

# *Ideas and Politics in Social Science Research*

**Edited by**

**Daniel Béland and Robert Henry Cox**

**Contact Information for the Editors:**

Daniel Béland  
Canada Research Chair in Public Policy and Professor  
Johnson-Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy  
University of Saskatchewan  
101 Diefenbaker Place  
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan  
Canada S7N 5B8  
Tel.: 306 966-1272  
Fax: 306 966-8517  
daniel.beland@usask.ca

Robert Henry Cox  
 Professor  
 School of International and Area Studies  
 University of Oklahoma  
 729 Elm Ave, room 105  
 Norman, OK 73019  
 Tel: 405 325 1584  
 Fax: 405 325 7738  
[rhcox@ou.edu](mailto:rhcox@ou.edu)

**Contact Information for the Contributors (in order of appearance):**

Jal Mehta  
 Current Affiliation: Assistant Professor, Harvard Graduate School of Education  
 Mailing Address: 447 Gutman Library, Cambridge, MA, 02138  
 Email: [Jal\\_mehta@gse.harvard.edu](mailto:Jal_mehta@gse.harvard.edu)

Vivien A. Schmidt  
 Current Affiliation: Boston University  
 Mailing Address: 152 Bay State Road  
 Boston MA 02215 USA  
 Email: [vschmidt@bu.edu](mailto:vschmidt@bu.edu)

Colin Hay  
 Current Affiliation: University of Sheffield, UK  
 Mailing Address: Professor of Political Analysis and Co-Director,  
 Political Economy Research Centre  
 University of Sheffield Elmfield  
 Northumberland Road, Sheffield  
 S10 2TU UK  
 Email: [c.hay@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:c.hay@sheffield.ac.uk)

Mark Blyth  
 Current Affiliation: Professor of International Political Economy, Department of Political  
 Science, Brown University,  
 Mailing Address: Box 1970, 111 Thayer Street,  
 Providence RI 02912-1970  
 Email: [mark\\_blyth@brown.edu](mailto:mark_blyth@brown.edu)

Sheri Berman  
 Current Affiliation: Associate Professor of Political Science  
 Barnard College, Columbia University  
 3009 Broadway  
 New York, NY 10027-6598  
 Phone: 212 854 2158  
 Fax: 212 854 3024  
 Email: [sberman@barnard.edu](mailto:sberman@barnard.edu)

Craig Parsons  
Current Affiliation: University of Oregon  
Mailing Address: Dept. of Political Science, 1284 University of  
Oregon, Eugene, OR 97403-1284  
Email: [cap@uoregon.edu](mailto:cap@uoregon.edu)

Daniel Wincott  
Current Affiliation: Cardiff Law School, Cardiff University  
Mailing Address: Cardiff Law School, Cardiff University,  
Museum Avenue, Cardiff, CF10 3AX,  
Wales, United Kingdom  
Email: [WincottD@Cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:WincottD@Cardiff.ac.uk)

John L. Campbell  
Class of 1925 Professor of Sociology  
Professor of Political Economy, Copenhagen Business School, Denmark  
Dartmouth College  
6104 Silsby - Room 123  
Hanover, NH 03755  
603-646-2542  
[John.L.Campbell@Dartmouth.edu](mailto:John.L.Campbell@Dartmouth.edu)

Ove Kaj Pedersen  
Professor of Comparative Political Economy  
International Center for Business and Politics  
Copenhagen Business School  
Steen Blichersvej 22  
2200 Frederiksberg, Denmark  
[op.cbp@cbs.dk](mailto:op.cbp@cbs.dk)

Andrew Rich  
President and CEO, The Roosevelt Institute  
570 Lexington Ave., 18th Floor  
New York, NY 10022  
[arich@rooseveltinstitute.org](mailto:arich@rooseveltinstitute.org)

Robert C. Lieberman  
Chair, Department of International and Public Affairs; Professor of Political Science and Public  
Affairs, Columbia University, SIPA  
International Affairs Building, Room 1427  
1318 IAB, MC 3323  
New York, NY 10027  
Phone: 212-854-4725  
[robert.lieberman@sipa.columbia.edu](mailto:robert.lieberman@sipa.columbia.edu)  
[rcl15@columbia.edu](mailto:rcl15@columbia.edu)

## Table of Contents

<i>About the Contributors</i>	<i>vi</i>
<i>Preface</i>	<i>xii</i>
<b>Introduction: Ideas and Politics</b> <i>DANIEL BÉLAND AND ROBERT HENRY COX</i>	<b>1</b>
<b>PART I THEORY</b>	
<b>1. The Varied Roles of Ideas in Politics</b> <i>JAL MEHTA</i>	<b>28</b>
<b>2. Reconciling Ideas and Institutions through Discursive Institutionalism</b> <i>VIVIEN A. SCHMIDT</i>	<b>64</b>
<b>3. Ideas and the Construction of Interests</b> <i>COLIN HAY</i>	<b>90</b>
<b>4. Ideas, Uncertainty and Evolution</b> <i>MARK BLYTH</i>	<b>115</b>
<b>PART II ANALYSIS</b>	
<b>5. Ideology, History and Politics</b> <i>SHERI BERMAN</i>	<b>144</b>
<b>6. Ideas, Position, and Supranationality</b> <i>CRAIG PARSONS</i>	<b>177</b>
<b>7. Ideas, Policy Change and the Welfare State</b> <i>DANIEL WINCOTT</i>	<b>201</b>
<b>8. Knowledge Regimes and Comparative Political Economy</b> <i>JOHN CAMPBELL AND OVE K. PEDERSEN</i>	<b>234</b>
<b>9. Ideas, Expertise and Think Tanks</b> <i>ANDREW RICH</i>	<b>271</b>
<b>10. Ideas and Institutions in Race Politics</b> <i>ROBERT C. LIEBERMAN</i>	<b>299</b>
<b>References</b>	<b>327</b>

## About the Contributors

**Daniel Béland** is Canada Research Chair in Public Policy and Professor at the Johnson-Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy (University of Saskatchewan). A political sociologist studying politics and public policy from a comparative and historical perspective, he has published more than fifty articles in peer-reviewed journals. His seven books include *Social Security: History and Politics from the New Deal to the Privatization Debate* (University Press of Kansas, 2005), *Nationalism and Social Policy: The Politics of Territorial Solidarity* (with André Lecours; Oxford University Press, 2008), and *What is Social Policy? Understanding the Welfare State* (Polity Press, 2010).

**Sheri Berman** is an Associate Professor of Political Science at Barnard College, Columbia University. She is the author of *The Social Democratic Moment* (Harvard University Press, 1998) and *The Primacy of Politics: Social Democracy and the Making of Europe's Twentieth Century* (Cambridge University Press, 2006). She has also written articles for political science journals including *Perspectives on Politics*, *World Politics* and *Comparative Politics* as well as publications such as *Foreign Affairs*, *Dissent* and *World Policy Journal*.

**Mark Blyth** is Professor of International Political Economy in the Department of Political Science at Brown University. His research interests lie in the fields of International and Comparative Political Economy. He is or has been a visiting professor in the United Kingdom, France, Germany, France and Denmark. He is the author of *Great Transformations: Economic Ideas and Institutional Change in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge University Press, 2002); editor of *The Handbook of International Political Economy: IPE as a Global Conversation* (New

York: Routledge Press 2009); co-editor of *The Transformation of Great American School Districts: How Big Cities Are Reshaping Public Education*, with William Lowe Boyd, and Charles Taylor Kerchner, (Cambridge: Harvard Education Press 2008); and *Constructing the International Economy*, (with Rawi Abdelal and Craig Parsons, (Cornell University Press 2010). He is currently working on two other projects. The first is a book on party politics and political economy in advanced welfare states called “The New Political Economy of Party Politics.” The second is a single authored project of the possibilities of Liberal governance in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century called *The End of the (Liberal) World?* His articles have appeared in such journals as *The American Political Science Review*, *International Studies Quarterly*, *Comparative Politics*, *World Politics*, and *Perspectives on Politics*.

**John L. Campbell** is the Class of 1925 Professor in the Department of Sociology at Dartmouth College. He is also Professor of Political Economy at the International Center for Business and Politics, Copenhagen Business School. His most recent books are *Institutional Change and Globalization* (Princeton University Press, 2004) and *National Identity and the Varieties of Capitalism: The Danish Experience* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2006).

**Robert Henry Cox** is Professor in the School of International and Area Studies at the University of Oklahoma, where he was Director from 2001-2009. Additionally, Cox is Co-Editor for the top-ranked journal *Governance*, and Co-Director of the European Union Center at the University of Oklahoma. He is on the Board of Experts for the *Itinera Institute*, a think tank based on Brussels, Belgium. His research focuses on the role of ideas and discourse in the development and evolution of welfare states in advanced industrialized countries. His publications have appeared in such journals as *World Politics*, *Comparative Political Studies*, *Politics and Society*,

*Governance, Journal of Social Policy, Publius*, and many other academic journals. His first book is *The Development of the Dutch Welfare State: From Workers' Insurance to Universal Entitlements* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 1993).

**Colin Hay** is Professor of Political Analysis at the University of Sheffield where he is Director of the Political Economy Research Centre. He has held visiting posts at Harvard University, MIT and the University of Manchester. He is the author or editor of a number of books, including, most recently, *New Directions in Political Science* (Palgrave, 2010), *The Oxford Handbook of British Politics* (Oxford University Press, 2009), *Why We Hate Politics* (Polity, 2007 - winner of the WJM Mackenzie Prize), *The State: Theories and Issues* (Palgrave, 2005) and *Political Analysis* (Palgrave, 2002). He is founding co-editor of the journals *Comparative European Politics* and *British Politics* and an editor of *New Political Economy*.

**Robert C. Lieberman** is Professor of Political Science and Public Affairs at Columbia University. His research interests include American political development, public policy and political institutions, race and politics, and social welfare policy and the welfare state. Lieberman is the author of *Shaping Race Policy: The United States in Comparative Perspective* (Princeton University Press, 2005). His first book, *Shifting the Color Line: Race and the American Welfare State* (Harvard University Press, 1998), won numerous prizes, including Lionel Trilling Award, the Social Science History Association's President's Book Award, and the Thomas J. Wilson Prize from Harvard University Press. His work has appeared in numerous journals including the *American Political Science Review*, *Studies in American Political Development*, the *British Journal of Political Science*, *Political Research Quarterly*, *Social Science History*, as well as several edited collections.

**Jal Mehta** is an Assistant Professor at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. His primary research interests lie at the intersection of the sociology of knowledge, morality, politics, and the professions. His dissertation, *The Transformation of American Educational Policy, 1980-2001*, recently received the Outstanding Dissertation Award from the AERA politics' section. He is a co-author of *Rampage: The Social Roots of School Shootings*, which was a finalist for the C. Wright Mills Award. He is currently working on a book charting the growing "rationalization" of American schooling, asking what this shift means for the educational field, for the teaching profession, and for social justice. He is also working on a project, *The Chastened Dream*, about the limits and possibilities of using social science as a means of achieving social progress. Jal received his Ph.D. in Sociology and Social Policy from Harvard University.

**Craig Parsons** (Ph.D. 1999, University of California, Berkeley) is Associate Professor of Political Science at the University of Oregon. He is the author of *A Certain Idea of Europe* (Cornell University Press, 2003), *How to Map Arguments in Political Science* (Oxford University Press, 2007), co-editor of *With US or Against US: European Trends in American Perspective* (Oxford University Press, 2005), *Immigration and the Transformation of Europe* (Cambridge University Press, 2006), and *Constructing the International Economy* (Cornell University Press, 2010) and has published articles in *International Organization*, *Comparative Political Studies*, *Journal of Common Market Studies*, *European Journal of International Relations* and other journals.

**Ove K. Pedersen** is Professor of Comparative Political Economy and the former director and founder of the International Center for Business and Politics at the Copenhagen Business School.

He has been a Visiting Professor at Harvard University, Peking University and a Fellow at SCANCOR, Stanford University. His research interests include comparative political economy, institutional theory, and the development of comparative methodology. His latest book publications in English are *The Rise of Neoliberalism and Institutional Analysis* (Princeton University Press, 2001, with John L. Campbell), *Europeanization and the Transnational State* (Routledge, 2004, with Per Lægreid and Bengt Jacobsson), and *National Identity and the Varieties of Capitalism: The Danish Experience* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2006; with John L. Campbell and John A. Hall).

**Andrew Rich** became President and CEO of the Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute on January 1, 2009. The Institute is a public policy think tank and leadership development organization with offices in New York City; Hyde Park, NY; and Washington, DC. Before joining the Roosevelt Institute, Rich was Associate Professor and Chair of Political Science at City College of New York, and he was Deputy Director of the Colin Powell Center for Policy Studies at CCNY. He was also Associate Professor of Political Science at the CUNY Graduate Center. He is the author of *Think Tanks, Public Policy, and the Politics of Expertise* (Cambridge University Press, 2004), a book about the proliferation of think tanks in U.S. national policymaking and the ways that research and research-based nonprofit organizations influence contemporary decision-making. He received his Ph.D. in political science from Yale University.

**Vivien A. Schmidt** is Jean Monnet Professor of European Integration and Director of the Center for International Relations at Boston University. She has published widely in the areas of European political economy, institutions, public policy, and institutional theory. Recent work includes: *Democracy in Europe: The EU and National Politics* (Oxford 2006), *The Futures of*

*European Capitalism* (Oxford 2002), *Welfare and Work in the Open Economy* (co-edited with F. W. Scharpf, Oxford 2000); “Discursive Institutionalism: The Explanatory Power of Ideas and Discourse” *Annual Review of Political Science* (2008) and “Putting the Political Back into Political Economy by Bringing the State Back in Yet Again” *World Politics* (2009). She is also past head of EUSA, the European Union Studies Association and recently received an honorary doctorate from the Free University of Brussels (ULB).

**Daniel Wincott** holds the Blackwell Law and Society Chair at Cardiff Law School, having previously been Professor of Comparative and European Politics in the Department of Political Science and International Studies at the University of Birmingham. His research ranges over European integration (particularly integration theory and the European Social Model) and comparative public policy (welfare state theory, the territorial politics of social policy) and has been supported by major grants from the United Kingdom’s Economic and Social Research Council, the Nuffield Foundation and the British Academy. He has published more than fifty papers, including articles in such journals as the *International Political Science Review*, *Journal of Common Market Studies*, *Journal of European Public Policy*, *Political Studies*, and *Public Administration*. His *Accountability and Legitimacy in the European Union* (co-edited with Anthony Arnall) was published by Oxford University Press in 2002.

## **Preface**

“What we need is a manifesto for ideas and politics; a book that surveys the literature and charts a direction for future research.” This statement, uttered over lunch at a conference in Washington, DC, was the start of this project. What followed was a typical back of the napkin jotting of names of people we thought were the principal figures in this emerging approach to research. It took us all of ten minutes to arrive at a list longer than we needed. And, we expressly strived to identify people who were working in a variety of diverse fields of research. That we were able to quickly compile the names indicates how widespread the interest in the study of ideas has become. After the conference we quickly contacted everyone on the list and were pleasantly surprised when almost everyone enthusiastically agreed to contribute to the project. Evidently, we were not the only ones who craved such a book.

The idea was to examine the broad collection of literature that addressed ideational approaches. This literature is vast, and exhibits a broad variety in terminology, foci of study, and levels of analysis. In part, this is because ideational approaches have settled into a number of disciplines and subdisciplines of the social sciences. In some of these subdisciplines ideational approaches are new, being toyed with by scholars who seek to move beyond rationalist or structuralist approaches. In other subdisciplines, ideational perspectives are well-established, but seem in recent years to have moved from one of many to become the dominant approach to research. All the more reason for a book that examines the phenomenon and offers an argument for what this trend means for social science research. Yet we needed to be selective, so we focused primarily on policy-related research. This is still a broad field that spans many subdisciplines of sociology and political science. But, it does not include some of the other subdisciplines where the study of ideas has also been prominent. Moreover, even when focusing on selected issues and subfields, we could not feature all the ideational approaches available in

the literature. Yet, we hope that scholars working in those other fields will find the statements we make here useful to their fields of inquiry.

This project began as a set of sessions organized at the 2006 and 2007 annual meetings of the American Political Science Association. Most of the chapters in the book were first presented on panels at one of these conferences. Since that time, we have engaged in a few lively rounds of critiquing each others' essays, and formulating a series of statements about the role of ideas in political life. Our message is simple, ideas are at the core of political action. They shape the way we understand interests, are the inspiration for the construction of political and social institutions, and are the currency of our discourse about politics. Of course the message isn't so simple. This book is our exploration of the complexities of the subject.

Putting together this volume was one of the most exciting intellectual projects in which we have ever participated. Our contributors were highly committed to this project, and we must thank them all for their hard work and the insightful comments they provide us and each other. The pleasure of working with them increased when Dave McBride of Oxford University Press threw his support behind the project. At Oxford University Press, we also thank Alexandra Dauler and the members of the manuscript production team. Thanks also goes to Phill Jo and Albert Schilthuis, graduate students at the University of Oklahoma who provided invaluable editorial assistance. Over the years, we had countless discussions about the role of ideas in politics with dozens of scholars and students we met at conferences or in the classroom. It would be too long to enumerate their names here but we do thank them collectively for their insight. As this volume illustrates, scholarly work is a collective endeavour and research is like the politics of ideas: a constant debate between people who often disagree on core issues but keep the conversation going, as it is part of what makes us full human beings living in a democratic

society. Finally, we would like to thank our wives, Angela and Eugenia, respectively, who provided much intellectual and personal support as we worked on this project.

Daniel Béland and Robert Henry Cox