

# **PEWS Survey Report**

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## **Introduction**

At the PEWS Council meeting in August 2016, the Council decided to conduct a survey to assist us in our efforts to deal with the problem of declining membership. The Council created a committee to conduct the survey consisting of Rob Clark, Matthew Mahutga, Victoria Reyes and John Talbot. The committee developed a survey instrument designed to ascertain the impressions of the PEWS section among current PEWS members, former members, and ASA members who had never been PEWS members but who might be interested in joining. The survey was distributed in November 2016 to PEWS members and was sent to the chairs of fifteen ASA sections that we identified as having some overlap of interests with PEWS. The chairs were asked to send the survey to their members. We received a total of 398 responses.

## Executive Summary

There were 164 responses from current members, representing 40% of the total membership of the section. The gender and racial/ethnic composition of respondents was very similar to that of the section overall, so we take these responses as being representative of the opinions of the section membership.

We focused on a series of eight questions included in the survey that measured members' opinions about the section. A majority of respondents were satisfied with the section on each of these measures, but there were also expressions of dissatisfaction, particularly on theoretical and methodological inclusiveness, helping members to advance their careers, gender inclusiveness, and racial and ethnic inclusiveness.

Gender was related to opinions about inclusiveness. Females were less likely to think that the section was gender, racial/ethnically, and theoretically/methodologically inclusive (note that the section is 62% male). Persons of color were less likely than whites to feel that the section was theoretically/methodologically inclusive, or that it helped them to advance their careers.

We used one question asking how likely a respondent was to remain a member of the section for the rest of their career as a dependent variable measuring overall satisfaction with the section, and used the other seven measures as independent variables in a multivariate analysis. The most important predictor of overall satisfaction was whether the respondent felt that the section helped to advance their career. The other important predictors were whether the section was seen to promote activism or whether it should promote activism. This points to a section that is bifurcated between scholars and activists. Indeed, "should promote activism" is only weakly correlated with "promotes activism," implying that many who value it think we do too little of it, and many who do not value it think we do too much. Further analysis showed that gender inclusiveness and promoting excellence in research were most strongly related to feeling that the section helped to advance one's career.

We interpret these results as follows. Among a segment of our membership, there is a feeling that world-systems analysis is too "ideological." That is, it puts political considerations ahead of rigorous analysis of empirical data. These members feel that this lowers the quality of research done in the section. This is aggravated by the dominance of world-systems as the section paradigm. These members tend to see a divide between ideology and science, with world-systems analyses tending to the ideological, less rigorous side and the world-system-ites who control the section discouraging more rigorous work that is outside the paradigm.

We also asked three open-ended questions of current members. A vast majority of them did not answer any of the open-ended questions. However, out of the ones that did, two interrelated themes emerged in both open-ended questions regarding changes they would make to the section and ways to attract new members. First, is broadening the **theoretical and methodological inclusiveness** of the section. Members suggested a few concrete steps to help achieve this goal,

including 1) focusing on ASA sessions by prioritizing open topics, co-sponsoring panels with other sections, and inviting speakers who do work which may not be seen as traditional world-systems research, and (2) changing our name, for example, to “political economy” or another, similar variant to indicate the section’s commitment to theoretical diversity.

The second theme that emerged was to focus on **outreach of younger scholars**. Members suggested we prioritize recruiting graduate students as a way to increase membership. Yet, these two themes are not mutually exclusive, as efforts to be inclusive will assist with outreach, and members made similar suggestions regarding ASA sessions and changing the section's name as a way to recruit new members.

The third open-ended question for current members focused on the journal, and members who responded suggested that the journal could move forward by having a new editor prioritize getting it indexed, publishing work that critiques / being more open to theoretical traditions beyond the world-systems paradigm, and soliciting manuscripts from well-respected scholars.

A prominent theme among some Formers and Nevers was that PEWS represented a poor fit and that they would not be (re)joining the section. However, other respondents suggested several pathways for PEWS to consider. (1) Some respondents indicated that **rebranding the section** may help boost membership. According to these individuals, PEWS should broaden its appeal by becoming more inclusive, welcoming alternative theoretical approaches and more diverse research topics. A number of respondents expressed negative sentiments towards world-system theory, in particular, and that the section’s ties to this perspective gives the impression that PEWS is narrow, archaic, and ideological. Possible ideas include changing the section’s name and/or introducing panels at conferences that signal a change in philosophy.

At the same time, some respondents recommended that the section do a better job demonstrating that membership in PEWS would bring value added beyond what existing sections offer. With the proliferation of related sections in recent years (i.e., Global/Transnational and Development), several respondents complained of section fatigue and indicated that membership in PEWS would be redundant. (2) A number of respondents suggested that PEWS should do more regarding **outreach**. A surprising number of Nevers had never heard of PEWS before, which suggests that the section could increase membership simply by better publicizing itself.

Attention was also directed at recruitment, particularly of young scholars, as well as networking strategies that involve collaborative efforts with related sections. Accordingly, several respondents suggested that simply knowing others who were members of PEWS would increase the odds that they themselves would join. (3) Finally, several respondents indicated that **cost** was an important factor in their decision making. Because membership costs are higher at PEWS than elsewhere, this has made the decision to not join much easier. Continuing to pay section fees for graduate students would seem to be a wise strategy in light of these responses. In addition, PEWS may wish to consider attaching monetary prizes to paper/book awards.

## RESULTS OF THE PEWS SURVEY

### Current PEWS Members

#### Description of the Sample

There were 164 current PEWS members who completed the survey. The total membership when the survey was conducted was 412, so the survey was completed by 40% of the membership. Here is the composition of the sample by gender and race/ethnicity:

Table 1: PEWS Membership by Gender and Race/Ethnicity

Gender	Race/Ethnicity						Total
	White	Asian American	African American	Native American	Hispanic/Latino/a	Other/Undisclosed	
Male	41.7%	5.5%	2.4%	0.6%	8.0%	5.5%	63.8%
Female	22.7%	3.1%	1.2%	0	1.8%	4.9%	33.7%
Other/Undisc	1.2%	0	0	0	0	1.2%	2.4%
Total	65.6%	8.6%	3.7%	0.6%	9.8%	11.6%	163

The sample is heavily white and male. Males outnumber females within each race/ethnic category. The second largest ethnic group is Hispanics<sup>1</sup>, followed by Asian Americans and African Americans. Data from ASA show that the membership of the section in 2016 was 61.9% male, 36.2% female, 1% genderqueer, and 1% did not answer. So the gender composition of the sample is slightly less female than the section as a whole, but the difference is small.

In the ASA ethnicity data, members were allowed to specify two ethnicities. Based on the first reported ethnicity, the section was 63.1% white, 11.9% Asian/Asian American, 10.2% Hispanic/Latino/a, 3.4% African American/Black, 1.4% Native American/American Indian/Alaskan Native, and 10.0% other/did not respond/prefer not to state. 11.2% of members specified a second ethnicity, but over half of these responses were other/did not respond/prefer not to state. Almost all of the rest specified white as their second ethnicity. Overall, there are small variations between the gender and ethnic composition of the sample and of the section as a whole, but we can conclude that the sample is demographically representative of the membership as a whole.

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<sup>1</sup> These people all replied “yes” to the separate question on Hispanic/Latino/a ethnicity. Half of them specified “Other” on the race question and half responded “wish not to disclose.”

The distribution of the sample by academic rank is as follows:

Table 2: Membership Distribution by Academic Rank

<u>Academic Rank</u>	
Graduate student	32.3%
Postdoc	2.4
Adjunct	0.6
Assistant professor	12.2
Associate professor	19.5
Professor	18.3
Emeritus professor	9.1
<u>Other</u>	<u>5.5</u>
Total	164

Almost a third of the sample are graduate students, 15% are postdocs or untenured faculty, approximately 40% are tenured and 9% are retired faculty. There were a total of 166 graduate student members out of the 412 members of the section, or 40.3%, so graduate students are slightly underrepresented in the sample. Our membership category of regular member comprised 53.4% of the section membership, but it doesn't allow us to distinguish between tenured and untenured faculty. Slightly over half of graduate students were female, while almost 60% of postdocs and junior faculty, and over 80% of senior faculty, were male. Academic ranks did not differ significantly in their ethnic compositions.

Moving forward, the Council may want to discuss the section's demographics. For example, having 40% of the section's membership be graduate students could mean that younger generations are interested in PEWS-related research. However, it could also suggest that 40% of our membership is reliant on gifted memberships.

The sample is a fairly large proportion of the population and seems reasonably representative, at least as far as its demographic characteristics are concerned, so we take the results that follow as generally accurately representing the opinions of section members as a whole. Strictly speaking, since it is a self-selected sample and therefore not random, statistical testing is not appropriate as a means of drawing inferences from the sample to the population. We use the results of statistical testing to serve as an objective measure of when relationships between variables in our analysis are "strong enough" to pay attention to.

### **Opinions about the PEWS Section**

We asked a series of eight questions to measure respondents' opinions about the section. They were in the form of statements about PEWS, and respondents were asked to respond to each one

on this 5-point scale: strongly disagree, somewhat disagree, neither disagree nor agree, somewhat agree, and strongly agree. The eight statements were:

- I will remain a PEWS member for the duration of my career.
- The PEWS section is welcoming to scholars from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds.
- The PEWS section is welcoming to scholars from diverse gender orientations and identities.
- The PEWS section is welcoming to scholars from diverse theoretical and/or methodological backgrounds.
- The PEWS section promotes excellence in scholarship and research among its members.
- The PEWS section promotes social activism among its members.
- The PEWS section should promote social activism among its members.
- The PEWS section helps me advance in my career.

Here are the results:

Table 3: Opinions about PEWS Section

Response	Will Remain Member	Racial Inclusive	Gender Inclusive	Theory/Method Inclusive	Promotes Excellence	Promotes Activism	Should promote activism	Advances my career
Strongly disagree	2.1%	2.1%	1.4%	6.7%	0.7%	2.1%	2.8%	2.8%
Somewhat disagree	8.5%	2.9%	5.0%	18.6%	5.6%	4.9%	3.5%	14.1%
Neither agree or disagree	12.8%	30.0%	39.0%	20.7%	22.5%	29.6%	16.2%	33.8%
Somewhat agree	31.2%	27.1%	25.5%	39.3%	25.4%	41.5%	34.5%	35.2%
Strongly agree	45.4%	37.9%	29.1%	13.6%	45.8%	21.8%	43.0%	14.1%
N	141	140	141	140	142	142	142	142

Note that there was a group of about 23 respondents who didn't answer any questions, or only one or two questions, in this set. Fourteen of them were graduate students; these may have been students who had just joined the section and therefore had not formed an opinion about these characteristics. Non-response to this set of questions was unrelated to any other demographic characteristic.

The responses overall are positive, and over three-quarters of members agree that they will remain members for the durations of their careers. However, there are several areas where members think that the section is not doing as well as it could. These are: theoretical and methodological inclusiveness, helping members to advance their careers, gender inclusiveness, racial and ethnic inclusiveness, and promoting activism. However, even on these indicators, members were more likely to respond neither disagree nor agree than to disagree with the statements. We first explored to what extent these opinions weakened a person's attachment to the section, through lowering their intention to remain a member.<sup>2</sup> We found that six of the other seven indicators were all significantly related to a person's intention to remain a member for the rest of their career. Only promoting activism showed no association with remain a member. The

<sup>2</sup> For this crosstab analysis, we combined neither disagree nor agree, somewhat disagree and strongly disagree into one category due to the small numbers who disagreed.

strongest associations were with promoting excellence and advancing my career, followed by racial inclusiveness, gender inclusiveness, and theoretical and methodological inclusiveness.

### **Demographics and Opinions about PEWS**

Next, we examined whether the demographic variables<sup>3</sup> were related to any of the eight indicators. Neither gender nor race/ethnicity were related to intention to remain a member of the section, but academic rank was marginally significant. Roughly half of both graduate students and senior faculty strongly agreed that they would remain a member for the rest of their career, while only about a quarter of junior faculty strongly agreed. Junior faculty were also less likely than graduate students or senior faculty to agree that being a PEWS member helped them to advance their careers, although the relationship was not significant.

Gender was related to opinions about inclusiveness; females were less likely to think that the section was gender, ethnically, and theoretically/methodologically inclusive. Gender was also related to opinions about activism; females were less likely than males to think that the section promotes activism and more likely than males to think that it should promote activism. Gender was not related to opinions about promoting excellence or helping members to advance their careers.

Race/ethnicity was not related to opinions about gender or ethnic inclusiveness, but it was weakly related to opinions about theoretical and methodological inclusiveness. Persons of color were more likely to somewhat agree, while whites were more likely to both strongly agree and to disagree or remain neutral. Race/ethnicity was not related to promotes excellence, but it was related to helps me to advance my career. The pattern was similar to the pattern observed with theoretical and methodological inclusiveness. Race/ethnicity was also related to opinions about activism; similar to the results for gender, persons of color were less likely than whites to agree that the section promotes activism and more likely than whites to agree that it should promote activism.

Academic rank was related to opinions about ethnic inclusiveness, but in a complex pattern. Graduate students were less likely than senior faculty to think that PEWS was ethnically inclusive, while junior faculty were more polarized; most of them were about equally split between strongly agree and disagree/remain neutral on ethnic inclusiveness. Rank was also related to opinions about gender inclusiveness. Graduate students and junior faculty were less likely to think that PEWS was gender inclusive than senior faculty. Finally, graduate students were much less likely than junior or senior faculty to think that the section promotes activism, although rank was not related to opinions about whether the section should promote activism. Some of these results are probably explained by the differing gender compositions of the different ranks.

After looking at these bivariate relationships, we conducted a regression analysis to examine the combined influence of the demographic factors and opinions about PEWS on a member's intention to remain a member of the section. The first model, using only the demographic

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<sup>3</sup> For this analysis, we excluded the other/undisclosed genders and combined all non-white ethnicities into a category of persons of color, because the small numbers did not allow for separate analyses. For the eight indicators, strongly disagree, somewhat disagree and neither disagree or agree were also combined due to the small numbers.

variables, shows that being a Hispanic American/ Latino/a had a positive effect on intention to remain a member (vs. whites). Being other gender also had a positive effect (vs. male), but this is a very small category so the result should be interpreted cautiously.

**Table 4: OLS Regression of Remain a Member**

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Racially Inclusive		0.338** (3.175)							0.174 (1.225)
Gender/Sexuality Inclusive			0.319** (3.106)						0.040 (0.274)
Theory/Method Inclusive				0.269** (3.198)					0.112 (1.237)
Promotes Excellence					0.444*** (4.570)				0.038 (0.385)
Promotes Activism						0.044 (0.458)			-0.197* (-2.311)
Should Promote Activism							0.290** (3.330)		0.177* (2.250)
Advances my Career								0.506*** (5.702)	0.461*** (4.428)
<b>Race a</b>									
Asian American	0.217 (0.498)	0.138 (0.337)	0.010 (0.026)	0.021 (0.050)	0.223 (0.592)	0.228 (0.533)	0.094 (0.214)	0.256 (0.814)	0.046 (0.153)
Black/African American	0.057 (0.122)	-0.097 (-0.284)	0.064 (0.167)	-0.117 (-0.263)	-0.081 (-0.237)	0.082 (0.171)	-0.086 (-0.161)	0.207 (0.469)	-0.170 (-0.429)
Native American Indian	-0.133 (-0.732)	-0.088 (-0.505)	-0.165 (-0.909)	-0.312* (-1.986)	* (-3.395)	-0.179 (-0.958)	-0.474* (-2.469)	-0.339** (-2.623)	-0.384* (-2.078)
Hispanic American	0.536* (2.325)	0.532* (2.126)	0.679** (3.228)	0.433* (2.017)	0.296 (1.293)	0.551* (2.368)	0.383 (1.796)	0.352 (1.697)	0.167 (0.801)
Other	0.288 (1.240)	0.408 (1.825)	0.442 (1.867)	0.341 (1.496)	0.217 (1.049)	0.304 (1.287)	0.134 (0.612)	0.280 (1.292)	0.209 (1.049)
<b>Gender b</b>									
Female	-0.000 (-0.002)	0.172 (0.958)	0.171 (0.896)	0.013 (0.070)	-0.105 (-0.574)	0.014 (0.067)	-0.141 (-0.722)	-0.013 (-0.075)	-0.042 (-0.274)
Other	0.934** *	0.876** (2.849)	0.819** (2.863)	1.365** (6.145)	1.380*** (8.149)	0.949** (6.193)	1.088** (4.423)	0.941*** (4.540)	1.146*** (4.344)
<b>Age c</b>									
18 to 29 years	-0.220 (-0.658)	-0.088 (-0.270)	-0.134 (-0.405)	-0.233 (-0.709)	-0.041 (-0.121)	-0.196 (-0.567)	-0.156 (-0.487)	-0.117 (-0.379)	-0.135 (-0.472)
30 to 44 years	-0.771** (-3.278)	-0.519* (-2.307)	-0.618** (-2.699)	-0.604* (-2.445)	-0.410 (-1.647)	-0.779** (-3.301)	-0.687** (-3.189)	* (-3.444)	-0.468* (-2.001)
45 to 64 years	-0.351 (-1.479)	-0.185 (-0.838)	-0.211 (-0.909)	-0.254 (-1.081)	-0.218 (-0.982)	-0.351 (-1.483)	-0.299 (-1.385)	-0.471* (-2.014)	-0.308 (-1.394)
Observations	140	138	139	138	140	140	140	140	136
R-squared	0.106	0.189	0.181	0.183	0.262	0.107	0.177	0.341	0.456
BIC	437.094	420.529	428.042	425.178	415.083	441.820	430.503	399.314	391.503

c 65 and over is excluded

Notes: OLS Standardized Coefficients; Robust Standard Errors in Parentheses. \* p<.05; \*\*P<.01; \*\*\*p<.001 (two-tailed tests)

a White is excluded

b Male is excluded

c 65 and over is excluded

Next we added each of the other opinion variables one at a time and, consistent with the bivariate analysis, all of them except promotes activism had a positive impact on intention to remain a member. The final model uses all demographic factors and opinions together. None of the demographic factors are reliably significant (other gender and Native American are very small categories), with the exception of age. Here, all three of the included age categories are less satisfied than the oldest 65 and over group. The 30-44 year olds are significantly less satisfied than 65 and older members in all models, which is concerning given that this is our largest (nearly half) age category.<sup>4</sup>

Three of the opinion variables remain significant; advances my career is by far the strongest. Paradoxically, “Should Promote Activism” is a significantly positive predictor, while “Promotes activism” is a significantly negative predictor. They are comparable in size. This points to a section that is bifurcated between scholars and activists. Indeed, “should promote activism” is only weakly correlated with “promotes activism,” implying that many who value it think we do too little of it, and many who do not value it think we do too much (see Table 5).

Table 5: Bivariate Correlations between attitudinal responses.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1 Will Remain member							
2 Racially Inclusive	0.342						
3 Gender Inclusive	0.295	0.770					
4 Theory/Method Inclusive	0.303	0.506	0.351				
5 Promotes Excellence	0.443	0.349	0.253	0.393			
6 Promotes Activism	-0.041	0.200	0.256	0.131	0.134		
7 Should Promote Activism	0.277	0.064	-0.078	0.336	0.354	0.071	
8 Advances my Career	0.473	0.117	0.219	0.078	0.497	0.216	0.131

Given the results in Table 4, where “advances career” was the biggest predictor of positive satisfaction, we also examined the correlates of perceptions that the section advances the careers of its membership. The largest correlation is with “promotes excellence,” which is followed by “Gender Inclusive” and “Promotes Activism,” respectively. In an OLS regression, we found that each of these were significantly correlated with “advances career,” net of race, gender and age. In a full model, only “promotes excellence” and “gender inclusive” were significant correlates with “advances career,” suggesting that the section may have more successful membership drives if it can convincingly show that it promotes excellence in research and is gender inclusive (see Table 6).

<sup>4</sup> Distribution by Age

Age	Percent
18 to 29 years	11.73
30 to 44 years	46.30
45 to 64 years	25.93
65 and over	16.05

**Table 6: OLS Regression of “Advances Career.”**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Racially Inclusive	0.179 (1.724)						-0.218 (-1.704)
Gender Inclusive		0.309** (3.012)					0.300* (2.482)
Theory/Method Inclusive			0.121 (1.067)				-0.103 (-0.970)
Promotes Excellence				0.577** *			0.584** *
Promotes Activism				(7.701)	0.241** (2.678)		0.088 (1.035)
Should Promote Activism						0.156 (1.607)	0.004 (0.049)
Asian/Pacific Islander	-0.052 (-0.590)	-0.078 (-0.983)	-0.036 (-0.421)	-0.019 (-0.288)	-0.003 (-0.035)	-0.039 (-0.473)	-0.013 (-0.181)
Black/African American	-0.078 (-0.780)	-0.059 (-0.574)	-0.067 (-0.636)	-0.098 (-0.980)	-0.030 (-0.262)	-0.075 (-0.664)	-0.051 (-0.449)
Native American Indian	0.034* (2.103)	0.031 (1.940)	0.031 (1.847)	-0.006 (-0.455)	0.012 (0.684)	0.019 (1.017)	-0.015 (-0.918)
Hispanic/Latino/a	0.065 (1.221)	0.085 (1.420)	0.058 (1.192)	0.016 (0.236)	0.070 (1.310)	0.035 (0.664)	0.039 (0.568)
Other/non-disclosed	0.026 (0.340)	0.058 (0.780)	0.021 (0.283)	-0.028 (-0.409)	0.040 (0.538)	-0.025 (-0.330)	0.004 (0.052)
Female	0.035 (0.423)	0.073 (0.856)	0.015 (0.173)	-0.050 (-0.724)	0.032 (0.385)	-0.040 (-0.458)	-0.016 (-0.202)
Other	-0.008 (-0.214)	-0.017 (-0.755)	0.020 (0.334)	0.068 (1.517)	0.008 (0.202)	0.007 (0.118)	0.048 (1.318)
30 to 44 years	0.157 (1.225)	0.170 (1.358)	0.163 (1.207)	0.254 (1.904)	0.043 (0.335)	0.143 (1.120)	0.196 (1.493)
45 to 64 years	0.206 (1.629)	0.220 (1.781)	0.219 (1.677)	0.175 (1.362)	0.123 (0.972)	0.189 (1.454)	0.151 (1.199)
65 years and over	0.040 (0.316)	0.039 (0.321)	0.058 (0.453)	-0.011 (-0.087)	0.018 (0.134)	0.060 (0.466)	-0.055 (-0.436)
Observations	139	140	139	141	141	141	137
R-squared	0.052	0.104	0.042	0.319	0.076	0.047	0.369

Notes: OLS Standardized Coefficients; Robust Standard Errors in Parentheses. \* p<.05; \*\*P<.01; \*\*\*p<.001 (two-tailed tests)

White is excluded category for race; male is excluded for gender; under 30 is excluded for age.

## Open-Ended Questions

In addition to the questions analyzed above, we asked three open-ended questions to help us further understand the results presented above. We read through the answers to each question and grouped them into categories based on common themes.

### Current PEWS Members

*Question 1: What, if any, changes would you make to the section?*

Approximately 75% (124/164) responses were “Missing/Don’t know.” Of the next two popular categories, almost 10% (16/164) thought the section needed to diversify/broaden theoretical perspectives and methods and 7% (12/164) of people suggesting we focus on outreach and mentorship of junior, more diverse, and/or international scholars. Almost 4% (6/164) of members explicitly suggested that the section change its name, however, there was a suggestion from 2% (4/164) of the members to strengthen the world-systems orientation, and other (4/164), one response was that this question “is a new can of worms.”

**Summary:** The majority of the section had no responses to the question, and we can’t know whether that is because they would not make any changes, did not know how to answer the question, or something else. Of the people who responded, the largest concern is having the section be more diverse in the theory and methods the section encompasses. For example, one respondent noted that “Political Economy should not be reduced to the World Systems perspective, but that is the only ASA option. Given that it is also the perspective of those who control the section, other viewpoints are drowned out and it kills innovative research.” The second largest concern is making sure that section officers and members reach out and mentor more diverse sets of people. As one person said, “[the section] continues to be off-putting to some young scholars. Part of it is the lack of diversity of members that your survey questions cue us to think about.” However, diversity in theories/methods and people are not mutually exclusive categories. As a way to move forward, one respondent suggested that

[W]e should think about outreach efforts stating 1. We are no longer only Wallerstein and his followers, or that the PEWS neo-Marxist paradigm isn't hegemonic in the that's what gets published or on the program sense. Let a thousand flowers bloom! 2. Emphasize the NN issues of the day: EU up down, apart together, etc. Russia/Ukraine, Middle East in geopolitical sense not just as a periphery or semiperiphery; South China Sea as geopolitics etc. 3. Global perspectives on domestic issues--eg. Trump election. Anyway you get my drift. Punchline: we are almost half a century old; founded on a single

paradigm and theoretical statement; such that, it needs updating and we need widening of interests.

While another noted the complaints they heard regarding the section as “a bit of a ‘good ole boys club’” and that “we need to get over institutional snobbery.” One suggestion on moving forward was to make sure that we have open topic sessions at the ASA, so as to highlight the wide array of PEWS-related research. The mentorship aspect of the section is not only about recruiting grad students, but also helping support our members in their attempts to “gain tenure, [and] fulfill productivity demands.” Finally, other ideas to increase our membership and theoretical diversity include changing our section’s name, for example, to “political economy.”

*Question 2: How do you think we can attract new members?*

The majority of members, 70% (115/145) were either “Missing/Don’t know,” while 11% (18/164) suggested ways to recruit grad students and outreach to other sessions, and 5% (9/164) recommended focusing on the increasing the quality, rigor, and relevance of scholarship, and as one person put it “tone down the ideology.” 5% (8/164) suggested a name change, while the remaining answers focused on theoretical and methodological diversity (7/164) or other concerns (such as dues or to not focus on recruitment, 7/164).

**Summary:** Similar themes to question #1 arose in question #2, including the need to change our section’s name and broaden the section’s theoretical and methodological diversity. Of the people who responded, the primary recommendation was to focus on recruiting grad students, which is particularly important because “graduate school is usually a formative period in scholars’ intellectual development.” Recruitment is also particularly important because as one person summarized our section’s history and the relevance of our section:

I believe that we are in a time, right now, when there will be more appreciation among graduate students and junior scholars of a critical global stance. It's an urgently needed perspective in the emerging era of Trump. So part of our job in recruiting new members is simply outreach: letting students and younger scholars know we are here, available and welcoming. We DO need to try to be more welcoming of diversity. The PEWS founders tended to be older white men who were creatures of "a certain time." I believe that they genuinely desired to be inclusive, but they didn't always take gender and race/ethnicity as seriously as they should have, either in terms of providing extravagant welcome to members of those groups, or in terms of incorporating gender, race, ethnicity (and other categories of "exclusion") into the scholarly analysis. We should take an 'affirmative action' approach to this and invite and sponsor more discussion of these issues in PEWS related events at conferences and the journal -- and we should also offer targeted free memberships to folks in underrepresented groups. Organizing themed sessions and conferences around the sorts of themes that would attract scholars from these pools

would be an excellent idea!

Also of importance was placing “PEWS-oriented research in top-tier journals” and the overall rigor, quality, and relevance of our scholarship.

*Question 3: Given the search for a new editor for the section’s journal, Journal of World Systems Research, what would you like the incoming editor’s vision for the journal to include?*

Approximately 70% (114/164) of the respondents were “Missing/Don’t Know.” Here we see again, similar concerns of our members: 13% (22/114) wanted to see theoretical, methodological and/or substantive diversity in the journal, 6% (10/164) wanted the new editor to increase the rigor, quality, and relevance of scholarship in the journal, and 4% (7/164) thought the editor needs to do research, while 5% (8/164) responded with an answer classified as other. Not including those classified as “other” (such as encouraging debates in the journal) or the “Missing/Don’t Know,” 24% (39/164) of the respondents wanted to see some form of change to the journal, while 5% (9/164) said that the new editor should continue what the current editorial team is doing.

**Summary:** Of the answers, many of our members want to see increased diversity in the work that is published, whether “a balance between qualitative and quantitative research,” “broader. Less denomination,” “openness to theoretical traditions beyond a strict world system/dependency perspective” because, as someone else notes, “PEWS deals with so much, and . . . the journal should be more expansive with respect to the types of manuscripts it publishes.” The rigor of the scholarship was also a concern, and this ranged from SSCI indexing to, as one person suggested “[t]o make it a respectable journal to which serious scholars would like to submit their manuscripts. This includes making some effort to solicit manuscripts from well[-]respected scholars on the front end, getting it indexed in the ISI Citation Index, maintaining high quality of the publications, rigorous peer-review, methodological diversity.” Another suggested that the new editor should “[p]lace a greater emphasis on quality at the risk of publishing thinner and/or fewer volumes.”

Even those who wanted to maintain “its focus on world system research while also permitting critiques of the paradigm,” for instance, as another member suggested “I think we want to have a person with familiarity and perhaps even a bit of “commitment” to world-system analysis. But also someone with a rather broad vision of this -- and an emphasis on being inclusive of other points of view (perhaps in dialogue with global political economy).”

## **Discussion**

We had a long discussion about what all of these results mean. Theoretical and methodological inclusiveness was one major theme. It was one of the opinion questions on which the section was

rated relatively low and it was significantly related to intention to remain a member in the bivariate analysis, although not significant in the final regression model. A lack of theoretical and methodological inclusiveness was one of the most frequently mentioned problems in the answers to the open-ended questions. We think that the section is fairly diverse methodologically. Members do quantitative, qualitative and historical comparative analyses, and all are welcome in the section. Therefore, we believe that these comments are primarily focused on theoretical inclusiveness. Some members feel that world-systems analysis is the dominant orientation and that people who work outside this paradigm are not always welcome in the section.

Although advancing one's career was the strongest predictor of intention to remain a member in the final regression model, it doesn't come up very frequently in the open-ended answers. Mentorship, which we have started doing, was mentioned. Several responses suggest that we could help members advance their careers by promoting more excellence in scholarship. Related to this were responses suggesting a lack of rigor in world-systems analysis, and one suggestion that we "tone down the rhetoric." Based on these data and on conversations that we have had with members, we advance the following tentative interpretation. Among a segment of our membership, there is a feeling that world-systems analysis is too "ideological." That is, it puts political considerations ahead of rigorous analysis of empirical data. These members feel that this lowers the quality of research done in the section. This is aggravated by the dominance of world-systems as the section paradigm. These members tend to see a divide between ideology and science, with world-systems analyses tending to the ideological, less rigorous side and the world-system-ites who control the section discouraging more rigorous work that is outside the paradigm. This is why some members suggest changing the name of the section and broadening its focus to make it more explicit that scholarship outside the world-systems paradigm is welcome.

We should remember that about 70% of respondents did not respond to each of these questions, so we have no way of knowing how widespread this dissatisfaction with the section is. A few members explicitly disagreed and responded that we should strengthen our focus on world-systems analysis. However, this sense of dissatisfaction is important and we must think seriously about how to respond to it, because it is one of the things driving members away from PEWS, as we will see below.

## Former PEWS Members

We also sent the survey to many other sections that might have some overlap with PEWS, in an attempt to understand why some people who have been members of the section decided not to renew their membership or why potential members have never joined the section. We were able to get responses from 46 former members. 37 of them were white (80.4%), 3 each (6.5%) were African American and Hispanic, and 2 (4.3%) responded “other.” This group was whiter than current members. 28 were male (60.9%) and 18 (39.1%) were female. Only 43 responded to any questions beyond their race and gender. 23 (53.5%) were associate or full professors, 11 (25.6%) were assistants and only 2 (4.6%) were graduate students. We have no data on the composition of the group of former members as a whole, so we have no way to judge how representative this sample is. There was not enough racial/ethnic diversity to analyze whether this influenced a person’s likelihood to renew their membership in the future. Females were slightly more likely to say they might renew in the future but the difference was not significant. Likelihood of future renewal was not related to rank.

We also asked three open-ended questions of the former members.

*Question #1: Why did you choose not to renew your membership?*

About a quarter of responses were “Missing/DK” (26.1%). Among the remaining respondents, the most popular answer was “Poor Fit/Different Interests” (17.4%). After that, the most common responses were “Section Is Too Narrow” (13.0%) and “Cost” (13.0%), followed by “Too Many Sections/Competing Obligations/Redundant” (10.9%), and then “Quit ASA/Academia” (8.7%) and “Section Defined by World-System Theory” (8.7%).

**Summary:** Some Formers regard PEWS as a narrow section, “extremely insular,” and not inclusive of alternative perspectives or open to diversity. In particular, the section is known for its orthodox adherence to world-system theory (and this is not viewed positively), populated by scholars who ideologically strive to confirm (rather than objectively test) its central tenets. As a result, PEWS is becoming a niche section. Beyond this, the issue of cost seemed more prevalent than we had expected, because PEWS section dues are higher than elsewhere. Finally, the emergence of competing sections (i.e., Development and Global/Transnational) is contributing to section fatigue, as ASA members are unlikely to join multiple sections that they feel are largely redundant or overlapping. Broad sections like Development appear to be serving as one-stop

shopping for many scholars.

*Question #2: What would you like to see happen in order for you to rejoin the section?*

Almost half of all responses were “Missing/DK” (45.7%). The next largest group of respondents indicated that rejoining “Won’t Happen” (15.2%). After this, the most popular responses were “Rebrand Section” (8.7%) and “Demonstrate Value Added of Section” (8.7%), followed by “Make Section More Inclusive” (6.5%) and “Reduce Cost” (6.5%).

**Summary:** Most of the Formers will probably not be rejoining. However, others seemed open to the possibility, especially if PEWS made a genuine effort to welcome alternative ideas and approaches. Most importantly, if PEWS demonstrated that its members were not “tied to a specific theory,” this may attract more people. Perhaps the section could create a series of panels that invited criticism of world-system orthodoxy and/or celebrated alternative perspectives. Beyond this, less contentious solutions are available that address the costs and benefits of membership. Continuing to sponsor graduate students seems like a particularly wise decision in light of these survey responses. Perhaps PEWS can also include monetary prizes with its paper awards (although this may require donations to the section from senior members). Formers also stressed that PEWS needs to demonstrate how membership in this section would bring value-added beyond membership in related sections. Ideas include making PEWS research more visible and receiving monthly newsletters and updates.

*Question #3: How do you think we can attract new members?*

Over half of all responses were “Missing/DK” (52.2%). The most popular of the remaining responses were “Focus on Outreach/Promotion” (13.0%) and “Merge/Partner/Collaborate With Other Sections” (10.9%). Beyond this, other responses were mixed across several categories, including “Nothing Can Be Done/Too Late” (6.5%), “Become More Inclusive/Diversify” (4.3%), “Rebrand Section” (4.3%), “Focus on Young Scholars” (4.3%), and “Other” (4.3%).

**Summary:** Many recommendations involved establishing joint ventures with related sections (e.g., co-sponsor panels and receptions) or increased communication with such sections for the purpose of recruitment. The use of social media to make PEWS and its research more visible to the wider community (especially young scholars) was also suggested. Across the open-ended questions, several people even suggested merging with Development or Global/Transnational. Short of this, the existing PEWS membership could make a conscious effort to recruit high-profile scholars who operate outside the world-system bubble and work to elect them into leadership positions within PEWS. One respondent implied that it might be too late for PEWS to do much of anything. In particular, the creation of the Development section represents what PEWS should have done several years ago (i.e., change its name and rebrand the section as something broader). Once the Development section was created, many talented people left

PEWS for good. Along these lines, several Formers suggested that PEWS should finally change its name, dropping “world-system” and focusing on “political economy” so as not to identify with a particular theory or approach. Others expressed concern that the section lacks rigor and is too ideological (rather than scientific). Overall, though, the dominant criticism seems to be that PEWS lacks intellectual diversity and is hostile to opposing perspectives. In our opinion, this perception may or may not correspond with reality, but PEWS must nonetheless confront it.

### **People Who Have Never Been PEWS Members**

We also got responses from 188 people who have never been PEWS members. 85 were male (45.2%) and 98 (52.1%) female with 5 (2.7%) other genders. In contrast to both current and former member, males were in the minority in this group. 31.7% were graduate students, 24.7% junior faculty and 38.7% senior faculty, with 4.8% others. 61.5% were white, 12.3% African American, 11.8% Hispanic, 7.5% Asian and 7.0% other.

#### *Question #1: Why are you not a member of PEWS?*

Approximately half of all responses were either “Missing/DK” (26.5%) or “Poor Fit/Different Interests” (24.9%). Of the remaining responses, the most popular were “Not Familiar With Section” (16.4%), “Too Many Sections/Competing Obligations/Redundant” (11.6%), “Section Defined By World-System Theory” (9.5%), “Section Is Too Narrow” (6.9%), and “Cost” (3.2%).

**Summary:** While some Formers can be characterized as having negative feelings towards PEWS, the Nevers are more likely to be unfamiliar with PEWS, and some have never even heard of the section before. Graduate students in the 20<sup>th</sup> century were almost certainly exposed to world-system theory, but that is less likely to be the case for today’s graduate students and young professors. Other Nevers reiterated concerns with section fatigue. There are only so many sections with which one can remain actively engaged, such that competing obligations with other sections appear to be depressing membership in PEWS. Several also suggested that PEWS may be redundant given the available alternatives (i.e., Development, Global/Transnational). Others took direct aim at world-system theory, indicating that they do not agree with the approach, that it is “outdated” and “inane,” or that they are interested in political economy, but not world-system analysis. Still others expressed concern that the section is rigid and narrow, “overly wedded to a particular theoretical tradition,” and run by a “good ole boys network of people who do straight world-systems analysis.” A final concern for Nevers is cost, just as this was a concern expressed by Formers.

#### *Question #2: What would make you consider joining the section?*

Almost 40% of responses were “Missing/DK” (39.2%), while the next largest response, “Align Section With Research Interests” (15.9%), indicates a mismatch in research interests between

PEWS and the respondents. After this, the most popular responses were “More Information On Section” (10.1%), “Won’t Happen” (9.5%), “Demonstrate Added Value of Section” (7.9%), and “Make Section More Inclusive” (5.8%). The remaining responses were “Rebrand Section” (3.7%), “Reduce Cost” (3.2%), “Know Other Members” (2.1%), “Other” (1.6%), and “Merge With Competing Sections” (1.1%).

**Summary:** A number of Nevers indicated that they will not join PEWS. An even larger number noted that they or PEWS would have to alter their research interests to better align with the other. Others, however, suggested that being better informed about PEWS would make them consider joining. In fact, it was surprising to learn how unfamiliar some Nevers are with PEWS. One respondent, for example, recommended that PEWS place a greater “emphasis on global inequality.” Some Nevers reiterated the idea that PEWS should become more inclusive and rebrand itself by updating its name, dropping the “archaic” term world-system. Ultimately, if PEWS is interested in expanding its membership, it must clearly broaden its reach. Others suggest that PEWS do a better job distinguishing itself from rival sections and demonstrate how membership can provide tangible benefits to its members. As was the case with Formers, several Nevers expressed concern with cost and recommended having their membership fees paid on their behalf. Finally, a few Nevers indicated that they would be more likely to join PEWS if they knew others who were also members of PEWS, which suggests that social networks serve as a potential mechanism to increase membership.