

SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS II: POLITICAL SOCIOLOGY

Academic year 2022/2023, Fall Semester

University Carlos III of Madrid

Mondays 15:00-18:00, Room 18.1.A.01

Course Instructor: Prof. Juan J. Fernández (jjfgonza@clio.uc3m.es, 91 624 96 14)
Office hours: Friday 9:00-12:00 (18.2.A.24) and [online](#)

“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 19th 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. We will also analyze the increasing overlap in approaches, topics of interests and methodology between political science and political sociology.

Class discussions will also address a second question: Which 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. Part I and 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, Michel Foucault and Steve Lukes – three towering figures in the subdiscipline. Their understandings of power, the state, state-society relations still have a profound influence on contemporary political sociology and strong familiarity with their work is critical to contribute to this subdiscipline. In week 4 we will analyze the principles of field theory through the work of Niel Fligstein and Doug McAdam. 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 guide class discussions through three or four weekly questions on the readings that will be provided in advance. These guiding questions are aimed to facilitate interpretation of the readings and allow identification of differences across authors and topics. He will also contribute to class debates through discussions of the intellectual and sociopolitical background of the readings and providing core evidence of basic claims and real-world examples of major concepts. All students are expected to do the readings of the course before each session. 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 topics will take place throughout the course. Each student is expected to make one presentation. They 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 several orientations: they may involve a theoretical discussion, a research project, or an empirical analysis, or a combination of these three. Essays should be 4,000-6,000 words long. The topic for the essay must be discussed with Prof. Fernández in office hours. The essay will determine 40% of the final grade. Research papers must represent original pieces of academic research.

Third, students are expected to submit a weekly 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. You should do this for 10 of the 12 weeks we will meet. 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.

Fourth, given that this is a graduate and professionally-oriented course, class participation is strongly encouraged. All students are expected to contribute to the debate with their interpretation and critiques of the readings. Class participation will represent 20% of the final grade.

Late Assignments. If you cannot meet a deadline due to medical or family emergency or religious observance, please contact the instructor as soon as possible so that we may work out an alternative schedule of due dates and times. If you have a temporary health condition or permanent disability that requires accommodations (conditions include but not limited to: mental health, attention-related, learning, vision, hearing, physical or health impacts), please share what accommodations would be helpful to you so that we can plan together for how you can be successful. Making a good plan will not require you to share your private health information with me. If you are in quarantine or isolation due to Covid-19, please inform me of the situation using the university form. If you are under other travel restrictions, please contact me.

All the Rules of the Masters in Social Sciences distributed by the Director of the IC3JM apply to this course. This applies to attendance and punctuality. Having more than two non-justifiable absences will imply failing the course. Absences are only justifiable under conditions of a doctor's appointment or a serious family emergency. A delay of longer than 15 minutes counts as missing a session.

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 12

Key Readings

- Clemens, Elisabeth. 2016. *What is Political Sociology?* Cambridge: Polity Press. Introduction and chapter 1.
- Robert M. Fishman and Suzanne M. Coshov. 2017 "Political Sociology: A Broad and 'Poly-centric' Field." Pp. 314-325 *The Cambridge Handbook of Sociology*, Kathleen Korgen, Ed., Cambridge University Press.
- 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.

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 social theorists: Max Weber, Steve Lukes and Neil Fligstein. 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 examines 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 19

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 and theoretical research in political sociology.

Key Readings

Weber, Max. 2013[1920]. *Economy and Society*. Stanford: Stanford University Press. Two sections: (a) Vol. 1, part I, pp. 210-254, 262-283.

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: Power according to M. Foucault and S. Lukes

Monday September 26

The notion of power undergirds every conceptualization of political struggles and their consequences. A systematic examination of the relationship between power, politics and society, thus requires a careful consideration of the different dimensions and understandings of power. Steven Lukes and Michel Foucault have made critical contributions to our conceptualizations of power.

Key Readings

Lukes, Steven. 2005. *Power: A Radical View*. Palgrave. Second Edition, chapter 1 & 2.

Foucault, Michel. 1980. "Two Lectures." in *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*, Pantheon Books, pp. 92-102.

Optional Readings

Heath, Jonathan. 2018. "Power", in *SAGE Handbook of Political Sociology*, edited by William Outhwaite and Stephen Turner, Sage, vol. 2.

Week 4: Introduction to Field Theory

Monday October 3

With the theoretical tool of social fields, sociology offers a promising model to understand position-takings, inequalities and influences between actors in complex political orders. This week we get familiarized with the building blocks of field theory.

Key Readings

Fligstein, Neil and Doug McAdam. 2012. *A Theory of Fields*. Oxford University Press, pp. 8-23, ch. 2, 67-74, chapter 4.

Optional Readings

Bourdieu, Pierre. 2005. *The Social Structures of the Economy*. Oxford University Press, ch. 1.
Martin, John Levi. 2003. "What is Field Theory?" *American Journal of Sociology*, 109, 1-49.

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

In this Part of the course we will engage four ongoing debates in individual- or micro-level political sociology. First, we will examine recent work on class alignment. Second, we will engage the emerging debate on the gender gap in left voting in post-industrial societies. Third, in response to the increasing ethnic diversity and immigration in advanced democracies, we will examine studies on the political mobilization of immigrants and ethnic minorities. Fourth, we will assess recent research on the role of the individual residential situation and its influence on political participation.

Week 5: Class Voting and Class-based Political Preferences

Monday October 10

Since the notion of social class is a quintessential conceptual contribution of sociology to the analysis of social and political action, the relationship between social class location and political preferences and choices 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

Langsaether, Petter Egge and Geoffrey Evans. 2020. "More than Self-interest: Why Different Classess Have Different Attitudes towards Income Inequality", *British Journal of Sociology*, 71, 4, 594-607.

Oesch, Daniel and L. Rennwald. 2018. "Electoral Competition in Europe's New Tripolar Political Space: Class Voting for the Left, Center-right and Radical Right", *European Journal of Political Research*, 57, 783-807.

Optional Readings

Lipset, Seymour and Stein Rokkan. 1967. "Cleavage Structures, Party Systems, and Voter Alignments: An Introduction." Pp. 1-26 in *Party Systems and Voter Alignments: Cross-National Perspectives*. Free Press.

Langsaether, Petter Egge, Geoffrey Evans and Tom O'Grady. 2022. "Explaining the Relationship between Class Position and Political Preferences: A Long-term Panel Analysis of Intra-generational Class Mobility", *British Journal of Political Science*, 52, 2, 958-967.

Bengtsoon, Mattias, Tomas Berglund and Maria Oskarson. 2013. "Class and Ideological Orientations Revisited: An Exploration of Class-based Mechanisms", *British Journal of Sociology*, 64.

Week 6: New and Old Gender Gaps in Political Behavior **Monday October 17**

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

Key Readings

- 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.
- Dassonneville, Ruth. 2020. "The Cultural Sources of the Gender Gap in Voter Turnout", *British Journal of Political Science*, 1-22.

Optional Readings

- Dassonneville, Ruth. 2020. "Change and Continuity in the Ideological Gender Gap a Longitudinal Analysis of Left-right Self-placement in OECD Countries", *European Journal of Political Research*, 60, 1, 225-238.
- 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.

Week 7: Ethnicity, Migration and Political Mobilization **Monday October 24**

Many studies examine the consequences of increasing ethnic diversity for the political attitudes of native citizens. Yet the political mobilization of immigrant ethnic minorities has been analyzed. This week we consider three informative studies of the political engagement of immigrants from ethnic minorities.

Key Readings

- Mora, Cristina. 2014. "Cross-field Effects and Ethnic Classification: The Institutionalization of Hispanic Panethnicity, 1965 to 1990." *American Sociological Review*, 79, 183-210.
- Lu, Yao. 2019. "Empowerment or Disintegration? Migration, Social Institutions, and Collective Action in Rural China", *American Journal of Sociology*, 125, 683-729.

Optional Readings

October 31 – Holiday

Week 8: Political Polarization **Monday November 7**

A lively debate has emerged in the social sciences over the possibility of increasing ideological and partisan polarization in affluent democracies. This potential change could have major consequences for the evolution and stability of democratic institutions and social cohesion. This week we tackle the issue through recent quantitative work in sociology.

Key Readings

- Balsassarri, Deli and Andrew Gelman. 2008. "Partisans without Constraint: Political Polarization and Trends in American Public Opinion", *American Journal of Sociology*, 114, 2, 408-490.
- Park, Barum. 2018. "How Are We Apart? Continuity and Change in the Structure of Ideological Disagreement in the American Public, 1980–2012", *Social Forces*, 96(4), 1757-1784.

Optional readings

Balsassarri, Deli and Peter Bearman. 2007. "Dynamics of Political Polarization", *American Sociological Review*, 72, 784-811.

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 address the causes of the global diffusion of nation-states and wars. Second, we examine the causes of national civil society configurations. 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 a comparative study concerning the role of cultural understandings of democracy on political outcomes.

Week 9: The Global Diffusion of Nation-States and War **Monday November 14**

In a world where the nation-state constitutes the most salient and predominant form of political community, the diffusion of this form of governance is a central political event in global modern history. This week we analyze the configurational approach of Andreas Wimmer to the spread of nation-states. We also examine how the rise of the nation-states influence inter-state military conflicts and civil wars.

Key Readings

Wimmer, Andreas. 2013. *Waves of War: Nationalism, State Formation and Ethnic Exclusion in the Modern World*. Oxford University Press. Chapters 1, 3 and 4.

Optional Readings

Li, Xue and Alexander Hicks. 2016. "World Polity Matters: Another Look at the Rise of the Nation-State across the World, 1816 to 2001", *American Sociological Review*, 81, 596–607.

Week 10: Democratization **Monday November 21**

Together with the global diffusion of the nation-state, modern politics have a distinctive feature in the emergence of democratic orders. This week we consider two recent articles addressing the causes of these radical transformation of domestic polities.

Key Readings

Kadivar, Mohammad Ali. 2018. "Mass Mobilization and the Durability of New Democracies", *American Sociological Review*, 83, 390-417.

Usmani, Adaner. 2018. "Democracy and the Class Struggle", *American Journal of Sociology*, 124, 3, 664-704.

Optional Readings

Fishman, Robert. 2018. "What Made the Third Wave Possible? Historical Contingency and Meta-Politics in the Genesis of Worldwide Democratization", *Comparative Politics*, 50, 4, 607-626.

Fishman, Robert. 2016. "Rethinking Dimensions of Democracy for Empirical Analysis: Authenticity, Quality, Depth, and Consolidation", *Annual Review of Political Science*, 19, 289-309.

Week 11: Civil Society Configuration**Monday November 28**

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

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

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

Optional readings

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.

Week 12: Welfare State Reform**Monday December 12**

Due to the gradual growth of decommodification, 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 and to engage in recalibrations of major programs. This week we examine the causes and consequences of retrenchments and recalibrations.

Key Readings

Korpi, Walter, and Joakim Palme. 1998. "The Paradox of Redistribution and Strategies of Equality: Welfare State Institutions, Inequality, and Poverty in the Western Countries." *American Sociological Review*, 63, 5, 661–87.

Brady, David and Amie Bostic. 2015. "Paradoxes of Social Policy: Welfare Transfers, Relative Poverty, and Redistribution Preferences", *American Sociological Review*, 80, 268-298.