A Message from the Chair
Lyn Spillman
University of Notre Dame

"As we look ahead to the new year:"
Culture and Interests[1]

I write this message for *Culture*'s fall issue with some ironic amusement. I've seen many such messages recently in my research on economic culture in American business associations: the Chair's Message is a little-known but well populated genre in thousands of association newsletters. So, the United Lightning Protection Association's newsletter (*More Static*) provides glowing conference recaps. The Real Estate Brokers' president is "very excited about the progress that has been achieved so far..." For the new chair of the International Telecommunications Society "it gives me great pleasure to greet you all. I look forward to deepening the many friendships I have made over the years..." The president of the Delaware Valley chapter of the International Concrete Repair Institute writes in their newsletter, *The Hard Hat,* that the close of summer is "always a good time to pause, reflect, and re-energize;" and the president of the National Electronic Service Dealers' Association reflects that "as we look ahead to the new year we do so with excitement and trepidation..." What more is there to say?[2]

Editor's Note

The beginning of my tenure as chair-elect marks the end of my tenure as editor of *Culture.* It is a privilege to have been editor for these past seven years. I'm grateful to my predecessors—Vera Zolberg, Stephen Hart, and Karen Cerulo; to the eight different section chairs who have anchored the newsletter with their "Messages"; to Pete Peterson, who faithfully brought to our attention his "Books of Note"; to the many contributors, who have collectively outlined the expanding horizons of the field; and to an engaged readership that comprises the ASA's liveliest section. The Council of the Culture Section discussed the issue of editorial transition last August; I'm enormously proud to pass the editorial mantle to Andy Perrin, the section's webmaster, whose mastery of the sociological craft, scholarly achievements, and service to this (and other) sections are so exemplary. Please send your ideas for submissions to him—
andrew_perrin@unc.edu . **Welcome, Andy!**

With thanks,
Mark D. Jacobs

Cordoning off Culture in Introductory Sociology Textbooks
Michael Jindra
Spring Arbor University

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

Visualizing the Hipster: Photoblogs and Grassroots Cultural Production in the Midwest
Joan Weston
Ohio University

In the last five years, "photoblogs," online image archives, have emerged as a popular form of documentation constitutive of the Midwest post-industrial performance environment and for the reproduction of the "deviant Midwest subcultural music scene" of the 1950s and early 60s. Photographers capture images of scene hipsters dangling on the edge of middle-class decency and respectability and upload them onto popular online image archives or databases, such as everyoneisfamous.com, cobrasnake.com and lastnightsparty.com. Mark "Cobrasnake"

As cultural sociologists, we understand how we might be spoken by texts. But to be spoken by a text shared with business people like real estate brokers and concrete repair contractors may seem a little hard to take. Scholars of professions like Magali Sarfatti Larson and Andy Abbott– not to mention Bourdieu– do remind us that, collectively, we professional "cultural specialists" are not as pure and disinterested as we sometimes like to think. Nevertheless, I think there's an additional, more Durkheimian lesson to be drawn from the potentially threatening parallel between profit-seeking concrete repair contractors and ourselves. If we experience a shared, "disinterested" concern with technical excellence and occupational camaraderie (even while "networking," and promoting our own ideas), many for-profit actors I've studied turn out to be excited by the same things. I want to suggest here that cultural sociologists need to think through and redevelop our often implicit theory of interests to come to better terms with this similarity.[3]

But first, and speaking of "that Durkheimian moment" (as our colleague Ann Mische once labeled culture section business meetings), the 20th Anniversary Dinner and Mini-conference on Modeling, and the section events which preceded it, certainly succeeded wonderfully. A Solidarity Audit would show us to be in excellent shape. Elsewhere in this issue you'll read more about the substance of the mini-conference. Its scholarly interest, popularity, and pleasure are attributable to the flawless planning of Chandra Mukerji, with the help of Kate Levitt, Mitchell Stevens, Harvey Molotch, and Cindy Svacina, and the support of the UCSD Communications Department and NYU's Department of Sociology. Thank you from us all, Chandra, for that anniversary gift to the section.

Section panels at ASA also drew big crowds– at least 450 in all-- to hear about research. addressing some core issues concerning cultural sociologists. The packed room of roundtable discussions organized by Omar Lizardo provided another "Durkheimian moment" of intense intellectual exchange for culture section members. Laura Edles and Nina Eliasoph organized a panel of papers speaking to a core theoretical issue, "Structure and Practice in Cultural Analysis"; Elizabeth Armstrong created a panel to resonate with ASA's theme, "Is Another World Possible? Culture and Political Change in Activism and Policy." Brian Steensland's panel on "Thick Description and Causal Claims in Cultural Analysis" advanced our conversation on methodological issues; Vera Zolberg's panel on "New Perspectives on Art and Society" demonstrated to an absorbed audience some fascinating new thinking in that key area. Mary Blair-Loy assembled a set of excellent papers on a topic I think we should be talking about more– "Cultural Contexts of Work and Industry." And we celebrated our 20th anniversary and promoted cultural sociology with a well-attended and stimulating panel on "Cultural Sociology and Disciplinary Change: A Twenty Year Assessment," thanks to Jeff Alexander.

All the panels and the conversations they generated– not to mention the many other culture-related events on the conference program--showed we had much in the way of technical excellence and occupational community to celebrate. Many of us do like to think there's something more being produced here, and in all the other meetings and mediated communication which keep us in touch, than cv items. But we rarely

credit groups of concrete repair contractors or telecommunications executives or hospitality consultants with a similar disinterest. That's partly because of the particular normative issues associated with for-profit action. Yet it also indicates, I think, that our theory of interests is underdeveloped.

Many of us operate with taken-for-granted presuppositions about interests– indeed, these assumptions provide one of the implicit analytic models guiding our work that Chandra Mukerji had us reflect on at the recent mini-conference. I think cultural sociology's implicit approach to interests actually helps account for some of the productivity of our work in the last twenty years. At the same time, though, it's also a feature that sometimes frustrates or puzzles many other social scientists, including other sociologists.

Many cultural sociologists are *against* using interests to model our research problems. What does that mean? As Richard Swedberg points out,"interest" is really only what Merton calls a "proto-concept" in sociology– fuzzy and unarticulated (2005, 48). But if we use what I'm thinking of as "anti-interest models" we' re contrasting ourselves first, of course, with neoclassical economists and rational choice political scientists who'd make the pursuit of interests a generic postulate about human nature, and model any research problem starting with that assumption (though the bald assumption might be nuanced with sophisticated conditions and qualifications). More immediately, I think we tend to distinguish our work from that of many other sociologists– for instance, in some political sociology or stratification research– who tend to take the existence of some *collective* interests as a transparent fact– and examine how action based on collective interests plays out– or fails to do so.

Being against using interests as a fundamental analytic touchstone opens up a richer field of human activity for analysis, and I think we've benefitted from that. We do a lot more with subjects involving a lot of Weber's traditional and affectual action, and we're not confined to fields of action dominated by instrumental and value-rational action. From the beginning, we've highlighted investigation of expressive objects and practices– the arts and the media– which, as Raymond Williams pointed out, were often seen as somehow separate from the grubby pursuit of interest at the core of capitalist society, and accordingly marginalized by many sociologists (though as we know of course that's at least an outdated distinction, and probably never sustainable).

When we do investigate fields of action where other scholars see interests we're immediately suspicious– or at least I am. We always want to know about the social construction of interests, the ways they are sustained in discursive, interactive, expressive and ritual processes, and, by implication, how interests might be understood differently. So, for instance, if you took "national interests" for granted, you might analyze the strategies and conflicts involved in state formation, nationalist movements, and inter-state relations. But the other direction to go with this topic is, of course, to think: "'Nation'?? How bizarre! Where does that come from? How does it become so persuasive or taken for granted as an 'interest'?" We get the culturalist shift, which produced a boom in good scholarship on nationalism by scholars such as Benedict Anderson (1991), Liah Greenfeld (1992)and Rogers Brubaker (1992). We tend to ask about "identities" rather than interests. (I'm thinking of

identities here as widely shared discourses *grounding* claims-making about interests). Sometimes, the epiphenomenon– cultural identity– and the phenomenon– interests– switch places in the way we think.

This shift makes a big and productive difference in the ways we define the objects we are studying and the sorts of data we seek and find. So, for instance, when I investigated national identity in the United States and Australia I was turning to cases which had previously been treated as unproblematic by nationalism theorists (though not by historians) because, comparatively speaking, the United States and Australia had become "nations" without the strong states or critical social movements most of the nationalism literature examined. Without ignoring "politics-as-usual" in social movements and states, I looked especially for events and processes of intense cultural production, and found centennials and bicentennial commemorations– large-scale rituals generating reams of discourse about national identity from many different voices. These data-generating events had been neglected in political and social history. I looked for all the variant meanings attached to the "nation," expecting and finding a lot of variation, and a cultural politics of inclusion and exclusion. But beyond all the contingent cultural politics, I found an underlying discursive field conditioning the expression of "national" interest– a cultural structure evident in both countries, across time, and in both critical and affirmative claims. Being against using interests as an analytic model turned into a set of assumptions about what to look for to find out more about the cultural conditions for "having an interest" (Spillman 1997)

Similarly, my suspicion of the value of "interests" as a fundamental explanatory principle led me (by some obscure pathways) to the concrete repair contractors, the hospitality consultants, the telecommunications executives, and many other such groups mostly alien to sociologists and sociological inquiry. In the United States, there are over 4400 national business associations, and many others which are regional or local; these are organizational sites of intense cultural production of meanings for economic action. The received wisdom that groups of for-profit actors like these are simply political interest groups does not stand up to empirical investigation, and their impact on the obscure cultural politics of coordination and change within "industries" and markets, which has sometimes interested economic sociologists, is intermittent at best. A case-by-case account in terms of the pursuit of interest, even of the variant social construction of "interests," takes the presumed folk belief of for-profit actors themselves in business-as-usual at face value. But as it turns out, the discourses they use to articulate "business interests" are rarely transparent and often surprising, emphasizing technical excellence and occupational camaraderie as much as protecting profits and stability.[4]

So being suspicious of "interest"-based analytic models and asking where interests come from has helped me-- and many other cultural sociologists-- re-specify our objects of investigation and operationalize them in new ways. In the process, we've turned up lots of rich but neglected data and new research problems. We see this approach productively established in a variety of important research programs, such those on civic culture, collective memory, and global culture (cf. Armstrong and Bernstein forthcoming; Jasper 2005).

But there's a problem with this line of thinking. Just as I get frustrated and dissatisfied with work which takes action in pursuit of interests for granted, other scholars just don't see much point in looking at the social construction of interests, and just want to look at the blow by blow strategy story, and its various outcomes. From that point of view, *who cares* how interests are constructed? It can seem somewhat distant or naive to worry about that. Considering nationalism's sometimes bloody geopolitical impact, why should we concern ourselves with what Billig (1995) calls "banal nationalism" in comparatively quiet places? Considering persistent and glaring structural inequalities, why investigate identity politics? If the organizational isomorphism identified in neo-institutionalist theory explains more about industry stability than change, why bother with it? Aren't various organizational strategies affecting the bottom line more important than the question of how people define the bottom line? Arguably, we need to be concerned with the various *consequences* of interest-oriented action, even if we're atheists about "objective interests," and even if questions about when and how interests are constructed seem more absorbing. And of course we're also committed in our day-to-day action to what others at least would see as the interests of the various groups of which we are members, however reflectively we make those commitments and pursue those "interests." (Culture Section interests are safe with me.) Keeping these sorts of issues in mind, it's no wonder that Swedberg calls for sociologists to develop a better theory of "interests."

Cultural sociologists offer many promising resources for such a theory, in our work on social movements, policy, social problems, religion, war, and no doubt other areas I'm unacquainted with. What I'm emphasizing here, though, is that a truly cultural theory of interests will go beyond investigating their construction to theorizing the very cultural conditions for having "an interest." In my view, we would first need to recognize that any clarity about interests usually requires simply structured fields of action and institutionalized practices, and that these are historically rarer, more vulnerable, and more curious than typical interest analyses assume (Smelser 1998; cf. Abolafia 1996). They are islands in an ocean of much richer but more ambiguous meanings– even for the profit-oriented actors I study. In particular, discourses about interests and interested oriented action often rely on meaningful disinterest (e.g. Alexander 2006). So, as Hirsch (1972) has pointed out (of culture industries), cultural "production" is often necessarily "overproduction" if viewed from a strategic point of view. Some meaning-making will turn out to be consequential in strategic games, but we don't really know *a priori* what will be consequential and what not. Because of this, it's relevant even from the point of view of interest-based analysis to look at all the potential cultural conditions for having an interest– and perhaps even model that relation.

What socially seismic shifts or erosion processes create these islands where strategic games can make sense? Hirschmann (1977) argued that seventeenth-century Western thinkers saw interests as a benign and civilizing force in a world of destructive political passions. Taken beyond that particular historical context, this observation could alert us to a generalization Durkheim might have made: discourses of interest – even competitive interest– are first and foremost discourses of social interrelationship in a differentiated social world.

(Anyone who's had to manufacture for themselves "an interest" in a local sports team for the sake of conversation will recognize this process). With more social differentiation, there will be more discourses creating relationship in terms of "having an interest," even "competing interests." Having competing interests is different, after all, from refusing or failing to "be interested" in the game, in the "other" or competitor. Your interests and my interests may be at odds, but we share the mutual understanding that we both have interests, and likely share an understanding of the field within which we pursue them.

Such a general, cultural theory of interests may seem even more remote from interest-based, blow-by-blow strategy accounts of (for instance) nationalist movements or industry politics or policy battles than the typical investigation of the social construction of interests. But in offering a de-naturalized hypothesis about when "interests" matter, and when they don't, it suggests an additional set of conditions and mechanisms of variable strategic power. This way of theorizing interests may also seem to be too a-political, under-emphasizing the destructive power of the tunnel vision which often attends the pursuit of both material and ideal interests in strategic games. In my view, however, political and normative issues will be better addressed– and alternatives strengthened– with a general, cultural understanding of interest-oriented action which not only questions the transparency of interests but recognizes their latent function as an often abused claim to social connection.

I know that many of you have been thinking about these and related issues in one way or another, so I'm confident that a conversation about how to better theorize and analyze interests could be intrinsically valuable, productive for our work, and good for our image as one of the sites where sociologists discuss issues of real intellectual weight. Our twentieth anniversary is a time for celebrating our accomplishments so far, but it can also be time for reconsidering the scholarly problems we share and articulating new concerns. I hope other members besides me will be suggesting new issues we ought to be considering collectively this year. For cultural sociologists as for my "Firestop Contractors," "this is a very exciting time to be involved...."

References

Abbott, Andrew. 1988. *The System of Professions*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Abolafia, Mitchell. 1996. *Making Markets: Opportunism and Restraint on Wall Street*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.

Alexander, Jeffrey C. 2006. *The Civil Sphere.* Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.

Anderson, Benedict. 1991. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso.

Armstrong, Elizabeth A and Mary Bernstein. Forthcoming. "Culture, Power, and Institutions: A Multi-Institutional Politics Approach to Social Movements" *Sociological Theory.*

Berk, Gerald and Marc Schneiberg. 2005. "Varieties *in* Capitalism, Varieties *of* Association: Collaborative Learning in American Industry, 1900 to 1925." *Politics & Society* 33: 46-87.

Billig, Michael. 1995. *Banal Nationalism.* London and Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Brubaker, Rogers. 1992. *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.

Craig, Ailsa. 2006. "Sociability and the Transliterative Practices of Occupational Subculture," *Culture* 20(3): 1, 7-9.

Crane, Diana. 1972. *Invisible Colleges*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

DiMaggio, Paul J. 1988. "Interest and Agency in Institutional Theory." Pp. 3-22 in Lynne Zucker, ed. *Institutional Patterns and Organizations*. Cambridge MA: Ballinger.

DiMaggio, Paul J. and Walter W. Powell. 1991. "The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organizational Fields." Pp. 63-82 in Powell and DiMaggio, eds., *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Fligstein, Neil. 2001. *The Architecture of Markets: An Economic Sociology of the Twenty-First Century.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Greenfeld, Liah. 1992. *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity* Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.

Hirsch, Paul M. 1972. "Processing Fads and Fashions: An Organization-Set Analysis of Cultural Industry Systems." *American Journal of Sociology* 77: 639-59.

Hirschmann, Albert O. 1977. *The Passions and the Interests: Political Arguments for Capitalism before its Triumph.* Princeton N.J. Princeton University Press.

Jasper, James L. 2005. "Culture, Knowledge, Politics." Pp. 115-33 in Thomas Janoski *et al.,* eds. *The Handbook of Political Sociology: States, Civil Societies, and Globalization* Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press.

Knoke, David. 1990. *Organizing For Collective Action: The Political Economies of Associations*. New York: Aldine de Gruyter.

Larson, Magali Sarfatti. 1977. *The Rise of Professionalism* Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Larson, Magali Sarfatti. 2005. "Professions as Disciplinary Cultures." Pp. 318-331 in Mark D. Jacobs and Nancy Weiss Hanrahan, eds. *The Blackwell Companion to the Sociology of Culture* Malden MA and Oxford: Blackwell.

Roy, William and Rachel Parker-Gwin. 1999. "How Many Logics of Collective Action?" *Theory and Society* 28: 203-37.

Schneiberg, Marc. 1999. "Political and Institutional Conditions for Governance by Association: Private Order and Price Controls in American Fire Insurance," *Politics and Society* 27: 67-103.

Smelser, Neil J. 1998. "The Rational and the Ambivalent in the Social Sciences." *American Sociological Review* 63: 1-16.

Spillman, Lyn. 1997. *Nation and Commemoration: Creating National Identities in the United States and Australia.* Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press.

Spillman, Lyn. 1999. "Enriching Exchange: Cultural Dimensions of Markets." *American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 58: 1047-71
.
Spillman, Lyn. Forthcoming. "'A Special Camaraderie with Colleagues:' Business Associations and Cultural Production for Economic Action." In Isaac Reed and Jeff Alexander, eds. *Meaning and Method: The Cultural Approach to Sociology.* Boulder CO: Paradigm Publishers

Swedberg, Richard. 2005. *Interest*. Maidenhead, England and New York: Open University Press.

Van Maanen, John and Stephen R. Barley. 1984. "Occupational Communities: Culture and Control in Organizations." *Research in Organizational Behavior* 6: 234-365.

Warner, W. Lloyd. and Desmond Martin. 1967. "Big Trade and Business Associations." Pp. 314-46 in W. Lloyd Warner, ed. *The Emergent American Society* Vol. 1. New Haven: Yale University Press.

White, Harrison. 2002. *Markets From Networks: Socioeconomic Models of Production*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Zelizer, Viviana 1978. "Human Values and the Market: The Case of Life Insurance and Death in 19th-Century America." *American Journal of Sociology* 84: 591-610.

Zelizer, Viviana. 1994. *The Social Meaning of Money*. New York; Basic Books.

Notes

[2]. United Lightning Protection Association from "72nd Annual Conference Recap," *More Static* Spring 2004, p. 1 accessed at ulpa.org/tech.htm; National Association of Real Estate Brokers from nareb.com/NAREB/president_message4.shtml; International Telecommunications Society from itsworld.org/news/message.htm; International Concrete Repair Institute from icridelva.com/newsletter.htm; and National Electronic Dealers Association from Brian Gibson, "Facing New Technologies," *ProService Magazine: A Journal of NESDA and ISCET* December 2003, p. 10 accessed at iscet.org/proservice/index.html; The Firestop Contractors' quotation at the conclusion of this message is from fcia.org/articles/messages-3-00.htm. Documents were accessed and printed in December 2004 and January 2005; similar documents are available at these sites now, and the final two documents cited can still be found, the former now located at nesda.com/proservice1203web.pdf

[3]. On professional interests see Larson (1977) and Abbott (1988). For an important but neglected theorization of occupational community see Van Maanen and Barley (1984), along with Craig (2006), Crane (1972), and Larson (2005).

[4]. Spillman (forthcoming). This project builds on themes and questions raised in culturally-attuned economic sociology (Spillman 1999), e.g. DiMaggio (1988); DiMaggio and Powell (1991); Zelizer (1978; 1994); Fligstein (2001) and White (2002). The few sociological treatments of American business associations include, most notably, Warner and Martin (1967); Knoke (1990); Schneiberg (1999); Berk and Schneiberg (2005); and Roy and Parker-Gwin (1999).

Cordoning off Culture in Introductory Sociology Textbooks, continued

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

Sociology has witnessed the resurgence of culture as an important factor in other topics, including stratification (Small and Newman 2001; Hitlin and Piliavin 2004; P. Smith 2005, 43-50). In the texts, the culture chapter often highlights the subsistence practices of different cultural groups, and some contrast orientations toward social and kin responsibilities versus

those toward work and progress. The later international stratification chapter would be an ideal place to build on these contrasts by discussing how they influence economic outcomes. Instead, the chapters almost uniformly reference the standard structural functional/modernization and dependency or world system explanations without any reference to the previous culture chapter , even though these theories are largely legacies of the 1950s and 1960s and rather Eurocentric in their own contrasting ways.

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

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

The neglect of culture is also expressed in the attention the texts give to production over consumption, having still not factored in the phenomenal rise of consumer culture since the 1980's (Zukin and Maguire 2004). Production (in the broad sense) has more to do with power, labor hierarchies, capital, all meaty stuff of traditional sociology (though production is also "culture-filled," as many sociologists of culture point out). While consumption also involves power and capital among other things, its form certainly has more to do with symbols, ideals, subjectivity, peer relations, leisure and media and popular cultures, where meaning is key. Levels and forms of consumption certainly have a relationship with class, education, deviance, and other factors, as the consumption "clusters" that marketing firms use clearly show. In general, culture is now utilized in a much more sophisticated way in economic sociology (Swedberg 2003; Day, Papataxiarchis and Stewart 1999). Little of this is integrated into the various chapters of the texts, perhaps because economic sociology "grew up" concentrating on production rather than consumption (Zelizer 2005: 336). And even with the attention given to production, the concepts of social and cultural capital (beyond the Bourdieuian sense), essential to understanding economies, especially ethnic ones, also fail to find even a mention in the in the textbooks, despite voluminous literature (Light 2005:663).

Popular and Subcultures

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

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

Cultural sociology also provides a great opportunity to connect micro and macro environments, through connecting local and subcultural social processes to popular cultures, as in David Harding's (2007) work on disadvantaged neighborhoods. Another example of this is the heavy debate over whether accusations of "acting white" affect educational outcomes. Influences here include local school group dynamics and media constructions of "authentic" racial identity that have a huge influence on youth through music genres such as hip hop. This issue is not mentioned in any textbook I examined.

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

When reading these texts, one also rarely gets a sense of cultural differences, other than the mentions in the "culture" chapter. Basic information concerning cultural variable notions of time, space, personhood, social interaction, subsistence or narratives may be mentioned briefly in the culture chapter, but is otherwise left out. The texts often studiously avoid ethnic and cultural differences in styles (such as communication styles), even though there are sources that illuminate this (Skrentny 2007). Many cultural sociologists argue that discussion of cultural codes and moral orders are crucial to understanding social life (C. Smith 2003), though this is for the most part absent from these textbooks. Social scientists, Marshall Sahlins argues, are denying "the existence of cultural boundaries just when so many peoples are being called upon to mark them" (Sahlins 1999: 409), with the implication that any "diversity is just a matter of superficial difference," an assumption that is "still at the core of many perspectives on race, ethnicity and culture in the social sciences" (Markus, Steele and Steele 202:461).

For the sociology texts to truly display the richness of human social life, they need to show it as strongly cultural, as people moved by motives and desires for identity, subjectivity, experience, desire, and not simply as subject to institutional

forces and motivated by instrumentalities (Smith 2003). And they need to indicate how all these are mediated by culture in diverse ways. Instead of simplistic explanations where either the individual (where "culture" is sometimes misleadingly placed) or social structure (the favored explanation) is determining, these texts ought to include culture as a mediating force between the two (Smilde 2007). Whether this means adding another explicit theoretical perspective is debatable, but this approach would be eclectic enough to draw on the strengths of the other perspectives, and to incorporate materialist, instrumental, rationalist or other approaches when appropriate (Chabal and Daloz 2006: 310).

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

References

Alexander, Jeffrey and Kenneth Thompson. 2007. *A Contemporary Introduction to Sociology.* Boulder, CO: Paradigm.

Chabal, Patrick and Jean-Pascal Daloz. 2006. *Culture Troubles: Politics and the Interpretation of Meaning.* Chicago: University of Chicago.
---------1999. *Africa Works: Disorder as Political Instrument.* London: International African Institute.

Day, Sophie, E. Papataxiarchis and M. Stewart. 1999. *Lilies of the Field: Marginal people who live for the moment.* Boulder, CO: Westview.

Farkas, George. 2003. "Cognitive Skills and Noncognitive Traits and Behaviors in Stratification Processes." *Annual Review of Sociology* 29: 541-562.

Ferrell, Jeff. 1999. "Cultural Criminology" *Annual Review of Sociology* 25:395-418.

Fincham, Ben . 2007. "Bicycle Couriers, Subculture and Enjoyment." *Sociological Review* 52(2):189-202.

Harding, David. 2007. "Cultural Context, Sexual Behavior, and Romantic Relationships in Disadvantaged Neighborhoods." *American Sociological Review* 72:341-364.

Hitlin, Steven and Jane Piliavin. 2004. "Values: Reviving a Dormant Concept." *Annual Review of Sociology* 30:359-393.

Katz, Jack. 1988. *Seductions of Crime.* New York: Basic.

Kaufman, Jason. 2004. "Endogenous Explanations in the Sociology of Culture." *Annual Review of Sociology* 30:335-57.

Lamont, Michèle, ed. 1999. *The Cultural Territories of Race.* Chicago: University of Chicago.

Light, Ivan. 2005. "The Ethnic Economy" in *The Handbook of Economic Sociology.* N. Smelser and R. Swedberg, eds. Princeton University Press and Russell Sage Foundation.

MacLeod, Jay. 1987. *Ain't No Makin' It.* Boulder, CO: Westview.

Markus, Hazel Rose, Claude M. Steele and Dorothy M. Steele. 2002. "Color Blindness as a Barrier to Inclusion" in *Engaging Cultural Differences*, R. Shweder, M. Minow and H. R. Markus, eds. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Patterson, Orlando. 2000. "Taking Culture Seriously: A Framework and an Afro-American Illustration." *Culture Matters: How Values Shape Human Progress.* L. Harrison and S. Huntington, eds. New York: Basic.

Sahlins, Marshall. 1999. "Two or Three Things I Know About Culture." *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 5(3) (Sept. 1999), pp. 399-421.

Skrentny, John. 2007. "The Role of Culture in the Study of Race and Ethnicity." Paper presented at Third annual UCSD Culture Conference.

Small, Mario Luis. 2004. *Villa Victoria.* University of Chicago Press.

Small, Mario Luis and Katherine Newman. 2001. "Urban Poverty After the Truly Disadvantaged: The rediscovery of the family, the neighborhood, and culture." *Annual Review of Sociology* 27:23-45.

Smilde, David. 2007. *Reason to Believe: Cultural Agency in Latin American Evangelicalism.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Smith, Christian. 2003. .*Moral, Believing Animals: Human personhood and culture.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Smith, Philip. 2005. *Why War?* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Swedberg, Richard. 2003. *Principles of Economic Sociology.* Princeton University Press.

Turner, Stephen P. and Jonathan H. Turner. 1990. *The Impossible Science.* Newbury Park: Sage.

Wilson, W. J. 2006. "Social Theory and the Concept 'Underclass'" in D. Grusky and R. Kanbur (eds.), *Poverty and Inequality.* Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Zelizer, Viviana. 2005. "Culture and Consumption" in *The Handbook of Economic Sociology.* N. Smelser and R. Swedberg, eds. Princeton University Press and Russell Sage Foundation.

Zhou, Min. 2005. "Ethnicity as Social Capital: Community-based institutions and embedded networks of social rela-

tions." in *Ethnicity, Social Mobility and Public Policy*, G. Loury, T. Modood and S. Teles, eds. Cambridge University Press.

Zukin, Sharon and Jennifer Smith Maguire. 2005. "Consumers and Consumption." *Annual Review of Sociology* 30:173-97.

Visualizing the Hipster, continued

Hunter is notoriously famous for the images on his signature photoblog Cobrasnake. Hunter challenges middle-class parental sensibilities reinforced through the everyday social routines that encourage gated-community kids to embrace the cultural experiences offered by institutions like Boston's Museum of Fine Arts and to deny themselves the visceral pleasures of theme park amusement. These visual landscapes display an assortment of images, not only of the young middle-class, but the young white middle-class getting "down and dirty" (http://www.thetrashbar.com). Here, I use two resources for interpreting these images, William Bielby's 2003 Presidential Address, "Rock in a Hard Place: Grassroots Cultural Production in the Post Elvis Era" and his Webshots.com photoblog entitled, "Thin Vitae Live at the Trash Bar." Both texts document the development of the Midwest grassroots rock and roll music scene and the deviant Midwest youth subcultural performance environment re-imagined and reproduced in the visual online hipster scenes of popular photoblogs.

The first time I saw Bill Bielby play the guitar I was at a reception for graduate students and faculty. He sat confidently on an amplifier holding in front of him a guitar and appeared unnerved by the sights and sounds of faculty and graduate students gathered for the kind of social interaction intended to release them from the burdens of everyday academic professionalism. Bielby displayed a quiet confidence in a pose reminiscent of the one struck by the legendary bluesman Robert Johnson--right leg crossed over the left, fingers poised in the F cord position, guitar cradled close to his chest. His self-assurance was noticeable even in the dimly lit courtyard that held the hopes, ambitions and anxieties of graduate students struggling to complete that comprehensive exam, to defend that dissertation proposal, to reorganize that methodology chapter, to understand why that offer to interview for that dream job at that dream school never came. My initial interpretation of the reception and the sound of the blues I heard here was that both seemed so very far removed from the plantation experience out of which the Midwest urban blues emerges.

I was in the initial stages of my research on the African American cooperative farm movement and the reorganization of the general merchandising retail trade in the plantation counties of the Alabama Black belt when I witnessed for the first time Bielby perform with the band Thin Vitae (Johnson 1934 p. 8). From the beginning of June to the middle of August 2003, I lived and worked as a landscaper's assistant near Rogers plantation, one of several plantations located in southwest Alabama. The highlight of my summer field experience was the Rogers plantation July 4th celebration, an event that brought Chicago transplants back to the plantation, a place that those returning called 'Home.' Black men and women made the annual pil-

grimage from the south and west sides of Chicago back to the plantation on which they spent their childhood and adolescence. I attended the celebration hoping to hear some authentic African American blues. But the families gathered there opened the formal welcoming ceremony with "God Bless America," which was followed by a host of songs with words like "trouble over yonder," "carry me over yonder," "there over yonder," "goin' over yonder," and "take me over yonder." The last of the "yonder songs" elicited a shout from a woman who was comforted by those standing nearest to her. Immediately after a 15-minute prayer session, ending with a jubilant "Aman!," arose chatter pierced with bouts of hearty laughter and the music of Willie Dixon, Muddy Waters, Rufus Thomas, and Bobby Blue Bland, Chicago-based recording artists signed to the Chess record label. Both the chatter and music continued into the late hours of the night transforming an afternoon picnic into an adult-oriented nightspot.

I drove from the Alabama plantation to the new south metropolis, Atlanta, Georgia, for the American Sociological Association Meetings where Bielby delivered his 2003 ASA Presidential Address entitled "Rock in a Hard Place: Grassroots Cultural Production in the Post-Elvis Era" (2004). In his address, Bielby asserted that even though their social interactions with African American peers was quite limited, white working-class teenagers participating in the 1950s and early 60s grassroots rock and roll music scene found meaning in the music played on Black radio. This music included the urbanized plantation blues of Willie Dixon, Muddy Waters, Rufus Thomas, and Bobby Blue Bland, the same music that homeward bound African Americans once listened to on Chicago radio stations and could hear again at the July 4th homecoming celebration. According to Bielby "[m]any of the teenagers—especially the musicians—"had their musical tastes shaped in part by the rhythm & blues and the urban blues music" heard on Chicago's Black radio (p. 2). He goes on to argue that the post-Elvis rock and roll music scene, a "deviant subcultural performance environment," provided white working-class adolescent boys an alternative status culture in which to display their social competencies. To put this argument bluntly, a white working–class boy with little interest in getting down and dirty and all-sweaty and soakin' wet from huffing and puffing on a football or baseball field, on the basketball court, or in the boxing ring could still perform hegemonic masculinity by huffing and puffing on a bandstand. That is, through the rock and roll performance scene, rather than the sports performance scene, white working-class teenage boys lacking either the interest or physical strength needed to participate in organized competitive sports could still reap the rewards of a white supremacist patriarchal society by appropriating black cultural

expressivity and reinterpreting it in a rock and roll teenage performance scene.

Thin Vitae performed live at the 2003 ASA held in Atlanta, Georgia, the host of the Cotton States and International Exposition. This 1895 exposition, organized by northern capitalists to showcase the city's progress since the civil war and to stimulate trade between the United States and South America, featured Booker T. Washington who delivered his infamous Atlanta Compromise Speech. The single most important factor in the redevelopment of the new south economy, argued Washington, was the cheap labor of disenfranchised southern Blacks. Washington goes on to admonish the capitalists in attendance who were beginning to reinforce a racial preference for the European immigrant over and above the newly freed slave: "Cast down your bucket among these people who have, without strikes and labour wars, tilled your fields, cleared your forests, builded your railroads and cities, and brought forth treasures from the bowels of the earth, and helped make possible this magnificent representation of the progress of the South." In response to critics of his 1895 Atlanta exposition speech who asked him what kinds of leisure activities he participated in during his youth, Washington replied, "no period of my life . . . was devoted to play" and laments that he might have been "a more useful man" (p. 3) had he participated in the Black bohemian cultural movement of the Harlem Renaissance.

Bielby's Presidential Address forced me to interrogate my memory of the 1998 graduate student/faculty reception and to reinterpret the guitar, the pose, the courtyard full of hopes, ambitions, and anxieties, the music, one blues standard after another, as social facts whose existence was neither random nor disconnected from the plantation, the birthplace of urban blues. White teenagers and young adults living in neo-bohemian neighborhoods of Chicago's north and west side (Schipper 2002; Lloyd 2006) and across the United States appropriate the deviant subculture constitutive of the post-Elvis era rock and roll performance scene, a cultural resource that non-athletic working-class white boys used in the competitive status culture of the suburban high school. In their reinterpretation of the white working-class grassroots cultural production of rock and roll, contemporary hipsters have the opportunity to recreate a connection between the blues and the plantation, which are themselves being reinterpreted and re-imagined by African Americans returning to the southern rural black belt (Stack 1999; Falk 2004). Rock and roll grassroots cultural productions and reproductions take place in real time and places and are popularized through the consumption of photoblogs like Myspace.com, YouTube.com, everyoneisfamous.com, cobrasnake.com and lastnightsparty.com.

Images documenting the development of Thin Vitae are on Webshots.com. These images offer a narrative account of working-class white boys and girls coming of age in the Midwest and during an era in which the practices of redlining served to keep protect white suburban youth from the cultural influences of their African American peers. They also show some of the same kids as college hippies lounging on the campus lawns of the quintessential Midwest University and as Midwest University graduate students protesting both internal and external colonialism, racism within the United States and the nation's war against Vietnam. The most recent addition to this digital archive shows the members of Thin Vitae performing live at The Trash Bar, a Brooklyn hipster scene (http://entertainment.webshots.com/album/559676410QZxCeB). The announcement in the Village Voice, also posted on the blog, shows Thin Vitae appearing with the bands Loaded Revulvas, a punk rock band from Athens, Ohio, Johnny and the Makebelieves, Double Gold, Dragline Brothers, and Baby Jones and the Biological Clocks. Moreover, Thin Vitae's Trash Bar performance is available for viewing on YouTube (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=55TZUjaaQJM).

The Trash Bar, the club in which Thin Vitae made its New York debut, displays images of the on-going reinterpretation of the 1950s and early 60s "deviant youth subcultural performance" Bielby describes in his 2003 Presidential Address. Images of the bar's exterior offer a limited understanding of the neighborhood whose residents are working-class African American and first- and second generation Caribbean. The patrons of this subcultural performance environment are predominantly young, white, middle-class, and college educated and the hostility between patrons and neighborhood residents is just below surface. An African American woman in her mid-thirties who lived in an apartment building two blocks from The Trash Bar approached me and a member of Thin Vitae standing outside the venue. She was in the bar earlier in the evening, but was not present during the band's performance. What started as a friendly chat between a neighborhood resident and two visitors to the neighborhood quickly turned into a chat between a neighborhood resident and two intruders, one white, one black. "Is this a joke, the National Sociological Association After-Party," the woman asked? Irritated she stated, "Why do you and all these hipsters come here?" I assumed from her comment that neither the member of Thin Vitae nor I could pass as hipsters. "Why don't you have your party in Manhattan?" "Well," I said hesitantly, "It would be too expensive," I said. "Besides, would you have come to the after-party if it were held in Manhattan?" "Hell No!" she responded. I didn't ask her why she wouldn't go to Manhattan for the "After the ASA Meeting After-Party," but wish that I had. "Neither would we!" I said and went back into the bar.

References

Bielby, William T. 2004. "Rock in a Hard Place: Grassroots Cultural Production in the Post-Elvis Era." *American Sociological Review.* Vol. 69 (February): 1-13.

Falk, William. 2004. *Rooted in Place: Family and Belonging in a Southern Black Community*. Rutgers University Press.

Lloyd. Richard. 2006. *Neo-Bohemia: Art and Commerce in the Post-Industrial City.* New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

Johnson, Charles S. 1934. *Shadow of the Plantation*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Schipper, Mimi. 2002. *Rockin' Out of the Box: Gender Maneuvering in Alternative Hard Rock*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

Stack, Carol. *A Call to Home: African Americans Reclaim the Rural South.* New York: Basic Books.

Washington, Booker T. 1965. *Up from Slavery*. New York: Dodd, Mead and Company.

Culture Section Mini-Conference: "Models in Cultural Sociology"
Bart Bonikowski (Princeton University) and Lisa McCormick (University of Lethbridge)

Social scientists do not study social reality. They study representations of its particular elements captured by their analytical models. This process inevitably involves crucial choices about which of those elements should be selected, how their various features should be represented, and what kinds of relationships between them should be analyzed. These choices are far from neutral – from technical decisions about which statistical model to employ or what site to choose for an interview to the selection of a theoretical model for making sense of the data, the process is guided by crucial epistemological (and often ontological) assumptions. These assumptions are embedded in interpersonal and organizational networks characterized by institutionalized modes of thinking and doing, which constitute communities of knowledge, or what Karin Knorr Cetina calls epistemic cultures. None of this is news to members of our section, for it is precisely on the taken-for-granted nature of cultural practice that our analytical lenses are usually trained. However, as is the case in most epistemic cultures, we seldom turn those lenses on our own practices. It is precisely that which Chandra Mukerji invited us to do during the section's mini-conference held at NYU on August 15, 2007.

The breadth of the meeting's theme, "Models in Cultural Sociology," was reflected in the diverse topics chosen by the speakers, which included analytical approaches (e.g. formal, narrative), theoretical perspectives (e.g. institutional, semiotic), epistemological assumptions (e.g. role of interest in social science), vernacular practices (e.g. found models, metaphors), models of social scientific research (e.g. career trajectories, identifying research topics), and substantive programmatic statements. These varied interpretations of "models" shared a common (though varied in degree) reflexivity toward cultural analysis. Some speakers discussed the difficulties inherent in describing and explaining cultural processes, and in some cases pointed the way toward improvements, while others emphasized the unacknowledged assumptions built into our modeling practices. The papers and the questions that followed demonstrated that the epistemological community of cultural sociology is itself composed of diverse views of what should be studied and how. Nonetheless, these distinctions did not stand in the way of constructive intellectual exchange.

The conference was divided into two parts. The morning featured two plenary panels and the afternoon consisted of two groups of four thematic break-out sessions. In the first plenary, Paul DiMaggio (Princeton University), John Mohr (UC-Santa Barbara), Elizabeth Long (Rice University), and Lyn Spillman (University of Notre Dame) discussed the latest developments and remaining challenges in the conceptual modeling of culture. DiMaggio pointed to two analytical choices facing institutional researchers: first, whether to study institutions as cognitive representations of the social world (i.e., schemata) or features of the physical or social environment and second, whether to study them synchronically or diachronically.

These choices must be made in light of a number of problems inherent in institutional processes, including variability in the degree of institutionalization, population heterogeneity, and the multiplicity of ways in which the same individual may organize a given cognitive domain. Constructing dynamic models that acknowledge the interaction between individual and environmental levels of analysis can address some of these problems. Topics that lend themselves to this approach include institutional logics, frame switching, classification struggles, and boundary-crossing transpositions. However, more complex models cannot automatically solve a more fundamental challenge facing institutional analysis, namely the risk of projecting the researcher's own logic onto the institutions studied.

Mohr provided an overview of the history of formal modeling in culture, from the phenomenological break of the 1960s, through the production-of-culture framework of the 1970s, to the culture-as-resource paradigm of the 1980s. This trajectory has resulted in a plethora of formal approaches to culture which vary along a number of dimensions. The first source of variation is methodological and includes linear, network, and combinatorial approaches. The second dimension corresponds to the intensity with which culture is measured, from unmeasured or measured indirectly to more complex operationalizations. Third, modeling of culture varies across levels of analysis (from micro to macro) and domains (from purely mental to purely material). Finally, culture can be assigned different roles in formal models. It can be treated as an outcome of structural organization (e.g. production-of-culture tradition), a determinant of social organization (e.g. cultural capital), or as an element in the mutually constitutive duality of social and cultural organization. Mohr concluded by reflecting on the tradeoffs involved in formal modeling.

Long made a case for greater scholarly attention to stories as the "carriers of theory." The Chicago School had relied on stories but their use waned with the rise of positivism and the popularization of quantitative methods. Long provided examples of how the use of vignettes and parables in scholarly writing can help bridge the gap between the particular and the general, serving as "cognitive interventions" through which the familiar can become strange. Furthermore, since stories are often the most poignant elements in an analytical account, they tend to leave a lasting impression on the reader.

Spillman called for more reflexivity in our treatment of interest. In contrast to rational choice theory, neo-classical economics, and much stratification research, cultural analysis typically entails the implicit assumption that interest (as opposed to identity) is inconsequential for social action. While this assumption has served cultural sociology well by opening up new areas of inquiry, it has partly distorted its models and limited its dialogue with other subfields and disciplines. Spillman challenged cultural sociologists to examine how the "anti-in-

terest position" shapes their data and analytical models and to begin developing a theory of interest. To that end, she suggested that we follow Durkheim in paying closer attention to the collective contexts, such as social relations and communities, in which interests are generated.

In the second plenary session, Robin Wagner-Pacifici (Swarthmore College), Fred Turner (Stanford University), Eviatar Zerubavel (Rutgers) and Richard Peterson (Vanderbilt University) tackled the topic of "found" models and the models we use to study them. The instructive *objet trouvé* for Wagner-Pacifici was the image. After Ricoeur, she posed the artistic image and iconology as models for social scientific investigations. While cultural analysts are traditionally preoccupied with action, pictures offer a rare opportunity to investigate inaction and its transformational power. Images, regardless of their genre, afford this opportunity through their unusual capacity to hold society still, capturing and articulating complex conceptual schemes of social structure. Also unique to images is their power to appear to exist outside time and independently of the observer. Wagner-Pacifici concluded with a stern warning: disdain or fear of images is simply not an option, especially in the post-Abu Ghraib era.

Turner related what he learned about models from researching the *Whole Earth Catalog* (a rare book whose cult status was audibly confirmed by the audience when Turner held up his dog-eared copy). Designed as a resource to help hippies return "back to the land," the pages of the catalog contained many surprises that shook Turner's long-held assumptions about the countercultural movement of the 1960s. In terms of its content, the catalog featured objects and literature that linked back to the military-industrial culture its readers were supposedly escaping. For example, the newest calculators manufactured by Hewlett-Packard, birch bark cribs held together with high-tech plastic components, and the collected works of Norbert Wiener (founder of cybernetics) were among the more surprising tools on offer for the transformation of consciousness. In terms of its form, the catalog was not designed to directly provide these resources for its readers, but to put them in touch with someone who could, in exchange for the readers' contribution of reviewed items to the catalog. This "peer production" format thereby revealed the social relations and social processes within the subculture. Turner identified two lessons he learned from the *Whole Earth Catalog*. The first is that texts are not just systems of representation, but systems of coordination. The second is that subcultures are never unified wholes. These lessons allowed Turner to recognize that the subsequent activities of the catalog's contributors in the halls of Congress, the Pentagon, and publications like *Wired* magazine were not a contradiction, but the logical extension of their pre-existing, if latent, fascination with technology and power.

Zerubavel spoke about metaphors, images, and analogies as models in social thought. He pointed out that the most powerful foundational concepts in sociological theory commonly use evocative, metaphorical terms (e.g. social mobility, the looking-glass self.) But metaphorical language is hardly the exclusive reserve of theory. We often employ images and metaphors to understand and describe statistical methods and research, such as "distance" between observations not separated in physical space. Zerubavel also discussed images and metaphors in his own work, both as objects and represen-

tations of analysis. Most recently, he has become interested in ancestry and the mental maps used to describe relations between people. Through his discussion of the two most common metaphors used to describe descent (the chain and the tree), Zerubavel effectively demonstrated the power of metaphor to help us relate across disciplines as different – dare we say distant? – as biology, philology, genealogy, and sociology.

Peterson began his talk by recalling the frustration he experienced when an Italian colleague asked him to articulate his research strategy. Upon reflection, however, he could easily identify two models which have informed his work. In the first, he begins with a wealth of provocative data and seeks a theory that can adequately explain it. The famed production-of-culture perspective was the result of such a research process. When Peterson first began this project, the reigning view of popular culture was that of Adorno (as interpreted by Merton and Lazersfeld), who denounced the popular music industry for "narcotizing an innocent mass." Finding this a peculiar image, Peterson set out to find the center of the conspiracy, only to discover there was none. Intrigued, he collected mounds of information about the web of smaller institutions that composed the industry, which eventually unfolded into the production-of-culture perspective. The second research model describes the same process in reverse. In his work on Billboard magazine charts, for example, Peterson began with the theory, and set out to find the data that could illustrate and refine it.

The latter half of the conference was organized into two blocks of four concurrent sessions. Although the diversity of fascinating topics and speakers made the choice quite difficult, we decided to attend "Democracy and politics" and "Toolkits/epistemic cultures." In the former, Michael Schudson (UC-San Diego) advocated increased scholarly attention to the surprisingly understudied topic of representative democratic institutions, which constitute the American political system (rather than the participatory model typically studied by sociologists). Nina Eliasoph (University of Southern California) outlined her own research model, which consists of identifying those elements at a research site that contradict her initial expectations, looking for tensions between moral narratives and the reality of organizational action, analyzing how these tensions are disguised by institutionalized group styles, and generalizing the case to broader social processes.

The second thematic session featured Ann Swidler (UC-Berkeley), Karin Knorr Cetina (University of Constance), and Michele Lamont (Harvard University). Swidler expressed frustration with the repertoire approach to cultural sociology and argued for the need to study broad social institutions (and not just formal organizations), which entail representations, taken-for-granted norms, and sanctions that reproduce social structure. One way to gain analytic purchase on this topic is to study the discrepancies between culturally constructed institutional models and their actual instantiations. Knorr Cetina discussed the self-articulation and cultural differentiation of financial markets, which are composed of constantly moving elements structured into flows, and emphasized the crucial role played by time in shaping transnational financial communities. Lamont reflected on her research strategy of continually moving back and forth between theory and data in order to provide explanations by way of analytic description. She provided illustrations from her past research as well as her new

project on the definitions of excellence in academic funding panels.

As we have hopefully conveyed in this summary, the meeting's theme prompted stimulating presentations on a wide variety of topics. From found and analytical models to research strategies and career trajectories, the speakers addressed pressing issues in cultural sociology and offered valuable lessons for sociological practice in general. Furthermore, this first of two mini-conferences celebrating the 20th anniversary of the Culture Section was a testament to the section's continued successes. Despite the event's timing (it was held one day after the ASA meetings), the venue was full and, judging by the lively question periods and intermissions, the audience was enthusiastic and engaged. We only wish that time had permitted a more sustained debate of the issues raised (and left out) in the papers. Among the topics deeply relevant to the conference theme which received limited attention were the potential dangers of analytical reification and self-referentiality, as well as the more general problem of unacknowledged assumptions inherent in existing models. We look forward to wrestling with these issues at the next symposium scheduled for July 2008 in Boston.

2007 Culture Section Award Statements

Best Book Award: Laura Miller

The committee received 39 nominated books this year, demonstrating the full range of interests in sociology of culture. The award went to Laura J. Miller, for *Reluctant Capitalists: Bookselling and the Culture of Consumption* (2006), U. Chicago Press.

Laura Miller's careful study of both the history and contemporary practices of bookselling – and book-buying – situates itself amidst a number of core questions in the sociology of culture.

Miller centrally addresses the on-going tension between culture as a commodity and culture as sacralized expression. Books, as both commodity products in the capitalist marketplace and noble, even sacred objects symbolic of our highest order meaning-making, are the perfect instantiation of this larger battle. Drawing on a broad literature in the sociology of culture, Miller problematizes this opposition by reconsidering the ideological underpinnings to cultural valorization and evaluative processes that construct hierarchies of worth to begin with. She then considers how such battles nonetheless play out within the cultural contexts of our time.

Miller uses a careful and detailed analysis of the history of independent booksellers – and the formation of their identity as the independent bookseller's movement – as the vehicle to confront and consider questions of cultural value, meaning-making, and the logics of consumption and capitalism. All of us are aware of the ideological battles between the superstore chain booksellers (including Amazon) and the often declining independent bookstores – and many of us, I would guess, somewhat guiltily patronize a variety of stores, valuing independent booksellers and their image of books, but also taking advantage of the ease, convenience, and low prices of Barnes & Noble, Borders, and Amazon. Miller provides a fascinating analysis of the sources, history, and consequences of this as-yet unfinished battle.

Early booksellers happily considered themselves gentlemen-scholars, as Coser, Kadushin, and Powell so aptly described in the last comprehensive sociological analysis of the publishing industry (*Books: The Culture and Commerce of Publishing,* 1985). Despite their role as members of an authoritative cultural elite, however, booksellers were also always businessmen earning money from selling books to a public for whom they had a mixed regard. One of Miller's many nice points is how this mixed regard continues today as independent booksellers struggle to position themselves as populists who take readers seriously while simultaneously disparaging the tastes of most of the public, especially the non-reading majority.

Even early booksellers struggled with the problem of profit-hungry larger organizations taking aim at books – department stores entered the book market at the rise of the 20th century – but the massive transformations of the bookselling sector occurred 50 years ago with the advent of national chains, and then definitively in the 1990s with the rise of superstores and, most recently, on-line bookselling. Miller uses both historical data and interviews with key members of the book industry to understand and situate these changes. She uses interviews with bookstore customers to understand how it is that the book-buying public is, and is not, vested in these struggles. Her final chapter "Pursuing the Citizen-Consumer: Consumption as Politics" addresses both sociological questions at the forefront of consumption studies and, for many of us, questions about our own role as members of what Wendy Griswold calls "the reading class."

The committee particularly noted the writing of *Reluctant Capitalists*, its relevance to several of the biggest questions and subfields in sociology of culture, and the meticulous research and data collection on which Miller's work is based. We are extremely pleased to present the award for the Culture Section's Best Book to Laura Miller.

Committee Members: Sarah Corse (Chair), Doug Hartmann, Tia DeNora.

Best Article Awards: Joachim Savelsberg and Ryan King; Brian Steensland

The Best Article Award Committee had 11 strong contenders for this year's prize. We have two co-winning articles. Presented in alphabetical order, they are Joachim Savelsberg and Ryan King of the University of Minnesota and SUNY Albany, respectively, and Brian Steensland of Indiana University.

Savelsberg and King's article, "Institutionalizing Collective Memories of Hate…" that appeared in *AJS* in 2005, eloquently and elegantly examines the enactment and bureaucracy of hate crime laws comparatively in the US and Germany. In the US, memories of hate and cultural traumas are dehistoricized, and such laws and institutionalized protections emerge in patterns that apply to entire social categories of the population. Germany's approach, in contrast, devises protections for specific groups and ties institutionalization to historically specific failures of the state. So while both nations seek the protections of democracy for their citizens, their differences in approach are consequential to the enforcement of legal protections. Within the US, such protections attend to the domestic level writ large, while in Germany, in contrast, protections attend to oversight of specific groups.

Steensland's article, "Cultural Categories and the Welfare State…" appeared in *AJS* in 2006. Steensland spotlights how analysis of cultural boundaries advances understanding of American social policy by profiling the rise and fall of guaranteed annual income policies of the 1960s and 1970s. By identifying the relevance of cultural categories of "social worthiness," Brian reveals how social class infiltrates, institutionalizes, and reinforces symbolic and programmatic boundaries between categories of the poor.

Committe Members: Denise Bielby (Chair), Bennetta Jules-Rosette, and Ron Lembo

Best Graduate Paper Award: Hiro Saito

It was both fun and inspiring to read the scholarship of young sociologists coming up in the profession. We had a large pool of papers this year but we pared it down to short list of eight and then to our final three award-winners.

One honorable mention goes to Sarah Quinn, of UC Berkeley for her paper titled "From Revulsion to Consolation: Moral Ambiguity and the Viaticals Industry." It's a paper about the secondary market for life insurance, in which investors buy strangers' life insurance policies for cash. In the past decade or so, this practice, once infrequent and sporadic, has been rationalized and institutionalized, spurred in part by the AIDS epidemic of the 1980s. Ms. Quinn traces the moral logics underlying this transformation, charting narratives that, on the one hand, cast the viaticals industry as morally repellant and corrupt, and, on the other, as enabling dignity (and financial solvency) in death. Drawing on newspaper articles, regulatory and industry documents, and interviews with key market participants, Ms Quinn constructs the secondary life insurance market as a field wherein actors strategically leverage cultural resources to achieve their goals – in this case, within a context characterized by rising health-care costs, increases in dual-income families, and the growth of an ill population that was insured but often without beneficiaries. In doing so, she mobilizes and extends in innovative ways the literature that connects economic with cultural sociology, with implications for how we understand interplay between death, bereavement, and the market.

The other honorable mention goes to Rachel Rinaldo, of the University of Chicago, for her paper titled "High Heels and Headscarves: Women's Clothing and Islamic Piety in Indonesia." This is an ethnographic study of women's groups in Jakarta during the rocky post-Suharto transition to democratic rule, in which the growth of the middle-class and a revival of Islam stimulated the growth of Muslim activist groups, NGOs, and political parties – developments that, in turn, have generated broad public debate about women's role in the public sphere, as well as morality and religiosity. Ms Rinaldo focuses on women's clothing – the veil in particular – as a lens through which to understand the shifting social relation between gender, piety, and politics. She uses Goffman's notion of performance to chart a middle path between "embodiment" explanations of veiling (in which women cultivate pious selves through dress and conduct) and an identity politics perspective (in which pre-existing identities direct particular modes of enacting piety). Arguing for a theory of subjectivity that is dynamic and heterogenous, she sets embodiment and identity explanations of veiling in conversation with one another; what they say is that one can't know a priori the meaning of cultural practices as they relate to performances of the self in the political realm. This is a particularly important insight given the shifting meaning of the veil over time in Indonesia and the conception that many Indonesian's (and others) still have of veiling as foreign and fanatical. Rinaldo shows how the veil, although still linked to certain conceptions of female modesty, also symbolizes, in various ways and in differing degrees, connection to a global Muslim community, one's support for democratic reform, and a rejection of the traditional housewife role so idealized by the former regime. It's a wonderfully rich cultural ethnography that addresses a timely and important topic.

The winner of this year's graduate student paper award goes to Hiro Saito from the University of Michigan for his paper "Reiterated Commemoration: Hiroshima as National Trauma." You can find it in the December issue of *Sociological Theory*. The committee's decision on this paper was swift, unanimous, and confident. Employing four kinds of data – memoirs, archival documents, political proceedings, and newspaper coverage, Mr. Saito traces the historical shifts in Japanese collective memory of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima. He demonstrates that from 1945 to 1954, the commemoration of Hiroshima remained fragmented and largely decoupled from politics. This period was characterized by what he calls "structures of commemoration"

in which actors struggled to articulate solutions to the recurring problem of remembering Hiroshima largely in isolation from one another, largely outside of a discourse of national identity, and focusing more on the recovery of Hiroshima than US culpability. After 1954, at the end of the occupation of Japan and after a Japanese fishing boat was exposed to nuclear fallout in the Bikini islands, the atom bomb survivor took on totemic status and there was a critical shift in the structure of feeling; sympathy and solidarity replaced pity with regard to victims and the bombings came to be understood within a framework of civic cultural trauma. Once fragmented, commemoration of Hiroshima became muti-vocal and unified, organized under a nationalist framework that also encompassed transnational anti-nuclear activity. As Mr. Saito argues, the success of this transformation was due not simply to changes in the political culture, links between past and present debates, or the rise of specific powerful actors. Rather, it depended on whether groups forged networks of interactions, created feedback loops, and allowed for the existence of multiple voices within an overarching frame. The paper combines theoretical acumen with careful historical/discursive analysis. It is also beautifully crafted and argued. Congratulations Hiro.

Committee Members: Laura Grindstaff (Chair), Grant Blank, David Halle

Announcements and Reminders

2008 Section Prize Committees

Mary Douglas Prize for Best Book

Section members, authors, or publishers may nominate books published in 2006-2008. Self-nominations are welcome. Send a copy of the book and a nominating letter, including a description of the book and its significance, to each of the committee members: Robin Wagner-Pacifici (Chair), Department of Sociology, Swarthmore College, 500 College Avenue, Swarthmore PA 19081, rwagner1@swarthmore.edu; Eva Illouz, Center for the Study of Rationality, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Givat Ram Campus, Jerusalem, 91904, Israel, illouz@mscc.huji.ac.il (Send books by registered or express mail); and Gianpaolo Baiocchi, Department of Sociology, Brown University, Box 1916, 112 George Street, Providence, RI 02912, Gianpaolo_Baiocchi@Brown.edu. The deadline for nominations and receipt of books is February 1, 2008.

Clifford Geertz Prize for Best Article

Section members may nominate articles published in 2006-2008. Self nominations are welcome. Send an electronic copy to each member of the prize committee: Wendy Griswold (Chair), Department of Sociology, Northwestern University, 1810 Chicago Avenue Evanston IL 60208-1330, w-griswold@northwestern.edu.; Paul Lichterman, Department of Sociology, University of Southern California, lichterm@usc.edu; and Jeremy Straughn, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Purdue University, jstraugh@exchange.purdue.edu. The deadline for nominations and receipt of articles is February 1, 2008.

Suzanne Langer Prize for Best Student Paper

Section members may nominate any work (published or unpublished, but not previously submitted for this prize) by someone who is a student at the time of submission. Self-nominations are welcome. This award includes a $300 prize to reimburse part of the cost of attending the 2008 ASA Annual Meeting. Send an electronic copy to each of the committee members: David Smilde (Chair), Department of Sociology, University of Georgia, dsmilde@arches.uga.edu; Paul Lopes, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Colgate University, plopes@mail.colgate.edu; and Susan Pearce, Division of Sociology and Anthropology, West Virginia University, susan.pearce@mail.wvu.edu. The deadline for nominations and receipt of works is February 1, 2008.

Research Network News

The Culture Section is large and our interests range widely. Research networks provide settings for scholars to discuss their work on particular topics and issues within that broader range, thanks to the care and coordination of Karen Cerulo. Now is the time to join existing networks, revitalize networks which are currently dormant, or form new ones.

Our currently active research networks include those on symbolic boundaries, culture and cognition, and space and place. Other topics have included culture and ethnicity, culture and theory, culture and gender, culture and history, meaning and measurement, and many more. Networks have conducted lively online symposia and email discussion, and network coordinators may organize discussions during culture section roundtables at the ASA meetings. Many other activities are possible, depending on coordinators' aims and imagination. Check out the research networks at the section website, www.ibiblio.org/culture, and while you're there go to the Spring 1995 and Spring 2003 newsletters for earlier reports on network activities.

To join active networks, contact the coordinator involved. If you'd like to start a new group, contact Karen at cerulo@rci.rutgers.edu This is a great chance to highlight neglected and emerging empirical topics and theoretical problems of interest to section members, and I hope that newer and early-career members will take this opportunity to contribute to the section.

---Lyn Spillman

Culture Section Open Sessions, ASA 08

Since "culture" has arguably become the central commonplace of sociology (and indeed of the social sciences and humanities more broadly), the sessions of the Culture Section at ASA 08 are designed to apply a "liberal arts" approach to its study. Each of the four open-submission sections is patterned after one of the classical liberal arts.

1. Recovering Venerable Traditions in the Study of Culture (organizer: **Andrew J Perrin,** andrew_perrin@unc.edu)
How can near-forgotten scholarly traditions be rediscovered or re-examined as contributions to the study of culture? What new relevance can be found in a Mannheim or a Rieff, a Mills or a Marcuse-or countless others?

2. New Lines of Inquiry into Culture (organizer: **Christena Nippert-Eng**, nippert@iit.edu)
Scholarly inventions transform the very traditions that guide them, both in their principles and methods of discovering problems and adducing evidence and warrant, and in their more fundamental perspectives. How is your new research extending and transforming old lines of inquiry?

3. Issues of Evidence and Warrant in Analyzing Culture (organizer: **Marion Fourcade,** fourcade@berkeley.edu)
The influence of an argument depends not only on the quality of its evidence, but also—what often remains only tacit—on the quality of the warrant which makes that evidence relevant to a set of claims and reasons. What principles of evidence and warrant are most salient—and most in need of articulation—in your analysis of culture?

4.Bringing into Dialogue Divergent Perspectives about Culture (organizer: **Susan Silbey**, ssilbey@mit.edu)
The deepest transformation of a discipline's methods and principles comes from forcing divergent perspectives into a single dialogic frame. What work of yours is dramatically expanding the principles and methods of studying culture, by bringing divergent perspectives into dialogue?

These sessions represent, respectively, the classical arts of grammar, rhetoric, logic, and dialectic (or recovery, invention, presentation, and systematics, in more contemporary terms). Individually and collectively, they aim to encourage a reflexive expansion of the sociology of culture, based on a rethinking of its principles and methods. They will complement an **invited** session on **Global Differences in Conceptualizing Culture**, co-organized with the Theory Section by Paul Lichterman.

Session **6, Roundtables**, will be organized by **Diane M. Grams,** dgrams@tulane.edu.

Remember, as well, the **Regular Sessions on the Sociology of Culture**, organized by **Anne Kane,** kanea@uhd.edu.

Submit papers online--   http://asanet.org.

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION: 3PM (EST) JANUARY 16, 2008.

New or renewed section memberships: http://asanet.org/

Culture Section webpage: http://ibiblio.org/culture/