

## **SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS II: POLITICAL SOCIOLOGY**

**Academic year 2018/2019, Fall Semester**

**University Carlos III of Madrid**

**Mondays 12:00-15:00, Room 18.0.A.12**

**Course Instructor:** Prof. Juan J. Fernández ([jjfgonza@clio.uc3m.es](mailto:jjfgonza@clio.uc3m.es), 91 624 96 14)  
Office hours: Wednesday 16:30-18:00 (18.2.D.12)

*“Politics’ for us means to share power or arriving to influence the distribution of power, either among states or among groups within a state” (Weber 1994[1920]: 78).*

### **OVERVIEW OF THE COURSE**

Political behavior and political change have been core topics of sociological analysis since the inception of the discipline in late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Both classic and contemporary sociologists have addressed central questions regarding modern politics like the nature of the modern state, types of political regimes and public policy regimes, inequality in influence of state action, the nature of political cleavages or social outcomes of public policies. This interest of sociologists on power inequality and in state-society relations has not waned in recent decades. Political sociology represents a core subdiscipline in sociology that continues to make substantial contributions to our understanding of the link between social structures, life chances and personal troubles. Following these facts, this course thus provides a general introduction to core questions and debates in political sociology.

The course has been structured to answer two core questions. First, is there a distinctive sociological approach to the analysis of contemporary politics? If so, which is such approach? Given the existence of political science – a ‘sister discipline’ specialized in the analysis of the state and forms of government –, the course will explore the differences between mainstream political science and mainstream political sociology. The course seeks to demonstrate that sociology engages in certain aspects of political relations and from concrete theoretical perspectives largely overlooked by other social sciences. For this purpose we compare and contrast central claims of sociologists, economists and political scientists to ongoing debates regarding the relationship between social structure and politics.

Class discussions will also address a second question: what are the core theoretical and empirical debates in contemporary political sociology? The topics and readings of the 12 weeks have been chosen to provide a general road map of central controversies in the subdiscipline. Such road map should allow junior scholars make substantial contributions that other social scientist acknowledge as an advancement in our understanding of state-society relations.

## **STRUCTURE OF THE COURSE**

The course is divided in four sections. The first week provides a general introduction to political sociology. It explores dominant accounts of its distinctiveness vis-à-vis political science, the core questions in the subdiscipline and dominant theoretical approaches. Part II of the course offers theoretical building blocks for the rest of the course. Weeks 2-3 examine in detail the political theory of Max Weber and Emile Durkheim – two founding fathers of the discipline. Their understanding of power, the state, state-society relations has a profound influence on empirical, contemporary sociology and strong familiarity with their work is critical to contribute to this subdiscipline. In week 4 we will analyze the political theory in Michel Foucault, who wasn't a self-declared sociologist, but has made relevant imprint in sociological work. Parts III and IV of the course introduce students to unresolved debates in political sociology. They are separated by the level of analysis. Part III explores debates regarding micro-level political processes, mostly individual-level political behavior. Part IV, instead, explores debates regarding macro-level political processes, mostly interactions between collective actors and states.

## **CLASS DYNAMICS AND READINGS**

The classes will involve a guided discussion of key readings predetermined for each week, complemented with student presentations. The course instructor will guide discussions in two ways. He will contribute to class debate by discussing the intellectual and sociopolitical background of the readings and providing or examining core evidence of basic claims and real-world examples of major concepts. He will also guide class discussion through three or four weekly questions on the readings that will be provided in advance.

All students are expected to do the readings of the course before each session. Guiding questions will be provided to facilitate interpretation of the readings and allow identification of differences across authors and topics. The readings will be available in PDF format in Aula Global. Prof. Fernández can provide supplementary readings to students upon request.

## **ASSESSMENT**

The assessment will be made based on three elements. First, individual presentations regarding the following 12 topics will take place throughout the course. Presentations will not be grouped in a series of weeks or sessions. Instead, one presentation will be made in each week. Presentations are expected to be around 20 minutes long. The presentation will determine 30% of the final grade.

Second, students are expected to submit an essay on one of the topics of the course. Essays can have three orientations. They may involve a theoretical discussion, a research project, or an empirical analysis. Essays should be 3,000-5,000 words long. The topic for the essay must be discussed with Prof. Fernández in office hours. The essay will determine 60% of the final grade.

Third, students are expected to submit a discussion question. To facilitate conversation in debates, you are required to submit online in Aula Global at least one question about each week's readings. They can be questions that seek to clarify an argument in the reading, that ask about this week's reading connects with past week's readings, or that considers how readings enlighten events in your home country. Discussion Questions must be submitted to the Discussion Forum in Aula Global by the end of the day on Sunday. These questions will represent 10% of the final grade.

## **PART I – WEEK 1: INTRODUCTION**

This section of the course reviews the nature of the sociological enterprise and addresses recent discussions of its specificity as a subdiscipline. To situate firmly the main foci analyzed by major political sociologists and dominant theoretical approaches, this part also examines recent reviews.

### **Week 1: What Is Political Sociology? How Does It Differ from Political Science? – Principles of Analytical Sociology**

**Monday September 17**

#### *Key Readings*

- Wright Mills, Charles. 1959. *The Sociological Imagination*. New York: Oxford University Press. Chapter 1.
- Clemens, Elisabeth. 2016. *What is Political Sociology?* Cambridge: Polity Press. Introduction and chapter 1.
- Piven, Frances Fox and Richard Cloward. 2005. "Rule Making, Rule Breaking, and Power." Pp. 33-53 in *The Handbook of Political Sociology: States, Civil Society, and Globalization*, edited by Thomas Janoski, Robert Alford, Alexander Hicks, and Mildred A. Schwartz. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

#### *Optional Readings*

- Hicks, Alexander, Thomas Janoski, and Mildred A. Schwartz. 2005. "Political Sociology in the New Millennium." Pp. 1-33 in *The Handbook of Political Sociology: States, Civil Society, and Globalization*, edited by Thomas Janoski, Robert Alford, Alexander Hicks, and Mildred A. Schwartz. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hicks, Alexander and Frank J. Lechner. 2005. "Neopluralism and Neofunctionalism in Political Sociology." Pp. 54-71 in *The Handbook of Political Sociology: States, Civil Society, and Globalization*, edited by Thomas Janoski, Robert Alford, Alexander Hicks, and Mildred A. Schwartz. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Van den Berg, Axel and Thomas Janoski. 2005. "Conflict Theories and Political Sociology." Pp. 72-96 in *The Handbook of Political Sociology: States, Civil Society, and Globalization*, edited by Thomas Janoski, Robert Alford, Alexander Hicks, and Mildred A. Schwartz. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

## **PART II – WEEKS 2-4: CLASSIC APPROACHES IN POLITICAL SOCIOLOGY – SOCIAL MECHANISMS**

In Part II, we compare the understandings and approaches to the analysis of political behavior of three major social theorists: Max Weber, Emile Durkheim and Michel Foucault. Although these three authors have different motivations to study political processes, draw on different premises and reach different conclusions, they address several common themes: What is power? What is the state? What is the relationship between politically organized social groups and state action? This Part of the course, examine the main principles in the political theories of these three authors and identify commonalities and differences among them.

### **Week 2: Political Theory in Max Weber**

**Monday September 24**

Max Weber was passionate about politics during his whole life and produced many texts regarding the nature of politics in contemporary societies. His conception of power, the state, the sources of legitimacy and types of conflicts in the political area continue to influence empirical research in political sociology.

### *Key Readings*

- Weber, Max. 2013[1920]. *Economy and Society*. Stanford: Stanford University Press. Two sections: (a) Vol. 1, part I, chapter 3; (b) Vol. 2, pp. 926-956.
- Weber, Max. 1994[1919]. "The Profession and Vocation of Politics." Pp. 309-369 in *Weber: Political Writings*, edited by Peter Lassman and Ronald Speirs. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

### *Optional Readings*

- Giddens, Antony. 2013. *Capitalism & Modern Social Theory: An Analysis of the Writings of Marx, Durkheim and Max Weber*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Swedberg, Richard and Ola Agevall. 2016. *The Max Weber Dictionary: Key Words and Central Concepts*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

## **Week 3: Political Theory Emile Durkheim**

**Monday October 1**

Although Durkheim is mostly known for his theories of religion and of social integration, he also wrote extensively regarding political relations. Durkheim has a distinct theory of the state, state-society relations and of the sources of power in modern societies.

### *Key Readings*

- Durkheim, Emile. 1964[1893]. *The Division of Labour in Society*. New York: Free Press.  
Three sections: (a) Book I, Chapters II, III; (b) Book II, Chapters II.
- Durkheim, Emile. 1992[1957]. *Professional Ethics and Civil Morals*. London: Routledge.  
Chapters IV-VI.

### *Optional Readings*

- Giddens, Anthony. 1986. *Durkheim on Politics and the State*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Thompson, Kenneth. "Durkheim and Durkheimian Political Sociology." Pp. 27-36 in *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Political Sociology*, edited by Edwin Amenta, Kate Nash, and Alan Scott. Wiley-Blackwell.

## **Week 4: Political Theory in Michel Foucault**

**Monday October 8**

Michel Foucault is a central theorist in postmodern approaches to the study of government, the state and politics. His discussions regarding the evolution of the concept of 'government' and its relationship with power and knowledge break new ground in political theory and motivate innovative explorations regarding state action.

### *Key Readings*

- Foucault, Michel. 2009. *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the College De France, 1977-1978*. Basingstoke: Plagrave. Chapters 2-5 and 13.

### *Optional Readings*

- Foucault, Michel. 2000. *Power*. New Press.

## **PART III – WEEKS 5-8: SUBSTANTIVE DEBATES IN MICRO-LEVEL POLITICAL SOCIOLOGY**

In this Part of the course we engage four ongoing debates in individual- or micro-level political sociology. First, we examine recent work on class alignment and dealignment in voting preferences. Second, we review the growing number of models of stratification

produced in sociology, political science and economics to explain political preferences. Third, we engage the emerging debate on the gender gap in left voting in post-industrial societies. Fourth, we assess research on age difference in political preferences.

**Week 5: A Class Dealignment in Political Preferences? Monday October 15**

Since the notion of social class is a quintessential conceptual contribution of sociology to the analysis of social and political action, the debate on the political dealignment or realignment of classes has also been at the heart of political sociological debates in recent decades. We approach this debate from a multidisciplinary and comparative perspective.

*Key Readings*

- Lipset, Seymour and Stein Rokkan. 1967. "Cleavage Structures, Party Systems, and Voter Alignments: An Introduction." Pp. 1-64 in *Party Systems and Voter Alignments: Cross-National Perspectives*. Free Press.
- Jansen, Giedo, Geoffrey Evans, and Nan Dirk De Graaf. 2013. "Class Voting and Left-Right Party Positions: A Comparative Study of Fifteen Western Democracies, 1960-2015." Pp. 46-86 in *Political Choice Matters: Explaining the Strength of Class and Religious Cleavages in Cross-National Perspective*, edited by Geoffrey Evans and Nan Dirk De Graaf. Oxford University Press.
- Waal, Jeroen van der, Peter Achterberg, and Dick Houtman. 2007. "Class Is Not Dead - It Has Been Buried Alive: Class Voting and Cultural Voting in Postwar Western Societies (1956-1990)." *Politics and Society* 35:403-426.

**Week 6: Models of Inequality: Macro-classes, Micro-classes, Economic Insecurity, Skills Specificity, Income and Political Preferences Monday October 22**

In part because of the growing consensus on the decline in class voting and in part due to disciplinary insularity, several new models of stratification have been theorized in the last decades to explain variations in political preferences. We will compare and contrast these models of stratification formulated in sociology, political economy and political science.

*Key Readings*

- Chan, Tak Wing and John H. Goldthorpe. 2007. "Class and Status: The Conceptual Distinction and its Empirical Relevance." *American Sociological Review*, 72, 4, 512-532.
- Weeden, Kim A., and David B. Grusky. 2012 "The Three Worlds of Inequality." *American Journal of Sociology* 117, 6, 1,723-1,785.
- Rehm, Phillip. 2009. "Risks and Redistribution: An Individual-Level Analysis." *Comparative Political Studies*, 42, 7, 855-881.

**Week 7: New and Old Gender Gaps in Political Behavior Monday October 29**

A vexing issue regarding gender and politics concerns changes in the gender gap in voting preferences. Recent work suggests a rapid change in the direction of this gap. This week we analyze the empirical debate concerning the extent and causes of this shift.

*Key Readings*

- Manza, Jeff, and Clem Brooks. 1998. *Social Cleavages and Political Change*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, chapter 5.
- Giger, Nathalie. 2009. "Towards a Modern Gender Gap in Europe? A Comparative Analysis of Voting Behavior in 12 countries." *The Social Science Journal* 46, 474-492.

Emmenegger, Patrick and Phillip Manow. 2016. "Religion and the Gender Vote Gap: Women's Changed Political Preferences from the 1970s to 2010." *Politics & Society*, 42 166-193.

**Week 8: Residential Situation and Political Capacity** **Monday November 5**

Globally acclaimed research by M. Desmond examines the link between the residential situation of the American urban poor and their political capacity. This week we explore this multi-methods literature and its implication for European countries.

*Key Readings*

Desmond, Matthew and Adam Travis. 2018. "Political Consequences of Survival Strategies among the Urban Poor." *American Sociological Review*.

Desmond, Matthew. 2016. *Evicted*. Penguin: London. Chapters 14 & 20.

**PART IV – WEEKS 9-12: SUBSTANTIVE DEBATES IN MACRO-LEVEL POLITICAL SOCIOLOGY**

In this Part of the course we engage four ongoing debates in macro-level political sociology. First, we examine the causes of national civil society configurations. Second, we address the debate on the sources of collective, political mobilization through social movements. Third, we take part with the discussion regarding the causes of contemporary social policy reform in Western democracies, which are most commonly restrictive in generosity levels. We finish the course by considering the literature on global convergence in political institutions.

**Week 9: What Are the Causes of Cross-national Variation in Civil Society Configuration?** **Monday November 12**

The ensemble of voluntary organizations situated between the state and the market has been a constant object of analysis for political sociologists. This week we consider recent contributions to explaining the origins of civil society configurations in affluent democracies. We will address both discussions on dimensions of civil societies and dominant explanatory models.

*Key Readings*

Schover, Evan and Wesley Longhofer. 2011. "The Structural Sources of Association." *American Journal of Sociology*, 117, 2, 539–585.

Fourcade, Marion and Evan Schofer. 2016. "Political Structures and Political Mores: Varieties of Politics in Comparative Perspective", *Sociological Science*, June 16

Riley, Dylan and Juan J. Fernández. 2014. "Beyond Strong and Weak: Re-Thinking Post-Authoritarian Civil Societies", *American Journal of Sociology*, 120, 2, 432-503.

Foa, Stefan Roberto and Grzegorz Ekiert. 2016. "The Weakness of Postcommunist Civil Society Reassessed." *European Journal of Political Research*, 56, 2, 419-439.

**Week 10: Collective Outcomes of Social Movement Activism** **Monday November 19**

Whereas the literature on civil society normally focuses on formal organizations, a long body of work also considers informal political participation through social movements. This week we consider dominant models to account for the causes and consequences of cross-national differences in social movement activism.

### *Key Readings*

- Tilly, Charles and Sidney Tarrow. 2015. *Contentious Politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Chapters 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, and 10.
- Meyer, David S. 2016. "Protest and Political Process." Pp. 397-408 in *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Political Sociology*, edited by Edwin Amenta, Kate Nash, and Alan Scott. West Sussex: Wiley Blackwell.
- Jenkins, J. Craig and William Form. 2005. "Social Movements and Social Change." Pp. 331-349 in *The Handbook of Political Sociology*, edited by Thomas Janoski, Robert Alford, Alexander Hicks, and Mildred A. Schwartz. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

## **Week 11: Welfare State Retrenchment: Its Causes – Monday November 26 Principles of the New Institutionalism**

Due to the gradual growth of decommodifying, public social programs, modern states in advanced democracies are now welfare states. Current structural, political and economic conditions, however, exert pressures to reduce decommodification levels. This week we assess the impact of these pressures.

### *Key Readings*

- Pierson, Paul. 2001. "Post-industrial Pressures on the Mature Welfare States." Pp.80-107 in *The New Politics of the Welfare State*, edited by Paul Pierson, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Korpi, Walter and Joakim Palme. 2003. "New Politics and Class Politics in the Context of Austerity and Globalization: State Regress in 18 Countries, 1975-1995." *American Political Science Review*, 97, 3, 425-446.
- Brady, David and Hang Young Lee. 2014. "The Rise and Fall of Government Spending in Affluent Democracies, 1971–2008." *Journal of European Social Policy*, 24, 1, 56–79

## **Week 12: Globalization and Political Institutions: Towards Monday December 3 Worldwide Policy Convergence? Dimensions of Globalization**

The possibility global convergence in domestic, political institutions is one of the main controversies in the literature on globalization. Sociologists, political scientists and economists formulate different theories and predictions in this regard. This week we review them.

### *Key Readings*

- Drezner, Daniel. 2001. "Globalization and Policy Convergence." *International Studies Review*, 3, 53-78.
- Meyer, John W., John Boli, George M. Thomas, and Francisco O. Ramirez. 1997. "World Society and the Nation-State." *American Journal of Sociology* 103:144-181.
- Berry, Heather, Mauro F. Guillén, and Arun S. Hendi. 2014. "Is There Convergence across Countries? A Spatial Approach." *Journal of international business studies* 45,4, 387-404.