Letter from the Chair

Kim Voss
University of California, Berkeley

I am honored to chair the Comparative and Historical Section this year. Had I written this before November 8th, my tone would have been purely celebratory. Back then, I was still feeling the glow of our successful panels at the annual meetings, the lingering inspiration from our pre-ASA mini-conference, and the relief of our successful membership drive. These successes made me confident about the wellbeing of our section and confirmed my sense that comparative historical sociology could, indeed, contribute to saving the world, as so many of you have argued over the past year.

But the results of the 2016 election have profoundly undermined my optimism about almost everything. Now, like many of you, I am reassessing what I thought I knew about the world, and most especially about

CONTENTS

Book Symposia
Page 4  Jonathan Wytzsen’s Making Morocco
Page 20  Caroline Lee’s Do-it-Yourself Democracy
Page 36  Martin Ruel’s Between Slavery and Capitalism

Features and News
Page 45  Op-Ed Corner: Understanding Trump’s election
Page 52  Identities: Harold Kerbo
Page 56  Tribute: George Steinmetz on Georges Balandier
Page 61  Policy Brief: Iga Kozłowska on the Polish constitutional crisis
Page 64  New Publications
Page 69  Section News

Section Officers

CHAIR
Kim Voss
University of California, Berkeley

CHAIR-ELECT
George Steinmetz
University of Michigan

PAST CHAIR
Monica Prasad
Northwestern University

SECRETARY-TREASURER
Colin J. Beck
Pomona College (2017)

COUNCIL
Cedric de Leon
Providence College (2017)
Anne Kane
University of Houston (2017)
Stephanie Mudge
University of California, Davis (2018)
Robert Jansen
University of Michigan (2018)
Melissa Wilde
University of Pennsylvania (2019)
Tasleen J. Padamsee
Ohio State University (2019)
Diana Rodriguez-Franco
Northwestern University (Student, 2017)

WEBMASTER
Şahan Savaş Karataşlı,
Princeton University (2015)

NEWSLETTER EDITORS
Matthew Baltz
University of California, Los Angeles (2014)
Marilyn Grell-Brisk
Université de Neuchâtel (2016)
Victoria Reyes
University of California, Riverside (2016)
Yijing Shen
Brown University (2016)
American politics and institutions. Additionally, I am reassessing my research priorities. My sense is that comparative historical sociology is now essential to helping us figure out the best way forward, particularly for showing how we might keep the forces of intolerance and reaction at bay, both in the short and longer term.

But before offering some short remarks about research priorities I’d like to see going forward, I want to thank Monica Prasad for her outstanding work over the past year during her tenure as section chair. Under her leadership, the section engaged in a year-long discussion about whether comparative historical sociologists could and/or should do policy-relevant work. Judging by the many young scholars I saw at the highly successful mini-conference, “Can Comparative Historical Sociology Save the World?”, it looks to me like the debate inspired a whole new generation to do comparative historical work! Under Monica’s leadership, the section has started a blog (http://policytrajectory.asa-comparative-historical.org) and organized 11 problem-solving working groups (see page 69), both of which will continue the momentum she started.

I additionally want to thank the people who helped me with last summer’s very successful ASA sessions: Cedric de Leon, Zophia Edwards, Barry Eidlin, Laura Nelson and Charles Seguin. If you were unable to attend the two invited panels, you’ll be able to read some of the excellent presentations from Digitized (big) Data and Comparative Historical Sociology in the next issue of Trajectories. Additionally, plans are afoot to publish elsewhere the presentations from the session commemorating the 50th anniversary of Barrington Moore’s Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy.

Speaking of dictatorship and democracy, the election results lead me to reflect on what suddenly seems to be the fragility of American democratic institutions. Going forward, how might comparative historical scholarship help us understand this sudden fragility - and also illuminate possible ways to prevent the next four years from bringing about greater erosion? As a first step, we need to use what Monica identified in her Trajectories column last summer as the “secret weapon” of comparative historical sociology: comparison. But we should recognize that the kind of comparative cases on which we might draw has shifted dramatically. Pundits have frequently compared Donald Trump’s victory to Brexit and we can learn much from systematic analyses of the two cases, yet our comparative options could be expanded to include the politics of countries like Poland, Hungary, and Turkey, all of which have recently turned to the right. Are there similar transnational processes and domestic politics that have undermined liberal institutions across such cases? And what can we learn by enlarging our comparisons to include cases in earlier eras where authoritarian rulers have come to power by electoral means, such as Germany in the 1930s? Comparative historical sociologists are well positioned to collectively construct a sociology of democratic collapse, although I certainly hope (and will work to ensure) that the U.S. will avoid such a fate.

We need to keep in mind that useful comparisons can also be made below the
national level: for example, what might we learn by comparing civic associations and professional organizations in societies that have undergone authoritarian transitions? What distinguishes those that have been the basis for democratic resilience from those that have not? And what of universities, where most of us teach and do our research? As I write this letter, mine is struggling with how to respond to an upcoming talk by the white nationalist movement provocateur, Milo Yiannopoulos, of course, entail examination of failing strategies and right-wing retrenchment along with the successful cases. And, in order not to fall victim to the kind of hopelessness that zaps research energy, it helps me to be mindful of the process Meyer and Staggenborg (1996) theorized two decades ago: in federal systems like the U.S., there are numerous institutional sites where policy is made, and movements often respond to a defeat in one venue by targeting protest in an alternative venue. Moreover, conflicts can be prolonged for a very long time as switches in venue make it very difficult for one opposing movement to vanquish the other. The few hopeful outcomes in the November election involved state and local victories in support of the minimum wage and progressive labor regulation, along with the defeat of the notoriously anti-immigrant sheriff, Joe Arpaio.¹ The question, of course, is how these local victories came about and what they might portend for the future. Additionally, it would be useful to know the fate of local and regional movements in non-federal systems as I consider the theoretical contributions comparative historical sociologists are well placed to make.

As I survey the likely wreckage of labor protections and workers’ right to organize, and despair over the decimation of all hope in the foreseeable future for a fair and humane immigration system, I am more interested than ever in pursuing research that that might elucidate effective strategies and frames for groups and individuals to resist authoritarian, illiberal policies.

and it’s not at all clear that any of us have identified the comparative cases that might best guide our consideration of possible responses. This is terrain where comparative historical sociology has much to offer, both pragmatically and theoretically.

As is probably obvious by now, my own intellectual bent and past research lead me to be particularly interested in exploring comparative cases of resistance and resilience. As I survey the likely wreckage of labor protections and workers’ right to organize, and despair over the decimation of all hope in the foreseeable future for a fair and humane immigration system, I am more interested than ever in pursuing research that that might elucidate effective strategies and frames for groups and individuals to resist authoritarian, illiberal policies. This will, of these are just a few of the concerns and research questions that I hope we can tackle in the wake of the 2016 election. I welcome your thoughts and hope that we can have a continuing conversation throughout this year, both in the pages of Trajectories and on the section blog.

Endnotes

1. Increases in the minimum wage were passed in four states and in the first city outside of the west and east coast—Flagstaff, Arizona. In addition, San Jose, California passed a progressive initiative aimed at limiting employers use of part-time work to erode labor standards.

References

Making Morocco
Colonial Intervention and the Politics of Identity
Cornell University Press
Jonathan Wyrtzen

Editor’s Note: The following text is based on an author-meets-critics session that was organized by Nick Wilson for the Annual Meeting of the Social Science History Association in November, 2015. My thanks go out to Nick for organizing this feature, and to George Steinmetz, Julian Go, Mary Lewis, Mounira Maya Charrad, and Johnathan Wyrtzen for agreeing to contribute their comments to the newsletter. -MJB

Comments on Making Morocco
George Steinmetz
University of Michigan

Making Morocco: Colonial Intervention and the Politics of Identity is an extremely impressive contribution to the history of colonialism and postcolonialism and a wondrous example of the ways sociology and history are entering a new stage of fruitful interdisciplinarity. The book sheds light on the complex and distinctive case of colonial Morocco, particularly the French Protectorate, while also examining in less detail the smaller Spanish Protectorate. Making Morocco sheds a powerful light on the interactions and comparisons between various political forces inside what Wyrtzen calls the “political field” of colonial Morocco. One axis of interaction and comparison involved political authorities. Here Wyrtzen looks at the semi-autonomous Moroccan state, or makhzan, and the French colonial state, or “Residence.” He also includes the Spanish authorities in the colony and French authorities in the metropole. The book further examines Moroccan political movements and several salient categories of relational Moroccan political identities: Arab and Berber; Muslim and Jew; women and men. The book deploys an impressive range of printed and archival sources in Arabic, French, Spanish, and English and shows a solid grasp of the extensive secondary literature.

The book is organized around theoretical and thematic logics. The theoretical framing develops two key arguments. The first has to do with the colonial state as seeking to legitimate itself and to render the colonized society “legible.” The second revolves around the semi-Bourdieuian concept of the “colonial political field.” Wyrtzen distinguishes between the narrower state and the wider political field, intentionally using the latter to capture a wider range of “organization, mobilization, agitation, and struggle.” More specifically, the book is organized around what Wyrtzen calls “three
commonsense field characteristics,” by which he means (1) field as used in a topological sense, referring to the positions of agents and institutions in an analytic space; 2) an organization or array of forces; and 3) a field of contestation, or a battlefield.

At a different level the book asks a series of questions and makes several causal claims. For example, Wyrtzen argues that the classification of French Morocco as a protectorate rather than a colony had significant effects on “what types of organizing logics were expressed in various colonial political fields.” He asks why urban nationalists emphasized Islam and Arabic language and culture and marginalized other dimensions of Moroccan collective identity, including Berber or Jewish markers, why they made Mohamed V the fulcrum of their claims, and how they used Islam, the Arabic language, and the political form of monarchy to mobilize popular protest. The answers he provides are richly documented with evidence and carefully structured as complex, overdetermined analytic narratives.

Thematicallv, Making Morocco focuses special attention on the experience and political strategies and expressions of the colonized. The groups discussed include the Moroccan elite, especially the Sultan Mohamed ben Youssef; Arab nationalists and anticolonialists; Berbers; Jews; and women. Wyrtzen criticizes a tendency in sociological work on colonies and empires to privilege a “top down” focus on elites rather than a bottom-up focus on the colonized. This bias in historical sociological work on empires and colonies is an interesting anomaly in sociology, which as a discipline tends to approach its social object from the opposite, bottom up perspective. Wyrtzen’s work is more typical within History, which took an “ex-centric” turn in the study of colonialism decades ago, followed by an even more bottom-up approach in Subaltern studies. As such, the book represents an important corrective within sociology, bringing it in line with colonial historiography. I will return to this topic in a moment and argue that the combination of what we might call Weberian and Subaltern approaches is a natural methodological move, once one adopts Bourdieusian field theory, and a move that overcomes the division between conventional sociological and historical work in this area.

I want to single out three specific parts of the book for particular praise. The first is the discussion of Berber oral poetry. This fascinating material provides a stunning window onto the mentalities and practices of anticolonial jihad and is richly suggestive of the depth and intensity of the hatred of the French. Second is the chapter on the Jews in and of Morocco. Wyrtzen does a masterful job in conveying the dilemmas and threats to Moroccan Jews, the opportunities created by complex and contradictory colonial and imperial laws and structures, and the successes and failures of various individuals and groups in taking advantage of these opportunities (for example the overlapping of different legal systems). Rarely have the contradictions between imperial and colonial rule been shown in such dramatic form. A third and equally important chapter (ch. 7) focuses on the complex mix of gender practices rooted in the policies of the colonizers, the makhzan, Berbers, and Jews.

Against the backdrop of my overwhelming enthusiasm for the book, I have several critiques. The point first concerns the concept and the treatment of the colonial state, as opposed to the colonial political field. Making Morocco pays relatively little attention to activities within the colonial administration itself and colonial policy. The book also downplays the activities and social structures of French and Spanish settlers, who are of course not the same thing as the French and Spanish administration. One possible reason for this
relative lack of emphasis here on the state is that another leading English language specialist in French Morocco, Terry Burke, has long focused on precisely these aspects (most notably in Burke 2014). Wyrtzen’s book stakes out a very different terrain. Nonetheless, it would have been preferable to the non-specialist with a richer sense of the complexities of French (and Spanish) colonial governance. To use the author’s own words: there were “identification processes” and “classification struggles” going on inside the colonial administration, not just outside it. The colonial state is no longer your grandfather’s colonial state, the state of Hoover Institution historians or the Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History. The colonial state and colonial field of power, in the historical and social science literature, have become as complex as any other modern state—perhaps even more so. History from “below” can no longer claim the epistemological, theoretical, or even the political high ground; E.P. Thompson can and should coexist with Pierre Bourdieu, or Max Weber.

The book does, however, discuss two key subfields of the colonial state: the colonial juridical field and the educational directorate. And the author repeatedly notes, the colonial state was causally relevant in an immediate sense for explaining activities inside what he calls the “colonial political field” and in shaping the evolution of the neo-makhzan state. For example, in 1930 the French Residency promulgated a decree (dahir), which the sultan “perfunctorily signed,” and which “reorganized the separate customary legal system that the French first set in place in 1914 in certain so-called Berber regions.” All subsequent nationalist and independence movements were significantly shaped by the 1930 decree. Another example of the colonial administration shaping the political field is the fact argument that “the rapid Europeanization of much of the urban Moroccan Jewish community and cultural identification with France did not translate into political rights.” Strictly speaking this historical process leading to the lack of political citizenship for Europeanized Moroccan Jews was due to logic of colonial state field, not the colonial political field—it was due to the fact that the French colonial state was articulated with the Moroccan state in a version of indirect rule.¹

There are a few points where Wyrtzen talks directly about the French colonial state. He writes, for instance, that “from this point forward, the nationalist struggle entered a new phase in which the sultan became a full player in the attempt to contest French control of the colonial state” (my emphasis). It is unclear what is meant by “state” in this context, since the colonized by definition cannot be “full players” in the control of a colonial state—it would no longer be a colonial state, in that case, but simply a national state (Steinmetz 2008). I think what he means is the balance of power in a country with dual sovereignty tipped away dominance by the French colonial state and toward the Makhzan state. These and other episodes suggest that the French colonial regime was, at least until the end of the 1940s, more powerful than any other institution or movement in the Moroccan colonial political field.

The book’s relative lack of emphasis on European power structures in the colony produces the peculiar effect of rendering the activities of the colonizing state both mysterious and unexplained, and seemingly obvious, as if it needs no further explanation. Clarity around these issues seems important, especially given the extreme complexity of the Moroccan power structure in the middle 20th century. This would help comparative historians respond meaningfully to colonial-era objections that Morocco was never really a colony—claims that still surface in the secondary literature today. The question of
state sovereignty is central to answering this argument. These claims are usually based on an entirely nominalist definition of Morocco as a Protectorate rather than a Colony. What this overlooks is the fact that conquered elites have everywhere denied that they had been conquered, and indirectly ruled elites have frequently exaggerated their political autonomy.

My second critique revolves around the question of legitimacy. This concept is first introduced in the context of Wyrtzen’s discussion of the state. Indeed, this is where legitimacy is usually located in historical sociology, due to Max Weber’s classic definition of the state. The author makes two separate claims here. The first is that the French colonial state was in fact strongly oriented toward seeking legitimacy, and the second is that the French actually succeeded—at least temporarily—in legitimizing their activities in Morocco.

The first question raised by any discussion of legitimacy is: legitimacy for whom? From whom did the French seek and obtain legitimacy? Wyrtzen suggests that the French sought legitimacy for their presence and activities in Morocco among Moroccans. He writes that “evidence in French North Africa demonstrates that colonizing powers were often profoundly concerned with the question of legitimacy and made significant efforts to buttress their claims, both for external audiences and for the local population.” The second question is whether such legitimacy claims were in fact successful, and if so, with which audiences. Securing legitimacy among external audiences is very different from securing it among the colonized. Even if the “French remained formally tied to the legitimacy structure embedded in the Treaty of Fes” throughout the protectorate’s four decades, there is little evidence, at least in *Making Morocco*, that the French were seen as legitimate rulers by most Moroccans. On the contrary, Wyrtzen provides evidence of the rejection by nearly every Moroccan community of official French accounts of what they were doing in their country. Chapter Seven, on the logics of French colonial gender policies, shows that there was nearly universal rejection of French politics by all Moroccan parties. The one chapter that partially counters this is the chapter on the Moroccan Jews. But here too the author paints a picture of an overall loss of legitimacy for the French over time.

This book recovers the complete merger of history and sociology that was pioneered by the Annales School in the interwar years and by the German historical sociologists during the Weimar Republic.

An example of the ambiguity surrounding the word legitimacy arises when the author writes that “so-called associationist, indirect rule was legitimated, in part, by historically documenting how the precolonial makhzan constituted a “failed state.” It is unclear in this sentence where this legitimacy was socially located. But there is certainly no evidence that the makhzan leaders accepted this depiction of their state as a failed one. What we seem to have in this instance is legitimation claims being made for audiences in the metropole.

Moving away from summary and critique I want to say a few more general words about how this book fits into and sheds light on more general trends in the human and social sciences today. This book recovers the complete merger of history and sociology that was pioneered by the Annales School in the interwar years and by the German historical sociologists during the Weimar Republic (Steinmetz, 2010,
Forthcoming). One test of the overcoming of this disciplinary division is whether readers from the two disciplines recognize a single book as belonging to both of their disciplines. Jonathan Wyrtzen’s book provides a compelling synthesis of the genres of social history and historical sociology. Like a historian or an Annales-influenced historical sociologist, Wyrtzen plumbs the archives for original documents. Also more like a post-E.P. Thompson social historian or an advocate of the “history of everyday life” (Alltagsgeschichte), Wyrtzen recovers the voices of the voiceless, the practices of the oppressed. It is somewhat paradoxical that sociologists working on empire have focused more on the internal workings of the institutions of power than on what James C. Scott (1990) called the hidden transcripts of the powerless. What is essential is a view of the social totality that combines the study of elites and the lower classes and masses.

In sum, Making Morocco will become a standard work in historical and political sociology and the sociology of the state and colonies, nationalism and social movements, and ethnic and religious identification. It will be read by historians of France, Morocco, and colonialism, and in fields of Islam, North African, and Near Eastern studies. It will stand as a beacon to future historical sociologists, setting standards of analytical integrity and methodological rigor.

Endnotes

1. This is yet another example of the many ways in which French citizenship law was at least as regressive as that of other European powers, including Germany, whose colonial citizenship law before 1914 was regressive but less so. Any study of French citizenship has to take into account the sixty million people in its overseas empire, whose numbers dwarfed those of the metropole. French citizenship law only liberalized for a very brief moment at the end of WWII and then snapped back almost immediately into its extremely restrictive form (Cooper 2014).

References


Steinmetz, George. Forthcoming. “Field Theory and Interdisciplinary: Relations between History and Sociology in Germany and France during the Twentieth Century.” Comparative Studies in Society and History.

Comments on Making Morocco

Julian Go
Boston University

Making Morocco is an important book for us historical sociologists. Not only does it make substantive contributions to our understanding of French colonialism and Moroccan politics and identity, it also deploys a compelling novel approach for analyzing the legacies of colonialism and doing the historical sociology of colonialism in the first place.

To be sure, there is a vastly growing literature on colonial legacies. James Mahoney’s (2010) book on the impact of colonialism upon development in Latin America is a good example, as is the economists’ literature on colonial influences on development (Acemoglu and Robinson 2012). But unlike these large-scale cross-national studies that speak in broad generalizations about how colonialism impacts democracy or economic development, Wyrtzen’s book offers a fine-grained analysis of how a range of identities in Morocco were constructed, politicized, valorized or otherwise marginalized through a series of struggles and
interactions in what Wyrtzen calls the “colonial political field.” We get to see, almost first-hand, how French colonial forms valorized and institutionalized the Moroccan monarchy, how Moroccan nationalism became discursively centered around an Arabic-Islamic high culture, and how Muslim, Jewish, Arab and Berber classifications, as well as gender distinctions, all became politicized. In this way, Wyrtzen offers an historical analysis that helps us understand how religion, ethnicity, territory and the monarchy were all consolidated through colonialism and hence how and why they remain the focus of contemporary Moroccan political struggles. At the last ASA meetings, the sociologist Kieran Healy grabbed some attention for his paper titled “fuck nuance.” But Wyrtzen’s book shows the impoverishment of such a stance, and allows us to retort: “fuck parsimony.” The devil is in the details, and Making Morocco rivets on our attention upon them. Rather than promoting sound bite, twitter-laden sociology that follows the hegemonic protocols of parsimony, Making Morocco narrates complexity – a type of thick description – that is nonetheless shown to be structured and patterned by the power of colonialism.

By narrating the complexities of colonialism and identity-formation, Making Morocco is much closer to another literature on the legacies of colonialism besides the large-scale cross-national literature on democracy and economic development. I am thinking here of the work by area scholars, historians, and political scientists who offer fine-grained case studies of how colonialism invents and institutionalizes identities. Think, for instance of some of the older work by, say, David Laitin, in Hegemony and Culture (1986), or work by Mamdani (1996) or Miles (1994) on the legacies of indirect and direct rule. Here Wyrtzen’s book also broaches some of the Foucauldian inspired studies of colonialism, such as Timothy Mitchell’s seminal and early work (1991) and other scholarship on colonial governmentalties.

Still, Wyrtzen’s book stands out relative to this work, too, for unlike some of this work, Making Morocco allows us to see people more clearly. Rather than reducing French colonialism in Morocco to a matter of colonial states, colonial officials and administrators, to logics of rule or colonial governmentalties, Wyrtzen’s book gets us closer to how these things impacted and related to the experiences and subjectivities of the colonized themselves. Here Wyrtzen’s remarkable linguistic skills and area specific knowledge are put to work; those skills and that knowledge allows Wyrtzen to dig deep into the archive of subaltern agency and voice, and Making Morocco thus reminds us that colonialism was never simply a top-down process of imposition, nor just a play of colonial policies and governmentalties, but also a field of interaction in which all actors are shaped and reshaped in the process.

Fittingly, one of my favorite chapters is Chapter Three, “Resisting the Colonial Political Field in the Atlas Mountains,” where Wyrtzen excavates an archive of Berber poetry to reveal how Berbers imaginatively reconstructed...
territory and identity amidst their resistance to the expanding colonial field. There are similar moments in other chapters. For example, in Chapter Seven, “Gender and the Politics of Identity,” Wyrten uses oral poems to recover the otherwise subjugated voices of rural women and their resistance to the colonial identifications imposed upon them. In these and other swaths of Making Morocco, the subjective experiences and practices of the colonized are put into plain view. And in this, Making Morocco is much closer to the early work of the theoretical master to which the book relies – Pierre Bourdieu; but not the Bourdieu of Distinction. It is rather the Bourdieu that did fieldwork in neighboring Algeria. And this is not the Bourdieu of the Logic of Practice, which was indeed based upon his work in Algeria, but more precisely the founding work of Bourdieu, which includes his photography on Algerian peasants (2003), his book on work and workers in Algeria, and other studies where Bourdieu and his collaborators let us more closely see the experiences of the colonized groups who had to negotiate and manage French colonialism (e.g. 1961(1958)). In this sense, it is more than fitting that Wyrten draws upon Bourdieu’s field theory for his analysis – for the seeds of the idea of fields in the first place lie in Bourdieu’s early work on colonialism in Algeria (Go 2013).

In short, Wyrten’s ability to move beyond just a focus upon state classificatory schemes and how those schemes, and colonial governmentality, impacted colonized identities is a key innovation. It is where I see Making Morocco as part of a newer body of work among younger scholars like him (or, for instance, Zophia Edwards). This is a new strand in historical sociology that goes beyond the often Eurocentric and state-centric foci of a lot of existing work and returns us to the experiences of the dominated, of those who were subjected to colonialism’s powers; a return, in a sense, to historical anthropologies of colonialism and to subaltern studies.

In my book on US colonialism in Puerto Rico and the Philippines (2008), I too tried to draw upon that body of work to recapture the subjective understandings of colonized actors, but Wyrten’s book is probably more exemplary, for it is able to capture not just elite voices but also the typically repressed voices to show how all of these actors, not just a narrow group of elites or officials, negotiated the identity impositions of French rule. Yes, Wyrten carefully tracks how elite identities were consolidated and how, for instance, the monarchy was institutionalized in the political field. But he also attends to the way in which non-elite groups like Berber-speaking illiterate women responded to the capacity of the colonial state visited upon them.

I would even go further and say that Wyrten’s book even does more than return us to subaltern scholarship or the early work of Bourdieu. It also connects with the founding work of anticolonial thinkers who helped spawn postcolonial studies, such as Frantz Fanon, Aimé Césaire, and W.E.B. Dubois. For these scholars, colonialism was a process that impacted the identities of colonizer and colonized alike, and they were able to track this not through top down analyses of empires and colonialism but by paying attention to the voices and experiences of colonial subjects. For Fanon, the starting point for theorizing colonialism was not “what does the empire think”? but rather “what does the Black Man want?” Some of the most compelling passages of Making Morocco are exactly those that address a similar question for the colonized subjects of Morocco’s past, showing how those colonized subjects received, made sense of, interacted with, negotiated, and managed state imposition.

My only criticism is that all of the Chapters are
not like Chapters Three and Seven; chapters where Wyrten is at the height of his linguistic, area-specific and interpretive powers; chapters where we see how colonial domination induces imaginative responses and reconstructions. But this is a minor criticism. Overall, Making Morocco is a work that must be applauded, not only for revealing the specifics of Morocco’s colonial experience, but also for serving as a beacon for further work on colonialism that mobilizes area-specific knowledge and rich linguistic skills to disclose the impact of colonialism upon subject peoples; scholarship that deploys social science theory but does not let the theory become the story and instead uses it to reveal relations and processes we wouldn’t otherwise see; scholarship that attends to all of the actors, from officials to peasants alike, that were entangled in and constituted through the lasting power of colonialism – scholarship that thereby shows us a humanity that the historical sociology should illuminate more often.

References


On Making Morocco

Mary Lewis
Harvard University

Making Morocco is an unusual book in that it combines an analysis of nation-building with that of nationalism. Now, obviously, these two phenomena are related, but often in the literature the former, following the work of scholars as varied as Ernest Gellner (1983), Eugen Weber (1976), and Benedict Anderson (1983) is treated more or less functionally as the end result of processes such as “modernization,” “territorialization,” even capitalism – print or otherwise.

Nationalism, on the other hand, is a political movement and often exists where nation-building is incomplete. It is the effort to unite politically that which is not already united socially or culturally. Sometimes nationalists aim to jump-start nation-building (through schooling and other means) but the two phenomena for the most part have been analytically distinct in most scholarship.¹

What’s original about Making Morocco is that Professor Wyrten shows how French efforts to prevent nation-building in the colonial context – by various divide-and-rule tactics cordonning off Berbers from Arabs, Jews from Muslims, and by acceding to Spanish and international zones (Tangier) – actually helped catalyze a powerful nationalist movement.

What’s counterintuitive about the argument is that while “territorialization” in the European and the U.S. context, and perhaps some places like Japan, is intimately connected to the nation-state form, in Wyrten’s account, the
French intensively “territorialized” Morocco – through occupation, road-building and other interventions without making Morocco part of the French nation-state (see esp. Maier 2000; Bayly 2004:ch. 7). That is, using Wyrtenz’s useful way of thinking about it, the French increasingly eliminated non-state space. French officials installed “thousands of kilometers of telephone lines, which made instant communications between military commands possible,” Wyrtenz tells us (p. 56). This begs the question, of course, of whether that communication was accurate or useful (Thomas 2008). In any case, in expanding the state to fill the territory, they did not at the same time create a nation-state. In fact, they wanted explicitly to avoid nation-building and deliberately maintained divide and rule tactics designed with this in mind. This effort backfired, because the expansion of the colonial state combined with the divide and rule tactics triggered a reaction to both and led people whom the French state actively cultivated as distinct from one another to seek common cause in an identity called “Moroccan.”

The danger here is to make Moroccan nationalism look like a mere by-product of colonialism. But fortunately Wyrtenz is careful to demonstrate its genesis as resulting from an interaction of individuals and groups, all of whom he situates within complex fields of action. This being the case, I sometimes found his adaptation of Bourdieu’s field terminology (and particularly the notion of “colonial political field”) unnecessarily reductionist. While Wyrtenz shows Moroccans acting in some respects according to a “field” logic, he also explodes the notion of a unified field of play and shows some actors following different “rules.” This comes out perhaps most clearly in his fascinating analysis of Tamazight poetry. On the one hand, Wyrtenz demonstrates how the poets responded to conquest primarily as Muslims who identified their oppressors as “irumin” or Christians (rather than French), thus contributing to French desire to further divorce the Berbers from Arabs (and Islam), which backfired when it helped catalyze Moroccan nationalism. On the other hand, he also shows how some of the poets were more accommodationist, a point he makes most clearly in the chapter regarding the Rif. Here, I am curious how he would situate his work with, say, that of Julia Clancy-Smith or David Robinson, both of whom use the concept of accommodation when discussing the

One thing I really appreciated about the manuscript was that Wyrtenz simultaneously draws on actors’ categories...and relates them to the analytic categories he contributes to insightfully. So I found myself wondering if he really needed phrases like “colonial political field” or “classificatory practices” and maybe instead, he might explore the analytic connections he is making so quietly.

The relationship between Muslim colonial subjects and the French colonial power (Clancy-Smith 1994; Robinson 2000).

One thing I really appreciated about the manuscript was that Wyrtenz simultaneously draws on actors’ categories – e.g. *blad al-makhzan* (land of government) and *blad al-siba* (land of dissidence) – and relates them to the analytic categories he contributes to insightfully. So I found myself wondering if he really needed phrases like “colonial political field” or “classificatory practices” and maybe instead, he might explore the analytic connections he is making so quietly. The book makes real analytic contributions to categories that have often been developed with
Western/Northern assumptions in mind and shows them to be more nuanced and complicated than hitherto appreciated. So instead of or in addition to using Bourdieu, and again this is probably the historian in me, I would love to see Wyrtsen take on “territorialization” as an analytic tool. Does the colonial context like that described in Making Morocco force some qualification or rethinking of Charles Maier’s arguments?

Making Morocco also has much to say about the politicization of Islam. Writing about the Berber crisis in chapter five, for instance, Wyrtsen demonstrates how nationalists, ascertaining French divide-and-rule tactics, deliberately used Islam as a unifying identity. Here his analysis of the Latif prayer is absolutely fascinating. What is especially interesting is how what starts off as a cynical tactic becomes an authentic expression of faith: “nationalists fused religious ritual and political protest in ways that began to make the solidarity of a Moroccan nationality community that was unified by Islam and Arabic language and culture an embodied experience for thousands of urban Moroccans” (p. 147). In fact, the tactics he describes of refashioning Muslim rituals in the service of politics are so familiar to me since Tunisian nationalists did this as well – in my book, I discuss how a different ritual, Muslim burial rites, is politicized by a subset of the Destour party that goes on to form Neo-Destour (Lewis 2014:Ch. 5). As Martin Thomas has suggested in Empires of Intelligence, the potential for pan-Islam is an obsession on the part of French intelligence agents in this era, but they also underestimate the motivating power of Islam greatly (Thomas 2008). The book would have benefited from a discussion of possible connections between such movements across colonial borders. Wyrtsen dangles a tantalizing line that the “Berber crisis” moved Morocco, the peripheral ‘farthest west’ of the Arab world, to the center of pan-Islamic and pan-Arab concerns,” but then shifts back to Moroccan nationalism and so we don’t see the connection between what Moroccan, Egyptian, and Tunisian nationalists – among others – are all doing almost simultaneously (p. 149). I, for one, wondered what difference it made that Morocco’s sovereign, the sultan, was himself a figure of religious significance, which distinguishes Morocco from many other sites of Pan-Islam and perhaps help explain the synergies between Islamic and nationalist movements in Morocco.

Endnotes
1. Anderson is something of an exception in trying to bring the two together, but Imagined Communities, to my mind is more successful at explaining how individuals come to understand themselves as part of a community beyond their immediate orbit, and less so in explaining nationalism as a political project.
2. Since the conference at which this paper was originally delivered, Charles Maier has published a book (2016) that incorporates colonies into his analysis of territorial thinking. But the question remains how such concepts work with Wyrtsen’s analysis of territorialization.

References
Robinson, David. 2000. Paths of Accommodation:


Comments on Making Morocco

Mounira Maya Charrad
University of Texas, Austin

Making Morocco: Colonial Intervention and the Politics of Identity is a single country analysis that shows how history can contribute to sociology. Compelling about the book is its location at the intersection of history and social theory and how it highlights the importance of a historical perspective in the field of sociology. Jonathan Wyrten uses rich narratives as a basis to discuss sociological issues of interest to comparative historical sociologists. The book takes us through details of archival research at the same time it invites us to reflect on broader issues of social theory.

The book is well crafted, compelling, important, and an intellectually robust analysis. Its methodological documentation is meticulous. It offers a complex theoretical treatment of the subject matter. Wyrten brings a wealth of empirical evidence to bear on the questions he asks, developing a clear argument about how colonialism developed in Morocco and how it entailed struggles over identities. The evidence in the empirical sections of the book is skillfully marshaled to illustrate and support the argument.

A major theoretical contribution of the book is to anchor the analysis of colonialism in the concept of a colonial political field that shaped the formation and politics of identities. Wondering how Moroccan national identity came to be defined by the triptych of “God, the Nation, and the King,” Wyrten focuses on the interactions among several social groups in what constituted the colonial political field in the history of the country. He considers interactions among those in power in the colonial state and marginalized subaltern local groups. He engages in a study of contentious politics at multiple levels, ranging from the spatial occupation of territory to the realms of the legal and the symbolic. He also includes in his analysis a plurality of markers of identity, Muslim, Jewish, Arab and Berber. The focus on interactions among multiple groups and the many dimensions of identity he uses allow him to develop a complex, nuanced analysis.

The part I find especially engaging about the book is its use of oral history as expressed in poems. Poetry has a long history of being been used as a form of resistance on the part of subaltern groups in the Middle East and North Africa. One could not go to the streets to demonstrate to oppose various forms of hegemony, but one could express dissidence in poetry and songs. Women in particular used poems to express themselves, as did other oppressed groups. It is interesting to note that the tradition has continued to modern times. One can think of rap music and other forms of art as expressions of resistance during the Arab Spring protests of 2011, for example.

Based on archives of poems, the discussion of resistance in Making Morocco is beautifully presented. The Berber oral poetry gathered in the Atlas Mountains speaks volumes on anti-colonial sentiments in the rural areas. It shows the forms taken by resistance to colonial encroachment among subaltern populations. It tells us vividly how tribal communities in the Atlas responded when faced with the expansion of colonial power in their daily lives. The same richness applies to the analysis of poems and songs in another rural region of Morocco and of the collective prayers in many parts of the
country.

In sum, Making Morocco joins the scholarship that focuses on the interaction between state and social groups in explaining policies and political outcomes. It is a major contribution to the analysis of colonial domination and to historical sociology.

Author’s Reply

Jonathan Wyrtzen
Yale University

It is an incredible opportunity to be able to discuss Making Morocco with four scholars whose own work I have interacted with extensively while carrying out this project. I want to thank George, Julian, Mary, and Maya for taking the time to deeply engage with the book. I also want to express my profound appreciation to Nick Wilson for organizing the round-table at SSH, for helping put together the comments for Trajectories, and for having himself offered invaluable input during the writing process.

First, a bit of background. The origins for this project trace back to 2001, a couple of weeks before 9/11, when my wife and I first moved to begin teaching jobs at a Moroccan university located in the Middle Atlas Mountains. Those initial two years in Morocco—during which the U.S. responded to the Al-Qaeda attacks by invading and occupying two countries in the “Greater Middle East”—set up a nexus of questions for me that the book struggles to answer. How does external intervention transform the local society? What is the relationship between military conquest, colonial institution building, collaboration/resistance, and the politics of identity? I was interested in these questions very specifically with regard to Morocco—where somehow a four-century old monarchy survived the colonial period and has thrived afterward—but also much more broadly with respect to other post-colonial contexts and for contemporary examples like Iraq and Afghanistan.

I went back to grad school in DC in 2003, researched the project through many of the Bush years, and wrapped up the writing after moving to the Yale Sociology department in 2009. George Steinmetz nails an important point about my interdisciplinary identity at the boundary between history and sociology. To come completely clean with the Trajectories readership, I am a trained-historian of the Modern Middle East and North Africa-cum-comparative-historical sociologist, and I think this hybrid disciplinary identity is obvious in how Making Morocco engages area studies, historical social science, and postcolonial studies.

One of the challenges with this book was to figure out a way to talk to these three audiences simultaneously, as the gap I sought to fill with regard to each was sometimes mismatched. For Moroccanists, I was pointing out that the colonial period, rather than being a parenthetical break in Moroccan history, actually dramatically transformed identities in the country. Towards historical sociology and some parts of the colonial studies literature, I wanted to make an intervention against a tendency to focus on the state, on elites, or on impersonal forces of colonial governmentality, and bring in a wider cast of actors that were marginal but also at the very center of identity struggles in protectorate Morocco. This bottom-up, subaltern studies move involved integrating non-text producing groups (rural and tribal populations and of urban and rural women) into the analysis. The point was not, however, to recapture some sort of subaltern autonomy, but to draw these groups in to a broader relational analysis.

As it ended up, as Steinmetz’s comments point out, this became a party to which Max Weber, E.P. Thompson, Pierre Bourdieu, and I would
add, Gayatri Spivak, were all warmly invited. I will come back later to more thoughts on this, but he is absolutely correct in saying that one of my ambitions in *Making Morocco* was to use field theory as a means to bring together Weberian and subaltern approaches to carry out something that falls on the disciplinary line between sociological history and historical sociology. The colonial political field was the conceptual device I used to try to hold together an interactional story that included colonial and local institutions and actors.

I want to turn now to a few of the critiques Steinmetz directed at *Making Morocco*. The first of these is my relative lack of attention to what was happening in the colonial administration. Here, to a degree, I am guilty as charged. In terms of an academic division of labor, Edmund “Terry” Burke’s work, particularly *The Ethnographic State* (2015), has already masterfully covered this ground, as George points out. Also, the French historian, Daniel Rivet (1998), has contributed a definitive analysis of the inner workings of the protectorate colonial state, negotiations between the French and Moroccan ruling classes, and the contribution of the first French Resident General, Hubert Lyautey, in the first two decades of the protectorate. While I make some reference to the complex identification processes and classification struggles happening inside the colonial state with regard to native policy, the true focus of this book, and what I really wanted to contribute, is more on the Moroccan side of the colonial encounter. Nevertheless, Steinmetz is right that, for the non-specialist, it would have been helpful to fill in more about the internal variegation and competition happening within this social field.

I think the more significant critique is the one aimed at my lack of attention to the struggles within the settler society. Morocco has never been classified as a “settler colony” like its neighbor Algeria. But, by the 1950s, there were a total of 350,000 Europeans settled in a country with just over 8 million Moroccan Muslims and Jews. This is not as high a proportion as Algeria (1 million settlers to 8.5 Algerian Muslims), but it is significant, and there remains a pretty serious *lacuna* on what was going on in Morocco’s *colon* society. More research, for Morocco and elsewhere in French North Africa, needs to be done on how settler and native populations interacted and how they both made claims and competed for resources from the colonial state and the imperial metropole. Similarly, I delved into how Moroccan Muslims and Jews responded to moves made by French settlers but not the reverse. Compared to the *pieds noirs* in Algeria, we still know very little about how struggles in Morocco and other colonial political fields in the French empire (Tunisia, Indochina, etc.) politicized aspects of settler identity.

The questions Steinmetz raises about “legitimacy” with regard to colonial rule and the colonial state are significant, and it is important to clarify what I am asserting in this part of the book’s argument. The two questions here are: did the French *try* to legitimate their...
colonial project in Morocco (and elsewhere)? Did they succeed in securing legitimacy? Both questions can be directed at three different audiences: did they try/succeed in legitimizing the protectorate for the 1) international diplomatic community, 2) the metropolitan French population, and, more counter-intuitively, also for 3) the subjugated Moroccan population?

In response to those two questions, I first want to emphasize the distinction between legitimacy as a substantive quality of rule that is or is not secured and legitimization as a continuing interactive process. I am not the first to argue that legitimacy in the first, “strong” Weberian sense is never permanently attained by any state. Legitimacy is a dynamic variable in any political system (as I am finishing this response “Trump is not my president” protests are happening around the United States) and shifts over time for different types of actors within a given political unit. Here, I do not think that, by definition, whether a state-based form of domination is expressed as nation-state or colonial-state excludes a consideration of the question of legitimacy. Power-as-authority is not a static binary “on” or “off”; it is a dynamic configuration plotted on a sliding scale over time.

My main focus, therefore, was how the French tried to legitimize colonial intervention in Morocco. Most scholars agree that colonial powers try to legitimize their activity to the international community and to the metropolitan audiences, justifying the enterprise of empire for economic, strategic, or civilizing mission reasons. The more controversial claim I am making is that the colonial power also cared about what the colonized society thought and tried to legitimize rule in their eyes too.

The argument in the book is that this work directed at the local population really mattered because, whether or not they accepted the legitimacy of the colonial state, these attempts to legitimize it had a significant influence on how Moroccan identities were politicized during the colonial period. The decision to use a form of indirect rule that maintained and embellished the “traditional” trappings of the Moroccan sultanate was directed at the Moroccan audience, and it mattered for this audience. The French wanted the elites to buy into the project and thought it would be more palatable to the general population. Again, my main focus was not on the attainment of legitimacy but in its pursuit: my argument is that how the French tried to legitimize their activity structured the rules of the game in the political field and thereby influenced how different Moroccans played the game on the field.

Now we get to the harder question of whether the French succeeded, even partially or temporarily, with these attempts. The short answer is yes. Moroccans militarily resisted the imposition of the colonial political field; but Moroccans also, at certain points, accepted the basic framework of the protectorate and sought to maximize their economic, political, or cultural position within it. The substantial evidence for this is shown by how Moroccans (like other colonial subjects in the French or British empires) made claims within the system, how they petitioned, protested, and lobbied by appealing to the legitimizing logics of indirect rule, to liberal rights frameworks, and to humanistic values. They did engage in this field of play, either within its ostensible organizing rules or over them. Adria Lawrence (2013) and Fred Cooper (2015) have gone much further than me in this direction, documenting struggles to reconfigure notions of citizenship and subject in the French Empire and how long these projects seemed viable into the mid-20th century. What this evidence tells us is that empire was, at some level and for some period of time, accepted by colonized actors as a legitimate framework for politics.
My book analyzes the evolution and variety of Moroccans’ experiences of colonialism over time from militantly resisting the initial creation of this type of colonial political field, implicitly accepting it by collaborating or politically mobilizing according to its logics, to rejecting the field’s logics and trying to overthrow French control of it.

The arc of this story aligns with the point Mary Lewis makes about the dialectical relationship between nation-building and nationalism in the Moroccan colonial context. The whole premise in _Making Morocco_ is that the range of politicized Moroccan identities that emerged by independence, including the dominant Arabo-Islamic nationalism, was relationally produced through interactions among French and Spanish colonial actors and a wide array of Moroccan elites and non-elites.

The French, while “making peasants into Frenchmen” at home, tried to decouple state-building—institutional, economic, and infrastructural development—from nation-building in the colonial periphery. As Lewis points out, the unintended consequence of divide-and-rule practices—in this case using religious and ethnic criteria to reify and distinguish boundaries between Jews and Muslims, Arabs and Jews—was to set up easy targets the nascent nationalist movement in Morocco (as in the Tunisian case Lewis (2013) has deftly studied herself) would attack in attempts to mobilize mass anti-colonial protests.

It was in these early moments of anti-colonial protest in the early 1930s that I argue specific configurations of Arabo-Islamic identity were defined in ways that would have long path dependent effects in Morocco. Colonial policies politicized certain ethnic and religious boundaries, and the emergent urban nationalist leadership mobilized against these policies by appealing to pre-existing notions of religious solidarity in Moroccan society that they also sought to shape moving forward. I do not see this quite as a cynical tactic of politicizing Islam that _became_ an authentic expression of faith so much as a complex mixture of all of the above right from the beginning. There is a degree of instrumentalization, but it is also an organic process where certain performative moments, like the Berber Dahir protests and the burial protests that Lewis addresses in Tunisia, fuse the religious and the political.

More comparative work does need to be done between Morocco and other cases like Tunisia or Jordan, and Lewis is right to point out that my book teases by opening up occasionally to this broader transnational sweep then snapping back to focus on Morocco. Fortunately, there is a rising generation of new scholars already filling in this gap by explicitly putting the colonial period in North Africa into a sustained and rigorous transnational framework of analysis. Similarly, her point about going further into how territory and colonial territoriality in particular might be used as a powerful conceptual framework is spot on. This is exactly what I am working on in my second book project focused on the making of the modern Middle East and North Africa in the long post-World War I decade!
My final responses turn to the comments Julian Go and Maya Charrad make about the book. Julian’s remarks really capture what I was trying to do in terms of a relational historical sociology of the colonial encounter that encompasses the state and the subaltern in its view. Somewhere between parsimony and nuance (but much closer to nuance as Julian observes), the challenges were how to practice a form of thick description that really had analytical traction and how to write a book about colonial Morocco that would be relevant to specialists and non-specialists.

This is a case-study into which I have poured a lot of personal investment in time and emotion, and I could not approach it with a parsimonious social scientific eye. From a very experiential and personal side, I was strongly committed to telling a revisionist story about Moroccan history that brought in a range of Moroccan voices—urban and rural women and Tamazight (Berber) groups—that have previously been marginalized. This commitment, though, was not just a form of historiographical affirmative action (though there is nothing wrong with that) but a necessary analytical move.

As Maya Charrad points out, poetry, song, and a range of other non-textual forms of expression and performance have constituted and remain a significant form of resistance from the colonial period to the Arab Uprisings, and these alternate source bases have to be included alongside the textual historical data we plumb in the archives, in books, and in periodicals. These non-traditional historical source bases, though much harder to access, open up windows into important groups—particularly majority illiterate populations—that are essential in sociological analysis.

I believe historical sociology does have to theoretically and methodologically incorporate the subaltern in order to understand how processes like state and nation-formation work. This requires a relational sociological method that encompasses institutions, elite and non-elite actors, and the dynamism of mobilization and contention over time. It has been incredibly rewarding to have Steinmetz, Lewis, Go, and Charrad seriously read and interact with Making Morocco, and their gracious comments and suggestions have given me much to think about moving forward with further with this type of comparative historical research. I am grateful and thank them and Nick Wilson for helping put this together.

References


Do-It-Yourself Democracy
The Rise of the Public Engagement Industry
Oxford University Press
Caroline W. Lee

Editor’s Note: The following text is based on author-meets-critics sessions that were organized for the annual meetings of the Social Science History Association in November, 2015 and the American Sociological Association in August, 2016. My thanks go out to Lyn Spillman, Margaret O’Mara, Philip Lewin, William Haynes, and Caroline Lee for agreeing to contribute their comments to the newsletter. -MJB

Public Engagement, Normative Control, and Modern Solidarity

Lyn Spillman
University of Notre Dame

There are at least two major reasons why any scholar with even a remote interest in politics should read this book: empirical discovery and theoretical challenge. Here, I want to reflect on those virtues, but also suggest why it is important to push further than we see in Do-It-Yourself Democracy to fully absorb its implications.

First, Caroline Lee offers us discovery--observations about our socio-political world we have almost certainly not seriously considered before. The observations are obviously important because they cast a new light on more familiar topics like social movements and conventional political engagement.

Second, Lee does not settle for sociologically easy arguments and interpretations as she explains the public engagement industry. Her analysis is shot through with the sort of paradox and irony that comes with the recognition of complexity. The irony of the title-- “Do-It-Yourself Democracy” which is organized and managed by hired professionals--is only the beginning. The book keeps challenging us as readers and challenging our “go-to” theories, and that is a stimulating and productive accomplishment.

Empirically, Lee introduces us to a fascinating form of “collective” action which, I’d venture to guess, most people never even knew about before. It can be seen as a movement, a field, and industry, a profession-- or maybe just a management tool. It is constituted as different logics are mixed. And the ambiguities that the mixing generates are more an advantage than a disadvantage for practitioners and sponsors.

At its core, public engagement involves “facilitation services aimed at engaging the public and relevant stakeholders with
organizations in more intensive ways than traditional, one-way public outreach and information... [it provides] rich information to administrators on participant preferences and .....may determine the course of organizational action” (56). Lee uses extensive fieldwork, close archival analysis, interviews, and surveys to bring this field of cultural production to light.

I want to highlight and emphasize the contribution she makes with this. The many ambiguities in “public engagement services” make the field inchoate and quite intractable, as I know first-hand from my own similar experience with business associations (Spillman 2012). For instance, practitioners may work independently or in large organizations; they work for many different sorts of clients– colleges, governments, businesses, non-profits (48); most work on small-scale processes, but around one in five on very large-scale projects with large global organizations (52). They use many different methods and tactics for generating deliberation and participation, but these are usually highly “produced” and involve all sorts of marketing, recruitment, and other choreography, even as they disavow control and value self-effacement. Even making a straightforward empirical picture of a new, complicated, dispersed social phenomenon like this is very difficult, and Lee has done an important service developing this picture.

But this very important empirical contribution leaves me wanting to know more. For instance, it seems important to know more about the distributions of main topics across events with different types of sponsors. Do different types of sponsors– local and regional government, nonprofits, business, etc– tend to focus on different sorts of goals– restructuring, teamwork, financial performance, etc (163)? I realize this information is not easily accessible, but it does seem important to probe somewhat more deeply, because it seems very important for the conclusion late in the book that “topics and outcomes are linked to business discipline– the moral virtues of thrift– to a much greater extent than scholars focused on civic and political values have realized, in part because civic outcomes are sold alongside fiscal ones as linked priorities” (161). This claim is important and plausible, but it seems to call for broader evidence relating various outcomes and topic to various sorts of sponsors.

A related point I wonder about is the question of how reliant the field is on clients in business. Lee notes that seventeen per cent of sponsors are business, industry associations, etc., and later reports that business is among the top three sponsors for almost half of public engagement professionals surveyed (48, 135). Perhaps the relatively few business sponsors generate a larger financial volume than others, but it seems important to know more, because the answer could make a difference to our interpretation. In a way, the public engagement industry is less paradoxical, puzzling, and disturbing the more it is simply a business service. In that case, it is easy to categorize as a management tool of normative control, just like the corporate ideology and ritual process that scholars like Gideon Kunda (1992) describe. Indeed, features of the public engagement industry identified in the book, like the way dissent is absorbed in process, and the moral ambivalence it generates, are certainly foreshadowed in Kunda’s study of normative control in corporate culture.

So Lee is offering a really important and impressive empirical discovery in this book, and my questions here push for even more, especially about business.

The second big virtue of the book is its theoretical challenge. It never really quite lets us settle into sociological formulae. Yes, the standard formula of sociological argumentation is certainly important: a romantic vision (participation) is challenged (industry) and
Ironies of cooptation and unintended consequences are drawn out. The classic critical theory polemic by Horkheimer and Adorno—“Enlightenment as Mass Deception” (1972 [1944])—certainly crossed my mind several times while I was reading. But as Lee plans, her view goes beyond one-sided views of “thrilling alternative” or “cynical window dressing” (25). You could read it that way, but you would be missing something important, because the “public engagement industry” is more complicated and paradoxical than that.¹

Here are a few of the many paradoxes Lee identifies. First, attempts to increase regular participation call for expert facilitation (the public sphere as seminar room?). Second, public engagement practitioners are probably more idealistic and more fearful of manipulation than any of their sponsors or audiences. Third, they generate real, not false engagement, real short-term solidarity (28). Fourth, successful public engagement work increases individual responsibility, without increasing power (7). Fifth, successful participatory dialogue events can leave participants with the sense that the ritual is enough, and that other people will do the work (195, 202). Sixth, sometimes real discussion is silenced with the “real work” of icebreaker techniques (111). Overall, participatory events manage change, but don’t produce it.

Against that background, there is certainly plenty of support for claims about “enlightenment as mass deception.” But depending on your reference point, it can all be read another way, and Lee never quite lets us forget that. If we always had robust social movements and ideal democratic contention, maybe we would not need the public engagement industry. But what if we don’t?

So I would like to see the book expand on the alternate theoretical reading implicit in the way Do-It-Yourself Democracy sustains paradox. Suppose social movements and a robust democratic process are not the implicit alternative. For many of the examples Lee offers, they are not. The more realistic alternative is top-down decision-making that never considers its audience, and regular people who are entirely disengaged from decision-making. Against this comparison, we start to see that the ritualistic dimension—“authentic political experience,” “civic festivals of inclusion, equality, democracy,” “empowering short-term engagement,” “co-creation and non-instrumental engagement,” “occasions for the rebirth of civic faith”—really could have important consequences for democratic solidarity.

I sometimes think political sociology (narrowly considered) is too naive and not cynical enough, because it often assumes that people naturally care about issues, and if they do not, that is the result of cynical manipulation. But if we start with the alternative, more pessimistic null hypothesis of complete disengagement—no virtuous contention—I think we can see beyond the straight sociological formula running from romantic claim through debunking to critique, and theorize better how these participatory rituals really matter. This is implicit throughout the careful analysis of manipulated participation in Do-It-Yourself Democracy. Lee is careful never to let the paradox resolve itself entirely. But a deeper theorization might lead more explicitly to a direct incorporation of Durkheim’s views of the necessity and fragility of modern solidarity.

Endnotes
1 A better critical theory connection would be the later and more nuanced Adorno essay, “Cultural Criticism and Society” (1982[1967]).

References

Horkheimer, Max and Theodor Adorno, 1972[1944].


Comments on Do-it-Yourself Democracy

Margaret O’Mara
University of Washington

Two years ago, one of the odder recent collisions of politics and pop culture occurred when the conservative anti-tax crusader Grover Norquist went to Burning Man. The annual festival in the Nevada desert has become a mainstream Silicon Valley ritual, emptying out the Bay Area of nearly every tech mogul and full-stack web developer each Labor Day weekend, yet the idea of the right-wing policy wonk getting dusty and funky along with them seemed like a bridge too far. Yet Norquist loved what he saw. “The story of Burning Man is one of radical self-reliance,” he reflected. “A community that comes together with a minimum of ‘rules’ demands self-reliance — that everyone clean up after themselves and help thy neighbor. Some day, I want to live 52 weeks a year in a state or city that acts like this. I want to attend a national political convention that advocates the wisdom of Burning Man.”

The convention halls, earnest facilitators, and graphics-filled whiteboards of the public engagement industry Caroline Lee examines in Do-It-Yourself Democracy initially seem to have little in common with either anti-tax conservatism or techno-libertarian campouts like Burning Man. Contrasted with the incrementalist and starkly partisan era of modern Washington politics and change-the-world technophilia of Silicon Valley, the cresting wave of deliberative democracy seems almost charmingly retro. DC and the Valley are where people ask for forgiveness rather than for permission; D&D is where they play nice.

Yet as Lee shows in this careful, incisive, and important study, all are part and parcel of the same trends. And in showing this connective tissue, Lee raises broader questions about the purpose and path forward for American democratic and communitarian processes of all sorts—questions with which historians of U.S politics and of the technology industry should grapple as we try to make sense of the recent past and fractious present.

One important contribution of Lee’s book is showing that the public engagement movement (or “dialogue and deliberation” aka D&D) is not radically new nor is it the bespoke product that its practitioners promise, but something with roots in the strong politics of self-realization and individual empowerment of the 1960s and 1970s. Here we find those fabled “community organizers” turned entrepreneurs and evangelists, subbing work in the neighborhood for facilitated convenings on neutral, purportedly apolitical ground.

This periodization could go back even further. Public engagement proponents and participants remind me of Progressive Era reformers, earnest in their faith in process, opening up smoke-filled rooms to the air and light of public deliberation. One important contrast, however: the age of reform occurred in an era of very little central government, when the biggest federal agency was the Post Office and the Pennsylvania Railroad had many times more employees than the U.S. Army. A major thrust that bound together various “progressivisms” was the push to make
government do more, not less, and to augment and supplant voluntarism and localism with centralized, professionalized power. D&D occurs against a backdrop of austerity, where public officials channel scant resources into the new “platforms” and “tools” of deliberation and dialogue. In an era when traditional political institutions have been delegitimized by five-plus decades of sustained antigovernment rhetoric from both left and right, and when a steadily growing bloc of Americans have fragile and periodic associations and loyalties to organized political parties, the alternative, “disruptive” processes of D&D step in. Yet the uncomfortable truth that seeps through Lee’s narrative is that deliberation and engagement is not policy. A great meeting cannot sub for policy implementation. Big government may be over, but what is in its place?

A second contribution here is one of politics—both in showing the politics of D&D itself, as well as the broader ripples and consequences of partisan reinvention and retrenchment since the 1990s. While expressly nonpartisan, D&D clearly struggles—to the point of overcorrection—against too much alliance with or reliance on the words and tactics of its liberal antecedents (to the degree that none other than Grover Norquist warns at one convening to avoid language that might be “off-putting” to conservatives [p. 79]). As Lee’s analysis shows, even nonpartisanship has a politics, and it isn’t always progressive. “Public engagement professionals’ work legitimates market and state authority by regularizing and routinizing performances of political equality, while social inequalities go unchallenged” (p. 103).

Despite the left-ish communitarian leanings and social-justice desires of so many of the D&D actors and processes Lee examines, it is also clear from her analysis that the structure and institutions of the public engagement industry gain strength and steam from the pullback of public institutions that they seek to rectify. Part of the basic proposition of D&D, as Lee shows, is that things are temporary: citizen-participation is essential as a means to get back to the norm of institutions that work as they should. But as it encourages this participation, it can undermine the case for building those institutions back up. As Lee reminds us,

In an era when traditional political institutions have been delegitimized by five-plus decades of sustained antigovernment rhetoric from both left and right, and when a steadily growing bloc of Americans have fragile and periodic associations and loyalties to organized political parties, the alternative, “disruptive” processes of D&D step in. Yet the uncomfortable truth that seeps through Lee’s narrative is that deliberation and engagement is not policy. A great meeting cannot sub for policy implementation. Big government may be over, but what is in its place?

deliberation can either inspire citizens to act or convince them that bureaucrats cannot. “That both of these outcomes inspire increased toleration of self-sacrifice or increasing willingness to assume small-scale responsibilities of self-governance helps to explain why deliberation can be so appealing to antigovernment, antitax prophets” (p. 202). Public engagement defuses actual activism, channeling grassroots energy into more predictable and less threatening forms.

Do-It-Yourself Democracy also adds important insights and contributions to political history as this field moves into the study of the 1990s,
including the reinvention of the Democratic Party, the political discourses of empowerment and entrepreneurship, and “politically neutral devices” like participatory budgeting. In their mainstream, post-1990 incarnations, both Democrats and Republicans embraced the centrality and wisdom of non-governmental entities (private, philanthropic) in getting things done. A devotion to the principles of free enterprise and minimalist taxing-and-spending is one of the few principles that bind the various and fractious constituencies of the modern GOP. Meanwhile, “New” Democrats of the Clinton era and beyond have encouraged public-private partnerships and deregulated financial systems as a “third way” between expansive New Deal liberalism and neoliberal austerity. Deepening partisan rifts and divided control of government meant policy incrementalism won out over sweeping reform.

This is an American story, but also an international one, where the era of Reagan and Thatcher gave way to the era of Clinton and Blair, and liberal politicians transmuted these kinds of ideas over the globe in the wake of a breakdown in traditional party loyalties and new regimes of governmental austerities and privatization. Wrapped up in it, as well, was the new emphasis on performance standards and benchmarking, an accountability movement that also threads strongly throughout the public engagement industry Lee profiles in her book. Is it any surprise that D&D gathers steam at a moment when the Democratic mainstream is pulling back from liberalism and embracing “third way” incrementalism, and the GOP is moving from being the party of loyal opposition to becoming the party of “no”?

At the same time, on the other coast and other planet of Silicon Valley, the Internet-era technology industry spent the past four decades building what veteran venture capitalist John Doerr once called “the largest, legal creation of wealth in the history of the planet.” This is another contribution to the history of our recent history that Caroline Lee is making in this book. For the public engagement industry is, as I see it, part and parcel of the same trends and ideologies that drive Silicon Valley and that shape the landscape of techie political interventions that don’t neatly hew left or right, Democratic or Republican. It also gives a bigger canvas on which to consider the basic contradiction of the high-tech industry, which embraces the pursuit of wealth while still trumpeting its “make the world a better place” mantra. Same goes for D&D; as Lee puts it: “public engagement is a market, but it’s a market for a sacred thing, the way yoga and organic foods are” (p. 129).

Although loyalties among tech’s donor class have shifted from majority-Republican to majority-Democrat between the 1980s and today, the prevailing ethos of the tech industry was and is apolitical or, to be more precise, anti-institutional. This is an industry established by young men with iconoclastic politics that spanned both parties. From the start, Valley companies embraced flat hierarchies, spurned unionization, and built loyalty through stock options and an amorphous but powerful emphasis on “company culture.” Establishment parties and old-style bureaucracies continue to have little appeal to web-era tech. Government is either something to avoid entirely, or to disrupt and revise beyond recognition. Yet anarchy was not and is not Silicon Valley’s game: these folks are engineers, and they are believers in precise systems to get things done. Perhaps the breakneck pace that technological tools and platforms have created in modern life helps explain public engagement’s appeal. As Lee observes, “the processes of engagement is a method for managing and slowing the breakneck pace of social change in our organizational lives” (p. 229).

Like the public engagement industry Lee explores in this book, both politicians and techies have built identities around the rejection
of bureaucratic institutions and the embrace of more communitarian values. Yet the inability of our modern age to do much about persistent social inequities (instead, in the places the tech industry concentrates, it has exacerbated them), raises a big question: when the era of big corporate hierarchies—or big government—is over, what effective policy mechanism comes in its place? Who benefits from disruption? And, most ominously, has process trumped substance?

Many times, I was infuriated by the people Lee depicts in her book. We read of summits on childhood obesity sponsored by food companies, and budget-cutting exercises for the truly beleaguered and cash-starved city of Philadelphia. We see smart people making tough choices instead of actually funding government adequately so that these choices don’t have to be made (pp. 166-170).

Yet for all her critique, Lee displays empathy, sympathy, even as she carefully points out the shortcomings. As one graduate student quoted by Lee puts it ruefully, “failure is actually the system itself and not entirely our actions within the system” (p. 193).

True democracy, through any means, can be tremendously difficult to pull off. Yet the people and processes that Lee profiles in this study—while symptomatic of and possibly contributing to a broader stasis and crisis of leadership—are still in many ways portraits of hope in that they are trying to make the difficult possible, to work, deliberatively and gradually and inclusively, toward a more perfect union.

**Endnotes**


---

**The Public Engagement Industry and the Future of Democratic Praxis**

**Philip Lewin**  
*Florida Atlantic University*

Reading *Do-It-Yourself Democracy* this summer harkened the experience I had while viewing Lena Dunham’s first film, *Tiny Furniture*. Dunham is the film director who has become a pop culture icon due to her depiction of millennial twenty-somethings on the hit show *Girls*. I know this is an awkward comparison, so let me explain what I mean. My immediate reflection upon the conclusion of Dunham’s *Tiny Furniture* was that she had masterfully depicted a fascinating social world that was hitherto alien to me—the world of the rich Manhattan debutante ensnared in post-collegiate malaise. As a director, Dunham’s success rested in her intimate familiarity with that world—with her capacity to animate its fine cultural contours and highlight its internal contradictions. Her challenge as a director, however, was that the world she represented made many people cringe. This was because Dunham depicted the real existential problems that people living in a fantasy world (i.e. the world of the “one percent”) faced: anguish due to being rich, liberated from work, and devoid of structure, meaning, and life purpose. This is what makes the film interesting: the problems that Dunham’s characters face seem debilitating in the context of the movie but absurd when placed in the broader social-political milieu, where millions of people lack access to basic material security and face myriad forms of political repression.

The same tension between appearance and reality undergirds Caroline Lee’s brilliant *Do-It-Yourself Democracy*. Lee’s book depicts the real problems that those peddling a fake or at best distorted form of democracy face. A number of government institutions, non-profit organizations, and private-sector corporations,
as she explains, have sought to devolve administrative decision-making processes over the past 20 years. “Engagement professionals” work with these “clients” to involve constituents and employees in institutional governance. The rub is that clients rarely if ever afford participants any real power to influence outcomes. Instead, they restrict participation to choosing among officially approved options, which almost always benefit clients at the public’s expense. This leaves Lee’s “democracy practitioners” in a pickle: they must generate enthusiasm for “democratic” practices that impose extreme parameters on the nature of participation and that leave most participants feeling disempowered when “deliberation and dialogue” processes conclude.

Before I finished Lee’s book, my impulse was to dismiss engagement professionals as phonies and their “dialogue and deliberation” practices as a sham. Much like I cringed at the ostensibly tortured existence of the trust fund youth in Dunham’s *Tiny Furniture*, I cringed at the contradiction between democracy practitioners’ rhetoric—their pretensions of providing citizens with “transformative” experiences of “authentic public engagement” and promoting “real public participation”—and the practical realities of their work, which oftentimes did little more than infuse administrative decrees with a veneer of public approval. What I really like about *Do-It-Yourself Democracy*, however, is that Lee doesn’t let readers off the hook that easy. She dispelled my reactionary stereotypes, taking pains to show that engagement professionals are sincere people who genuinely believe in the power of engagement, and who, despite the limits they face, approach their work with considerable gravitas.

More importantly, Lee makes sense of engagement professionals’ trade by firmly situating their practices in the political and economic contradictions of our time. Her analysis reveals how the engagement industry’s existence evolved out of the convergence of two opposed forces: concerns about diminishing citizen participation and eroding social capital that sparked calls for organized engagement initiatives on the one hand, and the intensification of neoliberal political-economic policies on the other, which prescribed privatization and markets as default solutions to social problems and transformed personal authenticity into a civic virtue. Much of Lee’s book analyzes the tensions that have ensued from attempting to enact democracy on this ontological fault line. She explores, for example, the peculiarities of a political project that attempts to spur a public good (i.e. social capital, civic capacity, and public participation) by relying on private sector professionals (similar to the project of educating the public via for-profit universities); that works to mobilize publics to generate private profits (similar to the old convict-leasing system and corporate subsidies); and that attempts to mobilize citizens who are eager to participate in civic affairs but cynical about participatory initiatives, and who care about social justice at the same time they are preoccupied with projects of individual self-realization.

Apart from explaining public engagement’s contradictions, Lee explores the industry’s implications. This is an important and timely task. Engagement professionals have begun to transform the very nature of democracy—the bedrock of historical efforts oriented toward political emancipation and social justice—by professionalizing and commodifying processes that have historically taken the popular and the
public as their starting points. Worse, they have sold “democracy” to corporate actors and state technocrats who use them to further social control, expand profits, and cultivate the illusion of popular sovereignty rather than to facilitate self-governance. Indeed, the industry’s products and services usually don’t help people collectively decide how to live their lives; they present the public with prefabricated “choices” about how they would like to absorb budget cuts, perform more work for less compensation (phrased as “giving back” or “contributing” to the “greater good”), and relinquish their rights and privileges as citizens. These processes, as Lee discusses in the final chapter, ultimately mollify aggrieved citizens, contain resistance, and discourage mobilization.

Lee’s work suggests that commercialized public engagement has begun to reshape the very nature of “publics” as well. Given the industry’s peculiar character as both neoliberal and social justice-oriented, the engagement practices it promotes are designed to moderate public desire and engender a collective will predicated upon the principles of Randian Objectivism. The industry, as she explains, has embraced a philosophy of “selfing,” which encourages the public to “see all others as on an equally compelling mutual journey to personal authenticity and heart-based self-fulfillment”—including the boss who is downsizing the firm to increase dividends and the public official reducing welfare benefits to fund tax cuts (p.107). Its engagement practices, as such, encourage exploited groups to empathize with those who exert power over them.

They also mold a public that is paradoxically held together by a common belief in the virtues of individualism. In the eyes of engagement professionals, the meaning of “public” does not necessarily involve sharing resources, interests, or visions; it means sharing a commitment to an individual journey of self-realization. Despite their attempts to be “ruthlessly self-critical” (p.225), engagement professionals refused to reflect on their homogenous social composition (they were largely white and middle-class) and dismissed dialogue about race, class, and gender inequalities as regressive “identity politics.” At the many engagement conferences that Lee attended, considerations of social and economic justice, minority rights, and collective action were rare. Platitudes from the positive psychology movements, New Age pontifications about the “the nature of infinity,” and team-building exercises involving “conversation cafes,” “peace tiles,” and “journey walls,” on the other hand, reigned supreme. In this “feel good” version of democracy —wherein “we’re all human, man”—social justice and collective solidarity took a backseat to the mutual pursuit of personal authenticity.

Lee’s insights into the type of democracy that engagement professionals promote left me with several questions—most concerning where subsequent scholarship might take the study of political participation and public engagement. The first deals with the interesting tension of how engagement can feel “authentically real” and “transformative” to participants while economically and politically disempowering them. In further exploring this tension, engagement with two literatures might be useful. The first is Gramsci’s writing on hegemony, which analyze how skillful leadership that is sensitive to the collective anxieties and culture of subordinate groups can generate consent. Although she does not draw from him, Lee’s analysis, one might argue, construes engagement professionals as hegemonic leaders in the neoliberal era of cutbacks and “labor-for-work” (Standing 2011:120). They make workers and community members feel satisfied and engaged while diminishing their capacity to affect institutional change and discouraging them from protesting or pursuing litigation to achieve their interests.
They also tend to convince members of the public, to use Burawoy’s (1979: xi) terms, to participate in the “intensification of [their] own exploitation,” that is to say, do more work for less compensation or pay more taxes for fewer benefits. This is essentially the definition of hegemonic consent.

I also wonder if Meyer and Rowan’s (1977) neo-institutional theory might shed further light on the social dynamics of the engagement industry. Much of Lee’s analysis describes how process and purpose/outcome have become decoupled among democracy practitioners. Public engagement firms like AmericaSpeaks appear to adopt specific practices and processes to secure legitimacy among clients and participants while knowing that those practices and processes fail to further democratic decision-making. To what extent does this phenomenon parallel the permanently failing organizations that neo-institutionalists have long analyzed, e.g. universities that successfully secure funding and high student satisfaction rates while failing to achieve their core mission—learning?

The second question pertains to two words that permeate Lee’s book: “authenticity” and “real.” Engagement professionals continuously distinguish between “real engagement” and “fake engagement,” and they seem infatuated with the idea of “authenticity.” Why is this the case? Does the discourse have something to do with the way their industry has commercialized something that is supposed to be not-for-profit—even sacred? The rhetoric of Lee’s participants reminded me of 90s-era musicians who defended the integrity of their music after signing contracts with major record labels. Their discourses, like engagement professionals’, emphasized how the commodification of their products would not undermine their aesthetic value nor impinge upon their ability to creatively control them. What’s interesting is that in recent years discourses of authenticity have largely faded from music and art scenes.

Will this happen with public engagement as well? In other words, does the prominence of authenticity discourses reflect resistance to the commercialization of democracy? Will they infuse engagement processes with greater integrity, or will they evanesc as people acclimate to the idea of democracy as just another commodity (as has happened in the music and art worlds)? When examining this issue, we must also question whether such a thing as “authentic engagement” actually exists. In the sociology of culture, scholars treat authenticity as a social construction—a claim that others legitimate or deny. Looking at engagement processes from this angle, why do professionals define some processes and meetings as authentic but others as fake? What is the common thread? And perhaps most importantly, how can we study public engagement in a way that both avoids reifying democracy as an ontologically real set of processes while remaining critical of what Lee calls “facipulation?”

Answering some of these questions, I hope, will help us think through what the rise of the public engagement industry means for democratic praxis in the 21st Century. At the end of her book, Lee wavers a bit on this question. She offers a trenchant critique of the public engagement industry in her final chapter, but also seems reluctant to dismiss the industry wholesale. Whether she views commercialized public engagement as a corruption of democracy, a promising development, or as something toward which we should feel ambivalent remains somewhat unclear. This, I think, highlights the need for further inquiry and debate. We should commend Lee for making such an insightful intervention into this important debate and such an outstanding contribution to the literature on political participation.
References

Comments on Do-It-Yourself Democracy
William Hoynes
Vassar College

Caroline Lee's wonderfully rich study of participation professionals, Do-It-Yourself Democracy, takes us on an enlightening tour inside the public engagement industry. Lee grapples with important questions about the meaning of democracy, and her multi-method study both offers fresh insight about the complex meanings of participation and maps the contours of a future research agenda on the contradictions of public engagement.

As I read Do-It-Yourself Democracy, I was reminded of Wini Breines's (1989) classic, if underappreciated, study of the New Left, which challenged us to think anew about the possibilities of prefigurative politics and the limits of traditionally bureaucratic organizational forms. Lee wades into the debate about the possibilities and limits of participation at a much different historical moment, and her focus is on a recently professionalized form of activism. But like Breines, Lee challenges us to reconsider widespread assumptions about the significance of participation in public life. If Breines left me optimistic about the future, Lee's work paints a far less sanguine picture. Still, Lee's clear-eyed analysis of common deliberation practices is a valuable contribution precisely because it interrogates basic assumptions about the benefits of professionally managed public engagement.

As she examines the work of public engagement professionals, Lee recognizes its foundation in an earnest commitment to public participation. Indeed, there is much to admire in the democratic faith and enduring optimism that is shared widely within the network of consultants dedicated to developing and disseminating tools for enhancing public deliberation. Lee gives readers a view of the tactics and techniques these professionals use to facilitate participation, highlighting the importance of process, the value of listening, and the possibility of empowerment.

There is, however, much more to the story, and Lee's careful sociological analysis peels away the layers of public engagement to reveal the limits and unintended consequences of P2 ("public participation") work. For starters, Lee shows how the professionalization of participation is connected to broader rationalizing logics of contemporary institutions; this kind of bureaucratization of participation can severely constrain the possibilities of public engagement. Lee's discussion of how increasingly rationalized forms of "participatory budgeting" – typically through the development of a "best practices" approach – has a tendency to marginalize the very social justice commitments that inspired participatory budgeting in the first place is a powerful case in point.

In addition, professionalization produces forms of participation that mobilize individual rather than collective action, often emphasizing public engagement as a form of self-actualization. At the same time, a focus on individual participation, perhaps surprisingly, mobilizes and strengthens pathways to public life that position people as consumers rather than the citizens – and participation itself becomes an increasingly commodified experience. How
public engagement practices elevate consumer over citizen identities echoes throughout Do-It-Yourself Democracy, and I suspect there is much more rich terrain to be explored in future research.

While Lee describes a public engagement industry full of positive-thinking idealists, she also shows us how deliberation practices act as an often-powerful form of social control. Following routinized best practices can squeeze out more combative forms of discourse, produce normative commitments to narrow definitions of civility, and marginalize dissent. In this context, it is not hard to see how a commitment to deliberation and participation can serve to delegitimize political engagement that is organized around mobilization and contention. Social movements often demand public participation, but activist forms of participation may conflict quite dramatically with institutional forms of public deliberation. When she connects the dots, showing the historical links between the public engagement industry and experts' efforts to develop more effective workplace control strategies, Lee pushes us to reckon with how bureaucratized forms of public participation might, counter-intuitively, actually limit rather than enhance democratic processes.

All of this suggests that it is useful to understand professional public engagement practices as part of the processes of constructing consent in formally democratic societies. In a clear and careful analysis, Lee shows how professional public engagement processes ultimately serve to legitimize decisions at the same time they build public empathy for decision makers, while simultaneously defining the common good in relation to economic efficiency, fiscal responsibility, and a supportive business climate. When public participation is framed within such narrow bounds, especially when citizens accept the legitimacy of such a limited perspective, we can see how public engagement practices work to promote top-down, market-oriented definitions of why people should get involved in the first place. It may not be much of a stretch to suggest that the public engagement industry promotes a distinctively neo-liberal form of participation in public life. In the contemporary political climate, subjecting these neoliberal participatory practices to critical scrutiny is becoming an increasingly urgent task.

Lee's critique of the public engagement industry is rich and nuanced, and it is most compelling when she explores the deep contradictions imbedded in the practice. For example, efforts intended to empower publics produce "disempowering outcomes" and a commitment to enlarging the democratic imagination yields approaches "more likely to contain unrest than to challenge inequalities."
When I finished reading *Do-It-Yourself Democracy* ... I read it again. And I found it even more persuasive on a second read. Lee is a clear and eloquent writer, who knows how to tell a story, analyze data, and work through complex concepts. And, as with the scholarship I find most valuable, *Do-It-Yourself Democracy* left me with many new questions. How can we envision new approaches that would make public participation efforts more mobilizing? What would it mean (and what would it take) to disentangle a commitment to fiscal discipline from ideas about the value of public participation? How does a relentless enthusiasm and emphasis on maintaining an individual sense of hope limit public engagement efforts, and what are the alternatives? What makes public participation so attractive to so many activists, reformers, and others dedicated to social change? And, ultimately, what are the civic benefits of public participation, and how can we match practices of participation to social contexts likely to yield these benefits?

For all its genuine commitment to building democratic practices that are participatory and deliberative, Lee reveals how professional public engagement is ultimately demobilizing. This may be a somewhat disheartening conclusion. After all, critical sociology is, in many respects, bound up with a commitment to enhancing democratic public life. Nevertheless, Lee never loses sight of the big picture, and sociologists in a range of subfields—including social movements, culture, and organizations—will encounter deep thinking in *Do-It-Yourself Democracy*. I hope this masterful work will help open new inquiries about the complex relationships among democracy, deliberation, public participation, and forms of mobilization and collective action.

**References**


---

**Is Deliberative Democracy Stuck in a Moment?**

**Caroline W. Lee**
Lafayette College

“In state-of-the-field surveys of historical sociology and of historical social science at large, the study of the public sphere is missing. The rise of historical social science has not led to an established tradition of comparative historical research on the public sphere.”

-Andreas Koller, 2010, “The Public Sphere and Comparative Historical Research”

I wrote this book because I found that, despite the expansive deliberative democracy literature in the 1990s and 2000s, there was minimal comparative historical analysis of why deliberative public engagement had become a popular solution to the ills of the public sphere. As such, I am thrilled that Matt Baltz organized this symposium on *Do-It-Yourself Democracy: The Rise of the Public Engagement Industry*, and so grateful to the critics from Author Meets Critics sessions at the Social Science History Association and American Sociological Association annual meetings for adapting their comments for *Trajectories*.

I am frequently asked by readers like Philip to better specify my personal perspective on the social changes described in the book: Is the rise of the industry corrupting, promising, or something in between? As some of the comments here note, I don’t think these normative questions—which are extensively engaged by critics and proponents of deliberation on the ground—are the key responsibility of scholars of democracy. My larger agenda is to make the case that the understanding of enthusiasm for a certain kind of public engagement in the last three decades must be attentive to the conditions for its possibility and the contexts in which this form...
of “deep” democracy is deployed. Without relating the political voice and civic action that engagement can empower to social and economic inequalities, we really can’t get a full picture of the health of contemporary democracy. As Lyn and Philip note, DIY Democracy only begins to sketch that task, and I appreciate the opportunity to provide a bit more context on public engagement in the current moment and to outline key areas where I believe more comparative historical research is needed.

As an attempt to understand the world of public engagement practitioners, DIY Democracy is very much an artifact of the late Bush II and early Obama years in which it was researched. The field was born more than a decade before, at a moment of anxiety about everyday people’s political apathy and expert and interest group dominance in public life. It was forged in the late 2000s and early 2010s by financial crisis and austerity policies, which made the empathy that public engagement reliably produces attractive to managers from all sectors. But even as I was finishing the book, the landscape in which public engagement consultants offered a uniquely valuable alternative to ordinary politics was changing.

By the time I was completing final edits on the manuscript, the field was maturing and changing, increasingly fighting for its continued relevance as political consultants and public relations firms began to offer their own versions of dialogue-focused public engagement. While “join the conversation!” had become a standard invitation in online ads for all kinds of products and campaigns, AmericaSpeaks, a pioneering organization in the field and developer of the trademarked “21st Century Town Meeting” process, folded in January 2014. The same year, a special issue of the Journal of Public Deliberation on “The State of Our Field” found industry leaders increasingly concerned about dialogue and deliberation’s “branding problem” (McCoy 2014) and “harmful identity crisis” (Leighninger 2014), especially the need to go beyond the “temporary public consultations” that still are its bread and butter (Scully 2014).

While recent years have seen introspection among facilitators on the difficulties of institutionalizing deep democracy, new international research on the industry’s various challenges now can tell us much more about Lyn’s questions on business dimensions and variance in sponsors, topics, and goals, in addition to the global diffusion of public engagement facilitation methods and practices. See, for example, Baiocchi and Ganuza’s work on the tumultuous career of participatory budgeting as it has traveled from Brazil around the world (2014). Canadian and French scholars organized a daylong symposium at the 2014 International Political Science Association Annual Congress on the global professionalization of public participation, resulting in a forthcoming edited volume (Bherer, Gauthier, and Simard 2017). From my own standpoint, such research is especially welcome as it expands our sense of the appeal of deliberative public engagement beyond the neoliberal austerity focused on in DIY Democracy to its embrace in settings as diverse as urban China and the World Social Forum.

Still, there is much more research to be done on how, exactly, we got to authentic engagement as a political strategy, and why it matters for the problems we might diagnose in the public
sphere today. There are multiple areas of research that are important to crafting this understanding.

The first locates the cultural threads blended in professionalized public engagement—from New Age spirituality to sports fandom to slam poetry to accountability discourses—in Margaret’s wonderful historicization of these “odd settings of modern capitalism.” Scholars have had a tendency in studying public deliberative events to focus on the political pageantry as a unique civic experience, rather than an assemblage of morally-inflected, largely unremarkable group styles (Lichterman and Eliasoph 2014)—awkward icebreakers, storytelling in the round, flipchart action planning—familiar from corporate retreats, team sports, diversity trainings, Greek life, volunteer groups, and 12-step meetings. The odd thing about the Rockwellian nostalgia blended with multiculturalism and anti-institutionalism in public deliberative events today is just how normal it all seems for veterans of small group life in America. Strange bedfellows may not mind sharing a bed made of comfortably bland discourses about self-realization and bureaucratic incompetence. If there is potential for rebuilding a fragile democratic solidarity, as Lyn asks, it is not, as Philip says, in “sharing resources [or] interests” but in the power of sharing from the heart—in rituals that celebrate individuals taking time to connect with themselves. The work here for researchers, I believe, is in unpacking the resentments and assumptions that make more substantive connections seem out of reach.

But the fraught cultural context is not the whole story. We simply can’t understand why dialogue and deliberation seems “charmingly retro” without understanding the other industries and fields that have struggled with producing public culture at the same time that private interests, political voice, and civic action can be blurred for strategic reasons.

Hoynes’s Public Television for Sale and Spillman’s Solidarity in Strategy are key for me in understanding organizational perspectives on these historical changes from the public and private side, respectively. Why are sectoral distinctions still so central, when they seem less and less meaningful for organizing experience? We have to explore public engagement in terms of institutional fields, in which policing these boundaries or serving as intermediaries—see Medvetz (2012) on why think tanks became central to public debate—can provide powerful force to these models of behavior. There is some very exciting research documenting just how complex and dynamic the organizational contexts of political, economic, and civic activity are (Eliasoph 2014; Krause 2014; Pacewicz 2016; Polletta 2015). Edward Walker’s research on grassroots lobbying in the sharing economy (2015), for example, describes exactly what is new and old in the way new media and new institutions have reshaped urban politics, and particularly conceptions of authentic activism, today. As Margaret says, “Even nonpartisanship has a politics and it isn’t always progressive.”

Finally, thinking about the politics of civicness today gets us to thinking about the future and the optimism that Bill and Margaret see, even as Philip and Lyn point to stark deficits and manipulation. I worry about my own ivory tower version of Philip’s fantasyland—the “impasse” of progressive critique described by Lashaw (2013)—in scrutinizing the organizational interests and odd tics of reasoned, nonpartisan dialogue in a post-Trump moment. Maybe deliberative democracy is an overdue balm in a world of 140-character outrage—and indeed, public engagement practitioners’ listservs in November 2016 discussed how their work was “needed now more than ever.” My own new project explores top-down civic initiatives in higher ed—exploring how institutions in crisis (and their professional associations and foundations)
have devoted substantial resources to educate students for thoughtful civic engagement in both distant and not-so-distant suffering. These courses, programs, institutes, and centers are often led by progressive social science faculty,

**Maybe deliberative democracy is an overdue balm in a world of 140-character outrage—and indeed, public engagement practitioners’ listservs in November 2016 discussed how their work was “needed now more than ever.”**

highly critical of the neoliberal university and confronting the difficulties of sustained, collective, and transformative engagement firsthand. That the uncomfortable lessons that often result are ones the next generation of leaders will take into the divided and unequal world they inherit makes it that much more important, I think, to respect and understand the necessary imperfections of well-meaning, carefully-designed civic projects.

References


Leighninger, Matt. 2014. “‘What We’re Talking About When We Talk About the ‘Civic Field’ (And why we should clarify what we mean).” *Journal of Public Deliberation* 10(1). http://www.publicdeliberation.net/jpd/vol10/iss1/art8/


Between Slavery and Capitalism
The Legacy of Emancipation in the American South
Princeton University Press
Martin Ruef

Editor’s Note: The following text is based on an author-meets-critics session that was organized by Andreas Wimmer for the Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association in August, 2016. My thanks go out to Tera Hunter, Amy Bailey, and Martin Ruef for agreeing to contribute their comments to the newsletter. -MJB

On Between Slavery and Capitalism: The Legacy of Emancipation in the American South
Tera W. Hunter
Princeton University

Martin Ruef has written an excellent book, which fits within and diverges from some recent trends among historians. There has been a longstanding debate among political thinkers and scholars about the nature of the antebellum Southern political economy going back to the era of slavery itself. But there has been renewed interest, especially over the past several years, as historians have given new attention to the relationship between slavery and capitalism. (Some of the most notable authors writing on the subject are Sven Beckert, Edward Baptist, and Walter Johnson.)

But whereas Ruef describes capitalism as the system that emerged after the end of slavery, consistent with the work of historians such as Eugene Genovese (who wrote books on the subject especially from the 1960s-1980s), current historians are more likely to define slavery itself as capitalist. The Atlantic slave trade and systems of bound labor in the Americas created obscene levels of wealth through the expropriation of land, exploitation of labor on multiple continents using human beings as its chief capital. It created global markets, innovative financial systems, and sophisticated oceanic transportation networks. The plantations and the factories were closely linked, as the profits from slavery helped to fuel and sustain industrial development.

Ruef’s book also departs from the others by focusing on the implications of capitalism in the aftermath of slavery. Of course, this too has been a topic of sustained interest going back to economic and political historians, such as C. Vann Woodard’s classic study of The Origins of the New South (1951) and the work of Roger Ransom and Richard Sutch, One Kind of Freedom: The Economic Consequences of Emancipation (1977), which Ruef discusses in his book. These scholars have looked at the fate of the South’s political economy from Reconstruction through the late nineteenth
century to understand the nature of class structure, the persistence or lack of the planter elite, the character of postbellum labor systems, the emergence of industrial development, changes in the structure of the plantation itself, and the emergence of credit and trade institutions.

What stands out for me, despite the overlapping themes and analyses, is how different Ruef’s approach is. It is quite interdisciplinary: it uses history, sociology and economics and combines labor and business history, which is more typically bifurcated in separate fields. It skillfully combines both qualitative and quantitative sources, especially noteworthy is how he uses the WPA ex-slave narratives (to study changes in status and the demography of the plantation) and labor contracts negotiated by the Freedmen’s Bureau (to study the valuation of labor).

His findings about postwar social mobility based on data seems novel to me. Historians have not provided the kind of empirical data that shows how antebellum occupations influenced postbellum economic prospects. Skilled labor is one of those areas I think historians need to study more and I think Ruef’s work opens up some ways to push forward on this.

I found the chapter on comparative emancipation especially useful in succinctly, but comprehensively, identifying the common problems and challenges that slave societies faced in replacing slave with free labor. The three mechanisms that he uses to describe the ways that all societies tried to reduce uncertainty is insightful: gradual emancipation, partial emancipation, and the use of compensation to slaveholders.

The central argument of the book is centered in theoretical concerns that are quite discrete to Sociology (or perhaps other social science fields as well). The question of certainty versus uncertainty and how it impacts institutional change is not a theoretical approach I’m familiar with. The equivalent concern among historians would be to emphasize that historical change is not inevitable and show why and how human agency allows for dynamic actions that can never be fully foretold. So essentially I don’t think many, if any, historians would quibble with the argument that there was a great deal of uncertainty in postwar Southern economic development.

But here is where I would like to push back a bit, specifically with respect to those areas of

What happened during the war limited the parameters of what could happen after the war in a way that made for more certainty than may appear if the starting point of analysis is 1865.

the book that deal with postbellum labor. There was a great deal of certainty within the uncertainty, if we take into account not just what happened after the war, but also what happened during it. (I’m not suggesting that Ruef does not know this or gesture towards it in. But it is worth emphasizing, because for me it raises the question of which was more determining: uncertainty or certainty?) What happened during the war limited the parameters of what could happen after the war in a way that made for more certainty than may appear if the starting point of analysis is 1865.

During the war, the federal government led the effort, in alliance with Northern missionaries and entrepreneurs, to manage the uncertainty by implementing what were called experiments in free labor. They used the unexpected circumstances of seized plantations and slaves running away in droves to put them back to
work to revive and sustain the Southern economy, especially the production of cotton. Abolitionists were especially keen on structuring “free labor” in this context as what historian Willie Lee Rose famously called, “a rehearsal for Reconstruction,” to show that slaves were indeed capable of functioning outside bound labor.

In other words, there was an intermediary period, between slavery and universal emancipation in which large numbers of Southern blacks experienced so-called free labor. This period set the parameters for what would come afterwards in significant ways. It sets the parameters in that it was designed to put former slaves back to work, as Ruef points out several times in the book regarding Reconstruction, doing the same labor as before. It did not simply insist that African Americans work, but that they should engage in a certain kind of work, under white management. Work on cotton plantations was required, under the supervision of U.S. military officials, Northern entrepreneurs, missionaries, and even some former ante-bellum planters who declared their allegiance to the United States, renouncing their ties to the Confederacy. It actively discouraged and prohibited independent work.

Former slaves were characterized as idle and lazy if they tried to work on their own and to become self-sufficient outside of the plantation system. And yet, the parameters were set up to discourage so-called dependency. The government was concerned that black workers would become dependent on it for food and basic supplies. In some areas, where ex-slaves did government work they were charged a tax against their wages that went into a Contraband Fund, to take care of the sick, elderly, or those too young for work. The evidence suggests, quite strikingly, that the fear of dependence was based on racial stereotypes. The American Freedmen’s Commission, which Congress set up to investigate conditions of ex-slaves, wrote quite a bit about how black people actually did more and received less from the federal government than they deserved (based on their service) and less than poor whites who had been disloyal.

The parameters were set by the ways in which women’s work was devalued. There was an insatiable demand for men’s work throughout the occupied South, even as the supply shrank after the Emancipation Proclamation was issued and black men were enlisted in the Armed services. Meanwhile, it was women who became the dominant workforce on the plantations. Women’s labor was constantly derided, even though many observers (some begrudgingly) admitted that they had provided critical contributions to the Union.

The parameters were set in the ways that labor began to be organized using a certain family form. Under slavery, marriage was not legally recognized. In the context of wartime labor experiments and contraband camps, marriage became a prerequisite. It was considered essential to civilizing African Americans and providing the foundation for creating a disciplined labor pool. The nuclear family was perceived to be and used as the most efficient unit in this regard. African Americans were not tethered to a family form; they were committed to a family sensibility. But sharecropping in the postbellum era, would shackle them to this particular form. That process began during the war.

The parameters were set during the war by systems in which black workers still did not receive a commensurate share of the proceeds from their labor. Some agents openly admitted that blacks should be paid sub-par wages in order to encourage suffering because that would be the only thing that would urge them to work. A lot of individuals and institutions benefitted from the large profits made on seized plantations, but not black workers.
Meanwhile, the parameters were set to limit black ownership of land. African Americans were allowed very little access to land that was confiscated and sold by the federal government. This perhaps more than anything created a certainty of both political and economic oppression for African Americans. Without land, they could not achieve economic independence, and without economic independence they could not sustain political power.

In other words, the system during the war, as Ruef describes for the postbellum period, was essentially a “slave-wage system.” The postbellum labor system failed even before Reconstruction began because the federal government, political and economic elites were most committed to the underlying assumptions that had sustained slavery, minus what was perceived as the most egregious elements of bondage: the physical compulsion to work, the lack of compensation, and the literal buying and selling of black productive and reproductive bodies.

This to me suggests more certainty than uncertainty in what did eventually evolve. No one could have predicted the emergence of sharecropping in its particular form. As Ruef and others have argued, it was the product of a combination of forces, including African Americans insistence on family organization of their labor. Although it was discernibly different from its antebellum antecedents, the constraints it imposed were not sufficiently different to benefit black workers. This leads me to ask about the takeaway of Ruef’s book. If we go with the uncertainty thesis as the dominating influence, what does this mean for the legacy of slavery regarding black labor? What are the lasting consequences?

Comments on Between Slavery and Capitalism:

Amy Kate Bailey
University of Illinois, Chicago

With this book, Martin Ruef has again delivered an important and engaging piece of scholarship, grappling creatively with critical questions about the development of the sharecropping system in the post-Emancipation southern states, and the increasing embeddedness of the Southern economy within national and global capital markets. In Between Slavery and Capitalism, he takes seriously the question of how categorical uncertainty about the functioning of meso- and macro-level economic structures can affect individual behavior. This categorical uncertainty results when actors are unable to categorize the possible outcomes of a major social transition (p. 7) – a source of deep anxiety. Heeding Coleman’s (1990) call to integrate the micro- and macro-levels within our explanatory models, Ruef identifies the specific ways in which major institutional shifts can affect the behavior of entire classes of actors, which in turn can re-shape institutional structures and functioning. He amasses an impressive array of data – a mind-
boggling assortment of evidence, in truth – to examine the ways in which greater integration with national credit markets, shifts in the calculus of investments in human capital, and a new level of geographic mobility among the African American population combined to facilitate a transition away from plantation-based models of agricultural production to a more diffused and decidedly capitalist orientation to the cotton economy, and the entrenchment of a system of sharecropping.

This scholarship makes an important contribution in its explanation of a key institutional transition in U.S. history, as well as in the example it sets for other researchers using archival data. To be clear, I really like this book, and the scholarly contribution it makes. However, there are two key areas that I wish Ruef had interrogated in a more explicit and systematic way: gender differentiation in southern labor markets, and the role that racial violence played in compelling African American compliance with the emerging system of sharecropping.

In several places throughout the book, Ruef touches on issues of gender inequality. For example, his analyses of variation in the sale price of enslaved women and girls as compared to men and boys argues that the statistical discrimination associated with concern over disruptions in labor output due to childbearing within free labor markets should actually lead to higher valuations of women of childbearing age under conditions of enslavement – a reversal due to the long time horizon during which slaveholders could anticipate extracting labor from enslaved people and their progeny. The evidence on insurance valuations of slaves based on age and gender supports this argument, as do differential wage structures applied to men’s and women’s work in contracts organized through the Freedman’s Bureau. However, this opens the door for a more intensive discussion of the relative positions of men and women in the antebellum and post-Reconstruction era. Ruef’s brief mention of women as business owners similarly raises the issue of women’s economic location, and the differential impacts of shifts in the organization of economic production on men’s and women’s fortunes.

An underlying premise of the book is that uncertainty about the durability of the white supremacist regime following Emancipation

This scholarship makes an important contribution in its explanation of a key institutional transition in U.S. history, as well as in the example it sets for other researchers using archival data...However, there are two key areas that I wish Ruef had interrogated in a more explicit and systematic way: gender differentiation in southern labor markets, and the role that racial violence played in compelling African American compliance with the emerging system of sharecropping.

shaped efforts among the planter class to restructure agricultural production to replicate, inasmuch as it was possible, the antebellum racial hierarchies. That a nontrivial portion of Ruef’s discussion of reconfiguration of labor markets and ownership structures mentioned gendered disparities would seem to beg the question of why a similar reconsideration of hierarchies between men and women was not seriously considered at this time. In light of contemporaneous national movements that either focused on gendered forms of inequality – such as the campaign for women’s suffrage –
or provided women with opportunities for public leadership – such as the Social Gospel and Temperance movements – it is striking that discussions about men’s and women’s relative roles did not intrude into Southern economic conversations. Of course, we know that the southern states were lacking in institutions of civil society relative to the North, save for the church. However, both the white Missionary Associations that sent teachers and money south during the period of Reconstruction, and the black churches that expanded throughout the South during the latter nineteenth and early twentieth centuries took on myriad other emancipatory social issues. Without belaboring the point, it seems that the national ethos and at least some aspects of the local infrastructure could have focused on issues of (primarily black) women as workers, and decided not to. A more elaborated discussion of this fact would have been welcome.

Similarly, prior scholarship has identified causative links between migration, the organization of the agricultural sector, and the level of racial violence within a community. Ruef identifies relationships between two of these – migration as a key aspect of uncertainty white landowners sought to control, and its links it to the reorganization of agricultural production. He neglects, however, to incorporate a discussion of the ways in which these factors were associated with a community’s trajectory of racialized violence. The conceptual connections he identifies are certainly quite important, but the omission of a discussion of lynching and other forms of intergroup predation render the overall explanations he outlines somewhat incomplete. To be sure, as a scholar of lynching and racial violence, I am particularly sensitive to the ways in which the regime of terror was used against formerly enslaved black people to re-establish racial hierarchies, and suffuse white supremacy more concretely across radically reshaped southern institutions, ranging from family structures to organs of political representation to the educational system. From this vantage, and in light of the extensive body of knowledge about the tightly interwoven nature of agriculture and lynching, the explanations proffered in Ruef’s book would seem to tell only part of the story.

Neither of these limitations is a “fatal flaw” in Ruef’s argument. Indeed, Between Slavery and Capitalism is an important work that enhances our understanding of the institutional and individual processes at play in the development of the sharecropping system and entrenchment of capitalism within the American south. However, the elaboration of issues related to gender and to racial violence would have expanded the utility of the work, and broadened its appeal to encompass a wider range of sociologists and historians. Regardless of what it fails to do, Ruef’s book succeeds in traversing substantial territory in our understanding of key historical processes, and provides a model for subsequent scholarly works of social history. This piece makes a real contribution, and for those interested in historical sociology, the American south, and economic institutions, this book is well worth the read.

Reply to Critics

Martin Ruef
Duke University

I would like to begin by thanking Tera Hunter and Amy Bailey for their interdisciplinary and thought-provoking feedback on my book, as well Andreas Wimmer for putting together a terrific Author-Meets-the-Critics session at the 2016 ASA meeting in Seattle. The panel of critics also included Wesley Hiers and Robert Mickey.

When I began working on Between Slavery and Capitalism many years ago, I must admit that I
did not expect that the book would receive much attention. By the early 2000s, scholarship on the economic history of slavery and emancipation had become a rather dusty enterprise. Many of the major controversies had taken place in the 1970s and 80s, centering on the work of Robert Fogel, Stanley Engerman, and Eugene Genovese, among others. While certainly not resolved, these debates had become passé, particularly among sociologists. The topic itself was increasingly disconnected from public discourse in a supposedly “post-racial” society. Perhaps the main claim to relevance that I could proffer for my project was that the book would be completed around the sesquicentennial of the end of the American Civil War. (needless to say, this justification largely elicited glazed eyes from non-historian colleagues!)

In recent years, however, it has turned out that the economic history of slavery and emancipation is not so archaic after all. Historical best-sellers have included Edward Baptist’s *The Half has Never been Told* (2014) and Sven Beckert’s *Empire of Cotton* (2014). Advocacy organizations have revealed the staggering toll of modern slave labor, which, by some measures, yields global profits that exceed those of the U.S. banking sector or big oil companies (Kolodny 2014). And images of a post-racial society in the United States have been shattered by events involving racial and economic injustice; not to mention the divisive rhetoric and outcome of the 2016 presidential election. As a result, there is a growing sense among historians and sociologists that there is a renewed need to examine the legacies of slavery and emancipation, particularly if they contribute to the racial and economic tensions that we witness today.

As Professor Hunter highlights, a central theme of my book is the escalating uncertainty around social categories that followed the American Civil War and the emancipation of four million bondsmen and bondswomen. For over two centuries, the peculiar institution of slavery had served to anchor other social categories in the United States and, more generally, in the Western Hemisphere – black, white, and mulatto; lower and upper class; feminine and masculine. In the absence of slavery, these categories became subject to durable contestation. Where I depart from the conventional wisdom in many current historical treatments is in the institutional source of this contestation. While scholars have increasingly characterized slavery as crucial to the development of our modern global economy, with business practices that anticipate or parallel those of industrial capitalism (e.g., Baptist 2014; Schermerhorn 2015), I theorize and provide empirical evidence of a profound institutional shift between the antebellum and postbellum economies. This shift was reflected in how social categories affected the valuation of black labor, the possible class positions among blacks and whites, the reconstitution of the black family under freedom, the organizational building blocks of postbellum agriculture,
industry, and trade, and the economic trajectory of the American South.

A reasonable critique of my emphasis on categorical uncertainty is that there were opportunities for union authorities, freedpeople, and progressive Northerners and Southerners to “rehearse” the process of emancipation. Hunter rightly notes the war-time experiments conducted by the Union in hybrid forms of slave-wage labor. Robert E. Lee’s former plantation in Arlington was converted into the Freedman’s Village, an enclave of workshops, schools, and residences for emancipated slaves. Sugar plantations in Louisiana operated under the occupation of federal troops. Perhaps the most extensive experiment occurred in the Sea Islands, off the South Carolina coast, which were already occupied in November of 1861, just half a year after the beginning of the Civil War.

What lessons were learned from these initial experiments to inform the massive undertaking of social, political, and economic Reconstruction after the war? Unfortunately, fairly little. In practice, the Freedman’s Village hosted relatively few able-bodied workers and could more aptly be described as a rehearsal in residential segregation than in free labor. The federal authorities in Louisiana largely acceded to the expectations of the white planters, who continued to emphasize coercive and centralized plantation routines. Even in the Sea Islands, where the old planter class had fled entirely, the experiment was far more halting and contested than what one might expect. The stakeholders in the “free” Sea Island plantations – including union officials, missionary societies, and freedpeople themselves – pursued vastly different agendas (Dougherty 2014). An experiment that began with bright hopes for economic development and an inclusive civil society ended in uncertainty and disappointment.

Professor Bailey identifies another lacuna in Between Slavery and Capitalism, which may serve to understate – rather than overstate – the uncertainty of the postbellum era. Specifically, by focusing narrowly on the economic dimensions of uncertainty, it is likely that my book ignores aspects of white terrorism and violence that contributed mightily to the chaos of that historical period. A somewhat feeble response to this critique is that the book does not devote as much attention to racial violence and the political dimension of uncertainty, because others – such as Bailey and her co-authors (e.g., Bailey and Tolnay 2015) – have done such an outstanding job in their own research. A more satisfying response is that there are untapped opportunities to combine the data sources on black status attainment that I use in the book with comprehensive portraits of lynching victims. Such a historical project would go far in helping us to understand the chilling ecological effect that racial violence may have had on the upward mobility of blacks in Southern communities.

Bailey also points to the changing role of gender in Southern labor markets (and the postbellum economy, more generally) as a dimension of uncertainty that my book touches on, but does not fully flesh out. As I suggest in the book’s final chapter, a remarkable feature of emancipation is the exclusion of free women of color from jobs that female slaves were considered to be well-suited for. In the decades following emancipation, this contributed to a restriction of opportunities for former bondswomen and their descendants, who were channeled into devalued work in domestic service and low-end farming or manufacturing. At the same time, the postbellum era in the U.S. was associated with new economic and political opportunities for white women. White war widows operated a substantial number of the small retail enterprises that I track in the book. And progressive social movements, such as the
Temperance and Suffrage movements, afforded options for female leadership. An understanding of the distinct trajectories of white and black women during this period would thus benefit from a deeper intersectional analysis, such as the excellent work already done by Enobong Branch (2011).

In closing, I will pick up on questions that feed into the feedback of both Professors Hunter and Bailey: what were the economic possibilities that emerged for blacks and whites in the aftermath of slavery, and to what extent could those possibilities have been predicted in advance? The precarious aspect of freedom was that it did not simply create new possibilities for emancipated slaves and their descendants, but that it also generated new forms of contention, organized violence, and interracial control among the white populace. None of the experiments conducted under federal auspices during the Civil War, or under Reconstruction governments, could truly anticipate the long-term outcomes of emancipation, because they removed unreformed Southern nationalists from the equation. Without stretching historical comparison too much, one might argue that we now find ourselves in a similar moment of historical contingency in the United States. The last eight years have offered periods of political uplift for people of color, accompanied by ongoing struggles against discrimination and microaggression in daily life. Meanwhile, rural white workers and voters have expressed a sense of growing disillusionment and disenfranchisement in a globalized political economy. After these frustrations collided at the ballot box, the future has become profoundly uncertain.

References


Dougherty, Kevin. 2014. The Port Royal Experiment: A Case Study in Development. Jackson, MS: University of Mississippi Press.


Understanding Trump's Election

Editor's Introduction

Victoria Reyes
University of Michigan

Per the advice of Karyn Lacy (University of Michigan), I recently attended a day-long seminar hosted by The Op-Ed Project (http://www.theopedproject.org), whose “mission is to increase the range of voices and quality of ideas we hear in the world.”

Prior to attending the seminar, I wasn’t quite sure whether, how, and if I wanted to engage in public sociology. Nor did I know how it fit with my primary goal to publish rigorous, quality research in peer-reviewed venues.

What this seminar taught me was to look at op-eds as places where the world gets narrated, and who gets to narrate the world? A very small segment of the population.

Yet, each of us have something important to share. Writing op-eds should not replace our scholarship in peer-reviewed venues. But what it can do is translate our work to a broader audience, a need that the Comparative and Historical Sociology Section has been attuned to, as seen in our leadership and section activities (including our “Can Historical Comparative Sociology Save the World?” mini-conference, Policy Trajectories blog, and research groups). It can also clarify our ideas by drilling them down to their main point - in essence, complementing our scholarship - and it increases the diversity of perspectives that narrate the world around us.

In this new feature, “The Op-Ed Corner,” we wanted to expand the section’s interest in policy relevant conversations by having comparative-historical sociologists share their insights on timely and relevant news stories in a way that complements the work Fiona Rose-Greenland is doing as editor of the Policy Trajectories blog.

In this issue, three scholars help us understand Trump's election: Barry Eidlin on the role of political organizations (particularly unions), Marcus Hunter on the role of race, and Stephanie Mudge on the differences between democracy and representation.

If you would like to contribute an op-ed or suggest a topic for the next issue of Trajectories, please email vreyes@umich.edu. To continue the conversation, go to:

http://policytrajectories.asa-comparative-historical.org/

Here, sociologists from across the discipline tackle current policy issues using innovative theories and cases, including more commentary on Trump's election by Richard Lachmann, Michael Kennedy, and Josh Pacewicz.
Understanding Trump’s Election, or Why Demographics Are Not Destiny

Barry Eidlin  
McGill University

As pundits grappled with the shocking realization that Donald Trump would be the next president on election night, a common-sense narrative took hold. This election was about “the revenge of working-class whites,” the blue-collar, non-college-educated men across the key Rust Belt states of Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin whose lives had been devastated by globalization and deindustrialization—and who abandoned the Democrats to vote for Trump in droves. According to this narrative, these voters’ frustration with the economic and social destruction they had experienced for decades exploded in a rage against “the establishment,” and found an unlikely tribune in Trump, who struck a nerve with his anti-trade, anti-immigration message.

Against this conventional wisdom, some countered that race and gender, not class, proved decisive. Pointing out that voters with annual household incomes under $50,000 voted for Clinton, they argued that Trump’s support was based in a layer of older white men who have seen their power and dominance threatened in an increasingly diverse, multi-racial United States. For these analysts, the election was the revenge of the racist white patriarchy, those left behind by the shifting tide of history who couldn’t stomach the idea of a strong, successful woman as president. According to this narrative, Trump’s success lie in his willingness to appeal openly to the racism and misogyny of this key demographic.

While both narratives get important things right about why Trump won, they also leave troubling questions unanswered. How could the election be about class if the poorest voters still voted for Clinton? How could deep-seated racism explain Trump support when many of his voters supported Obama in 2008 and 2012? If misogyny was such a key issue, then why did Trump win among white women?

Each of these questions highlights a fundamental problem not only with the competing narratives about Trump’s victory, but with a core tenet of much conventional political analysis: the assumption that demographics are destiny.

The Clinton campaign relied heavily on this assumption during the campaign, slicing and dicing the electorate into ever-more-precise demographic categories, which they could then micro-target with ever-more-tailored political messages. It also figured prominently in post-election analysis, particularly in efforts to understand the seemingly decisive “white working class” demographic.

The core idea underlying the “demographics is destiny” assumption is that there is a clear and natural link between demographic traits, political issues, and policy proposals. We can see this, for example, in the contention that Trump’s proposals to “build a wall” and restrict immigration resonated with white men with nativist tendencies who felt threatened by foreigners and people of color.

This argument isn’t wrong. There likely were many white male voters who responded to Trump’s proposals in this way. The problem is that it assumes what needs to be explained: why did nativist xenophobia resonate as the solution to white working class economic grievances?

At first glance, the answer might seem obvious. Racism and white supremacy run deep in the U.S., and white workers have often responded to economic threats by lashing out at immigrants and people of color. We could easily see white working class support for
Trump as yet another chapter in this troubling history.

But simply chalking up support for nativist policies to deep-seated racism ignores the many instances where white workers have responded to economic threats by uniting with immigrants and workers of color around a message of class solidarity. Most recently we have seen this approach both in the Bernie Sanders campaign and the Fight for $15 movement, but it has a lineage going back to the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO), the early Communist Party, the Southern Populists, and the Knights of Labor, among others. While each of these examples has its shortcomings, taken together they show that racism is not the inevitable response to economic threats.

What then determines whether workers respond to economic grievances with nativism or solidarity? In a word, organization. Recent sociological research has refocused attention on the role that organizations like parties and unions play in actively shaping political identities and divisions, not simply reflecting them.

Viewed through this lens, what becomes immediately apparent is the central role of two sets of organizations in explaining Trump’s victory: labor unions and the Democratic Party. While unions have a checkered history when it comes to race, they are traditionally one of the few organizations that unite workers of many races, religions, and political beliefs around programs of economic justice. At their best, they have served as bulwarks against racism and xenophobia. But with unionization rates currently barely over ten percent overall, unions simply don’t have the reach they once did. Union decline has left the field open to other players to shape the political narrative that workers use to make sense of their economic grievances.

But beyond their numerical decline, unions have lost their ability to shape the political actions of the members they still have. We saw this in the exit polls, which showed that only 51 percent of union households voted for Clinton, even less in the Rust Belt states. This was the lowest percentage since the 1984 Reagan landslide.

To understand this, we must address the relation between unions and another organization—the Democratic Party. While the relation has been thorny since it was forged in the 1930s, in recent decades the Democrats have increasingly taken workers’ votes for granted. They have relied on unions to deliver funds during campaign season and votes on election day, while offering little in return. Much needed labor law reforms have taken a back seat, while signature Democratic Party achievements like NAFTA, welfare reform, and immigration crackdowns have hurt workers and
their unions. So dismissive have the Democrats become of their labor base that when Clinton was asked during the presidential campaign to take a stand against so-called “right-to-work” laws, an existential threat to labor, one of her top advisors demurred, saying “I like staying more at platitudes about what unions have done for workers.”

Comparing Clinton’s union platitudes with her concrete support for pro-business free trade policies and coziness with financial elites helps to explain the Clinton “enthusiasm gap” among union voters, particularly in the critical Rust Belt counties that cost her the Electoral College. Many workers of color stayed home rather than fulfill their demographic destiny as taken-for-granted members of Clinton’s base, while many white workers took a chance on Trump’s faux populism.

In the aftermath of the election, many within the Democratic Party seem to be clinging to the “demographics as destiny” idea. They await the emergence of a “new Democratic majority” as more liberal millennials and people of color become a larger share of the electorate, and the “basket of deplorables” that makes up their vision of the white working class dies off. But this election shows the bankruptcy of such a strategy. There is a limit to which workers and the rest of the Democratic Party’s base can be browbeaten into settling for the “lesser evil.” Absent a positive vision of cross-racial economic justice, progressives will continue to lose ground to Trump’s nativist appeals.

Understanding Trump’s election starts with rejecting the idea that demographics are destiny. Instead, analysts need to focus on the role of political organizations in connecting identities to issues and forging political coalitions. That’s how Trump was able to win, but it’s also the key to making him lose.

### Poultry Politics and How America Got Trumped

**Marcus Anthony Hunter**  
**University of California, Los Angeles**

“Chickens coming home to roost,” an emboldened Malcolm X proclaimed more than fifty years ago to reporters upon questions about the events surrounding the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. Though an expression of his insight about the collateral damage of white supremacy and anti-Blackness, Malcolm X’s comment would lead to his being silenced by the Nation of Islam and a permanent reputation as a radical agitator within and outside of the Civil Rights Movement. As I boarded the plane to Michigan on Election Day, Malcolm X and his provocation had been weighing heavy on mind. I had never been to the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor. So when the opportunity came to give a lecture on Black Detroit in November I jumped at the chance.

Amidst the clearing rain clouds, I arrived at Detroit International Airport just in time to watch the election returns. During a lively discussion over the drive from the airport to Ann Arbor, I was convinced that our prolonged punishment known as the presidential election campaign season would end with the formal selection of the nation’s first woman president. Focus groups and polls had for the previous two weeks indicated a vast swing in the electorate in favor of Hillary Clinton, with some models suggesting she would win the presidency by significant margins. Still, there was tension and fear in the air. “Trump could still win,” I was reminded just as we arrived at the Graduate Hotel in the center of Ann Arbor.

Once checked-in and relatively unpacked, I began tuning into various stations for the election returns. Exit polls in places like Pennsylvania, my home state, were hot topics. According to early exit polling many White
voters had rejected Donald Trump, telling exit pollsters that they instead chose to vote for write-in candidates, the Green Party nominee, Clinton or some derivative thereof. This seemed to make sense, especially after the widely discussed revelation of Trump’s use of mints to bypass laws protecting women from physical harm and molestation. Yet, within a few hours Pennsylvania and Michigan turned red before my eyes. A dejected Rachel Maddow, wall magician John King’s look of surprise, and a solemn Lester Holmes were the sights and sounds of the announcement of the election result that Trump would become the 45th President of the United States.

Like many campuses across the country, the next morning Ann Arbor was somber and unusually empty. For many, the election was a matter of life or death and the next four or more years will prove trying at the very least. Yet, I can't help but to continually ask myself: "What would Malcolm X think or say?" - especially given that Michigan was his birthplace. Have we not witnessed an assassination of some sort during this presidential campaign? The integrity of Black and Brown people, women, immigrants and Muslims have surely been attacked if not assassinated over the last two years. And there has most definitely been a roosting of chickens. These chickens, however, disassembled their way into the coop.

The exit polls were not wrong simply due to mere statistical errors. Rather, many White voters lied. They lied in focus groups. They lied in robocalls. They lied just before Election Day and sure enough kept on lying. The exit pollsters had been duped. There had never been any real political departure away from Trump.

Trump voters across race, gender and class disassembled until they reached the safety of the voting booth where they roosted, bringing to the surface all of the redness that has been hidden in the nooks and crannies of the American South. Now that America's redness has been exposed and the chickens have roosted, it is White America that has some answering and troubleshooting to do. Since Trump's victory there has been a lot of finger pointing especially among White progressives and mainstream media. But as the old adage goes, "When you point your finger, there are three looking back at you!"
The 2016 election: democracy versus representation

Stephanie Mudge
University of California, Davis

I confess, my initial intention for this post was to write something wonky about the 2016 election, maybe something that draws on my work on the history of the Democratic Party and Western leftism in general—which, by the way, I think has been collapsing since the 1980s. But I will save that for another time. It just doesn’t feel like a business-as-usual kind of moment. So, instead, what I have to say is this:

There is no shortage of smart and thoughtful interpretations and reactions to the events of November 8. To these discussions I would like to inject a single point: it is high time to separate the institutional fact of democracy—that is, the fact that American politics is, technically, democratic—from the question of meaningful representation, and to train our eyes on what can, and has, driven a wedge between the two. We have parties, voters, and elections, but I think it’s debatable that what we have, therefore, is representation. The disjuncture between democracy and representation has to be recognized before it can be dealt with.

In the last election a whole lot of things stood in-between voters and would-be representatives: polls, probabilities, pundits; echo chamber journalism; emails in our inboxes from campaigns, not candidates. Never have we been so in touch with national politicians and campaigns, and yet so far removed from them. Indeed, American democratic politics has become a very odd sort of game—more a performance of representation than the real thing, in which professional insiders are capable of defining what is true ... right up until elections prove them, resoundingly, wrong.

And now, in the wake of the election, there is a whole—surreal, in my opinion—effort to show that the judgments of the professionals weren’t really wrong, or at least not totally; the polls were right, they were in the margin of error! Nevermind that their very purpose, their raison d’être, is to predict who would win—to report realities, not willful fictions, to the many people who kept their eyes trained on each day’s results in the lead-up to November 8. Never mind the fundamental question of whether polling, which is now an electoral weapon instead of a mere reporting of probabilistic electoral facts, may well be part of the problem: a component element of the ever-growing wedge that separates the represented from the representatives, contributing to a yawning chasm in between democracy as an institutional fact and representation in fact.

Perhaps, by recognizing this chasm, we might better understand why whole swathes of American voters—most strikingly in the Midwest and the rustbelt, including formerly reliably Democratic swaths, who cannot be simply dismissed as racists or bigots—voted so strikingly against the whole game of American politics. Polls capture nothing if the item that respondents would like to check off does not appear on the list of options: namely, the feeling that the problem is the game itself.

Trump’s performance in the election made it clear that mainstream American party politics

We have parties, voters, and elections, but I think it’s debatable that what we have, therefore, is representation. The disjuncture between democracy and representation has to be recognized before it can be dealt with.
is, for some considerable number of people, a substitute for, not a means of, representation. He has shown that the rules of the political game are flouted easily enough; that placing oneself in opposition to professionalism, punditry, and conventional wisdom, even to the point of undermining the most basic rules of American civic culture, is now a winning move. How many times were we told that the Trump campaign was disorganized, unprofessional, lacking in strategy, not to be taken seriously? That the polls and probabilities, the truth of data, ruled out a Trump victory? That his comments were beyond the pale, unacceptable, impossibly self-defeating? That voters would punish him for his inexperience, his incompetence, his divisiveness, his boorishness? And yet it appears that these very qualities won him the election—or, at least, that they didn’t prevent him from winning.

Instead of recognizing that there may be something important missing from mainstream political analysis, what we find instead is the claim that Trump’s victory was totally unpredictable. “No one” guessed this would happen. Sort of like “no one” guessed that American mortgage markets would fail—except those who did, quite profitably in some cases. If folks had their eyes trained on American electoral history instead of minute-to-minute polls and echo chamber conventional wisdom—or, say, if they took a quick look at Tressie MacMillan Cottom’s Twitter feed in January 2016—we might have found that a Trump presidency was, in fact, entirely predictable, depending on who you asked; that the party of a sitting two-term president, regardless of the candidates in play or the politics of the moment, almost never retains the White House; and that Obama’s 2008 nomination and election were, also, the results of votes for the outsider candidate against the political game, attributable in part to the mobilization of minority voters who are well acquainted with the American political scene’s disjuncture between de jure democracy and de facto non-representation.

We might, then, have considered that the same thing can happen again, and that there are times when conventional polls tell us less than the “idiosyncratic” and “non-scientific” opinions and perspectives of the non-professionals, the alienated, and the de-mobilized—that is, of the many, diverse occupants of the chasm between democracy and representation. Perhaps, then, instead of retroactively salvaging the science of polling we should focus on restoring representation by insisting that the professionals, especially those in and around the Democratic Party, open up their world and let people in.
Identities

**Editor's Note:** The following essay continues the newsletter's "Identities" feature. These are short autobiographical essays where section members reflect upon what drew them to comparative and historical sociology and how the latter has subsequently shaped their professional identities and influenced their research agendas. My thanks go out to Harold Kerbo for contributing his essay, and to past newsletter editors for hatching the original idea. -MJB

The Importance of Historical Comparative Sociology—with a Qualitative Focus As Well

**Harold Kerbo**
Professor Emeritus of Sociology
California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo

I might start this essay by noting that I grew up in a rather small mid-western suburban town, received a BA and MA, in Oklahoma, then PhD in sociology at Virginia Tech before I had been out of the US for maybe just a few miles in the south and north. I was educated in the standard US sociology of the 60s and early 70s of the time. I recall seeing very few articles in, for example, *ASR* and *AJS* that had much to do with comparative or historical sociology. My teaching career started for a short time in Oklahoma, then here at Cal Poly with that same mind set. I did gradually become more interested in historical comparisons for the United States. But still, at first not that much. My social stratification book first came out in 1983 with the title *Social Stratification and Inequality: Class and Class Conflict in the United States*. Then as the next editions of the stratification book (now in 8th edition) they starting evolving with new subtitles such as *Social Stratification and Inequality: Class and Class Conflict in Historical Perspective*, then *Social Stratification and Inequality: Class and Class Conflict in Historical and Comparative Perspective*, and finally *Social Stratification: Class and Class Conflict in Historical, Comparative, and Global Perspective*.

What happened was this: In 1983 my old friend and colleague (John McKinstry) invited me to offer summer courses as he had been doing in a college in Japan. It was something like a total paradigm shift ("this ain’t Oklahoma any more"). I was walking around Tokyo and learning about the society and thinking, “my God, this is different. Why don’t I understand this? I mean, I am a sociologist, right?” From that point on I started trying to learn more about Japan, reading everything I could find about Japanese society and history. Then in 1988-1989 I received a Fulbright to teach at Hiroshima University for a year, and was really hooked. My colleague and I ended up coauthoring 3 books about Japan.

In 1990 I tried my luck again, and got a summer Fulbright-Hays award to study in Thailand. Again, it hit me. “Well, all of Asia is not alike, not even close.” My first experience in Thailand, and courses given that summer by Thai professors at Chulalongkorn University, taught me Thailand has a different cultural and social organization compared to Japan. For
example, there is more of a hierarchy based on status even more than in Japan, more old elite domination of the economy and political system, but interestingly more influence by women in Thailand, especially in the economy and professions. Just to give another example, in the past Thailand (as well as most of the Buddhist countries in South East Asia, except for Vietnam) has had a matrilocial family system. In other words, in Thai traditions the oldest daughter inherited the land in the countryside rather than sons, though these old Thai traditions have become more complex in urban areas with a large influx of Chinese immigrants from around the beginning of the 20th century. Another thing I learned was that Thai employees were not so tied to the workplace authority as in Japan. I could go on listing Thai and Japan differences for many pages.

A year later, in 1991, a now old friend who was a visiting professor in Oklahoma back then invited me to be a visiting professor in Germany for 6 months. It hit me again. Ok, Germans are more like Americans in many ways, more than Asians, but still there are significant differences in modern Germany. I walked around asking “how different, and why?” I received a research grant from the German government in the mid-1990s to study relations between Japanese corporate managers based in Germany and their German employees. One of our main findings was that Japanese managers in Germany had real problems relating to German work laws (under what is called in English as the Works Constitution Laws established in the 1950s and expanded in the 1970s). This Works Constitution Act, for example, gives German employees extensive influence in management of corporations, particularly through the Works Councils elected by employees even on the shop floors. The Japanese manages had a hard time accepting this. (I should note, any foreign company operating in Germany and employing German workers has to abide by these laws). Knowing Japan fairly abide, I interviewed the Japanese managers first, then asked them to distribute questionnaires to their German employees. After about two weeks I started getting calls from the Japanese managers in my Duisburg apartment with them telling me almost in shock, “they won’t do it.” I found there is a clause in the Works Constitution Act saying any questionnaires given to German employees must have the prior approval of the Works Council. That is when I begin to learn that German work organization is not only different from Japan, but perhaps even more different from the United States. Again, without qualitative comparative analysis one can not understand even difference between not only Japan and Germany, but even Germany and the United States.

In 1994 I got a small research grant to set up a research program in Thailand and possibly set up a quarter study program for our Cal Poly students. That study program began in 1995 with about 15 students for 6 weeks, then bloomed into a 4-month study program of about 40 to 50 students a few years later. I was their lead professor most years up until 2009. My research grant, funded by the World Society Foundation in Zurich, gave me several months of studying work organization and employee relations in US and Japanese corporations in Thailand. We used similar questionnaires for both American and Japanese manages and their Thai employees. Again I was surprised. One might think that Thai employees would prefer working in Japanese corporations because they are both from Asian cultures. But we were wrong. Despite similar pay in Japanese and American corporations, the Thais were more satisfied working in American corporations. In essence, the Thai questionnaire responses indicated that Thai employees were less positive toward Japanese managers because they usually demanded all work organization must conform to Japanese models.
even if it didn’t respect Thai culture. The Japanese companies always had many Japanese managers in the company watching over Thai employees, and no Thais were promoted to top management positions.

After we interviewed managers in Japanese companies first (about 30 companies in all), we started interviews in the American companies. Our first interviews with management in an American high tech firm was with a Thai mid manager. We asked, “how many American managers are here overseeing production?” The Thai manager thought for a while, then said “I think there was an American here for a while a couple of years ago.” We heard this again and again. They told us that American company heads had said, in essence, “you organize the work in a Thai way, and if you make quality products and at reasonable costs, we don’t really care how you organized the workplace.” Without qualitative comparative analysis between Japan, the United States, and Thailand, who would have ever imagined these findings?

Another issue we discovered related to women. Some of the most discontented Thai women in mid-level management positions we discovered worked in these Japanese corporations. As I mentioned earlier, Thai women have relative high positions in the economy and professions in Thailand. When the Japanese top managers had to work with Thai women just a rank below them there were difficulties for these Thai women. Japanese managers had little experience working on a somewhat equal level with women in Japan.

After living in Japan (for almost two years) and Germany for almost a year, I was able to work out another Fulbright position or visiting position for around 6 months each in Wales, Zurich, and then Vienna up until 2003. Then I was lucky to get a Japan Foundation, Abe Fellowship, which allowed me to study comparative poverty and poverty reduction and economic development programs in Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam for almost 2 years.

For many years I realized the comparative data sets and statistical analysis of variables (e.g. Foreign Direct Investment to poverty or long term economic development in developing countries around the world, etc), rather than actual comparisons of specific countries are very useful, and I have used them extensively. But during the 1990s at a conference with the Social Mobility International Sociology group, and of course after I had been studying about Japan for a few years, and just off from a year of a Fulbright in Hiroshima, the quantitative

They told us that American company heads had said, in essence, “you organize the work in a Thai way, and if you make quality products and at reasonable costs, we don’t really care how you organized the workplace.” Without qualitative comparative analysis between Japan, the United States, and Thailand, who would have ever imagined these findings?

guys were arguing that the data on status inconsistency in Japan couldn’t be correct because it didn’t fit their models using variable correlations with large data sets among the most developed countries. Along with a friend from Tokyo University, we argued that though Japan is a modern post-industrial society, there are still significant historical-cultural differences in status ranking that would explain why their Western based theoretical models had not always been accurate. These sociologists at this European conference
seemed unconvincing. For example, top bureaucratic government officials have historically had very high status in the country (they were seen as representatives of the emperor), but their income has been quite modest. These differences cannot tell you all that is happening as much as a Weberian style qualitative analysis can.

Later I began trying to understand, for example, the differences between South Korea and Thailand’s economic development, which will likely lag behind South Korea for years if not indefinitely. And why, when I got on the ground in Cambodia and Laos for several months doing fieldwork on poverty, for example, did I see that the figures from the World Bank and other international agencies showing Laos as poor as Cambodia seem very misleading? The answer I found was that hill tribes in very remote mountains in Laos are still plows, electric power lines, and relatively new brick farm houses. In Cambodia 90 percent of the villages had no electricity, no fresh water, very little access to health care, and were still plowing with water buffalo. The World Bank lists Cambodian GDP growing at 5 or 6 percent in recent years. But they don’t tell you this is almost completely happening in two Cambodian cities, mostly for tourism now that the Khmer Rouge are gone and foreign companies are bribing Cambodian government officials to export Cambodian resources at very low costs. There are some foreign companies setting up factories in Cambodia, but they are almost exclusively textile “sweatshops.”

In other words, we need both broad data sets comparing the impact of variables such as FDI to things like standards of living and poverty reduction as well as more qualitative comparative analysis of specific countries to understand what is actually happening in countries around the world.

Beginning in 1999 I persuaded McGraw-Hill to publish a series of Comparative Society short books on a comparative societies themes (Modern Societies series). There were 11 books I commissioned and edited on countries from different major world regions. In the introduction to these books I quoted Seymour Martin Lipset from his book American Exceptionalism (1996); “a person that knows only one country knows no country.” This pretty much sums up my commitment to historical-comparative analysis that for me started by the late 1980s.
Georges Balandier was born in 1920 in Ailleville-et-Lyaumon, a village in the Franche-Comté region of eastern France. Balandier carried out his primary and secondary school studies in the Paris suburbs and in Paris. Before WWII he studied at the Sorbonne, earning a licence degree in Letters (philosophy) and a diploma in Ethnology from the Paris Ethnological Institute. After being conscripted into forced labor in Nazi Germany, Balandier joined the French Resistance in 1943-1944. In 1944 he returned to Paris and became part of the Department of Black Africa at the Musée de l’homme (Museum of Man), working closely with the famous surrealist novelist and ethnographer Michel Leiris. Under the influence of Leiris, Balandier’s first publication was a semi-autobiographical novel, Tous comptes faits. In 1946 Balandier assumed a research position as an ethnographer with the Office of Overseas Scientific Research (Office de la Recherche Scientifique Outre-mer) and was associated with the French Institute for Black Africa (Institut Français d’Afrique Noire), or IFAN, in Dakar, which was the capital of French West Africa at the time. During the next five years Balandier carried out research in Senegal, Gabon, and the French Congo. In 1947 Balandier directed the IFAN Center in French Guinée at Conakry. He subsequently created and directed the Department of Social Sciences at the Institute of Central African Studies (Institut d’Études Centrafricaines) in Brazzaville, the erstwhile capital of French Equatorial Africa.

In 1952 Balandier became a researcher at the French National Center of Scientific Research, or Centre national de la recherche scientifique (CNRS). He was affiliated at the time with the CNRS-funded Centre d’études sociologiques, the organization that was at the center of postwar French sociological research. In 1954 Balandier became a professor (directeur d’études) at the Sixth Section of the Paris École Pratique des Hautes Études, the school that has been at the cutting edge of French social science since WWII. In 1957 Balandier created the Centre d’études africaines, which was associated with the Sixth Section. He was elected to a chair in African Studies at the Sorbonne in 1962, and then took over Georges Gurvitch’s Sorbonne chair in “general sociology” in 1966.

Balandier also took over the post of “Editorial Secretary” of Cahiers internationaux de sociologie from Georges Gurvitch in 1954. The Cahiers internationaux de sociologie was the first new sociology journal created in France after the war. Whereas the journal foregrounded social theory under Gurvitch’s editorship, Balandier added a focus on colonial, postcolonial, and non-European studies. Balandier also created the journals Études...
guinéennes (Guinean Studies) and Informations dans les sciences sociales (Informations in the Social Sciences), and he played a role in the creation of Présence africaine, the pan-Africanist journal founded by the Senegalese philosopher Alioune Diop in 1947.4

In 1955 Balandier published his two doctoral theses, Sociologie actuelle de l’Afrique: Dynamique des changements sociaux en Afrique central (Contemporary Sociology of Black Africa: Dynamics of Social Change in Black Central Africa) and Sociologie des Brazzavilles noires (Sociology of the Black Brazzavilles).5 Notable first was the militant insistence in the titles of both theses on “sociology.” The first book paved the way for a comparative historical sociology of colonialism and anticolonialism by contrasting the responses of the Gabonese Fang and the Congolese Bakongo to French rule.6 The second thesis was a pioneering urban sociology of sub-Saharan Africa, focusing on Bakongo urbanites who had resettled in Brazzaville. Balandier found that migrants did not abandon their traditional culture or connections to rural countrymen and that they developed a precocious awareness of the colonial situation and its structures of domination.7 Balandier became the leading French sociologist of underdevelopment. He popularized the term “Tiers-monde” (Third World), a phrase coined by Alfred Sauvy in 1952 on the pattern of the “Third estate” in the French Revolution.

Balandier was the central figure in pushing colonial sociologists from a dependent position serving colonial rulers to a stance critical of colonialism and supportive of decolonization. Along with his coauthor Paul Mercier,
Balandier began describing his work as “sociology” rather than “ethnology” or “anthropology” during this period. The label sociology seemed preferable to Balandier and others at the time because it placed Africa and the colonized and postcolonial world in the same analytic frame as the global north, enmeshed in global history. Balandier told me in 2007 that sociology was understood at the time as a kind of avant-garde, theoretical, and militant position (“une position théorique, une position militante”), in contrast to ethnology, more theoretically conservative at the time. Sociology as it was understood by Balandier and his colleagues at the time rejected any view of Africa as “unhistorical, repeating itself from generation to generation.” This embrace of “sociology” was also motivated by a sense of the intellectual bankruptcy of a disciplinary division of labor that sorted “exotic,” colonized, and traditional societies to anthropology and advanced northern societies to sociology. Balandier moved away from his earlier rejection of ethnography during the 1960s, identifying increasingly with the label at the expense of sociology, but also becoming a fervent partisan of interdisciplinary. Balandier’s 1967 book *Anthropologie politique* (published in English in 1972) introduced his more historical optic to the anthropology of politics and the state. Since his retirement in 1985 Balandier’s publications turned toward more sweeping theoretical statements on power, civilization, and modernity.

Balandier’s famous essay from 1951 on the “colonial situation”—published in English translation by Immanuel Wallerstein in 1966—analyzed colonialism as a complex, unique, overdetermined totality that could not be reduced to the instance of a generalized historical process. “Colonial situations” differed from conditions in the metropoles and from noncolonized, nonwestern societies. The colonial and noncolonial aspects of a society were interlaced and could not be isolated from one another. And colonies and postcolonies were dynamic, historical, evolving entities—an argument undergirding Balandier’s defense of a “dynamic sociology” against what he saw as the unhistorical, static models of structuralist anthropology. Several students of Balandier’s students during the 1960s, including Emmanuel Terray, Marc Augé, and Pierre Philippe Rey, pioneered a unique form of historical ethnography that differed in key ways from the structuralist anthropology that dominated the French academy at the time. They combined archival research and a dynamic, historical sensibility with ethnographic fieldwork in African settings, along with a neo-Marxist theoretical framework indebted to Louis Althusser. More recent students of Balandier include the socio-ethnologist Didier Fassin (Institute for Advanced Study, School of Social Science) and Abolhassan Bani Sadr, Iranian President from February 1980 to June 1981. Balandier supervised 200 doctoral students.

Georges Balandier was an extraordinary scholar and a wonderful human being. He will be sorely missed.

*Georges Balandier, Dec. 21, 1920 (Ailleville-et-Lyaumont, France) - October 5, 2016 (Paris)*
Endnotes

Bibliography of works by Balandier in English


International Pressure can Resolve the Polish Constitutional Crisis

Iga Kozlowska
Northwestern University

Policy briefs address practical implications of comparative-historical studies and aim to foster exchange between comparative-historical social science and broader academic and non-academic audiences. Please note that the views expressed in this policy brief are those of the author, and do not necessarily reflect those of the American Sociological Association.

In early 2016, the Polish Law and Justice Party (PiS) paralyzed the country's constitutional court with a number of political moves, endangering the tripartite separation of powers. This was a vivid example of the attack on liberal democratic values that is taking place across Europe and the United States. PiS is just one of several right-wing, populist parties (such as the UK Independent Party, the Alternative for Germany, and Fidesz in Hungary) whose resurgence Europe has experienced in recent years. In Central Europe, Orbán's Fidesz party and Szydło's PiS have concentrated their power by limiting independent media and crippling the judiciary using their majorities in parliament and ethno-nationalist, euro-skeptical rhetoric. The Polish constitutional crisis has elicited critical reactions everywhere from Warsaw to Brussels and even from Washington DC. However, more international pressure is needed to convince the Polish government to restore the independent and efficient functioning of the Constitutional Court.

In the last few months PiS-affiliated Polish President (Andrzej Duda) and PiS-dominated parliament attempted to undermine the power of the judiciary by changing the opposition appointed Constitutional Court judges and passing amendments that undermine the court’s capacity to make decisions. First, President Duda refused to swear in five new judges appointed by the opposition Civic Platform (PO), despite his constitutional responsibility to do so. Instead, he swore in five judges chosen by PiS, although the Constitutional Court ruled that three oppositional judges were appointed appropriately and two of them should have been appointed in the next congressional term. In addition to appointing loyal judges, PiS passed amendments to the law on the Constitutional Court such that decisions would require a 2/3 majority of the Court, instead of a simple one. Further, the Court must now take cases according to date of receipt rather than their urgency, and a case must therefore wait for three or six months in the docket before it is taken up. Taken together, these reforms debilitate the Court's ability to balance the power of the executive branch and to limit its abuse.
The Constitutional Court has responded critically to PiS's legislative changes, but PiS refused to retreat, bringing the legislature and judiciary to an impasse. In March 2016, the Court ruled that PiS's amendments were unconstitutional since the Polish Constitution requires only a simple majority in the Court to make decisions. In turn, PiS claimed that the Court's ruling was unconstitutional because it was not made under the new rules that the PiS-rulled parliament passed in December 2015. For this reason, PiS has refused to publish the Court's decision, which would make it binding, thereby shirking the parliament's constitutional responsibility. In its public statements PiS claims that it is correcting the mistakes of the previous ruling party and delivering "good change", which is PiS's campaign slogan.

Numerous Polish institutions, foreign governments, and transnational bodies have warned about the threat this crisis poses to Polish rule of law and democracy. On March 11, the Council of Europe's Venice Commission concluded that PiS's constitutional reforms "endanger not only the rule of law, but also the functioning of the democratic system" (Venice Commission Opinion no. 833/2015). On April 13, the European Parliament passed a resolution that says it is "seriously concerned that the effective paralysis of the Constitutional Tribunal in Poland poses a danger to democracy, human rights and the rule of law" (EP Resolution 2015/3031(RSP)). The European Parliament reminds Poland that under the Treaty on European Union it is obligated to maintain democratic rule of law as a member state of the EU. In a letter to Prime Minister Szydło, US Senators John McCain (R-AZ), Ben Cardin (D-MD) and Richard Durbin (D-IL) expressed similar concerns that PiS's reforms can "diminish democratic norms, including the rule of law" (Associated Press 2/15/16).

Polish civil society has expressed its concern as well by taking to the streets. In November 2015 the liberal, left, and center opposition parties founded the Committee for the Defense of Democracy (KOD) to protest PiS's actions. Every Saturday, it organizes protests across Poland, rain or shine. Citizens participate in the protests to let PiS know that its electoral mandate does not allow it to hijack the institutions of democracy that Poland so dearly fought for throughout the 20th century. On May 7, the demonstrations in Warsaw gathered, according to city authorities, almost a quarter of a million people, making it the largest civic protest since 1989.

Placing the Polish case in a comparative context, we can see that right-wing populist parties, such as PiS in Poland and Fidesz in Hungary, chip away at the separation of powers to make it easier to implement their agenda and win re-election. In Poland's case, PiS's actions were purposefully designed to make it easier to implement its political program (e.g. pronatalist policies, politicization of the mass media, limiting privacy rights in policing) without the scrutiny of effective judicial review. In Hungary, Fidesz, which won a supermajority (68%) in the 2010 parliamentary elections, voted on an entirely new constitution that politicized the judiciary and media while enshrining a Fidesz-supported Christian, ethno-nationalist worldview into Hungarian law. Unsurprisingly, Hungary strongly supports PiS in the EU arena.

The resolution of the constitutional crisis depends not only on political actors in Poland but also, and crucially, the international community. The rule of law and the separation of powers would be restored if the Polish government: (1) published the Constitutional Court decision from March 19 that ruled PiS's constitutional reforms illegal and repealed the amendments which have paralyzed the Court, and; (2) swore in the three judges appointed by the previous government and retained two of their own appointees thereby implementing
Court decisions. However, PiS is unlikely to go back on its reforms due to the threat of being seen by its constituents as buckling under EU "ultimatums" or the opposition's demands. International players need to recognize that PiS needs a face-saving strategy and is more likely to choose a compromise tactic. For example, PiS could keep its five new judges (which serve nine-year terms), but repeal the amendments that make it difficult for the Court to function. To pressure PiS, international institutions and public opinion should continue to let the Polish government know it has gone too far. For example, the European Commission should make it clear to Poland that it intends to move swiftly through the Rule of Law Framework, the arbitration process already underway, and will not shy away from invoking the Article 7 procedure, a sanctioning mechanism never yet used in the EU. Influenced by such international pressure and diminished domestic support, PiS may choose to show bipartisanship and reconciliatory good will to regain favor among its constituents, who are as appalled and embarrassed by this crisis as is the opposition.

To protect Polish democracy and the rule of law and to reinforce EU stability, the Polish government must end the constitutional crisis by appointing the appropriate judges and repealing recent amendments that have paralyzed the Court. For that to happen, the international community must put more pressure on the Polish government, discreetly but firmly, to push PiS to end the impasse while saving face at home and abroad.
Books and Edited Volumes

Neoliberalismo y Movimientos Populares en Centroamérica.  
**UCA Editores, 2016**  
**Paul D. Almeida**

Luego de seis años en los que la obra de Paul Almeida, Olas de movilización popular, ha estado contribuyendo al estudio de los movimientos sociales salvadoreños, UCA Editores publica otra investigación suya: *Neoliberalismo y movimientos populares en Centroamérica*. En su versión inglesa, fue premiada en 2015 (Distinguished Scholarship Award - Pacific Sociological Association) y en 2016 (Honorable Mention por la American Sociological Association - Sociology of Development Section).

Almeida Analiza en este libro las luchas populares en el istmo, entendidas como “campañas de protesta”, las cuales se han enfilado en las últimas décadas en contra de los cambios económicos ligados a la globalización neoliberal (privatizaciones, libre comercio, incremento de precios, etc.). A diferencia de las movilizaciones colectivas de largo plazo, las campañas de protesta se enfocan en políticas particulares, su movilización suele ser efímera y, por lo general, tienden a ser menos espontáneas que los disturbios porque implican, de parte de los actores involucrados, un cálculo de medios y estrategias.

Asociaciones laborales, grupos de mujeres, indígenas, partidos de opsocisión, movimientos estudiantiles y de maestros, ONG, entre muchos otros, son los sujetos principales del libro. En ocho capítulos, el autor estudia no solo el caso de cada país centroamericano, sino también examina, de manera comparativa, las coaliciones y las alianzas multisectoriales entre aquellos actores, cuyas formas de resistencia además de ser pacíficas, en ocasiones se han tornado disruptivas con el sistema hegemónico.

Development in Crisis: Threats to Human Well-Being in the Global South and Global North  
**Routleg, 2016**  
**Edited by Rae Blumberg and Sam Cohn**

*Development in Crisis: Threats to Human Well-Being in the Global South and Global North*, is a provocative, engaging and interesting collection of real-world case studies in development and globalization focusing on under-emphasized threats to growth and human welfare worldwide. Created by two of America's top development sociologists, it targets undergraduates, graduates, academics and development professionals. Crises such as falling state capacity, declining technological innovation, increasing class inequality and persisting gender inequality are considered, along with their economic and social consequences.
The Social Thought of Max Weber
*Sage Publishing, 2016*
Stephen Kalberg

Stephen Kalberg's *The Social Thought of Max Weber*, the newest volume of the SAGE Social Thinkers series, provides a concise introduction to the work, life, and influence of Max Weber, considered to be one of three most important founders (along with Marx and Durkheim) of sociology. The book serves as an excellent introduction to the full range of Weber’s major themes, and explores in detail the extent to which they are relevant today. It is ideal for use as a self-contained volume or in conjunction with other sociological theory textbooks.

When Solidarity Works: Labor-Civic Networks and Welfare States in the Market Reform Era
*Cambridge University Press, 2016*
Cheol-Sung Lee

Why do some labor movements successfully defend the welfare state even under the pressures of neo-liberal market reform? Why do some unions (and their allied parties and civic associations) succeed in building more universal and comprehensive social policy regimes, while others fail to do so? In this innovative work, Cheol-Sung Lee explores these conundrums through a comparative historical analysis of four countries: Argentina, Brazil, South Korea and Taiwan. He introduces the notion of 'embedded cohesiveness' in order to develop an explanatory model in which labor-civic solidarity and union-political party alliance jointly account for outcomes of welfare state retrenchment as well as welfare state expansion. Lee's exploration of the critical roles of civil society and social movement processes in shaping democratic governance and public policies make this ideal for academic researchers and graduate students in comparative politics, political sociology and network analysis.

Contractual Knowledge: A Hundred Years of Legal Experimentation in Global Markets
*Cambridge University Press, 2016*
Edited by Grégoire Mallard and Jérôme Sgard

Contractual Knowledge: A Hundred Years of Legal Experimentation in Global Markets, edited by Grégoire Mallard and Jérôme Sgard, extends the scholarship of law and globalization in two important directions. First, it provides a unique genealogy of global economic governance by explaining the transition from English law to one where global exchanges are primarily governed by international, multilateral, and finally, transnational legal orders. Second, rather than focusing on macro-political organizations, like the League of Nations, or the International Monetary Fund, the book examines elements of contracts, including how and by whom they were designed and exactly who (experts, courts, arbitrators, and international organizations) interpreted, upheld, and established the legal validity of these contracts. By exploring such micro-level aspects of market exchanges, this collection unveils the contractual knowledge that led to the globalization of markets over the last century.
Secular Conversions: Political Institutions and Religious Education in the United States and Australia, 1800-2000
*Cambridge University Press, 2016*

Damon Mayrl

Why does secularization proceed differently in otherwise similar countries? *Secular Conversions* demonstrates that the institutional structure of the state is a key factor shaping the course of secularization. Drawing upon detailed historical analysis of religious education policy in the United States and Australia, Damon Mayrl details how administrative structures, legal procedures, and electoral systems have shaped political opportunities and even helped create constituencies for secular policies. In so doing, he also shows how a decentralized, readily accessible American state acts as an engine for religious conflict, encouraging religious differences to spill into law and politics at every turn. This book provides a vivid picture of how political conflicts interacted with the state over the long span of American and Australian history to shape religion's role in public life. Ultimately, it reveals that taken-for-granted political structures have powerfully shaped the fate of religion in modern societies.

Partisans and Partners: the Politics of the Post-Keynesian Society
*University of Chicago Press, 2016*

Josh Pacewicz

There’s no question that Americans are bitterly divided by politics. But in *Partisans and Partners*, Josh Pacewicz finds that our traditional understanding of red/blue, right/left, urban/rural division is too simplistic. Wheels-down in Iowa—that most important of primary states—Pacewicz looks to two cities, one traditionally Democratic, the other traditionally Republican, and finds that younger voters are rejecting older-timers’ strict political affiliations. A paradox is emerging—as the dividing lines between America’s political parties have sharpened, Americans are at the same time growing distrustful of traditional party politics in favor of becoming apolitical or embracing outside-the-beltway candidates. Pacewicz sees this change coming not from politicians and voters, but from the fundamental reorganization of the community institutions in which political parties have traditionally been rooted. Weaving together major themes in American political history—including globalization, the decline of organized labor, loss of locally owned industries, uneven economic development, and the emergence of grassroots populist movements—*Partisans and Partners* is a timely and comprehensive analysis of American politics as it happens on the ground.

Representing Mass Violence: Conflicting Responses to Human Rights Violations in Darfur
*University of California Press, 2015*

Joachim Savelsberg

How do interventions by the UN Security Council and the International Criminal Court influence representations of mass violence? What images arise instead from the humanitarianism and diplomacy fields? How are these competing perspectives communicated to the public via mass media? Zooming in on the case of Darfur, Joachim J. Savelsberg analyzes more than three thousand news reports and opinion pieces and interviews leading newspaper correspondents, NGO experts, and foreign ministry officials from
eight countries to show the dramatic differences in the framing of mass violence around the world and across social fields. *Representing Mass Violence* contributes to our understanding of how the world acknowledges and responds to violence in the Global South.

A three field- and eight-country comparison of representations of the violence in Darfur, *Representing Mass Violence* received Best Book awards from both the SSSP Theory Division and the ASC International Division. Published in 2015 by the University of California Press, the book is also available as an open access-online edition at http://www.luminoso.org/site/books/detail/3/representing-mass-violence/

**Divided Fates: The State, Race, and Korean Immigrants' Adaptation in Japan and the United States**

*Rowman & Littlefield/Lexington, 2016*

Kazuko Suzuki

This book compares the Korean diasporic groups in Japan and the United States. It highlights the contrasting adaptation of Koreans in Japan and the United States, and illuminates how the destinies of immigrants who originally belonged to the same ethnic/national collectivity diverge depending upon destinations and how they are received in a certain state and society within particular historical contexts. The author finds that the mode of incorporation (a specific combination of contextual factors), rather than ethnic ‘culture’ and ‘race,’ plays a decisive role in determining the fates of these Korean immigrant groups. In other words, what matters most for immigrants' integration is not their particular cultural background or racial similarity to the dominant group, but the way they are received by the host state and other institutions. Thus, this book is not just about Korean immigrants; it is also about how contexts of reception including different conceptualizations of ‘race’ in relation to nationhood affect the adaptation of immigrants from the same ethnic/national origin.

**Articles and Book Chapters**


Articles and Book Chapters (cont.)


News and Section Announcements

CHS Problem-Solving Research Working Groups

“Can Comparative Historical Sociology Save the World?” This was the theme of the CHS Section’s successful mini-conference held in August of this year. A major outcome of the conference was the formation of research working groups with the express purpose of finding solutions to specific social problems/issues. In creating the problem-solving research working groups the section recognized the need to integrate each group’s work with its members’ career successes. Therefore, an integral part of each group’s agenda is an earnest effort to publish peer-reviewed articles that address its problem-solving efforts. This ensures the success of both the group infrastructure and the members.

There are eleven research groups at varying levels of development – meaning that some are still recruiting members while others are already preparing articles for publication. Each group (except one) has a facilitator that is responsible for organizing at least one in-person group meeting, and for keeping the group members in contact with and following up on each other’s scholarship. Two of the eleven groups are closed and no longer accepting new members. However, if anyone would like to become a member of the remaining nine groups, please visit the following website:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1myGiNGAFSaxu4XtMfkZPCh1xUQrN7FN0m98I68cPLfl/edit

Given today’s global socio-economic and political climate, the success of this infrastructure set up by the CHS Section and the various group efforts to solve these problems are even more urgent.

In the upcoming issues of Trajectories, we will feature two to three of these research groups and will highlight their efforts and progress:

Carbon Taxes, Malcolm Fairbrother (facilitator)
Climate Change, Malcolm Fairbrother
Corporate Power, Jensen Sass
Corruption in Developing Countries, Marina Zaloznaya
Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, Needs facilitator
Migration Policy and Labor Rights in the Global South, Deisy Del Real**
Responding to Legacies of Exclusions in Higher Education, Christi M. Smith
Tax Reform, Monica Prasad**
Terrorism, Richard Lachmann
Urban Fiscal Politics, Josh Pacewicz
Using Sociology to Guide Development Experiments, Andre Nickow

**These groups are closed and are no longer accepting new members.
Congratulations to the 2016 Section Award Winners!

BARRINGTON MOORE BOOK AWARD

Winner: Prerna Singh

How Solidarity Works for Welfare: Subnationalism and Social Development in India, Cambridge University Press

Honorable Mention: Fatma Muge Göçek

Denial of Violence: Ottoman Past, Turkish Present, and Collective Violence against the Armenians 1789-2009, Oxford University Press

THEDA SKOCPOL DISSERTATION AWARD

Winner: Hillary Angelo

How Green Became Good: Urban Greening as Social Improvement in Germany's Ruhr Valley

CHARLES TILLY BEST ARTICLE AWARD

Winner: Josh Pacewicz


Honorable Mention: Damon Mayrl


REINHARD BENDIX BEST STUDENT PAPER AWARD

Winner: Mohammad Ali Kadivar

"Mass Mobilization and the Durability of New Democracies"

Honorable Mention: Adaner Usmani,

"Democracy and the Class Struggle"
2017 ASA Annual Meeting Section Sessions

INVITED SESSIONS

1. Theory, Epistemology, and Ethics in Historical Social Science

This panel examines current discussions of theory, epistemology, and ethics in historical social science.

Panelists:

Phil Gorski (Yale University): “On the ethics of social science”


Orloff, Ann (Northwestern University): title TBA

Dan Little (University of Michigan): “Historical foundations of the social sciences”

Discussant:

Isaac Reed (University of Virginia)

2. Bourdieu and historical sociology

Recognition of the importance of Pierre Bourdieu’s work for empirical and theoretical sociology continues to grow worldwide, including the United States and North America. Yet the relations between Bourdieu and historical social science, historical sociology, and historiography are less obvious. This panel brings together sociologists and historians from five countries to examine the role of Bourdieu, past and present, in historical social science and historiography.

Panelists:

Jean Louis Fabiani (École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, Paris; Central European University Budapest): “Event, structure and history.”

Lutz Raphael (University of Trier, Germany). “Microhistories and huge comparisons: Bourdieu and the practice of social history.”

Yves Gingras (Université du Québec à Montréal): “How Bourdieu’s approach helps us write the history of the formation of the scientific field from the 17th to the 20th century.”

Craig Calhoun (President, Berggruen Institute, Los Angeles): “Field Transformations as History: Between the Evenemental and the Longue Durée”.

Discussant:

Gisèle Sapiro (École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, Paris)

3. Empires, colonies, indigenous peoples

Sociologists have shown increasing interest in the historical and comparative study of empires, colonies, and indigenous peoples. This paper brings together specialists on the British and American empires and postcolonies and the imperial frontiers with indigenous societies.

Panelists:

Yael Berda (Harvard and Hebrew University): “Legacies of Suspicion: from British Colonial Emergency regulations to the ‘War on Terror’ in Israel and India.”

James V. Fenelon (California State University, San Bernardino) and Thomas D. Hall (DePauw University): “Standing Rock, Epicenter of Resistance to American Empire.”

Julian Go (Boston University): “Imperial Returns: American Empire and Militarization at home”

Luana Ross (University of Washington and Salish Kootenai College): TBA

Discussant:

Miguel Centeno (Princeton University)
4. The Historical sociology of social science: Québécois perspectives.

Sponsored by the History of Sociology section of the ASA, co-sponsored by the Comparative and Historical Sociology section.

The sociology of sociology is a necessary component of disciplinary self-reflexivity. Over the course of sociology’s history there has been a recurrent interest in such reflection on the discipline. The earliest discussions of “historical sociology” in the annual meetings of the American Sociological Society focused on the history of sociology itself. This session foregrounds historical work on sociology by sociologists and historians based in Québec and in Francophone world. This emphasis is especially appropriate given this location of this year’s meeting and the fact that 2017 is the centenary of Durkheim’s death.

**Moderator:**

Peter Kivisto (Augustana College)

**Panelists:**

John A. Hall (McGill University, Montréal): “Adam Smith: Neglected, to Our Cost”

Marcel Fournier (Université du Québec à Montréal): “The Last Days of Durkheim’s Life.”

Jean-Philippe Warren (Concordia University Montreal): “Quebec sociology and how it differentiates itself from mainstream Anglophone American sociology”

Sebastien Mosbah-Natanson (Paris Sorbonne University Abu Dhabi): “Who were the first sociologists in France? A long-term perspective on conflicting narratives about the birth of French sociology”

**Discussant:**

Chad Goldberg (University of Wisconsin)

3 New Volunteers to Co-Edit Trajectories Newsletter

*Trajectories* welcomes the following new co-editors who heroically answered the call for volunteers after the 2016 ASA Annual Meeting:

**Marilyn Grell-Brisk** (marilyn.grell@gmail.com) is a doctoral student at Université de Neuchâtel and her primary research focus is on China’s engagement with Sub-Saharan Africa and the Global South. Her research interests also include global inequalities (economic stratification), class analysis (class formation and precarity), theories of development, comparative historical sociology and economic history.

**Victoria Reyes** (vreyes@umich.edu) is an assistant professor at UC-Riverside and is currently a Postdoctoral Fellow at U Michigan's National Center for Institutional Diversity. Her research interests are in global/transnational sociology, economic sociology, urban sociology, race/ethnicity and colonial legacies. She is currently revising her book manuscript, where she examines the cultural dynamics of foreign-control through a case study of Subic Bay, Philippines.

**Yibing Shen** (yibing_shen@brown.edu) is a doctoral student at Brown University and is broadly interested in comparative historical sociology, dynamics of global capitalism, sociology of knowledge/ cultural sociology and political sociology. She is working on a dissertation project that looks at how the interplay of politics and economic knowledge intervene in the trajectories of land and finance sectors in twentieth-century China.