

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

**Academic year 2020/2021, Fall Semester**

**University Carlos III of Madrid**

**Mondays 15:00-18:00, Room 18.0.A.04**

**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) 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 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. 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: 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 Steve Lukes – two founding highly influential figures in 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 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 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. These guiding questions should facilitate interpretation of the readings and allow identification of differences across authors and topics. 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 3,000-5,000 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.

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. 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 10% of the final grade.

Fifth, regular quizzes on the readings. This part of the grade will represent 10% of the final grade.

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. More than two non-justifiable absences will imply failing the course. Moreover, a delay of longer than 10 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 21**

#### *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 28**

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: Political Theory of Steve Lukes**

**Monday October 5**

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 provides an excellent opening to the ongoing debate on conceptualizations of power.

### *Key Readings*

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

### *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 19**

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 will 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 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 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 examine studies on the political mobilization of immigrants and ethnic minorities. Fourth, we 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 26**

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. 1-26 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 15 Western democracies, 1960–2005." *Social Science Research*, 42, 376-400.

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

##### *Optional Readings*

Kitschelt, Herbert and Philipp Rehm. 2014. "Occupations and Site of Political Preference Formation", *Comparative Political Studies*, 47, 1670-1706.

#### **Week 6: New and Old Gender Gaps in Political Behavior** **Monday November 9**

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*

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 7: Ethnicity, Migration and Political Mobilization** **Monday November 16**

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.

**Week 8: The Emerging Educational Cleavage and the Rise of Right-Wing Populism**

**Monday November 23**

The electoral success of right-wing populism has radically transformed domestic party systems in affluent democracies. This important change occurs simultaneously to the increasing importance of cultural and identitarian topics in domestic electoral arenas. We tackle both topics through recent qualitative and quantitative work.

*Key Readings*

- Hochschild, Arlie. 2016. *Strangers in Their Own Land*. The New Press. Chapters 1-3, 9-13.
- Stubager, Rune. 2013. "The Changing Basis of Party Competition: Education, Authoritarian-Libertarian Values and Voting", *Government and Opposition*, 48, 372-397.

*Optional readings*

- Iverson, Elisabeth and Rune Stubager. 2013. "Voting for the Populist Right in Western Europe: The Role of Education", in *Class Politics and the Radical Right*, edited by Jens Rydgren, Routledge, pp. 122-137.

**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 30**

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: The Causes of Social Revolutions**

**Monday December 14**

Together with the global diffusion of the nation-state, modern politics have a distinctive feature in the emergence of social revolutions. This week we consider the causes of these radical transformation of domestic structural inequalities. For this purpose, we will analyze the classic book of Theda Skocpol.

*Key Readings*

Skocpol, Theda. 2015[1979]. *States and Social Revolutions*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

*Optional Readings*

Goodwin, Jeff. 2003. *No Other Way Out: States and Revolutionary Movements, 1945-1991*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Sewell, WH. 1993. "Historical Events as Transformations of Structures: Inventing Revolution at the Bastille", *Theory and Society*, 25, 841-881.

**Week 11: Civil Society Configuration**

**Monday December 21**

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*

Schofer, 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

**Week 11: Welfare State Reform: Its Causes –  
Principles of the New Institutionalism**

**Monday January 11**

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*

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

Zohlnhöfer, Reimut, Fabian Engler and Kathrin Dümig. 2017. "Review Article: The Retreat of the Interventionist State in Advanced Societies", *British Journal of Political Science*, 28, 535-562.