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Letter from the Editor: Spring 2019

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Letter from the Editor: Spring 2019

Amanda Pullum, Faculty Advisor

One of the questions we're often asked about *Culture, Society, and Praxis* is, "What does 'praxis' mean?" I was introduced to this term in my first year of college, as a student in a residential learning community focused on leadership and social change. Our second semester course was titled, "[Exploring Citizen Leadership \(Praxis\)](#)." Praxis, we learned, is a process of doing something that applies your knowledge, reflecting on the new things you learned during that action, and then doing new things that apply your new knowledge. As social scientists, we engage in praxis when we apply our knowledge of concepts, theories, and methods to understanding and addressing problems; think about what this experience taught us; and use that reflection to make our next action better.

Praxis is truly at the heart of CSP. We do not reject any student's social scientific work, because we believe in this journal as a tool for engaging in praxis. Our authors create submissions, receive feedback, reflect on this feedback, and use their skills and new knowledge to revise their work. Our student editors review articles, learn from that reviewing experience, and use their learning to make our next round of reviews stronger and more helpful to the authors.

Praxis is also at the heart of this issue's theme, "Constants and Change." The social world has always changed, and it will continue to change. However, we can use our existing social scientific knowledge to understand our changing world, and we can use our research and experience to develop new understandings. In this issue, our authors use social scientific principles to

grapple with a variety of difficult and controversial issues.

In our first article, we continue our series examining how to become a well-informed consumer of news. (A description of this project can be found in the Fall 2018 [Letter from the Editor](#).) Celine Parra evaluates news coverage of the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School shooting in Parkland, Florida. She examines the distinction between evidence-based news coverage and opinion writing, emphasizing that while the well-informed reader may seek out both types of media, careful evaluation is sometimes necessary to distinguish between the two.

Our second article, by Grace T. Douglas, reviews current literature on domestic violence and its relationship with mental health. Douglas devotes attention specifically to the link between intimate partner violence, mental health, and socioeconomic status. She highlights the fact that poverty exacerbates the effects of abuse in multiple ways, emphasizing the importance of material resources for both preventing domestic violence and supporting survivors.

Third, Aurora Castañeda examines factors that drive some radical activists to destructive tactics. She studies historical and contemporary mobilization to identify three motivations for these actions: collective identity, acting in self-defense, and garnering media/public attention. Castañeda's work can help shed light on some of the reasons why activism sometimes becomes violent.

Fourth, in Heather Wiley's work, we are introduced to the "sex pots" of the pre-Columbian Moche people. Wiley links these

ceramics, depicting myriad sexual acts, to Moche beliefs about the water cycle, the afterlife, and fertility of the land. Her work challenges us to examine our own ideas about life, death, and sexuality.

Finally, because this issue addresses topics that may be difficult for readers, we would like to share the following mental health resources, and encourage all our readers to seek support when needed.

Monterey County

- [Monterey County Rape Crisis Center](#) (831-375-4357 or 831-424-4357)
- [YWCA Monterey County Domestic Violence Hotline](#) (831-372-6300 or 831-757-1001)

United States

- [Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network \(RAINN\)](#) (1-800-656-4673)
- [National Domestic Violence Hotline](#) (1-800-799-7233, TTY 1-800-787-3224)