

## NSF Grant Awarded to Support Political Network Analysis

*Co-PIs Janet Box-Steffensmeier and Robert Huckfeldt*



In spring 2013, the Political Networks Section of the American Political Science Association was awarded a renewal of an award from the National Science Foundation from two programs at NSF: the Methodology, Measurement, and Statistics, and the Political Science Program. This new award is for one year, and is renewable for up to three years.

This is a particularly promising period for the development of network studies in politics. Extensive “big” data sets, expanded computational capabilities, and newly-developed analytic techniques have reduced many of the past obstacles to the serious study of political networks. Hence the study of political networks is at an important juncture, supported by newly established interdisciplinary organizations, an organized section, and training efforts that are currently underway. As a consequence, network studies have gained supporters and practitioners in virtually every area of political study – political institutions, comparative politics, political behavior, international relations, public policy, parties and elections, public opinion, interest groups, social movements, and political communication. Indeed, few areas of inquiry cut so broadly across the subfields. In short, we are at a critical moment in the development of a new approach to the study of politics – a moment when new generations of interdisciplinary scholars and graduate students are being exposed to network methods and the new ways of studying politics that they offer.

*(Con't. p. 3)*

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### This Issue:

NSF Grant Awarded .....	1
APSA 2013 Update .....	1
5th Annual PolNet Conference .....	2
POLNET Officers .....	2
POLNET Membership Low .....	3
2013 POLNET Meeting .....	3
Upcoming Conferences .....	3
<i>Voter Turnout</i> - Review .....	4
Call for Award Nominations .....	4
<i>The Social Citizen</i> - Review .....	5
Award Announcements .....	5
SNA Conferences and Training .....	6

### APSA 2013 Update

*Mark Lubell, APSA Political Networks Section Chair*



**Power & Persuasion**  
2013 APSA Annual Meeting & Exhibition  
August 29–September 1, 2013 • Chicago, IL

The 2013 APSA political network section will feature eight high-level panels applying network science to political science research questions. Despite recent declines in section membership, this is the same number of panels as last year. But keeping a strong presence of network science at APSA requires you to maintain your section membership! There was a large number of high quality submissions, and the topics of the panel are quite general and will apply to many different subfields. For example, there are two panels on methodological innovations in political networks that will benefit people across the discipline who are using network data and methods. The panels also continue to demonstrate the interdisciplinary nature of network science, as ideas from many different disciplines are brought to bear on political phenomena.

## 5th Annual Political Networks Conference— Success in Colorado

-Anand Sokhey

The 5th Annual Political Networks Conference and Workshops was held at the University of Colorado at Boulder, June 13-16, 2012. Anand Sokhey and Seth Masket served as hosts, and Jennifer Victor and Alex Montgomery as program chairs.

Following in the footsteps of gatherings held at Harvard, Duke, and Michigan, the 2012 meeting was supported by the National Science Foundation, and included 2 days of methods workshops, and 2 days of panels/speakers. New workshop offerings included a session on dynamic social networks and human behavior (James Fowler), a seminar on strategies in network data collection (David Knoke), and

analysis with Siena (Christian Steglich). The plenary addresses were delivered by David Knoke and John Padgett, and the poster session was capped off with a series of (entertaining and informative!) Ignite-style research talks.

Approximately 150 individuals attended some portion of the conference, drawn from 85 universities and 7 countries, and representing a wide range of disciplinary backgrounds, including computer science, analytics and cryptography, organizational studies, environmental studies, sociology, and psychology. The conference was a great success, and we hope to see you at the 2013 meeting in Bloomington!



### POLNET OFFICERS



**CHAIR:**  
Meredith Rolfe  
University of Oxford



**VICE-CHAIR:**  
Betsy Sinclair  
Washington University in St. Louis  
(August 2013)



**TREASURER:**  
Michael T. Heaney  
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**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:**  
Skyler Cranmer  
University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill



**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:**  
Charli Carpenter  
University of Massachusetts, Amherst



**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:**  
Hans Noel  
Georgetown University

A nominating committee has been formed to nominate new candidates that will be elected at the APSA 2013 Business Meeting. The nominating committee includes: Meredith Rolfe, Mark Lubell, and Sandra Gonzalez-Bailon.

Join us for the Political Networks Business Meeting at APSA, Saturday, August 31, 2013, 6:15pm in Salon 1 of the Palmer House Hilton

Are you subscribed to the Polnet Listserv ([PN-L@listserv.siu.edu](mailto:PN-L@listserv.siu.edu))? If not, ask Scott McClurg to add you. Email him at [mcclurg@siu.edu](mailto:mcclurg@siu.edu).

**APSA 2013 Program Chair:**  
**Membership Chair 2013:**  
**PolNet Hosts 2013:**

**PolNet Program Chairs 2013:** Mark Lubell (UC Davis) and Sandra Gonzalez-Bailon (Oxford)

**NSF Grant Executors:** Janet Box-Steffensmeier (Ohio State) and Robert Huckfeldt (UC Davis)

**MPSA Section Chair 2013:** Scott McClurg, Southern Illinois, Carbondale  
**SPSA Section Chair 2014:** Betsy Sinclair, Washington University

### Other Positions

Mark Lubell, UC Davis  
Casey Kolfstad, University of Miami  
Armando Razo and Bernice Pescosolido, Indiana University

## POLNET APSA Section Membership is Low

-Casey Klofstad

Over the past 12 months section membership has declined from 280 to 225. As APSA requires sections to maintain memberships of 250 or more, we are in danger of being disbanded.

If your membership has lapsed please renew today, and encourage your colleagues in and outside of political science to do the same. While we are housed in the APSA, the field of political networks is far broader, covering many different disciplines and areas of the globe.

Log into MyAPSA at [apsanet.org](http://apsanet.org) and click on "Renew APSA and section memberships." The fee is only \$8. Many thanks if you have already done this while registering for APSA.

We are seeing numerous benefits from forming our section three years ago. The Political Networks conference will be in its 6th year this summer, hosted by Indiana University (visit: <http://polnet2013.indiana.edu>). Part of your section membership fee helps to fund the conference. Given the recent cut of NSF funding for political science, your support has never been more important. Also due to your efforts, political network research is gaining increased attention in the discipline and in the media, and our research is increasingly finding homes in leading academic journals.

The section recognizes these efforts with the bi-annual book (odd years) and article (even years) awards. All of these successes are due to the efforts of members like you. We are all grateful for your help, and appreciate your continued membership.

Best wishes for a productive and enjoyable summer. I look forward to seeing you in Bloomington later this month.

## Political Networks Meeting 2013

-Armando Razo

The Theme for our 2013 meeting is "Political Networks in an Interdisciplinary World," reflecting the Program Committee's desire to explore the two-way relationship between the study of political networks and Network Science in general.

The meeting will take place from June 26 to June 29, 2013 at the Bloomington campus of Indiana University. Among confirmed speakers, we have Robert Huckfeldt of UC-Davis who will speak on "Political Networks: The State of the Science", and Brint Milward of the University of Arizona who will speak on "Dark Networks: Insurgency as an Ecology of Games".

As in previous years, we will have multiple workshops ranging from introductions to social network analysis to more cutting-edge methods statistical approaches.

We have just learned that NSF will be providing financial support for graduate students.

For additional information, visit: <http://polnet2013.indiana.edu>.

## NSF Grant (continued from p. 1)

The grant supports continuing efforts at building and developing the field of political network analysis. The resources are dedicated to support graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, and under-funded assistant professors, expand diversity efforts, extend mentoring and networking efforts, and encourage the development and dissemination of new methods and theories appropriate for the specific needs of subfields brought together by an interest in studying political networks. The grant leverages strengths in training and mentoring to advance the field of political networks and foster interdisciplinary ties in what has been deemed "a new discipline" (Network Science 2012).

## Upcoming Conferences

[APSA 2013](#) Chicago, Aug 29-Sept. 1, 2013

[ECPR 2013](#) Bordeaux, Sept 4-7, 2013

[SPSA 2014](#) New Orleans, Jan 9-11, 2014

[MPSA 2014](#) Chicago, April 3-6, 2014

[Sunbelt \(INSNA\)](#). St. Petersburg, FL, Feb. 2014, TBD.

[NetSci](#) 2014. Details forthcoming.

[ECPR 2014 Glasgow](#) Sept 3-6, 2014

## Thank You!

The Political Networks Section owes a big thank you to **Janet Box-Steffensmeier** (Ohio State) and **Robert Huckfeldt** (U.C. Davis) for drafting an NSF proposal to renew the grant that helps to fund the conference, training, and fellowships!

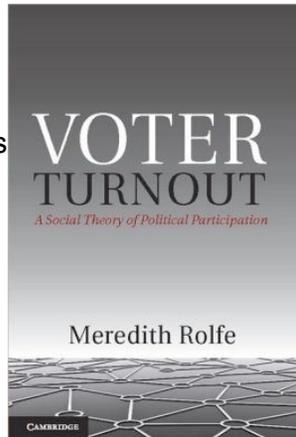
Have you seen the new section website? Check out <http://www.polinetworks.org/>  
It rocks! Thank you Anand Sokhey and Seth Masket!

## Voter Turnout: A Social Theory of Political Participation by Meredith Rolfe

- Summary by Lauren A. Ratliff, Graduate Student in the Department of Political Science at the Ohio State University

In *Voter Turnout: A Social Theory of Political Participation*, Meredith Rolfe presents an expansive and remarkable account of why some Americans vote and others do not. The social theory of turnout contends that one's decision to vote is a "conditionally cooperative response to cooperative decisions made by ... members of the social network of the citizen in question" (pg. 4). Out of the conditional choice framework, Rolfe builds a formal model of turnout where the act of voting is operationalized as a low-cost social dilemma. Voting is modeled, not as a distribution of individual actors, but as a distribution of decision rules. An individual employing the unconditional decision rule will vote regardless of how many other people vote, and the use of this rule is assumed to randomly vary throughout the population. The costs of voting shift the percentage of the population employing an unconditional decision rule; the higher the costs of voting, the lower the probability that an individual will employ the unconditional decision rule (or, vote no matter the costs).

Elections make up the social situations in which American citizens vote. All turnout, Rolfe argues, is mobilized, either directly or indirectly, by strategic political actors who utilize campaigns to raise the salience of elections and to mobilize people who will vote for them. Because campaigns cannot possibly contact every individual directly, they must rely on social networks to spread mobilization messages. Close, high-salience elections, for example, increase turnout because of the increasing size of an individual's reference group; the larger the network, the greater the probability that an individual will come into contact with an unconditional voter (i.e., someone who is already voting) and then vote themselves. Social network structure, then, explains individual differences in turnout.



In the social theory of turnout, traditional individual correlates of turnout, such as education, are seen as proxies for social structural variables, or the broader network context in which an individual is embedded: particularly, the size and structure of the social network. Individual education levels are unrelated to turnout in elections once social network structure is taken into account; certainly, a direct challenge of a long-standing convention in political science. Social networks that are large and loosely connected, like those found in formal education, are more effective in spreading the turnout message than small, dense networks. Thus, education is an important indicator of membership in a specific social network structure.

The implications of the social theory of turnout are striking; potential voters make conditional decisions on whether or not to vote, and these decisions are independently influenced by the size and density of a voter's social network. Rolfe provides a convincing and paradigm-shifting account of the decision to vote and, in so doing, invites further empirical tests of the social theory of turnout. If Rolfe's explanation is correct, social scientists must more fully embrace the realities of an interconnected society and continue to look beyond rational and civic resource based accounts of the decision to vote.

### Call for Award Nominations Political Networks 2013

The *John Sprague Award* will be given to the best political networks paper presented by a graduate student at a political science conference in the previous year (including APSA 2012, SPSA 2013, MPSA 2013, PolNet 2013). Self nominations are encouraged. The deadline for nominations is July 23, 2013. The selection committee includes **Scott McClurg** (chair, [mcclurg@siu.edu](mailto:mcclurg@siu.edu)), **Adam Henry** ([adhenry@email.arizona.edu](mailto:adhenry@email.arizona.edu)), and **Matthew Howell** ([matthew.howell@eku.edu](mailto:matthew.howell@eku.edu)).

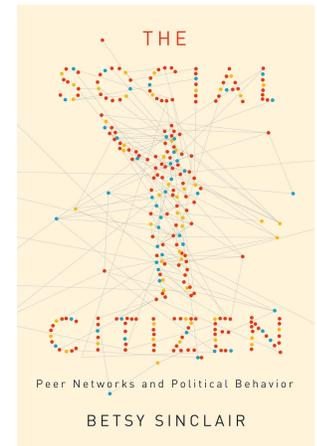
An award will be given for the best political networks paper presented by faculty at a political science conference in the previous year (including APSA 2012, SPSA 2013, MPSA 2013, PolNet 2013). Self nominations are encouraged. The deadline for nominations is July 23, 2013. The selection committee includes **Scott McClurg** (chair, [mcclurg@siu.edu](mailto:mcclurg@siu.edu)), **Adam Henry** ([adhenry@email.arizona.edu](mailto:adhenry@email.arizona.edu)), and **Matthew Howell** ([matthew.howell@eku.edu](mailto:matthew.howell@eku.edu)).

The Political Ties Award will be given to the best journal article on political networks published between April 1, 2012 and March 31, 2014. The selection committee includes **Justin Kirkland** (chair, [jkirkland@uh.edu](mailto:jkirkland@uh.edu)), **Elizabeth Menninga** ([menninga@email.unc.edu](mailto:menninga@email.unc.edu)), and **Anand Sokhey** ([Anand.Sokhey@Colorado.edu](mailto:Anand.Sokhey@Colorado.edu)).

## The Social Citizen. By Betsy Sinclair. (University of Chicago Press, 2012).

Anand Edward Sokhey, *The University of Colorado at Boulder*

Building on recent efforts using temporal and experimental approaches, Betsy Sinclair systematically addresses threats to inference that have long plagued the literature on social influence. Bringing together field experiments, original survey data, and careful analytic techniques, Sinclair demonstrates that social factors sway turnout, participation (political contributions), candidate choice, and even party identification. *The Social Citizen* makes a contribution by demonstrating – definitively – that network effects are real. On this point alone the book should (and will be) cited heavily.



That said, there is another contribution lurking behind the presentation of clean designs and “teched-up” methodological tools. Across chapters and dependent variables, Sinclair conceptualizes networks and social influence in a variety of ways. However, the idea is not just to demonstrate that networks matter, but to demonstrate how they matter. All analyses are united by a focus on mechanisms, and specifically, on a sustained effort to adjudicate whether social influence operates via explicit information transmission, or social pressures (that is, the expression, acknowledgement, and adherence to behavioral norms). The accumulation of evidence points to pressure rather than information as the mechanism of influence. This is an important finding, and one that will spur additional scholarly inquiry.

*The Social Citizen* emerges as a thorough and thoughtful effort. The book is simultaneously accessible and technical; it responds to an established literature at the same time that it leads it in new directions. It may be premature to say that Sinclair has put the “causal effects fight” to rest when it comes to the study of social influence. However, she has certainly landed some blows, and in doing so, has urged us to consider some critical questions.

### Award Announcements for Research in Political Networks

**The 2012 Political Ties Award** for the best journal article on political networks published between April 1, 2010 and March 31, 2012 goes to David Siegel for “When Does Repression Work? Collective Action in Social Networks” (*Journal of Politics*, Vol. 73, No. 4, October 2011, pp. 993-1010). In addressing differences in individual motivations and repressive technologies, this article provides a theoretically rich story of how social network structure conditions the relationship between repression and dissent. The author examines very timely and core questions of importance to both scholars of political networks and contentious politics. A novel agent-based modeling approach illuminates some of the

theoretical implications. The selection committee was Eduardo Alemán, Michael Heaney, and Amanda Murdie.

**The award for Best Paper presented by faculty on political networks** at the 2011 APSA meeting goes to David Lazer, Anand Sokhey, Michael Neblo, and Kevin Esterling for their paper, “Difference and Deliberation: Re-Examining the Effects of Politically Heterogeneous Relationships.” The selection committee was Paul Djupe, Jude Hays, and Casey Dominquez.

**The John Sprague Award, for the best political networks paper presented by a graduate student** at the 2011 APSA meetings, goes to Daniel Maliniak and Michael Plouffe for their paper “A Network Approach to the Formation of Diplomatic Ties.” The selection committee was Paul Djupe, Jude Hays, and Casey Dominquez.

### Political Networks Section Mission Statement

The Political Networks section seeks to promote the study of political networks and the use of network analysis in political science by: 1) enhancing communication between scholars who work in this area, 2) supporting the process of developing and disseminating new methods and data sources, 3) supporting the process of building consensus about the appropriate application of conceptual and analytic techniques in political networks research, and 4) accelerating training in political network analysis. In all of the above, the section seeks to promote communication and the exchange of ideas across subfield and disciplinary boundaries.

For more information regarding The American Political Science Association and The Political Networks Section, visit our website at <http://www.polinetworks.org/>.

## Social Network Analysis Conferences and Training Sessions

### ICPSR Network Analysis Courses - Summer Program 2013

#### Network Analysis: An Introduction

June 17 - June 21, 2013  
Location: ICPSR, Ann Arbor, MI  
Instructors: Hank Green; Stanley Wasserman  
<http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/sumprog/courses/0020>

#### Network Analysis

June 24 - July 19, 2013  
Location: ICPSR, Ann Arbor, MI  
Instructor: Ann McCranie  
<http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/sumprog/courses/0131>

#### Network Analysis: A Second Course

June 24 - 28, 2013  
Location: ICPSR, Ann Arbor, MI  
Instructors: Hank Green; Stanley Wasserman  
<http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/sumprog/courses/0100>

#### Social Network Analysis: Intro

July 15 - 19, 2013  
Location: UC Berkeley  
Instructor: Katherine Faust  
<http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/sumprog/courses/0104>

#### Analysis of Large-Scale Networks

July 15 - 19, 2013  
Location: ICPSR, Ann Arbor, MI  
Instructor: Jukka-Pekka Onnela  
<http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/sumprog/courses/0135>

#### Network Analysis: Advanced Topics

July 22 - August 16, 2013  
Location: ICPSR, Ann Arbor, MI  
Instructor: Bruce Desmarais  
<http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/sumprog/courses/0148>

#### Analyzing Social Networks: An Introduction

August 12 - 16, 2013  
Location: University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill  
Instructor: Douglas Steinley  
<http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/sumprog/courses/0159>

### Essex Summer School in Social Science Data Analysis 2013

#### Session 1: Introduction to Social Network Analysis

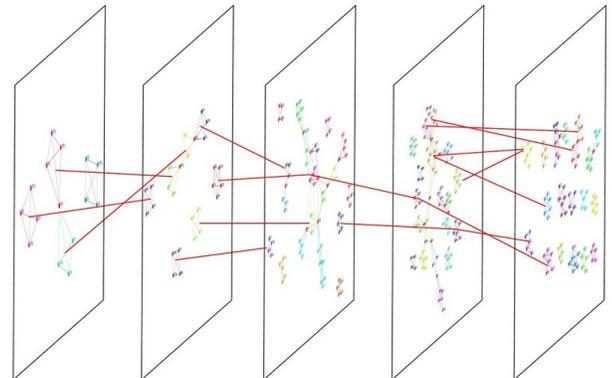
July 8 - 19, 2013  
Location: The University of Essex, Colchester, UK  
Host: Rich DeJordy, Northeastern University  
<http://www.essex.ac.uk/summerschool/courses/session1/1d.html>

#### Session 2: Advanced Social Network Analysis I - Selection Mechanisms and Social Structure

July 22 - August 2, 2013  
Location: The University of Essex, Colchester, UK  
Host: John Skvoretz, University of South Florida and Filip Agneessens, University of Groningen  
<http://www.essex.ac.uk/summerschool/courses/session2/2e.html>

#### Session 3: Advanced Social Network Analysis II - Influence Mechanisms & Longitudinal Network Analysis

August 5 - 16, 2013  
Location: The University of Essex, Colchester, UK  
Host: Filip Agneessens, University of Groningen  
<http://www.essex.ac.uk/summerschool/courses/>



### 2013 Xi'an International Network for Social Network Analysis Conference (INSNA 2013)

July 12 - 15, 2013  
Location: Xi'an, China. Info: <http://insna2013.xjtu.edu.cn/>

### SNAA 2013: 3rd Workshop on Social Network Analysis in Applications - Now in partnership with CSNA

August 25 - 28, 2013  
Location: Niagara Falls, Canada. Info: <http://www.zsi.pwr.wroc.pl/SNAA2013/>

### ASNA 2013: Conference on Applications of Social Network Analysis

August 27 - 30, 2013

Location: University of Zurich, Switzerland. Info: <http://asna.ch/index.php?id=99>

### Swiss Political Science Association Annual Congress

Featuring a sub-panel on Social Network Analysis  
January 30-31, 2014  
Location: University of Bern, Switzerland. Info: <http://www.svpw-assp.ch>

### LINKS Center 2014 Summer Conference

June 2 - 6, 2014  
Location: The University of Kentucky, KY. For more information contact Steve Borgatti at [sborgatti@uky.edu](mailto:sborgatti@uky.edu).