SECTIONCULTURE

Contents

Editors:

Manning Zhang
Brandeis University

Elizabeth Trudeau
Carleton College

Man Yao
The Ohio State University

Bambang Trihadmojo
Northwestern University

The header image by ktbuffy, Creative Commons.

Letter from the Chair

Finding Connection in Culture: Beyond the Whirlwind and the Treadmill

Photo: Ann Mische,
University of Notre Dame

As we approach the 2022 ASA meetings, many of us are not sure whether we are being sucked up in a whirlwind or stuck on a treadmill. We are caught between tumult and stasis, pulled from one "can you believe that just happened?" moment to the next while struggling to move forward with work and life.

I start my final Chair's letter this way not just as a form of throat clearing, but also to keep things real. I am currently in the midst of preparing for Culture Section events at what by all indications will be a quite rich and exciting conference in Los

Angeles, featuring highly engaged scholarship in response to the pressing problems and events of the day. At the same time, I know we are all reeling from the year's news and carrying out a complex calculus of how to protect ourselves, our families, and our communities from a pandemic that has not gone away.

This letter is an opportunity to celebrate our membership and reflect back on the many ways in which we have worked to maintain social and intellectual community in the Cultural Section during challenging times. I am proud of the ways in which so many of you have pitched in to make that happen, despite ongoing stress and uncertainty, as well as competing demands on our time and attention.

For those of you who can make it to Los Angeles, we hope to see many of you at our Culture Section sessions, organized by incoming chair **Vanina Leschziner** and the program committee, **Fatma Muge Gocek, Omar Lizardo** and **Derron Wallace**. We also have a Graduate Professionalization panel on "Culture in a (Post)Pandemic World," organized by **Nino Bariola** and **Amy Zhang**. See [page 5](#) of this newsletter for a full listing of our events. A huge thanks to all of our organizers, presenters, presiders and discussants on these exciting panels!

Please come to our **Culture Section Business Meetin**g at **11:00 am on Sunday, August 7** (LACC Level 2, 406A.). This will be a great chance to connect with fellow section members and get more engaged in the life of our community. And please join us at the **Culture Section Reception from 7-9 pm on Sunday August 7** (Marriot Gold Level, Gold Salon 2). The reception will be held jointly with the Collective Behavior and Social Movements Section. Thank you to our Reception Committee (**Hannah Wohl, Laura Adler,**

and **Omar Lizardo**) for helping me think through the complicated logistics of organizing a reception under Covid conditions.

If you can't make it to ASA this year – no worries! We completely understand. Please know that we are trying to find ways to keep you included in section activities. Stay tuned for the new ASA Connect platform, as well as for upcoming CCL webinars and for newsletter reports on Culture Section events at the conference.

Whether you are in LA or not, we hope that many of you will sign up to participate in section organization and leadership via committees and other activities! *We are especially in need of enthusiastic people to work on communications* – including serving as webmaster, social media coordinator, and discussion platform moderators. Please look for invitations from Vanina on participation and service opportunities. And feel free to reach out independently if you would like to engage with the section in this way.

On to the gratitudes and celebrations! It truly takes a village to run a section, and I am honored to have worked with so many wonderful people on section activities throughout 2021-22. Here are some of the highlights:

1. We held three spectacular sessions of the **Culture and Contemporary Life Series**! A huge shout-out to **Yan Long** and the CCL committee (**Alejandra Cueto Piazza, Amin Ghaziani, Rachel Keynton, Ian Waller** and **Xiaohong Xu**) for their thoughtful, creative work in pulling these three panels together. The CCL series was launched by Past Chair Terry McDonnell in 2020-21 as a forum in which Culture Section members can share their expertise in lively conversations about what cultural

sociology has to say about pressing issues in the news. The series is a way to bridge professional and public sociology while generating an intellectual community between ASA meetings.

Links to videos from all of the sessions from the past two years can be found on the [CCL YouTube channel](). In 2021-22, sessions included the following (see summaries of the last two sessions in this newsletter):

- [Revisiting Cultural Methods to Address Racism](), featuring Ellen Berrey, Marcus A. Hunter, Mario L. Small and Derron Wallace.

- [Fake News? Perspectives from Cultural Sociology](), with Gary Allen Fine, Jaron Harabam and Francesca Tripodi.

- [The Crisis of Masculinity: Perspectives from Around the World,]() with Tristan Bridges, Hector Carillo, Michela Musto, and Robert Wyrod.

2. We have worked hard to make the Culture Section a more welcoming place for all by deepening our commitment to **Diversity and Inclusion initiatives**. In my last [Chair's letter](), I detailed multiple steps we have taken in this direction over the past few years, although we know we have more to work to do. Three recently launched projects that will continue into the coming year include:

   - The launch of the [John Mohr Dissertation Improvement Grants](), which will fund two racially or ethnically underrepresented graduate students at a public institution each year. Our first two awardees are **Maia Behrendt**

(University of Nebraska and **Edwin Grimsley** (CUNY). I am grateful for the leadership of **Clayton Childress** in setting up this donor-funded award, building on suggestions from last year's D&I committee. Thanks to the Mohr Award committee for thoughtful stewardship of our inaugural year. The committee was chaired by **Lauren Valentino,** with **Nino Bariola, Julia Cheng, Jun Fang, Jonathan Mijs,** and **Rachel Rinaldo**.

- A **demographic and climate survey** conducted by the Diversity and Inclusion Committee chaired by **Jean Beaman,** with **Elena Ayala-Hurtado, Elisabeth Becker, Barbara Harris Combs, Daniel Karell,** and **Mikki Liu**. A sincere thank you to everyone who completed the survey! Stay tuned for the committee's report as the basis for an expanded discussion on how to deepen our commitment to justice and inclusion within the section.

- The launch of a **BIPOC Resource Sharing Network**. This is an initiative of the Membership Committee, with the goal of creating an ongoing network of support and resource exchange for BIPOC scholars within the Culture Section. If you are interested in being part of this network, please submit your name on this [google form.]()

3. We are carrying the **Culture Section Mentorship Program** into its third successful year! This year our Membership Committee – consisting of **Marshall Taylor** (chair), **Tania**

Aparicio, **Barbara Kiviat, Sam Leonard, Rachel Skagg, Ana Velitchkova** and **Amy Zhang** - recruited 21 senior scholars to compose mentoring "pods" with 70 junior scholars. (See Marshall's report later in this newsletter). We hope that these pods will have a chance to meet in the weeks around ASA and that they will continue their consultations and mutual exchange through the coming year.

4. A special thank you to our three hard-working publication award committees for the **Douglas, Geertz, and Peterson Awards**, chaired (respectively) by **Juan Pablo Pardo Guerra, Mathieu Desan** and **Mariana Craciun**! You can read about the awardees and the committees on our website as well as on page 9 of this newsletter. By all accounts, these were difficult decisions as we had many outstanding submissions for all three awards.

5. Welcome to our new Section officers, including **Monika Krause** as Chair-Elect, **Elisabeth Becker, Christina Simko** and **Hannah Wohl** as incoming Council members, and **Tania Aparicio** as our Graduate Student Representative on Council. Thanks to everyone who ran for office, and to our Nominations Committee: **Shai Dromi** (Chair), **Laura Acosta, Japonica Brown-Saracino, Meredith Hall, Mark Patchucki** and **Tad Skotnicki.**

6. Many thanks as well to our outgoing Council members **Nino Bariola, Mariana Craciun** and **Matt Desan** for their committed multi-year service to our section. And I could not have made it through this year without the always awesome, always cheerful, always calming work and company of **Clayton Childress** – best COO ever!

7. And finally, I would like to say a heartfelt thank you to our Culture Section Newsletter team! **Bo Yun Park** and **Manning Zhang** shepherded us through our Fall and Winter/Spring issues, bringing lively reports, thoughtful interviews, and carefully curated announcements. Manning was joined in the current issue by two new editors, **Man Yao** and **Elizabeth Trudeau**, who will both continue to provide leadership and coordination on our Communications team in the coming year. Thanks also to **Bambang Trihadmojo** for his good work as our webmaster for the past two years.

(This is one more reminder that we are looking for a new webmaster and social media coordinator – please contact Vanina if you are interested!!!)

And with that, I will sign off! I hope to see many of you in LA at our Culture Section events. And if you can't make it, we hope to see you engaged in our Culture section activities and discussions over the coming year. You will be in capable hands with incoming Chair **Vanina Leschziner**.

May we all find light, connection and movement in our research on culture this year – carrying us through the whirlwind and beyond the treadmill!

(Please note that all of the times below are in Pacific Daylight Time (PDT).

1. The Racial Politics of Culture? Critical Perspectives from Cultural Sociology
Sat, August 6, 8:00 to 9:30am, LACC, Floor: Level 2, 303B

What is the relationship between the cultural and the racial? What political factors and social forces shape the racial politics of culture? How are processes of distinction, consumption and reproduction shaped by white supremacy? What is lost or limited when culture is framed as a race-neutral formulation in the field of sociology and wider society? For this panel, we invite empirically grounded and theoretically sophisticated papers that engage with one or more of these questions. We are open to related questions not noted here, too. We are especially interested in papers that interrogate the role of race, racialization or racism in shaping discourses on culture as a system of complex meaning-making, nationally and internationally.

This is a joint session with the Race, Gender, and Class Section.

Organizer and Presider: **Derron Wallace**, *Brandeis University*

1. From "Critical Race Theory" to CRT: the new front in the American Culture Wars. **Yagmur Karakaya**, *Yale University*

2. Stuff White People Like: BDSM, Polyamory, Neo-Paganism, and… Cats. **Julie Lynn Fennell**, *Gallaudet University*

3. 'Decolonising fashion': Fashion consumption and clothing practices of the South Asian Muslim communities in Glasgow. **Rohit K Dasgupta**, *University of Glasgow*; **Nazli Alimen**, *Birmingham City University*

4. Examining racialized sentiments towards Muslim women's dress using social media data. **Jessica Stallone**, *University of Toronto*

5. Symbolic Divisions and Symbolic Violence: Multilingual Latina/o Peer Mentors and Racialization of 'ESL Students.' **Melanie Jones Gast**, *University of Louisville*; **James Chisholm**, *University of Louisville*; **Yohimar Sivira Gonzalez**, *University of Louisville*

2. International Perspectives in Cultural Sociology
Sat, August 6, 10:00 to 11:30am, LACC, Floor: Level 2, 303B

This panel invites papers that introduce concepts, theories, or perspectives in cultural sociology beyond the U.S. The goal of this panel is to expose audiences to analytical tools that are instrumental for the sociological study of culture which are heretofore little known in the U.S. Papers could focus solely on analytical tools that remain little known in the U.S. or put those analytical tools into dialogue with approaches that are more commonly used in cultural sociology in the U.S. We

welcome papers that present and develop novel theoretical materials as well as those that apply new analytical tools to empirical data.

Organizer and Presider: **Vanina Leschziner**, *University of Toronto*

1. Literary structuralism and transnational politics. **Lucile Dumont**, *EHESS*

2. Migrating Artists and Migrating Art: Decentering the Global Art World. **Kangsan Lee**, *New York University*; **Peggy Levitt**, *Wellesley College*; **Chantal Valdivia**, *Wellesley College*

3. Tastes, complex tastes, and meta-tastes. **Xiangyu Ma**, *University of Chicago*

4. The Network Structure of Cultural Elements and Organizational Creativity. **Hang-Jun Cho**, *INSEAD*; **Frederic Clement Godart**, *INSEAD*; **Charles Galunic**, *INSEAD*

Discussant: **Vanina Leschziner**, *University of Toronto*

3. Crisis of Democracy? New Perspectives from Cultural Sociology
Sun, August 7, 8:00 to 9:30am, LACC, Floor: Level 2, 304A

In recent years, mature and young democracies alike around the globe have been experiencing intensified challenges, as exemplified in the January 6th Capitol Riot in the U.S., Brexit in the U.K, Turkey's failed coup in 2016 and its aftermath, etc. The underlying cultural-political trends, such as populism, ultra-nationalism, and authoritarianism, are prompting us to ask if liberalism and democracy are now in crisis, why we have reached this point, how social actors are envisioning new paths forwards, and how such inquiries challenge us to rethink sociological theories and paradigms. With a focus on cultural sociology, this panel welcomes papers that address these questions through empirically grounded analyses.

Organizer: **Ming-Cheng M. Lo**, *University of California-Davis*
Presider: **Stephanie L. Mudge**, *University of California-Davis*

1. A Cultural Backlash in Europe? Evidence from the European Values Study 1999-2017. **Tim Reeskens**, *Tilburg University*; **Quita Muis***; **Ruud Luijkx**, *Tilburg University*; **Inge Sieben**

2. Bad Company? Civil Society and Democracy in Comparative Perspective. **Andrew P. Davis**, *North Carolina State University*; **Yongjun Zhang**, *Stony Brook University*

3. Politics of Nationhood and the Decay of the Media in Turkey. **Defne Over**, *Texas A&M University-College Station*

4. The Dual Legacy of John Locke: Exceptionalism & Racism in America. **Chandra Mukerji**, *University of California, San Diego*

5. Religious Dissolution and the Crisis of Liberalism: Inside a Christian Brotherhood and a Masonic Lodge. **Graham Wilson Hill**, *University of Bern*

4. Culture in a (Post)Pandemic World (Graduate Professionalization Panel)
Sun, August 7, 10:00 to 11:00am, LACC, Floor: Level 2, 404A

The pandemic is having a significant impact on multiple aspects of contemporary cultural life—from rendering collective rituals (like concerts or sports games) risky, absurd, or less accessible, to altering the ways in which we build interpersonal trust, and challenging how people think about and calculate risk. How are cultural scholars doing research about these dynamics?

Organizer: **Amy Zhang**, *George Mason University*
Presider: **Nino Bariola**, The University of Texas at Austin

Panelists:
1. **Rachel Skaggs**, *Ohio State University*
2. **Fernando A. Calderón Figuero**a, *University of Toronto*
3. **Vivian Shaw**, *Vanderbilt University*
4. **Brenton David Kalinowski,** *Rice University*

5. Section on Sociology of Culture Business Meeting
Sun, August 7, 11:00 to 11:30am, LACC, Floor: Level 2, 404A

Organizer and Presider: **Ann Mische**, *University of Notre Dame*

6. Action in Unsettled Times
Sun, August 7, 12:00 to 1:30pm, LACC, Floor: Level 2, 304B

Social life amidst the Covid-19 pandemic is, by all accounts, unsettled. Disrupted habits, disturbed routines, suspended rhythms, and unpredictability: these have come to characterize a kind of new normal. But what does it mean to act in such times of constant unsettledness? The very idea of an "unsettled context" is of fundamental importance to post-Parsonian theories of action. This panel invites papers that are willing to explore big ideas about disruption, helping to build our toolkit for understanding action in unsettled times of seemingly interminable duration.

Organizers: **Christina Simko**, Williams College; **Michael Strand**, *Brandeis University*
Presider: **Ann Swidler**, *University of California-Berkeley*

1. Repertoires of repair: confronting ontological insecurity during the COVID-19 pandemic in New York City. **Ryan Hagen**, *Columbia University*; **Denise Milstein**, *Columbia University*

2. The Domestic Violence Victim as COVID Crisis Figure.
   Paige L. Sweet, *University of Michigan-Ann Arbor*; **Maya Glenn***;* **Jacob Caponi**

3. The Meaning of Masks: Tracing Trajectories and Stabilizing the "New Normal."
   Terence Emmett McDonnell, *University of Notre Dame*; **Rachel Keynton**, *University of Notre Dame*

4. The Temporal Structure of Capitals: Lessons from the End of Life.
   Zhuofan Li, *University of Arizona*; **Daniel Dohan**, *University of California-San Francisco*;

Corey M. Abramson, *University of Arizona*

5. Too "Essential" For Domestic Labor? Ambiguous Availability in Essential and Remote Worker Families During COVID-19. **Angela Clague**, *University of California, Los Angeles*

Discussant: **Ann Swidler**, *University of California-Berkeley*

7. Section on Sociology of Culture Roundtables Session
Sun, August 7, 2:00 to 3:30pm, JW Marriott, Floor: Gold Level, Gold Salon 2

Organizers: **Gordon Brett**, *University of Toronto*; **Martin Lukk**, *University of Toronto*; **Taylor Price**, *University of Toronto*

8. Joint Reception: Section on Sociology of Culture, Section on Collective Behavior and Social Movements
Sun, August 7, 7:00 to 9:00pm, JW Marriott, Floor: Gold Level, Gold Salon 2

Organizers: **Ann Mische**, *University of Notre Dame*; **Rory M. McVeigh**, *University of Notre Dame*

9. Formal Models of Culture
Tue, August 9, 8:00 to 9:30am, JW Marriott, Floor: Level 3, Plaza III

We invite papers that use formal (mathematical or computational) approaches, broadly speaking, to study culture. These papers could focus, for example, on how culture forms and evolves, how cultural elements relate to one another, or how cultural elements influence thinking and behavior, among other possible topics. We are open to papers that present and develop theoretical models using formal techniques as well as those that apply formal methods to empirical data. The methods used in these papers could include (but are not limited to) network analysis, word-embedding or other forms of natural language processing, mathematical models, or agent-based computational models.

This is a joint session with the Mathematical Sociology Section.

Organizer and Presider: Daniel DellaPosta, *Pennsylvania State University*

1. Ideological Transformation and Rhetorical Creation of the Market in China's People's Daily. **Shilin Jia**, *University of Chicago*; **Linzhuo Li**, *University of Chicago*

2. Influence and Constraint: A Synthesizing Simulation Model of Cultural Alignment. **Austen Mack-Crane**, *Cornell University*; **Michael W. Macy**, *Cornell University*

3. Partisan divergence in political discourse in the UK Brexit referendum on Twitter. **Roland Adorjani**, *University of Bern*; **Sarah M. G. Otner**, *Kingston Business School*

4. Predictably Unpredictable: The Dynamic Constraint of Cultural Belief Systems. **Kevin Kiley**, *North Carolina State University*

5. The shape of formative periods and the rhythm of cultural change. **Nicholas Restrepo Ochoa**

ASA 2022 CULTURE SECTION

Publication Awards

Mary Douglas Award for Best Book

Co-winners:

Fiona Greenland, *Ruling Culture: Art Police, Tomb Robbers, and the Rise of Cultural Power in Italy* (University of Chicago Press 2021)

Michael Rodríguez-Muñiz, *Figures of the Future: Figures for the Future: Latino Civil Rights and the Politics of Demographic Change* (Princeton University Press 2021)

Honorable Mention:
Tad Skotnicki, T*he Sympathetic Consumer: Moral Critique in Capitalist Culture* (Stanford University Press 2021)

Committee: Juan-Pablo Parda Guerra (chair), Matt Clair, Michal Pagis, Victoria Reyes, Fernando Dominguez Rubio, Anna Skarpelis

Clifford Geertz Award for Best Article

Winner:

Talia Shiff. 2021. "A Sociology of Discordance: Negotiating Schemas of Deservingness and Codified Law in U.S. Asylum Status Determinations," *American Journal of Sociology* 127(2): 337-375.

Honorable Mentions:
Andrei Boutyline and Laura K. Soter. 2021. "Cultural Schemas: What they Are, How to Find Them, and What to Do Once You've Caught One," *American Sociological Review* 86(4): 728-758.

Amanda Barret Cox. 2021. "Powered Down: The Microfoundations of Organizational Attempts to Redistribute Power," *American Journal of Sociology* 127(2): 1-52.

Committee: Mathieu Desan (chair), Hillary Angelo, Jelani Ince, Carly Knight, Caroline Lee, Blake Silver

Richard A. Peterson Award for Best Graduate Student Paper

Winner:

Patrick Sheehan. 2022. "The Paradox of Self-Help Expertise: How Unemployed Workers Become Professional Career Coaches." American Journal of Sociology 127 (4): 1151–1182.

Committee: Mariana Craciun (chair), Holley Campeau, Chloe Hart, Amy Singer, Kris Velasco, Celso Villegas

State of the '22 ASA Culture Section Mentor Program

Marshall A. Taylor

(New Mexico State University)

This is now the third year for the section's mentoring program. The first two iterations of the program laid a foundation of excellence, and our goal this year was to continue that success ("if it ain't broke, don't fix it"), while also looking for new ways to make the program even better. Together with the committee—Barbara Kiviat, Rachel Skaggs, Amy Zhang, Ana Velitchkova, Samantha Leonard, and Tania Aparicio— the consensus this year is: So far, so good.

The mentor program is now well underway. The actual mentoring structure looks the same as it did the first two years: pods consisting of one mentor and two to three (or so) mentees. The pods were announced in early May, with the expectation that each pod would communicate with one another to find the meeting time, structure, and format that best fits their needs. We have a total of 21 pods consisting of 21 mentors and 70 mentees. Each pod consists of three or four mentees. The table below provides some descriptives on the makeup of the mentor and mentee pools for the '22 program.

Our pod construction process was a bit different this year. The biggest change is we fielded two different application forms: one for mentors and another for mentees. We used the section announcements to keep members informed about when each application form would open and close. The mentor application opened on March 1st and closed on April 8th; the mentee application opened on April 15th and closed on May 8th. The main reason we structured the sign-up process this way was to give mentees a bit more agency in determining whom they would like their mentor to be.

Specifically, in the mentor application, we gave applicants a list of potential mentorship areas—ranging from general networking, research and publishing, and teaching, to parenting and/or caretaking in academia, scholar-activism, and BIPOC in academia. We asked mentors to select the three to five areas on which they would like to mentor. Then, after the mentor application closed, we created anonymous "profiles" for each mentor consisting of a comma-delimited list of these mentorship areas along with their scholarly interests, position (e.g., associate professor), and type of institution (e.g., U.S. liberal arts college). We then provided a link to these mentor profiles in the mentee application and asked mentees to rank-order the five mentors (based on these anonymous profiles) that best matched what they hoped to achieve in their mentorship. The committee then constructed the mentor pods based on a combination of these rank-orderings and mentor/mentee time constraints (which we also gathered in the application forms). Any applicant could serve as a mentor and a mentee (though, obviously, in different pods), and we had some applicants do this.

Once the pods were constructed, we emailed the set of 21 mentors to inform them that the pods would be announced in the next couple of days. The purpose of this email was to lay out mentor expectations: namely, that the type and frequency of meetings were at the discretion of each pod, that meeting in person at ASA was not required, that we hoped each pod would meet at least three times throughout the calendar year, and that mentors should set up the first video call at some point before the ASA annual meeting in August. We emailed each pod individually to introduce the members to one another. The pods were then off and running!

Our plan is to field an exit survey just before the next membership committee is formed to assess what mentors and mentees liked and didn't like. That said, we have two preliminary thoughts for the '23 program. First, based on informal discussions with program participants, we think that the "profile ranking" system is the way to go. Mentees seemed to appreciate the opportunity to see what mentors could or were willing to offer; and, importantly, the mentees' rank-orderings made it much easier to construct the mentor pods. Second, as the table above shows, non-academic positions are woefully underrepresented (nonexistent!) in the mentor pool. Interestingly, not many mentees explicitly mentioned non-ac/alt-ac interests in their application forms; but these sorts of career trajectories are becoming more common, and this program should be able to facilitate those mentoring relationships. Our main form of advertisement for the program was through the Culture Section listserv announcements, so perhaps some alternative outlets are necessary to get the word out to non-ac/alt-ac cultural sociologists interested in being a mentor.

There is one last thing that the committee did differently this year that extends beyond the mentorship program. We are starting a BIPOC Resource Sharing Network, with the goal of creating a new listserv within the section for scholars interested in sharing resources surrounding being BIPOC in academia. The mentor and mentee forms had an opt-in item for this network, and we are now fielding a separate form for section members who did not participate in the mentor program but who want to be a part of this initiative. (If you want to be a part of this, please sign up here!)

Thanks to the '22 mentors, mentees, and committee members for making the mentor program a success so far!

Table 1 Summary Statistics of the Participants

	Position								Type of Institution			
	Pre-ABD	ABD	NTT AcP[1]	Asst Prof	Assoc Prof	Full Prof	App[2]	Ind	R1/R2	Liberal Arts	Public/ State	Alt-AC
Mentor	0	0	2	7	9	3	0	0	18	3	0	0
Mentee	18	38	3	9	0	0	1	1	67	0	2	1

[1]This position includes postdocs, visiting professors, lecturers, and other non-tenured academic positions.
[2]This position includes applied sociologists, professionals, or other members outside of the academy.

Four Questions for Karen A. Cerulo

Man Yao (The Ohio State University) interviews **Karen A. Cerulo** (Rutgers University) about her works on culture and cognition and the vision of a jargon-free sociology.

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

I started out working in the sociology of music. I have a music background and I wanted to try to combine two interests: music and sociology. My very first publication was about classical music composers who were writing music about war during World War II. I wanted to compare composers who were working in combat zones versus those who were removed from combat zones to see how one's contextual environment influences creativity. I then went on to do a dissertation, several articles and a book that looked at national anthems and other national symbols. I wanted to see how social elements such as cultural heterogeneity, political or social stability, existing power structures, dominant systems of economic exchange, professional norms of expression, the nature of social ties, or levels of "collective focus" might be associated with certain variants of symbolic structure. My work was very different at that time because I saw it more as the sociology of culture. I really thought of music and other art objects as cultural products, and I was interested in the way different facets of social structure might cause variations in those products.

I don't think of my work that way anymore. But when I was doing my graduate work, when the culture section began, the sociology of culture perspective was much more dominant. Pete Peterson was the first section chair and was working in the production of culture perspective. That was a very dominant approach at that period. As time went on, cultural sociology expanded and so did my own work. I began thinking more in terms of cultural sociology and aspects of meaning. For me, at least, that meant refraining from thinking about structure and culture as two different things, but rather thinking about them as symbiotic entities that form a whole.

[Yao: How did the transition process happen, from the production of culture perspective to the cultural sociology perspective?]

For me, three things were key. One was that people who worked in music and the arts did think about cultural objects as having meanings that could be conveyed both semantically and syntactically, and I

was very drawn to that. That wasn't the mainstream view within sociology at that time.

I was also very active in the International Communications Association and was very influenced by publications and people who were exploring message meanings. So, I began to look at the meaning of objects, as opposed to structural causes of the shape of objects or the sound of objects. I would say I made that transition fairly early in my career.

A final thing was that I wanted to develop quantitative measures to capture musical structure, graphic structure, and things like that. People who were working in culture were very anti-quantitative. I went through a lot to get published. I was getting regularly blackballed at the journals, as my work was quantitative. It took a long time for me to figure out how to balance things in my work so that it would have both quantitative and qualitative aspects and make my arguments about meaning and measurement more effective. I got some good advice from some of my senior colleagues (Paul DiMaggio, Ann Swidler, and Judith Blau in particular) who helped me work through that difficult period, the first two or three years of being a faculty member. Ultimately, I was able to make my way through.

As for the field, I feel like Ann Swindler's article in the ASR, "Culture in Action," was a real turning point for cultural sociology. Ann was very interested in looking at meaning and its connection to action. She was also open to the measurement of meaning, either quantitatively or qualitatively. I really felt that her ASR article had so much impact on the field. Up until then, I think the production of culture perspective was really at the center of the study of culture. But I felt those folks were more interested in organizations and careers. I wanted to look

at the objects themselves, and so I think of Ann's article as being a kind of turning point that influenced a lot of people and really brought the study of meaning into the field in a much more powerful way.

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?

I've come to see culture as integral to all of the elements that we think about in sociology, so I no longer feel that it's fruitful to make a culture vs. structure distinction. I no longer feel that it's fruitful to make a culture vs. cognition distinction. I think that these three things work together symbiotically. If we want to fully understand any issue in sociology, we have to think about the way culture, structure, and cognition work together. I think it took a very long time for people to stop asking the question: is it culture, or is it structure? I think it took a very long time for people to say it's both, in fact they may be one united thing. And I think we're going through that struggle now with culture and cognition. There are some cognitive sociologists who think that, to deal with cognition in the way a cognitive scientist might, means we are focusing too much on the individual.

I feel that if you can't think about the internal workings of the brain, then you really can't think about *how culture works*. Because culture is both outside and inside of us, you have to study how the brain works to understand, first of all, how culture gets inside us, and how it gets maintained inside us. Also, you have to understand the brain in order to understand how we select things that are outside of us. You also have to understand that how the brain works and how what's stored in our brains is so heavily influenced by our social locations.

I've been doing a lot of podcast interviews and media interviews for my latest book *Dreams of a Lifetime* that I wrote with Janet M. Ruane. I think about where you're standing in social space, whether it be your class, race, gender, whether it be where you are in the life course or the events that are influencing you. Those things have an impact on the culture that you see in the world around you, on what you include and what you don't include in your thinking. It also impacts what you store in your brain. To me, all three of those things have to be considered to get a full picture of whatever issue you're studying. I began to feel that way when I wrote my second book *Deciphering Violence*. I went even more in that direction when I wrote *Never Saw It Coming*. I'm both feet into it when you look at my articles on apologies or the meaning of scents, or when you look at my current book on dreaming, and some of the articles that have come out of it.

[Yao: What are some unique contributions sociologists can make for better understanding of the cognitive mechanism of culture?]

Not too long ago, maybe a year ago, I published an article called *Rethinking Culture and Cognition* with my former graduate student Vanina Leschziner, who is our new section chair, and Hana Shepherd, who is my current colleague. My worry was always this: at some point, I understood what the cognitive scientists were going to say. "Hey, the brain does not work in isolation. It's socially situated." What I started to see is that they were trying to do the sociology of that, and they were doing a pretty poor job of it. That's part of why I started the culture and cognition network within the culture section, and why I ran a number of national conferences and sessions at both ASA and ESS. I didn't want to let the cognitive scientists speculate

on what sociologists are thinking. What we did in the last annual review article is to say: here's what cognitive scientists tell us about, mirror neurons or automatic and deliberate cognition, etc. But here are the qualifications that they're not considering; here's what sociologists can add to the story. I really see that article as saying: this is what sociology brings to the table that cognitive scientists can't really begin to understand because it's outside their purview. We tried very hard to not only talk about what sociology can offer in that article, but to suggest future research questions. Sociologists should take up those questions in a way that would embellish what cognitive scientists are telling us about the brain and allow us to think of cognition in more social and cultural terms.

Not too long ago, maybe a year ago, I published an article called *Rethinking Culture and Cognition* with my former graduate student Vanina Leschziner, who is our new section chair, and Hana Shepherd, who is my current colleague. My worry was always this: at some point, I understood what the cognitive scientists were going to say. "Hey, the brain does not work in isolation. It's socially situated." What I started to see is that they were trying to do the sociology of that, and they were doing a pretty poor job of it. That's part of why I started the culture and cognition network within the culture section, and why I ran a number of national conferences and sessions at both ASA and ESS. I didn't want to let the cognitive scientists speculate on what sociologists are thinking. What we did in the last annual review article is to say: here's what cognitive scientists tell us about, mirror neurons or automatic and deliberate cognition, etc. But here are the qualifications that they're not considering; here's what sociologists can add to the story. I really see that article as saying: this is what sociology brings to the table that

cognitive scientists can't really begin to understand because it's outside their purview. We tried very hard to not only talk about what sociology can offer in that article, but to suggest future research questions. Sociologists should take up those questions in a way that would embellish what cognitive scientists are telling us about the brain and allow us to think of cognition in more social and cultural terms.

For example, sociologists care about variations. I don't think, as sociologists, we can think of anything as uniform or universal right? Variation is what we're all about here. Even in what appear to be things grounded in universal characteristics like genetics, emotions, and cognitions. I think it's our duty to probe that, so that we don't get drowned out by the cognitive scientist's voices. There is still, I'm afraid, bias, not just in American society but globally, that hard scientists somehow have a greater truth than social scientists. And within social sciences, I think that people say economists and psychologists have greater truths than sociologists. I talk about this often with colleagues. We have become a very jargon-laden discipline. I think we have to find a better way to communicate what we do, what our findings are, and why they're important. I think we have to find a way to translate our work. In my most recent book, I worked very hard on this so that someone could pick up that book and not be discouraged by the amount of jargon. Our jargonistic ways make sociology often feel so very esoteric. I think that is a big mistake that we need to address as sociologists. We have to learn how to communicate what we do in a much better and forceful way.

When I wrote *Never Saw it Coming*, and look back on it, I find it too jargonistic. There were a limited number of people, other sociologists, who heard what that book had to say. I often think if I could go back and rewrite it, I would write it in a very different way. At that time, I promised myself, I was going to start working very hard on translating my work to make it more accessible. Little by little, I think I'm getting there. But I think it's something the field has to think about. Because when you look at it, you rarely see a sociologist quoted in the *New York Times* or in the *Atlantic*. When people want a social scientific perspective, they are going to economists and political scientists and psychologists. I've always been troubled by this fact. Certainly, economists are not dealing with uncomplicated issues. But they have found a way to explain what they're doing, and the same for political scientists and psychologists. But largely we are still failing at making our work understandable. I think we can do it. I really think we can do it. Even if we can't give the full breadth of an idea, we can give enough of it to make people pay attention to the sociological aspects of life. I can't underscore how important it is. This is critical about the future of not just cultural sociology but sociology in general. We have to learn how to translate our craft.

[Yao: Were there any negative opinions about the culture and cognition approach in the beginning? How did you and other sociologists handle them?]

In the very beginning, when I started down this path, there were people who said that we don't need to link to cognitive sciences. That's demeaning for sociologists, they said, and we need to be our own discipline. But I felt strongly that this kind of crosstalk between disciplines was advantageous for everyone. As I said to you earlier, I felt if we didn't get involved, we were going to find cognitive scientists speaking for us. I started trying to get together a group of people who felt that way. Among them, Omar Lizardo, Stephen Vaisey, Gabe

Ignatow, Vanina Leschziner, Hana Shepherd, Karen Danna and many others. We did several journal special issues and panel, trying to get that intersection of disciplines out there and more visible. Once we did that, people began to be much more accepting, and in fact, excited about these kinds of alliances.

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

I think the overarching umbrella for me is that I'm interested in popular culture and media. A lot of the things I write about are, in some way, connected to those two topics. That has been a tough road, because many people think those topics are unimportant. I have always felt that all we need to do is look around, especially now. As I'm watching the hearings, for example, on January 6th, I'm saying how could anyone think that popular culture and social media or the media in general are any less important than something like religion, economics, or politics—things we think of as being more suitable for us to study. Clearly, popular culture, what's available to us, and media, both old media and new media, influence what we are thinking, influence how we go about establishing agency. And I feel it guides action. People ask why are you studying apologies? Why are you studying perfumes? Why are you studying dreams of the future? I'm doing it because those things are very, very powerful avenues into our understanding of equality and inequality, how it's established, and how people internalize those meanings. These topics offer unexpected ways of getting at what people's biases are and they let us see how deeply people's biases are entrenched. How you apologize to someone, or what you think when you smell

something, or how you fantasize about the future, those things are influenced by whether you feel you are unequal in a society, or you judge someone else to be unequal in a society. I think these kinds of popular culture or media topics are very important ways to help us understand hierarchies and biases in societies.

[Yao: Can you talk a little bit about how you consume or get exposed to popular culture in daily life?]

I like to read newspapers and a lot of websites that are dealing with cultural issues, and really, all sorts of topics. I like to watch TV. I'm a Netflix addict. For some reason I have gotten in a groove where I'm watching a lot of shows made in South Korea and I've become fascinated with Korean culture and shows that talk about both historical, ancient culture and current culture. I find myself now thinking about bringing Korean culture into, for example, the study of dreams. My co-author and I want to choose some other countries in which to study dreams and what I've seen in shows about Korean culture fascinates me so much. One of my favorites was *Mr. Sunshine*, which was about the revolutions in the late 1800s with Japan invading Korea and so forth. I just watched *Crash Landing on You* and I very much enjoyed that one. I liked *The Rookie Historian* too.

[Yao: How did you connect topics you are interested in with issues the mainstream sociology cares about?]

One of the things that I've tried to do more of in the past five or seven years is to play up themes of inequality and bias and to be more explicit about those topics in my work. I think those things were there implicitly, but I've tried to be more explicit about how the kinds of things I study are important and give us a different kind of insight into how people develop biases,

how inequality gets sustained, if and how inequality can be overcome, etc. I think it's important to understand that these cultural messages are all around us. If we can't understand popular culture fully, then we also lose a way of understanding how biases and inequalities get deeply entrenched in people's minds and hearts, such that they will storm a national capital or go on shooting sprees. This is something that they are internalizing, something that is enculturated. We have to understand that process. I hope more and more people are taking popular culture more seriously, particularly social media—how important social media are in terms of the amount of time people are spending with it and how it mobilizes people. I hope we're getting to a point where people are seeing this as an avenue to understanding collective mobilization, social movements, inequality, etc.

What excited you most about the future of sociology and cultural analysis in sociology? What would you say to future sociologists?

What excites me most is the prospect of people thinking about culture, structure, and cognition as equally important parts of understanding and explaining social phenomena, and having people deal with all three simultaneously. What excites me is seeing people who are trying to translate very complicated and intricate ideas into the public sphere, and I hope that we continue to do more of that.

One thing I hope that's in the future of cultural sociology is that we will take a step back and de-jargonize our field a bit. We are not alone in this problem. People who are studying race and gender have also over jargonized their work and made their work less accessible to someone who might otherwise be interested. I hope we'll take a step back and de-jargonize, so that we can make our ideas and our findings accessible, and they will have the impact that they deserve to have.

[Yao: Did you have any suggestions about *how* to do it?]

One of the things that has helped me is that I've tried to envision, when I'm writing, someone I know who I think is an intelligent person, but is not a sociologist. Then I think, if I write to that audience, how would I explain some of the very complicated concepts? Are there any of those concepts that I could rename in a way that might have more intuitive meaning for someone. So, I've tried to change, in my mind, who I'm writing to. I don't think that's hurting sociology. I think what it's done is to give me a broader audience, not just outside of sociology but even within sociology so that someone doing medical sociology might be more interested in the cultural sociology work I'm doing, or someone doing economic sociology might be more interested because they're not overwhelmed with jargon that they don't want to take the time to understand. We've tried very hard to do that in our most recent book, *Dreams of a Lifetime*. We've really tried to make it readable by anybody. A sociologist will not feel cheated when they read it, but people beyond sociology will be able to read it, and perhaps learn something sociological from it.

The other thing is that in *Never Saw It Coming*, in the apology study, in the perfume study, I did a lot of media interviewing, and so I had to think about how to convey what my work meant in everyday language. It's a real challenge. I tell all my graduate students that when they're writing dissertations, when they finish every chapter, they should write a page or two about how they would explain what they did in that chapter to a non-sociologist. They can start getting practice

in making their work accessible. I just think it's very important. Partly because I think right now sociology has so much to offer to help us understand the problems that are going on right now, politically, globally, environmentally, and economically. Sociologists have so much to offer in these areas, but we have to find a way to make ourselves clear.

[Yao: what would you say to future sociologists?]

In addition to the above, the other thing I would say to future sociologists would be to study what you love, even if you feel it's not valued in the field. Find a way to link your love to something that *is* valued. If you're interested in television, try to look at aspects of television messages and themes that are linked to inequality or bias or labor or power. That will make your work interesting to those beyond television researchers. There is always something that you can link your work to that is important in mainstream sociology.

Report: "'Fake News?' Perspectives From Cultural Sociology"

by Elizabeth Trudeau (Carleton College)

Moderator: Dr. Yan Long
Participants:
Dr. Francesca Tripodi
Dr. Gary Allen Fine
Dr. Jaron Harambam

On April 5th, 2022 the Culture Section of the American Sociological Association held an online event entitled "'Fake News?' Perspectives From Cultural Sociology" as part of its Culture in Contemporary Life (CCL) series. **Yan Long** (University of California Berkeley) moderated. Dr. **Gary Alan Fine** (Northwestern), Dr. **Jaron Harambam** (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam) and Dr. **Francesca Tripodi** (University of North Carolina Chapel Hill) participated as panelists.

The panel focused on the challenges of understanding how information is produced

and received in modern technological contexts - particularly in an age of social media. Further, panelists discussed what cultural sociologists can contribute to the conversation surrounding fake news through both classic and contemporary theories and methods. You can watch the full panel on the CCL Youtube channel. Below is a summary of the discussion.

What is fake news and where does it come from?

The Panel started out discussing the term in question. Moderator. **Yan Long** posed the question: "what *is* fake news?"

All three panelists agreed that the phrase needs to be carefully separated from the socio-cultural study of information production and reception. **Jaron Harambam** noted that European scholars tend to not use the term in analysis because it is "easily weaponized." **Francesca Tripodi** pointed out that the term itself is an example of how knowledge is created and used. She discussed how "fake news" in U.S. politics went from a term coined by journalists to describe false information to a slogan used by Trump supporters to refer to any "negative press."

"The concept of 'fake news' is still very much a reality for some groups," **Tripodi** acknowledged, but she maintained that for sociologists "the important question is not about the concept itself but about how people seek out information in today's societies."

All panelists also pointed to the changing technological and communications landscape as an important factor in how information is created and received across the current political and social landscape. **Gary Fine** pointed out how "institutional divisions" have greatly diminished as traditional newspapers and other media sources peter out while other less-institutionalized ones have "expanded enormously."

Harambam said the internet has helped create a new complex media terrain in which information is both "democratized" and vastly more complex as it is no longer supervised by the "traditional gatekeepers" who in the past exercised control over what information was deemed legitimate and what was not.

However, panelists were also quick to point out that while current technologies change the landscape and mediums through which information is spread, the phenomena of propaganda, false news, conspiracy theories, etc. are not new. They pointed to work by many classic theorists including DuBois, Halbwachs and Mannheim as important starting points for understanding information in both historical and contemporary contexts.

What Role Should Cultural Sociologists Play?

All panelists agreed that cultural sociologists have an important role to play in understanding "fake news" today. **Fine** argued that sociologists must focus on understanding how news is processed and received rather than whether it is legitimate. "Our challenge is to think as theorists rather than people who want to tell people what the empirical truth of the world is."

Tripodi shared that in her experience she has had exciting success pairing her own qualitative and theoretical knowledge with the practical insight of data scientists: positing that such collaborations allow theorists to move beyond technical limitations and allow data scientists to ask deeper, more meaningful questions.

Harambam acknowledged that integrating cultural insights into understanding how people interact with social media can be complex, but he noted that this is an essential and often missing piece of the current media studies field, which is often dominated by psychological theorists as well as by data scientists. He suggested some real world consequences that can occur when these sociological questions are not taken into account. While it's important to teach people how to parse facts, it is a misconception that "debunking" fake news will make it go away. He argued, "I think what all of us are trying to show is that the cultural warfare . . . and the social circles in which people are living in very much determine these questions of trust, of credibility, etc."
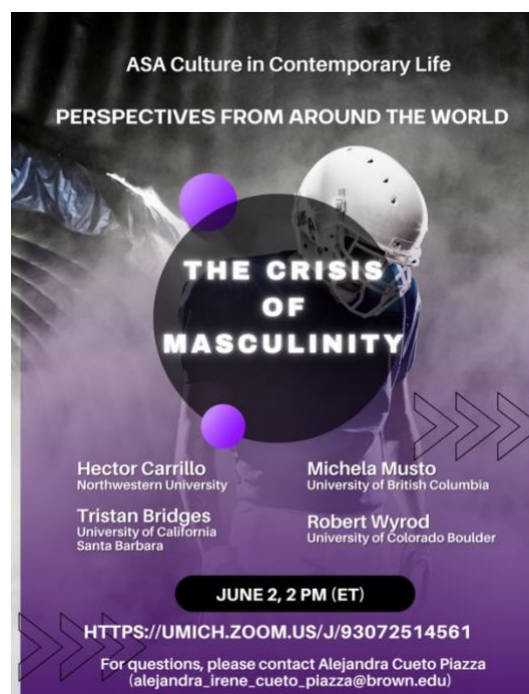
Future Questions

The panel concluded by answering audience questions and reflecting on future research directions. They discussed the questions of how social media platforms should or should be held culpable for the spread of misinformation and the relationship between economic-political systems and "fake news." For future research, in addition to collaborating with data scientists, they discussed the need to understand how/why people participate in the spread of false news as a tool of entertainment and/or community-building and to conduct cross-national comparisons.

Report: "The Crisis of Masculinity: Perspectives from Around the World."

by Manning Zhang (Brandeis University)

On June 2, 2022, the Culture Section of the American Sociological Association held the third event of this year's Culture and Contemporary Life Series. Yan Long (University of California, Berkeley) moderated the discussion. Héctor Carrillo (Northwestern University), Michela Musto (University of British Columbia), Tristan Bridges (University of California, Santa Barbara) and Robert Wyrod (University of Colorado, Boulder) participated as panelists. The event took the theme "The Crisis of Masculinity: Perspectives from Around the World." You can watch the recording of this event on YouTube. Here are highlighted remarks from the discussion.

ASA Culture in Contemporary Life
PERSPECTIVES FROM AROUND THE WORLD

THE CRISIS OF MASCULINITY

Hector Carrillo
Northwestern University

Michela Musto
University of British Columbia

Tristan Bridges
University of California Santa Barbara

Robert Wyrod
University of Colorado Boulder

JUNE 2, 2 PM (ET)
HTTPS://UMICH.ZOOM.US/J/93072514561
For questions, please contact Alejandra Cueto Piazza
(alejandra_irene_cueto_piazza@brown.edu)

Yan Long raised the opening question: In the countries or regions you study, how have the anxieties around masculinity changed in the past two decades? **Michela Musto** argued that many of these fears can be traced back to the mid to late 1800s, which was a time when land-owning white men's power and authority in Western countries like the United States and the UK were being challenged on multiple fronts. These anxieties, however, help deflect attention away from the fact that patterns of inequality in the US have long advantaged affluent white men. For instance, in her in-progress book manuscript, **Musto** shows that popular anxieties about the "boy crisis" ignore the fact that routine, taken-for-granted school structures help secure white boys' advantageous position in society.

Héctor Carrillo replied to Long's question from a transnational perspective. He stressed that it is crucial for us to consider how countries in the so-called "Global South" have experienced the accelerated processes of progressive change in gender and sexuality. For instance, in the past few decades Mexican society has come to question the assumption that Mexican gay men are by definition "effeminate" and this has changed the older systems of classification that suggested that homosexual people are "like women." Thus, men who previously could get away with participating in same-sex relationships and claim to be heterosexual are challenged in terms of identities. However, the backlash from the conservatives coexists with these progressive changes.

Tristan Bridges, in his studies of male pro-feminists and dads' right activists, found a commonly shared narrative pattern in which respondents claim, "I'm not like most men." He found out that men are really eager to distance themselves categorically from the concept of masculinity. **Bridges** argued that this phenomenon reflects the conservative backlash and is accompanied by the resurgence of people's eagerness to say "Masculinity matters."

Robert Wyrod mainly focused on the context of Sub-Saharan Africa, particularly Uganda. He echoed **Carrillo's** and **Bridges'** points and argued that anxieties around masculinity in Sub-Saharan Africa also impede progressive changes in masculinity. Heightened economic inequality, embattled feminism and repugnant legislation towards LGBTQ issues are the three main forces that have increased the anxieties and insecurities towards masculinity among Ugandan men.

Long raised the second question: To what extent is the masculinity crisis intertwined with the crisis of democracy and the resurgence of authoritarian tendencies around the world?

Bridges responded with an interesting argument: While masculinity is *claimed* to be in a crisis in the United States and around the world, there were some periods of time when masculinity was perceived to be less stable compared to other times. He elaborated this point by discussing the transformation in the meaning of the word "manliness" in history. **Bridges** argued that since inequality requires distinction and difference, it needs to find new ways to reproduce itself when challenges are in place, i.e., during times when masculinity crises are heightened. Thus, these periods of time overlap with the resurgence of authoritarian tendencies and democracies all around the world.

Wyrod emphasized the importance of studying regional trends, such as how authoritarian male leaders, Trump, Putin and Xi, have an impact on democracy and feminism in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Carrillo agreed on **Bridges'** and **Wyrod's**

viewpoints, and added that it is important to look at both left-wing and right-wing perspectives to better understand the anti-democratic politics that threaten feminism and other progressive movements in regard to gender norms. He argued that the resistance to progressive change is linked to both the extreme right and the extreme left. He witnessed that in many countries resistance is tied to a so-called *anti-gender* movement, which is critical of what it sees as the erosion of family values created by feminism and LGBTQ rights. This critique has been promoted throughout the world by transnational religious groups, including Christian groups and catholic organizations.

Agreeing with **Bridges'** argument, **Musto** said that she is not convinced that there is a crisis of masculinity. Instead, what we are currently seeing is related to what we've seen in the past. She argued that the democratic system – designed by land-owning white men – initially excluded all others from having full citizenship rights. While acknowledging all the important rights that activists and policymakers have secured over the years, she argued that the democratic system has historically allowed cisgender, straight, white, able-bodied, and educated men to consolidate their power. What we need is an *actual* crisis of democracy, one in which we examine how the democratic process continues to prevent Indigenous peoples, people of color, women, LGBTQ people, immigrants, and people with disabilities from achieving full citizenship rights.

Long raised her third question: How do you think about the utility of intersectionality in your area of study?

Héctor Carrillo contended that intersectionality is very crucial to the ways in which multiple social variables intersect in creating profound differences in the experience of the population that he studies. For instance, immigration status is not a common variable to be considered in sexuality studies, but the intersection of immigration status and sexual identity profoundly shaped capacities for inclusion and belonging. Also, **Carrillo** suggested that two things be considered when conducting intersectional research: First, we should not see the inequalities and forms of oppression that result from intersectional social marginalization as simply adjustive across social variables, but rather we should consider the complex forms of interaction among social identities and differences that lead to very specific experiences of oppression; Second, we should consider intersectionality not only in relation to social oppression, but also as a very helpful tool to analyze social privilege.

Michela Musto noted that her current ethnographic research project uses an intersectional perspective to show that students who engage in the same, or very similar, behaviors are perceived and treated very differently by their teachers depending on students' gender, race, and the academic course they have been tracked into. Contrary to fears that there is a "boy crisis" in school, adopting an intersectional perspective allows scholars to make better sense of the more complex processes shaping students' experiences in school.

Robert Wyrod considered class as a very crucial but neglected element in African studies. He notes that ethnicity and tribal differences in the African context have always been exploited by political corruption and favoritism. What's more, the colonial legacy in Africa suggests that race matters.

Tristan Bridges thought intersectionality was late to hit scholarship on masculinities. One of the reasons is that masculinity studies have the boundaries erected

around the subfield of gender studies that have created an echo chamber which makes the outside influence of theories don't have the immediate influence that we might suspect when looking at other subfields. As editor in *Men and Masculinity*, **Bridges** put intersectionality as in the mission of the journal to promote this perspective.

Long asked the following final question: What is missing in the current public or scholarly debate about hegemonic masculinity?

Wyrod pointed out that hegemonic masculinity is such a dominating and monolithic concept in masculinity studies, and ironically there is a lot of conceptual confusion about what it means. He thanked **Bridges** along with his other colleagues' efforts in developing the hybrid masculinity idea as a means of bringing dynamism back in. **Wyrod** suggested that we should try to move away from the single concept of hegemonic masculinity and explore more possibilities to discuss masculinity.

Bridges acknowledged the difficulties involved in building a theory as hegemonic masculinity in order to explain things that we lacked language to talk about. He considered that in both public debate and academic debate, this concept gets really flattened and the dynamism within it is neglected.

Musto recognized the possible contribution cultural sociology can make to masculinity studies, in terms of understanding how people's beliefs and interactions reproduce, or do not reproduce, a hierarchical and complementary relationship between masculinity and femininity. Particularly, she pointed out that this nuance is needed in the discussion on toxic masculinity in the public sphere, since this discussion risks

depicting masculinity as a static set of traits that men possess or lack.

Both **Bridges** and **Carrillo** mentioned an article that Yuchen Yang published in *Sociology Theory* in 2020: "What's Hegemonic about Hegemonic Masculinity? Legitimation and Beyond." **Carrillo** thought that this critique goes back to the roots of hegemony and examines Gramsci's formulation of hegemony and links it to Bourdieu and Connell. He agreed with the author that hegemonic masculinity is not static, is not something to abolish but something to take over. **Carrillo** considered that such critique provides us not only hope but also a possible pathway to think about how to respond to the currently perceived crisis of masculinity.

In the Q&A session, one additional question popped up: What is the relationship between the purported crisis of masculinity and the parallel crisis of the institution of heterosexuality? **Carrillo** and **Bridges** both argued that these two cannot be separated. **Bridges** also pointed out that one way these two things are connected is that there are institutions of privilege that are now just more visible than they used to be. **Wyrod** argued that the attempt of LGBTQ groups in Africa to challenge homophobia is about their success in challenging the institution and creating a much-needed crisis of African heterosexuality. But this endeavor is considered a threat to the people in power. **Musto** shared her ideas about why heteronormativity remains unchallenged and embedded at school: young people are often presumed to be "innocent" and "impressionable," so educators often shy away from overt conversations about sex and sexuality in school. And yet, this ignores the fact that normative assumptions about sexuality are embedded in both the formal and hidden curriculum students encounter in school.

Long thanked the speakers and the audience and noted that previous events of the Culture and Contemporary Life series had discussed topics including racism and fake news. Access to the video of this and previous CCL sessions are available on the [Culture Section YouTube channel.](#)

Bios of Participants

Héctor Carrillo has a joint appointment in the Sociology Department and the Gender & Sexuality Studies Program at Northwestern University. His current research investigates amateur genealogists' interaction with archival documents, and the social implications of the proliferation of genealogy as a global phenomenon.

Michela Musto is an Assistant Professor of Sociology at the University of British Columbia. Her areas of expertise include gender, race & ethnicity, education, children & youth, and sport. Her current project examines the social construction of exceptionalism in early adolescence.

Tristan Bridges is an Assistant Professor of Feminist Studies at University of California, Santa Barbara. His research is broadly concerned with an important dynamic in the sociology of gender—while gender is subject to incredible variation and transformation, gender inequality has been shown to be much more durable.

Robert Wyrod is an Associate Professor in the Department of Women and Gender Studies and the International Affairs Program at the University of Colorado Boulder. He is a sociologist interested in gender, sexuality, and social change in the developing world.

Yan Long is an Assistant Professor of Sociology at University of California, Berkeley. She studies the interactions between globalization and authoritarian politics across empirical areas such as civic action, health, development and technology.

About the Book:

Natasha Warikoo (2022). *Race at the Top: Asian Americans and Whites in Pursuit of the American Dream in Suburban Schools.* May 2022, University of Chicago Press.

This book addresses the impact of Asian American youth's academic success on ethnic assimilation. The findings are based on research in a well-off suburban community with a large and growing Asian American population. In "Woodcrest" white and Asian parents alike mobilize their resources to bolster their children's achievements in both academics and extracurricular activities. Asian parents tend to prioritize academics while white parents tend to prioritize extracurriculars, especially sports. The book shows how tensions over the 'right' way to parent develop when Asian American youth catapult ahead of their white peers academically. Rather than whites and Asians assimilating, either by Asians adopting dominant 'white' upper middle class parenting practices or whites adopting the strategies of upper middle-class Asians, parents instead engage in moral boundary making to defend their own parenting, especially against well-known stereotypes about Asian parents being too demanding and white children being outsmarted by their Asian American peers. Ultimately, both white and Asian families alike benefit from the race and class segregation that keeps working class and poor families, especially those who are African American or Latinx, out of their town altogether, through policies designed to maintain racial and class segregation.
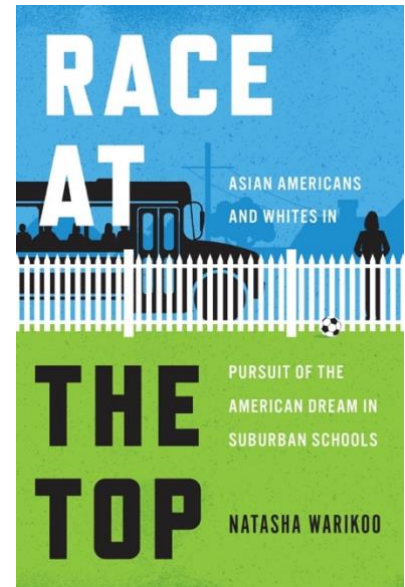
Review of *Race at the Top* by Natasha Warikoo

Tiffany J. Huang, PhD (University of Pennsylvania)

In *Race at the Top: Asian Americans and Whites in Pursuit of the American Dream in Suburban Dreams*, author Natasha Warikoo divulges that her interviews with suburban parents in Woodcrest, USA occasionally caused her to question her own parenting. Compared with Asian American parents who enrolled their children in extracurricular math courses, or with White parents who paid for individual sports coaching and private leagues, was her own parenting too lax? Indeed, I too experienced a certain degree of second-hand anxiety while reading about the intense academic and extracurricular undertakings of highly-privileged Woodcrest students, despite being many years removed from my own high school years. In the wealthy, liberal suburb of Woodcrest (a pseudonym), where the population shifted from 95% White in 1970 to just under one-third Asian by the 2010s, both White and Asian parents alike were attracted to the town's excellent schools, had high expectations of their children's academic *and* extracurricular achievement, and cared deeply about college admissions. Yet racial and ethnic differences persisted in *how* parents went about mobilizing their resources in helping their children succeed.

Drawing on three years of ethnographic observation and interviews with White and Asian parents and children, Warikoo argues that parents drew on the cultural repertoires that enabled their own success in prioritizing academics versus extracurriculars. Chinese and Indian parents who succeeded in their home countries' exam-driven systems transferred their focus on academics to their children; White parents who found success in well-roundedness prioritized their children's extracurricular autonomy and excellence in sports. Both sets of parents were concerned about their children's emotional health and well-being, though White parents were more likely to leverage their concerns to influence school- and district-wide policies, successfully lobbying for homework-reduction policies. And, given these differences, both sets of parents drew moral boundaries about what constituted good and defensible parenting; White parents critiqued Asian parents' obsession with academic achievement, while Asian parents acknowledged these critiques but highlighted White parents' hypocrisy for expending comparable time and resources on extracurriculars. Ultimately, neither set of parents did much to acknowledge the overall privilege of Woodcrest families, to the exclusion of Black and Latinx families.

Cultural sociologists will be interested in Warikoo's in-depth analysis of Woodcrest parents' cultural repertoires, though the book's theoretical conclusions focus more on implications for theories of assimilation. Readers will also find that the book is in deep conversation with recent notable works on Asian American achievement, including *The Asian American Achievement Paradox* by Jennifer Lee and Min Zhou, *Stuck* by Margaret Chin, *Hyper Education* by Pawan Dhingra, and *The Other Side of Assimilation* by Tomás Jiménez.

Race at the Top also provides readers and future researchers with pathways for future inquiries. For example, one particularly interesting conclusion in the book is that Woodcrest parents' concerns over emotional well-being may be a new form of status, rather than a reflection of an exceptionally dire mental health crisis. Future work could expand on this proposition to examine, for example, how class affects parents' concerns over mental health, or whether individuals' attention to emotional well-being affects how they are perceived.

In addition, Warikoo describes Woodcrest as leaning heavily Democratic, and interviewees spoke positively about living in a diverse community. But despite interviewees' overt views, Warikoo's careful analysis of her interview data reveals the subtle ways in which race emerged for parents who otherwise knew better than to explicitly critique a racial group in front of an Asian American researcher. Nevertheless, she also notes that Woodcrest High School's White principal described White parents as speaking much more explicitly about race than they did with her. I would be curious as to whether other forms of data, such as online parenting forums, could also reveal more explicit statements about race. Moreover, in light of growing awareness of anti-Asian racism, future work could also examine whether Woodcrest parents' attitudes have shifted since the original data was collected.

The 2020 Census revealed that Asian Americans were the fastest growing group in America over the last two decades, and their population is projected to continue rising. *Race at the Top* provides a timely look at how one community with a growing Asian population is coping with change – and in doing so, prompts readers to consider how similar communities might do so in a more equitable fashion in the future.

Announcements

New Articles

Chaudhary, Ali. R. 2022. "Paint it White: Segregationist Logics in Advertising and the Electric Guitar." *Sociological Forum* 37(1):133-154.
https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/socf.12782
*Using the case of the electric guitar, this study examines how a cultural object pioneered and popularized by Black celebrity guitarists became homologous with White masculinity through the production and circulation of visual images featured in advertising materials.

Harvey, Peter Francis. 2022. "'Make Sure You Look Someone in the Eye': Socialization and Classed Comportment in Two Elementary Schools." *American Journal of Sociology* 127(5):1417–59. doi: 10.1086/719406.

Nie, Ke. 2022. "Bowing to five pecks of rice: how online monetization programs shape artistic novelty." *Chinese Sociological Review*. doi:10.1080/21620555.2022.2084606

Rucks-Ahidiana, Zawadi. 2022. "Race and the Financial Toolkit: Bridging Cultural Theories to Understand Behavior and Decision Making in the Racial Wealth Gap." *Sociological Inquiry* 92(2): 388-416.

Thai, Mai. 2022. "Policing and Symbolic Control: The Process of Valorization." *American Journal of Sociology* 27(4): 1183-1220. doi:10.1086/718278.
*Using the case of a youth-based junior police academy, this article explores the cultural dimensions of policing and how it operates as implicit, but powerful, dimensions of police power.

Yazdiha, Hajar. 2022. "Building and Wedging Strategic Alliances: Racial Framing Contests in the Immigrant Rights and Nativist Counter-Movements." *American Behavioral Scientist*. doi: 10.1177/00027642221083526.

Youssef, Maro. 2022. "Strategic Choices: How Conservative Women Activists Remained Active throughout Tunisia's Democratic Transition." *Sociological Forum* 37(3) doi:10.1111/socf.12828.

Youssef, Maro and Sarah Yerkes. "COVID-19 and Gender-Based Violence: Pandemic Response and Impact in Tunisia" in *COVID-19 in the MENA: Two Years On*, the *Project on Middle East Political Science Studies* No. 47.

Diane Vaughan. 2021. *Dead Reckoning: Air Traffic Control, System Effects and Risk*. The University of Chicago Press.
https://press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/book/chicago/D/bo95833511.html
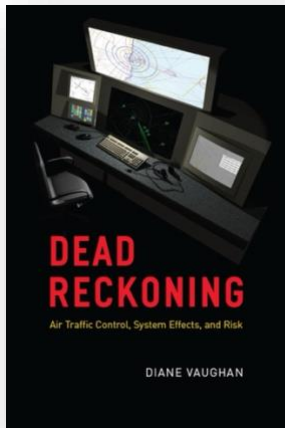
This is an historical comparative ethnography of four air traffic control facilities in the New England Region. The focus is on system effects: how historical conditions, events, actors, actions in the external environment impact the air traffic system, changing the organization, the workplace, and controllers' dead reckoning. Dead reckoning refers to controllers' embodied interpretive work, which consists of ethnocognition and boundary work. Controllers enact boundary work – social, structural, cultural, and symbolic. Ethnocognition, originally from anthropology (Geertz), is transformed into a sociological concept: it is not only distributed beyond the local (contra Hutchins, 1995), it is layered (confirming DiMaggio, 1997). Far from a top-down model, controllers actively respond to system effects, contributing to institutional persistence and change.

Helmut Staubmann. 2022. *Sociology in a New Key. Essays in Social Theory and Aesthetics.* Cham: Springer. https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-030-94922-8

This book presents essays that address fundamental issues in social and cultural theory by viewing them through the lens of aesthetic theory. Drawing on the aesthetic theories of Theodor W. Adorno, Gregory Bateson, Jean-Marie Guyau, Talcott Parsons and Georg Simmel, it suggests a new take on basic sociological concepts and methodologies. The chapters cover a wide range of topics, including the sensuality of social action, social construction of unreality, and The Rolling Stones' enduring success as a reflection of our society and culture.

The book's title *Sociology in a New Key* refers to a classic work by Susanne K. Langer, whose *Philosophy in a New Key* argued for a reorientation of modern philosophical thought based on a thorough account of symbolism in general and of the arts in particular. In this way, the basic ideas and assumptions of the philosophical tradition are transposed to new understandings and perspectives. After all, it was Georg Simmel himself who claimed to have gained several of his general theoretical insights "via the detour of reflections on the essence of art." The book will appeal to scholars and students of the sociology of the arts and music, and to anyone interested in the intersection of social theory and aesthetics.

Pérez, R. (2022). *The Souls of White Jokes: How Racist Humor Fuels White Supremacy*. **Stanford University Press.**
https://www.sup.org/books/title/?id=30308

A rigorous study of the social meaning and consequences of racist humor, and a damning argument for when the joke is not *just* a joke.

Having a "good" sense of humor generally means being able to take a joke without getting offended—laughing even at a taboo thought or at another's expense. The insinuation is that laughter eases social tension and creates solidarity in an overly politicized social world. But do the stakes change when the jokes are racist? In *The Souls of White Jokes* Raúl Pérez argues that we must genuinely confront this unsettling question in order to fully understand the persistence of anti-black racism and white supremacy in American society today.
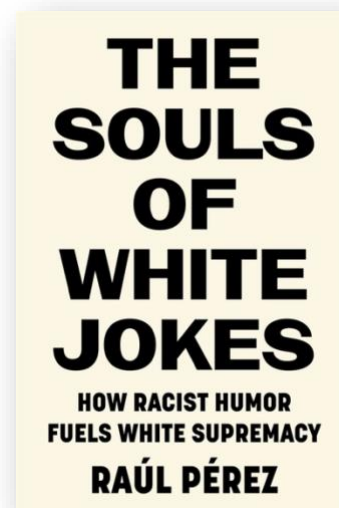
W.E.B. Du Bois's prescient essay "The Souls of White Folk" was one of the first to theorize whiteness as a social and political construct based on a feeling of superiority over racialized others—a kind of racial contempt. Pérez extends this theory to the study of humor, connecting theories of racial formation to parallel ideas about humor stemming from laughter at another's misfortune. Critically synthesizing scholarship on race, humor, and emotions, he uncovers a key function of humor as a tool for producing racial alienation, dehumanization, exclusion, and even violence. Pérez tracks this use of humor from blackface minstrelsy to contemporary contexts, including police culture, politics, and far-right extremists. Rather than being harmless fun, this humor plays a central role in reinforcing and mobilizing racist ideology and power under the guise of amusement.

The Souls of White Jokes exposes this malicious side of humor, while also revealing a new facet of racism today. Though it can be comforting to imagine racism as coming from racial hatred and anger, the terrifying reality is that it is tied up in seemingly benign, even joyful, everyday interactions as well— and for racism to be eradicated we must face this truth.

About the author

Raúl Pérez is Assistant Professor of Sociology at the University of La Verne. His work has been published in *American Behavioral Scientist*, *Discourse and Society*, *Ethnicities*, and *Sociological Perspectives*, and featured in *Time*, *The Grio*, *Latino Rebels*, and *Zócalo Public Square*.

Edited by Radosveta Dimitrova, David Lackland Sam, and Laura Ferrer Wreder. 2021. *Roma Minority Youth across Cultural Contexts: Taking a Positive Approach to Research, Policy and Practice.* **Oxford University Press.** **https://global.oup.com/academic/product/roma-minority-youth-across-cultural-contexts-9780190654061?q=dimitrova&lang=en&cc=us**

2022 PROSE Award Winner for Psychology

This book explores Positive Youth Development (PYD) in Roma ethnic minority youth. Standing apart from current volumes, this book focuses on the Roma ethnic minority — one of the most marginalized and oppressed minority groups in Europe — and on strengths and resources for optimal well-being in the community. The international and multidisciplinary contributors to this book address the complexities of Roma life in a variety of cultural settings, exploring how key developmental processes and person-context interactions can contribute to optimal and successful adaptation. The conclusions clarify how the PYD of ethnic minority children and youth may be fostered based on the empirical findings reported in the volume. The book draws on core theoretical models of PYD and theories of normative development from the perspective of developmental science to highlight the applicability of these frameworks to Roma groups. With a special focus on cultural, contextual, and socio-economic characteristics of Roma, this project also aims to provide a better understanding of what does and what does not contribute to the success of youth in oppressed minority groups.
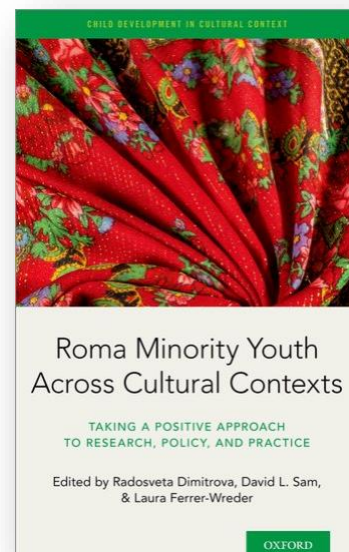
Edited by Radosveta Dimitrova and Nora Wiium. 2021. *Handbook of Positive Youth Development. Advancing Research, Policy and Practice Applications in a Global Context,* **Springer. https://www.springer.com/gp/book/9783030702618#aboutAuthors**

2022 Outstanding Social Policy Book Award by the Society for Research in Adolescence
*2022 Ursula Gielen Global Psychology Book Award, American Psychological Association, APA*

This handbook examines positive youth development (PYD) in youth and emerging adults from an international perspective. It focuses on large and underrepresented cultural groups across six continents within a strengths-based conception of adolescence that considers all youth as having assets. The volume explores the ways in which developmental assets, when effectively harnessed, empower youth to transition into a productive and resourceful adulthood. The book focuses on PYD across vast geographical regions, including Europe, Asia, Africa, Middle East, Australia, New Zealand, North America, and Latin America as well as on strengths and resources for optimal well-being. The handbook addresses the positive development of young people
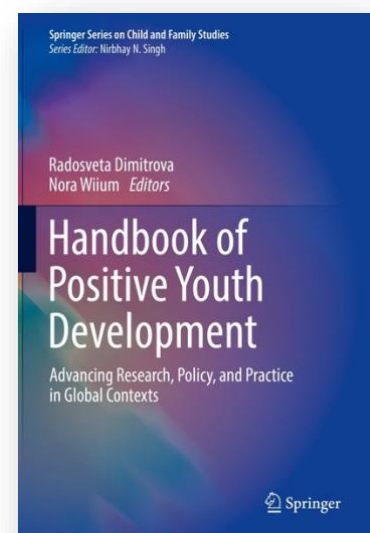
across various cultural contexts to advance research, policy, and practice and inform interventions that foster continued thriving and reduce the chances of compromised youth development. It presents theoretical perspectives and supporting empirical findings to promote a more comprehensive understanding of PYD from an integrated, multidisciplinary, and multinational perspective.

Reyes, Victoria. 2022. *Academic Outsider: Stories of Exclusion and Hope.* **Stanford, CA: Stanford Briefs (an imprint of Stanford University Press), https://www.sup.org/books/title/?id=33375**
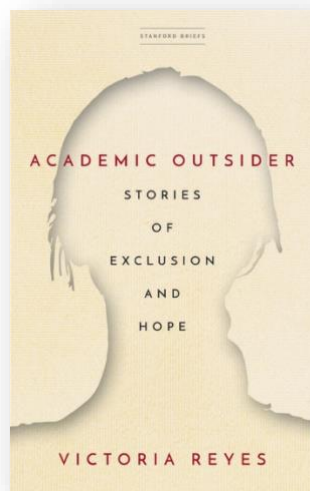
Tenure-track, published author, recipient of prestigious fellowships and awards—these credentials mark Victoria Reyes as somebody who has achieved the status of insider in the academy. *Woman of color, family history of sexual violence, first generation, mother*—these qualities place Reyes on the margins of the academy; a person who does not see herself reflected in its models of excellence. This contradiction allows Reyes to theorize the conditional citizenship of academic life—a liminal status occupied by a rapidly growing proportion of the academy, as the majority white, male, and affluent space simultaneously transforms and resists transformation. Reyes blends her own personal experiences with the tools of sociology to lay bare the ways in which the structures of the university and the people working within it continue to keep their traditionally marginalized members relegated to symbolic status, somewhere outside the center. Reyes confronts the impossibility of success in the midst of competing and contradictory needs—from navigating coded language, to balancing professional expectations with care-taking responsibilities, to combating the literal exclusions of outmoded and hierarchical rules. Her searing commentary takes on, with sensitivity and fury, the urgent call for academic justice.

Watts, Galen. (2022) *The Spiritual Turn*. **Oxford University Press. https://global.oup.com/academic/product/the-spiritual-turn-9780192859839?q=galen%20watts&lang=en&cc=gb#**

Secularization theorists argue that "spirituality" lacks institutional support and a shared tradition, thereby evincing religious decline. Meanwhile, critical commentators contend that the spiritual turn embodies all of the ills of post-1960s liberal democracies—be it, the ascent of irrationality and subjectivism, the triumph of narcissism and the weakening of community, the imperialism of the market, the corrosion of civic membership, and the emergence of novel forms of social control. *The Spiritual Turn c*hallenges these popular misconceptions. Combining cultural sociology with intellectual history and political philosophy, and drawing from first-hand interview and fieldwork data, along with discourse analysis of best-selling books, the book shows that rather
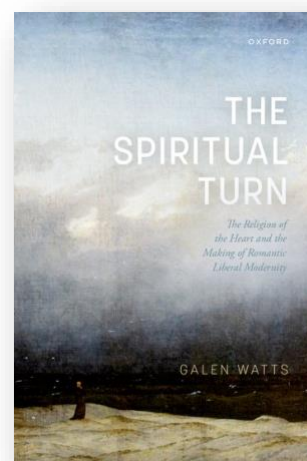
than reflecting religious decline, the spiritual turn marks the rise of an enduring cultural structure in Western modernity—the *religion of the heart*.

Tracing the rise of the religion of the heart to the 1960s, the book illuminates its elective affinities with the romantic liberal social imaginary that crystallized in popular consciousness during this era, and transformed the institutional spheres of Western liberal democracies, eventually giving birth to a new social order—which I call *romantic liberal modernity*. Then, inspired by the Durkheimian tradition, it presents case studies of three sites where the religion of the heart is institutionalized in a specific discursive form—a Twelve Step group, a neo-Pentecostal church, and a Toastmasters public speaking club. *The Spiritual Turn* concludes that while critics may have reason to disparage both "spirituality" and romantic liberal modernity more generally, the reality is far more complex than their criticisms suggest—and more importantly, far less hopeless.

Sound Study Recruitment

Alessandra Lembo, PhD (University of Chicago)

Is cultural experience structured?

Is there a structure to cultural experience? If yes, can we map its underlying structure? These are two questions that interest me and motive my article in Sociological Forum, "He Heard, She Heard: Toward a Cultural Sociology of the Senses." In that study, I developed a novel interview technique designed to facilitate the description of music experience using adjectives not typically used to describe music. This study was a first step in demonstrating the validity of the task. John Levi Martin (University of Chicago) and I then made an attempt using some of the data to map out the overall structure of music experience in our recent article in Poetics, "The Structure of Cultural Experience." We were gratified to find that, despite the difficulty of the task, the resulting data possessed internal validity and allowed us to make counter-intuitive predictions which were confirmed.

Now, we are looking to expand this project in a collaboration with Noah Askin (INSEAD). Using the original interview protocol as our guide, we have scaled-up the study to an online survey. We feel it is very important to get a large sample comprised of people with a variety of different musical backgrounds and from different geographic areas. Doing so is critical to our goals of determining whether there is a structure to music experience, and understanding how individual characteristics such as gender, geographic region, and musical training shape this experience. As an intermediary between the small, in-person studies with which I began, and a completely open, web-based, study, we would love to have sociologists interested in culture complete the survey. We therefore invite you to check out (and complete!) our survey, which can be found here: www.structureofsound.com. When you complete it, you will be able to see where you fall on a map relative to others who are more or less like you in terms of music experience, age, and gender (among other variables). We would then love to hear your thoughts on the difficulty and enjoyability of the task, and whether you imagine that the results have validity (or whether you felt you were consistently simply "guessing"). We look forward to your thoughts…and your data!

Man Yao is a PhD candidate of sociology at Ohio State University. Her research interests include gender inequality, cultural sociology, and sociology of education. Her dissertation uses the culture and cognition perspective to examine how people in the U.S. perceive the gender meanings of unfamiliar Chinese names and its real-life consequences. In another line of research, she uses large-scale survey data to document progress and impediment of gender equality in education and work.

Elizabeth Trudeau is a recent graduate of the University of Notre Dame. She will be a visiting assistant professor of Sociology at Carleton College beginning in the fall of 2022. Her publications and research investigate sex, gender, and cultural conflicts with an emphasis on organizations and criminal justice. She is currently studying the movement to end Human Trafficking in the United States.

Bambang Trihadmojo will enter his fourth year at Northwestern University this fall. His areas of interest in research include organizational studies, nature conservation, and cultural sociology. He is currently writing a paper on the enduring influence of the colonial method of fortress conservation in Southeast Asia. He is intrigued by the manner in which government agencies, international organizations, and corporations construct the meaning of nature and nature conservation.

Manning Zhang is a rising third-year PhD student at Brandeis University. She is in the joint PhD program of sociology and health policy. Her research interests are cultural sociology, health and sports. Currently she is working on an independent mixed-method research project on college-age students' motivation to do weight training in the university gym. She is curious about how people from different cultural contexts understand fitness and make sense of their weight training practices.

Call for Newsletter Webmaster!

Are you interested in joining the editorial team for the Culture Section newsletter? We are looking for a new webmaster and social media coordinator. We will work together to highlight the work of section members, disseminate information about ongoing activities within the section, and foster discussion and intellectual exchange on topics of interest to our members.

Our section embraces interpersonal, methodological, and theoretical diversity, and we encourage scholars from underrepresented backgrounds to apply:

In recognition of the newsletter webmaster's significant contributions to the intellectual life of the Culture Section, we will provide an honorary grant of $150, to be used for research or travel expenses. This grant will be disbursed prior to the ASA Annual Meeting in recognition of a full year of service to the section (from one Annual Meeting to the next).

Please email the current newsletter editors at asaculturenews@gmail.com if you are interested in this service opportunity.