

THEDA SKOCPOL is the Victor S. Thomas Professor of Government and Sociology at Harvard University. Skocpol received her BA in 1969 from Michigan State University and her PhD in 1975 from Harvard University. Her first faculty appointment was to Harvard's Sociology Department (1975-1981), after which she held faculty appointments in Sociology and Political Science at The University of Chicago (1981-1986). Returning to Harvard in 1986, she has served as Professor of Sociology (1986-1994), Professor of Government and Sociology (1995-1997), and Victor S. Thomas Professor of Government and Sociology (1998-present).

In 1996, Skocpol served as President of the Social Science History Association, an interdisciplinary professional group, and from 2001 to 2003, she served as President-Elect and then President -- during its centennial year -- of the 14,000-member American Political Science Association. At Harvard, she has directed the Center for American Political Studies (2000-2006) and has served as Dean of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences (2005-2007).

Skocpol has been elected to membership in all three major U.S. interdisciplinary honor societies: the American Academy of Arts and Sciences (elected 1994), the American Philosophical Society (elected 2006), and the National Academy of Sciences (elected 2008). She has been awarded honorary degrees by Michigan State University, Northwestern University, Amherst College, Columbia University, Radboud University (Netherlands), and Oxford University and has held fellowships from the John Simon Guggenheim Foundation, the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, the Russell Sage Foundation, and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. In 2007, she was awarded the Johan Skytte Prize in Political Science for her "visionary analysis of the significance of the state for revolutions, welfare, and political trust, pursued with theoretical depth and empirical evidence." Awarded annually by the Skytte Foundation at Uppsala University (Sweden), the Skytte Prize is one of the largest and most prestigious in political science.

The author of twelve books, twelve edited collections, and more than seven dozen articles, Skocpol is recognized as one of the most cited and widely influential scholars in the modern social sciences. Her work has contributed to the study of comparative politics, American politics, comparative and historical sociology, U.S. history, and the study of public policy.

Her first book, [*States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia, and China*](#) (1979), won the 1979 C. Wright Mills Award and the 1980 American Sociological Association Award for a Distinguished Contribution to Scholarship. A leader in historical-institutional and comparative research, Skocpol edited [*Vision and Method in Historical Sociology*](#) (1984) and co-edited the influential Social Science Research Council collection [*Bringing the State Back In*](#) (1985).

Since the 1990s, Skocpol's research has focused on US politics in historical and comparative perspective. Her [*Protecting Soldiers and Mothers: The Political Origins of Social Policy in the United States*](#) (1992), won five scholarly awards: the J. David Greenstone Award of the Politics and History Section of the American Political Science

Association; the Outstanding Book Award of the Political Sociology Section of the American Sociological Association; the 1993 Woodrow Wilson Foundation Award of the American Political Science Association, given annually for “the best book published in the United States during the prior year on government, politics or international affairs;” the 1993 Allan Sharlin Memorial Award of the Social Science History Association; and the 1993 Ralph Waldo Emerson Award of Phi Beta Kappa, given to honor “a comprehensive study that contributes significantly to historical, philosophical, or religious interpretations of the human condition.”

Skocpol’s other books include

- [*Boomerang: Health Reform and the Turn Against Government*](#) (1996)
- [*Diminished Democracy: From Membership to Management in American Civic Life*](#) (2003, winner of the 2004 Greenstone Award)
- [*Inequality and American Democracy: What We Know and What We Need to Learn*](#) (edited with Lawrence R. Jacobs, 2005)
- [*What a Mighty Power We Can Be: African American Fraternal Groups and the Struggle for Racial Equality*](#) (with Ariane Liazos and Marshall Ganz, 2006)
- [*Health Care Reform and American Politics: What Everyone Needs to Know*](#) (with Lawrence Jacobs, 2010, 2012, 2016)
- [*Obama and America’s Political Future*](#) (with commentaries by Larry M. Bartels, Mickey Edwards, and Suzanne Mettler, 2012)
- [*The Tea Party and the Remaking of Republican Conservatism*](#) (with Vanessa Williamson, 2012, 2016)
- [*Upending American Politics: Polarizing Parties, Ideological Elites, and Citizen Activists from the Tea Party to the Anti-Trump Resistance*](#) (edited with Caroline Tervo, 2020).

Active in civic as well as academic life, Skocpol speaks regularly to community groups and writes for blogs and public interest magazines. In 2009, she co-founded, and currently directs, the Scholars Strategy Network (SSN), www.scholars.org, whose mission is to improve public policy and strengthen democracy by encouraging nonpartisan public engagement by university-based scholars. Building ties between academics and policymakers, civic groups, and journalists, at local, state, and national levels, SSN helps scholars bring their evidenced-based policy research to the public discourse. Since its founding, SSN has grown into a national organization of over 900 scholars from 200+ universities, with dozens of regional chapters across 46 states.

Theda does not work all the time. She loves to visit antique malls, looking for various kinds of Americana including old membership ribbon badges from unions and fraternal associations. And, she is a [devoted NFL football fan who closely follows all the teams, above all the New England Patriots](#).