

Section on the Political Economy of the World-System

Section Chair: Amy Quark, aaquark@wm.edu

Description of Proposed Changes: These changes seek to update the Section's mission statement, clarify its policy on petitions from the membership, and establish two new awards (Distinguished Teaching Award, Award for Advancing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion), three new committees (Teaching and Mentoring Committee, Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, and Membership Committee), an anti-harassment statement, and procedures to improve institutional memory.

Proposed Changes to Current Bylaws:

Section on Political Economy of The World-System By-Laws

Revised August 1996, August 1997, June 2002, July 2008, June 2015, June 2017

The Section on Political Economy of The World-System will be concerned with pursuing the study of world-systems over long periods of time, and to the understanding of the difference such a point of departure makes for the integrated analysis of the political economy and its social bases. The Section seeks to facilitate communication, expand networks, and provide a forum for intellectual exchange and debate among sociologists, scholars, and teachers who study world-systems. The Section welcomes members of diverse theoretical persuasions and substantive interests that are encompassed by the broad rubrics of world-systems analysis.

Officers of the Section. The officers of the Section shall be a Chairperson, a Chairperson-Elect, a Past-Chairperson, and a Secretary-Treasurer. Voting members of the association alone shall be eligible to hold office. The Chairperson-Elect will automatically become Chairperson in the year following his/her year in office as Chairperson-Elect, and in the year subsequent to that become Past-Chairperson. The Secretary-Treasurer shall be elected for a period of three years.

There shall be a Council consisting of eight members, six regular members and two student members. The regular members will serve staggered three-year terms, with two Council seats being vacated each year. The student members will serve staggered two-year terms.

Officers shall not succeed themselves. The Chairperson, Chairperson-Elect, Past-Chairperson, and Secretary-Treasurer shall also serve as members of the Council with the Chairperson of the Section serving as Chairperson of the Council.

If an elected office is vacated before the term is completed, the candidate with the next highest vote count is invited to fill the open position for the remainder of the term. The Chairperson, in consultation with the Chairperson-Elect, Past-Chairperson, and membership at large, will be responsible for determining the academic program of the section. The outgoing Chairperson will also be responsible for proposing additional sessions related to the following year's overall conference theme and for proposing

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Comment [1]: The Council proposes deleting this opening paragraph stating our mission statement and replacing it with one of two options to be presented to the membership for a vote. The options are pasted at the end of the document.

additional sessions related to world-systems research in response to the general ASA Call for Papers. The Secretary-Treasurer will be responsible for keeping section records (including the website) up to date, drafting an annual budget for the section, and tracking and promoting section membership. ▾

Powers of the Council. The Council is vested in principle with the power to carry out all necessary operations for the Section, acting as the representative of the membership of the Section. To that end, it shall meet on the occasion of the ASA Annual Meeting and may meet at other times when more than half of the Council can be assembled, whether in person or through electronic means. The Council shall make decisions by majority rule of its assembled members.

Elections and Voting. The elections of the Section shall be carried out in cooperation with the American Sociological Association and coordinated to their schedule. Newly elected officers and Council members shall assume office at the end of the Business Meeting of the Section at the American Sociological Association's Annual Meeting.

Committees.

(a) There shall be a Nominations Committee, the composition of which shall be the Past-Chairperson of the Section and at least two volunteers from the membership. ~~No member shall serve on the nominating committee for two consecutive years, and the Past-Chairperson of the Section will be the chair of the committee. The Nominations Committee shall present at least two people for each office to be voted on by the voting members of the Section.~~

(b) There shall be an annual Book Award Committee, the composition of which shall be Chairperson-Elect, one member of Council in their first year of service, and one volunteer from the membership, which may be the past award winner. The Chairperson-Elect shall be chair of the committee. The award shall be for the best book or books published with copyright date falling in the two calendar years prior to the year of the award. Authors are invited to self-nominate for the award. Authors and nominators must be members of the section at the time of nomination. ▾

(c) There shall be an annual Article Award Committee, the composition of which shall be the PEWS Chairperson (who will serve as chair of the committee), the student representative in their second year of service, and one volunteer from the membership, which may be the past award winner. Article awards will be offered for both the best professional paper and the best student paper published (including publication in ASA meeting proceeding) with copyright date falling in the two calendar years prior to the year of the award. Authors are invited to self-nominate for the awards. Authors and nominators must be members of the section at the time of nomination. ▾

(d) There shall be an annual Teaching and Mentoring Committee, the composition of which shall be one member of Council in their second year of service (who will serve as chair of the committee), the student representative in their first year of service, and one volunteer from the membership, which may be the past award winner. Each year, the

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Committee will organize the mentoring program at the annual meetings of the ASA. The Committee will pursue strategic teaching and mentoring initiatives as identified by the Committee in consultation with the PEWS Chairperson and Council. This may include creating or updating resources on the website such as lists of syllabi, other teaching resources, relevant journals, and grants/fellowships. The Committee will offer a Distinguished Teaching Award biennially in odd years. Members are invited to self-nominate for the award. Nominees must be members of the section at the time of nomination.

(e) There shall be a Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, the composition of which shall be one member of Council in their second year of service, one member of Council in their first year of service, and one volunteer from the membership, which may be the past award winner. The Committee will collect demographic data on the composition of the section membership, the Council, and committees, as well as other relevant data, and provide a report to the Council and the membership annually. The Committee will pursue strategic initiatives, in consultation with the PEWS Chairperson and the Council, to pursue the goals of equity, diversity, and inclusion within the section. The Committee will offer an Award for Advancing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion biennially in odd years. Members are invited to self-nominate for the awards. Nominees must be members of the section at the time of nomination.

(f) There shall be a Publications Committee to oversee the publication of the *Journal of World-Systems Research*, the section newsletter, and the section website, and to maintain the social media presence of the section. The Publications Committee will consist of up to eight members which will include the current editor of the *JWSR*, the section newsletter editor(s), the section webmaster, two third-year Council members, and up to two volunteers from the membership, which should include past *JWSR* editors when possible. Each year following the annual ASA meeting, the committee will elect its chair from its members and announce that election to the section via the section listserv. The editor of the *JWSR* shall be appointed to a five-year term by the Council on the recommendation of the Publications Committee. The current editor of the *JWSR* shall serve as a non-voting, Ex-Officio member of the section Council. The newsletter editor(s) and the webmaster shall be appointed to three-year terms by the Council on the recommendation of the Publications Committee, and they may be reappointed to a second term by the Council.

(g) There shall be a Membership Committee to track and promote Section membership. The Membership Committee shall be composed of the Secretary-Treasurer, who will chair the committee, and two volunteers from the membership, which should include the Outreach Editor of the *JWSR* when possible.

Other committees shall be appointed by the Chairperson with the approval of the Council, on an *ad hoc* basis.

Continuity and Accountability. The chair of each committee will produce or update a set of guidelines detailing the committee's tasks and the schedule for performing them. In

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addition, each committee chair will provide an annual written report of the accomplishments and/or difficulties within, and recommendations for, their committee. Electronic copies of the guidelines (or its annual additions/edits) and reports should be submitted by July 1 to the entire Council. The Section Chair and Secretary-Treasurer will keep an updated electronic record of all Section tasks via these guidelines and annual reports. The PEWS Chairperson will analyze these reports and prepare recommendations for discussion at the Council meeting at the ASA annual meetings. Following the ASA annual meetings each year, the new PEWS Chairperson is responsible for sending each committee chair the guidelines for their assigned tasks in the upcoming year.

Nomination by Petition. Qualified members of the Section may be nominated for any office by a petition of ten percent of the members of the Section or by 25 members of the Section, whichever is less. The choices of the Nominating Committee for each office shall be made known to the membership at least 60 days prior to the deadline for receiving nominations by petition.

Referenda. Any proposal, including changes of the By-Laws, may be referred to an electronic ballot of Section members by means of a petition containing the signatures of ten percent of the Section members or of 25 members of the Section, whichever is less. Any resolution passed by the Annual Business Meeting of the Section shall be referred to Council. If such resolutions are not accepted by the Council, they shall be submitted to the membership by electronic ballot.

Membership. The membership of the Section shall be drawn from the members of the American Sociological Association who have expressed an interest in the political economy of the world-system.

Dues. Dues shall be set by the Council in accord with the requirements of the American Sociological Association. Dues shall consist of two parts: one to support the operation of the section and the other to support the operation of the Journal of World-Systems Research.

Awards. In accordance with the Association's regulations on sections, six types of awards will be given. The awards are: The PEWS Distinguished Book Award [Annual], The PEWS Distinguished Article Award [Annual], The PEWS Terence K. Hopkins Student Paper Award [Annual], The PEWS Distinguished Teaching Award [Biennial, even years], The PEWS Award for Advancing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion [Biennial, odd years] and The PEWS Distinguished Career Award [occasional]. The PEWS Distinguished Career Award must be approved by the PEWS Council and ratified by the membership at the annual business meeting. The Chairperson of the Section is responsible for ensuring that the total number of section awards made is in compliance with ASA guidelines.

Anti-Harassment Policy. The Section is committed to providing a safe and welcoming environment for all members during their interactions at conferences and in online exchanges. These interactions should be free from any type of harassment including, but

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[not limited to, harassment based on age, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, language, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression, disability, health conditions, socioeconomic status, marital status, domestic status, or parental status. We encourage our members to follow the norms of professional respect that are necessary to promote the conditions for free academic interchange as defined by the American Sociological Association Code of Ethics.](#)

Rationale for Proposed Changes

The proposed changes to the bylaws seek to achieve a number of goals identified by the Council through a multi-year effort to understand and address declining section membership. The Council developed these proposed changes in response to feedback from the membership solicited via a survey in 2016-17, a blog discussion in spring 2018, and a workshop hosted at the 2018 ASA Annual Meetings.

1) Two potential mission statements are proposed as alternatives; the membership will be asked to choose between them. The first mission statement was developed by an ad-hoc Reconciliation Committee appointed by the Council following contentious debate in the section over the mission statement. The second mission statement was submitted via a petition from members, which met our section criteria for referenda.

2) The proposed changes introduce two new awards (i.e. Distinguished Teaching Award, Award for Advancing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) and three new committees (i.e. Teaching and Mentoring Committee, Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, and Membership Committee). The two new awards seek to recognize the important teaching and service work done by our members alongside the research contributions that our existing awards recognize. The awards will be offered in alternating years to ensure the total awards given each year follow ASA guidelines. The Teaching and Mentoring Committee and the Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion will solicit and evaluate nominations for these awards and pursue strategic initiatives in consultation with the PEWS Chairperson and Council. The Membership Committee, which has often been appointed on an ad-hoc basis, will track and develop long-term strategies to promote membership.

3) Changes are proposed to the composition of the Book Award and Article Award Committees. These changes move some Council members from these committees to newly established committees (i.e. Teaching and Mentoring Committee and Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion). This also opens up new opportunities for members to participate in the committees, network with other members, and gain professionalization.

4) Minor procedural changes are proposed to achieve greater inclusivity. Specifically, the Nominations Committee and the Publications Committee Chair will no longer be elected at the Annual Business Meeting, which many members are unable to attend.

5) Changes to the Publications Committee and the addition of procedures defined in the paragraph on “Continuity and Accountability” aim to strengthen institutional memory within the Council and its committees.

6) A minor change to our policies on referenda is proposed to provide greater clarity in the bylaws and ensure members’ right to petition.

7) The Anti-Harassment Policy was developed to clearly communicate the Section’s position on harassment given the broader public debates on these issues within ASA and in national politics.

Mission Statement Alternatives:

PEWS members should choose one of the following mission statements for inclusion in the by-laws:

1) Mission statement proposed by the Reconciliation Committee and approved by the Council:

“The Section on Political Economy of the World-System (PEWS) brings together scholars committed to the critical study of the capitalist world-economy and other historical social systems. The PEWS Section seeks to foster an intellectual tradition that finds its roots in the anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist analyses forged during struggles for decolonization by scholars in the Global South. With a focus on world-systemic dynamics, PEWS members are united by the use of political economy as an analytical frame, while exploring the intersection of political economic change with race, gender, class, imperialism, neo-colonialism, and the environment. This Section maintains PEWS’ legacy as a radical critique of disciplinary boundaries and thus embraces diverse disciplinary, epistemological, theoretical, and methodological approaches. We seek to provide a forum for intellectual exchange and debate among kindred sociologists, scholars, activist-practitioners, and teachers in both the Global North and the Global South. We welcome members with wide-ranging substantive interests in world historical perspectives and are strongly committed to promoting a diverse membership.”

2) Mission statement proposed by Petition:

“The purpose of the Political Economy of the World-System Section (PEWS) is to promote the understanding of how the world works, from a perspective that views the world as a unified exploitative whole that is polarized and inequitable. Consequently, the world-system is the basic unit of analysis. The modern capitalist world-system evolved from a multiplicity of previous world-systems that were sufficiently autonomous to be considered “worlds in themselves.” Thus, world-systems analysis is the study of the origins, structures, dynamics, and futures of such systems. A primary focus is on the political-economy of the world-system, on the production and distribution of benefits and resources, on who gets what, when, why, and how, and with what consequences. World-systems analysts investigate how the system works as a whole through the analysis of economic, political, cultural, gendered, racial, ethnic, class and ecological relations and

unequal flows across its component parts, between territories and states, between states and citizens, between firms and workers, between classes and ethnic groups, and between/within households. Because the world-system is historically finite, PEWS scholars emphasize the centrality of social change, through shifting relations among core, semiperiphery and periphery and through ongoing antisystemic resistance by groups and peoples who seek movement toward a more equitable world.

PEWS brings together scholars animated by the critical study of global capitalism and other historical social systems. The Section seeks to foster analyses that accommodate multiple scales of political economy and are attentive to long-term world-system dynamics. These include, for example, macro-historical analyses such as the comparative study of world-systems over time, as well as studies that situate contemporary phenomena within their global and historical contexts. Building from this shared commitment to the use of political economy as a core analytical frame, PEWS members also explore the intersection of political economic dynamics with the historical development of inequalities including race and ethnicity; sex, gender, and sexuality; and empire and (neo)colonialism. PEWS scholarship is thus wide-ranging but marked by attention to understanding change across space and time as both patterned and historically contingent. As a section of ASA, PEWS is an inclusive community of sociologists interested in the political economy of the world-system broadly conceived. At the same time, PEWS maintains its legacy of radical critique of disciplinary boundaries, and thus embraces diverse disciplinary, epistemological, theoretical, and methodological approaches. We welcome members with wide-ranging substantive interests in world historical perspectives and are strongly committed to promoting a diverse membership."