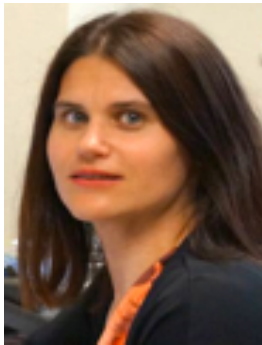


# ACCOUNTS

*Greetings from the Chair, Nina Bandelj*



Economic Sociology Series published by Polity Press.

The issue includes a conversation with Akos Rona-Tas and Alya Guseva about their new book, and spotlights of new books by John Campbell and Ove Pedersen; Saskia Sassen; and Thomas Janoski and Darina Lepadatu. We are delighted to continue with the Meet our Council feature, this time introducing Jennifer Bair, Lindsey Ibanez and Adam Goldstein.

Dear economic sociologists,

Here comes the Spring 2014 issue of Accounts! The editorial team compiled various resources for section members. We feature the Economic Sociology and Political Economy community (on Facebook and Twitter), run by Israeli sociologist Oleg Komlik, which now has around 16,000 members from 75 countries. We also include a conversation with José Ossandón who runs a blog Estudios de la Economía in Spanish, Portuguese, and English.

Other resources for younger scholars that we showcase include the New Fiscal Sociology Workshop organized by Isaac Martin, Ajay Mehrotra and Monica Prasad, and the Emerging Market Societies book series by Edward Elgar Publishing, edited by Salvatore Babones, who is inviting first-time authors to propose books to him. For junior and more seasoned economic sociologist alike, editor Jonathan Skerrett tells us about the

The program for the ASA in San Francisco is being finalized and will be available on the ASA Meeting website on April 30. We plan to present the various sessions of interest in our summer Accounts issue. Suffice to say at this point that there will be plenty of opportunities to discuss economic sociology in August in San Francisco! Marc Schneiberg, the regular economic sociology session organizer, has wisely convinced the ASA to allocate six (!) not just one session to this topic, and in addition to five section sessions, there will also be 17(!) roundtables organized by Simone Polillo and Hexuan Zhang. These will include a few tables dedicated to Ph.D. students presenting their dissertation proposals with faculty discussants, a new section mentoring initiative coordinated by Lindsey Ibanez.

I also ask you to please reserve time in your busy ASA schedules for the Economic Sociology Section Reception, on Monday, August 18,

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from 6:30pm to 8:30pm, at 50 Mason Social House. We are grateful to Adam Goldstein who helped us find a great venue, which will be all about economic sociology for that evening, and host just us, and any friends you want to bring along.

Have an enjoyable Spring! As always, we are open to receiving suggestions for short pieces to be published in the summer issue. You can email me at nbandelj@uci.edu.

All best wishes,

Nina Bandelj

## Akos Rona-Tas and Alya Guseva discuss their new book, *Plastic Money*

*Questions by Anne Schwichtenberg*



*Your book Plastic Money: Constructing Markets for Credit Cards in Eight Postcommunist Countries (Stanford University Press, 2014) centers on postcommunist societies but it really discusses issues that are central among our contemporary economic concerns, credit and debt. Can you discuss how your findings are similar to, and where they diverge from the Western development of the credit market? What makes the postcommunist case intriguing?*



Our analysis draws general lessons about market emergence, and, in particular, about the emergence of markets for cards. Some of our findings shed new light on Western developments.

We frame the credit card as a product that combines two features: it is both a means of payment and an instrument to access personal loans. Developing markets for credit cards are faced with several puzzles, some of them connected to the payment side of the cards, such as the need to standardize the technology, or the trick of simultaneously attracting merchants and cardholders, and some to the card as a means of borrowing, such as information asymmetry and information sharing among competing lenders. All new card markets, no matter where they are located, are faced with similar set of puzzles. Markets, however, differ in how those puzzles get solved, and markets based on rational competition can never solve these

puzzles themselves. The self-creating market is a myth.

For example, information sharing in post-communist countries had to be achieved either by forceful state intervention or by pressures to integrate into a larger foreign organization headquartered in different markets. Banks did not want to give up information to help competitors, and as banking was concentrated, large banks that had the most information had also the least to gain from sharing. Information sharing among US banks emerged seemingly more spontaneously and is often thought of as an example of how markets create the institutions necessary for their own operation. Looking at the US story through the lens of the post-communist experience, however, we suddenly see, that the reason why US banks were ready to cooperate and create private credit bureaus was a set of legal obstacles that since the 1920s, prevented banks from competing across state lines and from growing too big. Small banks that did not compete had much less to lose (and more to gain) by letting other banks know who had been their good and bad borrowers. In other words, what looked like spontaneous cooperation in the US turns out to be the result of government intervention of a very particular kind. In fact, US banks fought hard these regulations and managed to dismantle them only by the end of the 1990s. By that time, however, nationwide credit



reporting had been already firmly in place, and was an essential element of lending.

What makes the postcommunist case particularly intriguing is that it has been developing alongside the emergence of the market economy itself, on the ruins (or, as some say, with the ruins) of communism. The difficulties of the post-communist transition severely complicated the emergence of the card market that had to weather a contracting economy, inflation, unemployment, instability of the banking system, etc. But it also provided the emerging market with unique tools that did not exist in the West in that form. For instance, employees of the still sizable state sector became the first mass target customer group as their salaries, previously paid in cash, were moved to direct-deposit schemes per agreements between banks and employers, endowing workers with both bank accounts and newly-minted cards. This type of workplace coercion would be incomprehensible today in the US. But if we consider that the first real credit card, Diners Club, launched in 1950, was a charge card, and took off because American companies decided that the expenses of their travelling salesmen could be better controlled with a card than with cash, certain similarities become apparent.

*The book covers a lot of territory, and is based on field research in many countries. Would you be able to*

*share some field work stories that have been especially memorable?*

Our field research involved interviewing a variety of experts in all of the eight countries such as bankers, card and security specialists, government officials and industry analysts. Getting access to these people was particularly difficult in the case of Russia and Ukraine, where banking has been shrouded in secrecy. In a couple of cases, we were not allowed to go inside the bank because our interviewees while agreeing to be interviewed did not want it to be known officially, preferring to be interviewed in a public place instead. In one of the earlier interviews in Russia, in the late 1990s, Alya was told that none of the “how much” or “how many” questions would be answered because the top management prohibited anyone who was not authorized to do so to release any numbers related to the bank activity (this even included the number of cards the bank had issued). These moves were intended to protect the bank from its direct competitors. The aura of vigilance was amplified among the employees of banks’ “security departments,” regular units of the bank, which we only encountered in Ukraine and Russia. They were responsible for a wide variety of activities ranging from verifying loan applications and fighting fraud to investigating non-payments, and providing general physical and informational security of the bank. Security departments were staffed with the former

officers of the security forces – the army, police and the KGB (so-called siloviki). It was amusing and very surprising for us to meet people, some of whom sounded like they continued living in the mental world of the Cold War – constantly vigilant, distrustful and on guard, fighting imaginary enemies. It is no longer amusing or surprising, that several years later, in Russia, siloviki no longer only dominate employment rosters of banks’ security departments, but they, collectively, are tightening their grip over Russia’s economy and society. And the Cold War mentality is no longer a fanciful metaphor. We wish we could say we saw it coming.

In Vietnam, we encountered an unexpected bonus. Because many Vietnamese experts were trained at Central and East European universities during last decade and a half of communism, we found out that many Vietnamese bankers and officials spoke good Hungarian. The head of the first private bank in Vietnam translated Janos Kornai’s classic book *Economics of Shortage* from Hungarian to Vietnamese. Our colleague Tuan Pham, who was our invaluable guide in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, and who is a university professor, a successful entrepreneur running a software teaching franchise and a school for fashion modelling, and who is a graduate from NYU’s Stern Business School, also had a degree from Hungary and speaks Hungarian with native fluency. Once when

Akos was chatting with Tuan in Hungarian in a sauna run by the son of a high communist party cadre on the outskirts of Hanoi, in the intimacy of the hot steam a local man suddenly surprised them with a Hungarian profanity uttered in jest and then he proceeded to sing for us a Hungarian folk song.

*The cover you chose for your book seems to capture the story you are trying to tell in the book. Will you tell us how the choice for the cover image came about?*

Stanford University Press was kind enough to ask us for input early on. And subsequently, it gave us a choice of two covers: this one, which was the idea we developed in one of our regular Skype conversations, and another one that SUP developed on its own. (Our editor also asked us that we do not ask our friends and colleagues to vote on the two covers, but we immediately violated this request by asking anyone and everyone. The unofficial vote was split, so in the end we went with our gut feeling).

From the very beginning we wanted an image that would capture the central idea of the book: the arrival of an object, a credit card -- born and perfected in the West and serving as a protagonist of globalization, onto the postcommunist scene that still bore the traces of its communist past. Since the book covers eight different countries, we were looking for an image that could represent all of them equally well. We both grew up under socialism, and we relied

on our memories to find an image that would work. The sculpture "The Worker and the Peasant" is a piece of monumental art, initially created by the Soviet sculptor Vera Mukhina for the World Expo in Paris in 1937. It is a recognizable symbol of socialism (for instance, it has been used as a logo for Mosfilm – Moscow film studio, from the late 1940s). But it is also an image of two typical "socialist subjects," a man and a woman, and we wanted the cover to reflect the centrality of subjects – consumers – to the process of market-building. In the original version, the worker and the peasant are holding a hammer and a sickle, in ours – they are on a shopping spree, hammer and sickle tossed aside in favor of credit cards, shopping bags and a cart in hand.

*One of the benefits of the postcommunist credit market was that it could draw on lessons learned from other developed credit markets. Did you find this to be the case? In a time when many financial institutions in the West are undergoing tremendous change, what lessons can we learn from the post-communist case?*

One very general lesson is that markets are hard to construct and once built they are fragile. The fragility of the financial markets is painfully obvious to everyone since September 2008. The magic trick of markets is that they look natural after they are up and running and before they meet their demise. Markets exist in historical time, but when they are in full swing, they

make people believe that they are nothing more than realizations of timeless, universal principles. Economists describe markets in this normal state, as a formal system. But this system depends on mechanisms that must be in place first, and that become fully visible only once the market is in trouble. Following markets from their inception point, as the mechanisms are being set up and put into practice is another point at which these mechanisms are seen with a naked eye.

Just as Ferdinand de Saussure a century ago distinguished between historical and structural linguistics, we develop a distinction between generative and functional rules of the market. Economics is mostly interested in formalizing the latter, while economic sociologists along with economic historians and political economists are more interested in describing and explaining the former. While generative and functional rules of the market cannot be completely separated, not even as much as for human languages that change on a much slower time scale, we believe it is a powerful distinction that carves out a very important field of inquiry for economic sociology.

Another, less abstract lesson is about globalization. In the book, we develop the idea of a performative ideal type, a blue print that is both a picture of how something works and has a force to create this picture. Post-communist banks studied



card markets in the West and were also under pressure to conform to the rules set up by multinational companies and international financial organizations like the International Finance Corporation and Bank for International Settlements. Yet they also had to negotiate their local environment. When we started our research in 2003, the global forces of isomorphism seemed to dominate, but by the end of our research, especially since the financial crisis, we see a substantial shift. China has been in the lead as it decided in the early 2000s to develop its own card, UnionPay, and barring Visa and MasterCard from its domestic market. China copied some elements of Western credit card markets, UnionPay cards look similar and work like Western cards, but it reframed the purpose of the card in a completely different way. In the West, the card provides convenience for customers, a service, and it is a commodity. In China, cards are thought of as a key part of the domestic payment system, and the data card ownership and use generate can give the government control over the retail sector and the consumers. For instance, card use can impose financial transparency and force transactions out of the shadow economy. China's new credit bureau is not only an instrument to optimize lending decisions, but also a powerful tool of fighting crime and corruption. Russia, Ukraine and some other countries, like India, have also been moving in this direction in an attempt to develop their

national cards that may also one day merge with their national ID cards. As the payment card grows smarter and moves beyond magnetic stripes, it becomes an indispensable tool of surveillance and governmentality.

So while initially, the Western model worked as an ideal type, and you could look at the credit card as the epitome of globalization and the spread of American consumer culture, very much like George Ritzer described it in the 1990s, and chalk up the discrepancies to growing pains, by now the Western model is much less dominant and much less attractive. Moreover, the American-style credit card technology (magnetic stripe or "swipe-and-sign") has recently come under attack for its greater susceptibility to data theft after a string of massive security breaches at several US retailers like Target and Neiman Marcus. EU has recently issued a regulation intended to move all cards issued in the EU region onto the more secure chip-and-PIN technology (for a more detailed discussion of this, see our recent SUP blog (<http://stanfordpress.typepad.com/blog/2014/02/the-dinosaur-in-your-pocket.html>)). In several of the countries we studied, the arguments about the superiority of the chip over the magnetic stripe were put forth as early as the 1990s, made particularly attractive by their "late developer" status. Today, these countries continue advocating for chip cards as a more progressive technology. The US

is far behind in this regard due to its heavy path-dependent investment in magnetic stripes.

*How does the book continue or depart from your previous work?*

Akos's earlier book *The Great Surprise of the Small Transformation*, explored the role of the private sector in Hungary under socialism and the way it reconfigured social relations and ultimately contributed to the collapse of the system. That book focused on the central socio-economic institution of communism: universal state employment. In that book, markets emerge as responses to the failures of a bureaucratic economy. Here we scrutinize the ways markets are created by intentional social actors resolving market failures.

This book directly follows from our article, published in the ASR in 2001, comparing Russian and American credit card markets. That piece was the beginning of our collaboration, and it set the foundation for the subsequent theoretical scaffolding that was developed in this book around the centrality of the concept of uncertainty in lending and the use of the American credit card case as a performative ideal type. A large NSF grant to study uncertainty and risk in emerging credit card markets followed and paid for most of our travel and research expenses in the eight countries.

In 2008, Alya published her first book *Into the Red*, an in-depth analysis of the emergence of the Russian credit card market, based in part on her Ph.D.

dissertation as well as on the data collected as part of the NSF grant. This book foreshadowed some of the themes in *Plastic Money*, which included 1) a panoramic look at the process of emergence of the market from the very beginning (even before the beginning – really, from the late 1980s and the reform of the socialist monobank system) and up to the present moment, and 2) the treatment of market-building as a strategic process, which involves finding solutions to a series of problems (“market puzzles” as we call them in *Plastic Money*), the solutions shaped by the resources available in the postcommunist landscape.

*Plastic Money* moves beyond our earlier work. Not only does it cover a much larger empirical ground (20 years and eight countries) bringing together comparative historical and economic sociology but it also seeks to make novel theoretical contributions.

*If you were to extract some of the key issues the book tackles that are deserving of more attention by economic sociologists, what would those be?*

Economists’ models follow a marginalist approach: given the conditions, this is how market players behave or ought to behave. Those given conditions get buried in the assumptions of the model. It was no coincidence that Milton Friedman wanted us to leave those assumptions alone. But those conditions are the very material that economic sociologists should be curious about. The issue is not just whether those assumptions are correct, but if they are correct, how did they come about?

For instance, economists would assume that banks will maximize profit and minimize losses on their products. This is eminently reasonable, and indeed, most banks we encountered seemed to do so. But this does not follow from some general law of human nature. Banks are not humans, they are organizations of humans, and, as we explain in the book, within banks, employees of the card department were interested almost exclusively in selling as many cards as they could and cared much less about non-paying clients than people in the risk department. Bank directors

understood that putting the risk department in full charge would never result in a big enough card clientele and that they had to find a balance which was further complicated by the fact that they often had no idea how to calculate the profitability for their card operation separate from the rest of their business. In fact, even in the mid-2000s most banks reported that they thought they either lost money or just broke even on their card business. So the ability to act to minimize losses is an achievement, not a human trait, and requires scholarly scrutiny. Moreover, these achievements are temporary even if they serve the market players well enough for a while, because technology, politics, institutions etc., are all changing, and these accomplishments have to be re-attained. How banks come to balance market expansion and risk, how they ensure that they can tell if a part of their operation is profitable or loss making, and how they redo those as circumstances shift, are the kind of questions economic sociologists should ask and, eventually, answer.

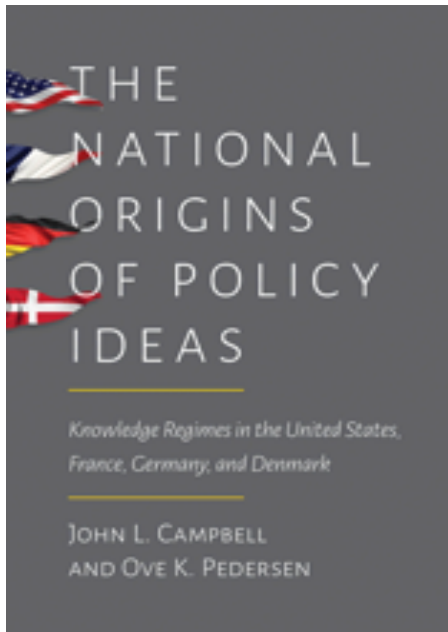
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**The ASA program will be available on April 30. Keep your eyes out for the exciting set of papers presented on economic sociology!**

**You’ll be able to see all of them at the 2014 Annual Meeting website:  
<http://www.asanet.org/am2014/am2014.cfm>**

***The National Origins of Policy Ideas: Knowledge Regimes in the United States, France, Germany, and Denmark (Princeton University Press, 2014)***

*John L. Campbell & Ove K. Pedersen*



In politics, ideas matter. They provide the foundation for economic policymaking that in turn shapes what is possible in domestic and international politics. Yet until now, little attention has been paid to how these ideas are produced and disseminated, and how this process varies between countries. *The National Origins of Policy Ideas* provides the first comparative analysis of how “knowledge regimes”—communities of policy research organizations like think tanks, political party foundations, ad hoc commissions and state research offices, and the institutions that govern them—generate ideas and communicate them to policymakers.

John Campbell and Ove Pedersen examine how knowledge regimes are organized, operate, and have changed over the last thirty years in the United States, France, Germany, and Denmark. They show how there are persistent national differences in how policy ideas are produced. Some countries do so in contentious, politically partisan ways, while others are cooperative and consensus oriented. They find that while knowledge regimes have adopted some common practices since the 1970s, tendencies toward convergence have been limited and outcomes have been heavily shaped by national contexts.

Drawing on extensive interviews with top officials at leading policy research organizations, this book demonstrates why knowledge regimes are as important to capitalism as the state and the firm, and sheds new light on debates about the effects of globalization, the rise of neoliberalism, and the orientation of comparative political economy in political science and sociology.

## **Mark Your Calendars!**

**Economic Sociology Section Reception**  
**Monday, August 18, from 6:30 to 8:30**  
**50 Mason Social House, San Francisco**  
**<http://50masonsocialhouse.com/>**

## Economic Sociology and Political Economy Community

*An Interview with Oleg Komlik by Scott Mitchell*



Oleg Komlik is a PhD Candidate in Economic Sociology in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Ben-Gurion University and a Lecturer in the School of Behavioral Sciences at the College of Management Academic Studies. In 2009, his MA thesis "'Deed of Compromises and Patchwork': Prohibition on Money Laundering Law- Between the Global and the Local" was awarded the Best Master Thesis Prize by the Israeli Sociological Society, and the Outstanding Master's Thesis (2nd award) by the Israeli Political Science Association. His PhD project "The State, Banks and the Financial System in the Political Economy of Israel" has been widely acknowledged by the Israeli academia and awarded several competitive scholarships and grants. Oleg is a founder and moderator of the global online community of Economic Sociology and Political Economy and serves as a board member of the Israeli Sociological Society, and Junior Sociologists Network at the International Sociological Association.

*What is the Economic Sociology and Political Economy community?*

The Economic Sociology and Political Economy community is a global online academic community whose goal is to disseminate the fruits and insights of socio-political research of the economy to the public and academics; and to serve as a platform on which community members share relevant information, exchange ideas and create collaborations.

Recently, it has been regarded as a new kind of learned association that reflects the transformations undergone by the academia in the digital interactive era. Recalling Jay Bolter's (1991) resonant statement "the computer is an ideal writing space for our networked society", one might see the ES/PE community as a rally on the web of science where research and knowledge meet intellectual curiosity about the constitution and functioning of, what I called in my dissertation, the indissoluble trinity of State-Economy-Society.

From an epistemological perspective, the ES/PE community aims to bridge two historically separate disciplines: '(new) economic sociology' and 'political economy'. Whereas their methodological lens, theoretical focus and empirical realms of research could differ,

both of them essentially engage in and deal with the ontological axiom of mutual embeddedness of State-Economy-Society, illuminating its variant angles. Therefore, in my view, the endeavor to bring closer these two disciplines and interlace them into one tremendously plentiful scholarship will not just enrich the investigation of socio-political processes and institutions of the economy; additionally, in line with Public Sociology imperative (Burawoy 2005, 2014; see also an excellent Discussion Forum by which I was inspired "Economic Sociology as Public Sociology" in *Socio-Economic Review*, vol. 5 (2), 2007), it will also equip us with a powerful scientific arsenal to lead the intellectual fight against, in Polanyi's bright terms (1947), market fundamentalism and economic determinism.

*How did the community get started?*

When I started my own academic journey through the fields of Economic Sociology and Political Economy, I felt – and I still gladly do – a thirst for knowledge and relevant materials. I've been envisioning and looking for a source, one website or database that provides a toolkit for a social scientist studying the economy and capitalism. To my surprise, the searches did not answer my expectations. Of course, there were academic associations



websites, blogs, personal webpages, mailing lists and e-journals—but, as great as they are, these sources offered only partial and narrow picture on what was going on in the areas of ES and PE. Moreover, browsing numerous websites and searching for specific content takes time and there is no guarantee you'll find what you're looking for. At the same time, I attended the 2011 SASE conference in Madrid and after talking to colleagues I realized that I had spotted an important, unsatisfied need among academics and junior scholars especially.

In addition, one more earnest reason has driven setting up the ES/PE community. During the financial crisis and the years thereafter I was upset by the paucity of educated, informed and intelligent debates in global and national arenas regarding the economy. The positions of Neoliberal corps in the media, policy forums and economics departments specializing in giving "academic veneer to the political projects" (Bourdieu and Wacquant 2001) did not surprise me. Rather, I was frustrated by the fact that a huge body of fascinating scholarly knowledge and brilliant social scientists whose works have literally stultified and debunked the dominant "Invisible Hand" tales have mostly remained in the shadow and been unheeded – while many out there were just not aware of treasure trove of profound research in

Economic Sociology and Political Economy. Hence, I had figured out that a proactive approach must be taken.

Mainly because of these two reasons, the challenges they pose and opportunities they embody, in June 2011 I decided to take the plunge and to initiate the establishment of a global virtual community of Economic Sociology and Political Economy.

*How large is the community and how has it evolved over time?*

In order to reach diverse audiences, the community is active on five main social networks: Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Google+ and Tumblr [Please see p. 27 for URLs to visit]. The contents are identical on all the websites and they are out at the same time. Currently the community counts already more than 16,000 people from about 75 countries. Among our members are academic faculty, researchers, undergraduates, doctoral students, state bureaucrats, politicians, journalists, activists, and others interested in broadening horizons through erudite discussions and enlightening readings on various topics about Economic Sociology and Political Economy. The US is the most represented country in the community. India is the second.

*What kinds of resources do the ES/PE community offer and why*

*should people join?*

The essential role of the community is to be hub of knowledge and information. Therefore the community brings on a regular basis (once a day) to the attention of our members two sorts of resources. First, substantive contents - insightful and innovative books, thought-provoking papers, interesting posts in the (academic) blogs, valuable documentaries, sharp quotes, meaningful memes (such "Theory in pictures", "Economists on economics", "Economy in Literature") and funny ones. Secondly, practical updates - important calls for papers for conferences and workshops, graduate and post-doc fellowships, grants and job openings.

I'm glad to hear from time to time that the community is used also as a collateral teaching resource in order to keep students intellectually involved, to arouse their interest in these issues and to encourage them to get into scholarly work.

*What kind of topics do you like to feature? How do you decide what to highlight?*

The first criteria for highlighting a book or an article is whether I like it and does it interest me in general. Defining it might be elusive, however Murray Davis' classic "That's interesting!" (1971) probably echoes in my mind. I also ask myself: does it achieve the goals of the community? Is

it important? Is it innovative? Is it useful?

Regarding the featured topics, the posts cover a wide range of issues in Economic Sociology, Political Economy, Fiscal Sociology, Social Studies of Finance and Markets, Labor and Welfare research, and Sociology of Economics. Within these themes, I tend to prefer comparative studies (over time and across space), works on markets evolution and change, institutional relations, interests struggles, development and diffusion of ideas, power of capital, cultural contexts, politics of inequality and business networks. Of course, other subjects get publicized too.

I would like to thank every scholar whose research I blogged about and every conference organizer whose ad I aired. The success of the ES/PE community, first of all, accredited to them.

Furthermore, it is necessary to point out that the community members are valuable contributors and active generators of contents. By their enthusiasm and ongoing interactions, they jointly maintain the campfire. I am grateful to them all!

*What is the best way to get involved?*

The best way to get involved is to come on board! I invite the American economic sociologists and Accounts' readers especially to be part of this initiative. You are welcome

to visit us, to join, to share posts, to comment and please feel free to recommend the community websites anyone who is interested in socio-political study of the economy: your colleagues, students and friends.

*What does the future hold for the Economic Sociology and Political Economy community?*

Although Kenneth Boulding, the former president of the American Economic Association said that "Anyone who believes in indefinite growth in anything physical, on a physically finite planet, is either mad or an economist", the community keeps growing and I think we are only in the beginning. I believe more people will join in to benefit from shared knowledge and join up to support - using an enormous multiplying and circulating effect of social networks - the cause of promoting Economic Sociology and Political Economy in these turbulent times.

*Finally, tell us about your own research. What are you working on currently?*

In my master's thesis I explored the legislative process through which the global anti-money laundering norms and practices have been adopted in Israel in accordance with the local societal, political and economic context. During the course of this research I became puzzled by the institutional relationship between Israeli banks and the

state agencies. Therefore in my doctoral dissertation I focus on the socio-political foundations of the Israeli banking system and analyze the dynamics between the Israeli banks and the state throughout the years. This study scrutinizes: the essential role of banking in realization of the Zionist nation building; the evolution of the Israeli banking system and the close cooperation between the banks, the state authorities and political actors; and particularly, the institutional change of the financial system in the Neoliberal age. This project is approaching its end and I'm willingly looking ahead.

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Bourdieu, Pierre and Loïc Wacquant. 2001. "Neoliberal Newspeak: Notes on the New Planetary Vulgate". *Radical Philosophy* 108: 2-5.

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Murray, Davis S. 1971. "'That's Interesting!' Towards a Phenomenology of Sociology and a Sociology of Phenomenology." *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* 1: 309-344.

Polanyi, Karl. 1947. "Our Obsolete Market Mentality: Civilization Must Find a New Thought Pattern." *Commentary* 3: 109-117.

## Meet Your Council: Council Member Jennifer Bair

*Jennifer Bair is Assistant Professor of Sociology at the University of Colorado at Boulder*

*How do you employ economy into your way of thinking about and analyzing the world?*

I follow Polanyi in understanding economy as an instituted process encompassing multiple forms of interaction, among people and between people and the natural world, towards the satisfaction (or pursuit thereof) of needs and wants. I am interested in understanding where these interactions take place, how they are organized, what consequences they have for participants, and how the answers to these questions change over time and across different kinds of spaces— institutional, social, territorial, etc.

*When and how did you come to be interested in economic sociology?*

I majored in international affairs as an undergraduate at Johns Hopkins because I thought it would be the course of study most relevant to my nascent interest in development. I took the standard economics courses for international affairs students— macro, micro, international trade, etc.—but I struggled to see a connection between this material and the questions of comparative development I wanted to understand. Then I stumbled into a few sociology seminars and found a vibrant intellectual tradition addressing just these questions, and I was hooked. In short, I'd have to say that my interest in economic sociology

grew out of my interest in the sociology of development because over time I became convinced that I needed the former to do the latter.

*What is your current work focusing upon?*

Recently, there has been a veritable explosion of interest in the topic of international trade and production networks, or “global value chains,” as they have become known. International institutions (e.g. the World Bank, the World Trade Organization) and multilateral development agencies (e.g. U.S. Agency for International Development) are organizing high-level international conferences on the topic, developing new metrics for measuring global value chains, and more generally promoting global value chains as a mechanisms of growth and development. The consensus emerging in this field is that the rise of global value chains is transforming the landscape of the international economy, altering the nature of economic competitiveness, and creating novel opportunities and challenges for regional/national economic development. To me, the recent ‘discovery’ and embrace of the global value chain calls for a sociology of knowledge analysis, especially since these forms of coordinated trade are really not that new. What, then, explains the popularity of global value chains? How does this



construct render the economy knowable? What are the policy implications that derive from this way of seeing the economy and the relative position of actors within it? From a development perspective, what kinds of interventions does the global value chain perspective enable or foreclose? These are the questions I'm exploring in current research, together with Marion Werner, a feminist economic geographer. In the preliminary phase of this project, we've been interviewing development practitioners and policymakers, as well as academics (mostly economists) who serve as consultants to institutions and agencies and who often translate “academic” global value chain analysis into more applied versions. Now we're in the process of developing a grant proposal to fund comparative ethnographic fieldwork on multiple global value chain-inspired development initiatives in Latin America.

*Does your current work connect to what you've done prior, or is it going into any new directions?*

Basically, I want to develop an economic sociology of the intra- and inter-firm exchanges that underlie contemporary trends like “outsourcing” and “off-shoring.” I’m interested in how spatially dispersed and organizationally fragmented production processes are coordinated, the degree to which these coordinated exchanges approximate a network form that is “neither market nor hierarchy,” and how they collectively constitute an entity called the global economy. Those have been the core questions orienting my work since graduate school, but I’m pursuing them in some new ways. For example, I am working on a collaborative, interdisciplinary book project; my collaborators, Mark Anner and Jeremy Blasi, are a political scientist and labor lawyer, respectively. Independently, the three of us had been researching the globalization of textile and apparel production for years. Clothing is a classic case of what Gary Gereffi once called a “buyer-driven” commodity chain—that is, almost none of the apparel we buy today is manufactured by the retailer or brand that is marketing it. Instead, it’s manufactured by independent contractors, mostly located in developing

countries. In this book, we examine the extant explanations for sweatshops—market failure, state failure, and managerial failure—and show that each of these explanations are inadequate because they ignore the root cause of labor violations in subcontracting networks: the downward price pressure that retailers and brands put on international suppliers. Because these manufacturers are competing with each other for the orders of buyers like Wal-Mart, H&M, etc., because the primary (if not only) criteria on which they are competing is price, the dynamic is quite similar to a reverse auction. We bring several kinds of data to bear on this analysis, including primary data collected through fieldwork in over a dozen countries. The core of the argument we make is that efforts to combat sweatshop conditions in global supply chains will only succeed by developing mechanisms that recognize and enforce the responsibility of brands and retailers for conditions in their suppliers’ factories. We find such a model in the history of the American apparel industry: the “jobbers’ agreement,” which was a collectively bargained contract that regulated labor-capital relations in the garment industry by holding ‘jobbers’ (the term then used

to describe companies analogous to today’s brands and retailers) jointly liable for wages and working conditions in their contractors’ sewing shops. Of course, this model would have to be updated and revised in a number of ways to reflect contemporary supply chains, but the principle of joint liability is of even greater relevance today.

This argument about joint liability actually grew out of earlier research I conducted for a very different purpose. I wanted to understand why the kinds of trust-based, collaborative relationships, or “embedded networks,” that Brian Uzzi described in a series of classic articles about New York’s garment district differed so dramatically from the contracting relations I and others observed in the global apparel industry. In the course of trying to answer this question, I stumbled upon the jobbers’ agreements, which I realized were an important historical institution that helped produce the particular social structure of competition that Uzzi observed in his fieldwork. Although the jobbers’ agreements were undermined by trade liberalization and the collapse of apparel manufacturing in the United States, the question we pursue in this new book is how the principle underlying them might be resurrected.

## Estudios de la Economía: An Interview with José Ossandón

*Questions, editing, and translation by Taylor Nelms*



José Ossandón is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Organization, Copenhagen Business School and Associate Researcher in the Instituto de Investigación en Ciencias Sociales, Universidad Diego Portales Chile. He received his PhD from Goldsmiths, University of London. His recent publications include the edited books *Adaptación: La Empresa Chilena después de Friedman* (2013), *Disturbios Culturales* (2012), and *Comunicaciones, Semánticas y Redes* (2011) and the articles “Reassembling and Cutting the Social with Health Insurance” (*Journal of Cultural Economy*), “Sowing Consumers in the Garden of Mass Retailing in Chile” (*Consumption, Markets and Culture*), and ‘Quand le Crédit à la Consommation Classe les Gens et les Choses’ (*Revue Française de Socio-Economie*).

Since 2009, the blog and website Estudios de la Economía [in English, Studies of the Economy or Economy Studies] has offered interdisciplinary and original research, interviews, and debate in Spanish, Portuguese, and English from a network of researchers around the world. Below we present an interview with the blog’s founder and editor José Ossandón. Join the conversation at <http://estudiosdelaeconomia.wordpress.com/> and follow along on Twitter @delaeconomia.

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*What is Estudios de la Economía?*

Estudios de la Economía is a collective blog that seeks to make itself into a focus or shared point of reference for researchers who study economic themes with the conceptual and methodological tools of the social sciences. The word “studies” gestures to fields (like organization, science, gender, media, or—more recently—finance studies) in which researchers from different disciplinary traditions come together to discuss a shared empirical object.

*Who contributes to Estudios de la Economía, and what kind of posts can be found on the site?*

The blog currently has 38 contributors from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Denmark, France, Germany, Mexico, Spain, the United Kingdom, and the United States. I am both contributor and editor (which involves organizing posts, editing, and moderating comments), and from the beginning I have counted on the

support of Felipe González (currently a PhD candidate at the Max Planck Institute). As the network of contributors has grown in number, and the disciplines and geographic regions represented have diversified, we have also noted a certain academic maturation. When we began many in the group were doctoral students or had recently finished their PhDs. Today we have new PhD students, but also others who are a bit more senior.

With these changes, we have noted the development of both collective and individual voices. Not necessarily in the sense of generating a properly “Latin American” thought, but in moving from the specific intersection that first characterized the network of contributors to the development of original arguments that are starting to influence the local and global academic discussions in which each person is inserted. These changes are also evident in contributors’ more stable institutional positions and in



the important increase of journal articles and books they have published.

Each week, usually on Monday, we upload “fixed posts,” which are generally 2000 words or less and report on ongoing research and recent readings. The dates of fixed posts are reserved a year in advance. We also post interviews, which will be of special interest to readers of *Accounts* who do not read Spanish. We don’t have the resources to transcribe, edit, and translate interviews, but editing audio today is quite easy, so we post interviews as podcasts, which allow you to listen to conversations with scholars whose work we generally only read. We have a rich archive of interviews with people like Jens Beckert, Daniel Beunza, Miguel Angel Centeno, Bruce Carruthers, Paul du Gay, Gil Eyal, Manuel Antonio Garretón, Mark Granovetter, Clara Han, Donald MacKenzie, Bill Maurer, Danny Miller, Timothy Mitchell, Yuval Millo, Philip Mirowski, Veronica Montecinos, Fabian Muniesa, David Stark, Wolfgang Streeck, Richard Swedberg, Peter Wagner, Guillermo Wormald, and Viviana Zelizer. Finally, on Thursdays, we upload all sorts of news, which appear underneath the principle post.

*Tell us a bit about the blog’s history. How was it started?*

Its history has something to do with my own academic biography. When I did my

PhD in the U.K. during the second half of the 2000s, I found a very fertile field of study about the economy that consisted not only of sociologists (my original discipline), but also anthropologists, geographers, and scholars of STS and cultural theory in the broadest sense. In those days it was called “Cultural Economy.” After my PhD, I returned to Chile as an assistant professor in a sociology department and I began to search for people with whom to discuss and share what I was reading and studying. In Chile, I found a strong community of people working at the intersection of STS and topics like marketing, social policy, and creativity, plus a few doing social network analysis and others closer to critical management studies. I also learned about conferences organized by people at the Instituto de Altos Estudios Sociales at the University of San Martín in Buenos Aires, Argentina, and there I was pleasantly surprised to find a rich conversation between economic sociologists and anthropologists in Buenos Aires and Rio de Janeiro.

In September 2010, *Estudios de la Economía* started as an attempt to make something like a permanent seminar that would allow us to surmount geographic and institutional distance and extend the conversation beyond conferences and workshops. From the original group of people in Buenos Aires and

Santiago, we have continued to “weave” the network, inviting people recommended by someone or people we met at conferences and in other activities.

At the beginning, we were inspired by blogs that had already existed for some time, like *OrgTheory* (<http://orgtheory.wordpress.com/>) or *Socializing Finance* (<http://socfinance.wordpress.com/>), but over time we have found our niche. *Estudios de la Economía* does not focus on topics internal to the U.S. academy like *OrgTheory* and we don’t have such a specific object of study like *Socializing Finance*. At one moment, I thought that perhaps we could transform the blog into a newsletter like *Accounts* or the *European Economic Sociology Newsletter*. But becoming a newsletter (circulated in .pdf form) would entail losing everything that being online makes possible. Today we are comfortable as a “collective academic blog.” We are able to post videos, images, podcasts, and so on; try out formats and ideas that would be too risky for a journal; and produce spin-offs or more traditional publications. For example, we have thought about editing, with Mariana Heredia, a book of the interviews on the blog, and several of the contributors who met each other through *Estudios de la Economía* have participated in special issues and collected volumes together.

The content of *Estudios de la Economía* is primarily in Spanish (although sometimes our Brazilian colleagues prefer to write in Portuguese). The interviews and some co-posts with other sites (especially the Charisma Network and, less frequently, *Socializing Finance*) are in English. Obviously, there is always the temptation to become more “global” and publish definitively in English. The majority of our contributors understand English, but it is much easier and more natural to write in Spanish and we don’t want to lose that. Moreover, the blog also acts as a resource for teaching, professionals and researchers in Latin America.

*What are some of the most important discussions that have emerged from the blog?*

I would highlight three themes among many, shared “objects” of study about which we have both individual contributions and collective discussion. I think that anyone interested in these three themes will be able to find on the blog a good archive and lively debate.

The first theme is about economists, who are very important in the recent history of Argentina and Chile. The discussion in these countries has been dedicated primarily to topics like technocracy related most closely to the political science or sociology of political elites. But on the blog, the discussion has turned, due to the influence of Michel Callon’s notion of

“performativity,” more to the production and history of economic knowledge and its use in the practical production of markets. This has also been connected to discussions about the role of economists in specific areas of social policy—like the environment, education, or the city—as well as to the interests of other contributors (coming from the perspective of organizational analysis) in topics like “new public management,” rankings, and instruments of public policy.

The second theme is domestic, household, or everyday finance. There is a very rich combination of people working at the intersection of STS and finance, as well as others influenced by French sociology and anthropology. We have debated long and hard over the work of scholars like Bill Maurer, Jane Guyer, Florence Webber, and Viviana Zelizer. But such debates do not emerge from reading assignments, but instead from the search for conceptual tools to think through the incredible things that have appeared in contributors’ fieldwork on topics like inflation, credit, investment, the Argentine “corralito,” and the use of multiple moneys.

Third, there is increasing discussion about topics closer to comparative political economy. There has been an interesting conversation among people working with the idea of “varieties of capitalism” or the work of B.R.

Schneider about Latin America, and others interested in performativity and domestic finance. This conversation has also generated new ways of talking about “big” themes like neoliberalism and capitalism. Another author that has appeared in multiple conversations is Karl Polanyi.

*What does the future hold for Estudios de la Economía?*

To continue! As long as we continue to find the project entertaining and continue to feel enthusiastic about it, as long as we continue to excite more collaborators, and as long as we don’t become something that people do just to improve institutional rankings. I would also like to continue exploring some of the experiments we have started—for instance, to continue to look for ways to do things with our friends in the Charisma Network and perhaps to open new types of collaboration beyond the social sciences, for example, with artists who work on economic subjects.

*Finally, tell us about your own research. What you currently working on?*

Currently I live in Denmark, where I am an Assistant Professor in the Department of Organization at the Copenhagen Business School. These days I work in three primary areas: First, on subjects related to STS, markets, and finance, about which I try to write from material I collected for my

dissertation about the history of private health insurance in Chile, as well as from data from my later research about consumer credit in the retail industry there. With my colleagues at the Copenhagen Business School, as well as with others in Argentina and Chile,

I work on what I am calling for now “markets as devices”—that is, the empirical analysis of the history and knowledge utilized in the creation, evaluation, and repair of markets designed to resolve public issues (like education, pollution, energy, etc.). Finally, on my less

“economic” side, which is more about social and cultural theory but which of course always serves to inspire the rest of my research, I will continue to explore the intersections between the work of authors like White, Strathern, Zelizer, Luhmann, and Serres.

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## Emerging Market Societies Series

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### *Questions for Salvatore Babones, Series Editor*

Salvatore Babones answers a few questions about a new series he is editing for Edward Elgar Publishing on “Emerging Market Societies”

#### *How did you get this opportunity?*

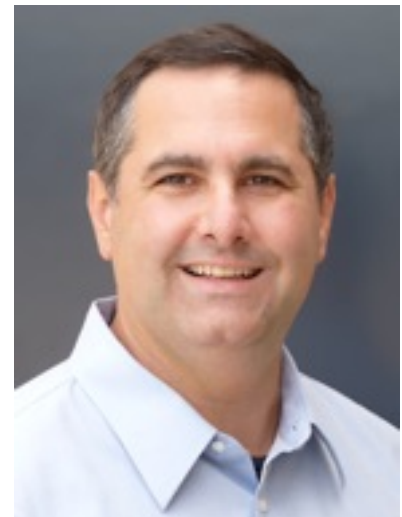
Since the moment I was awarded tenure (and no longer had to worry about my own future) I've been thinking about what people with tenure can do to make the career trajectory from PhD to tenure go more smoothly for coming generations. It seemed to me that a major stumbling block was the challenge of getting a first authored book published. First book publishing seems more like a lottery than a process. If an acquisitions editor at a major university press (who likely doesn't have a PhD and is not even a sociologist) happens to like your topic, you win. Otherwise, you struggle.

In fact, I made tenure on the basis of journal articles. Immediately afterward, I found the floodgates had opened. Instead of begging people to consider my proposals, I had publishers asking me to write books for them. It's not just me. Most post-tenure academics at

research universities have the same experience of going from famine to flood in just a couple years.

So I decided to do something about the problem. Many publishers are eager to piggy-back on the expertise that senior academics can provide. The problem is that most academics don't want to put in the work to develop junior authors. If I can be very frank, it's much easier just to commission your already-successful friends to write books. I decided I wanted to work with junior authors to help them prepare for tenure or habilitation. When I approached Alex Pettifer, the editorial director of Edward Elgar Publishing, with a proposal to work hand-in-hand with junior scholars he was thrilled and immediately commissioned the series.

#### *Who do you have in mind as contributors?*



Salvatore Babones is an associate professor of sociology and social policy at the University of Sydney. He writes on comparative international development and on quantitative methods for the social sciences. His most recent book is *Methods for Quantitative Macro-Comparative Research* (Sage, 2014).

I have a mandate to acquire at least three books a year by junior academics. The people are as much a focus of this series as the topics.

Ideally, I'm looking for people who have finished their PhDs and have succeeded in getting academic jobs but who have not yet published sole-authored books. There's some flexibility in this model, but the goal of the series is to help people through to tenure, and in fact I would be happy to serve as a tenure reviewer for authors in this series. What I want to do is to make sure that enthusiastic people aren't lost to the profession due to being thrown on their own resources in their first jobs. I'm sure that I wasn't the only one who had a tough time in my first five years as an assistant professor.

*What kind of topics?*

The books in this series will shine a light on the economic sociology of some of the larger emerging market countries and regions. Individual titles will cover either large, systemically important emerging market societies that are of wide interest (China, India, Brazil, Russia) or integrated economic regions in which individual countries have enough in common to support their being analyzed as a group (the Chinese diaspora, southeast Asia, the Middle East, sub-Saharan Africa). Each book will focus on a highly-visible aspect of the economic life of focus society or societies. Topics to be covered could include all aspects of economic sociology and social policy.

I will be encouraging authors in this series to think beyond their narrow PhD dissertation

topics to redefine themselves as experts on broader topics and regions. For example, a person who wrote a PhD dissertation on fertility decision-making in Vietnam might be encouraged to use this publishing opportunity to establish herself as an expert on women's empowerment in emerging Asia. It is very unlikely that books in this series will be merely revised versions of PhD thesis. They will be research-based books that make bold statements about broad societal processes.

*How do you envision the work process?*

I will work much more closely with the authors of these books than is the usual practice for series editors. I am not interested in "acquiring" books. I am interested in developing the careers of junior scholars. Toward this end, I have made a commitment to the publishers that I will follow a detailed ten-step management plan:

- (1) Actively seek out promising new academics at the beginnings of their careers
- (2) Walk them through the differences in logic behind article and book publishing
- (3) Work with them to produce book proposals (each with one sample chapter)
- (4) Help authors (and the publisher) decide whether or not these proposals merit further development
- (5) Read and comment on

chapters in draft, as per a PhD thesis

- (6) Assist authors with editing the full draft manuscript before submission for review
- (7) Select appropriate peer reviewers and manage the review process
- (8) Advise authors on responses to reviews and final manuscript preparation
- (9) Write a brief forward for each book that contextualizes it in the series
- (10) Approach journal book review editors to arrange at least two reviews of each book

In short, I intend my relationships with authors in the series to be mentoring relationships, not merely publishing relationships.

*What should those interested do at this point?*

Be in touch with me at sbabones@inbox.com. I am happy to talk to any pre-tenure scholars, including PhD students who have not yet finished their dissertations. The book series will run for at least three years, and assuming it is successful it will almost certainly be renewed, so I'm happy to plan for the long term. I will be holding meetings with potential authors at the ASA meetings in San Francisco and the ISA meetings in Yokohama. Of course, I am also available to meet by phone with those who are unable to attend these meetings. I really am eager to meet and talk to as many enthusiastic up-and-coming as possible!

## Meet Your Council: Graduate Student Representative Lindsey Ibanez

*Lindsey is a PhD Candidate in Sociology at The Ohio State University*



*How do you employ economy into your way of thinking about and analyzing the world?*

I have long been interested in development, both social and economic. My thesis work examined the power relations between sellers (milk producers) and buyers (a processing company), and how these relations shaped local development. In the process, I became fascinated by the tension between self-interest and social obligations. Why do we act sometimes in others' interests and sometimes only in our own? This is the fundamental philosophical concern that underlies my current work. Thus, to my mind 'economy' represents how we go about meeting our own needs and wants while at the same time forming and preserving relationships with others, and how we manage

the conflicts and paradoxes that inevitably arise.

*When and how did you come to be interested in economic sociology?*

I had been reading work by economists for my master's thesis in Latin American Studies at the University of Chicago, and I took a course in the policy school taught by a Brazilian economist. It was illuminating to study poverty, inequality, trade liberalization, and development from an economist's perspective, but the assumptions and models used did not always seem to jibe with 'reality' as I saw it. I sought to study economic issues in a way that honors the inherent messiness of human decision-making. At Ohio State I was introduced to economic sociology through Tim Bartley's graduate seminar on the topic. I appreciated the careful attention that economic sociologists pay to cultural meanings and interpersonal relations, and how these relate to networks and institutions.

*What is your current work focusing upon?*

My PhD dissertation examines how people mobilize their personal networks to find employment in urban Nicaragua. I chose a high-poverty, high-underemployment context for

the study for two reasons: 1) precarious employment is common in the developing world, and it is becoming more common in the US; and 2) in a context where there is no meaningful social safety net, finding employment gains even more urgency for low-income urban workers, and in a context where job-finding assistance is not forthcoming, networks should be even more important. My project is informed and inspired by the work of Granovetter, Wellman, Lin, Sandra Susan Smith, Mario Small, Alexandra Marin, and others.

In addition, I am part of a project studying food insecurity in Nicaragua, led by Kammi Schmeer and Barbara Piperata. Sociologists do not focus much on the food system, perhaps due to the traditional division of labor between sociology and rural sociology, but it is a fascinating sector that has changed rapidly in recent decades. Changes in the food sector have shaped migration, urbanization, and obesity, among other phenomena. I also am part of a research team, led by Steve Lopez and Vinnie Roscigno, that is studying how the Great Recession has affected residents in Central Ohio, and how they have responded. Since most of my research takes place in far-flung sites,



*Ibanez, cont.*

I'm surprised by how much this project has taught me about my home city and the people who live here.

*Does your current work connect to what you've done prior, or is it going into any new directions?*

On the surface of it, dairy farmers, food insecurity, the US recession, and job contacts are not closely related. But the things I've learned from my earlier work inform my current work; for example, my thesis project taught me to pay careful attention to institutional arrangements and the incentives they generate. Generally, I am interested in poverty, inequality, and mobility, and all of my projects are connected to these concerns. I decided to pursue job finding as a topic because in a market society, people derive their sustenance primarily from paid work. Thus, access to employment directly affects the outcomes I care about as a sociologist.

While my previous work mainly involved ethnographic methods, my current work incorporates other methodological approaches and analytical techniques, such as qualitative-comparative analysis and network analysis. And, for me, working collaboratively with other researchers is 'new.'

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## Meet Your Council: Graduate Student Representative Adam Goldstein

*Adam is a PhD Candidate in Sociology at UC, Berkeley*



*When and how did you come to be interested in economic sociology?*

I first became interested in economic sociology as an undergraduate student. Marc Schneiberg opened my eyes to the field. His courses and mentorship set me down the path of pursuing research in this area.

*What is your current work focusing upon?*

My current work revolves around a constellation of questions at the intersection of the sociology finance, stratification, and urban sociology. I am interested in how institutional changes associated with the rise of finance have reshaped various socio-economic domains, and how organizations, communities and households respond to these changes often.

My dissertation project addresses a series of questions

about mass-participatory financial activity in an era of rising insecurity. This project has evolved since it was hatched, but it grew initially out of an interest in trying to understand the demand-side dynamics underlying the mid-2000s housing market bubble.

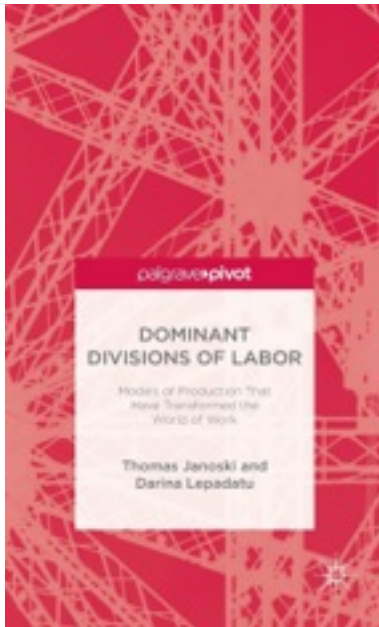
I am also working on a line of research on the financial services industry (with Neil Fligstein), an analysis of the housing bubble and the penal state (with Brenden Beck), and an analysis of financialization in U.S. higher education (with several other Berkeley graduate students).

Of far greater interest to section members, I have also been scoping venues for the section party in San Francisco this summer.

*Does your current work connect to what you've done prior, or is it going into any new directions?*

Both. I haven't been at this game for very long, but I can see my interests branching. Economic sociology embraces such a rich and dynamic topical domain. There are always interesting new questions to tempt one's attention. So like many young scholars, my research agenda seems to oscillate between a 5-year plan and something that looks more like a random walk.

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***Models of Production that Have Transformed the World of Work (Palgrave-MacMillan, 2013)***

*Thomas Janoski and Darina Lepadatu*

The past century of production was dominated by Fordism and Taylorism, but how do we make sense of global production today? This book takes a panoramic view of the new theories of production: post-Fordism, flexible accumulation, McDonaldization, Waltonism, Nikeification, Gatesism and Siliconism, shareholder value, and lean production with Toyotism. The authors argue that lean production in a somewhat expanded version presents three variations: Toyotism (the full model), Nikeification (off-shored plants lacking teamwork) and Waltonism (the merchandising form that presses for off-shoring). While all three share strong elements of "just in time" inventory through supply chain management, they differ in how teamwork and long-term philosophies are valued. This critical review of dominant established theories shows how the contemporary division of labor is structured. The authors also preview the newly emerging "additive" or 3-D production process.

***Expulsions: Brutality and Complexity in the Global Economy (Harvard University Press, 2014)***

*Saskia Sassen*

Soaring income inequality and unemployment, expanding populations of the displaced and imprisoned, accelerating destruction of land and water bodies: today's socioeconomic and environmental dislocations cannot be fully understood in the usual terms of poverty and injustice, according to Saskia Sassen. They are more accurately understood as a type of expulsion—from professional livelihood, from living space, even from the very biosphere that makes life possible.

This hard-headed critique updates our understanding of economics for the twenty-first century, exposing a system with devastating consequences even for those who think they are not vulnerable. From finance to mining, the complex types of knowledge and technology we have come to admire are used too often in ways that produce elementary brutalities. These have evolved into predatory formations—assemblages of knowledge, interests, and outcomes that go beyond a firm's or an individual's or a government's project.

Sassen draws surprising connections to illuminate the systemic logic of these expulsions. The sophisticated knowledge that created today's financial "instruments" is paralleled by the engineering expertise that enables exploitation of the environment, and by the legal expertise that allows the world's have-nations to acquire vast stretches of territory from the have-nots. *Expulsions* lays bare the extent to which the sheer complexity of the global economy makes it hard to trace lines of responsibility for the displacements, evictions, and eradications it produces—and equally hard for those who benefit from the system to feel responsible for its depredations.



## Polity's Series in Economic Sociology

### *Questions for Jonathan Skerrett, Editor*



*What inspired Polity to commission more books in economic sociology?*

There were two angles to this. On the one hand, economic sociology was a growing field, and it has remained so – the growth of the Economic Sociology section of the ASA is one of the most consistently strong, from 15th largest section in 2003 to 7th largest section in 2013. It is a key sub-discipline within 21st-century sociology which we want to reflect in our publishing.

From the other end of the equation, ideas from economic sociology have increasingly been picked up in the public sphere – outside of academia, people have been waking up to what economic sociology has to say about how the world works. It is exciting when mainstream media and commentators start to talk about the things that sociologists have been paying attention to for a long time, and as a book publisher we're looking to make the connection between those two spheres: academy and engaged

non-specialists/students. Coupled with key events like the financial crisis, it was clear that this was going to be a growth area both in terms of supply (academic enquiry) and demand (students wanting to take classes on these issues).

*What led to the decision to produce a new series of books specifically?*

The field has grown very broadly to cover a lot of bases – economic sociologists have turned their gaze in many directions! Content-wise, this offers great potential to explore in a series of books how scholarship is coalescing around key substantive topics and ideas. A series enables books to take a specific focus, though still broad enough to be able to draw on a lot of varied literature and insights, showing the discipline in action. In terms of our aim for these books to bridge the gap between scholarship and the classroom, a series of shorter, more in-depth books best fits the bill.

*What can readers expect to find in the books?*

Each of the books offers an overview of the scope of the area of enquiry (such as the institutional approach to economics) and of the key literature that has shaped that subfield. This gives contextual grounding for students new to the area, or a recap to others wishing to refresh their knowledge. But this is only the starting point: the books engage with the latest developments and bring that cutting-edge work into the overall portrait of the subfield, offering a

holistic overview which a non-specialist wouldn't be able to gather from individual research monographs or journal articles. And of course there are conflicting ideas and approaches in any area of academic enquiry which do not remain static, so the books look at the directions in which each subfield is developing: what does economic sociology have to offer next?

*What volumes are currently available?*

Seven titles are currently published, covering a broad range. There are titles on key traditional economic sociology topics, such as *Money and Credit* by Bruce Carruthers and Laura Ariovich and *Markets* by Patrik Aspers. Then there are titles on the broader political economic systems that pose some of the biggest questions in economic sociology, such as *Global Capitalism* by Miguel Centeno and Joseph Cohen, and *Economy and State* by Nina Bandelj and Elizabeth Sowers.

Two more recent titles look at core approaches to studying the social life of the economy: Francesco Duina's *Institutions and the Economy* and David Knoke's *Economic Networks*. Applying an economic sociology lens to a central dimension of social life – the world of work – the latest book is *Labor, Economy, and Society* by Jeffrey Sallaz.

*What are some of the topics you are considering for the future?*

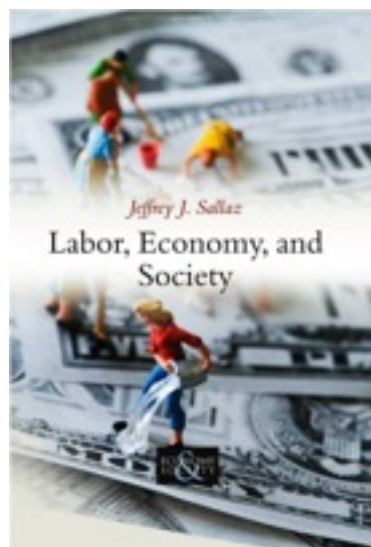
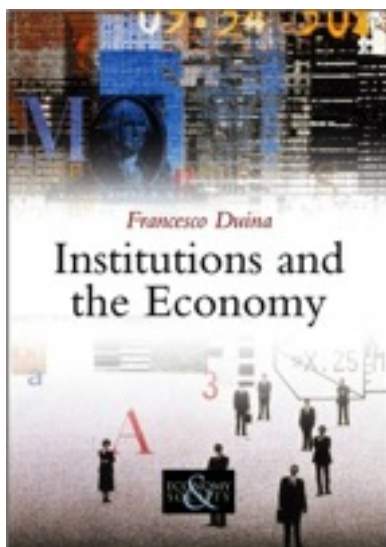
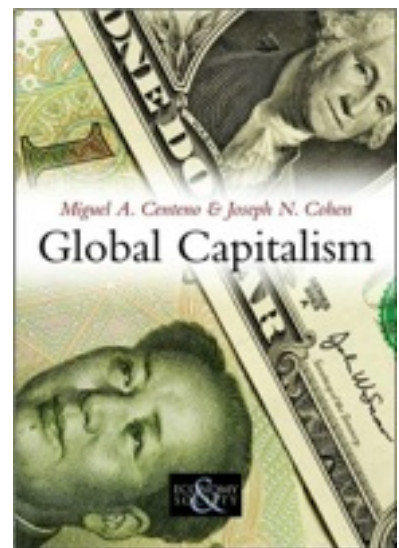
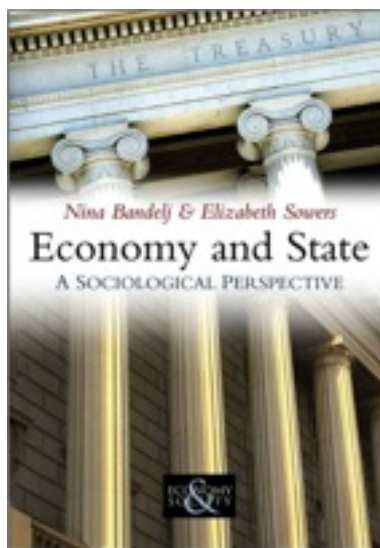
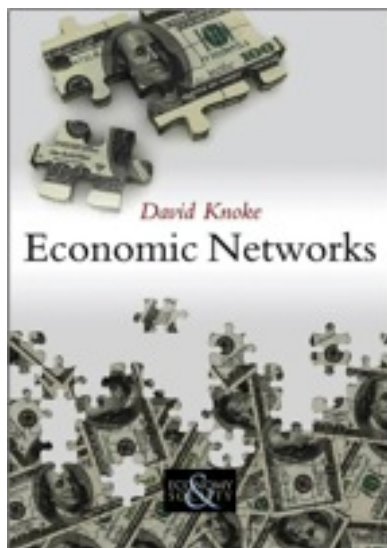
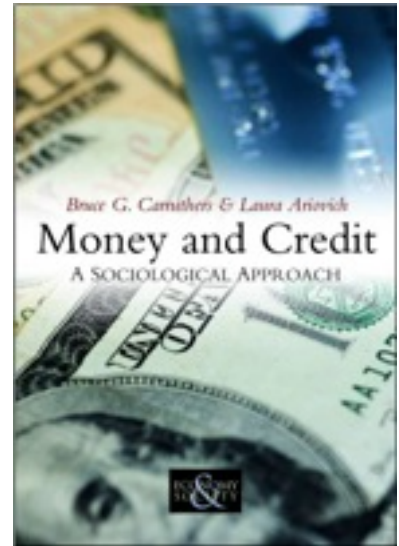


Projects are underway or in discussion on topics such as the economic sociology of development, wealth, financialization, alternative economies and the informal economy. But as an ever-developing field, I expect that in the coming years there will be a range of issues which seem embryonic at the moment which may well become a new turn in economic sociology.

*Could interested authors approach you with ideas, and if so, how should they go about that?*

Visit the Polity website where you will find contact details ([www.politybooks.com](http://www.politybooks.com)). It's always a pleasure to hear about new ideas which could fit the format of what we are commissioning in this series, or more broadly.

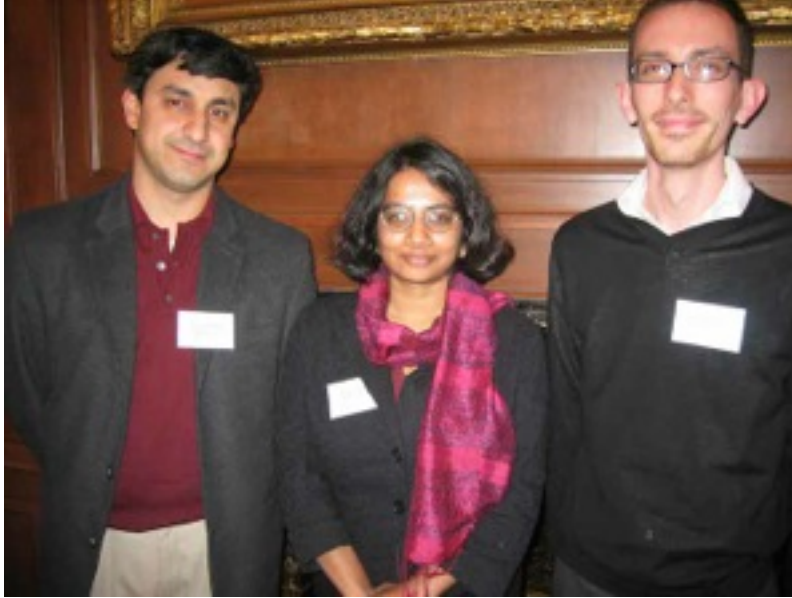
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## The New Fiscal Sociology Workshop

*Conversation between Isaac Martin, Ajay Mehrotra, and Monica Prasad, Workshop*

*Organizers; Questions by Paul James Morgan*



*Ajay Mehrotra, Monica Prasad, & Isaac Martin*

*How did organizing this workshop come about? Who got the idea? How did the three of you end up collaborating as co-organizers?*

**Monica:** The three of us had all individually worked our way to an interest in taxes in graduate school. For me, what did it was the discovery that Donald Duck helped to form the American tax state, and the realization that in all of my sociology courses we had never once talked about the social effort that makes it seem natural to ask citizens to part with a third to a half of their income for the common good. So we were all individually excited about taxes, but alone in our excitement. And then we met each other on the conference circuit. In those early years we would

commiserate about the difficulty of communicating to others what all three of us were convinced about—how exciting tax history can be, and how central it is to social science. And we often talked about how we wished we had had just a modicum of training in graduate school in fiscal sociology, so we didn't have to figure it all out ourselves. So that's what we are trying to do with this workshop, give graduate students from around the country the very basic building blocks.

**Ajay:** Monica has nicely summarized the beginnings of the conference that led to our edited volume and the subsequent set of graduate student workshops that followed. I would just add that from the

start we were pleasantly surprised by how many established scholars were interested in coming together to discuss their mutual interest in the history of fiscal policy. At that first conference, many participants admitted that they did not see themselves and their work as part of a particular subfield -- one that we have since the conference referred to as the "new fiscal sociology." But they all seemed to agree that there were important connections surrounding their work that dealt with fundamental issues about the causes and consequences of how communities raise revenue. We've kept this in mind as we've recruited participants to our annual graduate student workshop -- we try to look for people with interests that might not immediately fit the conventional understanding of field, but that comport with what we find interesting about the history of tax and spending policies.

**Isaac:** We should add that a grant from the ASA Fund for the Advancement of the Discipline made the first of these workshops possible in 2007. Subsequent workshops were funded by the National Science Foundation and the Social Science Research



Council, but the success of the first ASA-funded workshop is part of what made those proposals credible.

*Could you describe this workshop from the point of view of organizers; what topics are covered, who is invited to submit materials, or anything else that is relevant for students and faculty?*

**Isaac:** The purpose of the workshop, broadly, is to encourage the development of a research community of scholars working on public finance and society. From the beginning we opened the workshop to doctoral students (and the occasional postdoc) from fields as various as anthropology, classics, education, history, law, political science, and sociology. At first we focused very specifically on taxation. That's still our emphasis, but I think it's fair to say that in recent years we also have been paying increasing attention to public debt and other non-tax forms of public finance.

We made a bet early on that the most scholarly progress would come from finding the scattered scholars who work on these issues and getting them to realize that they were focused on a common set of questions. We're trying to cultivate a research community that includes people who are interested in a common set of problems, intellectually diverse enough that we're guaranteed to disagree about some things, and friendly enough with each

other that we all want to keep the argument going.

**Ajay:** I completely agree with Isaac, and would only stress a couple of points that he and Monica have made. First, we like to bring together as part of the annual workshop people with different disciplinary backgrounds who are intellectually curious about fiscal policy, and who are planning to work in that area in some fashion. I don't think our goal is to convince everyone to study tax history (at least not explicitly). Rather, we want to help students and postdocs think about the connections between their interests and what we see as a burgeoning scholarly conversation. The second thing we are trying to do is build an intellectual community in the way that Isaac has explained.

*What would you say have past participants gained by attending the workshop?*

**Isaac:** One thing they have gained is a chance to read and discuss some classic texts in the field; another is a chance to have their work discussed by a group of peers who may have a lot of substantive knowledge of their particular topic but who approach it from a wide variety of disciplinary backgrounds. I think the most important thing they have gained, honestly, is the chance to meet each other.

**Ajay:** Isaac's last point is absolutely critical. Now that we have had seven workshops, we have built a community of inquirers, all at different stages in their academic careers. And, as a result, we have a group of scholars who probably thought they were working on esoteric topics (like we did when we were in grad school), but who can look to a large and growing cohort of people who share their interests and intellectual curiosity about fiscal policy.

**Isaac:** Of course, this group is also an eager audience for work on these issues by other scholars who have not attended the workshop. The goal is not a closed clique, but a sufficient critical mass to start a big and noisy scholarly conversation that has lots of room for everyone to jump in.

*More generally, how does research in taxation fit into economic sociology work more broadly? What are some promising research avenues?*

**Isaac:** Economic sociology is well known for illuminating the social conditions that enable market exchange to work; fiscal sociology is the branch of economic sociology that studies the other, non-market part of the modern mixed economy. If you like, you could say that fiscal sociology is about the social embeddedness of the public budget.

**Monica:** The curious nature of taxation in the U.S.

continues to generate fascinating work, and there is some brilliant research being done on this by current graduate students. To me the most exciting and still relatively unexplored research avenue seems to be the role of taxation in development. There is a hypothesis that foreign aid undermines development by undermining tax regimes--the "aid curse," people call it. Is this true? If so, how do you reorient foreign aid to avoid this outcome? It is an intellectually exciting issue as well as one with important substantive implications. And there is the start of a research tradition that is focusing on trying to understand tax compliance and tax evasion, a central issue for social science and again one with important policy implications.

**Ajay:** As the non-sociologist in the group, I should defer to Monica and Isaac on this question. But I will say that from the start we have tried to frame the "new fiscal sociology" as a truly interdisciplinary project. Although most of the participants in our workshops have been sociologists (not surprisingly given the moniker we have used), we have always had a critical mass of other disciplines, including occasional students from the professional schools of law, business, and public policy. I think it is this disciplinary diversity and breadth that has helped us make a contribution

to the continued vibrancy of economic, political, and historical sociology.

**Isaac:** The old fiscal sociology was interdisciplinary, too. If you read the classic essays by scholars such as Rudolf Goldscheid, E.R.A. Seligman and Joseph Schumpeter, you'll see that "fiscal sociology" wasn't supposed to be the name for an academic discipline, it was the name for an approach to public finance that took society and history seriously.

*How does this discussion on topics/issues/questions, together with the theme of the workshop relate to your own research, past, present and future?*

**Ajay:** As the legal historian in the group, my interests have revolved mainly around how conceptions of fiscal policy have changed over time. I'm generally interested in tracing how the United States, for example, has been able to develop a robust system of direct and progressive taxation. I've learned a great deal from friends and colleagues in sociology, political science, and economics, and I've tried to incorporate those lessons into my reinterpretations of how our current tax system came into being.

**Isaac:** Most of my research is, in one way or another, about tax policy and social order, very broadly construed. Under what conditions does taxation produce conflict? Under what

conditions does it produce acquiescence? I am interested in these questions because I do not think we yet have an adequate theory of the social and political conditions that permit a democratically governed society to sustain large-scale redistribution. Given the mounting evidence that market inequality may come at a high cost for society, I think one of the most important questions for economic sociology is the question of how to redistribute in a way that can be socially and politically sustained.

**Monica:** What Isaac said. Given that economic sociologists have thoroughly demonstrated over the last two decades the necessity of the state to the proper functioning of the market, the next question is, how do you get people to finance that state? Under what conditions do they decide that they will refuse to do so--and with what consequences? Certainly these questions are not just academic questions in the contemporary world.

#### *Suggestions for Further Reading*

Isaac Martin, Ajay Mehrotra, Monica Prasad (eds.), *The New Fiscal Sociology*, Cambridge University Press, 2009

Joseph Schumpeter, *The Crisis of the Tax State*, 1918

Edwin Seligman, *Essays in Taxation* chapter 1, "The Development of Taxation," 1905

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