My research offers innovative answers to longstanding questions about contemporary democratic politics. I focus attention on the representation of marginalized groups in postindustrial countries—low-income citizens, and now inmate populations—and, through careful comparative analysis, identify the origins of contemporary political inequality and propose ways to evaluate remedies. Here, I summarize the four programs that structure my research, the development of graduate and undergraduate curricula, and my service to Stanford and the larger academic community.

Research Program 1. Parties and Political Representation

Why do parties represent some groups, and not others? Why, for example, is there no American labor party, when workers’ parties exist in most other democracies? Under which conditions will parties and candidates mobilize low-income voters as a partisan constituency? In this research program, I offer new answers to these long-standing and important questions.

*Who Speaks for the Poor? Electoral Geography, Party Entry, and Representation* (2017; Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics, Honorable Mention for the Luebbert Prize for the Best Book in Comparative Politics) shows that the key to understanding why parties represent some groups in a society, and not others, lies in an assessment of when and where changes in electoral geography create opportunities for new party entry. Although *Who Speaks for the Poor?* is recently published, the ideas within it have already gained favorable attention from political scientists. My dissertation, which won the American Political Science Association’s (APSA) Harold D. Lasswell Award for the Best Dissertation in the Field of Public Policy provides the motivation for *Who Speaks for the Poor?* There, I focused on how electoral geography structured the incentives of legislators and showed that the importance of current distributions of electoral power for explaining cross-national differences in social policy is limited by the historical dominance of low-income peoples’ parties. In *Who Speaks for the Poor?,* I focus on these parties, provide a wholly new explanation of their origins and use original data and innovative analysis to provide empirical support.1

Briefly, I demonstrate how the changing electoral geographies of the late 19th and early 20th centuries created incentives for political entrepreneurs to form and mobilize low-income constituencies. When migration, immigration, or (exogenous) suffrage expansions increased low-income voters’ electoral power, political entrepreneurs recognized a constituency that was ripe for mobilization. These “third-party men” recruited candidates in those districts where changes in local electorates were most profound, especially when newly pivotal groups had been excluded from local partisan networks. The new parties then tailored their appeals to the interests of these groups (e.g., agricultural or industrial low-income workers), with long-term implications for their partisan representation. Importantly, then, elections do not simply aggregate the preferences around which parties and candidates mobilize. Instead, new parties and candidates represent the interests of those groups who are favored by changing electoral geographies.

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1 Citations to my early work on the importance of electoral geography have appeared in top academic press books, and in peer-reviewed articles that are published in leading journals (e.g., the *British Journal of Political Science, Comparative Political Studies, Electoral Studies, The Journal of Politics, and Party Politics*).
By focusing attention on low-income citizens, a group defined in a way that is independent of its prior mobilization (a key methodological innovation in the study of party entry), *Who Speaks for the Poor?* identifies the incentive structures that determine whether political entrepreneurs will organize any particular group, and provides an explanation for cross-national differences in that group’s mobilization. Further, I derive general theoretical expectations about when and where new parties will enter electoral competition and, in an important advance for institutionalist accounts of party systems (e.g., Kalyvas 1996, Cox 1997), for which groups they will represent.

In *Who Speaks for the Poor?*, I examine the representation of low-income citizens as an important test of these expectations, and present two types of empirical evidence:

First, a broadly comparative analysis of fourteen European and North American democracies, observed from 1880-2000, shows that new parties (of all types) are more likely to enter electoral competition following periods of dramatic demographic change. This analysis also focuses attention on a period beginning around the end of the nineteenth century, when demographic change is dramatic and new parties frequently enter, and explains the apparently “frozen” party systems of the mid-twentieth century, when populations were more stable.

Second, I present a series of analytic case studies that concentrate on the entry decisions of specific parties: the American People’s Party (in 1892), the CCF and Social Credit in Canada (in 1936), British Labour (in 1906), and the Swedish Social Democrats (in 1905). Each case uses historical census data to characterize each country’s electoral geography of income, and historical and archival materials to validate each party’s strategic decisions. Independently, each analysis offers important insights about how the political entrepreneurs evaluated their opportunity-costs, about their strategic decision-making, or about partisanship more generally. Taken together, the analysis of party entry in these different cultural and institutional contexts shows that each party’s entry decisions were governed by the same incentive structures.

In addressing the American case, I show that historical shifts in electoral power generally favored those working in agricultural, not industrial, settings. As a consequence, even before a post-1930s decline in population movement, opportunities for a labor party were limited. Importantly, with the benefit of a comparative perspective, and a focus on historical electoral geography, in *Who Speaks for the Poor?*, I offer an explanation for the entry of (at least) the last major third party and an account of the general stability of the American two-party system.

In a series of related working papers, I am now extending this research, and to address further implications of the argument presented in *Who Speaks for the Poor?*:

- **How does the electoral geography of grievances structure new party entry decisions?** If electoral opportunities determine when and where new parties will enter electoral contests, for example, then other explanations, such as the salience of local grievances should offer limited insight into entry decisions. In the manuscript, “Opportunity, Not Grievance: the Strategic Entry of the Norwegian Labor Party,” I develop and incorporate measures of trade union activities to evaluate the role of grievances in new party entry decisions. In fact, even with these superior measures of local grievance—and indeed, in a very different institutional context from those considered in the book—local organizations and demands mattered less for party entry than the responses of political entrepreneurs to opportunities created by electoral opportunities. Parties do not “emerge,” therefore, with the accumulation of local demands or grievances; they enter, deliberately and strategically.
• How do local distributions of electoral power shape candidate incentives to mobilize (and represent the interests of) different groups in their constituency? In the manuscript, “Electoral Geography, Strategic Mobilization, and Implications for Voter Turnout,” I show that candidates’ mobilization efforts (and as a consequence, turnout rates), reflect group differences in electoral power. In fact, cross-national, and indeed, cross-district, differences in turnout rates among low-income citizens (again, defined exogenously), reflect similar differences in their electoral power. Importantly, this analysis suggests that turnout decisions are structured by candidate—not individual—cost-benefit analysis.

• How did the Great Migration affect local partisan networks? What were the implications for new party entry? Finally, in a new working paper (in development), “The Great Migration and Implications for American Party Politics,” I use historical census data to examine how the migration of African Americans, during the first few decades of the twentieth century, affected American electoral geography and altered local partisan networks, with profound implications for the New Deal coalition.

Research Program 2. The Politics of Anti-Poverty Policy

This research program has focused, first, on measuring the effectiveness of social policy, and second, on the politics of access to social support:

“Are We Providing Enough to Those Who Have Too Little? Measuring Poverty Relief,” (2017, Political Science Research and Methods; with K. Weisshaar) presents a new strategy for measuring poverty relief (i.e., responsiveness to low-income citizens) that uses the parameters that describe the relationship between market income and social transfers. The ‘poverty relief ratio’ overcomes important limitations of existing measures (e.g., it maintains rank order stability across varying poverty thresholds), and is especially well-suited for comparative analysis. This measure was originally developed as part of my dissertation research, and provides the basis of analyses included in the Stanford Center on Poverty and Inequality’s “State of the Union” reports, in 2014, 2015, and 2016.

“Who Benefits? The Politics of Access” is a working paper that explores the origins of administrative procedures that complicate access to social support in the US. This paper is motivated by the dramatic TANF caseload decline, following the adoption of the Clinton welfare reform, and identifies factors that undermine TANF enrollment among families that meet the economic eligibility criteria, including office location and application processes, in a cross-state analysis. Then, this paper ties differences in the accessibility of antipoverty support to the electoral power voting bloc of low-income voters. This paper suggests, therefore, that when elected representatives more frequently owe their seats to the support of a low-income voting bloc, they implement legislation and procedures that are more effective and more generous responses to poverty.

Research Program 3. The Institutional Origins of Political Inequality

How do electoral rules affect the poor? In “Electoral Geography and Redistributive Politics” (2015, Journal of Theoretical Politics), I challenge a central tenet of comparative political economics—that proportional representation (PR) rules lead to more generous social spending than majoritarian, single member district (SMD) electoral rules. Through formal theoretic analysis, I show that (national) PR rules lead to more generous social spending only when a population is assumed to be fully integrated. However, when income groups are segregated, majoritarian electoral rules can lead to equally generous redistributive policy.
In the last empirical chapter of *Who Speaks for the Poor?*, I use historical census data, and estimates of earnings, to characterize the effects of Sweden’s adoption of PR rules for the long-term representation of low-income citizens. Specifically, this analysis showed how the adoption of PR rules provided a short-term ceiling, but also a long-term, relatively high floor for the electoral power of low-income citizens. This analysis will serve as a jumping-off point for further analysis of other countries that adopted PR electoral rules early in the twentieth century.

Research Program 4. The Comparative Politics of Prison Reform

Whose interests are represented in the politics of prison reform? *The Prisoner’s Dilemma: Political Representation and the Comparative Political Economy of Prison Reform* is a new book project that, like *Who Speaks for the Poor?*, analyzes the political representation of a group whose democratic citizenship is challenged and, often, actively curtailed. I take a long-term, historical and comparative perspective—a perspective that pre-dates private facilities and prison guard unions, but that will also seek to understand these more recent phenomena—and show on how local political and economic contexts structure legislators’ incentives with regards to prison location and other policies that govern inmate populations.

To support the first major empirical piece of this research project, I have compiled a data-set that describes all state and federal prisons that have ever operated in the US (e.g., their sizes and intended populations, the number of jobs initially created). Then, after mapping their locations, the facilities were matched to the political and economic characteristics of their original congressional districts, or state legislative districts and counties. The working paper, “Representation and the Politics of Prison Siting,” shows that the location of prisons, at least in the US, was structured by legislators’ re-election incentives, and provides a starting point for the larger project which will also consider the politics of inmate labor.

Teaching and Service

In this section, I summarize the curricula that I have developed for graduate- and undergraduate-level courses. Each class combines cutting-edge political science research on important questions, with a strong emphasis on research design and methods.

A. Graduate-Level (PhD) Courses

- ‘Democratic Politics’ begins with an analysis of foundational democratic theory, and then confronts cutting-edge empirical research about contemporary democratic politics. We focus on the processes of opinion and identity formation, mobilization, the roles of parties, and legislative politics, in a broader conversation about democratic representation.

- ‘Politics and Geography’ (developed with Jonathan Rodden) focuses on questions at the intersection of economic geography and politics: who lives where? why? how do local contexts affect political identity and decision-making? I was primarily responsible for a substantial methods unit on the analysis of spatially-structured data.

- ‘Research Design in Political Science’ is now a department-wide required course that I developed with David Laitin, from a course intended for students in comparative politics, and which I have offered recently with Michael Tomz, and Judy Goldstein. This course introduces new graduate students to current standards of research design and causal inference, and facilitates
their development multiple-method research projects.

B. Undergraduate-Level Courses

- ‘The Politics of Inequality’ begins with a focus on a specific American city (a different city each time) to examine the ways in which local politics of inequality determines how we sort ourselves out in space, and identify the consequences of this local sorting. Then, in an examination of state-level politics of social policy, students work with labor and income surveys to estimate measures of income inequality and the effectiveness of the different income support programs. (These measures become key independent or dependent variables in final empirical projects for the course). Then, the course broadens to consider the contemporary politics of income inequality in consolidated and developing democracies.

- ‘Introduction to Comparative Politics’ provides a foundation introduction to basic models and theories of comparative political science, and concludes with a unit on contemporary democratic politics. In the most recent iteration, this unit focused attention on globalization, inequality, and the current appeal of populist candidates and ideas.

- ‘Doing Political Science’ and the ‘Research Honors Track’ seminars provide introductions to quantitative analysis and making empirical arguments. In each class students develop their own empirical research projects, either as a final project for the course, or to contribute to their senior thesis project. Students in the Research Honors Track then present their research to the Department of Political Science in a poster session.

C. Advising and Service to the Profession

I really enjoy working with students, and frequently continue to advise projects initially developed in my graduate courses. Some of the students with whom I have worked most closely are now faculty at Oxford, the University of Michigan, the University of Chicago, and the University of California, Berkeley.

I also advise undergraduate thesis projects in Political Science and adjacent fields, and have been a pre-major or major adviser to 47 Stanford undergraduates.

I regularly work closely with teams of graduate and undergraduate research assistants and am a frequent faculty adviser in the Department of Political Science’s Summer Research College. This is a terrific program in which students work closely with faculty and receive extensive training in research design, statistical analysis, and for my students specifically, the use of ArcGIS software for the analysis of spatial data and the creation of maps.

I have served on a variety of Department-level committees, including search and graduate admissions committees. I am currently a leader of the Stanford Center on Poverty and Inequality “Safety Net” working group. I regularly chair or am a member of nomination, paper, and book award committees, and have served as an executive or council member of several APSA sections.

[^2]: MPSA President and Council Nomination Committee (2011), Best Paper in Comparative Public Policy Committee chair (2016) and member (2017), Excellence in Mentoring Award (Public Policy, 2018), Seymour Martin Lipset Best Book Award Committee (2014), Riker Book Award Committee (2013), Comparative Politics Data Set Award (2012), Best Paper in Comparative Politics Award Committee (2010), PolMeth Graduate Student Poster Award Committee (2008, 2009, and 2015).
[^3]: Class and Inequality, Comparative Politics, Public Policy, and Representation and Elections.