

SECTION CULTURE



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Letter from the Chair

Vanina Leschziner



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Hello to all Culture Section members. We are now at the end of a semester that has found us returning to regular face-to-face interactions with students, colleagues, and friends in our academic worlds. I feel very fortunate to be chairing the Section during these more “normal” times, and planning ASA meetings in person, after the three past Chairs have dealt with the worst of the pandemic and its attendant disruption and uncertainty.

First, I want to express my gratitude and appreciation to Ann Mische, the Section’s Past Chair, for all the meaningful and

spirited work she did to keep the Section active and engaged during a difficult year, and to help advance the Section's various programs and committees, several of which had only recently been launched, either by Terry McDonnell or Allison Pugh, the Section's two previous Chairs. The very popular "Culture in Contemporary Life" (CCL) series, created by Terry McDonnell, had another successful run last year (chaired by Yan Long), gathering cultural sociologists to comment on timely and important public issues on panels throughout the year. If you missed these exciting panels on "The Crisis of Masculinity," "Fake News," and "Revisiting Cultural Methods to address Racism," you can find information about them and the recordings [here](#). Ann also did much to build on the equity and diversity initiatives started by Allison, and followed through by Terry with the establishment of the Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) committee (chaired by council member Jean Beaman), as well as the successful Culture Section Mentorship Program (chaired by Marshall Taylor) launched by the membership committee under Allison's leadership, which created "mentoring pods" matching mentors and mentees in small groups who connect throughout the year. We are all grateful to our fantastic COO Clayton Childress, who not only keeps the Section afloat but also moving into new directions. Thanks are also due to our outgoing Council members Nino Bariola, Mariana Craciun, and Mathieu Desan for all their work serving the Section.

I also want to personally thank Ann and Terry for all their help and support onboarding me. Being thrown into this position (like any leadership position in academia) provides fascinating insight into the curious workings of organizations. There is little training for the work involved in leading a Section, so we depend heavily on the generosity of the past Chairs to share information and guidance.

Thank you, Ann and Terry!

The ASA annual meeting was in person again this year, three years since our previous in-person meeting, in Summer 2019. Much has happened in the past three years, and even the ASA meeting was not exactly the same as it used to be. Still, it was invigorating to be able to attend all the conference events in person, as well as to see old colleagues and friends and meet new ones. We had a set of fantastic Sociology of Culture Section Sessions, which drew strong attendance and great interest. For those of you who were unable to be there, below is the list of panels held this summer.

ASA Annual Meeting 2022

1. The Racial Politics of Culture? Critical Perspectives from Cultural Sociology.

Joint session with the Race, Gender, and Class Section. Organizer and Presider: **Derron Wallace**, *Brandeis University*

- From "Critical Race Theory" to CRT: the new front in the American Culture Wars. **Yagmur Karakaya**, *Yale University*
- Stuff White People Like: BDSM, Polyamory, Neo-Paganism, and...Cats **Julie Lynn Fennell**, *Gallaudet University*
- '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*
- Examining racialized sentiments towards Muslim women's dress using social media data. **Jessica Stallone**, *University of Toronto*
- Symbolic Divisions and Symbolic Violence: Multilingual Latina/o Peer Mentors and Racialization of 'ESL Students.' **Melanie Jones Gast**, *University of Louisville*; **James Chisholm**,

of Louisville; **Yohimar Sivira Gonzalez**,
University of Louisville

2. International Perspectives in Cultural Sociology. Organizer and Presider/Discussant: **Vanina Leschziner**, *University of Toronto*

- Literary structuralism and transnational politics. **Lucile Dumont**, *EHESS*
- Migrating Artists and Migrating Art: Decentering the Global Art World. **Kangsan Lee**, *New York University*; **Peggy Levitt**, *Wellesley College*; **Chantal Valdivia**, *Wellesley College*
- Tastes, complex tastes, and meta-tastes. **Xiangyu Ma**, *University of Chicago*
- The Network Structure of Cultural Elements and Organizational Creativity. **Hang-Jun Cho**, *INSEAD*; **Frederic Clement Godart**, *INSEAD*; **Charles Galunic**, *INSEAD*

3. Crisis of Democracy? New Perspectives from Cultural Sociology. Organizer: **Ming-Cheng M. Lo**, *University of California–Davis*. Presider: **Stephanie L. Mudge**, *University of California–Davis*

- 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**
- Bad Company? Civil Society and Democracy in Comparative Perspective. **Andrew P. Davis**, *North Carolina State University*; **Yongjun Zhang**, *Stony Brook University*
- Politics of Nationhood and the Decay of the Media in Turkey. **Defne Over**, *Texas A&M University–College Station*
- The Dual Legacy of John Locke: Exceptionalism & Racism in America. **Chandra Mukerji**, *University of California, San Diego*

- 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).

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

Panelists:

Rachel Skaggs, *Ohio State University*
Fernando A. Calderón Figueroa,
University of Toronto
Vivian Shaw, *Vanderbilt University*
Brenton David Kalinowski, *Rice University*

6. Action in Unsettled Times.

Organizers: **Christina Simko**, *Williams College*; **Michael Strand**, *Brandeis University*. Presider and Discussant: **Ann Swidler**, *University of California–Berkeley*

- Repertoires of repair: confronting ontological insecurity during the COVID-19 pandemic in New York City. **Ryan Hagen**, *Columbia University*; **Denise Milstein**, *Columbia University*
- The Domestic Violence Victim as COVID Crisis Figure. **Paige L. Sweet**, *University of Michigan–Ann Arbor*; **Maya Glenn**; **Jacob Caponi**
- The Meaning of Masks: Tracing Trajectories and Stabilizing the “New Normal.” **Terence Emmett McDonnell**, *University of Notre Dame*; **Rachel Keynton**, *University of Notre Dame*
- 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*
- Too “Essential” For Domestic Labor? Ambiguous Availability in Essential and Remote Worker Families During COVID-19. **Angela Clague**, *University of California–Los Angeles*

7. Section on Sociology of Culture Roundtables Session.

Organizers:

Gordon Brett, *University of Toronto*;

Martin Lukk, *University of Toronto*;

Taylor Price, *University of Toronto*

9. Formal Models of Culture. Joint session with the Mathematical Sociology Section. Organizer and President: **Daniel Della Posta**, *Pennsylvania State University*

- Ideological Transformation and Rhetorical Creation of the Market in China's People's Daily. **Shilin Jia**, *University of Chicago*; **Linzhuo Li**, *University of Chicago*
- Influence and Constraint: A Synthesizing Simulation Model of Cultural Alignment. **Austen Mack-Crane**, *Cornell University*; **Michael W. Macy**, *Cornell University*
- Partisan divergence in political discourse in the UK Brexit referendum on Twitter. **Roland Adorjani**, *University of Bern*; **Sarah M. G. Otner**, *Kingston Business School*
- Predictably Unpredictable: The Dynamic Constraint of Cultural Belief Systems. **Kevin Kiley**, *North Carolina State University*
- The shape of formative periods and the rhythm of cultural change. **Nicholas Restrepo Ochoa**

Looking Ahead

Our Section's many committees have been hard at work planning activities for this academic year. The D&I committee (chaired by council member Jean Beaman) is building on the important work they did last year, and working on new initiatives to gather data on the Section's diversity and inclusion (beyond the survey they

conducted last year) as well as ways to improve both. Last year, the D&I committee worked collaboratively with the Membership Committee to create the John Mohr Dissertation Improvement Grant Award (committee chaired by Lauren Valentino), which provides support to racially or ethnically under-represented graduate students studying at a public university. There will be a new call for this award in the upcoming year (committee chaired by Craig Rawlings). The Membership Committee (chaired by Marshall Taylor) is also set to build on their fantastic work last year (they created a brilliant matching system to bring together mentors and mentees) to foster stronger mentorship and inclusive culture in our Section. One of the new initiatives planned for this year is a BIPOC Resource Sharing Network.

This year, we created a new committee dedicated to the goal of improving communication with and among Section members and circulating as well as promoting the work done by our Section members. The Communications Committee (chaired by council member Hannah Wohl), subdivided into Social Media and Newsletter subcommittees, has the important task of reviving and invigorating the Culture Section's social media presence (through Twitter and Facebook), and provide support to the fantastic newsletter editors Manning Zhang, Man Yao, and Elisabeth Trudeau, respectively. Anne Marie Champagne, a member of the Communications Committee, is also our new webmaster and will be updating the Culture Section's website.

Lastly, when we transitioned to the ASA Connect platform, all the information we had on our website was also posted in the new platform. This was done seamlessly thanks to the generous dedication of Estela Diaz, Jennifer Dudley, and prabdeep kehal.

“Culture in Contemporary Life” series

The “Culture and Contemporary Life” (CCL) series, chaired by Fiona Greenland, has an exciting set of panels planned for this academic year. As in the past, the CCL series will feature cultural sociologists drawing on their expertise to speak to current events and important social issues. The CCL committee has been recruiting panelists and finalizing all dates, with the first session already planned for late January 2023. (For information about the four panels planned, with more details about upcoming sessions forthcoming, please refer to the table located to the right.)

ASA Annual Meeting 2023

The deadline for submissions for the 2023 ASA conference is coming up (February 22, 2023), and Chair-Elect Monika Krause has put together a fantastic set of panels, so please consider submitting your work to them. Here is the list of sessions and organizers:

- *The Sociology of Art and Art Institutions* (Patricia Banks)
- *Cultures of Expertise: Mediating Global Challenges* (Monika Krause)
- *Culture and the State* (Fiona Greenland)
- *Modeling Cultures* (co-sponsored by Sociology of Culture and Mathematical Sociology; Juan Pablo Pardo-Guerra and Ronald L. Breiger)
- *Comparative and International Perspectives on Race and Culture* (Invited Session, co-sponsored by Sociology of Culture and Race, Gender, Class; Derron Wallace)
- *Section on Sociology of Culture Roundtables* (Guillermina Altomonte)

Wishing everyone a happy holiday season, and an excellent year ahead!

2023 “Culture in Contemporary Life” scheduled talks

Session 1. Inequality and the Politics of Cultural Authenticity – Authenticity can refer to multiple traits associated with “realness,” such as originality, purity, or genuineness. As a social construction, it confers status and legitimacy to objects, practices, places, and people. In this panel, three sociologists discuss why examining authenticity is key to understanding racial, gender, class, and global inequalities today.

Panelists: Marie Sarita Gaytán, University of Utah; Fred Wherry, Princeton University; Sharon Zukin, CUNY Graduate Center
Moderator: Annie Hikido, Colby College

Date: Friday, Jan 27, 1:00p PST / 4:00p EST

Session 2. Belligerent Nationalism in Big Power Politics – Violence is an ever-present possibility within nationalism. Belligerent nationalism in the case of big powers, such as the Russian invasion of Ukraine, China’s increasing militarization, and the January 6th insurgency in the United States, has raised concern about new practices of violence in the name of the nation. Panelists are invited to examine the causes of this resurgence of belligerent nationalism, to situate them in their contemporary socio-political contexts, and to examine how cultures of nationalism play a role.

Session 3. Theodicy and the Meaning of Suffering – What is the meaning of suffering? Sociologists have examined it as an individual experience that is at the heart of meaning-making in collective memory. Paradoxically, however, it is the inability to find meaning that makes suffering unbearable. This panel addresses the problem of meaning, how people reconcile the existence of God with evil, and what it means to find meaning in violence.

Session 4: The Body and Culture in a Post-Embodiment Age – This session will explore how media and medical technologies are changing the construction, conception, and presentation of the body. Panelists will consider whether we’ve arrived at a post-embodiment age, and what this means for how we understand cultures of the body.



Maia Behrendt is a PhD candidate in the Department of Sociology at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln where her scholarship has earned her the University’s Presidential Fellowship. She uses qualitative methods to study various topics lying at the intersection of race, gender, and colonialism. In addition to the sociology of culture, Maia’s work engages the subfields of Indigenous people and cultures, the sociology of art or visual studies, and social movements. Her dissertation, which received the John A. Mohr Dissertation Improvement Grant Award, focuses on Indigenous women artists and their art. Prior to her dissertation work, she studied the experiences of alcoholics, focusing on how the process of substance use recovery produces a shift in their epistemological frameworks, “enabling and encouraging changes in their drinking behaviors.”

For her dissertation, Maia is interested in the ways “minority communities use art as vehicles for social change” and the way that people perceive their art and relate to it. She conceives of these artists as responding to current political, social, and environmental landscapes. Her work currently focuses primarily on Indigenous women artists in the United States, and she would like to expand this research by examining how transnational ties, alliance building, and coalition building impact the work of Indigenous artists.

Maia grew up in Nebraska, which enabled an early exposure to a wealth of Indigenous art in her formative years. She also served as an undergraduate curatorial assistant in the Nebraska State Museum Anthropology Department, which she credits for cultivating her interest in studying material culture and developing her commitment to ethical partnership with Indigenous communities. For Maia, it is incredibly important that her dissertation work engages with Indigenous people as equitable stakeholders in material culture and the knowledge being produced from her dissertation. She firmly believes that Indigenous women artists or other communities are not subjects of study who are removed from the process of producing shared knowledge. Prior to the onset of her project, Maia worked with Indigenous and non-Indigenous consultants to interrogate what it means to engage in an Indigenous axiology. To this end, she ensured adequate compensation of the artists who participated in her research and allowed

them to review the interview transcript and make revisions if they would like. Maia plans to open a curated virtual exhibit showcasing the work Indigenous women artists listed as most personally important to them.

Edwin Grimsley is a PhD candidate in sociology at The Graduate Center, City University of New York, and his research aligns with the subfields of criminology, race and racism, public policy, and inequality. Edwin's work has earned him a variety of fellowships and awards, including the Vera Institute of Justice/CUNY Fellowship, the Graduate Center Fellowship, and the SAGE Publishing Keith Roberts Teaching Innovations Award among others. His research has been published in *City & Community*, *Journal of Criminology*, *Criminal Justice, Law & Society*, and *the Sociological Forum*.

His dissertation titled, "The Marijuana Effect: The (Uneven) Historical Development of National and State Laws and the Cumulative Disadvantage on Communities of Color," received the John A. Mohr Dissertation improvement Grant. In it, he looks at the development of marijuana laws in the United States, with particular emphasis on these laws in New York state. He traces this back to the National Commission of Marijuana in 1972. He is particularly interested in how these marijuana laws were proposed and contested by various interest groups and stakeholders. Edwin uses his historical analysis of archival material to enhance the discipline's understanding of how these laws came to disproportionately punish and incarcerate people in Black neighborhoods. He also explores how discourse around the "right to be left alone" and the right to privacy is applied unequally in public policy. Edwin came to this topic after working at the Misdemeanor Justice Project in the



Data for Collaborative Justice. Edwin is interested in how laws come into being, and the Dissertation Improvement Grant enabled him to visit the National Archives in Washington, DC and analyze the myriad documents needed for his research.

With more states legalizing marijuana, Edwin recognizes there is a lot of ongoing and future research work to be done. He is particularly interested in exploring how recent and future bills for legislating the sale and distribution of marijuana products can be used to advance racial and social equity goals. Edwin approaches his work with a critical eye for understanding systems of oppression and inequality, emphasizing the relational aspects of oppression. For example, he understands whiteness and Blackness to be symbiotic.



ASA 2023 CULTURE SECTION

Call for Award Nominations

Mary Douglas Prize for Best Book

Book authors may nominate a book published in the calendar year 2022. Authors must be section members to be eligible. Each member of the committee requires: [1] a copy of the book (hard copies preferred), and [2] a two paragraphs-long self-nomination letter written by the author providing a synopsis and outlining the book's contributions to the sociology of culture/cultural sociology. The letter should be submitted through this [online form](#). The deadline is **March 15, 2023**. To be considered, all the committee members must receive self-nomination and the books must arrive by this deadline. Please direct any inquiries to committee chair Terry McDonnell.

Committee Members

[Terry McDonnell](#) (Chair)

[Waverly Duck](#)

[Rebecca Jean Emigh](#)

[Amin Ghaziani](#)

[Fatma Gocek](#)

[Michael Rodríguez-Muñiz](#)

Clifford Geertz Prize for Best Article

Section members may nominate articles and original chapters of edited collections published in calendar years 2021-2022. Self-nominations are preferred. Authors must be members of the Culture Section. Please send the following to all members of the prize committee: [1] a very brief nominating email, including a paragraph-long description of the article and its significance to culture, and [2] an electronic copy of the manuscript. Articles that are not accompanied by a nomination letter will not be considered for the prize. The deadline for receipt of nominations and articles is **March 15, 2023**. Please direct any inquiries to committee chair Iddo Tavory.

Committee Members

[Iddo Tavory](#) (Chair)

[Sharon Quinsaas](#)

[Jeff Sheng](#)

[Christina Simko](#)

[Yongren Shi](#)

[Talía Shiff](#)

Richard A. Peterson Award for Best Student Paper

Section members may nominate any work (published or unpublished), written by someone who is a student at the time of submission. Self-nominations are welcome. Authors must be members of the Culture Section. The award recipient will receive a \$300 prize to reimburse part of the cost of attending the 2023 ASA Annual Meeting. Any paper that receives an honorable mention will be awarded \$100. Email an electronic copy of the paper to each member of the award committee. The deadline for receipt of nominations and articles is **March 15, 2023**. Please direct any inquiries to committee chair Paul Joosse.

Committee Members

[Paul Joosse](#) (Chair)

[Elisabeth Becker](#)

[Matteo Bortolini](#)

[Larissa Buchholz](#)

[Jun Fang](#)

[Meltem Odabas](#)

Mary Douglas Prize Book Distribution Instructions

Hard copy: These are strongly preferred! Please submit six hard copies of your book, one to each of the committee members at their respective postal addresses listed on the ASA website [here](#).

If a hard copy is unavailable, please email each committee member a link to an **e-book or digital version** of your book, or send a digital copy as an attachment.

Cultural Sociology's Rare Diamond

an interview with Wendy Griswold

Wendy Griswold has been an important figure in the ASA Culture Section from the very beginning. She organized a session on the sociology of the arts when the section was created in 1986; she served as a council member in the 1990s; she won the book prize in 2000 for *Bearing Witness: Readers, Writers, and the Novel in Nigeria* (Princeton University Press); and she has remained a guiding light throughout. **Lisa McCormick** recently spoke with her about her intellectual trajectory, her plans for retirement, and her thoughts on the future of the field.



Photo Northwestern Weinberg College of Arts & Sciences

Lisa McCormick: *How did you become interested in sociology?*

Wendy Griswold: When you look back at your career, you realize an awful lot happens by chance. I went to college for no particular reason except that everybody went to college. And then I went to graduate school at Duke because I didn't know what else to do with my life. I loved my seminars, but I had no calling, no career aspirations. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, women were starting to think in terms of careers as opposed to getting a job until you got married, and then working if you have to. I was in that transition.

In the early '70s, Boston was the place to be. This was post-Pill and pre-AIDS. Everything was free and easy. So, after a year at Duke, I decided to stop the PhD and move there. I got a job with the telephone company, which was actually very satisfying. I was in management, and I rose up with the wave of women that were being promoted. By the middle of the '70s, I thought that maybe I did want to go into an academic career now that I had seen the pleasures of the non-academic world.

When I was applying to graduate schools, I applied to English departments for the most part. I was interested in what was then called Commonwealth Literature, particularly West Indian literature. But I had taken a nighttime Harvard Extension course with Orlando Patterson, and he told me that the sort of thing I was interested in I could do in sociology.

I had never taken a sociology course and thought that it was the study of juvenile delinquents. Patterson told me no, actually there's more to it than that, so I applied to a number of places and got into Harvard. My ignorance was vast. I knew Harvard was good, but my main reason for going there was that I didn't have to move. I thought, "I'll stay here, and I'll do sociology, whatever that is." Obviously, that has turned out very well.

Lisa McCormick: *Did you work in the sociology of culture from the beginning of your PhD studies?*

Wendy Griswold: No. Here's another case where things happen, and you don't realize at the time how lucky you are. I assumed that my field would be organizational sociology, because I had worked for the phone company in management and understood the corporate world to some degree. At the time, organizational sociology was a big deal and there was no such thing as cultural sociology. There was a kind of sociology of literature—[Lucien] Goldmann's Marxian analyses of how classes are represented in literary works. That was around. But I had assumed I would study organizations, and I did.

At Harvard, we did oral exams after course work to show competence in a field. I did mine in organizations. I remember walking across the Harvard campus shortly after that with Ann Swidler, and she asked, "Well, what are you thinking about for your dissertation?" I answered, "I'll do something in organizations; although, you know what I'd really like to do is something in literature." And she said, "You should do what you really want to do, because you'll be better at it." It was a practical point: you will do better work if you do this quirky thing that you want to do as opposed to something that you think is going to fit the field or the market—not that I was thinking about that at the time. So, I said, "Fine, I'm interested in the revivals of Renaissance plays and why they get revived at certain times. Let's see if I can get some money to go over to England and study that." And I did.

I owe a great deal to Ann for that very specific advice, as well as for generally modelling what could be done in the culture area, and just how you could be a decent, wonderful human being and a hard-hitting professor.

Lisa McCormick: *By choosing an unusual topic, did you have any trouble getting a dissertation committee together?*

Wendy Griswold: This brings up Harrison White, who is the third member of the holy trinity [key figures who influenced my interests]. He is the smartest person I have ever met. He has a capaciousness of mind that is very rare. He used to teach a seminar on organizational theory, and he would walk in with a pile of 12 books and scatter them around the table. One would be on Anglo-Saxon law in the 9th century, another would be on the caste system in Northern India. Everybody would get one. And he would say, "Okay, all of you go read these, and next week we'll talk about the organizational structure." To this day I've never seen anyone else teach like that. It was such an expansive way of looking at the world as opposed to the standard way of starting with the literature on a topic. That influenced me enormously.

Earlier this year I had the great honor to have been elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. At the meeting for this year's class, I was asked to describe myself and I said I'm an amateur in the sense that I love and get interested in a lot of different things. I think I got that from Harrison. I find that, in the United States, sociology has become quite narrow, both in terms of the sort of political concerns that get expressed through the research and in terms of a careerist orientation. I try to encourage students to go and read that weird book that's interesting even though it might not fit into your program. I do this because I had the gift of people like Harrison doing that for me.

Lisa McCormick: *Would you say that you took an interdisciplinary approach in your work because of your background in the humanities?*

Wendy Griswold: I never really thought much about what I was doing, but I suppose I did bring something from my literary studies. When I would write about Renaissance plays or Nigerian novels, I paid attention to the literature itself. One of the things I don't like about some of the trends in English departments in the last 30 years or so is that a lot of people don't seem to like literature. They're combing it for homophobia, or colonialist thinking. Yes, that's there. But why spend your life with something that you deeply disapprove of? I want to look at the cultural thing, not just use it as a variable.

Lisa McCormick: *One of your best-known contributions is the “cultural diamond.” How did this idea come about?*

Wendy Griswold: When I began in sociology, it was clear to me that if you wanted to say something about literature and the social world, you had to bring in human beings. I've always said that in the Marxist model, the social world gets “down” into the cultural object, whereas the Weberian model goes “upwards,” with the cultural object influencing the social world. But you've got to have people doing things! With literature, writers and readers are the obvious people, but then also editors, and publishers, and so forth.

The cultural diamond is like a checklist. It isn't a theory. If you put heads on the arrows [connecting the four corners of the diamond], you could make it a theory. But the diamond isn't a theory. It is a laundry list of what you need to pay attention to if you're going to talk about a cultural object: who's producing it, who's receiving it, the social context, and how that might change over time. The first piece of research on that wasn't my dissertation. It was something on George Lamming, the West Indian author, and how his novels written in the

'50s and early '60s had been interpreted differently by reviewers in the United Kingdom, the United States, and the Caribbean. It turned out that the West Indians would say, “This is a novel about identity,” and the British would say, “This is a novel about growing up,” and the Americans would say, “This is a novel about race.” It became very clear that people are differently placed in the social world, and that different lenses were used in how they responded to the same work.

I took that idea to my dissertation, but I didn't publish that paper until much later. I set it aside to do my dissertation on Renaissance plays, but the thinking was very much the same. I started with a play that's written in 1610, or so, that is performed in 1750 and then in 1830, and again in 1850. And I asked: How is the play understood in these different times?

Lisa McCormick: *Would you agree that the cultural diamond was a major conceptual innovation that propelled the ascent of the production of culture perspective? Did you see yourself, and your work on literature, as part of that approach?*

Wendy Griswold: Initially I think it was because the production perspective was what was happening. I was very aware of Peterson's work. Actually, the first time I met Pete Peterson, we got together at Harvard in 1979 or 1980 with Paul Dimaggio and some other people and we were talking about the production of culture. And I suppose everyone was very familiar with Paul Hirsch's article of a few years earlier on how mass-produced cultural objects move through this organizational chain.

So that was very much in the air, and I suppose that I felt that was necessary, that

I was a part of it. But also, it was insufficient, because I was interested in the objects themselves, not just in what I sometimes call the “plumbing,” you know, where you’re looking at how things flow through a system.

Lisa McCormick: ***Congratulations on your retirement! While some academics pursue other passions after retiring, others, like Norbert Elias, continue to publish. Indeed, the late Zygmunt Bauman used to advise academics to retire from active university service as soon as possible to make more time for thinking and writing. What are your plans?***

Wendy Griswold: Like most academics I know, I’m not just going to stop working. It’s not like working for a company where once you’ve cleared out your desk, there’s no role for you. So, yes, I’ll continue to work on regionalism. I have bits and pieces of a third book that is looking at episodes of regionalism in the US.

But what I’ve been spending most of my time on is a project that has been on the back burner for years. I’ve been putting together a database of images—mostly painting, some sculpture—of a single historical figure from about 800 to the 21st century. And the figure is Saint Jerome. When I started doing this, I knew nothing about saints. But I was looking for a figure that could be depicted in art in multiple ways, and it turns out that Saint Jerome was a perfect candidate for that. I’m looking at the changes in depictions, and how that relates to what was going on in church history, kind of like my project on Renaissance revivals. I have about 1,000 images, and I’m cleaning the data.

I’m a little obsessive about doing the empirical work before announcing the great

new theory. But there was a period in the early 16th century where there was an expansion of the conception of the social. It’s an image of the social world that includes the divine and the natural world, organic and inorganic, human and non-human animals, and how the different narratives are interwoven. It didn’t last because the counter-Reformation came along and said, “Okay, we’ve got to close that down!”

There’s this subset of sociologists and biologists that show that the line between human and non-human creatures is not what we once thought it was, and even religious thought of that era was not making this sharp division between the animal world, the plant world, the human world, and the spiritual world. I find it fascinating, because if I can show empirically that this really did happen in this period, I would then suggest that sociology might broaden its thinking in some new ways.

Lisa McCormick: ***What are you reading these days?***

Wendy Griswold: I’m glad you asked, because it gives me a chance to plug a book that would be wonderful for sociologists to read or use in a variety of courses. If you’re teaching about community, STS and medicine, race and culture—this book has it all! It’s called *Carville’s Cure*, and it’s by Pam Fessler. It’s about the hospital for lepers that was established in Louisiana in the late 19th century and that remained in use until the 1990s.

One of the reasons it’s interesting is that, at the time, many doctors realized that leprosy is not particularly contagious, nor is it a particularly prevalent disease like tuberculosis or syphilis. But leprosy had this incredible stigma attached to it. If someone was known to have leprosy, they would be walled up in their homes (kind of like

lockdown), thrown out of the city, or in some cases, killed. There was a doctor in New Orleans who was aware of a plantation up on the Mississippi River that was falling apart and he thought that lepers could be sent there to stop the city worrying about it so much. The plantation is established, and people give some money for renovations. Eventually the Federal government starts supporting this because in other cities—New York, Philadelphia, San Francisco—public authorities wanted to get rid of their lepers. So, they send them all to Louisiana, to Carville.

People were imprisoned in this hospital. There was barbed wire on the outside. The disease was criminalized. People would often escape, and when they were found they would be hauled back. There were hundreds of people who spent their whole lives there. There were children who were brought up there and literally lived 80 to 90 years there. And they developed all of the institutions that you would have in any community, such as recreational institutions and singing societies. And because it was Louisiana, they celebrated Mardi Gras and made costumes. They built a social world where leprosy was the master identity, overriding Black and white, wealthy and non-wealthy.

Lisa McCormick: *What do you see as the greatest challenge facing cultural sociologists today?*

Wendy Griswold: Culture is such a broad term, and it lends itself to a lot of misbehavior, and by that I mean assertions with very little evidence. I've always thought that this was the difference between cultural studies and cultural sociology. Sociology is actually supposed to be a science, and we actually need evidence and comparisons. If you work in a

quantitative field, or even historical sociology, the comparisons are built in, whereas cultural sociology can too often look like cultural studies where you have an idea, and you put together a little evidence, and you run with it rather than actually testing the validity of your theory, showing data that support your take, and considering alternative explanations.

I don't think it's a new problem. The rapid growth of the section in the late 1980s and 1990s was because of the capaciousness of "culture." If you say anybody can do it using any method and any theoretical orientation, you get this sort of mushrooming thing. There's nothing wrong with it. Let a hundred flowers bloom! But a lot of those flowers are not doing the sort of scientific thinking that I favor.

Lisa McCormick: *What excites you most about the future of cultural sociology?*

Wendy Griswold: The new development that I think is both an opportunity and a danger for cultural sociologists is big data and data scraping. This is the new shiny object of the past 5 or 10 years. It is exciting because it allows for all sort of opportunities, including researching the cultural world. The temptation is for the method to drive the research questions. Also, the social world is very imperfectly captured by social media platforms. If you were to look at Twitter, you would think that politically people were at each other's throats! But if you go out there in the world, you'll find that actually most people get along most of the time. I hope cultural sociology will use the techniques opening up in the digital world in ways that advance knowledge rather than just getting excited about how many data points can be thrown together.

Announcements

New Articles

- Jack, Anthony Abraham, and Zennon Black. 2022. "Belonging and Boundaries at an Elite University." *Social Problems* 18. DOI: [10.1093/socpro/spac051](https://doi.org/10.1093/socpro/spac051).
- Liang, Yingjian. 2022. "Different Time Frames, Different Futures: How Disadvantaged Youth Project Realistic and Idealistic Futures." *Social Problems*. DOI: [10.1093/socpro/spac053](https://doi.org/10.1093/socpro/spac053).
- Mijs, Jonathan J.B. 2022. "Organizing a Weak Anti-prison Movement? Surrogate Representation and Political Pacification at a Nonprofit Prison Reentry Organization." *Race and Space (Research on Social Movements, Conflicts and Change)* 46: 87–107.
- Siciliano, Michael. 2022. "Effort in Absence: Technologically Mediated Aesthetic Experiences of the Culture Industries' Routine Workers." *Ethnography*. DOI: [10.1177/14661381221124514](https://doi.org/10.1177/14661381221124514).
- Siciliano, Michael. 2022. "How Gatekeeping Became Digital: Infrastructural Barriers to Participation in Conventional and Platformized Cultural Production." *International Journal of Cultural Policy*. DOI: [10.1080/10286632.2022.2137154](https://doi.org/10.1080/10286632.2022.2137154).
- van Stee, Elena G. 2022. "Privileged Dependence, Precarious Autonomy: Parent/Young Adult Relationships through the Lens of COVID-19." *Journal of Marriage and Family*. DOI: [10.1111/jomf.12895](https://doi.org/10.1111/jomf.12895).

New Books

Carceral, K.C. and Michael Flaherty. 2021. *The Cage of Days: Time and Temporal Experience in Prison*. Columbia University Press.

Prisons operate according to the clockwork logic of our criminal justice system: we punish people by making them "serve" time. *The Cage of Days* combines the perspectives of K. C. Carceral, a formerly incarcerated convict criminologist, and Michael G. Flaherty, a sociologist who studies temporal experience. Drawing from Carceral's field notes, his interviews with fellow inmates, and convict memoirs, this book reveals what time does to prisoners and what prisoners do to time.

Carceral and Flaherty consider the connection between the subjective dimensions of time and the existential circumstances of imprisonment. Convicts find that their experience of time has become deeply distorted by the rhythm and routines of prison and by how authorities ensure that an inmate's time is under their control. They become obsessed with the passage of time and preoccupied with regaining temporal autonomy, creating elaborate strategies for modifying their perception of time. To escape the feeling that their lives lack forward momentum, prisoners devise distinctive ways to mark the passage of time, but these tactics can backfire by intensifying their awareness of temporality. Providing rich and nuanced analysis grounded in the distinctive voices of diverse prisoners, *The Cage of Days* examines how prisons regulate time and how prisoners resist the temporal regime.

K. C. Carceral (a pseudonym) was incarcerated for thirty-one years in twelve different prisons until his parole in 2013. He is the author of *Behind a Convict's Eyes: Doing Time in a Modern Prison* (2004) and *Prison, Inc.: A Convict Exposes Life Inside a Private Prison* (2006)

Michael G. Flaherty is professor of sociology at Eckerd College and the University of South Florida. He is the author of *A Watched Pot: How We Experience Time* (1999) and *The Textures of Time: Agency and Temporal Experience* (2011). He is a coeditor of *Time Work: Studies of Temporal Agency* (2020).

Kotarba, Joseph. 2022. *Music Across the Course of Life*. Routledge.

This book illustrates how social meanings provided by music are experienced throughout the course of life. To this end, the author examines in depth the concepts of self, identity, socialization, and the life course itself.

Social scientists have traditionally focused on music experiences among different generations, one at a time, with an emphasis on young audiences. This book explores appreciation for and use of music as a dynamic process that does not begin when we enter adolescence, nor end when we become adults. It demonstrates the relationship between the experience of music and the experience of self as a fundamental feature of the more general relationship of the individual to society. Music completes the circle of life. The author bases his analysis on observations made through a variety of qualitative studies and methodologies, as well as his own music autobiography.

Clear and jargon free, this book is a timely application of key concepts from the everyday life sociologies for scholars and students in the sociology of music and culture and other related disciplines such as anthropology and ethnomusicology. It will be of interest for upper-division undergraduate and graduate courses in culture, music, symbolic interaction, social psychology, and qualitative research methods.

Joseph A. Kotarba is Professor of Sociology at Texas State University, U.S.A. where he directs the *Music Across the Life Course* Project. He also serves as Medical Sociologist and Ethnographer for the Institute for Translational Sciences at the University of Texas Medical Branch. He received the George Herbert Mead Award for Lifetime Achievement from the Society for the Study of Symbolic Interaction; and the Society's Charles Horton Cooley Award for Best Book in the Symbolic Interactionist Tradition for *Baby Boomer Rock 'n' Roll Fans* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2013); and the Society's Helena Lopata Award for Excellence in Mentoring. He is currently studying the relationship between science, medicine, and music; the experience of music during the COVID-19 pandemic; and the culture of the translational science movement. He received his doctorate from the University of California, San Diego.

Matlon, Jordanna. 2022. *A Man among Other Men: The Crisis of Black Masculinity in Racial Capitalism*. Cornell University Press.

A Man among Other Men examines competing constructions of modern manhood in the West African metropolis of Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire. Engaging the histories, representational repertoires, and performative identities of men in Abidjan and across the Black Atlantic, Jordanna Matlon shows how French colonial legacies and media tropes of Blackness act as powerful axes, rooting masculine identity and value within labor, consumerism, and commodification.

Through a broad chronological and transatlantic scope that culminates in a deep ethnography of the livelihoods and lifestyles of men in Abidjan's informal economy, Matlon demonstrates how men's subjectivities are formed in dialectical tension by and through hegemonic ideologies of race and patriarchy. *A Man among Other Men* provides a theoretically innovative, historically grounded, and empirically rich account of Black masculinity that illuminates the sustained power of imaginaries even as capitalism affords a deficit of material opportunities. Revealed is a story of Black abjection set against the anticipation of male privilege, a story of the long crisis of Black masculinity in racial capitalism.

Jordanna Matlon is Assistant Professor in the School of International Service at American University.

Monahan, Torin. 2022. *Crisis Vision: Race and the Cultural Production of Surveillance*. Duke University Press.

In *Crisis Vision*, Torin Monahan explores how artists confront the racializing dimensions of contemporary surveillance. He focuses on artists ranging from Kai Wiedenhöfer, Paolo Cirio, and Hank Willis Thomas to Claudia Rankine and Dread Scott, who engage with what he calls *crisis vision*—the regimes of racializing surveillance that position black and brown bodies as targets for

police and state violence. Many artists, Monahan contends, remain invested in frameworks that privilege transparency, universality, and individual responsibility in ways that often occlude racial difference. Other artists, however, disrupt crisis vision by confronting white supremacy and destabilizing hierarchies through the performance of opacity. Whether fostering a recognition of a shared responsibility and complicity for the violence of crisis vision or critiquing how vulnerable groups are constructed and treated globally, these artists emphasize ethical relations between strangers and ask viewers to question their own place within unjust social orders.

Torin Monahan is Professor of Communication at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, author of *Surveillance in the Time of Insecurity*, coauthor of *SuperVision: An Introduction to the Surveillance Society*, and coeditor of *Surveillance Studies: A Reader*.

Xu, Bin. 2022. *The Culture of Democracy: A Sociological Approach to Civil Society*. Polity.

Against the bleak backdrop of pressing issues in today's world, civil societies remain vibrant, animated by people's belief that they should and can solve such issues and build a better society. Their imagination of a good society, their understanding of their engagement, and the ways they choose to act constitute the cultural aspect of civil society.

Central to this cultural aspect of civil society is the "culture of democracy," including normative values, individual interpretations, and interaction norms pertaining to features of a democratic society, such as civility, independence, and solidarity. The culture of democracy varies in different contexts and faces challenges, but it shapes civic actions, alters political and social processes, and thus is the soul of modern civil societies.

The Culture of Democracy provides the first systematic survey of the cultural sociology of civil society and offers a committed global perspective. It shows that, as everyone is eager to have their voice heard, cultural sociology can serve as an "art of listening," a thoroughly empirical approach that takes ideas, meanings, and opinions seriously, for people to contemplate significant theoretical and public issues.

Bin Xu is Associate Professor of Sociology at Emory University

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

An illuminating, in-depth look at competition in suburban high schools with growing numbers of Asian Americans, where white parents are determined to ensure that their children remain at the head of the class.

The American suburb conjures an image of picturesque privilege: manicured lawns, quiet streets, and—most important to parents—high-quality schools. These elite enclaves are also historically white, allowing many white Americans to safeguard their privileges by using public schools to help their children enter top colleges. That's changing, however, as Asian American professionals increasingly move into wealthy suburban areas to give their kids that same leg up for their college applications and future careers.

As Natasha Warikoo shows in *Race at the Top*, white and Asian parents alike will do anything to help their children get to the top of the achievement pile. She takes us into the affluent suburban East Coast school she calls "Woodcrest High," with a student body about one-half white and one-third Asian American. As increasing numbers of Woodcrest's Asian American students earn star-pupil status, many whites feel displaced from the top of the academic hierarchy, and their frustrations grow. To maintain their children's edge, some white parents complain to the school that schoolwork has become *too* rigorous. They also emphasize excellence in extracurriculars like sports and theater, which maintains their children's advantage.

Warikoo reveals how, even when they are bested, white families in Woodcrest work to change the rules in their favor so they can remain the winners of the meritocracy game. Along the way, Warikoo

explores urgent issues of racial and economic inequality that play out in affluent suburban American high schools. Caught in a race for power and privilege at the very top of society, what families in towns like Woodcrest fail to see is that everyone in their race is getting a medal—the children who actually lose are those living beyond their town's boundaries.

Natasha Warikoo is professor of sociology at Tufts University. She is the author of, most recently, *The Diversity Bargain*, also published by the University of Chicago Press.

Conferences & Symposia

Junior Theorist Symposium (Co-organizers : Wendy Y. Li and Jon Shaffer)

The 2023 Junior Theorists Symposium (JTS) will take place on Thursday, August 17th, 2023 in Philadelphia, PA (specific location TBA). JTS is a one-day mini-conference held immediately before ASA which features the theoretical work of graduate students, postdocs, and early career faculty.

[Visit the Junior Theorists Symposium website to learn more.](#)

[SUBMIT YOUR PRÉCIS HERE](#)

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: March 1st, 11:59 PM Eastern Time

The 17th Junior Theorists Symposium (JTS) is now open to new submissions. The JTS is a conference featuring the work of emerging sociologists engaged in theoretical work, broadly defined. Sponsored in part by the Theory Section of the ASA, the conference has provided a platform for the work of early-career sociologists since 2005. We especially welcome submissions that broaden the practice of theory beyond its traditional themes, topics, and disciplinary function.

The symposium will be held as an in-person event on **Thursday, August 17** prior to the 2023 ASA Annual Meeting in Philadelphia, PA.

It is our honor to announce that **Claire Decoteau** (University of Illinois-Chicago), **Greta Krippner** (University of Michigan), and **Victor Ray** (University of Iowa) will serve as discussants for this year's symposium. **Daniel Hirschman** (Cornell University), winner of the 2022 Junior Theorist Award, will deliver a keynote address. Finally, the symposium will include an after-panel titled "Why Theorize?" This panel will seek to bring serious scholars, thinkers, and doers into conversation to explore convergences, tensions, and a range of possible responses to the question: why theorize?

We invite all ABD graduate students, recent PhDs, postdocs, and assistant professors who received their PhDs from 2019 onwards to submit up to a three-page précis (800–1000 words). The précis should include the key theoretical contribution of the paper and a general outline of the argument.

[Successful précis from last year's symposium can be viewed here.](#)

[Visit the Junior Theorists Symposium website to learn more.](#)

Please note that the précis must be for a paper that is not under review or forthcoming at a journal.

As in previous years, there is no pre-specified theme for the conference. Papers will be grouped into sessions based on emergent themes and discussants' areas of interest and expertise. We invite submissions from all substantive areas of sociology, we especially encourage papers that are works-in-progress and would benefit from the discussions at JTS.

Please remove all identifying information from your précis and submit it via the Google form linked above. **Wendy Li** (University of Wisconsin-Madison) and **Jon Shaffer** (Johns Hopkins University) will review the anonymized submissions. You can also contact them at juniortheorists@gmail.com with any questions. By **early April**, we will extend 9 invitations to present at JTS 2023. Please plan to share a full paper by **July 7, 2022**.

*Presenters should plan to attend in-person, though this may change based on the Covid-19 pandemic.

If you have any issues uploading your document, please send a copy of your précis with all identifying information removed to juniortheorists@gmail.com. Please include your name and affiliation (University and Department) in the body of the email.

