Group Asks ASA To Focus on Theoretical Integration

By Bernard Phillips

This brief follows up on the piece I wrote for the October 1999 issue, “Confronting Our Tower of Babel.” There I told of “a project aimed at demonstrating the feasibility” of an approach to research involving secondary analysis of published materials and using very abstract theoretical concepts, all with the aim of building bridges connecting our forty sections and yielding both rapid cumulative development of the discipline and increasing credibility. I can now report on where that project—admittedly a very ambitious one—stands and where we hope to go with it.

The project is being carried forward by an eighteen-member informal group of sociologists interested in pursuing Mills’ idea of the sociological imagination. We are working toward demonstrating this possibility in a research conference—open to all—during the evenings of the Washington ASA meetings (August 12, 2000).

See INTEGRATION on Page 4

Knotterinus and Van Delinder Will Edit Perspectives

The Publications Committee of the ASA Theory Section has selected David Knotterinus and Jean Van Delinder, both of Oklahoma State University, as incoming editors of the section newsletter. David Knotterinus, professor of sociology, has research interests in social theory, social psychology, social structure, inequality, collective behavior, and social movements. Jean Van Delinder, assistant professor of sociology, has research interests in classical social theory and social movements, particularly the early civil rights movement.

The incoming editors have begun planning for their three-year tenure, and welcome information related to pedagogy, books, articles, special articles, and conferences concerned with social theory. They also are soliciting suggestions for possible contributions to the newsletter, which members of the section might want to address. Topics under consideration include the contribution of American thought to social theory such as the influence of pragmatism on European thought; theory integration focusing on, for example, social structure, culture and history; formal theory development and cumulative theory; the role of feminist theory in the canon; and emerging issues that have significance for the development of social theory, for example, emotions. They invite suggestions from members of the theory section for themes and topics they would like to see addressed.
Sociological Theory Seeks to Educate about Formal Theory

In a recent issue of Perspectives (Vol. 22, No. 1), a report was presented based upon a 50% sample of the Theory Section asking respondents to discuss their views on theory and to name theorists whose ideas they favor in teaching. One finding, as a headline in the newsletter put it, was that “Dubois is Hot, Formal Theory is Not.” Granted, Dubois is a lot easier to teach and more relevant to the interests of most undergraduate students. But formal theory relates to the deepest scientific aspirations of our discipline and deserves to be better understood by non-formal theorists, even if not having high priority in their teaching. But this means that formal theorists must make an effort of “outreach” to their colleagues, conveying the spirit of the approach and some of its achievements, along with frank admissions of limitations and disappointments. That is the purpose of a forthcoming symposium on formal theory to appear in Sociological Theory later this year. In setting out their perspectives on formal models in relation to theorizing in sociology, the contributors include autobiographical remarks as well as illustrations from their own work without assuming prior familiarity with it. In addition, they avoid, as much as possible, the use of formal expressions and explain any technical terms they employ. The result is a set of unique statements by individuals whose programs of theory and research extend over decades and who therefore write from extensive experience. The contributors are Thomas J. Fararo (symposium editor), Peter Abell, Joseph Berger, David Heise, Harrison White, Guillermina Jasso and John Skvoretz. One hopes that these accessible statements, written from a variety of viewpoints, will enable all theorists to become more knowledgeable about the state of formal theory in our field.

Thomas J. Fararo

Update on Survey of Section Members

The October 1998 issue of Perspectives reported on a study by Jane T. Lord and Stephen K. Sanderson regarding Theory Section members’ theoretical orientations. The study was due to be published that fall, but was subsequently delayed for one year. The full report is now available in The American Sociologist, 1999, volume 30, pages 42-66.

ASA Meetings in Washington, D.C., August 12-16

The 2000 Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association will take place on August 12-16, 2000 in Washington. The Theory Section has scheduled a mini-conference consisting of three sessions, a session on “new directions” in sociological theory, a roundtables session, a business meeting, and a reception to be held jointly with the Section on Mathematical Sociology. All Theory Section events will be held on Saturday, August 12 and Sunday, August 13. Several other theory sessions have been organized by the ASA Program Committee as well, with topics ranging from the classics to new innovations in theory.

New Directions in Sociological Theory

Session 127. Sunday, August 13, 8:30 a.m.-10:10 a.m.
Organizer and Presider: David G. Wagner, State University of New York, Albany
The Evolution of Sex Discrimination. Rosemary Hopcroft, University of North Carolina, Charlotte, and Satoshi Kanaizawa, Indiana University of Pennsylvania
The Structure of Bipartite and Conditional Theories. Pidi Zhang and Edward Arroyo, Georgia Southern University
What Makes Sciences “Scientific?” Stephen Fuchs, University of Virginia
Discussion: David G. Wagner, State University of New York, Albany

Theory Section Refereed Roundtables

Session 17. Saturday, August 12, 8:30 a.m.-10:10 a.m.
Organizer: Robert K. Shelly, Ohio University
See ROUNDTABLES on Page 3
## Theory Section Sessions at ASA

### Roundtables from Page 2

**Table 1**


**Table 2**

- A Weberian Theory of Time. *Sandro Segre*, University of Genoa, Italy
- Recognition: Charles Taylor's Relationship to Hegel. *Abu C. Hayslip*, Northwestern University

**Table 3**

- Poststructuralism and Feminist Theoretical Practice. *Karen McCormack*, Wellesley College
- Recent Trends in Generative Theory and Practice. *Jeff Livsey*, Colorado College

**Table 4**

- Food Consumption as a Model of Ethical Practice. *Sam Binkley*, New School of Social Research
- The Changing Nature of Personal Identity: An Examination of Classical Symbolic Interactionist Theory. *Norman A. Dolch*, Louisiana State University, Shreveport

**Table 5**

- The Structure of the Form of Social Action? Analogies of “Axioms” and Conclusion in Parsons' and Simmel's Frame of Reference. *Helmut Staubmann*, University of Innsbruck
- Ontology, Textuality, and Morality: New Directions for Substantive Programs in Sociology. *Rob Stokes*, University of Essex

**Table 6**


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### Theory Section Miniconference

Saturday, August 12

#### New Directions in Sociological Theory: Growth of Contemporary Theories I

- Session 43. Saturday, August 12, 10:30 a.m.-12:10 p.m.
- Organizers: *Joseph Berger* and *Morris Zelditch*, Stanford University
- President: *Morris Zelditch*, Stanford University
- Affected Control Theory Across Cultures. *David Hoese*, Indiana University
- Understanding Revolutions: Theory Development from Simple to Conjectural to Chaos Models of Social Change. *Jack Goldstone*, University of California, Davis
- Discussion: *Jonathan Turner*, University of California, Riverside

#### New Directions in Sociological Theory: Growth of Contemporary Theories III

- Session 101. Saturday, August 12, 2:30 p.m.-4:10 p.m.
- Organizers: *Joseph Berger* and *Morris Zelditch*, Stanford University
- President: *Joseph Berger*, Stanford University
- The Theory of Structural Holes. *Ronald Burt*, University of Chicago
- Network Exchange Theory: Recent Developments and New Directions. *David Waller*, University of South Carolina, *Henry Walker*, University of Arizona, *Shane Tyle* and *Brent Simpson*, University of South Carolina, and *Michael Lovaglia* and *Barry Markovsky*, University of Iowa
- Reflections on Structural Sociology. *Peter M. Blau*, University of North Carolina
- Theoretical Integration and Generative Structuralism. *Thomas J. Fararo*, University of Pittsburgh, and *John Skvoretz*, University of South Carolina
- Discussion: *Murray Webster*, University of North Carolina, Charlotte and National Science Foundation

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See More on Page 5
A Proposal for Additional Sessions at the Annual Meetings

We believe that sociology’s potential for rapid cumulative development and increasing credibility remains unfulfilled largely because the discipline has not, on a continuing basis, focused sufficient attention on the issues involved in the idea of sociology as a science, whether pro or con. For example, many of us see the lack of communication among sociologists in different fields—in common with the other social sciences—as pointing toward a veritable Tower of Babel, going against our ideals for openness to knowledge. Yet the discipline persists in failing to build bridges connecting knowledge in different fields. Recent controversies between sociologists who question the very idea of a scientific sociology and others who see the scientific method as fundamental have helped to lay bare some of our basic assumptions, and we would like to see such discussion emphasized throughout the discipline. We view this as important both for those interested in more rapid development of our substantive knowledge or pure sociology as well as for those concerned with applied sociology with its focus on understanding the social problems which presently threaten societies worldwide.

Given this rationale, we recommend to the ASA Council that every section which desires to organize a session at the annual meeting around the theme of “Sociology as a Science: Pro and Con”—where there would be openness to all points of view within the discipline—be permitted to expand its allowed number of sessions so as to include such a session. In this way, this topic could become over time a continuing minor theme at the annual meetings, taking its place alongside of the changing major themes addressed by the program committees. This proposal is not a push for the importance of methods, theory or the sociology of science over all other topics. And it is not an effort to detract from the ongoing achievements of specialized work within our forty sections. Rather, it seeks to emphasize questions which have been with us since the origins of the discipline yet now appear to have become more urgent for sociology as well as society. How might we proceed to decrease the fragmentation within sociology and back up our specialized knowledge with what we have learned from the discipline as a whole? Is it possible for us to move much further in the development of sociology as a science, where we learn to achieve rapid cumulative development and attain increasing credibility, or is this a hopeless endeavor? Can such efforts give us a direction for building bridges among the social sciences?

David W. Britt
Richard E. Edgar
James C. Kimberly
Harold Kincaid

Bronwen Lichtenstein
Guenther Lueschen
John J. Malarkey, III
Bernard Phillips

Martin Sawzin
Thomas J. Scheff
Jay Weinstein

Please do not assume that others who believe as you do will follow through. Every reader is responsible for the present situation of the discipline, and in my view the discipline is—given its incredible potential—largely responsible for the present state of modern society.
The ASA Meetings in Washington
Feminist Theory, Critical Theory, Teaching, and More

In addition to the theory sessions organized by our section, several other sessions devoted to sociological theory have been organized by the ASA Program Committee and by other sections. They include sessions on feminist theory, critical theory, classics of sociological theory, and postmodern theory; there are also sessions devoted to teaching theory. These sessions are listed below.

Section on Undergraduate Education Roundtables
Session 42. Saturday, August 12, 10:30 a.m.-12:10 p.m.
Organizer: Diane Pike, Augsburg College

Table I. Exercises in Teaching Theory
Table Presider: Peter R. Grahame, Mount St. Mary’s College

Theoretical Constructs: The Presentation of Theory in Undergraduate Instruction. Peter R. Grahame, Mount St. Mary’s College
Multidimensional Theory Analysis: Teaching Students How to Think Sociologically. H. Reed Geertz, Utah State University

Section on Mathematical Sociology—Social Theory: Mathematical and Computational Theorizing
Session 77. Saturday, August 12, 12:30 a.m.-2:10 p.m.
Organizer: Kathleen M. Carley, Carnegie Mellon University
Presider: Edward Brent, University of Missouri, Columbia

A Computational Approach to Sociological Explanations. Edward Brent, Alan Thompson, and Whitley Vale, University of Missouri, Columbia
Global Structures, Local Processes II: Tripartite Models of Actions, Identity, and Representation in Political Mobilization. Ann Mishe, Rutgers University
Power over Groups through Effective Monitoring and Sanctioning. Joseph M. Whitmeyer and Rosemary Hopcroft, University of North Carolina, Charlotte

The Logic of Role Theory. James Montgomery, London School of Economics and Political Science

Social Theory: Critical reflections upon the Classics
Session 248. Monday, August 14, 8:30 a.m.-10:10 a.m.
Organizer: Mustafa Emirbayer, University of Wisconsin, Madison
Presider: Michele Olliver, Univ. of Ottawa

Anomie and Strain: Merton’s Two Theories. Richard Featherstone and Mathieu Deflem, Perdue University

Class and Causation in Bourdieu. Elliot Weininger

Rethinking the Sociological “Canon”: An Examination of Difference in the Epistemological Perspectives of Gilman andDurkheim. Melanie Heath, University of Southern California

Political Durkheim: A Discussion of Religion, Culture, and the Sacred. Simonetta Falasca-Zamponi, European University Institute and University of California, Santa Barbara

Status Revisited: Durkheim and Weber in a Post-Modern World. Michele Olliver, University of Ottawa

Social Theory: Dilemmas of Contemporary Life
Session 318. Monday, August 14, 2:30 p.m.-4:10 p.m.
Organizer: Mustafa Emirbayer, University of Wisconsin, Madison
Presider: Ira Cohen, Rutgers University

Communitarianism for Cosmopolitan Societies. Benjamin Gregg, University of Texas, Austin
On Fragmentation, Urban and Social. Judit Bodnar, Rutgers University

Learning from Populism: Narrative Analysis and Social Movement Consciousness. Gary Bologh, University of Michigan

Sociology: From “Society” to “Mobilities.” John Urry, Lancaster University


Postmodern Theory
Session 412. Tuesday, August 15, 10:30 a.m.-12:10 p.m.
Organizer and Presenter: Ben Agger, University of Texas, Arlington

Critical Theory and Cybersociety. Douglas Kellner, UCLA


The Internet as Postmodern Culture. Mark Poster, University of California, Irvine

Discussion: Karin D. Knorr Cetina, University of Bielefeld, Germany

See SESSIONS on Page 7

MORE from Page 3

Table 7

A “Painful” Discipline: Confronting the Tensions in Sociological Theory. Eric K. Shaw, Rutgers University

Table 8

Globalization: The Meaning of Chaos. JoAnn Chirico, Pennsylvania State University, Beaver Campus

The Elusive Market: Embeddedness and the Paradigm of Economic Sociology. Greta Krippner, University of Wisconsin

Table 9

The Shape of Gains and Losses: An Experimental Test of the Value Function. Pam Hunter-Holmes, Ann C. Johansson, and Jane Sell, Texas A&M University

Designing a Research-friendly Theoretical Framework for the Social Sciences. M. Ross DеФ Witt, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee
Publishing Options in Social Theory

New Journal on Classical Theory to be Launched

By Bryan Turner

The Journal of Classical Sociology, edited by John O’Neill and Bryan Turner, will promote international scholarly writing on the central works of classical sociology and on key issues relating to the history of sociology as a discipline. The journal welcomes submissions exploring its canonical formation. The classical sociological tradition is a living body of social knowledge, which the journal will explore and develop.

The journal will function as a critical but positive reflection on the historical formation of sociology from the 17th century to the present. The journal will promote the study of early social theory (such as Hobbesian contract theory) and contemporary work (such as complexity theory as a development of systems theory).

The journal will also publish critical articles on classical sociology by feminism, postcolonial theory, subaltern studies and postmodernism. The journal does not exist to defend a bland rehearsal of the legacy of sociology, but to ask by contrast: what is valid and vital in the sociological tradition today? Indeed the journal will recognize a variety of sociological traditions across a range of societies and cultures. The journal welcomes papers that explore the intellectually contested and controversial nature of sociological theory.

During the twentieth century, sociology developed a canon of classical sociology. This orthodox canon has been constituted by specific ways of doing sociological theory, various modes of collecting evidence and forms of analysis. However, sociological orthodoxy has been seriously under attack (by feminism, postmodernism, queer theory, deconstructive techniques, critical theory, rhetorical analysis, textual critique, postcolonial theory and so forth). Is there anything of the canon still in place? The journal is based on the assumption that at the beginning of the new century the sociological canon is highly contested, but it also assumes that the debate is significant and that canonical authority is important if sociology is to survive as a distinctive discipline. What constitutes the canon is something that the journal will help to shape and define.

The journal will consider: (1) the various modes of doing (writing and reading) theory; (2) the national forms within which sociological theory evolved; (3) the nature of cross-disciplinarity (between economics, history, literature, geography, politics, and sociology); (4) theories of social systems, world systems and the macro-societal level; (5) analysis of institutions (including the profession of sociology itself); (6) cultural theory, cultural studies and sociological theory; (7) theories of subjects and agents (including agency and structure, identities, and subjectivities, and micro-sociology); and (8) the rise and impact of various forms of critical theory that contest the claims of canonical sociology.

This orientation attempts to avoid writing sociological theory as simply a history of ideas, or treating theory as merely a list of substantive areas (such as theories of the family, or theories in the sociology of work), or suggesting that sociological theory is only an exegesis of conventional texts.

See NEW JOURNAL on Page 7

[Continued on Next Page]
More Theory Sessions at the ASA

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**Critical Theory**
Session 459. Tuesday, August 15, 2:30 p.m.-4:10 p.m.
Organizer and Presenter: Neil McLaughlin, McMaster University
Gouldner’s Nightmare Marxism. James Chirs, Cleveland State University
Connections between Parsonian and Critical Theory, 1930s-1980s. Uta Gerhardt, Heidelberg University
Symbolic Interaction and Radical Democracy: Understand Domination and Resistance in a Legislative Hearing. Peter L. Callero, Western Oregon University
Weber and the Intercultural Foundations of Critical Theory. Fuyuki Kurasawa, Carleton University

**Feminist Theory**
Session 489. Tuesday, August 15, 4:30 p.m.-6:10 p.m.
Organizer and Presenter: Denise A. Segura, University of California, Santa Barbara
Feminism, Black Feminist Thought, and Resistance. Maria Teresa Bagner, University of Florida
Are Court Determinants of Legal Parental Status Affected by Race and Gender?: An Application of West and Fenstermaker's Theory “Doing Difference”. Susan Dalton, California State University, Chico
Performance and Accomplishment: Reconciling Feminist Conceptions of Gender. Sarah Fenstermaker and Molly Molony, University of California, Santa Barbara

What Do the Most Liberated Women Have in Common?: Cases from Ecuador, Thailand, Guinea-Bissau, and China, and Links to a General Theory of Gender Stratification. Rae Lesser Blumberg, University of Virginia and University of California, Santa Barbara.

**Inner and Outer Realities: Psychoanalysis and Social Theory**
Session 524. Wednesday, August 16, 10:30 a.m.-12:10 p.m.
Organizer: Catherine Silver, Brooklyn College and Graduate Center, City University of New York
Panel: Lynn Chancer, St. John University, New York
Wendy Holloway, Leeds University
Tony Jeffers, Keele University
Patricia Clough, Queens College and Graduate Center, City University of New York
Sonia Gomian, Mexican Institute of Sociopsychoanalysis
Discussion: Neil McLaughlin, McMaster University

The dynamics of conscious and unconscious mental state are explored in an effort to heighten the role of psychoanalysis as a form of social criticism of knowledge production. An understanding of social change requires that we pay closer attention to how historically situated individuals and collectivities internalize gendered representations, identify with state ideologies, and conform to social expectation in order to reproduce existing social structures and mentalities. Equally important, one needs to identify sources of inner and outer resistance, symbolization, and representation(s) that produce critical thinking. The papers of the panel discuss the production of new theoretical and methodological knowledge around issues of technologies (technoscience and teletechnology), social movements, education practices, and fear of crime. These topics become the sites to explore the real and imaginary mesh of intrapsychic and the institutional.

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original articles and review essays. Articles from North America should be sent to Ken Morrison, Department of Sociology, Wilfred Laurier University 75 University West, Waterloo, Ontario N3L 3C5 Canada and articles from outside North America should go to Bryan Turner, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Free School Lane, University of Cambridge, Cambridge England CB2 3RQ.
Psychology Journal Seeks Articles from Social Theorists

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Aims on our web site and a summary of our first decade of publishing in the editorial in the February 2000 issue, also available on our web site: www.psych.ucalgary.ca/thpsyc/). It should be no surprise then that some of these papers are relevant to the concerns of theorists in sociology nor that we have published a significant number of papers by sociologists. Indeed, a number of important sociologists and social theorists are members of Theory & Psychology's Editorial Board (e.g., Jeff Coulter, Ken Gergen, Rom Härré, Jonathan Potter, Ted Sarbin).

Beyond the obvious areas of relevance however it strikes me that there are some continuing parallels in the state of theorizing between the two disciplines, at least in so far as it concerns those areas of psychology that do not seek reductive accounts in infra-psychological explanations. The very nature of the interrelation between the social and the cognitive (which includes the question of human development) remains contested as is so amply demonstrated by the continuing relevance of the work of Vygotsky, Marx, Mead, Wittgenstein and Gibson as well as variants of ethnomethodology in certain forms of psychological theory. In addition, the continuing pretense among psychological social psychologists that sociological social psychology does not exist has finally been recognized as deeply troubling if not downright problematic for psychological theory by at least some psychologists and philosophers of psychology. The subsequent attempt to try to recover some balance has meant that there are psychologists who are willing to reconsider the nature of the social and of society/culture inside their own discipline just as it seems to me that the question of the kind of agent and the kind of body that this agent occupies in social theory continues to be a recurrent question in sociological theory.

We welcome contributions from those working in social theory or on any topic related to the kinds of issues I have raised above. Especially valued are those contributions that make possible an interdisciplinary dialogue. In addition to normal manuscript length submissions (5-8000 words) we also welcome shorter submissions (2500 words) for our 'Notes and Comments' section. These can be stand-alone pieces or commentary on previously published papers. Not least of all, we publish extensive book-reviews at regular (1000 words) or essay (i.e., article) length and would appreciate being alerted to new and important volumes that social theorists may think are relevant to a broad audience of psychologists. If you feel that you would like to write a book review yourself please contact us at the address below. Given the importance that the peer-review process plays in an multidisciplinary venture such as ours, we are always on the lookout for new manuscript reviewers. Interested readers should let us know their areas of expertise and we will include these individuals as ad hoc reviewers.

Should you have any questions or comments about the journal please contact me at: Department of Psychology, University of Calgary, Calgary, Alberta, Canada T2N 1N4; email thpsyc@ucalgary.ca; URL: www.psych.ucalgary.ca/thpsyc/