1999, 2002, 2007), Inwood (2015), Marable, Steinberg, and Middlemass (2007), Rodríguez (2007), and Vargas and McHarris (2017), but the literature across the disciplines is now substantial. In the wake of the Black Lives Matter movement, critical studies of policing and mobilization against it that expressly invoke and further theorize the racial state will no doubt proliferate (Derickson 2016; Hooker 2016), for the underside of the “liberal-democratic ‘face’ of the state” is “a second face of the American state that is at least as significant in the political lives of communities like Ferguson: the activities of governing institutions and officials that exercise social control and encompass various modes of coercion, containment, repression, surveillance, regulation, predation, discipline, and violence” (Soss and Weaver 2017: 567). Scrutinized anew, state institutions of ostensibly “soft power,” such as education and welfare, reveal themselves to be ordinarily coercive in reproducing racial domination (Gustafson 2011; Roberts 2001, 2012; Wun 2016).

From a racial empire-state approach, the widely taken-for-granted assumption that antiracism demands full inclusion by and into the US “nation-state” breaks down once we recognize the ongoing history of overland and overseas colonialism without which there is literally no US state. The original 13 colonies broke away from Great Britain “in large part, in order to free themselves from imperial constraints that restrained their own colonizing (or to use the preferred anodyne phrase, their own ‘westward movement’)” (Tomlins 2001: 365), and every moment of territorial expansion has been one of further colonization. To assume that the freedom struggles and dreams of colonized peoples, such as Native Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Puerto Ricans, have centered on full inclusion or assimilation into the US state would be a grave error – but an easy one, given that sociology of the US state is embarrassingly impoverished in dealing with race and colonialism.23 Political sociologists who are theoretically interested in the racial state can ill afford to ignore the many works done outside the discipline in this area, even if most of them do not explicitly invoke the concept (e.g., Burnett and Marshall 2001;22

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22 In addition to the direct application of racial violence, the state also resorts to violence when it chooses not to stop racial violence perpetrated by nonstate actors, as it did in relation to lynchings between Reconstruction and the CRM (Kato 2012). For a more recent example, in Greensboro, NC, in 1979, see Inwood (2012).

23 Baldoz (2011), Go (2004), and Kwon (2017) are exceptions. For references to additional exceptions, see Go (2009, 2016).

The federal government has long exercised “plenary powers” over American Indians and inhabitants of “unincorporated territories” (one among several euphemistic categories for colonies). Put differently, even though almost all of them were eventually accorded US citizenship through treaties and statutes, with or without their consent, they compose categories that are legally, formally distinct and afford them different and lesser rights and privileges in relation to the US state: they are, in short, colonial subjects. “Aliens,” or migrant noncitizens, are also similarly subject to federal plenary powers, and all three categories are, and have been, implicitly and explicitly racialized (Aleinikoff 2002; Saito 2007). But this political reality is lost on the US sociology of immigration and immigrants that is overly concerned with assimilation (Espiritu 2006; Jung 2009, 2015; Treitler 2015). If the state asserts a “monopoly on the legitimate authority to control movement” across and within its boundaries (Torpey 2000: 46), and the US state’s exercise of this authority has been incontrovertibly racial, the link between the racial state and migration/migrants should be of intense theoretical concern, which recent studies are beginning to take up. Jake Watson (2017) demonstrates how the postwar racial states of the United States and Britain pursued convergent and then divergent immigration policies on family reunification, as they both faced contradictory pressures of domestic desire to exclude nonwhites and of a new geopolitical order in which explicit racism was no longer legitimate. Foregrounding the racial state as a coercion-wielding organization, John Márquez (2012) proposes the concept of racial state of expendability to analyze the deadly militarization of the southern border with Mexico, and Amada Armenta (2017: 82) examines “the ‘crimmigration’ system . . . the convergence of the criminal justice and immigration enforcement systems,” which subjects Latinxs to mass deportation.

Partially excepting those concerning welfare, criminal justice, and immigration, studies that ground theoretical claims about the racial state in careful empirical investigations of specific “institutions, the policies they carry out, the conditions and rules which support and justify them, and the social relations in which they are embedded” were for long relatively few (Omi and Winant 1994: 83, emphases in original), but we are in the midst of a proliferation of innovative article-length studies that bode well for future monographs and syntheses. Riddling how the United States, relatively limited in military strength and bureaucratic reach, managed to incorporate

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25 Jung, Vargas, and Bonilla-Silva (2011) is an edited volume that gathers a range of such investigations.
the 48 contiguous states of North America by 1912, Paul Frymer directs our attention to federal land policies that “assert[ed] authority over the direction and [deliberate] pace of expansion and settlement”: complementing the use of state violence, these policies “incentivized” and deputized whites to populate and firmly secure their dominance, over Native Americans, Mexicans, and others, in “frontier” territories before incorporating them as states (2014: 134). Opening our eyes to an aspect of racial governance that should have been obvious, Kasey Henricks and Louise Seamster (2017) propose the concept of the racial tax state and identify mechanisms through which taxation produces racial inequalities: enfranchisement, hoarding, abatement, extraction, and redistribution. From a racial empire-state perspective, the retrospective obviousness arises from the fact that the Three-Fifths Clause of the US Constitution dealt with apportionment of “direct taxes” relative to the enslaved as well as “Indians not taxed”; further, tariffs were the immediate issue in Downes v. Bidwell (1901) and other Insular Cases, through which the Supreme Court determined and calibrated the political statuses of overseas colonies and their inhabitants at the turn of the twentieth century. On the informal, imperial side of the US empire-state, scholars are likewise awakening to the unrecognized centrality of racism in international relations and theories of them (Henderson 2013; Thompson 2013). Other examples of imperialism beyond as well as within the official boundaries of the US state abound, both historically and contemporarily. The internment of the Japanese during the Second World War would be a historical case within US boundaries, and the so-called “war on terror” would be a current one both inside and outside US borders (de Genova 2012; Lee 2007; Ngai 2004; Rana 2011, 2016; Razack 2012; Rodríguez 2007; Saito 2007; Singh 2012; Volpp 2002).

Additional recent works that cite the racial state, in passing or in depth, cover topics of great range, many of which could be fruitfully reconsidered from a racial empire-state approach to the United States and all of which are compatible with it: categorization (Browne and Odem 2012; Haney-López 2005), education (Aggarwal 2016; McCarthy 2008, 2009), environment (Kurtz 2009), housing (Wyly 2010; Wyly et al. 2012), Hurricane Katrina (Camp 2009; Giroux 2006), intersectionality with gender and sexuality (Alexander-Floyd 2007; Boris 1995; Glenn 2002; Kandaswamy 2012; Reddy 2011), labor (Cruz 2014), miscegenation laws (Pascoe 2010), transnational racial ideology in Korea and Korean America (Kim 2006), Vietnamese refugees (Espiritu 2006), and voting rights (Marshall 2014). Beyond engaging and adding to their respective literatures, the pressing task for sociology is to incorporate these studies’ various insights and rework, and even radicalize, the generative theories of Omi and Winant and others toward a more thoroughgoing analysis and critique of the racial state.

26 On taxation, slavery, and its afterlife, see Einhorn (2006).
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VI. Globalization, Power, and Resistance


Democracy and Autocracy in the Age of Populism

Carlos de la Torre

The twenty-first century might be known as the populist century. No longer confined to Latin America or to the margins of European and American politics, populism spread to Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and, with Donald Trump’s election, to the cradle of liberal democracy. Washington – and not Peronist Buenos Aires or Hugo Chávez’s Caracas – is the new international center of populism. Geert Wilders hailed Trump’s election as a “revolution,” while Marine Le Pen talked about the “emergence of a new world.” It remains to be seen whether Trump’s election will spark a wave of radical right-wing populists to power, or on the contrary that his autocratic manners and policies will lead voters in other parts of the world to turn away from populist mavericks.

Scholars have used the term “populism” to describe all these leaders that came to power since 2000. The list includes politicians from the right and the left, and nations from the North as well as the Global South. Donald Trump in the US, Hugo Chávez and Nicolás Maduro in Venezuela, Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil, Evo Morales in Bolivia, Rafael Correa in Ecuador, Rodrigo Duterte in the Philippines, Thaksin Shinawatra in Thailand, Nestor and Cristina Kirchner in Argentina, Viktor Orbán in Hungary, Recep Tayyip Erdogan in Turkey, Silvio Berlusconi in Italy, Narendra Modi in India, the late Michael Sata in Zambia, Abdoulaye Wade in Senegal, Jacob Zuma and Julius Malema in South Africa, Raila Odinga in Kenya, Alexis Tsipras in Greece. The list of populist parties seeking power is even longer. To make matters more complicated, if not more confusing, most pundits use the term “populism” to describe parties and leaders that they consider radical, irrational, and dangerous. Yet liberal politicians sometimes use the populist label to describe themselves in positive terms. Criticizing candidate Trump, President Barack Obama said, “I care about poor people who are working really hard and don’t have a chance to advance . . . I suppose that makes me a populist” (quoted in Roberts 2016: 69).
This chapter analyzes the relationships between populism, democracy, and authoritarianism. It first shows that differently from the recent past when scholars vehemently disagreed on what populism is, nowadays three theoretical approaches are used: political strategy, ideational, and discourse. The first section analyzes how these theories explain why populism emerges, its main characteristics, and how they interpret its relationship with democracy. Then the chapter explores the conditions that allow or do not allow populist ruptures of existing institutional arrangements. The following section analyzes how different constructions of the category “the people” lead to inclusive or exclusionary variants of populism. The chapter then studies populist organizations in civil society that go from clientelist networks to grassroots associations. The last section describes how populist practices in power undermined pluralism, and explores the conditions under which populism could lead to the slow death of democracy and its displacement toward authoritarianism. The conclusions review the tensions between inclusion and exclusion, and democracy and authoritarianism in populism.

Theories of Populism

Even though there is no agreement on one definition or approach, and most books and papers on populism start by recognizing and often complaining about the multiplicity of meanings of the term, three approaches are dominant nowadays: political, ideational, and discursive theories. These approaches replaced historicist theories of populism that linked it to the early phases of modernization, and/or to particular socioeconomic policies such as import substitution industrialization. Since populism is not confined to particular historical periods, or to particular economic policies, the new dominant approaches are useful for comparative and cross-regional studies.

Political Theories

Political theorists argued that the domain of populism is politics because it is “a specific way of competing for and exercising political power” (Weyland 2001: 11). They studied populism as a political style or as a political strategy. Michael Kazin (1995: 6) defined populism as a strategy of political mobilization and a political style that employed a mode of persuasion based on a language that conceived the people as a “noble assemblage,” and their “self-serving and undemocratic” elite opponents who “seek to mobilize the former against the latter.” Benjamin Moffitt (2016a: 43–45) defined populism as a political style “that features and appeals to the people vs. the elite,” which uses what elites consider bad manners such as accent, body language, bad taste, and the performance of what are perceived as crisis, breakdown, or threat. These performances are related to distrust in the complexities of modern governance.
Populists offer swift action rather than negotiation and deliberation (Moffitt 2016b: 56).

Definitions of populism as a political style focused on the mobilization and expressive aspects of populism, including its discourses and performances. According to Weyland (2001: 12) “defining populism as political style therefore casts too wide a net and hinders the clear delimitation of cases.” With the goal of providing a minimum definition that would eliminate conceptual disagreement and would advance the accumulation of knowledge, Weyland (2001: 14) defined populism “as a political strategy through which a personalistic leader seeks or exercises government power based on direct, unmediated, uninstitutionalized support from large numbers of mostly unorganized followers.” Rather than hewing to any particular political ideology, or to the right and left distinctions, populist leaders are pragmatic and opportunistic in their quest to conquer and retain power.

Political theories of populism correctly emphasized the importance of charismatic political leaders specifically. Without charismatic leaders, as Kirk Hawkins (2010: 43) recognized, populist movements “may prove ineffective and wither away.” These theories were useful in developing typologies of Latin American populism, and exploring how it was adapted to different developmental strategies: nationalist and state-led import substitution industrialization in the 1940s, neoliberalism in the 1990s, and the return of state-led development and nationalism in the first decades of the twenty-first century.

While studies of populism as a political strategy showed that leaders and followers were not always linked by formal institutions, they tended to exaggerate the supposedly unmediated relationship between leaders and followers. Populist parties in Latin America, for example, were organized through formal bureaucratic party networks and clientelist informal networks that distributed resources, information, and jobs to the poor. Like other political parties, populists exchanged services for votes. But in addition to populist exchanges populist leaders and their parties used a discourse that portrayed common people as the essence of the nation creating political and cultural identities.

Political theories of populism use liberal notions of democracy, and therefore can show the conditions under which populism could lead to inclusion or to authoritarianism. When populism first emerged it included citizens previously excluded from the political community. Under Juan Domingo Perón, for example, voter turnout dramatically surged from 18 percent of the population in 1946 to 50 percent in 1955 (Schamis 2013: 155). His administration expanded the franchise by giving women the right to vote in 1951. Perón’s government redistributed wealth and increased the share of wages in the national Gross Domestic Product from 37 percent in 1946 to 47 percent in 1955. Populist inclusion under Perón did not foster or strengthen democracy. As other populists, he concentrated power in the hands of the presidency,
attacked the media, aimed to control civil society, and pushed democracy toward authoritarianism.

Political theories have normative and theoretical tools to analyze under what conditions populism could lead to autocracy (Levitsky and Loxton 2013; Weyland 2013), yet their narrow institutionalist view of democracy is not the best to take into account populist critiques to real existing democracies. Populists promise to correct the deficits of participation and representation of liberal democracies. Populists challenged the appropriation of political sovereignty by political and economic elites, the reduction of politics to an administrative enterprise, and the depoliticization of democracy. Populists invoked the transformative potential of constituent power over constituted power. Liberals are rightly afraid of the dangers of appeals to the unbounded power of the sovereign people to create new constitutions, and institutions. Yet they tend to idealize the institutions of constituted power. The powerful populist critique of the malfunctions and deficits of democracy needs to be addressed without idealizing the existing institutional system of liberal democracy.

Populism as a Set of Ideas

Like political theories, ideational approaches aim to construct minimal definitions that could be used for empirical analysis. Instead of focusing on the strategies or style of leaders, or on their charisma, they study populism as a set of ideas of “how the world is and should be” (Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2017: 6). Kirk Hawkins (2010: 5) wrote, “populism is a set of fundamental beliefs about the nature of the political world.” Cass Mudde (2004: 543) defined populism as “an ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, ‘the pure people’ versus ‘the corrupt elite’, and which argues that politics should be an expression of the volonté générale (general will) of the people.” Lacking the sophistication of other ideologies like socialism or liberalism it is a thin ideology and could be combined with other beliefs and ideas of politics. Therefore it could be associated with nativism and neoliberalism in Austria, Belgium, or the Netherlands, or with anti-neoliberal and antiracist platforms with Syriza in Greece and Podemos in Spain. The role of the leader is not central to this approach, because it focused on the ideologies of parties as well as of the leader.

The ideational approach has been used to distinguish between inclusionary and exclusionary forms of populism (Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2013). The former aimed to include the materially, politically, and symbolically the excluded, while right-wing variants in Australia, Europe, and the US aimed for the exclusion of Muslims, and nonwhite immigrants. The ideological approach was used to measure populist discourse empirically (Hawkins 2010).

Ideational definitions of populism used the term “ideology” as a catchall concept (Moffitt 2016a: 19). This is problematic because populists have not
written foundational texts, and it is difficult to conceptualize a distinct populist ideology (Moffitt 2016a: 20). By subsuming all cases where a “populist ideology” was used as cases of populism “they participated in what Giovanni Sartori has termed conceptual stretching” overextending coverage and losing the connotative precision of the concept (Jansen 2015: 165). George W. Bush, for example, scores a high populist grade in Hawkins’ (2010) measurements of populist discourse when he was clearly talking about an external enemy quite different from Chávez’s enemies. Ideational theories naively assume that populism is a “stable property of political actors, and that we can therefore classify some politicians and parties as populist and others as non-populist” (Bonikowski 2016: 13). Hence this theory cannot account for the dynamic nature of populism, and for the fact that actors use populist discourses selectively depending on the audience and context. In their effort not to make normative assumptions about the relationship between populism and democracy, Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser relied on empiricist arguments that see populism as both a corrective and threat to democracy. It is a stretch of the imagination to see the likes of Wilders, Le Pen, or Trump as correctives to democracy. Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser’s lack of a normative theory of democracy prevents them from analyzing the internal logic of populism. The populist view of politics as struggles between antagonistic enemies, while effective in rupturing existing institutional arrangements, often leads to antipluralist practices and policies that under conditions of weak institutions and fragile civil societies could lead to the slow death of democracy and its replacement with authoritarianism.

Discourse Theory

Instead of focusing on the content of populist ideologies or on its class base, Ernesto Laclau developed a formal theory of populism and its logic of articulation. Populism is a political practice that creates popular political identities. The “people” is “a political subject constructed in and through populist politics” (Beasley-Murray 2010: 45). In Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory Laclau (1977: 172–173) defined populism as a discourse that articulates popular democratic interpellations as antagonistic to the dominant ideology. Populist discourse polarizes the social field into two antagonistic and irreconcilable poles: the people versus the power bloc. The types of populist ruptures, according to Laclau, are not theoretically predetermined, and could lead to fascism, socialism, or to Perón’s Bonapartism.

In his book On Populist Reason Laclau contrasted everyday, mundane, and administrative politics with those exceptional moments of a populist rupture understood as the political. He argued that the division of society into two antagonistic camps was required to put an end to exclusionary institutional systems and to forge an alternative order (Laclau 2005a: 122). He contrasted the logic of difference and the logic of equivalence. The first presupposes that
“any legitimate demand can be satisfied in a non-antagonistic, administrative way” (Laclau 2005b: 36). There are demands that could not be resolved individually and aggregate themselves forming an equivalent chain. Under the logic of equivalence “all the demands, in spite of their differential character, tend to aggregate themselves” becoming “fighting demands” that cannot be resolved by the institutional system (Laclau 2005b: 37). The social space splits into two camps: power and the underdog. The logic of populist articulation is anti-institutional, it is based on the construction of an enemy, and in an equivalent logic that leads to the rupture of the system.

“Laclau’s project is a defense of populism” (Beasley-Murray 2010: 41). He failed because he relied on Carl Schmitt’s view of politics as the struggle between friend and enemy. Under these constructs it is difficult to imagine democratic adversaries who have legitimate institutional spaces. Enemies as in Schmitt’s view might need to be manufactured and destroyed. Moreover, as Andrew Arato (2015: 42) argued, populism might involve the extraction of the mythical people – as constructed and imagined by the leader or the theorist of populism – from the empirically existing people. By giving normative priority to populist rupture, positive reformist improvements are ruled out by normative eschatological constructions of revolutionary politics as the dream of total discontinuity with a given order.

Laclau and his followers developed a normative theory of populism. They propose that with the global rise of neoliberalism understood as a rational and scientific mode of governance, public debate on the political economy was closed and replaced by the imposition of the criteria of experts. When all parties accepted neoliberalism and the rule of technocrats, citizens could not choose between alternatives. Politics was reduced to an administrative enterprise (Stavrakakis 2014: 506). Populism, they argue, entails the renaissance of politics. It is a revolt against technocratic reasoning, the surrendering of national sovereignty to supranational institutions, and of the popular will to neoliberal political elites. The task of the left, they argue, is to construct popular democratic subjects. Otherwise right-wing populists would give expression to popular grievances by politicizing fears of migration and multiculturalism (Errejón and Mouffe 2015).

Whereas Laclau and his followers were right in arguing that populism politicized neoliberal administrative orders, populist Schmittian views of the political are dangerous because they are antipluralist, and in the end antidemocratic. Populism attacks the institutions that are “an indispensable bulwark against political despotism” (Wolin 2006: 251). Constitutionalism, the separation of powers, freedom of speech, assembly, and the press are necessary to the politics of participatory democracy, to strengthen the public sphere, and to allow independent social movements to push for their democratizing demands. Populists in power, even those that promised more democracy, targeted precisely the constitutional framework of democracy. Their systematic attacks on civil rights and liberties, their attempts to control and
co-opt civil society and the public sphere, pushed democracy into authoritarianism.

Building on the three approaches to populism previously discussed, I understand populism as political discourses and strategies that aim to rupture institutional systems by polarizing society into two antagonistic camps. I differentiate social movements that use a populist rhetoric of the people against the establishment from populism. Without the presence of a leader, as Nadia Urbinati (2014: 129) wrote, “a popular movement that uses a populist rhetoric (i.e., polarization and antirepresentative discourse) is not yet populism.” Populist leaders claim that they alone represent and even embody the interests, will, and aspirations of a homogeneous people. All of those who challenge their claim to be the incarnation of the people are branded as enemies of the people, the leader, and the nation. Populists do not face political adversaries, they confront enemies. As Perón put it, when political adversaries become “enemies of the nation” they are no longer “gentlemen that one should fight fairly but snakes that one can kill in any way” (Finchelstein 2014: 86).

Populist parties seeking power need to be distinguished from populists in power (de la Torre 1992: 395–396). Whereas populists challenge the system or the establishment by promising to give power to the people, once in power they show their true antipluralist and antidemocratic colors. Once in office populists concentrate power in the hands of the executive, disregard the division of power and the rule of law, and attack dissident voices in the public sphere and civil society. When populists get into power in conditions of crises of political representation and with weak democratic institutions they displace democracy toward authoritarianism. In more institutionalized political systems they disfigure democracy by reducing its complexity to a Manichaean struggle between the leader as the embodiment of the people, and its enemies.

This chapter argues that Latin America as the world region where populists have gained power since the 1930s and 40s offers clues to understanding the relationships between populism, democracy, and authoritarianism. In what follows I compare Latin America with other world areas to analyze the conditions under which populist challenges led to ruptures of existing institutional systems. Then I compare different constructions of the category “the people” in the Americas and Europe, and how these constructs led or did not lead to autocratic populism. The following section focuses on populist organizations. The last section explains how populists in power undermined democracy in Latin America and speculates about the future of American democracy under Trump.

**POPULIST RUPTURES**

Populist narratives paint existing institutional arrangements as impediments for the people to express its voice and will. As a consequence, populists aim to overhaul the establishment, promising to give power back to the people.
Narendra Modi and his party the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), for example, challenged and defeated the Indian National Congress and the Nehru dynasty that ran it between 1947 and 2014 (Mietzner 1999). In 2011 Michael Sata, a poorly educated former police constable, ended two decades of rule by the Movement for Multi-Party Democracy (MMD) in Zambia (Resnick 2015: 317). In January 2015 the leftist party Syriza won the elections in Greece with a populist discourse against the neoliberal establishment and its austerity policies.

As Ernesto Laclau explained, the logic of populism is based on the construction of an enemy, it is anti-institutional, and could lead to the rupture of the system. Yet populist challenges do not always lead to ruptures. Populist ruptures took place only when political parties and the institutional framework of democracy were in crises. In Venezuela, Bolivia, and Ecuador populist leaders ruptured the elite consensus that linked neoliberal policies with electoral democracies. Hugo Chávez, Evo Morales, and Rafael Correa overhauled neoliberalism, enacted new constitutions, and displaced traditional political elites.

Differently from the Latin American cases discussed above, when Syriza won the Greek elections in 2015 political parties were in crisis but the institutional framework of liberal democracy was not in disarray. Syriza was not able or willing to break away from supranational organizations like the European Commission and the European Central Bank, to abandon the Euro, or to change the constitution to create new political institutions. Donald Trump captured the Republican Party in a context of relative crisis of political parties but not of a generalized collapse of all democratic institutions. He nonetheless ruptured the elite consensus that linked globalization with limited policies of multicultural recognition to women, nonwhites, and the LGBT communities. Whereas it will be easier to get rid of multiculturalism and “political correctness” to please nationalist, racist, and xenophobic constituencies, it would be more difficult to abandon globalization, especially for an administration committed to the unregulated market and to dismantling the regulatory welfare state.

Venezuela, Bolivia, and Ecuador underwent major crises of political representation. Political parties were perceived as instruments of local and foreign elites that implemented neoliberal policies that increased social inequality. Traditional parties in these nations appeared as “a closed, self-interested, and self-reproducing governing caste insulated from popular needs and concerns” (Roberts 2015: 149). Traditional political parties collapsed as political outsiders rose to power on platforms that promised to eliminate corrupt politicians, use constitution-making to revamp all existing institutions, experiment with participatory forms of democracy, abandon neoliberal orthodoxy, and implement policies to redistribute income.

A second factor that led to populist ruptures was previous widespread popular resistance to neoliberalism. On February 27, 1989, the Venezuelan
Caracazo – a massive insurrection against a hike in the price of gasoline that was brutally repressed with at least 400 people killed – undermined and ultimately destroyed the legitimacy of Venezuela’s two-party system (López Maya and Panzarelli 2013). Between 1997 and 2005, the three elected presidents of Ecuador – Abdalá Bucaram, Jamil Mahuad, and Lucio Gutiérrez – could not finish their terms in office because of massive insurrections against neoliberalism, and political corruption (de la Torre 2010: 177–180). Similarly, Bolivia underwent a cycle of protest and political turmoil that resulted in the collapse of both the party system that was established in 1985 and the neoliberal economic model in the country. Coalitions of rural and urban indigenous organizations, coca growers, and middle-class sectors fought against water privatization, increasing taxation, the forced eradication of coca leaves, and surrendering gas reserves to multinational interests. The state increasingly relied on repression, in turn radicalizing protestors. Scholars debated whether Bolivia had undergone a revolutionary epoch (Dunkerley 2007).

A third factor that led to populist ruptures in Latin America was the perception that politicians and neoliberal elites had surrendered national sovereignty to the US government, and supranational institutions like the International Monetary Fund. These left-wing leaders proposed a counterproject to US-dominated neoliberal trade initiatives. The Bolivarian Alliance for the Americas (ALBA) aimed for a real Latin American and Caribbean integration based on social justice and solidarity among the peoples. Their goals were to stop US domination in the region by promoting Latin America unity, and to create a multipolar international system.

Populist ruptures led to the abandonment of neoliberal policies. Chávez, Morales, and Correa strengthened the state and used it to redistribute wealth, and to reduce poverty and inequality. Venezuela, Bolivia, and Ecuador reaped huge benefits from the commodity boom of the 2000s, which sent oil and natural gas prices to record levels. As a result of enhanced revenues, public investment and social spending skyrocketed, and poverty rates – and to a lesser extent inequality – fell when the prices of oil and other commodities were high.

The main innovation of these left-wing populists was to convene constituent assemblies to draft new charters to overhaul all political institutions. Chávez, Morales, and Correa were elected with the promise to convene constituent assemblies tasked with the drafting of new constitutions. The process of drafting the new charters was participatory and involved the contributions and proposals of social movements and common citizens. The new Venezuelan, Bolivian, and Ecuadorian constitutions were approved in referenda. These constitutions established a different kind of democracy, based on elections, but also on a new constitutional order that concentrates power in the hands of the president. Majoritarian mobilization led by a personalistic leader took precedence over the checks and balances and respect for basic civil rights inherent in liberal democracy. Mechanisms of horizontal
accountability by other branches of government and an independent press were replaced by a variant of vertical accountability involving frequent elections, referenda, and plebiscites (de la Torre and Arnsen 2013: 10).

As in Latin America, Syriza came to power after massive protests. In May 2011 the aganaktismenoi, a spontaneous and grassroots movement, occupied squares to protest against the neoliberal policies of the Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK), and the New Democracy (ND) center-right party. Syriza won the 2015 election by “staging a sharp antagonism between the vast majority of the people and a privileged minority that was profiting from the crisis” (Katsambekis 2016: 9). Differently from Latin American presidentialist systems, Greece has a parliamentary democracy. Syriza got 36.34 percent of the vote, and the second most voted party ND got 27.81 percent. Syriza had to enter into a coalition and chose a small right-wing populist and nationalist party Independent Greeks (ANEL).

Syriza promised a break from the policies of austerity and confronted foreign creditors. Differently from the South American cases discussed in this chapter, traditional parties and the institutions of democracy did not collapse, and Syriza did not aim to overhaul democratic institutions via constitutional change. “Pressure from outside, especially from the Troika, stifled the eagerness for radical economic policy, held also in check by the public sentiment in favor of the euro” (Aslanidis and Rovira Kaltwasser 2016: 12). At the end Syriza capitulated to the Troika in July 2015, even after winning a referendum against austerity policies. Its radical populist promises evaporated and the party became less democratic and more vertical and leader-centric (Katsambekis 2016: 10). Syriza no longer “fights the establishment, but has in effect become the center-left component of it, as PASOK was” (Judis 2016: 118).

Donald Trump used populist strategies and discourses to run against the political establishment (de la Torre 2017). He claimed that “the establishment, the media, the special interest, the lobbyists, the big donors, they are all against me” (Judis 2016: 72). He took over the Republican Party, won their nomination, and surprising pollsters, pundits, and even common sense won the election. He assumed power in a context of relative crisis of political representation when many did not feel represented by the two parties, but in a context of robust democratic institutions. His election nonetheless ruptured America’s neoliberal multicultural consensus embraced by the Republican and Democratic Party elites that linked globalization with the limited recognition of minorities’ cultural rights. He opposed NAFTA and the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement. He linked national decline with the absence of industrial production, singling out corporations like Ford, Apple, Nabisco, and Carrier for moving factories overseas. He promised to bring manufacturing jobs back to the US. President Trump might be able to at least symbolically slow down manufacturing outsourcing, and might be able to keep some manufacturing jobs in the US. Yet his nationalist policies will not stop
automation and other structural sources of industrial job depletion. While rejecting globalization he put millionaires in key positions of power in his administration. His government aims to privatize and dismantle all vestiges of the welfare and regulatory state.

Trump used blatantly racist tropes against Muslims and Mexicans, destroying the myth that the US was becoming a colorblind, postracial society. Elites and many citizens believed that the election of their first black president showed that the US was moving to a colorblind postracial order, that overt racism was a thing of the past, and that the goals of the Civil Rights movement had been achieved (Omi and Winant 2015: 257). When launching his presidential candidacy from Trump Tower in New York City Trump asserted, “When Mexico sends its people, they’re not sending their best . . . They’re bringing drugs. They’re bringing crime. They’re rapists. And some, I assume, are good people”. 1 He expanded his racist platform by calling Muslims terrorist and promising to monitor Muslims within the US and banning those who want to enter the US.

Trump was the inheritor of the Tea Party, a right-wing insurrection against the first nonwhite president and to his limited policies of redistribution such as universal health care. Neoliberal deregulation of the financial system resulted in a housing boom that crashed in 2008. Millions lost their homes, and financial institutions were at risk of collapsing. Barack Obama was elected with the hope that he would help citizens over bankers, yet his policies prioritized the financial system. Nonetheless Obama introduced a stimulus package and a bill to help home-owners. In addition he launched a national health insurance plan. Conservatives created the Tea Party in 2009 to resist his policies. The Tea Party was a collection of grassroots organizations, the right-wing media, especially FOX News, and elites that funded conservative candidates and ideas. They opposed Obamacare and mortgage relief as an attack by liberal elites against hardworking citizens to give handouts to the undeserving poor.

The Tea Party was also a conservative reaction to the first nonwhite president. Obama was perceived as a foreigner, “an invader pretending to be an American . . . His academic achievements and social ties put him in league with the country’s intellectual elite whose . . . cosmopolitan leanings seemed unpatriotic” (Skocpol and Williamson 2012: 79). Donald Trump, a Birtherist that denied Obama’s Americanness, reached beyond the Tea Party social base of white older, wealthier, and more educated conservatives, appealing also to the white working class. He became the voice of “white Americans who felt left behind by globalization and the shift to a postindustrial economy” (Judit 2016: 75). His base of support was not only made up of the losers of globalization and uneducated white males. Middle-class and educated white men and women also supported him because many felt that they were not getting their fair share, and that they faced economic insecurity in their lives. They felt that women, blacks,
Hispanics, and gays were empowered by unfair policies of affirmative action and political correctness that negatively targeted white heterosexual males. Many “also felt culturally marginalized: their views about abortion, gay marriage, gender roles, race, guns, and the Confederate flag all were held in ridicule in the national media as backward. And they felt part of a demographic decline . . . . They’d begun to feel like a besieged minority” (Hochschild 2016: 221). It remains to be seen the extent to which Trump’s administration will dismantle the institutions and policies of the last decades that linked open markets and globalization to the limited cultural inclusion of minorities, women, and the LGBTQ communities.

In sum, populist challenges in conditions of profound and widespread crises of political representation led to ruptures in Venezuela, Bolivia, and Ecuador. Chávez, Morales, and Correa overhauled neoliberalism, drafted new constitutions, created new political institutions, and changed their foreign policies. When populists got into power in conditions of a relative crisis of political representation as in Greece, stronger domestic and supranational institutions contained populist challenges. Trump might rupture policies of multicultural recognition, but might not be able or willing to rupture economic globalization.

CONSTRUCTING THE PEOPLE

“The people” is not a primary datum; it is a discursive construct, and a claim made in struggles between politicians, activists, and intellectuals. “Populist discourse does not simply express some kind of popular identity; it actually constitutes the latter” (Laclau 2005b: 48, emphasis in original). The people could be constructed with ethnic or political criteria, and as a plurality or as the people-as-one. This section explores different constructions of the people and the politics of inclusion or exclusion that they entail.

Ethnic Constructions of the People

“The people” as constructed by right-wing populists in Europe and the United States faces ethnic enemies such as Muslims, illegal immigrants, and, in general, nonwhite populations. Like the European populist right Trump politicized fears of immigration, multiculturalism, and cosmopolitanism. Trump explicitly constructed his notion of the American people as different from three out-groups imagined as the dangerous other: Mexicans, Muslims, and black militant groups like Black Lives Matter. The image of the Mexican, as most Latinos in the US are nowadays called, is built on long nationalist stereotypes that marked them as lazy, dangerous, and as the ultimate outsiders to the US nation. Regardless of whether or not Mexicans and other Latino populations have lived for long periods in the US they are regarded as recent and passing immigrants, and as freeloaders who drain taxpayers. The notion of the Muslim
terrorist is not only a xenophobic reaction to 9/11. It is also built on the legacies of the image of the US as a Christian nation. Differently from Latinos and Muslims, who could be attacked with blatantly racist words, Trump, like the Tea Party and other conservatives, used code words of law and order to mark the unruly black militant as a criminal and as the opposite of the law-abiding and taxpaying citizen.

Differently from the exclusionary and racist view of the people as white, Evo Morales and his political party, the MAS, successfully used inclusive ethnopolitician appeals (Madrid 2012). Given the fluidity of race and ethnic relations in Bolivia they were able to create an inclusionary ethnic party grounded in indigenous social movements that appealed to different indigenous groups while also incorporating mestizo and white organizations and candidates. Morales portrayed indigenous people as the essence of the nation. It was an inclusive category that signified a claim to postcolonial justice, and for a broader political project of nationalism, self-determination, and democratization (Canessa 2006).

Distinct legacies of colonialism explain different uses of ethnicity to construct the people. “Colonialism established two differentiated worlds, the metropolitan polity for which ideas such as the sovereign people, democratic citizenship and rights were relevant” (Filc 2015: 269), and their external peripheries made up of savages, the natives, and the Orientals. Former colonial powers in Europe or imperialist nations with a white national identity like the US use notions of white superiority to stigmatize nonwhite immigrants, many of them arriving from their former colonies as racially inferior, and as bearers of cultures that are antagonistic to Western culture. Exclusionary populists use nativism and xenophobia to appeal to a common past to which immigrants and nonwhites do not belong.

Inclusionary ethnic appeals work in postcolonial contexts where the natives or the indigenous that are also the poor are the victims of discrimination as well as exclusion. In Bolivia and other postcolonial nations the excluded are the core of the people and the nation, while “the oligarchy, imperialism, and colonialism are the absolute Other” (Filc 2015: 271).

Political Constructs of the People

An alternative conceptualization of the people is primarily political and socioeconomic. Left-wing populists in Latin America and Southern Europe constructed the category “the people” as the majorities of their nations that were excluded by neoliberal policies imposed by supranational organizations like the IMF or the Troika. Podemos, for example, used an antagonistic discourse that aimed to rupture Spain’s institutional system. They constructed an enemy, branded as “the caste,” that dominated political, economic, social, and cultural life from the pacted transition to democracy in the mid-1970s. “The caste” is in antagonistic relations with the people, understood as the
disenfranchised victims of neoliberalism (Errejón and Mouffe 2015). Similarly, Alexis Tsipiras, the leader of Syriza, constructed the antagonism between the people and the neoliberal establishment in political and socioeconomic terms (Katsambekis 2016: 6).

Hugo Chávez framed the political arena so that he did not face political rivals, but instead an oligarchy that he defined as the political enemy of the people, “those self-serving elites who work against the homeland” (Zúquete 2008: 105). Chávez’s rhetoric politicized relations of inequality between different classes and ethnic groups. He reclaimed Venezuela’s indigenous and black heritages, which were downplayed by the elites (Buxton 2009: 161). He tapped into the “deep reservoir of daily humiliation and anger felt by people of the lower classes” (Fernandes 2010: 85).

The Plural People versus the People-as-One

As Jürgen Habermas (1996: 469) pointed out, “the people’ does not comprise a subject with a will and consciousness. It only appears in the plural, and as a people, it is capable of neither decision nor action as a whole.” Following these pluralistic understandings democrats construct the people as a plurality of actors with different views and proposals. By constructing the people as plural, liberal and social democrats faced democratic rivals that had legitimate institutional and normative spaces.

Chávez constructed the “people” as a sacred entity with a single consciousness and a will that could be embodied in his persona built as the redeemer of the people. Chávez boasted, “This is not about Hugo Chávez; this is about a ‘people.’ I represent, plainly, the voice and the heart of millions” (Zúquete 2008: 100). On another occasion Chávez commanded, “I demand absolute loyalty to me. I am not an individual, I am the people” (Gómez Calcaño and Arenas 2013: 20).

Even though Chávez’s populist political and socioeconomic construction of the people was inclusionary, his view of the people-as-one was antipluralist and antidemocratic because he attempted to become its only voice. Differently from autocratic constructs of the people as one, left-wing populist parties like Syriza, Podemos, and Morales’ MAS had plural views of the people. Syriza appealed to a “plural people (a ‘precarious people’ consisting of several different social groups) and expressed an effort to empower the marginalized and excluded” (Katsambekis 2016: 6). Podemos had a pluralistic, contingent, and nonessentialist view of the people constructed as the downtrodden, those at the bottom of society against the oligarchy (Errejón and Mouffe 2015: 109). Similarly, the MAS had a plural view of the people. Yet at times, Morales attempted to be the only voice of the people. When indigenous people from the lowlands challenged his policies of mineral extraction, they were dismissed as having been manipulated by foreign NGOs and not as authentically indigenous. Morales’ regime attempted to construct an indigenous identity
centered around loyalty to his government, and which excluded and
degraded all those who opposed him. But because of the power of social
movements in whose name he argued he was ruling, Morales had not been able
to impose his vision of the people-as-one. In contemporary Bolivia, according to
anthropologist Nancy Postero (2015: 422), we are witnessing an “ongoing
struggle to define who counts as el pueblo boliviano, and what that means for
Bolivian democracy.”

Similar tensions between the populist leaders’ attempts to be the only voice of
the people, and the resistance of their constituencies to become embodied in the
voice of the leader, occur in Syriza and Podemos. The language of left-wing
populism sparked bottom-up mobilization, participation, and popular
empowerment. Under left-wing variants of populism, leaders and
organizations of the subaltern disputed who had the power to speak on behalf
of the people, and who represented the nation. In countries where social
movements had the capacity to engage in sustained collective action, like
Bolivia, populist leaders could not claim to be the only voice of the people.
Similarly Podemos’ and Syriza’s constituencies have not succumbed to their
leaders’ claims to be the only voice of the people. When social movements do
not have the resources to engage in sustained collective action, a leader like
Chávez or Correa is freer to impose their claim that they are the authentic voice
of the people (de la Torre 2016: 68).

**POPULIST ORGANIZATIONS**

Populist followers are not masses in a state of anomie as earlier theories of
populism based on mass society theory assumed. A previous generation of
scholars traumatized by fascism analyzed populism as irrational and
emotional responses to abrupt processes of social change (Germani 1978). The
typical populist follower in their narrative was a recent migrant to the
city, or a worker who had just entered into the labor force without previous
experience in workers’ organization. Populism was seen as irrational and
emotional reactions to the dislocations of modernization. Even though mass
society and modernization theories were abandoned by scholars, the image of
the irrational populist follower continues to appear in journalistic pieces on
populism that assume that the social base of Trumpism or right-wing European
populism are the losers of modernization, and the uneducated. Yet populist
followers are not disorganized or irrational, and not only uneducated and poor
whites voted for right-wing populists.

Populists organized their followers in clientelist networks, and populist
followers formed associations and organizations. Some, like Tea Party
organizations, are grassroots; others, like Chávez’s Bolivarian groups, were
created from the top down. In Latin America populist followers are organized
through formal bureaucratic party networks and clientelist informal networks
that distribute resources, information, and jobs. Studies on political clientelism
showed that the poor voted instrumentally and strategically for the candidate with the best capacity to deliver goods and services (Menéndez-Carrón 1986). In addition to exchanging material goods for votes, populist networks also generate political identities. The resilience of Peronism among the Argentinean poor, for example, was partially explained by the informal and clientelist networks of the Peronist Party, which, in addition to delivering material resources, recreated political and cultural identities (Auyero 2001).

Populist organizations are based on low levels of institutionalization (Hawkins 2008). Leaders set their agendas and strategies, and it is difficult to build identities that differ from the image of the people as constructed by leaders. Populist organizations are based on insularity, as they do not promote solidarity with similar organizations in civil society. They do not value pluralism because they adopt the idea of the people as an undifferentiated and homogeneous whole. Hence the people can only be organized under loyal organizations to the leaders. Yet sometimes, common people use populist organizations, the openings of the political system under populism, and the rhetorical claims that they are the true nation to present their own demands.

Populist organizations created by Chávez’s government, such as Bolivarian Circles, Communal Councils, Urban Land Committees, and Technical Water Roundtables, illustrate the tension between the autonomous organizations of followers and their subordination to a charismatic leader. In order to promote the revolutionary process, President Chávez encouraged the formation of Bolivarian Circles in June 2001. These were “small groups of seven to fifteen people, they were intended to study the ideology of Bolivarianism, discuss local issues and defend the revolution” (Raby 2006: 188). In their heyday, Bolivarian Circles boasted approximately 2.2 million members and had an active role in the massive demonstrations rescuing President Chávez when he was temporarily removed from office in an April 2002 coup d’état. Kirk Hawkins and David Hansen (2006: 127) showed that mobilization of the Bolivarian Circles was not necessarily based in the “kind of autonomy that democracy requires.” Their study demonstrated that even though Bolivarian Circles did constitute forms of participation for poor people, they often worked as clientelist networks to transfer resources to neighborhoods where the president had supporters.

Communal Councils were conceived as institutions to promote popular power and were seen as the foundation for the future establishment of a socialist direct and pyramidal democracy. Critics and supporters of the Bolivarian Revolution agreed that Communal Councils faced the same problems as the Bolivarian Circles, namely, the persistence of clientelism in the exchange of social services for political support, and a charismatic style of rule that neutralizes or prevents autonomous grassroot inputs (Wilpert 2007: 195–204).

Bolivarian Circles and Communal Councils may have experienced problems of autonomy because they were created from above to promote Chávez’s Bolivarian Revolution. Other institutions, such as the Urban Land
Committees and Technical Water Roundtables, for example, accepted more autonomous grassroot inputs and were more pluralist. The government gave squatter settlements collective titles to land on which precarious self-built dwellings were situated. Through this process, “the community forms an urban land committee to administer its new collective property and to undertake and demand support for material improvement such as water, sewerage and electricity services or road paving” (Raby 2006: 188–189).

Similarly, local water committees “arrange the distribution of water between neighboring communities which share the same water mains” (Raby 2006: 189). Nevertheless, Urban Land and Water Committees lacked autonomy from the charismatic leader, as Chávez was the guiding force for these institutions (García Guadilla 2007).

Tea Party organizations were made up of relatively well-off, educated, and middle-aged white Americans. Conservatives and libertarians coexisted in these organizations. Skocpol and Williamson (2012: 200) note a “sharp bifurcation between generous, tolerant interaction within the group, and an almost total lack of empathy or sympathy for fellow Americans beyond the group.” Similarly to Chávez’s Bolivarian organizations Tea Parties were insular. Like other populist organizations, they despised pluralism. Organized African-American and Latino groups were dismissed as threats to the nation, and even Democratic Party and liberal organizations were portrayed as unpatriotic. Their insularity was magnified by their reliance on Fox News and its almost surrealistic representation of the US as a nation where “illegal immigrants, criminals, and badly behaving people of color are overrunning America” (Skocpol and Williamson 2012: 202).

Populist organizations in sum did not foster the politics of a plural and democratic civil society. Their insularity did not allow them to build links with other organizations, and their notion that they and only they constitute the true people led to the autocratic exclusions of those considered to be the ultimate Other. Nonetheless these organizations fostered loyalties, and powerful political identities. In contexts of profound political polarization, like those in Venezuela under Chávez, these organizations and the identities that they fostered partially explained the longevity of chavismo after Chávez’s death.

POPULISTS IN POWER

Populists challenge the establishment by promising to give power to the people, often demanding better forms of representation. Yet when populists got into power their antipluralist views of the people, and their construction of politics as antagonistic confrontations between the people and the power bloc had negative consequences for democracy. Once in power populists often tried to “create the homogeneous people in whose name they had been speaking all along” (Müller 2016: 49). They controlled all the institutions of the state, seized
and regulated the media, repressed independent organizations of civil society, and created loyal social movements from the top down. In poorly institutionalized political systems populists displaced democracy toward competitive authoritarianism (Levitsky and Loxton 2013; Weyland 2013). Even though in more institutionalized systems democracy did not die slowly, populists often damaged its institutions and the inclusive and tolerant public sphere. In their effort to stop populist parties, mainstream European parties often adopt some of their xenophobic and nationalist rhetoric and proposals.

When populists got elected in presidentialist systems and when the institutional framework of democracy and parties were in crisis, as in Venezuela, and Ecuador, their systematic attacks on pluralism, on the privately owned media, and on independent organizations of civil society led to what Guillermo O’Donnell (2011) described as the slow death of democracy. Steven Levitsky and James Loxton (2013) argued that populism pushed weak democracies into competitive authoritarianism for three reasons: (1) populists were outsiders with no experience in the give-and-take of parliamentary politics; (2) they were elected with the mandate to refound existing political institutions, meaning the institutional framework of liberal democracy; and (3) confronted congress, the judiciary, and other institutions controlled by parties.

In order to win elections populists skewed the electoral playing field. As incumbents, they had extraordinary advantages such as using the state media, selectively silencing the privately owned media, harassing the opposition, controlling electoral tribunal boards and all instances of appeal, and using public funds to influence the election. When these presidents won elections, the voting moments were clean, but the electoral processes blatantly favored incumbents.

Once in power presidents Chávez, Maduro, and Correa turned to discriminatory legalism, understood as the use of formal legal authority in discretionary ways (Weyland 2013: 23). In order to use laws discretionarily populist presidents packed the courts and institutions of accountability with loyal followers. Chávez, for example, incrementally gained nearly absolute command of all institutions of the state. He had a supermajority in the legislature, and in 2004 put the highest judicial authority, the Supreme Tribunal of Justice, in the hands of loyal judges. Hundreds of lower court judges were fired and replaced by unconditional supporters (Hawkins 2015). The National Electoral Council was politicized. Even though it made sure that the moment of voting was clean and free from fraud, the National Electoral Council did not enforce rules during the electoral process routinely favoring Chávez and his candidates. Similarly Correa put loyal followers in charge of electoral power, the judicial system, the electoral board, and all the institutions of accountability such as the Ombudsman and the Comptroller (de la Torre and Ortiz 2016: 225). As in Venezuela elections were free from fraud but took place in tilted electoral fields that favored Correa and his candidates.
Control and regulation of the media by the state were at the center of the populists’ struggle for hegemony. Chávez led the way in enacting laws to control the privately owned media. In 2000 the Organic Law of Telecommunication allowed the government to suspend or revoke broadcasting concessions to private outlets when it was “convenient for the interest of the nation.” The Law of Social responsibility of 2004 banned “the broadcasting of material that could promote hatred and violence” (Corrales 2015: 39). These laws were ambiguous at best, and the government could interpret their content according to its interests. Correa’s government emulated Chávez. In 2013 the National Assembly, as congress is named in Ecuador, controlled by his party approved a communication law that created a board tasked with monitoring and regulating the content of what the media could publish. To challenge the power of the private media, Chávez took away radio and television frequencies from critics. The state became the main communicator, controlling 64 percent of television channels (Corrales 2015: 41). Correa followed Chávez in using discriminatory legalism to take away radio and television frequencies. He created a state media conglomerate that included the two most watched TV stations, as well as several radio stations and newspapers (de la Torre and Ortiz 2016: 231). Without a tradition of a public media, and in the hands of governments that did not differentiate their interests from those of the state, these outlets were put to the service of populist administrations.

Chávez and Correa enacted legislation that used ambiguous language to control and regulate the work of NGOs. In 2010 the Law for the Defense of Political Sovereignty and National Self-Determination in Venezuela barred nongovernmental organizations that defended political rights or monitored the performances of public bodies from receiving international assistance (Corrales 2015: 39). Three years later in 2013 Correa enacted Executive Decree 16. This decree gave the government authority to sanction NGOs for deviating from the objectives for which they were constituted, for engaging in politics, and for interfering in public policies in a way that contravenes internal and external security or disturbs public peace (de la Torre and Ortiz 2016: 229–230).

In Venezuela and Ecuador social movements were created from the top down to counteract the power of workers’ unions, unionized teachers, students, and indigenous groups. Protest was criminalized in Venezuela and Ecuador. Union leaders and striking workers, even when they were sympathizers of Chávez, were charged with terrorism (Iranzo 2011: 28–31). Hundreds of peasant and indigenous activists were accused of terrorism and sabotage in Ecuador (Martínez Novo 2014). Laws were used discretionarily to arrest and harass leading figures of the opposition in the Bolivarian nations. The most notorious cases occurred under Nicolás Maduro in Venezuela. Opposition leader Leopoldo López is facing time in jail on trumped-up charges for inciting violence.

Other populists in power, such as Viktor Orbán in Hungary, followed the populist playbook eroding democracy. His party, Fidesz, won the 2010
election, and secured a two-thirds majority in congress. Orbán was elected after eight years of incompetent and corrupt Socialist rule. Citizens elected a party that promised to end the unholy alliance of the Socialist Party, bankers, and the interests of foreign capitalists and the European Union. Orbán claimed that a revolution in the ballot box took him to power.

Once in office he set about transforming Hungary into “what he described in a 2014 speech as ‘an illiberal new state based on national foundations,’ in which the government purposely marginalizes opposition forces by weakening existing state institutions (including the courts) and creating new, largely autonomous governing bodies and packing them with Fidesz loyalists” (Mudde 2016). His party transformed the civil service law “to enable the party to place loyalists in what should have been nonpartisan bureaucratic positions” (Müller 2016: 44–45). He weakened checks and balances on the executive power, adopted a majoritarian electoral system, redesigning electoral rules to make it difficult for the fragmented opposition to mount an effective challenge (Batory 2015). His administration created a regulatory body to control the content of what the media could publish, and “Fidesz loyalists directly or indirectly acquired the ownership of important media outlets, and government appointees dominated the management of public service broadcasters, leaving little space for unbiased political discourse” (Batory 2015: 13). Orbán confronted and discredited NGOs, accusing them of being controlled by foreign powers and serving external interests (Müller 2016: 48).

In the US political parties were considered out of touch with the electorate, yet Trump chose to use the Republican Party instead of running as an independent candidate. Differently from Venezuela and Ecuador, which experienced profound crises of political representation, the US has strong democratic institutions, and its constitutional frame constrains and fragments political expression. The Constitution “separates governance between three branches of government, breaks up representation over time and space (staggered elections, overlapping electoral units), divides sovereignty between the national government and the states, and filters political expression into two parties” (Lowndes 2016: 97). Under these institutional constraints it is difficult to find majoritarian control of government as in Latin America, and until Trump’s election populism was confined to the margins of the political system. Under this reading Trump’s populism would be no more than a passing nightmare, and the institutional framework of US democracy and civil society would be strong enough to process populist challenges without major destabilizing consequences.

An alternative and plausible scenario is that Trump, who comes to the presidency when the executive has more power over the legislature, with the Senate and Congress in the hands of Republicans, having the power to appoint ultra-conservatives to the Supreme Court could attempt to follow the populist
playbook of controlling all the institutions of the state. He despises career functionaries, and like other populists, could put loyalists in key positions of power. He has threatened Republicans who do not support him wholeheartedly, and it is not inconceivable that he might want to transform the Republican Party – a party to which he does not have any long-lasting loyalty – into his personalist venue.

Like Viktor Orbán and other populists, Trump does not like the media. In his rallies he led his followers to heckle journalists, who were sat in a separate section. He said, “The Rolling Stone magazine should be put out of business,” and he threatened to sue the New York Times. During the campaign “journalists who opposed Mr. Trump received photos of themselves – and in some cases their children – dead, or in gas chambers. Jewish and Jewish-surnamed journalists were particular targets” (Caldwell 2016). After assuming power Trump embarked on a war against the media. He tweeted that the New York Times, NBC, ABC, CBS, and CNN were the “enemy of the American people” (Davis 2017).

Trump used harsh and demeaning language against civil rights groups like Black Lives Matters. His policies of massive deportation, stop and frisk in poor and predominantly black and Latino neighborhoods, surveillance of American Muslims, and the rolling back of gender and LGBTQ rights would lead to confrontations with civil and human rights organizations.

Even if the institutional framework of democracy does not collapse under Trump, he has already damaged the democratic public sphere. Hate speech and the denigration of minorities are replacing the politics of cultural recognition and tolerance built by the struggles of feminists and antiracist social movements since the 1960s.

The day after Trump’s inauguration citizens marched to defend women’s rights, and later to oppose his policies banning visas for Muslim immigrants. The courts temporarily stopped his immigration policies. A stronger and active civil society, and independent democratic institutions, will hopefully prevent Donald Trump from killing the dream of an inclusive, tolerant, and pluralist America. Yet a crisis of national security provoked by a terrorist attack or war could give Trump the excuse to crack down on dissent to impose his autocratic nationalist policies. The future of American democracy is certainly uncertain under Trump’s populism.

CONCLUSIONS

Populism is a strategy and a political logic that represents politics as antagonistic struggles between the people and its enemies, and which aims to rupture existing institutions and to create a new order. The logic of populism leads to the polarization and simplification of politics as Schmittian struggles

between friend and enemy. Populists do not face rivals: they confront and manufacture enemies such as the political establishment, the media, global elites, and NGOs. Populism is effective in creating strong popular identities that could be used against elites and that might lead to the rupture of the system. Yet not all populist challenges subverted existing institutions creating new ones. This chapter showed that only when political parties and all the institutions of democracy were considered to be unresponsive, corrupt, and in crisis were populists able to overhaul the institutional system. When the institutional framework of democracy was not in crisis populists deradicalized their proposals and accommodated to the give-and-take of liberal democratic parliamentary politics.

Different constructions of the people led to exclusionary or inclusionary variants of populism. European and American variants of right-wing populism imagine the people as an ethnic and cultural group whose purity is under attack by their former colonial subjects. Their aim is to reconstruct the purity of the ethnic people by excluding those groups who are contaminating their culture and values. They are backward looking and want to restore an imaginary and nostalgic past, such as Trump’s promise to “make America great again.” Chávez’s left-wing populism was inclusionary because he politicized and challenged neoliberal exclusions, yet it was not democratic because he claimed to be the only voice of the people and the embodiment of their will. All of those who questioned him were branded as enemies.

Populists in power are hostile to “liberalism and the principles of constitutional democracy, in particular minority rights, division of powers, and party pluralism” (Urbinati 2013: 137). Populists centralized power, weakened checks and balances, strengthened the executive, and transformed elections “into a plebiscite of the leader” (Urbinati 2014: 129). Populists disfigured democracy, transforming an individual into the representative of the unity of the people, and elections into plebiscites that crown the leader (Urbinati 2014: 175). Yet populism did not abolish democracy. Populist legitimacy was grounded in winning elections, and in using the electoral system to destroy their enemies and to create new hegemonic blocs.

Under what conditions did populism in power lead to authoritarianism? Part of the answer is institutional and contextual. When populist leaders came into power in contexts of discredited political parties and liberal institutions, and when social movements did not have the resources to engage in sustained collective action, like in Chávez’s Venezuela and Correa’s Ecuador, these leaders acted as if they were the embodiment of the people. In Bolivia, Evo Morales was not allowed by his powerful base of strong social movements to act as if he embodied their homogeneous will.

Populist authoritarianism is not only the result of weak parties and institutions, fragile civil societies, and weak social movements. It is also grounded in the logic of populism. Unlike democrats, who regarded opponents as adversaries whose positions could be debated and even accepted, populists
fought against enemies that represented an evil threat that had to be eradicated. Populists did not approach politics with self-limiting notions, nor did they accept the boundaries of existing institutions and norms. They aimed to rupture institutions that excluded the people in order to create a new order.

Populists kept some institutions and practices of liberal democracy but used them instrumentally to control civil society, the public sphere, and to win elections. As Guillermo O’Donnell (2011) argued, the systematic erosion of rights and civil liberties, the curtailment of institutions of accountability, and the tilting of the electoral playing field to favor incumbents could lead, as in Hungary and Venezuela, to the displacement of democracy toward authoritarianism. More institutionalized democracies are not immune to populist autocratic challenges. Trump disfigured the democratic and tolerant public sphere, normalizing hate speech, xenophobia, and racism. It is an open question if his incremental attacks on civil liberties and human rights, confrontations with the media, and potential use of the legal system to silence critics could lead, as in Hungary, Venezuela, and other nations, to the slow death of democracy.

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Social movements fuel the sociological imagination. Fascination with intentional collective efforts to foster social change is endemic to the discipline (see Jasper, Chapter 23, this volume). Social movements that embody aspirations to defend and promote human flourishing and sustainable community life lie at the heart of this fascination. Analysis of social movements is in turn a core part of sociological theorization of the dynamics of social change. In the contemporary global political economy, analysis of social movements must include transnational social movements. When politics, production, and culture operate via global networks, social movements have no choice but to do the same. Transnational movements complement local and national movements while depending on complementarity with movements organized at other levels for their own efficacy.

The aim of this chapter is to understand how different streams of transnational activism have evolved from the late twentieth century through the early decades of the twenty-first century, creating a new “ecosystem” of transnational movements.1 Reflecting on the expansive trends of the late twentieth century and their theoretical reverberations will be the focus of the first section. In the second section, I will try to map the evolution of several broad substantive streams of transnational mobilization.

Together these first two sections will show how the organizational structures and strategies, constituencies, and ideological frames of different streams of transnational mobilization have shifted in recent decades. It is not just that the

1 The focus here will be on activism and movements aimed at promoting social change trajectories that foster human flourishing, expand human capabilities, and enhance societies’ sustainability. A full accounting of the universe of transnational movements would be a much larger undertaking. Most obviously it would require dealing with movements aimed at preventing others from exercising standard human rights or pursuing the lives they have reason to value. See, for example, my discussion of “regressive” movements (Evans 2008: 281–285) or Castells (2004).
character of individual movements has changed. The growth of overlaps and connections among them has been even more important. “Silos,” within which different movements fight their own fights insulated from other movements, have become atypical. Instead, movements have worked to build synergies, promoting shared agendas that bring together constituencies and take advantage of complementarities across issues.

The final section of the chapter turns to the future. The global ideological and geopolitical context continues to shift as the twenty-first century advances. Neoliberal capitalism coexists with an increasingly important set of what might be called “reactionary nationalist/populist” regimes. A full description of the contours of this new configuration cannot yet be made, but it involves more than parallel changes in the tenor of contestation in individual national political arenas. The future ability of transnational social movements to achieve their goals will depend on their ability to engage with this new set of contexts.

Can the resilience of transnational social movements be sustained in the face of adverse changes in the tenor of national politics? Or does the rise of “reactionary nationalist populist” regimes in key countries around the world threaten the prospects of transnational social movements? To pretend to have clear answers to these questions would be foolish, but to avoid confronting them would be even more foolish.

LATE-TWENTIETH-CENTURY EXPANSION

In the closing decades of the twentieth century, optimistic perspectives on transnational social movements prevailed. Late-twentieth-century optimism reflected reality. The empirical expansion of the number of transnational civic organizations was undeniable, and expansion helped in turn to stimulate conceptual and theoretical innovation.

The rise of transnational movements reflected the imagination and dedication of myriad activists, but it also reflected a set of structural opportunities. The first set of contextual facilitators is obvious. The twenty century’s revolutionary transformation of information, communication, and transportation technologies shrank geographic space and increased the permeability of physical and political boundaries. This “generic globalization” facilitated the operation of global neoliberal capitalism, but it also provided invaluable tools for transnational social movements (Evans 2008).

Global neoliberal capitalism also conveyed more counterintuitive benefits. The increasing universality of structures of domination made the necessity and possibility of transnational counternetworks obvious. When the same global corporations threaten the local environments and livelihoods of geographically far-flung local groups, building oppositional networks that cross borders makes intuitive sense.

Even the content of neoliberal ideology contained potential sources of leverage. However hypocritically the classical liberal themes of individual
rights and democracy might be deployed by those in power, these themes still ended up legitimating opposition to the domination of state apparatuses serving the interests of capital (Evans and Sewell 2013). This was especially true insofar as transnational movements were constructed to fight against state repression and violation of individual rights.

Neoliberalism was also subversive of the sanctity of sovereignty. “Free market” principles were deemed universally valid, not to be violated by the exercise of sovereignty by individual states. Transnational activists could make parallel arguments with regard to the universal applicability of more liberating classic liberal principles. National sovereignty remained a central tenet of the international political order, but the Westphalian principle that sovereignty was sacrosanct was replaced by a more conditional view, giving transnational social movements new leverage, not in all national contexts, but in a sufficient variety to help them grow.

Finally, the failures of global neoliberalism complemented its successes in helping transnational movements grow. During neoliberalism’s ascendance, the idea that freeing markets from the “dead hand” of political control would unleash new productive forces and result in unparalleled welfare gains for everyone had great charisma. As the twentieth century drew to a close, the hollowness of these promises was evident. Neoliberalism was not delivering the promised material benefits.

“Globalization,” which was touted as a central strategy for building welfare-enhancing “free markets,” was particularly susceptible to attack. The removal of decision-making power from all venues accessible to ordinary citizens could not claim legitimation on the basis of classic liberal principles. When the promised increased well-being failed to appear, it was easy for movements to portray globalization as the problem instead of the solution.

The structural opportunities created by neoliberalism and its failures manifested themselves concretely in the explosive growth in the number of transnational civic organizations during the closing decades of the twentieth century.  

2 After growing at a relatively slow pace during the 1950s and 1960s (circa 3–5 percent per year) the number of transnational social movement organizations almost doubled from 1973 to 1983 and then almost doubled again between 1983 and 1993 (see Sikkink and Smith 2002: 30, Table 2.1). For some categories of movement organizations the growth was even more explosive. The number of groups focused on the environment grew more than tenfold between 1973 and 1983. While the growing number of transnational organizations does not, in itself, demonstrate impact on policy and outcomes, a variety of other observations corroborate the proposition that one of the

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2 Jackie Smith and her colleagues have provided a host of richly variegated expositions of these data, which are drawn primarily from the Yearbook of International Organizations. See J. Smith (2004, 2008); J. Smith and Wiest (2012); J. Smith et al. (2017).
features of late-twentieth-century transnational political contestation was the intensification of participation by organized civil society.

A variety of global organizational arenas and normative fields emerged during the late twentieth century to give transnational social movements footholds. The increasing prominence of politically vulnerable global governance organizations, like the World Bank and the World Trade Organization, provided focal points and targets for transnational campaigns. They were manifestly undemocratic and easy to blame for the negative effects of neoliberal globalization. Thus the 1999 “Battle of Seattle” targeting the WTO was an appropriate symbol of the late-twentieth-century rise of transnational activism.

Not all global governance organizations were targeted. The UN played a more positive role as a focal point (see J. Smith 2008; P. Smith 2017). In different ways the UN’s global conferences on climate change and its world conferences on women intensified interaction among transnational movements, stimulating debates as well as productive conflict. UN conferences provided a venue and a rationale for parallel organizing by NGOs. The increase in civil society participation in the UN conferences on women from 1,500 to 30,000 between 1975 and 1995 is indicative of their energizing effects (Smith and Kutz-Flamenbaum 2017: 163). UN conventions like the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) helped add a transnational dimension to national struggles for rights.

The turn of the millennium also saw the emergence of multi-issue global forums operating apart from global governance organizations. These provided a rich space for the cross-fertilization of transnational movements. The World Social Forum is the iconic example. Held first in Brazil in 2001, then in a mix of Global South locales in Asia and Africa, then back in Brazil in 2005, the World Social Forum grew from 15,000 participants to 155,000 over the four-year period (J. Smith 2008: 207). The forum became an arena for experimenting with democracy forms and progressive cultural/ideological frames, including the iconic “Another World Is Possible” (B. Santos 2006).

“Transnational Alternative Policy Groups” (Carroll 2016) constitute yet another mode of integrating the intellectual frames of transnational activism. Conceived as counters to traditional “think tanks,” and located about equally in the South and the North, “TAPGs” are seen as auxiliaries to transnational movements and aim to “provide intellectual leadership through research, analysis and communication (i.e. knowledge production and mobilization” (Carroll 2016: 32, 15). These organizations were complements to more action-oriented organizations and movements. The last quarter of the twentieth century and the turn of the millennium constituted a fecund period for their emergence, just as it did for other kinds of organizations and movements.
The combination of exponential growth in the number of transnational social movement organizations, dramatic disruptions of global “business as usual,” like the Battle of Seattle, and the accretion of visible global confluences joining a multiplicity of organizations, movements, and ideas cried out for theoretical interpretation.

As the World Social Forum and Carroll’s TAPGs illustrate, shorthand characterizations of transnational activism as an “antiglobalization” movement are misleading. Transnational activists attacked the use of globalization by capital and its political allies as an instrument of domination and exploitation, but organizing an alternative globalization was central to their goals. Efforts to capture this multifarious endeavor in coherent theoretical frames took a variety of forms.

Keck and Sikkink’s (1998) characterization of the growth of transnational activism as the rise of “Transnational Activist Networks” (TANs) that challenged the primacy of old “state-centric” international networks was one of the most influential frames. Some went further, celebrating the rise of transnational activism as signaling the demise of the nation-state as a relevant unit of global politics, but others rejected this view, skeptical that the new challenges to sovereignty constituted such a fundamental transformation. Tarrow (2005: 206), for example, countered with a vision that seems prescient in retrospect, arguing for “resilient states, fragile movements.” Still others saw transnational movements as embodying political dynamics originally used in national struggles but reconfigured in a global frame.

Stephen Gill’s work is a good example of the application of older theories of national struggles to the global stage. He saw turn-of-the-millennium protests as forming “part of a world-wide movement that can perhaps be understood in terms of new potentials and forms of global political agency. And following Machiavelli and Gramsci, I call this set of potentials ‘the postmodern Prince’” (Gill 2000: 137). He saw these movements as “beginning to form what Gramsci called ‘an organism, a complex element of society’ that is beginning to point toward the realization of a ‘collective will.’ This will is coming to be ‘recognized and has to some extent asserted itself in action’” (2000: 138). In short, for Gill, it was not just that another world was possible: the infrastructure to produce another world was already coming into place.

My own efforts to translate late-twentieth-century transnational activism into a general conceptual frame were organized around the concept of “counter-hegemonic globalization” (Evans 2005, 2008, 2014b). This frame was less exuberant than Gill’s vision of a postmodern Prince, but it still projected fundamental transformative possibilities. The idea of counterhegemonic globalization focused first of all on the proposition that “like any reorganization of production, global neoliberal capitalism creates opportunities for counter-organization” (2010: 352), or more specifically that global neoliberal capitalism creates space for “a globally organized project of transformation aimed at replacing the dominant (hegemonic) global regime with one that maximizes
democratic political control and makes the equitable development of human capabilities and environmental stewardship its priorities” (2008: 271).

To mitigate the flavor of utopianism that this proposition might suggest, I tried to spell out the characteristics that the assemblage of transnational movements would need to develop in order to realize their potential, but I also sketched out some examples of “green shoots” indicating that this realization was under way. My vision was, however, a pale shadow of the one proposed by Hardt and Negri (2000) in Empire.

Hardt and Negri reenvisioned the assemblage of transnational social movements as “the multitude”: “the set of all the exploited and the subjugated ... a multitude that is directly opposed to Empire with no mediation between them” (2000: 393). The multitude was an “uncontainable force” “sustained by subterranean and uncontainable rhizomes” (2000: 394, 397) and was “capable of transforming all fixed and centralized elements into so many more nodes in its indefinitely expansive network” (Hardt 2002: 118).

Hardt and Negri’s exuberant form of millennial optimism was bound to collapse when confronted with hard twenty-first-century realities, but it still carried fruitful theoretical kernels. Their basic propositions continue to reverberate: for example, their insistence that flexible “rhizomic” networks could be the basis for transcending the limits of typical command-and-control organizational “trees” by allowing a more egalitarian multiplicity of connections among dispersed actors. Their assumption that the power of networks would be increased to the degree that they could encompass a broad, diverse range of goals continues to reverberate as well.

Optimistic visions did not disappear with the turn of the millennium, but early twenty-first-century history forced these visions to reckon with results that were modest rather than revolutionary. Skeptical assessments of the actual results delivered by transnational movements lent plausibility to the antithesis of earlier optimism: the proposition that even the most established transnational social movements were chimeras. Their goals might be hoped for or wished for, but their actual effects were illusory, unachievable in the real world.

Skepticism took different forms depending on its substantive focus. Two examples will suffice to illustrate the spirit of the arguments. Focusing on the human rights movement, some argued that the early twenty-first century represented the “end times of human rights” (Hopgood 2013). Responding to optimistic projections of the prospects of transnational labor activism, Burawoy (2010: 304, 312) argued that claims for the efficacy of labor transnationalism were “a mirage, a fantasy,” and put forward the position that “optimism today has to be countered by an uncompromising pessimism.”

Challenges to optimistic millennial readings of transnational movements focused first of all on the question of outcomes. Movements had grown and coalesced, but what was their actual or prospective impact on the structures and processes of global capitalism? Had they even had an impact on older modes of
inequality and injustice, from patriarchy to racism to the North–South divisions created by imperialism?

Seen through a negative lens, transnational social movements were ephemeral epiphenomena that expressed discontent with existing global structures without being able to change them. The counterthesis was not easy to falsify. The effects of transnational activism were often broad, abstract, and hard to pin down to consequences “on the ground,” such as the evolution of prevailing human rights norms. Or, effects were concrete and demonstrable but easy to dismiss as anecdotal, such as specific victories of indigenous groups in struggles against extractive global capital.

Despite the inherent difficulties of proving effects, scholars of transnational social movements responded to this challenge. The recent work of Kathryn Sikkink (2017) or Amanda Murdie (2014a) on the concrete effects of human rights offers a good example. Enumerating some of these responses is central to chronicling scholarship on transnational movements in the early decades of the twenty-first century. Carefully assessing effects is, however, only one facet of analyzing the path of transnational activism.

Debates over the magnitude of the concrete effects of transnational social movements will continue indefinitely, with judgments depending largely on the counterfactual invoked as a yardstick. What is undeniable is that “transnational social movements” themselves have changed continuously during the final decades of the twentieth century and the early decades of the twenty-first. The strategies and structures that constitute the “human rights movement,” “the global labor movement,” and indeed the whole panoply of transnational movements have evolved in fundamental ways over the decades since the millennium. Organizational landscapes, ideological frames, and the centrality of different constituencies have all changed. If the aim is to project the future impact of transnational activism, mapping these transformations is as important as assessing past effects.

THE SHIFTING TERRAIN OF TRANSNATIONAL ACTIVISM IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

Fully tracing the transformation of the different streams of transnational activism over the course of recent decades would require a massive volume in itself, but a handbook chapter can offer strategic examples that illustrate processes of change, suggest general trends, and set the stage for reexamining future prospects. If there is a single master takeaway from this analysis, it is that imagining transnational social movements as distinctive streams with separate constituencies and goals has become, if it ever made sense at all, anachronistic. If there is any feature of contemporary transnational activism that justifies holding on to millennial optimism, it is the emergence of synergistic ties between movements and constituencies.
Since the defense of basic human rights has long been the lynchpin of transnational activism, I will start by looking at what César Rodríguez-Garavito (2014, 2017b) has called the “new ecology of transnational human rights.” One of the features of this “new ecology” is that it involves melding of traditional “basic human rights” – that is, the protection of individuals from arbitrary violations of their persons by states and other actors wielding violence or the threat of violence – with socioeconomic rights, which many consider an inseparable part of human rights. This melding makes it easier to connect human rights and workers’ rights. The importance of precarious informal sector workers has grown. Concomitantly, with the rise in the proportion of women workers and their gradual incorporation into leadership roles, the global labor movement has become part of the transnational women’s movement. Shifts in the prominence of different constituencies have also changed the global movement for sustainability. From Standing Rock to the Amazon, indigenous communities have become a more powerful source of transnational campaigns and cultural frames, revamping outmoded images of sustainability as primarily a cause championed by affluent “postmaterialist” constituencies.

Synergistic ties among movements help facilitate the interweaving of different levels of organization. At the same time, the twenty-first century has deflated late-twentieth-century visions in which transnational politics would reveal the nation-state as a political anachronism. Not only has the nation-state demonstrated the resilience that Tarrow argued for, but appreciation of its potential usefulness as an instrument for realizing the goals of transnational movements has increased. More recently, nationalist politicians have also learned to use transnational social movements as targets. But the potential impact of this negative trend can be evaluated only once the transformation of transnational activism in the twenty-first century has been set out and appreciated.

END TIMES OR CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW ECOLOGY?

Transnational human rights activism is an ideal case for following the pendulum from late-twentieth-century euphoria to twenty-first-century pessimism and, more important, for going beyond the obsession with success to focus on the metamorphosis of structures and strategies in one of the most important streams of transnational activism.

Late-twentieth-century growth, in both scale and political prominence, is exemplified by transnational human rights. Stephen Hopgood (2014: 12), a twenty-first-century critic of transnational human rights, sums up twentieth-century expansion unabashedly, saying: “After decades of obscurity . . . it was in the 1970s that human rights took off as a global phenomenon.” By the beginning of the twenty-first century, Amnesty International had become “a million-strong global movement and Human Rights Watch an increasingly
visible presence worldwide.” In Hopgood’s view, “Human rights are no longer marginal, they are mainstream.” Why, then, has he become a twenty-first-century pessimist? He offers two reasons: one based on the shifting character of the international political economy and one based on a negative assessment of past efficacy.

Hopgood’s analysis of the changing context is the less convincing part of his argument, primarily because it lionizes “the West,” and particularly the United States, as the indispensable protector of human rights activism, neglecting the frequent opposition of the US government to the efforts of the human rights movement. For Hopgood, “the decline of the West” combined with the “new salience of religion globally” spells the death knell of the official and institutional apparatuses that undergird transnational human rights. It is hard to disagree that the global context has become more adverse for human rights activists, but Hopgood’s overemphasis on the positive US role is a misleading starting premise.

As Evans and Rodríguez-Garavito (2018: 17) point out: “For every campaign in which the U.S. has been part of the solution, there have been at least an equal number in which the U.S. was part of the problem.” Sikkink (2014, 2017) makes the same point in a complementary way, emphasizing the role of the Global South in constructing and extending transnational human rights activism. Her case is straightforward (2017: 230): “The international protection of human rights did not emerge from the Global North. ... The concept of human rights does not necessarily derive from or align with the geopolitical and economic interests of countries in the Global North or of global capitalism more generally.” The evolution of the twenty-first-century international political economy may have adverse consequences for the global human rights movement, but the “decline of the West” narrative is a misleading frame for understanding them.

Negative assessments of the past efficacy of the human rights movement, like concerns based on changing global context, also need to be taken seriously. Nonetheless, judgments of “failure” depend on how the evidence is construed. Again, Hopgood exemplifies how the metric chosen affects the assessment of “success.” Having set up the formal official intergovernmental “Global Human Rights Regime” (with the all caps signifying its official character) as the regime of interest, Hopgood (2014: 13) then dismisses the “less institutionalized, more flexible, more diverse and multi-vocal level, where social movements operate,” as incapable of “revolutionizing global politics.”

More modest standards make more sense. New norms have been established and integrated into the operations of global governance organizations and have been accepted by a range of countries that did not acknowledge them prior to the rise of the twentieth-century normative regime. These norms are “more honored in the breach than the observance,” just as Westphalian sovereignty was sacrosanct but was traditionally violated with impunity by great powers, but human rights norms are still a foundation that provides leverage for challenging capricious repressive authority.
Adopting more modest standards doesn’t end the controversy. Some researchers argue that credible analysis of large-scale data on human rights violations around the world fails to show systematic improvements in human rights as correlated either with increased presence of human rights NGOs in particular countries or with governments signing human rights treaties and conventions.3 (See reviews by Hafner-Burton and Ron [2009] and Hafner-Burton [2013].) While negative findings shouldn’t be dismissed, there is also careful quantitative work that counters the “failure to deliver results” critique.

The work of Amanda Murdie and her colleagues provides a host of examples. They have amassed a small library of sophisticated quantitative analyses of the effects of transnational human rights organizations. Their work indicates that when international advocacy is added to domestic efforts human rights practices improve (Murdie and Davis 2012; Bell, Clay, and Murdie 2012; Murdie 2014a). An analysis of the effects of over a thousand “shaming” events undertaken by international NGOs demonstrated significant effects on the improvement of physical integrity rights at the national level.4 Murdie and colleagues also found that human rights advocacy by international NGOs led to increases in levels of local protest (Murdie and Bhasin 2011), changes in opinions on human rights issues, and changes in foreign policy behavior (Murdie and Peksen 2013, 2014). Other equally thorough work, like Simmons (2009), has also supported the efficacy of transnational human rights activism.

Other critiques of transnational human rights activism focus on the diversion of priorities away from classic human rights preoccupations and the disproportionate role of a few very large Northern organizations in global human rights networks. Again, these critiques offer valuable insights, but, when used to examine the twenty-first-century global human rights movement, they turn out to be not so much critiques as windows into the way that the movement has been transforming itself.

The inordinate influence of giant Northern human rights NGOs like Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch (see Murdie 2014b) was one of the consequences of rapid late-twentieth-century expansion. But more recent trends seem to be dispersing this concentration. Both the growth of national organizations in major countries of the South and efforts on the part of major Northern organizations to decentralize decision-making seem to be reshaping the dynamics of growth. Louis Bickford (2018) summarizes the trend as follows: “There is an increasing ‘convergence towards the global middle,’ as national NGOs become increasingly internationalized and networked (both

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3 One possible source of such findings is the “information paradox”; the greater public awareness of and official attention to human rights violations lead to increased numbers of violations reported, which then can be taken as worse human rights results (see Sikkink 2018; Clark and Sikkink 2013).

4 See Murdie (2014a: 188–195, especially Figure 5.2, as well as Tables 5.1 through 5.4).
‘horizontally’ along a south–south axis, as well as ‘vertically,’ between northern and southern NGOs), and as INGOs become increasingly aware of the strategic and programmatic importance of being ‘closer to the ground.’”

For national organizations in the Global South, formal norm setting at the global level complements efforts to implement norms and policies at the local level in the South. Their focus on local implementation changes modes of activism and raises the relative salience of nonstate targets like corporations (see Rodríguez-Garavito 2017a).

Shifting salience of different goals has accompanied the shifts in the structure of global networks. Claims for fairness, equity, and socioeconomic justice have joined work on international legal norms. In the view of Ikawa (2018), the focus of this emerging menu of rights seeking is “rights for real people,” which is to say that “the content of rights reflects the needs of real individuals, as opposed to the needs of the abstract subject of liberalism.” The operative content of any socioeconomic right depends on the socioeconomic situation from which the individual starts. This also implies a political emphasis different from that of the formal international legal rules. Indeed, Ortiz et al. (2013) found that the “lack of real democracy” was the leading grievance of protesters in a sample of over 800 world protests.

Shifting definitions of priorities are also associated with different styles and strategies of protest. Lettinga (2018) points to what she calls “‘new’ civic activistisms,” which are transgressive, unruly, and disruptive.5 Lacking faith in the responsiveness of established institutions, the “new” civic activistisms “disrupt the framework of institutional power relations in more unconventional, confrontational, and sometimes illegal or violent ways.”

This metamorphosis may be disorienting, perhaps even disturbing, for those, like Hopgood, who define the success of human rights in terms of the classic successes of the late twentieth century. But others, like Rodríguez-Garavito (2014), see the multiplicity of forms and strategies as a potentially advantageous part of the process through which “the movement is shifting toward the structure and logic of an ecosystem.”

An ecosystem is not the undifferentiated mass of the “multitude.” To the contrary, the distinctions and differences among the organizations and movements that populate the field are what give it its potential strength, not amalgamation into an undifferentiated, homogeneous unity. In Rodríguez-Garavito’s view (2014: 501), “As in ecosystems, the field’s robustness will depend on the collaboration and complementarity among different forms of organization and diverse strategies.”

The morphing of global human rights in the postmillennium, posteuphoria period is a good introduction to the evolution of transnational activism more generally. When we shift from human rights to other substantive streams of transnational activism, continual transformation remains a hallmark.

5 See similar reflections by Alvarez et al. (2017) on what they call the “civic/uncivic divide.”
Constituencies, priorities, and strategies are in motion. Diversification in the constituencies and goals within movements that were more narrowly defined, convergence in goals among movements, and interweaving of organizations ostensibly part of particular movements are the result. “Success” still remains elusive and depends on the metric, but continued vitality in the face of continuous challenge is the common theme.

INTERWEAVING CONSTITUENCIES AND BUILDING SYNERGIES

Just as the transnational human rights movement is best viewed as an evolving ecology of organizations and movements whose overall success or failure depends on the connections and interactions among its different parts, other sorts of twenty-first-century transnational activism combine a changing mix of strategies and organizational forms. They interweave different constituencies and try to build synergies among them. The global labor movement is a good example.

The global labor movement saw no spectacular late-twentieth-century growth and did not share the millennial euphoria of the transnational human rights movement. To the contrary, union densities, and with them national political clout, eroded continuously in the North during the latter third of the twentieth century. Things looked less grim at the level of global organization, but optimism was still based more on hope than on evidence of an actual upward trajectory (see Evans 2010). Overall, labor had been unable to find an answer to the expanding political and economic power of global capital. Indeed, pessimistic assessments of labor’s prospects in a globalized world were “something of an orthodoxy in much academic debate” at the end of the twentieth century (Wills 1998: 112).

Despite all of this, the global labor movement was not as moribund as the “uncompromising pessimists” argued. Global labor could boast organizing successes both before and after the millennium (see Bronfenbrenner 2007 for a good overview). Among the most prominent were the transnational antisweatshop campaigns that combined new “rhizomic” networks of NGOs with traditional union command-and-control “tree” structures (see Evans 2010). At the same time, Global Union Federations (GUs) like UNI (Union Network International) mounted impressive multicountry campaigns, with perhaps the most impressive being the G4S Securicor campaign (McCallum 2013). New transnational union federations like the IDC (International Council of Dockworkers) pioneered transnational organizing structured around horizontal rank-and-file networks (Fox-Hodess 2017). Local unions, supported by global allies, won surprising victories against exemplars of global capital like Walmart (Bank Munoz 2017; Bank Munoz, Kenny, and Stecher 2018).

The global labor movement also benefitted from its version of the rise of the “global middle.” Labor was central to late-twentieth-century democratizing
transformations in major countries in the South like Brazil, Korea, and South Africa, creating (at least for a time) new national foundations for anchoring transnational alliances (see Lee 2016; Evans 2014a; Anner 2011). The rise of national labor strength in the “global middle” stimulated new transnational alliances outside the formal structure of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), like SIGTUR (Southern Initiative on Globalization and Trade Union Rights; see Webster, Lambert, and Bezuidenhout 2008).

New transnational campaigns combined with new national strengths in the “global middle” led to a minor boom in millennial optimism as exemplified by references to a “new labor internationalism” (e.g., Mazur 2000; Munck 2002; Waterman 2001). None of this sufficed to dent the power of global capital, but it did demonstrate that the global labor movement was hardly moribund.

Looking at the transformation of the global labor movement in the early decades of the twenty-first century expands the “evolving ecosystem” model proposed for transnational human rights. Shifts in labor’s core constituencies added new potential. Women and precarious workers became labor’s most dynamic pool of new members. At the same time, traditional strengths, including tens of millions of dues-paying members around the world and a 150-year history of organizing experience, made labor a potential anchor for campaigns that brought together other streams of transnational activism.

Labor’s potential for anchoring multiconstituency transnational campaigns is nowhere better illustrated than in the turn-of-the-millennium campaign to defeat the joint effort by global capital and the United States to impose “free trade” on the Western Hemisphere in the form of the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA; see Estevadeordal et al. 2004). The defeat of the FTAA also illustrates the potential power of cross-movement synergies.

The FTAA was defeated by a diverse, multisector, North–South alliance of social movements called the Alianza Social Continental or Hemispheric Social Alliance (ASC/HSA). It comprised a variety of social movements. Groups with rural or indigenous constituencies like Brazil’s MST (Movimento de Trabalhadores sem Terra) and Chile’s ANAMURI (National Association of Rural and Indigenous Women) and environmental groups all had a place in the network. Organizations that Carroll (2016) would consider “Transnational Alternative Policy Groups” – like the Chilean Institute of Political Ecology (Instituto de Ecología Política [IEP]) and the Mexican Center for Environmental Law (Centro Mexicano de Derecho Ambiental [CEMDA]) – were also involved.

Labor’s role in this transnational alliance exemplified its potential contribution to transnational activism. Marisa von Bülow’s (2009, 2010) detailed analysis of the networks involved in the ACS/HAS found Brazil’s CUT (Central Labor Federation) in the South and the biggest union federation (AFL-CIO) in the North among the groups most often named as “closest allies” by other groups. Labor’s ability to play this role was built on the historical foundations of prior campaigns, especially the (largely unsuccessful)
multiconstituency campaign to stop NAFTA (see Kay 2010; Kay and Evans 2018). Even more fundamentally, it depended on a willingness to frame goals in broad terms. In contraposition to the idea of “free trade,” labor’s regional body, the Organización Regional Interamericana de Trabajadores (ORIT), advocated the “globalization of human, economic, social, labor, cultural, and political rights” (see Anner and Evans 2004: 41).

While the anti-FTAA campaign is an unusual example, the evolution of labor’s membership should expand its openness to broad goals and its willingness to build synergistic ties with other movements. The most powerful change in labor’s constituency is the growing proportion of women among union members.

Cobble (2012) reports that a majority of trade union members are women in one-third of countries with adequate data (13/39) and at least 40 percent in another third. Cobble (2012: 43) goes on to argue that “unions have become one of the primary global vehicles for advancing gender equality.” Walby (2011) puts it more boldly, saying, “Trade unions are the largest feminist organizations.” The change in membership implies a change in issue focus. Unions not only support gender equality in pay and working conditions and pensions but also are “vocal and active in defense of public services that “women especially value (health, education and care work)” (Walby 2014; see also Moghadam 2005; Franzway and Fonow 2011; Moghadam, Franzway, and Fonow 2011).

Its synergistic ties with transnational feminism should stimulate labor to broaden and revitalize its agenda, just as they provide an additional source of strength to the global women’s movement, but it is still early to celebrate the results of the confluence. Changes in leadership and decision-making may be moving in the right direction, but they still lag behind changes in membership.6 And more attention to feminist issues has not stemmed the tide of declining membership and union density for formal sector unions.

Synergies between feminist and labor agendas have proved a greater source of dynamism when they combine with a second shift in labor’s constituency – the mobilization of precarious, informal sector workers. The mobilization of precarious workers in women-led unions with predominantly women members has become a central feature in the growth of the global labor movement, and, perhaps surprisingly, these unions have built transnational alliances, despite working in what are usually very local markets.

India’s SEWA (Self-Employed Women’s Association) is an iconic “founding mother” of this process (Agarwala 2013). It has helped organize informal

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6 For example, Franzway and Fonow (2011), after a detailed study of the position of women in the International Metalworkers Federation, concluded that serious inclusion of women in leadership was a postmillennial phenomenon. Nonetheless, they reported that as of 2005 they “saw an upsurge of women’s activism and the rapid expansion of their participation in all levels of decision making within the IMF” (2011: 124).
workers in other countries (e.g., Turkey, Nepal, Burma, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bhutan) and has initiated and/or supported transnational advocacy networks for informal workers (e.g., Homenet, Streetnet, WIEGO). It was also the first national union of informal workers to become affiliated with the ITUC. Other examples demonstrate the diversity of campaigns in which the organizing energy of women is central: for example, in the campaign to organize the transnational banana industry in Central America (Frank 2005).

One of the best recent examples of mobilizing precarious women workers is the organization of domestic workers. Despite being considered an archetype of the “unorganizable” worker, domestic workers not only organized locally and nationally but also managed to push the International Labour Organization into passing Convention 189 on Decent Work for Domestic Workers, thus creating a global legal and normative framework legitimating their struggles. Out of this emerged in turn the International Domestic Workers Federation (IDWF), a transnational federation dedicated to making sure that Convention 189 gains traction on the ground.

All of this brings us back to Walby’s and Cobble’s basic point. The increasing role of women workers doesn’t just change global labor’s constituency; it changes the goals and orientation of the movement, shifting its agenda in the direction of reflecting interests of families and communities, integrating workplace issues with issues of service delivery, and making alliances with community-based NGOs more natural. Combining issues salient to families and communities with issues that arise from women’s roles as workers still doesn’t get us to the multitude, but it gets us much closer than the traditional male-dominated labor movement did.

Pushing forward the transformation of the global labor movement is one of the contributions of transnational women’s activism to the evolution of transnational social movements. In terms of understanding the current structure of transnational activism, however, one of the most theoretically interesting contributions of activists and researchers has been close examination of the productive contestation that occurs within the networks that link Northern and Southern transnational activists and those that link local activists in the South to more central nodes within the South.

Millie Thayer (2001, 2010, 2017) does a meticulous job of using the relations between a group of rural women workers in Northeast Brazil and an urban feminist group to convey the complicated politics of the links between different levels in the network – links that are aspirationally egalitarian but inevitably infused with elements of verticality in practice. Thayer starts out (2001) by

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7 A particularly nice illustration of the intersection of women’s roles in labor mobilization is the work of Sanmiguel-Valderrama (2011) on Colombian flower workers.

8 The two groups referred to here are the Movimento de Mulheres Trabalhadoras Rurais (MMTR) and the SOS Corpo, a feminist health organization in the capital city. See also the discussion of Thayer in Evans (2005).
illustrating the potential local usefulness of cosmopolitan local frames to the struggles of local women workers by showing how Joan Scott’s analysis of gender proved useful to them in discussing practical issues with men in their communities. Thayer’s later work (2010) illuminates the back-and-forth negotiations among different nodes in this network, with those closer to the North having more direct access to resources while local organizations control validation that the network is in fact producing results “on the ground.” Finally (in Thayer 2017) she documents the ways in which the network is forced to deal with the intrusion of market-mimicking memes.

Cecilia Santos’ (2018) analysis of networks focused on transnational feminist networks fostering legal mobilization to combat violence against women brings out similar underlying themes. Following the idea of “epistemologies of the South” Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2014), Cecilia Santos argues that transnational networks embody an “ecology of knowledges,” with the success of the network in achieving its goals depending on the productive interaction of different kinds of knowledge. The networks include international and domestic human rights NGOs that specialize in transnational human rights litigation, feminist advocacy NGOs, grassroots feminist NGOs, and, most fundamentally, the victims themselves (Santos 2015, 2018). Santos shows that building an ecology of knowledges cannot be taken for granted: Her research demonstrates that “Transnational legal mobilization of human rights can both build and break solidarity” (2018: 124).

The theoretical contributions of researchers working on transnational feminist activism force a more sophisticated way of thinking about the intra-network dynamics of transnational activist networks. They reinforce the idea that when we think about ecologies of organizations, movements, and campaigns we must also think about ecologies of knowledge and epistemological terrains.

Shifting from human rights, labor, and women’s movements to transnational environmental movements underlines again that transnational movements must be seen as continually undergoing transformation rather than as being fixed entities. The morphing of movements for sustainability mirrors in some respects the morphing of the human rights movement. Here again, recentering around new constituencies has been a source of new vitality. The shift echoes the global labor movement’s gains from the expanded role of precarious women workers. The importance of new epistemological frames is also evident. Finally, looking at transnational environmental activism brings us back to Tarrow (2005) and his insistence on the persistent centrality of the nation-state.

The ability of Chico Mendes, the iconic Amazonian environmental activist, to use transnational networks to counter extractive capital and the Brazilian state was one of the most compelling examples in Keck and Sikkink (1998). But the more typical successes of late-twentieth-century transnational environmental activism involved embedding new rules in the structure of global governance. The “Montreal Protocol” restricting chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) was an early example that proved durable (Haas 1992). Activism around the Kyoto Protocol
and the Conferences of the Parties arising out of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change are also examples of efforts to push for new rules at the level of global governance.

Twenty-first-century transnational environmental activism also offers another example of the growth of connections among different streams of activism. Increased focus on socioeconomic rights in the human rights movement creates links to environmental activism. As Rodríguez-Garavito (2014: 500) puts it, “Extreme environmental degradation – climate change, water scarcity, the rapid extinction of species and forests, uncontrolled pollution – has become one of the most serious threats to human rights.”

The confluence of environmental NGOs with labor and rural activists in the anti-FTAA campaign, mentioned earlier, is another example of links between the environmental movement and other streams of transnational activism. The interests of rural labor activists in preserving small-scale farming create another kind of bridge, with the transnational activities of the MST and Via Campesina being perhaps the best examples of synergy (see Borras 2004, 2008; Bringel and Vieira 2013). The participation of recyclers in transnational environmental campaigns is yet another example of new intersections between the environmental and labor movements (see Ciplet 2014; Bonner and Spooner 2012).

The emergence of indigenous communities as a globally prominent constituency for environmental activism is perhaps the most interesting aspect of the morphing of the environmental movement. It introduces a new set of strategic global–local interactions. For example, the victory of the indigenous Sarayaku community of the Ecuadorian Amazon against global oil companies and the Ecuadorian government was an environmentalist victory as well as a victory for indigenous land rights. But the case was won in the Inter-American Court of Human Rights by a diverse coalition of Latin American human rights NGOs (Rodríguez-Garavito 2014).

Indigenous communities have also added epistemological resources to the transnational environmental movement. Indigenous worldviews offer an encompassing perspective grounded in shared community experiences. Buen vivir – which might be formulated as “living well, not having more” – is perhaps the most prominent example. Drawing on indigenous Andean worldviews, it has resonated in contexts that might seem quite disparate, such as grassroots organizing in Southeast Asia (Carroll 2016: 160; P. Smith 2017).

Finally, while a sustainable global environment is the most diffuse and encompassing of collective goods, the analysis of twenty-first-century environmental struggles has reconfirmed Tarrow’s (2005) suspicion that engaging the state was unavoidable. Paredes (2018) offers a nice example rooted in indigenous environmental struggles. Transnational advocates were essential to constructing a global norm of prior consultation, but the effective synergy of global and local movements in Peru depended on building an effective organizational node within the Peruvian state – in this case an
ombudsman. Here at least, local and transnational activists found state capacity to be an essential tool rather than a threat.

The necessity of continuing to include the state as a key actor is probably a component of any realistic model of transnational activism. For example, after completing one of the most thoroughgoing field studies comparing transnational labor and environmental campaigns, Bartley (2018: 258) concludes with a general call for “re-centering the state.” Unfortunately, at the same time that activists have learned to take better advantage of the organizational components of the nation-state as auxiliaries to the ecosystem of transnational activism, transnational movements are confronting a new set of efforts to use the power of the nation-state as a weapon against them. If the erosion of the ideological sanctity of sovereignty at the end of the twentieth century worked to the advantage of transnational movements, twenty-first-century revivals of nationalism pose a new kind of political threat.

REACTION, RESILIENCE, AND THE FUTURE OF TRANSNATIONAL ACTIVISM

At the end of the twentieth century, the intensification of globalization combined with the waning ideological charisma of neoliberalism constituted a counterintuitive set of structural opportunities for transnational social movements. The second decade of the twenty-first century has seen the rise of national regimes that, while ideologically uncritical of capitalism, are ambivalent with regard to “globalism” and hostile to the classic liberal elements of “neoliberalism.” The overall future of these “reactionary nationalist/populist regimes” is unclear, but they present serious challenges to transnational social movements (see Rodríguez-Garavito and Gomez 2018).

In some cases, these new political hybrids result from formally democratic regimes moving toward authoritarian rule without abandoning formal democracy. “Illiberal democracy” is one label for this shift (see Zakaria 1997; Rodrik 2016). They are “populist” in the sense of being willing to attack established political elites, but the term “reactionary” must be added to distinguish them from the progressive populist regimes of the past. In contrast to the blend of nationalism and globalism that characterized late-twentieth-century neoliberal regimes, they manage to be aggressively nationalist without rejecting global capitalism. “Reactionary nationalist/populist regimes” roughly captures their spirit. From Erdoğan, Orbán, and Duterte to Modi, Putin, and Trump, these regimes take diverse forms but share strong family resemblances.

Just as it facilitated the growth of transnational social movements, the inability of global neoliberal capitalism to increase well-being for all created the political foundations for these new regimes. It makes perfect sense in Polanyian terms that transnational social movements and reactionary
nationalist/populist politics should both benefit from global capital’s inability to deliver the good lives that it promises (see Evans 2015). For Polanyi, potential beneficiaries of the failures of capitalism included both progressive movements for social protection and reactionary movements for social protection. What makes current reactionary nationalist regimes depart from the Polanyian model is that, from Trump to Modi, they remain staunch defenders of global capital as an instrument of well-being, empirical evidence to the contrary notwithstanding.9

While the new nationalists portray their agendas as compatible with an expanded role for global capital, they define the global ties of transnational social movements as a fundamental threat to the integrity of the nation. Narendra Modi, for example, is happy to allow extractive global corporations to pillage India’s natural resources and foreign manufacturers to run factories where workers must face hazardous working conditions, but he is quick to decry transnational NGOs as agents of a sinister “foreign hand” and to impose a draconian set of new regulations to keep them from operating in India (see Mander 2018). For Viktor Orbán, George Soros’ Open Society Foundation ranks with immigrants as a dire threat to Hungary’s national project.

The antipathy makes sense. Locally rooted transnational activism represents a threat to oligarchic autonomy and has the potential to expose the failure of reactionary nationalist/populist regimes to deliver improved well-being. Transnational civic organizations’ access to global networks with resources makes them more threatening than local movements. Like immigrants, transnational social movements are perfect targets for whipped-up nationalist fervor. The future of the ecosystem of transnational activism depends, then, on the outcome of the collision of its own positive trajectory with the negative trajectory of national political contexts.

Contexts rife with threats and challenges are not news to transnational activists. Transnational social movements have faced them in the past, and resilience has prevailed. Nonetheless, the question for the future of transnational activism is clear: Does the combination of different streams of transnational activism that constitutes the current ecosystem have sufficient resilience to continue to transform itself and to support social movement efforts at the national and community levels?

Arguably the ecosystem is more robust than it was during the apogee of millennial euphoria. For decades it has been reinventing itself. Debate over the degree to which the latest generation of activists have succeeded in “changing the world” will continue without resolution, but there are fewer silos and more synergies. The assemblage of movements has managed to include new constituencies, to expand its operative set of approaches, organizations, and strategies, and to explore new epistemological frames. It has learned how to use

9 In Trump’s case global markets may be attacked rhetorically, but the attacks are directed against politicians in other nations presumed to be manipulating these markets, not against capital.
the institutions of capable states when it can and to develop new counterstrategies to respond to hostile state power.

The ecosystem of transnational social activism is unlikely to expand at the pace of the late twentieth century, and even less likely to achieve the kind of power imagined by Hardt and Negri. This ecosystem is, however, likely to continue to build and rebuild organizations and networks. It will continue to contribute to the pursuit of social justice and human flourishing, while pushing societies in the direction of socially and ecologically sustainable *buen vivir*.

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