

Theodoros Ntounias

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Education

University of California San Diego
PhD Political Science
San Diego, CA

June 2026

University of California San Diego
M.A. Political Science
San Diego, CA

July 2022

University of Warwick
M.Sc. Statistics with Distinction
Coventry, UK

September 2020

Reed College
B.A. Mathematics and Political Science (Interdisciplinary)
Portland, OR

January 2018

National Technical University of Athens
B.Eng. Electrical and Computer Engineering
Athens, GR

Transferred June 2016

Focus

Democratic Backsliding • Fiscal Federalism • Subnational Government •
European Politics • Promissory Democracy • Ranked Choice Voting

Published Research

Voter Information and RCV, an experimental approach to examining how information seeking behavior changes when voters are faced with ranked-choice voting, rather than traditional single-preference. (*Election Law Journal*, Vol. 22, No. 4, 2023)

Dissertation Research

Aspiring Autocrats and Local Autonomy Dissertation research about how aspiring autocrats in Central and Eastern Europe use fiscal recentralization as part of their executive aggrandizement strategy. Investigation on the goals, methods, and outcomes of fiscal recentralization on sub-national funding allocation and the ability of local opposition to successfully contest national power through effective public goods provision. (*dissertation work at UC San Diego*)

Ongoing Research

Globalization and Political Ambiguity, use of party manifesto text data to test whether political parties rely on strategic ambiguity during election campaigns to evade sanctioning by voters in future elections. (*with Christina J. Schneider and Robert Thompson*)

Climate Change in Europe and Political Party Support, climate change poses a growing challenge to democracies, as the economic consequences of extreme weather events become increasingly severe. While prior research shows that climate shocks can erode support for incumbent parties, much less is known about how they shape broader patterns of political competition across space. We argue that climate disasters trigger electoral realignments away from mainstream parties, and that the direction of this

shift depends on the geography of economic exposure. (*with Lisa Dellmuth, Evelina Jonsson, and Christina J. Schneider*)

Private Welfare in the Workplace and Support for Social Insurance, there is a set of arguments that private resources (home equity, credit) may dampen voters' support for public insurance programs and redistributive taxation. We investigate this hypothesis in the context of a novel set of workplace mutual aid arrangements—Employee Hardship Funds (EHFs). EHFs enable employers to distribute emergency cash to their workers using donations pooled from employees themselves. (*with John Ahlquist*)

Organized Labor and Democratic Survival, many have argued that labor unions are key organizations in building and defending democratic political institutions. Recent events across developed democracies cast doubt this claim. We revisit arguments linking unions and democracy at the national, sub-national, and individual levels (*with John Ahlquist*)

Book Chapters Ntounias, Theodoros, Schneider, Christina and Thompson, Robert 2026. "Blurring the Clarity of Political Communication" in *Promises Made, Promises Kept?: Democratic Politics in a Globalized World*. Christina J. Schneider and Robert Thomson, eds.

Conferences Invited Talks European University Institute Summer School on Democratic Backsliding and Political Conflict, selected among 160 applicants

APSA 2025 Full Paper Panel: "Subnational Perspectives on Democratic Erosion and Resilience" (Chair)

APSA 2025 Full Paper Panel: "Cutting Off the Respirator: Fiscal Recentralization as an Aspiring Autocrat Strategy"

EPSA 2025 Full Paper Panel: "Cutting Off the Respirator: Fiscal Recentralization as an Aspiring Autocrat Strategy"

APSA Dissertation Workshop in Novel European Political Studies, 2025

MPSA 2025 Full Paper Panel: "Cutting Off the Respirator: Fiscal Recentralization as an Aspiring Autocrat Strategy"

Invited Speaker at the Princeton Electoral Systems Conference, March 2025.

Invited Visiting Scholar at the University of Rochester Democracy Center, February 2024.

APSA 2023 Full Paper Panel: "Globalization and Political Ambiguity"

Teaching **Certificate of Recognition** as a Scholar in Student-Centered College Teaching, UCSD Teaching and Learning Commons ([Link](#))

Completed the UCSD Teaching and Learning Commons Equity-Minded Course Design series, Introduction to College Teaching (Syllabus), and Advanced College Teaching (Syllabus)

Instructor of Record Political Consequences of Electoral Systems (Syllabus)

Grader Introduction to Business Law • Analyzing Elections: Political Economy • The VRA 50 Years Later • Economic Theories and Political Behavior • Politics of Multiculturalism • Design and Effects of Electoral Systems

Teaching Assistant/Section Leader UCSD Political Science Senior Honors Seminar
• Introduction to Comparative Politics • Introduction to American Politics

Non-academic Speech and Debate teacher at the Hellenic-American Educational Foundation (2014-2021), multiple students reaching national finals.

Leadership Activities

Adjudicator Trainer and Consultant 2024-
USA National Speech and Debate Association
• Hired to help train over 200 judges in World Schools Debating.
• Provided on-site feedback and hands on corrections to judging procedures at a tournament of almost 12,000 participants from high schools across the country.

Faculty Liaison for Graduate Student Council 2023-
Elected position communicating graduate student needs and issues to faculty. Also sat on admissions committee in this role.

Chief Adjudicator 2016-
Several Debating Tournaments
• Chief Adjudicator of several schools and universities tournaments in Greece.
• On the Chief Adjudicator's Panel for the World Schools Debating Championship in **2019, 2021, 2023, and 2025**.
• For the above, helped train, test, and allocate a judging pool of over 150 judges.

Co-coach 2016-2019
Greek National Schools Debate Team, Athens, GR
• Trained five-member national debating delegation to compete in the World Championship.
• Placed in top twenty teams for three years running.

Honors Awards

Institute for Humane Studies Fellowship Award, Summer 2025. (\$5000)

UC Institute of Global Conflict and Cooperation Dissertation Fellowship 2025-26 (\$15000)

UC San Diego Graduate and Professional Student Association Community Award for Outstanding Graduate/Professional Student Leader 2025

Nominated by the UCSD Political Science Department for the Marye Anne Fox Dissertation Year Fellowship 2025

UC San Diego Summer Graduate Teaching Scholar Fellowship, Summer 2025. (\$500)

Institute for Humane Studies Fellowship Award, Summer 2024. (\$2500)

Social Sciences Dean's Supplementary Funding Award, UC San Diego 2024. (\$600)

UC San Diego Center for American Politics funding award for revisions on *Voter Information and RCV*. (\$2000)

Outstanding Dissertation in Statistics (Postgraduate) Award, University of Warwick

2020. (£500)

World Universities Debating Champion in the English as a Foreign Language category, WUDC Thessaloniki 2016.

Professional Memberships American Political Science Association • European Political Science Association • Greek Political Science Association • Royal Statistical Society

Other Skills Languages: Greek (Native), English (Fluent), French (B2), Spanish (Basic Reading/Listening).
Software: LaTeX, R, Python, STATA, SQL, C++, Git.

References Christina Schneider: Doctoral Committee Chair, cjschneider@ucsd.edu
Maria Carreri: Doctoral Committee Member, maria.carreri@unibocconi.it
Steph Haggard: Doctoral Committee Member, shaggard@ucsd.edu
Thad Kousser: Doctoral Committee Member, tkousser@ucsd.edu
Maureen Feely: Teaching Professor, mfeeley@ucsd.edu