

## Conference Report

“Politics and Inequality across Nations and Time: Theoretical and Empirical Approaches”

December 12 - 14, 2018

Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Polish Academy of Sciences (IFiS PAN)

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Sciences

### About

The international conference, “Politics and Inequality across Nations and Time: Theoretical and Empirical Approaches,” was held at IFiS PAN, December 12 - 14, 2018 in Warsaw, Poland. The event is part of the research project, “Political Voice and Economic Inequality across Nations and Time,” funded by the National Science Centre, Poland (2016/23/B/HS6/03916) from 2017 to 2020. The PI of that grant is Joshua K. Dubrow. The purpose of the grant project is to advance the theory, methods, and empirical base for studying the relationship between political inequality and economic inequality.

The conference brought together young and established scholars of the social sciences from the Europe, USA, and Latin America. Presentations were on substantive and methodological issues related to political voice and economic inequality.

The conference featured two keynote speakers, five sessions, and a roundtable discussion. Professor Andrzej Rychard, Director of IFiS PAN, officially opened the conference.

Frederick Solt, an Associate Professor in the Department of Political Science at the University of Iowa, USA, whose interests are in comparative political behavior and political economy from a cross-national perspective, delivered the first keynote speech. Professor Solt created and maintains the Standardized World Income Inequality Database (SWIID). His research appeared in the *American Journal of Political Science*, *Political Behavior*, and *Social Science Quarterly*, among others. Professor Solt’s keynote was: “Economic Inequality, Demand for Redistribution, and Redistributive Outcomes: Building the Empirical Foundations for Dynamic Comparative Research.” In this speech, Professor Solt described SWIID, which he continually refines and updates, as a source of data on income inequality and redistribution. He then discussed his recent project, the Dynamic Comparative Public Opinion (DCPO) that is designed “to overcome the sparsity and incomparability of available survey data and provide comparable estimates of public opinion regarding redistribution for many countries over many years” (Conference abstract).

Catherine Bolzendahl, an Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology at the University of California-Irvine, USA, whose interests are in gender and political change cross-nationally and over time, delivered the second keynote speech. Professor Bolzendahl’s research

has appeared in *Social Forces*, *European Sociological Review*, and *Politics & Gender*, among other outlets. Professor Bolzendahl's keynote was: "Women's Political Empowerment: A Path toward Progress in Uncertain Times." In this keynote, Professor Bolzendahl presented an overview of her long-running cross-national research on women's unequal political voice, including her recent co-edited book *Measuring Women's Political Empowerment Across the Globe: Strategies, Challenges and Future Research* (2017, Palgrave). Her research "highlights the continued urgency to understand gender inequality through social and political research and data collection" (Conference abstract).

Sessions in the conference included the topics of economic redistribution and the elite; political protest; the association of economic inequality, political power, and political participation; gender and politics; and voting behavior. Most papers featured quantitative methods and many papers in these sessions included Professor Solt's SWIID data and his theories of the association between economic inequality and political participation. Professor Bolzendahl was the discussant on the gender and politics session that featured presentations by Professor Renata Siemienska, who has produced influential research in the field of women and politics over the last four decades, and by GSSR PhD candidate Nika Palaguta, who co-edited the methodology book, *Towards Electoral Control in Central and Eastern Europe* (2016, IFiS Publishers). The topic of ex-post harmonization of cross-national surveys was presented by IFiS PAN assistant professor Irina Tomescu-Dubrow (affiliated with The Ohio State University OSU) and IFiS PAN and OSU professor Kazimierz M. Slomczynski, who are co-PIs (with J. Craig Jenkins) on the National Science Foundation grant, "Survey Data Recycling: New Analytic Framework, Integrated Database, and Tools for Cross-national Social, Behavioral and Economic Research."

The roundtable discussion, "Aggregating Survey Data: Problems and Solutions," was led by Fred Solt, Kazimierz M. Slomczynski, Catherine Bolzendahl, and WZB Berlin Social Science Center post-doctoral scholar Constantin Manuel Bosancianu. Aggregate measures of political behavior and attitudes are part of the project "Political Voice and Economic Inequality across Nations and Time," including the production of a publicly available database of country-year level indicators of political voice inequality, constructed on the basis of cross-national survey data and information from non-survey sources. Roundtable participants discussed the topic and potential measures of political voice. This roundtable provided new knowledge and a basis for research publications on this popular methodological issue.

Funding for this event came from the National Science Centre, Poland ("Political Voice and Economic Inequality across Nations and Time" 2016/23/B/HS6/03916), from the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Polish Academy of Sciences, and a conference grant from the Polish Academy of Sciences, with organizational support from IFiS PAN and CONSIRT - Cross-National Studies: Interdisciplinary Research and Training Program of The Ohio State University and PAN.

## Participants

There were 34 attendees from Europe, the United States, and Latin America. Of the fifteen conference presenters: eight were from institutions outside of Poland, and there were eight advanced researchers, three recent PhDs, and four PhD students. Students from the Graduate School for Social Research and the University of Warsaw attended. Participants hailed from across the social sciences, including sociology, political science, and economics.

The conference participants were: Frederick Solt, University of Iowa, USA; Catherine Bolzendahl, University of California-Irvine, USA; Renira Angeles, Central European University, Hungary; Jan Falkowski, University of Warsaw, Poland; Matias Lopez, Catholic University of Chile, Chile; Katerina Vrablikova, University of Bath, UK; Viktoriia Muliavka, Graduate School for Social Research, Poland; Olga Zelinska, Graduate School for Social Research, Poland; Gwangeun Choi, University of Essex, UK; Matthew Polacko, Royal Holloway, University of London, UK; Irina Tomescu-Dubrow and Kazimierz M. Slomczynski, IFiS PAN, CONSIRT, and The Ohio State University; Renata Siemienska, University of Warsaw, Poland; Nika Palaguta, Graduate School for Social Research, Poland; Constantin Manuel Bosancianu, WZB Berlin Social Science Center, Germany; Piotr Zagorski, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Spain; Michal Kotnarowski, Institute of Political Studies, Polish Academy of Sciences; Marta Kolczynska, post-doctoral scholar of the grant at IFiS PAN; and Joshua K. Dubrow, IFiS PAN, who was lead organizer of the conference.

## Outcomes

There were several outcomes of this conference. First, the conference highlighted the fact that IFiS PAN continues to be a major research center in the social sciences in Poland. Second, the conference built and strengthened a network of scholars who work on the topic of politics and inequality in cross-national and comparative perspective. Third, participants will use the conference and the networks as a springboard for publishing their research in high-quality publications. On that score, Joshua K. Dubrow and Matias Lopez intend to produce a guest edited issue of a peer-reviewed social science journal on the topic of democracy, politics, and inequality, featuring work from scholars at this conference and others in the field. Two of the conference participants, Professor Bolzendahl and Professor Dubrow, are co-editors of the Political Sociology section of *Sociology Compass* (Wiley Publishers, Web of Science journal), and invited participants to contribute an article. Fourth, there has been popularization of the event held at IFiS PAN, as conference participants “live Tweeted” the event on Twitter. The conference program and titles and abstracts are published on the project website, [politicalinequality.org](http://politicalinequality.org), where there will follow popular articles about conference participants’ presentations and research.

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**Renira Corinne Angeles** @reniracorinne · Dec 13

Day 2 #Politics and #Inequality Conference at IFiS Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw @MartaKolcz @fredericksolt @JoshuaKDubrow @C\_Bolzendahl



**Frederick Solt** @fredericksolt

Kateřina Vráblíková on the how the politicization of economic hardship leads to political protest. Economic crises open space for mobilization of the disadvantaged

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**Catherine Bolzendahl** @C\_Bolzendahl · Dec 12

We are at the end of a great first day. For more info on the conference see:

**Political Voice and Economic Inequality Conferenc...**

The research project, "Political Voice and Economic Inequality across Nations and Time," funded by Poland's National Science Centre, is organizing its first event. P...

[politicalinequality.org](http://politicalinequality.org)

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**Frederick Solt** @fredericksolt · Dec 13

Olga Zelinska drills into demands made by local Maidan protestors in Ukraine



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And that's a wrap on a great conference at IFiS PAN, Warsaw. Thanks to @JoshuaKDubrow for everything!



4:46 AM - 14 Dec 2018

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