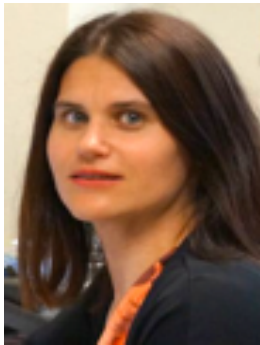


# ACCOUNTS

## *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](mailto:nbandelj@uci.edu).

All best wishes,

Nina Bandelj

## 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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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.

*Section Committees*

*Nominations Committee*

Chair, Vicki Smith, University of California, Davis

Yuval Millo, Leicester University

Frederick Wherry, Yale

*Institutional History Committee*

Chair, Sarah Quinn, University of Washington

Alya Guseva, Boston University

Brian Sargent, Northwestern

*Please visit the Economic Sociology and Political Economy Community!*

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/EconSociology>

Twitter: <http://www.twitter.com/EconSociology>

LinkedIn: <http://www.linkedin.com/groups/Economic-Sociology-Political-Economy-4898466>

Tumblr: <http://econsociology.tumblr.com>

Google+: <https://plus.google.com/u/o/b/118037426499271127133/118037426499271127133/posts>