

SECTION CULTURE



LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Culture Section,



It has been about three months since we last saw one another in Philadelphia, but if you are like me, your head may still be buzzing with ideas emerging from our conversations there, both formal and informal.

Culture section activities reflected what I see are the three core strengths of our field: Thematic ambition, empirical rigor, and methodological range. From panels asking the big questions as to both the (dappled) nature of and the functioning of culture (on this last, see **Theresa Hice Johnson** below), to panels featuring cutting-edge computational social science methods applied to cultural phenomena, to those featuring qualitative and mixed-methods work aimed at disentangling the effect of algorithms in creating and reproducing novel forms of social stratification, to those dealing with the cognitive dimensions of culture in concrete socio-material settings (see **Erica Zurawski** below), the quality and ambition of the work done by the members of our section was in full display for everybody to see. This was attested by generous (sometimes standing room) levels of attendance at all sessions, even those scheduled on the sometimes dreaded Tuesday late-morning and afternoon slots. All of this is

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something that we should be proud of. I am confident that our work will continue to stand, as once noted by **Lyn Spillman** and **Mark Jacobs**, “at the crossroads of the discipline,” or, for those who like concrete network metrics, as an important intellectual broker, bridging across the cultural holes separating the various sociological subfields.

Philly cheesesteaks may well be behind us, but the section leadership is already quite busy preparing our next gathering, and they stand to make good use of the six official slots allocated for the 2019 meeting in New York City. Our dynamic chair-elect, **Allison Pugh**, recruited a wonderful group of some of our best and brightest young scholars to form an ad hoc “program committee” (**Kemi Balogun**, **Angèle Christin**, **Crystal Fleming**, **Michael Jeffries**, **Greggor Mattson**, and **Eileen Otis**). I think you’ll agree with me in noting that they’ve done a terrific job of putting together what seems like a thematically diverse, substantively relevant, and intellectually exciting lineup. This includes a paper session on “algorithmic cultures” (organized by **Angèle Christin**); one on “Culture and Service Work: Relationships, Identities and Inequalities” (organized by **Eileen Otis**); another on “Culture, Racialization and Intersectionality” (Co-sponsored with the Section on Race, Gender and Class and organized by **Michael Jeffries**); a session on “Global and Transnational Approaches to Culture and Power” (Co-sponsored with the Section on Global and Transnational Sociology and organized by **Chinyere Osuji**). In addition, Allison has put together a compelling (and timely, given what I said earlier) invited panel on “Culture and Its Impact on Other Subfields,” which will feature such stellar presences in our field as **Kristen Barber**, **Amin Ghaziani**, **Deborah Gould**, **Cristina Mora**, and **Fred Wherry**. **Matthew Rowe** has graciously volunteered to organize our roundtables. Last but certainly not least, our graduate student representatives, **Joanna Pepin** and **Ande Reisman**, have organized an invited workshop on “Collecting, Analyzing and Sharing Cultural Sociology” which should be of interest to everyone regardless of career stage. So why wait

until the clock strikes midnight on January 9th? Head over to the ASA website and upload your papers now!

I would like to end by thanking our outgoing chair, **Ronald Jacobs**, and our previous past chair **Jennifer Lena**, both of whom have been incredibly helpful and supportive to me as I learn the ropes, and have been a great resource and source of leadership for the section in the last three years. I would like also like again to thank all of the people who volunteered to organize panels and our roundtables for the Philadelphia meetings: **Kieran Healy**, **Marion Fourcade**, **Iddo Tavory**, **Stephen Vaisey**, **Daniel Winchester**, **Lynette Shaw**, **Dustin Stoltz**, and **Marshall Taylor**.

Onwards!

Omar Lizardo,
UCLA

CULTURE SECTION OFFICERS

Chair: Omar Lizardo,
UCLA 2019

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Univ. of Virginia 2018

Past Chair: Ron Jacobs,
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FOUR QUESTIONS FOR ORLANDO PATTERSON

Dustin Stoltz (Univ. of Notre Dame) interviews **Orlando Patterson** (Harvard) on the past, present, and future of cultural analysis and sociology.

Dustin Stoltz: How did you become interested in sociology and the study of culture?

Orlando Patterson: I came to sociology from history and literature, and from fiction writing. My first books were novels, but I did my dissertation in historical sociology. It was a sociology of slavery in Jamaica. My interest in culture was first through literature and from that I naturally moved toward culture in a more sociological sense. It was a natural development because where I come from, in Jamaica, we view history and culture as the fundamental forces of understanding the problems that our little society faced. As for my early influences, I admired people who were strongly cultural in their orientation. Both my undergraduate work and my graduate work involved a lot of social anthropologists, like the eminent social anthropologists **Raymond Smith** (1925-2015), who was later a professor of Anthropology at Chicago, and **M. G. Smith** (1921-1993), who was later professor of anthropology at Yale. Then, at the London School of Economics (LSE)—this was a genuine interdisciplinary school when I was there—I interacted freely with not only my fellow sociologists but very eminent anthropologists, like **Lucy Mair**, as well as economists. That is, my background is a very social science one, with a historical-cultural orientation. And so, the significance of culture has always been a central preoccupation of mine, throughout my career.

My approach is to see how culture works interactively with structural forces and sometimes

it is less important, sometimes more important. I've never been reluctant to see how culture matters in understanding the plight of black people along with the problems of ghettoization and poverty and racism. That has gotten me into a lot of pickles. My work is viewed with great suspicion. The irony of this is, I come out of a tradition in Britain, a very much a Marxian one, a sort of postcolonial and decolonizing neo-Marxian tradition. That's my Caribbean background. I was one of the founders of the Caribbean version of dependency theory, and during my LSE days I was involved in radical groups and on the editorial board of *New Left Review*. In Britain, you get a book like Willis's *Learning to Labor*, and that was the tradition from which I came. Nobody would accuse Willis of being a conservative, of blaming the victim. But when I took that attitude over to America, people said "Patterson's is a conservative. He's blaming the victim!" This is so ironic, outside of America I'm viewed as a neo-Marxist radical because for eight years of my life I was special advisor to—other than Fidel Castro—the most radical prime minister in the hemisphere, Michael Manley. We tried to start a revolution! So I had this strange double life where I'd be in Jamaica and the middle classes there were screaming at me for being a communist, pro-Castro, radical maniac. I'd fly back from Jamaica and I'd find people saying "You're blaming the victim. You're a conservative. You and Moynihan and Lewis are one." So, that is the life I've lived with culture, which is kind of bizarre.

DS: What work does culture do in your thinking, and what do you see as the benefits and limitations of your approach as compared to alternatives?

OP: When I came to America, in the 1970s, I was coming from the British system where culture was seen as a critical component in sociological narratives. Now when I came to America, we were in the throes of a massive reaction against the previous Parsonian deterministic view of culture, which had been the reigning paradigm in sociology up to that time. I came right in the midst of this, the overthrow of culture in sociology with the overthrow of Parsons. I have never been a fan of Parsons, because in the British London School of Economics tradition, we never really did take too seriously Parsonian determinism. So I was a little confounded by the strength of the reaction, and the unwillingness, in fact, to consider any other approach to culture for a very long time. Culture was in the doghouse in sociology right up to the 80s—so a good 15 to 20 years—until the arrival of interest with the rise of the Culture Section of the ASA. Culture was brought back in, with several articles and books talking about bringing culture back and cultural turns. I found that all very puzzling since there is no turn for me to turn back to because I've always taken culture seriously, but among Americans this was a big deal.

But then the way that culture was brought back in was for me quite unsatisfactory. People were extremely cautious, always paranoid about not being misunderstood because by the mid-80s culture was seen not just to be associated with the determinism of Parsons, but also with right-wing social science and commentary. It was a knee-jerk, almost automatic view. If you measured culture with a word association metric, almost like Pavlov's dog, if you said "culture," they'd spit out "Moynihan, Moynihan, Moynihan" and after that you'd have "Lewis, Lewis, Lewis,"

and then "blaming the victim" and "reactionary." It was Pavlovian. And, it still exists.

The folks who decided to bring culture back in were acutely sensitive about that. The way they were able to gain respectability or avoid condemnation was to make sure you never, never, use culture to explain anything. The cultural turn meant, in fact, treating culture as something to be explained or as a meaning system to be understood hermeneutically. The person who gave permission to sociologists to talk about culture again, was actually not a sociologist but an anthropologist. It was **Clifford Geertz**. Sociologists rode piggyback on his famous book,

"I want sociologists to be less dogmatic; not to be terrified of approaching culture as something that operates interactively with structural forces to influence important outcomes such as poverty. To know that culture matters. That the past matters."

Interpretation of Culture. Here culture was interpretive, culture was hermeneutic, culture is something to be explained. Never, never, never to explain anything. Geertz's *Interpretation of Culture* is the fundamental dogma of the cultural turn in sociology. In it, Geertz explicitly rejects any causal role for culture (Go read it on page 12). Culture never explains anything. Culture is sort of like a book that needs to be read, like a text, which became the new mantra. "Meaning"

became the central stuff, and "meaning-making" became a standard trope. This oversensitivity and this dread, this sheer terror of ever being accused of using culture to explain anything accompanied the cultural turn in sociology. This cultural turn was really just a sociological piggybacking on Clifford Geertz.

Now, Geertz was a brilliant man. I spent a year with him. He invited me to spend a year at the Institute for Advanced study at Princeton. I was happy to be there. It was the year in which they focused on symbolic anthropology. This was '75. A wonderful year for me. I met several very good friends. One of them, who really influenced my own work—we talked a lot and had many wonderful long walks in the woods around the Institute for Advanced Study—was **Victor Turner**. But Victor Turner's work was literally loathed by Geertz. I don't know why he invited

him. I guess he had to invite him because Turner was very much one of the leaders of symbolic anthropology. But, Geertz very much hated the kind of symbolic anthropology that Turner was engaged in. I loved it. We got along very well. We were both drinking men then. I introduced him to good rum and he introduced me to good scotch; he was a scotch man. I remember once Victor getting tipsy, late in the night, having one too many, and he turned to me and said, "Orlando, I want to ask you a question: why does Geertz hate me so much?" I said, "Well, you don't view culture as just a text, you take culture seriously as having consequences." And, he said "But it does, Orlando, it does!" I said, "Yeah, I know it does, but Geertz thinks that's an abomination."

I view, of course, culture in interpretive terms, coming out of literature. But I also saw culture as very important for explaining. This goes back to my days in the London School of Economics. Culture was important but interactively so. That is, how it interacts with structural forces. Any explanation has to involve the ways culture interacts with structural, economic, political, and environmental sources.

DS: How does your approach to culture shape your choice of research topics, settings, and methods?

OP: In my historical sociology, of course, culture again, is important. *Slavery and Social Death* can be seen as an extended sociocultural interpretation of slavery in which I drew heavily on symbolic anthropology to understand the dynamics of manumission. The whole notion of social death as a symbolic trope used by slaveholders in their domination and oppression of the enslaved. The whole idea of the social dead, the idea of social rebirth, and manumission as a symbolic process in which the socially dead slave is reborn into the life of freedom, is of course for me cultural. And, my work on freedom is pure cultural analysis. Freedom is a deeply eminent Western construct, maybe the longest lasting cultural construct there is for the West. To understand it, is to understand what is a supreme cultural value, or cultural trope, in the West.

That also ties to another more deeper theoretical preoccupation of mine, which also places me against the grain. Sociologists are obsessed with change. I've been obsessed with change. I was a socialist, you know, and I want to see change. I was part of the decolonization movement and so on. But for me, what is even more fascinating than change is why things persist. Partially because I wanted change, I am frustrated often that things persist, even when everything would seem to suggest that they should change. The problem of continuity has always been a very central preoccupation. Why does the past influence the present as much as it does? In practical terms, I was preoccupied with the persisting lineaments of slavery on modern life.

I'm fairly catholic in my methodological approaches. In my research on social death, I draw methods from symbolic anthropological studies, but also I use quantitative approaches to understanding cultural issues. *Slavery and Social Death*, in addition to using interpretive approaches and drawing on a wide range of theoretical approaches, I use—and this is where my approach differed from what was then the emerging approach in historical sociology—large N and quantitative methods. Just about when *Slavery and Social Death* first came out, historical sociology was on the rise, but it took a turn that was completely out of sync—or I should say, I was completely out of sync with the way it was going. It was emphasizing small N, macro-sociological studies of collective subjects, like the bourgeoisie and so on.

My approach, instead of at the most macro level, it considers operations at the micro and meso level. The micro level of slavery as a relation of domination. Understanding that relation of domination between slaveholder and enslaved, and their interaction. But also at the meso level of slavery as an institution and the way in which manumission operates to maintain the system, and how, at the meso level, it is a very conserving system. Along the way, methodologically I've used a combination of interpretative methods and techniques from classical scholars, as well as anthropologists, but also using quantitative

approaches in the sense that *Slavery and Social Death* is not based on few small N, but in fact sixty-six societies. I then took a sub-sample of that to look in-depth at what I call the advanced slave societies. The analysis of the 66 societies where all coded using Murdock's cross-cultural studies, and their methodology of using statistical methods to analyze across cultures. That was anathema to a lot of anthropology and sociology at the time. So, I was moving in a completely different direction. The historical sociologists were hyper-structural and macro, mine was cultural and meso and micro. Mine was comparative in the sense of looking at large number of societies and largely quantitative and then selecting a smaller number and analyzing interpretatively but drawing on the tools of symbolic anthropology. So again, I was against the grain. That has been my fate.

DS: What most excites you about the future of cultural theory and analysis in sociology?

OP: In recent years, people are kind of tiptoeing around and saying maybe culture has some relevance for understanding problems, such as poverty. My dear friend and colleague, **William Julius** — of course previously the ultimate structuralist—in his *More Than Just Race*, acknowledges culture, but emphasizing that structure is always more important. A few other people have brought out a more recent studies looking at the cultural dimension of poverty, like my colleagues and friend, **Mario Small** and others.

I want sociologists to be less dogmatic, not to be terrified of approaching culture as something that operates interactively with structural forces to influence important outcomes such as poverty. To know that culture matters. That the past matters. Part of the way in which the immiseration of people is perpetuated is in how past systems of oppression lead people to adjust by developing strategies and beliefs and suspicions and so on, which can persist even after the structural forces

that occasion them are gone and continue to influence their behavior. Sociologists recognize this, of course, when they talk about the most famous cause of an historical determined cultural pattern: it's called racism.

In my most recent work, *The Cultural Matrix*, I laid out my own view of culture. It was largely an extension of my *Annual Review*, but adapted for understanding poverty, especially of black youth. The central idea being we should move away from talking about culture in the macro-sense and back to the micro and meso level. In fact, I emphasize "cultural configurations." There is in broad sense culture, attributes which are distinctive for certain groups, but I'd rather move away from that notion of culture to what I call cultural configurations. We live and move within a wide range of sometimes overlapping, sometimes separate cultural configurations and our identities sort of move in these these micro configurations of culture, and the way in which structural opportunities and situations determine which of these configurations we choose to emphasize or to activate at any given time.

Some of the younger generation of cultural sociologists are doing this. **Omar Lizardo**'s work I like—he takes culture seriously—and **Steve Vaisey** at Duke, I like his work a lot. And, the tools being developed to analyze big data, and textual analysis being used to look at broad cultural patterns. **Ethan Fosse**, who I edited *The Cultural Matrix* with, he's working at the cutting edge of textual analysis. We've done text regressions on my work on freedom, on American belief systems about freedom. This kind of work is beginning to take off. We just had a conference at Harvard organized by **Bart Bonikowski**, one of my young colleagues. Quite a few other people are doing this kind of work, **Chris Bail** at Duke, and I see **Paul DiMaggio** is very much moving in this direction too. I'm excited about those developments.



Orlando Patterson is the John Cowles Professor of Sociology at Harvard and a cultural and historical sociologist. He completed his undergraduate studies in economics at the Univ. of the West Indies ('62), and his doctoral work in sociology at the London School of Economics ('65) during the "heyday of the anthropologists" at LSE. Prior to arriving in London in the fall of 1962, he was drawn to Harold Laski's work, and later completed his doctoral work under the supervision of the demographer David Glass. Patterson's dissertation, *The Sociology of Slavery: Jamaica, 1655-1838*, was published in 1967 and since then his empirical work has revolved around three primary registers: slavery, freedom, and development in Jamaica and surrounding nations. He is the author of several fiction books and five additional academic books: *Slavery and Social Death* (1982); *Freedom in the Making of Western Culture* (1991); *The Ordeal of Integration* (1997); and most recently an edited volume, *The Cultural Matrix* (2015). While in graduate school in London, Patterson was a member of the influential Caribbean Artists Movement (along with Edward Kamau Brathwaite) and wrote for the *New Left Review*. As an

undergraduate, he was influenced by the anthropologists Raymond Smith, M. G. Smith, Lloyd Braithwaite, and Lloyd Best. As a graduate student he enjoyed the strongly interdisciplinary environment at the London School of Economics of the late 1960s where he interacted freely with sociologists, economists, and anthropologists—notably among the latter was Firth, Lucy Mair, and Isaac Shapiro. After his PhD, he taught at the London School of Economics and the Univ. of the West Indies. Invited by Talcott Parsons, Patterson visited Harvard while on sabbatical in early 1970, around the same time the famous Department of Social Relations was dissolved into component disciplines. Later the next year Patterson was offered a tenured professorship in the newly formed Department of Sociology. He received the Distinguished Contribution to Scholarship Award of the ASA in 1983.

CONFERENCE REPORTS

*113th American Sociological Association Meeting,
Philadelphia, PA Aug. 11-14, 2018*

MEANING-MAKING THROUGH THE LENS OF CULTURAL COGNITION

*Erica Zurawski,
UC, Santa Cruz*

In a paper session organized by **Daniel A. Winchester** (Purdue) and presided by **Dustin S. Stoltz** (Univ. of Notre Dame), panelists presented

their work around the topic of "Meaning-Making through the Lens of Cultural Cognition." This panel represented a wide array of thematic and methodological work in the realm of cultural cognition.

Marshall Allen Taylor (Univ. of Notre Dame) presented his collaborative work with **Dustin S. Stoltz** (Univ. Notre Dame), and **Terence Emmet**



McDonnell (Univ. of Notre Dame). Taylor demonstrated how his work extends existing literature which understands a cultural object as the “binding” of significance to a material form. This intervention seeks to engage more deeply with the perennial question of meaning-making versus meaning-maintenance. Taylor argued that meaning-making and meaning-maintenance function via distinct cognitive processes. To give deeper appreciation of this point, he clarified the difference and relationship between two types of cultural objects, a material “token” on one hand and a cognitive “type” on the other. As he explained, “tokens” are either assimilated to or expand existing “types” or resist this assimilation and thereby create a new “type.” Taylor identified these distinct binding processes as one of “indexicalizing” or “innovating.” He argued, however, that the brain prefers indexicalizing over innovating new cognitive types and in this preference for stability is the thrust of his point: “that meaning-making is deeply embedded in moments of meaning-maintenance.”

Caitlin Daniel (Univ. of California-Berkeley) presented on her research surrounding evaluations of the cost of food and how cognitive heuristics might influence these evaluations. Her intervention here is especially poignant given that behavioral economists have only studied cognitive heuristics through lab experiments which, as Daniel points out, does not account for how everyday settings and culture influence actual experiences of decision-making. Through shopping observations and interviews with parents across the socio-economic spectrum, Daniel found that in routine food purchasing, food prices are evaluated in relational terms and that these relational evaluations have cultural origins. She introduced the concept of cultural anchoring to

describe how the reference points that “anchor” people’s evaluations can vary across groups that have different beliefs and practices. Through her research and introduction of cultural anchoring, Daniel demonstrated the relevance of cultural sociology in accounting for every-day influences in decision science and economics, showing how these two seemingly competing fields are instead complementary.

CULTURE SECTION COUNCIL

Aneesh Aneesh,
Univ. of Wisconsin-Milwaukee 2019

Elizabeth A. Armstrong,
Univ. of Michigan 2019

Patricia A. Banks,
Mount Holyoke 2019

Ming-Cheng M. Lo
UC, Davis 2020

Gabriel Abend,
New York Univ. 2018

Victoria Reyes,
UC, Riverside 2018

Ethan W. Johnson (Univ. of Minnesota) presented his work on how rapport develops in interactional settings with **Penny Edgell** (Univ. of Minnesota) and **Kathleen E. Hull** (Univ. of Minnesota). Johnson presented empirical data from their research focus groups to contend that rapport is not accidental or automatic but rather, is coordinated and emerges from cultural frames and resources. In a synthesis of the cultural resources approach, group-centric approach, and socioemotional approach, Johnson proposed that “cultural resources cannot only make sense of the social world but can also serve as an entrée into existing or emergent routine of shared affect.” By examining construction of rapport through various focus groups’ discussion on an ethical dilemma, he demonstrated the significance of centering rapport. Johnson concluded on this point, indicating the generative openings that exist in studying processes of rapport both in powerful

institutions and in studying the effects of gender, race, and class embodied in cultural resources in rapport.

Jiayi Janet Xu (Princeton) presented her work on understandings of racial diversity and individual interpretation of racial statistics. Xu highlighted the lack of intersubjective agreement on the meaning of “diversity” yet the persistent dominance of “diversity” as a framework for talking about racial representation and race. Showcasing a survey experiment evaluating diversity perception on racial composition of neighborhoods, Xu showed that while there is no agreed upon quantification of or guideline for “diversity,” this does not mean that people do not see diversity as commensurable. Through this experiment, Xu articulated different qualitative interpretations of diversity between political party affiliation, but paradoxically, evaluations of diversity do not differ significantly by racial identity. She centered the importance of her findings through their contribution to understanding how people interpret and evaluate racial diversity.

Justin Van Ness (Univ. of Notre Dame) concluded the panel by arguing for the intersection of microsociology and cultural cognition. He introduced a heuristic to analyze interactions from his ethnographic research of protest situations, specifically around the problematized meaning-making of the swastika. Focusing on failed interactions, Van Ness sought to push these instances further to understand exactly when they break down. He introduced what he calls “conflicting cognitive pressures” as differing from cognitive dissonance in order to understand specific instances of dual-cognitions and when the same signal can cause competing cognitions and how people reckon with those competitions. Through his research, Van Ness articulated the fertility of the intersection of microsociology and cultural cognition.

This paper session offered a diverse array of topics within cultural cognition broadly. These timely contributions undoubtedly generated thought-provoking discussion on their own, but as one audience member pointed out, together they also represent the ability of cultural cognition as a field to expand and be relevant across multiple methodologies and topics.

HOW DOES CULTURE WORK?

*Theresa Hice Johnson,
UC, Santa Cruz*

At **Claudio Ezequiel Benzecry**’s (Northwestern) session, “How Does Culture Work?”, **Erika Summers-Effler** (Univ. of Notre Dame), **Chandra Mukerji** (UC, San Diego), **Clayton Childress** (Univ. of Toronto), and **Laura Grindstaff** (UC, Davis) presented engaging original work related to the session’s goal of demonstrating how theories of culture are developed and practiced in contemporary sociological research.

Erika Summers-Effler’s presentation of her paper, “Attention, Speed, and Culture: Patterned

Perception and the Reproduction of Inequality,” argued that emotions and time influence perception and provide the boundaries for meaning-making processes. Summers-Effler conducted an ethnographic study



of two non-profit organizations—a Catholic Workers group and STOP, an anti-death penalty organization. Summers-Effler was able to evaluate the long-term evolution of the orgs and determine how group histories and various goals and challenges influenced perceptions which reproduced racial and gender inequalities. Summers-Effler concluded with four findings: 1) Speed is more foundational than frame, 2) Immediate uncertainties overrule project length and hinder the development of clear courses of action, 3) The members of both organizations presented unintentional bias which was then reproduced within the organization, and 4) Preoccupation with outside issues, led members to have difficulty articulating organizational goals.

Chandra Mukerji presented a fascinating theoretical piece, which she acknowledges was a “reflection of [her] own life” in conversation with her physicist husband. Her paper, “Cultural Imaginaries and Institutional Identities,” wove together concepts from quantum physics and cultural sociology to develop the term “cultural braiding,” intended to capture the unfixed configuration of cultural meanings and explain the functionality of “weak” cultural forces such as cultural imaginaries. To explain how weak cultural forces can have greater effects, she used an example from quantum physics: the Newtonian objects and electrons that shouldn’t interact with them actually do get together, creating surfaces and transforming the environment around them. Mukerji compared this phenomenon to the weak force of toxic masculinity, exemplified by Uber’s CEO, Travis Kalanick, which created a professional surface of masculine aggression within the company. She also gave the example of the cultural imaginary of the Sun King as an expression of sovereignty and power in the court of King Louis XIV. The image of the Sun King produced what Foucault calls a “prophetic truth” which, although a weak cultural form, allowed for a nondescript, unchallengeable dream—a cultural imaginary—to be shared by the French people. This imaginary was then reproduced through French artwork, further transforming the surroundings (France) with its ability to maintain a surface of support for the king’s court.

Clayton Childress presented a paper co-authored with **Craig Rawlings** (Duke) entitled, “Emergent Meanings: Homophily, Interaction and the Segregation of Attitudes Toward Cultural Objects”. With a goal of building on Childress’ research on reading groups and their interpretations of texts, the authors began with an initial question, “Where does meaning come from?” This initiated an investigation of three theories:

dispositional-scaffolding, *situational-channeling*, and *homophilous-catalyst*. While *dispositional scaffolding* refers to the production of perception by way of the internalization of habitus, *situational channeling* suggests that meaning is unstable, evolving and created through interactions. Childress proposed a catalyst theory surmising that meanings are activated through “homophilous” interaction with an object whose properties resonate with some identity markers and not others. Childress and Rawlings theorized that global meanings converge within demographic and taste-based groups and individuals with identities that resonate with the cultural object will converge on similar meanings. To test this hypothesis, the authors distributed copies of an unknown novel to 21 previously established book groups. Book group participants were surveyed prior to and immediately following group discussion about their understanding of the book. They found that 1) Demographic interpretive meanings are not as ingrained as previously thought; 2) In-group based focus groups may be reflecting the meaning-making they wish to document; 3) Cultural objects aren’t just free-floating signifiers; and 4) Mixed methods designs are necessary for distinguishing meaning-making processes.

Finally, Laura Grindstaff presented a paper co-authored with **David Orzechowicz** (UC, Davis) entitled, “Working the Frame and Framing the Work: Performance Economies in the Culture Industries”. The fun and informative presentation summarized recent the results of recent ethnography conducted by Grindstaff and Orzechowicz. The authors immersed themselves in their two chosen cultural sites—theme parks and reality television—in order to investigate how these performance economies successfully

achieve apparent authenticity. By drawing from Ernest Stenberg, Grindstaff and Orzechowicz sought to connect the critiques of a “phantasmagoric” late capitalism which favors iconicity with empirical research to discover the meso-level practices which enable profitable performances. The authors found that while theme parks must manage unpredictable cast members (the park goesers themselves), reality television producers must manage the behavior of the show’s stars. They do so by shifting the burden of performance to the scaffolding, otherwise known as the show’s setting, location, and action (competition!). Currently, online information and virtual training provides potential reality stars (“real” people) with insights on how to be reality tv material, thus undermining the authenticity the shows seek to present. Therefore, Grindstaff

concluded that the scale of the infrastructure that reality television worked to build now threatens its own undoing.

By studying cultural reproduction in relation to time; the production of “strong” cultural imaginaries by way of “weak” cultural forces; small groups to further understand meaning-making processes; and the meso-level practices of theme parks and reality TV, each author demonstrated how culture is reproduced, influenced, or influencing in the “real world”. While “How does culture work?” seems like a simple question, these presentations demonstrate that there is plenty of room for additional theoretical and empirical inquiry in cultural sociology.

‘Installed Knowledge’ at the Science History Institute, Philadelphia, PA

*Joseph Klett,
Science History Institute*

After lunch on Monday, August 13, while ASA attendees were cramming into the ersatz salons of the Pennsylvania Convention Center and Marriott hotel, a clustering of sociologists stole away to a museum just down the street. The museum was closed. But we didn’t come for the curations; we came for the curators. This was the



plan. I have been a member of the Material Culture Network which has convened at ASA meetings for several years now; I have also be a researcher with the Science History Institute whose museum on the history of science features prominently in Philadelphia’s Old City neighborhood. I noticed during last year’s Network meeting that all the presentations implicated not just the objects of material culture, but the settings in which these objects were found. These settings were not happenstance formations.

They were places carefully curated for particular objects to do particular things and to be understood in particular ways. Galleries, studios, museums—they were places of what I began to call *installed knowledge*. Places, I soon realized, inhabited by folks like my colleagues at the Institute, who work diligently to design and present history through material culture. As plans for this year’s ASA in Philadelphia began to emerge, my two worlds quite literally began to merge.

Christy Schneider and Amanda Mahoney of the Science History Institute joined Terry McDonnell, Gemma Mangione and myself to plan a half-day meeting on the topic of installed knowledge. For the sociologists, this was a chance to share our theoretical work with practitioners who are often our subjects but rarely our audiences. For the practitioners, this was a chance to share the practical challenges of museum design with scholars who labor to separate the ideals of knowledge production from its messy reality.



Figure 1: *Green Light Corridor*: Bruce Nauman, *Green Light Corridor*, 1970, photograph 2010 © Paul Grover/The Daily Telegraph.

The day was separated in two sessions, with the first devoted to sociological work on varieties of installed knowledge, and the second to the immediate work being done to redesign the Institute's permanent exhibition. Our orienting questions included: How are museum spaces organized to guide perception and interpretation? How does the materiality of museum objects shape their display, interactive possibilities, and interpretability? How do scholars and practitioners measure and make sense of the visitor experience? The following is what we learned.

Terence E. McDonnell (Univ. of Notre Dame) began the first session with “**Objects, Words, and Bodies in Space**” (co-authored with **Wendy Griswold** and **Gemma Mangione** and published in *Qualitative Sociology* in 2013). McDonnell argues that a person's engagement with a work of art will necessarily shape their interpretation of that work. He presented Bruce Nauman's *Green*

Light Corridor (1970) to illustrate this process; people who squeeze into the corridor describe it as claustrophobic, and nauseating. The materiality of the installation imposes itself upon its audience.

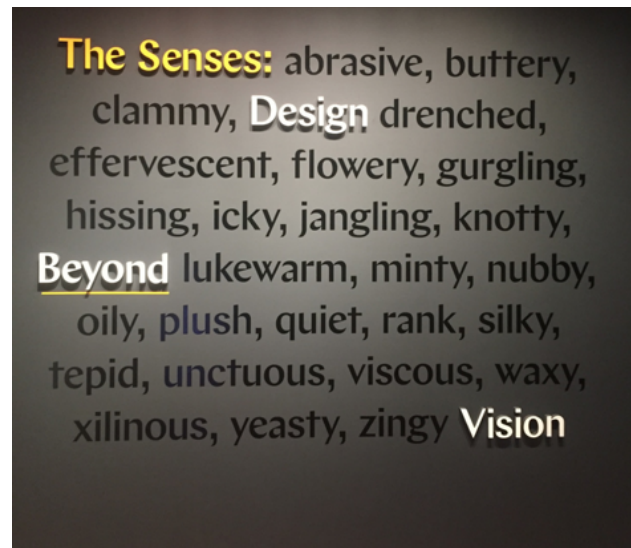


Figure 2: Introductory wall text to The Cooper Hewitt's *The Senses: Design Beyond Vision*.

As McDonnell points out, this materiality also excludes, preventing overweight, or disabled patrons from experiencing the work as intended. In this manner, *Green Light Corridor* demonstrates that meaning making, through the degree and kind of engagement, cannot be reduced to the resonance of symbols. Instead, it depends upon people's physical relationship to the work. In this sense, McDonnell and his co-authors advocate for the primacy of the viewer's position over location. These concepts deserve clarification. Position is physical: the characteristics of and relationships among objects, words, bodies, and space. Location is cognitive: the schemas and conventions that are triggered by the position of objects, words, and bodies through which people interpret what they encounter. The authors argue position comes first – before cognitive resources, such as art historical knowledge – as the material qualities of an object and its context create distance, invite intimacy, and orient a viewer's access. A revised attention to interaction helps sociologists understand how objects, words, and bodies in space impact

viewers' physical, emotional, and cognitive responses to art in places of installed knowledge.

Gemma Mangione (Columbia) continued this line of argument with a focus on sensory hierarchies: the social orders through which people come to value particular forms of embodied experience over others. Mangione starts from the common assumption that museums are spaces where we are socialized quite early to look, but don't touch (as a 1983 Sesame Street special famously taught Cookie Monster, we "don't eat the pictures.")



Image Source: Smithsonian.com

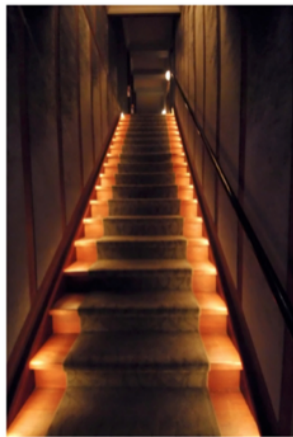


Image Source: Jon Delorey

Figure 3: Images from the Museum of Jurassic Technology

Yet scholarship in critical museology has highlighted how this "hands-off" conceit aligns with a broader Western cultural emphasis on what the historian Martin Jay has termed "ocularcentrism," or the privileging of vision above other sensory capacities. Given recent policy shifts emphasizing multi-sensory museum design and programming, Mangione then focused on the work of scholars in various fields who highlight the contingency of ocularcentrism, with anthropologists discussing how such hierarchies vary across cultures and historians noting how they vary across time. Joining this stream of thought, a sociological perspective can then emphasize how hierarchies vary across organizational contexts and by social group. For example, hierarchies vary between kinds of museums, with multi-sensory experiences often facilitated for visitors with disabilities specifically. Mangione's presentation made clear

how design for sensory engagement enhances visitor experience and promote inclusion, while also exposing critical conservation challenges for museum objects that often limit innovations in sensory design.

Robert S. Jansen (Univ. of Michigan) next presented "Doing Exhibits Together" with findings from an ethnographic study of the Museum of Jurassic Technology in Culver City, California (published in *Theory and Society* in 2008). Whereas much of the visitor studies literature remains focused on the relationship between individual visitors and the specific artifacts or exhibits with which they engage, Jansen's presentation stressed the importance of attending to interactions among visitors, highlighting the obvious but easily-overlooked fact that people experience museums socially. He emphasized three main points: First, people navigate museums with other people (whether as members of pairs or small groups visiting together, or simply as strangers inhabiting a common space together). Second, when people are in the presence of others, they strive to establish a sense of shared experience with one another. Third, that this sense of shared experience is a precondition for meaningful interpretation -- whether of specific objects, larger exhibits, or the whole museum space. As he explained, the spatial layout and exhibit curation of the Museum of Jurassic produce a sort of natural "breaching experiment," violating the rules that curators might follow if they were to take these three lessons to heart. Jansen concluded by encouraging museum practitioners to think about the sorts of both explicit and subtle interaction the spaces they design might be encouraging (or inhibiting), noting that museum spaces can be better or worse at fostering a sense of intersubjective connection among those inhabiting them and that this sense of connection matters for the overall interpretive experience.

Fiona Rose Greenland (Univ. of Virginia) then addressed the incursion of materiality studies into the sociology of culture. With this move, the role of artifacts in sociological theory shifted from paragon to protagonist. Greenland notes that

when we think of materiality, we have tended to focus on the primal force of presence: of the look and feel of solidity in its heterogeneous composites and surfaces. She says it is the capacity of material things to do, to act, that transcends symbols and communication and delivers us into what Searle called the “brute physical facts” of the world. Yet she also indicates that for all its tactile facticity, materiality is fiendishly mutable.



Figure 4: Reconstruction of a lamassu sculpture, based on an original destroyed by the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria. Papier-mâché, plaster and date syrup. London, Trafalgar Square. Photo source: Wikimedia Commons, Miriam Heppell.

Museum conservators know this as inherent vice—the ticking time bomb of a painting’s flaking paint chips or fraying canvas. Thus, Greenland promotes theories from cultural sociology that allow us to make sense of another dimension: evanescence, or the shimmering after-effects of material things. To demonstrate this theoretical innovation, she studied the ruination of artifacts in the Syrian civil war and the efforts to preserve their traces. Hundreds of mosques, shrines, churches, and archaeological sites were deliberately or accidentally destroyed since the start of the war. Digital reconstructions are being drawn up to commemorate what once stood. Composite stand-ins, however, are doing something else. She provided the example of Michael Rakowitz, a Chicago-based visual artist,

who uses Iraqi snack packaging and newspapers to recreate destroyed Mesopotamian antiquities like “ghosts to haunt us.” Rakowitz’s stand-ins fill the gaps left in the pockmarked landscape, and with his choice of cheap materials he ensures that these reconstructions, like their stone exemplars, will also fade and disappear. Greenland shares this lesson: The absence of materiality is also an opportunity for a powerful material encounter.



Figure 5: Lucy on all fours rather than bipedal on display at the Creation Museum underneath the phrase “Is Lucy Your Ancestor?” with the conventional fossil evidence looming in the background. Photo credit: Kenneth Rhem

Casey Oberlin (Grinnell College) concluded the session with “‘Lucy’ Up Close” and the question: What does it mean to make something look plausible or appear worthy of belief? Her focus was the Creation Museum -- curated by the group Answers in Genesis -- and the Museum’s use of ‘Lucy’, the *Australopithecus afarensis* used to depict one of our common ancestors in human evolution.

Oberlin compared the Creation Museum exhibit to exhibits on human origins at three natural history museums in the US. This comparison allowed her to unpack how the Creation Museum exhibit contested mainstream science museum representations by offering a counter narrative with a plausible ‘look and feel’ in three steps: First, they select a relevant, well-known example to target like Lucy that is neither esoteric nor unique to the group’s own interests; second, they portray an alternative account using similar conventions of presentation with the same physical evidence (in this case, fossils); finally, they claim transparency by stoking conflict in what is conventionally a conflict-averse setting by

stating explicitly what is wrong with dominant accounts. Oberlin’s analysis invited comparison to other politically-charged topics such as climate change, and raised the question of how conventions often lead curators to “forget” the importance of open discussions of uncertainty and a focus more on meaning making rather than solely ‘fun fact’ transmission. While museum professionals do not operate outside of the demands of administrative oversight, funding demands, and politicized public perceptions, they are nevertheless short on time and funding to study oppositional perspectives which thrive in rooms for doubt.

BRINGING CULTURAL SOCIOLOGY TO THE PUBLIC

*Written by Daniel Hirschman (Brown),
Compiled by Ande Reisman (Univ. of Washington)*



*An annual feature of the ASA meetings is the **Culture Section Professionalization Workshop**, which focuses on a topic relevant to the professional development of graduate students and junior faculty by*

*focusing on writing, publishing, and career opportunity skills. In Philadelphia for ASA 2018 the topic was, “Bringing Cultural Sociology to the Public.” The session focused on how sociologists, as scholars uniquely poised to weigh in on a variety of conversations relating to current events, can communicate their work to the broader public, particularly to influence news coverage. We featured **Daniel Hirschman**, **Ellen Berrey** (Toronto), **Greggor Mattson** (Oberlin College), and **Jessi Streib** (Duke). Panelists were asked to talk about how we can best communicate what we know about culture to create a better understanding of social problems and to offer advice for having the most purchase in the media.*

Daniel Hirschman has written a summary for those who were unable to attend the panel.

Greggor, Ellen, and Jessi each illustrated a different approach to public sociology, which in turn connect to different strategies of engagement. I think we can perhaps usefully characterize these strategies as *reactive*, *proactive*, and *promotional*. These strategies reflect different temporalities, and draw on different genres and media. Greggor's story is one about reacting to a particular claim that hit the news cycle. The goal of this reaction was to introduce sociology into a conversation begun by another discipline, and in so doing to offer a corrective to a misleading story. Greggor wasn't planning to write long blog posts about the basics of sex vs. gender vs. sexuality or the way algorithms can mislead if you approach them with the wrong understanding of how the social world works. But the need and opportunity arose simultaneously with the



circulation of the poorly-constructed "gaydar" study. Greggor was well-positioned to take advantage of the situation because he knew the topic and was already sufficiently connected through social media to other academics and to journalists, especially through his high-traffic [blog](#). He was able to write a funny and insightful post that contextualized gayness as a social identity quickly enough to react to the news cycle and promote that post through his network, getting it into the hands of journalists in time to affect coverage of the underlying study.

Ellen's strategy starts not with a news event, but with an argument that she wanted to get into the world. That is, based on her research, Ellen wanted to make certain claims about how diversity discourse limits conversations about race. Ellen then proactively looked for opportunity to connect that argument to larger story, in order to interest a wide audience. A Twitterstorm of outrage about Matt

Damon whitesplaining race provided the hook she needed to make her argument relevant to the immediate conversation. But the purpose of her engagement was not primarily to comment on Damon, but to try to reframe diversity discussions more broadly. Here, Ellen drew on her training and experience in writing op-eds, drafting the core of the argument in advance and then tailoring it to be able to place it in a sufficiently prominent outlet, *Salon*, when the opportunity arose. Her presence (or lack thereof) on social media was largely irrelevant, though perhaps helped a bit in circulating the piece.

Finally, Jessi's temporality was dictated by the promotional calendar of publishing. Her goal was to *create* a story, and thus help to share the insights from her newly-published book on cross-class marriages and how culture varies by class into a wider audience. In a sense, the publication of the book itself become the event whose timing Jessi took advantage of to repackage her arguments for different media. Journalists are on the lookout for new work that they can write about; Jessi's role then became facilitating their stories that were prompted by the book *The Atlantic*, *Vox*, *NPR*, *BBC*, and others (as

well as writing her own op-ed pieces for *The Washington Post*). And in her case, a social media presence was largely unnecessary—most of the outreach happened through traditional channels.

Each of these approaches highlights one useful way of engaging in public sociology. I want to add one more, which I borrow in part from a fantastic [essay](#) by **Kieran Healy**: doing sociology in public. While Greggor, Ellen, and Jessi all sought to bring wider attention to fully-formed arguments (either core disciplinary understandings applied to current topics, as in Greggor's case, or newer research findings, as in Ellen and Jessi's), another alternative focuses on making your work more accessible before it's finalized. At the simplest level, this process can involve posting working papers on a site like [SocArXiv](#), where other scholars *and* journalists or other interested individuals can access and read the work. This practice may also involve sharing data and code, or posting on blogs about data analysis or findings that are partial or still in-progress. This practice has the advantage of making your work *literally* accessible to a wide audience, in that most people will not be able to access research published in a paywalled journal. But it also makes it possible to engage with a wider audience while the work can still be changed. The benefit here to you is not just getting your work more exposure, or educating the public about sociology (both important goals!), but really improving the work itself. Additionally, it can dramatically shorten the lag between completing (at least a draft of) the project and when interested parties find it and are capable of learning from it. For example, Ellen Berrey and I posted a working paper to SocArXiv about trends in the consideration of race in college admissions, which we simultaneously submitted to a peer-reviewed journal. We didn't promote the working paper much—a few tweets and Facebook posts, and left it at that. But, the news cycle happened to come around to affirmative action, and a *Slate* journalist saw our paper and wrote up an article about it without ever contacting us. Because we'd made our work accessible, someone else was able to do the work of translating it to make it relevant for the news of the day.

So, to try to summarize: you can approach public sociology with different goals in mind (changing a narrative, promoting an argument, improving an argument), and doing so may draw on different skills and resources (social media presence, op-ed

writing, media connections, online outlets for works in progress). Think about what you want out of your public sociology, and where your strengths are, and figure out how to make the two work together.

Between Declension and Nostalgia: Bringing a Comparative Historical Gaze to the Logics and Lived Experiences of the American Rust Belt

*Amanda McMillan Lequieu,
Univ. of Wisconsin-Madison*

In the wake of the 2016 election, sociologists faced an “acute existential crisis,” according to then-ASA president Michele Lamont. Somehow, a



group of people committed to tracing and defining the social problems of inequality, human capital, and economic transformation underestimated the systemic frustration, dislocation, and consequential political foment of working-class

America. Lamont (2016) suggested that the results of the presidential election might “be interpreted as an expression of the white working class’s parallel move to assert its worth as a group that perceives itself as playing by the rules while others “cut in line”” (citing Hochschild 2016)), and evidence of a growing “recognition gap” between liberal, coastal elites and the once-middle-class residents of marginalized America. Any existential crisis wasn’t for lack of existing scholarly research on the repercussions of the ‘rusting’ of America’s industrial corridors in the late 20th century. Rather, it was the persistence, prevalence, and political implications of emotions linked with economic loss, disenfranchisement, racial anxieties, and/or cultural alienation in certain segments of

working-class America that gave sociologists pause.

An invited session at ASA 2018 aimed to address the cultures and emotions in contemporary industrial and post-industrial America. The Special Session, entitled “Between Declension and Nostalgia: The Logics and Lived Experiences of Politics, Culture, and Economics in the American Rust Belt,” moderated by **Michael M. Bell** (Univ. of Wisconsin-Madison) brought into conversation four contemporary cases of post-industrial and re-industrializing extractive and manufacturing communities. These papers probed the complexities of individual and corporate experiences of how past and current economic relationships shape political engagement, cultural expectations, and narratives of blame. **Shannon Elizabeth Bell** (Virginia Tech) explained how certain historical events and processes have kept many Central Appalachian coalfield residents quiescent in the face of increasing environmental and public health threats posed by mountaintop removal mining and other coal industry practices. **Colin Jerolmack** (New York Univ.) offered a contemporary case of community acceptance of natural resource extraction in the case of fracking in northern Pennsylvania. **Amanda McMillan Lequieu** (Univ. of Wisconsin) analyzed the long-term consequences of the evaporation of the steel commodity chain from both extractive and manufacturing communities in the upper Midwest. And **Josh Pacewicz** (Brown) traced the process of political reorganization required by

manufacturing decline in two small cities in Iowa. Individually, and then in an extended period of moderated discussion, these studies explored the synergies and differences between recognition gaps among former workers, property owners, and community members in cases across rural and urban contexts and extractive or manufacturing industries.

From these four distinct studies emerged several themes of interest to cultural sociologists. First, we discuss the interactions between economic and cultural processes. To understand emotions of marginalization, mobilization, or lack of recognition in the American Rust Belt, we argued for a historical analysis of how actors and processes shape specific communities in the image of capitalism. Understanding the history of economics sheds light on the persistence of certain cultural expectations. Second, we concurred that much can be gained from cross-case comparisons across time and space, rural and urban contexts, and theoretical and methodological frameworks. Bell and Jerolmack looked at patterns of contemporary quiescence and nonmobilization in contemporary, rural extractive locations, while Pacewicz centered on urban post-manufacturing communities, and McMillan Lequieu considered deindustrialization across both rural and urban nodes of a commodity chain. All four scholars engaged some

ethnography and interview-based research; Pacewicz used network analysis and McMillan Lequieu leaned more heavily into comparative historical research. Yet all four studies shed light on the complexities of individual and collective experiences of political engagement, cultural marginalization, and the emotions of economic gain and loss.

By grappling with how economic processes shape non-economic, social relations and thus, how long-term residents of both past and current industrial communities need to reconceptualize blame and responsibility, sociologists can trace the cultures and structures of recognition gaps in contemporary political economies of the American Rust Belt.

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Contact us with suggestions for essays, book reviews, symposia, reports on conference panels, etc.—or just themes or topics you'd like to see covered in the newsletter. Graduate students are especially welcome to be involved!

Contact us at dgraizbord@uga.edu

FOUR QUESTIONS FOR OMAR LIZARDO

Dustin Stoltz (Univ. of Notre Dame) interviews **Omar Lizardo** (UCLA), the new Culture Section chair, on the past, present, and future of cultural analysis and sociology.

Dustin Stoltz: How did you become interested in the study of culture?

Omar Lizardo: I came to grad school with interests in theory and with working knowledge of what gets called “theory” more broadly (namely, so-called French and critical theory, Habermas, Foucault, structuralism, Althusser, and so on). So I guess I was interested in what was called “cultural studies” in the late 1990s, but I knew that I wanted to be a sociologist, so I was interested in that intersection. I was not very familiar with more conventional “sociological” theory, but I knew about Bourdieu’s work in connection to my self-taught French theory background, and had even read **Jeff Alexander’s** extensive critique of Bourdieu’s approach in *Fin De Siècle Social Theory* (1995, Verso) by the time I applied to grad school. So I had a sense that “culture” was a somewhat “theoretical” area in sociology in which a lot of the background knowledge I had was applicable.

My first grad school classroom experience at Arizona cemented that. This was a sociology of culture graduate seminar taught by **Lis Clemens**. The course was great, mostly because it was a traditional Chicago-style “great books” class, and Lis is a good curator of what more empirically oriented people would call “culture” related work. Because it was Chicago-style, the course wasn’t just purely sociology, but empirical work on culture was understood in a more interdisciplinary way. Thus, we read such broadly influential books as Scott’s *Seeing Like a State* and *Domination and*

the Arts of Resistance, Baxandall’s monograph on the Quattrocento eye (which I later found out was critical for Bourdieu’s theoretical development), and Hebdige’s *Meaning of Style*. We also read more disciplinary stuff such as Bourdieu’s *Homo Academicus* (which I hadn’t read), Griswold’s *Sociological Methodology* piece on the cultural diamond, Sewell’s duality of structure paper, Peterson’s 1979 *Annual Review* piece on culture, Hirsch’s 1972 *AJS* piece on cultural industry systems, Gottdiener’s 1985 *AJS* piece on mass culture and hegemony, Brubaker’s 1985 *Theory and Society* piece on Bourdieu and the classics, and a bunch of other key pieces, as well as things that I had already read like the Frankfurt School and Habermas (and I did end up writing a final paper on mass culture as distorted communication!). In all, it was a great intro to empirical work on culture in sociology and “traditions” of work in social science oriented “cultural studies.”

“After values, and morality were brought back to the fold in the aughts, and practice theory became an established tradition of cultural analysis, there really are no “cultural things” that are off limits to study today.”

At the same time, I was taking the required Theory class with **Ron Breiger**, in which he introduced Bourdieu as this great empirical methodologist. So Bourdieu was a bridge between my “French theory” background and empirical sociology of culture. And that created my “template” of what work should look like, a sort of “normal science” (very Arizona) version of Bourdieu (essentially the Princeton-style stuff that would come to populate *Poetics*) of which there were a bunch of Arizona-approved examples to pick from such as early DiMaggio on cultural capital, some of Noah Mark’s work on networks and taste, and the foundational 1996 *ASR* papers

on cultural taste—Peterson and Kern and Bryson—published while **Paula England** edited the journal in Tucson. Later when I discovered that **John Martin** was also doing stuff like this (also via readings assigned in Breiger classes), I added his approach as another model to follow.

DS: What work does culture do in your thinking, and what do you see as the benefits and limitations of your approach as compared to alternatives?

OL: As with most people, culture plays a dual role for me as both a “topic of” and “resource for” analysis. As already noted, Bourdieu’s *Distinction* and the resurgent interest in studying empirical patterns of taste and culture consumption solved the topic problem for me. There was data on cultural tastes and consumption (GSS culture module, SPPA) and I was learning quantitative methods, and I was going study that using those methods; problem solved (I also needed to write an MA thesis). This was a Petersonian resolution to the “culture” issue because it doesn’t require delving on vexing definitions. Culture is patterns of choice (in my case, on the consumption side) with regards to the stuff that the folk also call culture such as music, books, paintings, etc. I feel like the people who study production also have their problems solved by Peterson in this way because you go to just study the thing that’s being made by particular people (e.g. rap, or country, or food, or whatever) rather than delving on analytical issues as to what culture “is” (or is not).

Thinking of culture as a “resource” for analysis (e.g., cultural analysis or cultural theory) took a bit longer for me, and that’s still a developing project. This probably started with me grappling with Bourdieu’s theory of practice and the status of the “cognitive element” in his overall approach, from the 2004 *JTSB* piece on the cognitive origins of habitus to some of the stuff on **Loic Wacquant**’s *Body and Soul* and the neural basis of habitus, onwards to the 2011 piece in the special issue of *Cultural Sociology* edited by **Marco Santoro** on Bourdieu as a “post-cultural” theorist. However, the main piece that began to

develop a more encompassing argument was the 2010 *Poetics* with **Mike Strand** for the special issue on cognition edited by **Karen Cerulo**, in which we kind of forced ourselves to bring Bourdieu’s concern with embodiment and practice in dialogue with Swidler’s “outside in” perspective, which was an approach that was broadly influential in American sociology, interest in which had been revived by Vaisey’s 2009 dual process piece. Clearly, you can trace a direct line between the 2010 *Poetics* paper and the 2017 *ASR* on the declarative/non-declarative distinction since the intent of both papers was synthetic rather than critical and the *ASR* piece developed arguments that existed in embryo in the earlier one. So, my approach tends to be more focused on bringing in insights from cognitive social science into cultural analysis, without being dismissive of native traditions of cultural theory in sociology. So those are the benefits; regarding limitations, time will tell.

So all of this work on culture as a resource for analysis has been more theoretical than empirical for me (although I’m glad that some people have taken up the empirical challenge as given by the citations I’ve seen to both papers). The underlying message in both of those pieces is that the cognitive dimension of the cultural needs to be theorized explicitly, and also expressly linked to the public aspects that American sociologists tend to be more comfortable bringing in empirically and theoretically. I do believe the recent interest in thinking of patterns of cultural taste as partially driven by underlying schemas that could be retrieved from surveys (e.g., the line of work opened up by **Amir Goldberg**’s 2011 *AJS*) bring the two strands of work I’ve done on culture kind of full circle. I hope to do more stuff in that vein (on schemas and cultural taste) in the near future.

DS: How does your approach to culture shape your choice of research topics, settings, and methods?

OL: As noted earlier, I don’t think that there was a direct relationship between an overall “approach” and the choice of topic. I guess there

would be if you call Petersonian pragmatism in defining culture as “expressive symbols,” and delineating strategies to deal with the consumption and production side that tied it closely to existing sources of data, an “approach.” So the imagery of “patterns of cultural choice” always stuck with me, because that’s literally what you see when you load survey data on cultural tastes into your favorite statistical software. People in the rows and a vector of numbers across the columns (where each entry may indicate whether a person likes, dislikes, or engages a given arts activity or musical genre). Each vector is a “pattern,” and most of our techniques consist of trying to reduce the data into even tinier and more manageable clumps where the patterns that are most alike end up in the same clump. This is usually done by trying to come up with classifications that lump the columns based on the correlation (e.g., factor analysis) or work with the n-way table formed by the response patterns (like latent class analysis) to clump the people. Bourdieu, of course, worked with eigenvalue decomposition techniques in which the patterns of cultural choice are modeled directly (multiple correspondence analysis), so that gives you a simultaneous classification of people and genres. I was taught simple CA and MCA (as well as latent class analysis and log-linear modeling) by Breiger and have always been interested in the many ways in which different methods realize the Petersonian “patterns” imagery in different ways.

Some recent work on the “formal” approaches to culture tradition that **John Mohr** started departs from yet a different way of realizing the “patterns” imagery, which works by drawing on Breiger’s duality conception and treats the data table as a “network” of people by genres (something that networks people such as **Steve Borgatti** say should be done, but few actually do) and directly applies network techniques to detect cultural choice patterns. Mohr and **Achim Edelmann** bring a lot of this stuff together in their recent introduction to a special issue of *Poetics* on formal approaches to modeling culture, and I really think that there’s a coherent line linking the Petersonian idea of cultural choice patterns and “the matrix” of data containing such patterns via

the unifying notion of the mutual constitution and definition of people and the objects they choose (this can be kicked up a notch by thinking about the mutual constitution of the relations among the relations in what **Monica Lee** with John Martin have recently referred to as the “[Dharma of Duality](#)”). This was, of course, foundational to Bourdieu’s own use of MCA and why *Distinction* was such a revelatory work both theoretically and empirically. I think the next step here, in addition to achieving duality enlightenment, is toward tighter integration with the techniques we are familiar with (both correlation and network-based) and more “exploratory” tools from the data science/mining/network science tradition in computer science such as cluster analysis or community detection. This is something I hope to broach in some ongoing work. A forthcoming paper with **Jeff Larson** in *Social Forces* on eliciting social movement logics (combining MCA and divisive clustering) from “the matrix” of events by protest-even characteristics implements a bit of this vision.

DS: What most excites you about the future of cultural theory and analysis in sociology?

OL: What excites me is the diversity. Both regarding culture as “topic” and “resource,” as well as the methodological diversity, which ranges from ethnography to interviews, to past surveys to novel, computational, natural language processing and automated text coding techniques. After values, and morality were brought back to the fold in the aughts, and practice theory became an established tradition of cultural analysis, there really are no “cultural things” that are off limits to study today. So the initial Petersonian restriction to expressive symbols and the defocusing of the stuff that sounded too Parsonian was the right pragmatic move for the sociology of culture when it needed to establish and legitimize itself but now is no longer needed. I think accepting “dappled” nature of culture (some of us study “taste,” others “beliefs,” others “practices,” others “discourses,” others “values,” etc.) is the comparative strength in the field. Restrictive definitions may be logically pretty, but they are pragmatically

disastrous. Accepting the dappledness, then the hard work analytically is to try to theorize how the various pieces of the cultural puzzle fit together and play (or grind against) with one another, and here you are seeing lots of great work theorizing both processes (e.g., “resonance”) and underlying entities (e.g., frames, schemas, etc.). So in this

respect, cultural theory is in a good place in the sense that people are open to and working on new ideas and creative syntheses, especially now that disciplinary anxieties about sociology being “conquered” by other fields have died down. So I'm excited about the continuing diversification of the area, both conceptually and methodologically.



Omar Lizardo is Professor and LeRoy Neiman Term Chair at UCLA. He completed his undergraduate studies in psychology at Brooklyn College. As a young man living in Brooklyn, he had a lot of content-based and general theoretical questions that went beyond generic behavioral propensities; his growing curiosities were not sated by his psychology coursework. Then he took his first sociology elective: an ‘intro’ class taught by a then graduate-student from

the CUNY grad center (now Prof. **George Cavalletto**) who assigned graduate-level reading. In particular, Wilson's *Truly Disadvantaged*, Hochschild's *Second Shift*, and Chodorow's *Reproduction of Mothering* introduced Lizardo to rigorous sociological explanations. At Univ of Arizona, he worked with **Al Bergesen**, who took him to his first conference, Political Economy of World-Systems at UC, Riverside, and introduced him to the “business side” of the profession. From Bergesen he learned, “First, no idea is a crazy idea; and second, you never turn down a publishing opportunity; it doesn't matter when, where, or how. If somebody gives you the faintest invitation to publish something, you say yes.” Through his other adviser at Arizona, **Ron Breiger**, he was introduced to the work of Bourdieu “as methodologically rigorous work and not as a pie-in-the-sky ‘French theorist.’” He also learned from Breiger to “stop worrying about the battle of the methods” because the more interesting methods (like correspondence analysis and network analysis) were combining both qualitative and quantitative techniques. Outside of his doctoral program, Lizardo was influenced by **Paul DiMaggio**’s work—specifically learning the right way write a sociology paper from DiMaggio’s articles. **John Levi Martin** also influenced him in a more general sense by providing a model of “how to be a sociologist,” specifically a “generalist” sociologist. This was “liberating,” according to Lizardo, “because ‘that’ meant that I did not need to sacrifice my interest in a wide variety of theoretical and substantive areas to get my degree.”

TEACHING ABSTRACTS

“Sociology of Creative Industries”

Professor: Hannah Wohl
Undergraduate course at
UC, Santa Barbara

Why do catalog models make more money than runway models? How do aspiring rappers learn to freestyle? How do comedians negotiate the boundary between originality and joke theft? This course explores sociological research on creative industries, such as visual art, film, music, gastronomy, comedy, fashion, literature, academia, and technology. Rather than address each industry separately, we compare and contrast research on different creative industries to identify common concepts and phenomena. The course is organized around three main processes: production, distribution, and consumption. We identify how social contexts, especially differences in race, gender, and class, affect the ways in which people produce, distribute, and consume creative products. Topics include globalization, place branding, creative careers, collaboration, experimentation, rankings and reviews, pricing, taste patterns, meaning and materiality, authenticity, morality, and censorship. Students conduct independent secondary research on a creative industry of their choice throughout the semester. In three papers devoted respectively to production, distribution, and consumption, they analyze their research in light of lectures and course readings.

"Leisure, Recreation, and Sports"

Professor: Jeff London
Undergraduate Course at
Hunter College, New York

The history of leisure, recreation and sports is intertwined with the attributes and defining values of our society. Leisure, once the region of the landed classes, has now become a pursuit that has risen to the forefront in our search for meaning. Recreation has shifted over the century to a further scripted, scheduled and predictable tone. Finally, sports have come to embody the nature of class capitals, the passion of regionalism, the shifting relations of gender and even subjects such as law, violence and the nature of truth. The objective of this course is to uncover how these trends have played out in the modern era and where we are going globally and locally in terms of these powerful sites of contested meaning in the 21st Century. We map the coincidence of the rise in leisure culture with both the advent of the mail order magazine and the adoption of street lights in big cities. As we reached the American modern age, according to William Leach, technologies of desire supplanted landscapes of comfort. We also look at the intersectional intensities of class, race and gender on certain sports and the connoisseur cultures that define their distinctiveness. Finally, we move into the realm of Critical Theory and the categorical denigration of the imagination under mass culture. We then look at the development of newer forms of possibility, using Hall's Reception theory and the use of leisure culture to turn the tables of power and take back consumer landscapes for those with contested identities.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

CORDONING OFF CULTURE IN INTRODUCTORY SOCIOLOGY TEXTBOOKS

(Excerpt, Volume 22, No. 1, Autumn 2007)

The newsletter of the Culture Section provides a rich repository of knowledge about cultural sociology and the sociology of culture. Its pages, which span from the 1980s to the present, index major debates, movements, and shifts. To contribute to our collective memory, the next several newsletters will feature an article or feature from an earlier newsletter. We hope these reprints will stimulate reflection on theoretical, methodological, and substantive changes and continuities in our community of practice.

Editor's Introduction

Michael Jindra, Spring Arbor Univ.

Is the cultural turn in sociology reflected in the standard introductory sociology textbooks? While these texts uniformly devote an early chapter to culture, the subject is still “cordoned” off from the other chapters and topics. The culture chapter often gives an adequate description of the various meanings and uses of culture and how it helps us understand different ways of thought and practice. But it usually has only scattered (“families in global perspective”), somewhat superficial and sometimes outmoded treatments of it in the other sections of the texts. Culture is something to be aware of, they seem to say, but certainly not as an explanatory factor, in contrast to what some cultural sociologists argue (Kaufman 2004; Patterson 2000, P. Smith 2005). To their credit, the Giddens, Duneier and Appelbaum text is the only one of the eleven I reviewed that mentioned the cultural turn in sociology, though I wish I saw more influence of this in the rest of the text.

While many different topics can be examined to see how culture is cordoned off, I will pick only a couple, stratification and pop/subcultures. I do this partly because they are topics I am more familiar with, but they also make an interesting pair because one is traditionally noncultural (stratification) while the other (popular and subcultures) is cultural by definition. Looking at them through the lens of culture also reveals how these two topics are connected. Other cultural sociologists, with other approaches and specializations, would likely pick different themes to focus on. And while it is easy to take potshots at intro sociology texts, given their survey function, I still would argue that culture is now important enough in the discipline to merit attention not just in the “culture” chapter, but throughout these texts.

STRATIFICATION CHAPTERS

Sociology has witnessed the resurgence of culture as an important factor in other topics, including stratification (Small and Newman 2001; Hitlin and Piliavin 2004; P. Smith 2005, 43- 50). In the texts, the culture chapter often highlights the subsistence practices of different cultural groups, and some contrast orientations toward social and kin responsibilities versus those toward work and progress. The later international stratification chapter would be an ideal place to build on these contrasts by discussing how they influence economic outcomes. Instead, the chapters almost uniformly reference the standard structural functional/modernization and dependency or world system explanations without any reference to the previous culture chapter, even though these theories are largely legacies of the 1950s and 1960s and rather Eurocentric in their own contrasting ways.

I am most familiar here with Africanist scholarship, where the discussion on poverty has gone well beyond the dependency/world systems/culture of poverty debate and toward discussion of modes of governance, institutional cultures, and the “moral economy,” all thick with cultural elements (Chabal and Daloz 1999). Ethnographic studies have given us keen insight into the links between economic and cultural processes, including religious change and the increasing importance of witchcraft. Some of the best studies tie these into global processes, and indeed draw on the strengths of the other theoretical perspectives.

Likewise, in domestic stratification, culture is usually shoved into the “culture of poverty” section, now decades old with few sociologists adhering to in its classic formulation. Almost nothing is taken from the earlier culture chapter to connect to issues of stratification. Instead of a nuanced analysis of how cultural and structural forces interact (Farkas 2003: 548, Lamont 1999, MacLeod 1987, Patterson 2000, Small 2004, Smilde 2007, Wilson 2006, Zhou 2005), the texts ignore the topic, and generally favor structuralist explanations (for reasons that I lack room to explain, but some of which can be found in some of the above citations).

The neglect of culture is also expressed in the attention the texts give to production over consumption, having still not factored in the phenomenal rise of consumer culture since the 1980’s (Zukin and Maguire 2004). Production (in the broad sense) has more to do with power, labor hierarchies, capital, all meaty stuff of traditional sociology (though production is also “culture-filled,” as many sociologists of culture point out). While consumption also involves power and capital among other things, its form certainly has more to do with symbols, ideals, subjectivity, peer relations, leisure and media and popular cultures, where meaning is key. Levels and forms of consumption certainly have a relationship with class, education, deviance, and other factors, as the consumption “clusters” that marketing firms use clearly show. In general, culture is now utilized in a much more

sophisticated way in economic sociology (Swedberg 2003; Day, Papataxiarchis and Stewart 1999). Little of this is integrated into the various chapters of the texts, perhaps because economic sociology “grew up” concentrating on production rather than consumption (Zelizer 2005: 336). And even with the attention given to production, the concepts of social and cultural capital (beyond the Bourdieuan sense), essential to understanding economies, especially ethnic ones, also fail to find even a mention in the in the textbooks, despite voluminous literature (Light 2005:663).

POPULAR AND SUBCULTURES

Though there is normally some coverage of popular and subcultures in the culture chapter, the theme is again cordoned off from other social topics. Though subcultures have taken on an increasingly important role in contemporary society, the point of the text seems to be to simply show a certain amount of diversity. Here again there are lost opportunities to connect chapters together by using the earlier culture chapter to consider the broader implications of the power of pop and subcultures, their impact on the specific institutions and processes of society, and their interactions with class, gender, race, religion and other factors.

For instance, the standard deviance theories typically stress the more rational and noncultural approaches. Contemporary society, however, offers a rich array of groups expressing meaningful engagement in activities, or that do things simply for the enjoyment or “thrill” of it, such as the bicycle couriers that prefer both the work and leisure lifestyle of their frenetic activity (Fincham 2007) or the “seductions” of deviant behavior that Jack Katz (1988) famously highlighted. It is clear that these groups have social effects, but one wouldn’t know this from reading the textbooks. In fact, the varied insights of “cultural criminology” (Ferrell 1999) are certainly underutilized in the texts.

Cultural sociology also provides a great opportunity to connect micro and macro environments, through connecting local and subcultural social processes to popular cultures, as

in David Harding's (2007) work on disadvantaged neighborhoods. Another example of this is the heavy debate over whether accusations of "acting white" affect educational outcomes. Influences here include local school group dynamics and media constructions of "authentic" racial identity that have a huge influence on youth through music genres such as hip hop. This issue is not mentioned in any textbook I examined.

Popular cultures are certainly having significant effects on society, helping to create or maintain certain moral orders. Sociology traditionally focuses on structures and institutions, but these formal and more direct influences are being sidelined by the increasingly pervasive media technologies that are infused with symbols and images, and the sociology texts are only beginning to catch onto this.

When reading these texts, one also rarely gets a sense of cultural differences, other than the mentions in the "culture" chapter. Basic information concerning cultural variable notions of time, space, personhood, social interaction, subsistence or narratives may be mentioned briefly in the culture chapter, but is otherwise left out. The texts often studiously avoid ethnic and cultural differences in styles (such as communication styles), even though there are sources that illuminate this (Skrentny 2007). Many cultural sociologists argue that discussion of cultural codes and moral orders are crucial to understanding social life (C. Smith 2003), though this is for the most part absent from these textbooks. Social scientists, Marshall Sahlins argues, are denying "the existence of cultural boundaries just when so many peoples are being called upon to mark them" (Sahlins 1999: 409), with the implication that any "diversity is just a matter of superficial difference," an assumption that is "still at the core of many perspectives on race, ethnicity and culture in the social sciences" (Markus, Steele and Steele 2002:461).

For the sociology texts to truly display the richness of human social life, they need to show it as strongly cultural, as people moved by motives and desires for identity, subjectivity, experience,

desire, and not simply as subject to institutional forces and motivated by instrumentalities (Smith 2003). And they need to indicate how all these are mediated by culture in diverse ways. Instead of simplistic explanations where either the individual (where "culture" is sometimes misleadingly placed) or social structure (the favored explanation) is determining, these texts ought to include culture as a mediating force between the two (Smilde 2007). Whether this means adding another explicit theoretical perspective is debatable, but this approach would be eclectic enough to draw on the strengths of the other perspectives, and to incorporate materialist, instrumental, rationalist or other approaches when appropriate (Chabal and Daloz 2006: 310).

The rather uniform structure of the intro texts is a product of market pressures and the specialization of sociology into subdisciplines (Turner and Turner 1990:164), and these forces also makes it unlikely that they will find it easy to reflect changes in the discipline. The evening before I submitted this article, however, I noticed the announcement of a forthcoming intro text by Jeffrey Alexander and Kenneth Thompson which claims to be the first "truly new introduction to sociology" in "decades" and also "promises to show how culture is central to many world problems" (Alexander and Thompson 2007), so perhaps changes are on the way.

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BOOK REVIEW

ANN SWIDLER AND SUSAN COTTS WATKINS.

A FRAUGHT EMBRACE: THE ROMANCE AND REALITY OF AIDS ALTRUISM IN AFRICA
(PRINCETON UP, 2017)

Shai Dromi,
Harvard Univ.

One of the most challenging barriers for humanitarian organizations is the lack of direct access to populations in need. In places like Syria

and Yemen, armed conflict and uncooperative local governments, along with a lack of infrastructure for travel and mobilization of aid supplies, may stand in the way of humanitarians. But even in more peaceful surroundings, aid organizations work in conditions of considerable

uncertainty as they attempt to identify a target population, evaluate its needs, decide on an effective intervention strategy, and determine whether or not said intervention is successful. As a result, humanitarian aid often fails to reach the communities that need it most, and when it does it achieves, at times, only partial success due to a lack of fit with local needs and expectations. The burgeoning literature on development and humanitarian organizations has shed considerable light on the challenges donors and aid organizations face as they seek to do good in the developing world. However, the long networks that carry international donors' good intentions to the African villages that need their help—and the ways mediators within those networks shape the aid that is ultimately dispensed—remain poorly understood.

In *A Fraught Embrace: The Romance & Reality of AIDS Altruism in Africa*, **Ann Swidler** and **Susan Cotts Watkins** provide a compelling look into these networks by investigating the inner workings of the humanitarian and development community in Malawi. Although HIV remains a significant health problem in the country, infection rates have dropped considerably over the past twenty years as local knowledge about the virus increased in the early 2000s. And yet, despite the already-ongoing decline in infection rates, Malawi has been flooded with international actors—donors, NGOs, church groups, and other altruists—intent on providing relief to suffering Africans. Malawi is a particularly attractive location for international altruists because of its developed roads that allow travel and supply mobilization, its relatively sparse ethnic conflicts, and its weak government that allows NGOs to act independently. The influx of international donors and NGOs created an expanding job market where educated Malawians can make a career and earn a decent living.

Swidler and Watkins bring a unique perspective to this site by focusing on the *brokers* of altruism—those Malawians who link donors, NGOs, and potential beneficiaries, whether as NGO employees, as impromptu informants, or as volunteers in villages. Such brokers “provide the

crucial channel-or, as it sometimes turns out, form the critical bottleneck” (p. 5): while altruists may believe brokers are direct representatives of populations in need, brokers often have very different understandings of the type of help needed and the ways to achieve it. In order to grasp these dynamics, Swidler and Watkins rely on an unusually rich and diverse set of data, collected over the past two decades through annual month-long ethnographic visits to rural Malawi. The authors, along with students and colleagues, conducted countless interviews with actors on all levels of Malawi's AIDS altruism world, observed trainings and public events, collected survey data, and examined documents produced by organizations large and small. The analysis also innovates methodologically by drawing on a dataset of diaries written by local ethnographers recruited for this project—namely villagers who observed and recorded conversations about AIDS in their surroundings.

The book first outlines the multilayered organizational landscape of AIDS altruism in Malawi, from large-scale multilateral organizations like the World Health Organization and International Nongovernmental Organizations (INGOs) like Doctors without Borders, through more focused academic institutions, bilateral agencies, for-profit organizations, and local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), to very local community-based organizations. In each of these organizational facets, actors work with particular aims, strategies, and organizational culture. To add to this mix, international “butterfly altruists”—namely those who travel to Malawi independently to offer direct assistance—work in Malawi free of accountability constraints and pursue their own visions of humanitarian aid. Swidler and Watkins demonstrate how brokers tie together the various levels of the Malawi AIDS altruism map. Brokers range from cosmopolitan elite brokers, who are often the only ones to interact at length with international donors, to national-level brokers who primarily work in NGO and INGO offices in Lilongwe, to regional brokers who work in field offices and are tasked with reaching target populations and reporting back to the head office. Two additional types of

brokers are “interstitial” brokers, who volunteer in local villages in the hope to be hired one day at an NGO, and freelance brokers, who may come across visiting altruists as service providers (such as taxi drivers) and guide them to sites where they are encouraged to contribute.

The heart of the book lays in the chapters that demonstrate the mismatches between altruist intentions, broker agendas, and beneficiary needs, along with the strategies actors develop to address or circumvent these gaps. While ideals about fighting HIV stigma and helping orphans appeal to Western altruists, these goals carry very different meanings in Malawi that make them hard to implement as intended. For example, campaigns that aim to fight AIDS stigma work only insofar as they resonate with local conceptions of assisting others and loving one another, and the more Western practice of “coming out” as HIV positive makes little sense to many Malawians. Many Malawian elite members – brokers included – believe that “mercenary women” are in part responsible for HIV infections, since they seduce and infect men, and thus a successful intervention should restrain them. Various Malawian cultural practices are similarly stigmatized, but donors have difficulties with goals that explicitly work against local culture, believing this to be insensitive and imperialist. Many donors believe that *empowering* women would help reduce HIV infections, whereas brokers believe that *stopping immoral behavior* will achieve this goal. Brokers thus have to translate their goals into human rights language in order for them to resonate with donors’ sensibilities about cultural sensitivity. Rather than talking about restraining women, their discussions turn to addressing women’s poverty, and rather than discussing “negative” cultural practices, brokers adopt the language of universal human rights when they communicate with donors.

In this, brokers devise ways to communicate to donors that their projects succeeded. An economy of information and cultural representations between different organizational levels exists, as brokers learn to communicate humanitarian needs and operational successes through carefully

curated testimonials, monitoring and evaluation reports, and matrixes that break down a broad intervention project into checklists of activities and anticipated results (the omnipresent “logframe”, in NGO-speak). Activities like educational campaigns, for example, draw on donor beliefs that eye-catching, playful awareness drives will be more effective (and often fall on deaf ears among villagers). But regardless of whether they directly help reduce AIDS incidence, they provide brokers with feasible ways to demonstrate that the funds invested were put to use in the field. Conducting trainings of various sorts is another activity that appeases all sides and bears little potential risk. Even though training often offers very little in concrete help, it speaks to donor ideals about sustainability and can be easily sold by brokers as a concrete, doable intervention. Brokers thus develop cultural competencies in the language and experiences that appease donors, while at the same time further their own goals of material payment, local prestige, and community moralizing.

Throughout the analysis, Swidler and Watkins highlight the role of imagination in AIDS altruism, specifically as it gives rise to very different fantasies among different actors. Donors imagine powerless beneficiaries in need of help, and develop fantasies about empowering them into self-sustenance. Such donors often find local social and cultural structures illegitimate and seek to change or circumvent them (or are unaware of them altogether). Conversely, like many other African societies, Malawians value *dependence* and client-patron relations rather than the independence international altruists would like to give them. Villagers develop fantasies about patronage that would help relieve their material needs, in ways that Western donors are often not comfortable with. In fact, Western altruists’ emphasis on building local self-reliance allows them to move from project to project without building long-lasting relations with specific communities—a practice at odds with the dependency ethic that locals harbor. And brokers also fantasize about achieving status and wealth through their position, becoming a success story, and—at times—policing the morality of their

community through the channeling of outside aid. In short, fantasy motivates altruistic behavior, but also stands in the way of effective interventions.

By highlighting the link between helping behavior and fantasy, *A Fraught Embrace* makes an important contribution toward a cultural sociology of altruism that can help make sense of other cases as well. Historically, other sites of social suffering have served as loci for fantasies of all sorts, and have given rise to corresponding types of altruistic work. The burgeoning mid-nineteenth-century Red Cross movement, for example, attracted many European women by emulating their romanticized views of the battlefield as an exciting site where the most noble human virtues could be expressed (and, where a volunteer nurse position could serve as an alternate socially acceptable trajectory for unwed women). In the 1970s, numerous French volunteers left their safe jobs and joined the emerging Doctors Without Borders movement's work in war- and disaster-ridden countries. Many of them recounted their excitement by the prospect of affecting true social change abroad, compared to their mundane workplaces in France. In these and other places, the thought of distant suffering intersected with culturally-specific ideas about altruism to generate fantasies that, in turn, translated into concrete mobilization. *A Fraught Embrace* provides a fruitful framework and model to analyze such sites, and will certainly inform future work on collective mobilization.

The book is also relevant for several timely questions in the sociology of development and humanitarianism. First, recent conversations on humanitarian aid have raised concepts like rights-based humanitarianism as possible alternative to the existing top-down relief model, in which NGOs primarily provide supplies and human services. Given situations in Haiti, Mozambique, and elsewhere where influxes of expatriate aid workers and NGOs effectively override the few functioning state health and

welfare systems (rather than partner with them and strengthen them), scholars and policy makers have been proposing ways to work toward sustainable local solutions. *A Fraught Embrace* demonstrates that Malawians tend to expect patronage, rather than such sustainability, but says little about what the long-term effects of reliance on international funding to generate jobs and support for locals might be. Further exploration of the potential implications here would be particularly useful for developing policies based on the findings of the book. Second, the book makes only brief mention of churches, mosques and faith-based organizations as part of the AIDS altruism landscape. But in a high religiosity country like Malawi, one would expect that religious organizations would figure strongly when it comes to addressing AIDS, as regulators of intimate life or as hubs for social activism. In some cases, for example, U.S. churches partner with African churches in their denominations in an attempt to channel aid through religious networks and circumvent some of the obstacles the book describes. While the book certainly mentions churches and faith-based organizations, more concerted discussion of the extent to which religious organizations facilitate or hinder efforts at aid – either on a practical level or as key cultural institutions in Malawi – would have expanded the scope of the book further still.

A Fraught Embrace is a must-read for any scholar interested in long-distance development projects. While the book focuses on Malawi, its findings are illuminating for a wide range of cases, and can inform abstract discussions of intervention ethics as well as concrete conversations of humanitarian best practices in the field. For cultural sociologists and for ethnographers, the use of ethnographic diaries along with the wide array of data sources should serve as an extraordinary model of rigorous empirical examination of meanings in social action. The book is compellingly written and will be of interest to senior scholars and undergraduates alike.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BOOKS

Naudet, Jules. 2018. [*Stepping into the Elite : Trajectories of Social Achievement in India, France and the United States*](#). New Delhi, Oxford Univ. Press.

This book is the English translation of the French title, *Entrer dans l'élite: parcours de réussite en France, en Inde et aux Etats-Unis*. In this book, the author highlights the particular way in which upwardly mobile people in India, France and the United States--countries embodying three distinct stratification systems-- make sense of their experience of shifting from one social class to another. Given that people draw upon particular cultural tools or repertoires to analyze their world and situate themselves in it, the author identifies the extent to which narratives of 'success' vary from one country to another. He argues that for any study on social mobility, it is important to take into account national contexts along with associated levels of analysis. In order to account satisfactorily for the way mobility is experienced, the author argues, identifying national repertoires of evaluation and institutional specificities is a decisive, yet insufficient step. Achievement narratives, the author concludes, are the result of a composite influence of the cultural repertoires and the dominant ideologies present in one's country, family, professional milieu, schools and universities attended, generation, social class of origin, neighbourhood, and caste or minority group.

Reyes, Daisy Verduzco. 2018. [*Learning to Be Latino: How Colleges Shape Identity Politics*](#). Rutgers Univ. Press.

Colleges matter not only because they shape students' job prospects, but also because they influence who, in a broader sense, students may become, shaping their understandings of themselves, their futures, and the world. We know that college campuses have very different organizational cultures, which shape students' experiences in distinct ways. Institutional prestige receives a lot of attention, yet colleges vary along many other dimensions—all of which can affect students. For example, schools have different peer cultures, party scenes, athletic emphases, racial-ethnic climates, and political cultures. Some campuses enclose their students' lives in a bubble for four years, offering an all-encompassing student life experience, while other schools enroll commuters with a very different relationship to the institution. How do these differences in campus climate play out for Latinos? Reyes explores how students learn particular and unique lessons at their college about what it means to be Latino on campus and in America; these lessons about identity are critical, as they inform understandings and strategies of how to best engage in collective action to advocate for change.

Newhart, Michelle. and William Dolphin. 2018. *The Medicalization of Marijuana: Legitimacy, Stigma and the Patient Experience*. New York: Routledge.

This book represents the first comprehensive look at what it means to participate in a regulated state medical marijuana program, from talking to doctors and establishing treatment regimens to managing risk and navigating stigma and stereotype. Anchored by key sociological theories

and concepts, this book is based on qualitative research that included in-depth interviews with 40 mid-life patients enrolled in Colorado's medical marijuana program, observation over a two-year period, and unstructured interviews with key actors in the medical cannabis industry. *The Medicalization of Marijuana* offers an accessible yet rigorous account of how people incorporate cannabis into medical treatment. It explores how concepts of medicalization, aging and life course, and stigma can provide insights into the changes in marijuana's place in society. This book is theory driven with patient stories throughout that make it accessible for undergraduate teaching or for graduate courses. It promises to figure prominently in the current policy debates about not just allowing medical uses of cannabis but distinguishing it from non-medical uses.

Hart-Brinson, Peter. 2018. *The Gay Marriage Generation: How the LGBTQ Movement Transformed American Culture*. New York Univ. Press.

How did gay marriage—something unimaginable two decades ago—come to feel inevitable to even its staunchest opponents? Drawing on over 95 interviews with two generations of Americans, as well as historical analysis and public opinion data, Peter Hart-Brinson argues that a fundamental shift in our understanding of homosexuality sparked the generational change that fueled gay marriage's unprecedented rise. Hart-Brinson shows that the LGBTQ movement's evolution and tactical responses to oppression caused Americans to reimagine what it means to be gay and what gay marriage would mean to society at large. While older generations grew up imagining gays and lesbians in terms of their behavior, younger generations came to understand them in terms of their identity. Over time, as the older generation and their ideas slowly passed away, they were

replaced by a new generational culture that brought gay marriage to all fifty states. Through revealing interviews, Hart-Brinson explores how different age groups embrace, resist, and create society's changing ideas about gay marriage. Religion, race, contact with gay people, and the power of love are all topics that weave in and out of these fascinating accounts, sometimes influencing opinions in surprising ways. The book captures a wide range of voices from diverse social backgrounds at a critical moment in the culture wars, right before the turn of the tide. The story of gay marriage's rapid ascent offers profound insights about how the continuous remaking of the population through birth and death, mixed with our personal, biographical experiences of our shared history and culture, produces a society that is continually in flux and constantly reinventing itself anew. An intimate portrait of social change with national implications, *The Gay Marriage Generation* is a significant contribution to our understanding of what causes generational change and how gay marriage became the reality in the United States.

JOURNAL ARTICLES & BOOK CHAPTERS

Cerulo, K. A. 2018. "Scents and Sensibility: Olfaction, Sense-making and Meaning Attribution." *American Sociological Review* 83(2): 361-389.

Chiarello, E. 2018. "Where Movements Matter: Examining Unintended Consequences of the Pain Management Movement in Medical, Criminal Justice, and Public Health Fields." *Law & Policy* 40(1): 79-109.

Chiarello, E. and **Morrill, C.** Forthcoming. "A Multi-Field Logics Approach to Theorizing Relationships Between Healthcare and Criminal Justice." Ed. Anna Kirkland and Marie-Andrée. Jacob. *Research Handbook on Law, Medicine and Society*. Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar.

- Ferry, M., J. Naudet and O. Roueff.** 2018. "Seeking the Indian social space. A multidimensional portrait of the stratifications of Indian society." *SAMAJ* [Online]. URL : <http://journals.openedition.org/samaj/4462>
- Jasso, G.** 2018. "The Theory of Comparison Processes." Pp. 249-280 in Peter J. Burke (ed.), *Contemporary Social Psychological Theories*. Second Edition. Stanford, CA: Stanford Univ. Press.
- Jasso, G.** 2018. "What Can You and I Do To Reduce Inequality?" *Journal of Mathematical Sociology* 42(4):186-204.
- Jasso, G.** 2018. "Quantitative Methods." Pp. 235-241 in J. Michael Ryan (ed.), *Core Concepts in Sociology*. New York, NY: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Jasso, G.** 2018. "Anything Lorenz Curves Can Do, Top Shares Can Do: Assessing the TopBot Family of Inequality Measures." *Sociological Methods and Research*. Prepublished May 13, 2018, DOI: 10.1177/0049124118769106 Online First.
- Joosse, P.** 2018. "Countering Trump: Toward a Theory of Charismatic Counter-roles." *Social Forces*. Advanced access: <https://doi.org/10.1093/sf/soy036>
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- Lotesta, J.** 2018. "The Myth of the Business Friendly Economy: Making Neoliberal Reforms in the Worst State for Business." *American Journal of Cultural Sociology*. Online First: doi.org/10.1057/s41290-018-0058-x.
- Mijs, J.J.B.** 2018. "Inequality is a problem of inference: How people solve the social puzzle of unequal outcomes." *Societies*. 8(3): 64. doi: 10.3390/soc8030064
- Naudet, J., A. Allorant and M. Ferry.** 2018. "Heirs, corporate aristocrats and 'Meritocrats': the social space of top CEOs and Chairmen in India." *Socio-Economic Review*. 16(2): 307-339.
- Reyes, V.** Forthcoming. "Ethnographic Toolkit: Strategic Positionality and Researchers' Visible and Invisible Tools in Field Research" *Ethnography*, online first: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1466138118805121>
- Savelsberg, J.J.** 2018. "Genocide and other Atrocity Crimes: Toward Remedies." in *Agenda for Justice: Global Edition*, edited by Glenn Muschert et al. Bristol, UK: Policy.
- Wood, M. L., Stoltz, D. S., Van Ness, J., & Taylor, M. A.** 2018. "Schemas and Frames." *Sociological Theory*. 36(3): 244-261 <https://doi.org/10.1177/0735275118794981>

AWARDS & RECOGNITION

Chiarello, E. received the National Science Foundation CAREER Award. "Developing a Micro-Level Approach to Field Change: Examining How Law and Technology Affect Social Problems' Influence on Field Transformation." Funded by Sociology and Law & Social Sciences Programs (\$415,000)

ABSTRACT:

The United States is facing an unprecedented opioid crisis. Opioids are addictive pain relievers that are profitable in illicit markets and pose challenges for healthcare providers who are responsible for treating pain and for enforcement agents who are tasked with ensuring proper drug provision. Several states have responded by adopting prescription drug monitoring programs (PDMPs), surveillance technologies

designed for healthcare and criminal justice use. However, researchers and policymakers have not fully considered how this technology will impact professional fields. This project will examine how current efforts to curb the opioid crisis affect healthcare and criminal justice workers. This project asks: how does policing patients affect healthcare practice? And, how does targeting healthcare providers affect law enforcement? Addressing these questions is important because requiring workers to venture beyond their traditional scopes of practice could undermine their professional commitments and negatively impact professional community members. This research contributes to policy by including both health care and enforcement workers, aiming to develop policy solutions amenable to both fields. It advances education by enlisting the help of undergraduate research assistants. Findings will inform policymakers and clinicians about ways to address the opioid crisis while avoiding unintended consequences.

This project examines the opioid epidemic as a case for understanding how social problems transform social fields. The primary goal is to extend sociological and socio-legal theory by developing a micro-level theory of field change. This project uses a mixed-methods, comparative design across three states, California, Florida, and Missouri, that will culminate in four original qualitative and quantitative data sets. These data will be analyzed with the assistance of an undergraduate research team using grounded theory techniques. This research contributes by addressing intersections between law and medicine and by using nested maximum variation samples to capture field-level heterogeneity and change. Although most research on opioid abuse is heavily siloed, focusing either on healthcare or law enforcement, this research brings together insights from both fields. Findings will inform policy makers and healthcare leaders about how using technology to combat opioid abuse affects practice. Technology is often considered a panacea for addressing social problems, but this research brings a critical lens to technology, addressing the kinds of unintended consequences that might result from its use.

Joseph A. Kotarba, (Ph.D., Texas State Univ.), has been invited to serve as the Featured Speaker at the 36th Annual Qualitative Analysis Conference in Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada, May 9-11, 2019. The conference theme is: The Transdisciplinary Efficacy of Qualitative Methods. Dr. Kotarba presentation will be: "The Impact of Translational Science on the Culture of Medicine: An Ethnographic Take."

MEDIA SPOTLIGHT

Barton, Bernadette. Stormy Daniels Stripper Skills May Save the Day. September 21st, 2018 *Lexington Herald*
Leader.
<https://www.kentucky.com/opinion/op-ed/article218837325.html>

Karen Cerulo's (2018) article "Scents and Sensibility: Olfaction, Sense-making and Meaning Attribution" was then featured in the Science section of *LeMonde*
https://www.lemonde.fr/sciences/article/2018/05/01/les-odeurs-ont-un-sens-et-une-classe-sociale_5292899_1650684.html

In the past few months, **Karen Cerulo** and **Janet M. Ruane's** (2014) article has gotten some press ("Apologies of the Rich and Famous: Social, Cultural and Cognitive Explanations of Why We Care and Why We Forgive." *Social Psychology Quarterly* 77: 2: 123-149.)

The article was written up in *Psychology Today*
<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/why-bad-looks-good/201805/how-effectively-apologize-lessons-roseanne> and *Playboy*
<http://www.playboymagastralia.com/?p=1280> The work was also featured on the 10/11/18 episode of Freakonomics Radio.