

# SECTORS

*Newsletter of the American Sociological Association's  
Sociology of Development Section*

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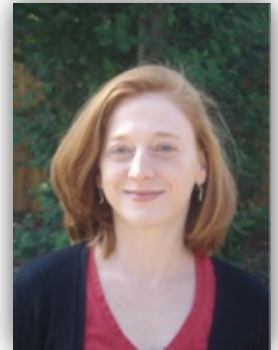
## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR:

*Jennifer Bair*

Dear development sociologists,

For those of us still grading final exams, August may feel far away. Nevertheless, the ASA will be here before you know it. We have an exciting section program scheduled for Sunday, Aug. 12; in addition to the roundtables and business meeting (which I hope everyone will attend), we have three paper sessions. Each is chockful with five papers on a fascinating array of topics; just perusing the titles provides a sense of the substantive diversity and intellectual depth characteristic of our section. Beyond our own sessions on Sunday, the general ASA program is replete with papers on development, including many by section members—another indication of the vitality of our subfield, and its growing prominence within the discipline.

One of this year's ASA section sessions, States, Parties, and Movements in the Global South, will be inviting us to rethink the role of the state in development. This is a challenge I have been grappling with myself in ongoing research into labor standards



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speculative land boom on surrounding farmland. These brokers told me, and my subsequent survey confirmed, that what was really crucial to becoming a broker was social connections in the city, which many of them had made as milk middlemen or through other forms of off-farm employment and business—diversification made possible by their prior and superior endowments of land. This stratum included the former feudal lord of the village, the past and present village headman, and many dominant caste farmers. The sellers tended to be lower-caste, poor, and less-educated farmer-workers who were under economic compulsion because they had no other economic assets and who had no good information about the SEZ and what it meant for land prices. Many of the sellers subsequently felt cheated by these brokers who made fortunes facilitating these land deals in connivance with outside investors, often at retrospectively low prices. So, brokers turned out to be very divisive figures. They helped to divide the village vis-à-vis the government and SEZ and undermine the possibility for collective action despite widespread anger at the loss of land and the fact that the SEZ did not provide locals with the promised jobs or infrastructure.

As I was observing this, I picked up a book on social capital in India that seemingly identified the exact same kinds of village brokers in the same region, but that attributed to them a far more positive function of activating social capital for development and democracy. How could one person come to the conclusion that villages had collective stocks of networks, norms, and trust, which just needed to be activated by local leaders to enable collective action around common goals, while I was finding that these leaders were utilizing individual networks to undermine norms and trust and disable collective action? It prompted me to take a deep dive into the vast social capital literature. And I came out convinced that there were inherent shortcomings to the collectivist conception of social capital advanced most notably by Robert Putnam and used very widely in the development literature. By grouping networks, norms, and trust together and seeing them as the collective possession of social units like a village, this Durkheimian conception of social capital could not deal with unequal individual social networks within social units and the likelihood that better-connected individuals will use theirs in violation of norms and trust. I then turned to Bourdieu's conception of social capital, which despite being far less developed than his theory of cultural capital, seemed better able to capture the way in which networks were distributed unequally and rooted in class structures, and were just as likely to be used for self-enrichment than the collective good. Whereas Putnam's conception of social capital lacks coherence at the micro-level (because networks, norms, and trust are separable and aren't collective possessions), Bourdieu's conception of social capital usefully identifies an important mechanism by which class inequalities shape who benefits from development projects and economic growth. But if you use Bourdieu's more plausible conception of social capital, and if you see development as ensuring broad-based or equitable growth, then social capital should be seen as an obstacle to development rather than an asset.

### ***What advice do you have for publishing?***

I would just encourage young scholars, graduate students in particular, to be confident in their work, to follow their intellect rather than academic fashion, and to not shy away from tackling big theoretical issues. Sharp criticisms and rejection come with the territory. Responding to good but difficult feedback will always push your analysis forward. When you encounter criticisms that you find unpersuasive, though, you should not back down but use it as an opportunity to sharpen and clarify your arguments. Sometimes it works out, sometimes it doesn't. Spend enough time away from your computer to keep things in perspective.

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## **Honorable Mention for the 2017 Sociology of Development Faculty Article Award**

**Sahan Savas Karatasli**, Assistant Research Scientist and Lecturer at Department of Sociology, Arrighi Center for Global Studies, Johns Hopkins University

I received my PhD in 2013 at the Department of Sociology, Johns Hopkins University with a dissertation titled "Financial Expansions, Hegemonic Transitions and Nationalism: A Longue Durée Analysis of State-Seeking Nationalist Movements" (Winner of the 2014 Theda Skocpol Dissertation Award by Comparative and Historical Sociology Section of the ASA). My research examines global and long-term dynamics of capitalism, social movements, and wars. At Johns Hopkins University, I took an active part in the launching of the Arrighi Center for Global Studies, co-coordinated

various research groups (i.e. global social protest and international development research working group) and taught courses in social movements, development, comparative methods, and statistics. In 2015-2017, I continued my studies as a post-doctoral research fellow of the “Empires: Domination, Collaboration and Resistance” research working group at the Princeton Institute of International, and Regional Studies (PIIRS) at Princeton University. In August 2018, I will be joining the Department of Sociology at University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

### ***How did you get started on this project?***

This paper is a part of a broader research project which explores long-term dynamics of capitalism, crisis, and social change. I initially started working on heterodox ways of empirically analyzing modes of capitalist world-economy with my former PhD advisor, Giovanni Arrighi (1937-2009). While we never attempted to conduct a long-historical empirical analysis of zones of capitalist world-economy, the dissolution of the trimodal structure was apparent in the preliminary research that we were conducting. Later on, I had to revisit this unfinished study because of my research on global waves of nationalism in world history. When writing my PhD dissertation, I felt the necessity to operationalize different zones of the world-economy from 16<sup>th</sup> century onwards but, to my surprise, there were no empirical studies that I could rely on for that matter. After finishing my PhD, I kept working on these problems as one of my secondary research projects. In one of the courses I taught at JHU for five semesters (entitled “Research Tools for Global Sociology and Development”), I started teaching undergraduate students how to replicate existing development studies using existing World Bank, IMF, and ILO data. In this course, I also started replicating and extending the Arrighi-Drangel study in different ways. Over time, with Sefika Kumral, we started to work on the Maddison data and to rethink the long-historical development of capitalism by giving emphasis to how capitalism transforms during periods of systemic crisis and chaos. This led to a series of conference papers that shaped our thinking. Of course, we were not happy about the Maddison data because of existing limitations, yet it seemed to be the only choice available. In 2015, at JHU, I co-taught a course with Dan Pasciuti entitled “Research Seminar on Stratification in the Modern World Economy: 1600-2014,” where we compared and critically assessed the limitations and prospects of all existing datasets for research on capitalist world-economy in the *longue durée*. After this course, I had clearer ideas about how to solve various data-related issues of this project. The simultaneous discussions at the empirical and theoretical levels gradually led to the production of this paper.

### ***What advice do you have for publishing?***

It is very important to see publication not as an end in itself but as an integral and organic part of the research process. Every research project improves through scholarly interaction through comments and feedback. Personally, I have greatly benefited from feedback and comments I received at the professional conferences, and my submissions to peer-reviewed academic journals. I believe that even comments one receives in the rejection letters have elements that will improve one’s research. Hence, *my first advice is that one should see publication as a tool to receive good feedback that will improve your research.* This is ultimately linked to second major issue. *To receive good feedback, you need to find the right journal.* For graduate students, this may not be as easy as it sounds. It usually takes time to understand which options are around there. Yet, in my experience, the journals you enjoy reading and cite in your own research usually tend to be right journals to receive good feedback. Finally, *do not underestimate the importance of publishing.* Ideas, theories, and findings you produce in your research do not have any use value if they are not circulated. Hence publishing is as important as production of your ideas.




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## 2017 Sociology of Development Graduate Student Paper Award

**Manuel Rosaldo** is a doctoral candidate in sociology at UC Berkeley. His research analyzes the potentials, constraints, and contradictions of labor rights organizing among informal workers. His dissertation focuses on waste picker rights organizing and policy-making in Brazil and Colombia. He holds a Masters in Global Affairs from New York University.