

Perspectives

Newsletter of the ASA Theory Section

www.asatheory.org

Notes from the Chair

Theorizing is a Verb

Wendy Nelson Espeland¹, *Northwestern University*

Theory in Active Voice

The passive voice is to be avoided. One of the cardinal sins of bad writing, we teach our students, is to write prose in a passive voice. To encourage a more active voice we urge them to use vigorous verbs and write sentences in which there is a clear subject doing the acting, rather than a passive entity that is being acted upon. One of the seductions of the passive voice is that while its tone is usually less elegant than better situated action, it is easier to write because it demands less of us; when we finesse rather than articulate the relation between the doer, the done and the done-to, we are let off the theoretical hook of having to specify the connections between actors and acts.

But readers, especially sociological readers, *do* want to know who is doing what to whom because we learn more that way, and because it is more engaging to read when the actors, actions, and the targets of action are specific and vivid rather than general and bland. Moreover, our capacity for understanding the meaning or imputing the rationality of action is greater when we have more information to work with - which, of course, increases our chances of getting the “why” right. These connections are crucial in explaining social action and social life. We cannot explain how inequality is sustained, for example, or how value is created in markets, if we do not account, in some way, for these linkages. And since people who are acted upon are often motivated to do something in relation to that ac-

tion (ranging from noticing, responding habitually or fiercely objecting to it), keeping our theoretical and rhetorical eye on the action sensitizes us to chains of action and their consequences.

This is not always easy, of course, especially when we are working at large-scale levels of analysis; and we all recognize that if we do not put some defensible brackets around the action that we are analyzing, we are threatened by infinite regress. But even so-called “macro” explanations need not be incompatible with using an active voice. What is required is that we be clear about where the action is located, and how it is coordinated and sustained among the groups, networks, and communities of actors involved in it. Sociological theorizing that aspires to explaining action that is recognizably human—action faithful to human ingenuity and frailties, attentive to our collaborations in organizing, improvising, or ignoring, whether this occurs in dyads or relations of global proportions—has always required a nuanced language of verbs. Part of the job of theory is to develop a sophisticated vocabulary for acting or failing to act. We possess a rich legacy of thinkers who have done just that, from vantage points that range from broadly structural to intimately local.

Karl Marx’s “macro” focus on the machinery of capitalism never left out the sometimes desperate incentives that drive capitalists, the revolutionary potentials of workers, or the human activity in processes as abstract as alienation or fetishization. That was his point. Max Weber created an elaborate if arcane edifice of human action that explained why people in cults or armies mostly followed orders until (*continued pg 2*)

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A Dialogue Between Theory Section Award Winners

John Levi Martin, *University of Chicago* and Margaret Frye, *University of California-Berkeley*

In what follows, Theory Prize award winner, John Levi Martin and Margaret Frye, who was awarded this year’s Shils-Coleman Prize for Best Graduate Student Paper, dialogue about the relationship between a theory of motivations and a theory of social fields.

JLM 1:

I think the greatest selling point for field theories (and it is important to remember that not all theories OF social fields are field theories, just as there were mechanistic theories of the gravitational and magnetic fields, such as that of Descartes) is their approach to motivation. The worst thing (*continued pg 3*)

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they didn't. Georg Simmel's distinctive formal investigations of sociability, faithfulness, or exchange, never failed to show how social forms shaped behavior and vice versa. And W.E.B. DuBois and Dorothy Smith argued strenuously that race and gender are lived inside systems of oppression and through standpoints. Our collaboration in creating, resisting or reproducing categories, whether in texts, memory, or practices lodged in markets, prisons, labs, or families, reveal the boundaries and inventiveness that constrain or motivate subjects and agency, frame our worldviews and organize our stuff. Our grammar of doing, our conceptual goggles for noticing it, and our means of investigating it, offer a rich heritage for analyzing and conveying action and agency. Let that legacy motivate our prose.

Theorizing as Action

If one strategy for appreciating the action in theory is to enunciate clearly the actors and action in our writing, another is to highlight the doing of theory as a particular kind of action. Theorizing is an activity, done by someone, in an effort to explain something. In two thoughtful essays Richard Swedberg wrote for *Perspectives* a few years ago, he challenged us to redress what he sees as an imbalance between theorizing and theory.² Theory, the noun, is the product or culmination of theorizing, the verb, but Swedberg urges us to examine and teach the "craft" of theorizing: to reflect more often and deeply about what it means to do it; to appreciate distinctive forms of reasoning and explanations that we incorporate into our theorizing; to consider how best to cultivate the "craft" of theorizing in ourselves and our students. Theorizing, he argues, is a set of skills and a form of reasoning which we can and should teach and embody.

As someone who tries to combine teaching theory with teaching theorizing, I sympathize with Swedberg's project and with the challenge of doing either well, or especially both at once. Swedberg offers a series of helpful tips: make the relationship you study plural and investigate its varieties; generalize, which can reveal both patterns and contingencies in what you are analyzing; follow Marx by turning concepts into social relationships; turn nouns into verbs; and perhaps most importantly, appreciate that in theory, as in life, no one ever has the final word because people keep on doing. To Swedberg's sound advice I would add my own small twist that in the *telling* as well as in the *doing* of theory, which may not be all that compartmentalized, keep the verbs in place and attached to people.

Theorizing: Context, Materials, Innovation, and Numbers

This leads me to the themes of this year's panels for our Section. To promote theory in an active voice and to call attention to the "craft" of theorizing, our Council has agreed to highlight theorizing -- in specific domains that we believe are especially timely or important. We are calling on you, dear readers, to submit papers for a series of open sessions that will be organized by sociologists with various kinds of expertise. One of the enduring challenges in theorizing is how to incorporate characteristics of contexts into our explanations of social relationships. Context can be understood in a number of ways: we can view it as historical contingency, as a setting characterized by a mix of variables, as a repository of taken-for-granted assumptions (or even as a nifty journal produced by our professional association). Michael Sauder (University of Iowa) will be assembling a panel of papers under the heading of "Theorizing Context" with an eye toward stimulating a lively conversation about approaches to understanding contexts and how to think about them. Terence McDonnell (University of Notre Dame) will organize a panel, "Theorizing Materiality," which addresses one of the more vibrant theoretical fields in sociology and the humanities these days: material properties. If your research investigates questions about how social relationships are expressed in, respond to, or are mediated by objects, broadly defined, this panel could be a home for your work. Another topical theme in theorizing is how to explain innovation. New ideas, new relations, new products, or new modes of organizing, fundamental to social change and to the pace at which we sometimes conduct our lives, are especially challenging to theorize because innovation, (*continued pg 3*)

Espeland, continued

by definition, transforms the routine and the routinized into something different. Jeannette Colyvas (Northwestern University) is looking for work that will address how we can explain more systematically or more rigorously that which we recognize as new and/or useful. For my contribution, I will be compiling a panel of scholars (by invitation) to consider how, when, or perhaps even whether we might or should theorize numbers. Quantification is a complicated activity that we often perform as a way to accomplish some cherished values: we count votes, administer tests, survey opinions all in the service of practicing democracy, rewarding merit, or measuring change. Increasingly, we link accountability and transparency to techniques of calculation. How should sociologists analyze the numbers that surround us?

In addition to these panels, Claire Decoteau (University of Illinois at Chicago), will add to her already considerable responsibilities as the editor of this newsletter by helping to organize our roundtable sessions based on themes that emerge from your submissions. So, if you prefer a more informal format or do not see your work represented in the themes above, there will be plenty of other opportunities to present your work. And, as is our tradition and pleasure, our Chair Elect, Robin Wagner-Pacifi (The New School) will be presiding over the 2013 Lewis Coser Lecture which will be delivered by Ivan Ermakoff (University of Wisconsin), who is sure to spark much theorizing in his audience.

It sounds like fun, doesn't it? Please stay tuned for more details.

1. Thanks to Claire Decoteau for her service to the Theory Section and for her editorial skills. This essay contains some ideas and language from an essay appearing in Jens Becker and Christine Musselin's book, *Constructing Quality. The Classification of Goods in Markets*, Oxford University Press, 2013, which is a model of what I am advocating.

2. See "The Craft of Theorizing," Richard Swedberg, *Sociological Perspectives*, 2009, Vol 31 (2) <http://www.csun.edu/~egodard/asatheory/newsletters/Perspectives-2009-Nov.pdf> and "From Theory to Theorizing," Richard Swedberg, *Sociological Perspectives*, November 2010, Vol 32 (2). <http://www.csun.edu/~egodard/asatheory/newsletters/Perspectives-2010-Nov.pdf>.

Martin and Frye, continued

about Good Old Fashioned Action Theory (GOFAT)—what we fall back on—is the account of motivation. Values, interests, or cultural templates are translated into concrete situational imperatives...except when they're not. What we do, as C. W. Mills told us, is to take the retrospective social productions used for accounting purposes ("motives") and fabricate a social psychology in which these things exist before, and indeed give rise to, the act. There may, in addition to the sorts of disruptions and perceptions that the pragmatists focused on, be aspects of subjectivity that can serve as "first causes" to action; perhaps we can call these "impulsions." But they aren't going to look like what we call "motivations."

Field theory recognizes that the antecedents of action ("impulsions") lie in the qualities and affordances of social objects, thereby providing a parsimonious explanation for action. It is overly simple in the way a good theory should be—working in a conceptual space of purity, but using this to begin to understand the real processes that enter into more complex situations.

MTF 1:

I don't share your affinity for Mills' incorporation of retrospective accounts under the term "motivations." Colin Campbell (1996) writes of sociologists' preoccupation with motivations as retrospective accounts of actions (Mills is the most famous rendition of this), and their relative silence on the more conventional definition of motivations as forces that "move" an individual to act in a certain way. This latter meaning of motivations is closer to what you describe as "impulsions," and I suggest we focus on these, rather than on the explanations or justifications of past actions. And I also suggest that we consider the decisions that we spend considerable time pondering

over – dilemmas or weighty life decisions, because the "impulsions" underlying these types of choices are particularly interesting in terms of how they fit in to a theory of social fields.

We spend an awful lot of time mulling over major life choices, such as selecting a career, finding a partner to marry, or choosing a major in college. We lie awake at night, we discuss them with others, often over and over again. In short, we deliberate over our actions and their potential consequences. And these deliberations, these ponderings, are often formed explicitly in opposition to one's current position in the social field, with the goal of moving closer to an idealized future version of the self. Imagined futures are often unrealistically severed from objective conditions on the ground, conceptualized in highly agentic terms. A person's capacity to realize these aspirational and forward-reaching imaginings may indeed be dependent on one's current position in the social field, but the imaginings are less so.

JLM 2:

Although I am a big fan of Campbell's work, I think that here he falls back on GOFAT; sociologists focus on motivations as retrospective accounts because this is where they empirically, visibly, are located in our lives. We study them here so as not to naively retroject them into action.

No one would deny that people sometimes deliberate. But that doesn't mean that it has a clear place in a theory of action. Formulaically, we might say that deliberation is not a part of a process of making a decision, but more what it feels like when one is *unable* to make a decision. At least when I am awake at night, you could call it "deliberation" or "obsession" or "indecision" with equal justification. It doesn't have much to do with those actions that I successfully implement.

That might be extreme, but the question is, it seems to me, whether there is any empirical reason to believe (*continued pg 12*)

Junior Theorists Symposium, 2012

Stephanie Lee Mudge, *University of California-Davis* and Iddo Tavory, *The New School for Social Research*

The 6th Junior Theorists Symposium took place at the University of Colorado-Denver on Thursday, August 16, 2012. Initiated in 2005, the Symposium has become an important forum for bringing together early-career sociologists who are explicitly engaging with, or developing, sociological theory. This year's forum featured three panels and eight papers, followed by reactions from three of our discipline's most prominent voices: Phil Gorski (Yale), Richard Swedberg (Cornell), and Ann Swidler (UC-Berkeley). This year the regular panels were followed by an "after panel" in which past JTS presenters and organizers offered commentary on their own trajectories and identities as "theorists," the role of theory in their work, the place of the JTS in creating a space for theoretical engagement, and the future prospects of theoretical work in sociology.

As in past years, JTS' call for papers stimulated intense interest both before and during the conference. We received 63 submissions from advanced graduate students, postdocs, and assistant professors from seven countries. And as previous organizers warned us, most submissions, including all too many that we couldn't fit in, were extremely good. At the conference itself, the JTS drew over 50 people who were formally registered and around 80 people attending over the course of the day. It was thus exciting to see the JTS' reputation as an important and intellectually stimulating forum, unusual as a space for the cultivation of theoretical engagement and creativity in sociology, continues to grow.

After much needed coffee, the Symposium started with a panel on "Theorizing Political Formations," featuring two papers that took up questions of political action, empire, and revolutionary uprising, which grappled with important conceptual and analytical issues along the way. A first paper by Joshua Bloom (UCLA), titled "*Opportunities for Practices: Black Insurgency Revisited*," challenged and developed the 'political opportunity' theory for explaining insurgency. Focusing on one of the core theoretical perspectives in the literature on political mobilization, Bloom argued that political "opportunities" and cleavages cannot be taken for granted, as the conditions of practice. Instead, Bloom showed how actors strategically conceive of disruptive practices that challenge, expose, and sometimes create fissures in the political environment they act upon. The second presentation, by co-authors Adam Slez (Princeton) and Nicholas Wilson (Yale), was titled "*In an Empire State of Mind: Between Networks and Fields in Political Orders*." Here, Slez and Wilson argued that the distinction between states and empires is easily overdrawn, and called for a relational approach that attends to what states and empires do rather than what they are, and that traces political development as a progression from networks to fields.

The second panel, "Group Formation and the Moral," featured three presentations that dealt with the ways in which actors position themselves morally, and define both themselves and others in the process. The first panelist, Fiona Rose-Greenland (University of Michigan), presented a study titled "*Mimesis and Nemesis in Nationhood Construction*." Rose-Greenland ambitiously synthesized insights from Gabriel Tarde's theory of imitation and neo-institutional accounts of isomorphism. Through this theoretical synthesis, Rose-Greenland then shed light on the way in which the British market for historical artifacts became a crucial part of the British project of imagining itself as an empire, after the same artifacts were previously ignored. The second presentation, by Dan Lainer-Vos (USC), titled "*The Practical Organization of Moral Transactions*," showed how Irish and Israeli bond drives in the early days of nationhood worked by producing what he called a "zone of indeterminacy," blurring the boundary between the bond as an economic transaction and the bond as a gift. By looking at the production of uncertainty, and focusing analytically on ambiguity, Lainer-Vos constructed a powerful theoretical account for the divergent fates of bond drives. The third panelist, Christina Simko (University of Virginia) presented a paper titled "*Rhetorics of Suffering: September 11 Commemorations as Theodicy*." Returning to one of the crucial, and most neglected, aspects of Weber's sociology of religion, Simko showed how different theodicies of suffering were constructed in New York and in Washington—with the Bush administration opting for a Manichean theodicy of the war of good against evil, and New York commemorations focusing on the existential fact of tragedy and suffering rather than a transcendent explanation of it.

Lastly, the third panel, "Meaning and Temporality," took up questions of time, cognition, and logics of action. Benjamin Snyder (University of Virginia) presented his paper "*Working with Time in Time*." Snyder called for working toward a "sociology of rhythm" in order to deal with the nature of social life as both patterned and dynamic. Providing an agenda for the theory of action and returning to the work of Henri Lefebvre, Snyder drew attention to a toolkit of concepts neglected by sociologists—isorhythmia, eurythmia, arrhythmia, and others—that can aid us in the analysis of the relations between time, space, and emotion. Neha Gondal (Rutgers University) presented her paper on "*Locating Culture in Less-Institutionalized Structure*," in which she theorized the actions and interpretations of people who find themselves in less-institutionalized positions—that is, socially recognizable positions for which no clear schemas or courses of action exist. Gondal argued that to solve this problem people relate their positions to other, clearer, structures, via two mechanisms: analogizing and switching. Finally, Todd Van Gunten (University of Wisconsin-Madison) presented his paper "*Rethinking Bureaucratic Agency in the State*" invoking Bourdieu's "bureaucratic field" in order to explain patterns of elite competition and policy volatility in Argentina and Mexico. He showed that the structure of networks and (*continued pg 5*)

Mudge and Tavory, continued

career pathways explained much of the divergent outcomes in terms of political allegiances and deeply consequential economic decisions in the two countries.

The discussants' comments for each of the sections and the conversations that later ensued were also extremely lively and thought-provoking. Treating the presentations as works-in-progress, discussants both noted the specific problems they saw and encouraged the presenters to continue in their work. Bringing the theoretical expertise for which they are well known, discussants pushed presenters to think through the meaning and nature of theoretical contribution, the relation between case study and general theory, and the ways in which their conceptual apparatuses meshed with their empirical cases and units of analysis.

Finally, the Symposium ended with an "after-panel" of four past JTS presenters who have each gone on to develop a theoretical agenda and who have remained involved with the JTS: Robert Jansen (University of Michigan), Monika Krause (Goldsmiths College, University of London), Omar Lizardo (University of Notre Dame), and Isaac Reed (University of Colorado, Boulder).

As the panelists' presentations are reproduced in this newsletter, we will not foreshadow them. However, it was valuable and at times even moving to see how the JTS has influenced the way past participants (these not-so-junior-anymore theorists) conceptualize both the field as a whole, as well as their own work and identities as theorists.

The JTS remains a lively forum for theoretical engagement and a rare place to find theory-in-the-making in the work of junior scholars. The 2012 Symposium was no exception in this regard. We were particularly taken by the centrality of the questions panelists engaged with—temporality in action, the role of ambiguity as an analytic construct, the existential solutions to the problem of evil, the relation between local strategies of action and larger structural forces, patterns of bureaucracy, etc. Each of the papers presented were excellent, but collectively they also showed how young theorists are returning to the core questions that animate the sociological imagination. We were honored to take part in this year's JTS, and look forward to next year's session—to be organized by Josh Pacewicz (Brown) and Fiona Rose-Greenland (University of Michigan).

Call for Abstracts, 2013 Junior Theorists Symposium

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS
2013 Junior Theorists Symposium

New York City, NY
9 August 2013

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: 15 FEBRUARY 2013

We invite submissions for extended abstracts for the 7th Junior Theorists Symposium (JTS), to be held in New York City on August 9th, 2013, the day before the annual meeting of the American Sociological Association (ASA). The JTS is a one-day conference featuring the work of up-and-coming theorists, organized by the Theory Section of the ASA. Since 2005, the conference has brought together early career-stage sociologists who engage in theoretical work.

We are pleased to announce that Wendy Espeland (Northwestern University), Paul DiMaggio (Princeton University), and Robin Wagner-Pacifici (The New School) will serve as discussants for this year's symposium.

In addition, we are pleased to announce an after-panel on "Theory, Past and Future," featuring Claire Laurier Decoteau (University of Illinois-Chicago), Neil Gross (University of British Columbia), Greta Krippner (University of Michigan), Richard Swedberg (Cornell University) and Iddo Tavory (The New School). The panel will examine such questions as why certain theoretical traditions retain their apparent usefulness while others die off, and what theoretical positions and debates are likely to remain or become salient in the near future.

We invite all ABD graduate students, postdocs, and assistant professors who received their PhDs from 2009 onwards to submit a three-page précis (800-1000 words). The précis should include the key theoretical contribution of the paper and a general outline of the argument. Be sure also to include (i) a paper title, (ii) author's name, title and contact information, and (iii) three or more descriptive keywords. As in previous years, in order to encourage a wide range of submissions we do not have a pre-specified theme for the conference. Instead, papers will be grouped into sessions based on emergent themes.

Please send submissions to the organizers: Fiona Rose-Greenland, University of Michigan (frose@umich.edu) and Josh Pacewicz, Brown University (pacewicz@brown.edu) with the phrase "JTS submission" in the subject line. The deadline is February 15, 2013. We will extend up to 12 invitations to present by March 15. Please plan to share a full paper by July 1, 2013.

Further information about the JTS and the ASA Theory Section can be found here: <http://www.csun.edu/~egodard/asatheory/jrtheorists-12.html>

The Junior Theorist Symposium After Panel: A Conversation about Theory

At the 2012 Junior Theorists' Symposium, four prominent junior scholars (and previous JTS presenters and organizers) presented their views on the state of the sociological theory field and the place of the JTS within it. Their comments have been reproduced in the newsletter for your reading pleasure.

What Young People Should Know about Theory and Theorizing

Omar Lizardo, *University of Notre Dame*

The state of the theoretical field today

Theorists, especially young theorists, live in a world of ideas. In that respect, theory is a subfield wherein the practitioners, especially the young practitioners, tend to be the most naïve about the objective conditions of production that make their work possible (or impossible). Therefore, I think it is prudent to start with a pragmatic “materialism” to grasp the real conditions of theoretical production today. Unfortunately, what I have to say is mostly bad news. The structure of the sociological field has changed, making it increasingly difficult to dedicate yourself to becoming proficient in most modes of doing “theory.”

We can adduce at least three broad reasons for this:

1. *The rapid de-institutionalization of teaching theory at the graduate level.* Though Lamont commented on this trend in 2004, (*Perspectives*), its impact is only now being felt. Most top graduate programs have cut back the theory curriculum to a single “omnibus” course that attempts the impossible task of going (*continued pg 7*)

Theory as an Anti-Subfield Subfield

Monika Krause, *Goldsmiths College, University of London*

In this discussion on the role of theory we build not just on a large published literature but also on earlier discussions within the section - for example, the one initiated by Michèle Lamont in 2004.¹ If I think it is worth carrying on these discussions, it is partly because some acts, such as “going to church” or saying “I love you” cannot be reduced to their content value - they serve a “preservation of concern”, which I think is an underappreciated aspect of academic work. The JTS is a good site for this discussion because these concerns might take generation-specific forms.

In my comments, I want to distinguish four different kinds of questions about the role of theory that are too often conflated and then offer some observation vis-à-vis one of these questions. I want to suggest that, in its institutional form, theory in American Sociology forms an anti-subfield subfield and that we may want to think about how we can best engage with this somewhat paradoxical space. (*continued pg 9*)

Making “Theorists” at the JTS: Reflections on the Institutional Cultivation of Identity

Robert S. Jansen, *University of Michigan*

The Junior Theorists Symposium is a remarkable institution. Although it *is* a lot of things, and it *does* a lot of things, I’d like to focus on one quality that I think is critical to the institution’s overall success: its ability to cultivate new intellectual identities. The JTS can take a young sociologist, who might not self-consciously identify as a “theorist” *per se*, and expose her or him to a field that’s actually quite a bit more open, varied, and inviting than its reputation sometimes has it. It can give this young sociologist permission to see herself or himself in a new light—as a theorist, or at least as someone doing theoretically relevant work. And it can give this sociologist permission to be invested in a field that might otherwise seem professionally off-limits to the uninitiated. To explore *how* the JTS does this, I’d like to follow the trajectory of a hypothetical young sociologist through four stages of participation in the institution.

Stage 1 (Pre-JTS). Let’s begin by imagining that you’re an advanced graduate student plugging away at your dissertation. Perhaps you enjoyed theory as an undergraduate. Maybe you even took a good theory seminar early on (*continued pg 8*)

What Is the JTS for?

Isaac Ariel Reed, *University of Colorado at Boulder*

The initial seeds planted by Neil Gross and Matthieu Deflem when they started the JTS in 2005 have flowered into something impressive. With extensive (3-page!) précis submitted by 63 people last year, it is clear that this pre-ASA conference is now part of the intellectual landscape of American sociology. Sponsored by the Theory Section, anxiously applied to by young scholars, attended by all sorts of folks, and featuring, each year, extensive commentary on the papers by various paterfamilias and materfamilias of sociology, the JTS has a certain stability and visibility. But what is it for? I want to argue that the JTS should involve risky and abstract theoretical discussion, *informed* by its participants’ various empirical projects, rather than a successful presentation of those projects, with, perhaps, their theoretical richness highlighted.

No one can quite agree on what theory is or is for in sociology these days, Gabriel Abend’s efforts notwithstanding.¹ At the 2011 JTS, Andrew Abbott railed against things that masqueraded as theory, including “applying existing labels to life-world phenomena” and (*continued pg 10*)

Lizardo, continued

from Montesquieu to Judith Butler in one semester. This goes hand in hand with the rapid displacement of the graduate seminar as the main place where learning happens in top sociology programs. This is part of the push to get students out of the seminar and in front of the word-processing program earlier in the grad school career, so that they can realistically finish in 5 to 6 years and have publications to show for it. We may call this: the “Princetonization of American sociology.” This dynamic creates a supply-side constraint on who can teach theory. Because graduate programs select top candidates based on publication records in top empirical journals, most people entrusted with the teaching of theory are not themselves theorists; absent a “genuine” theorist, and given that theory has become a low status, “hot potato” course that nobody who has any say wants to teach, the teaching of theory comes to be increasingly entrusted to younger faculty (usually assistant professors or young associates) whose work is only *relatively* theoretical in comparison to other denizens of that department. For instance, said faculty might specialize in the study of culture, institutions, or historical and economic sociology – subfields that are recognized as relatively more “theoretical” than others.

2. *The rapid devaluation of theory within an increasingly heteronomous field.* With de-institutionalization, comes *devaluation*; a theory paper or even a series of papers dedicated to theory have come to be seen as much less valuable than empirically “applied” work (whether qualitative or quantitative). Administrators and high-level decision-makers are under increasing pressure to demonstrate that tenure-track faculty members produce “useful” research, meaning: research that gets grants (which is generally oriented to the generation of reportable findings rather than conceptual issues). The fact that some modes of doing theory stand at the crossroads of the humanities and the social sciences adds to its woes, given the increasingly brazen attack on and dismantling of the humanities across American universities (especially public universities) which is a *de facto* attack on theory. The emergence of increasingly “rationalized” and quantified measures of impact or worth of publications means that theory falls even further behind; impact factors of top theory journals in sociology (e.g. *Sociological Theory*, *Theory and Society*) are much lower than top empirical journals. If you are thinking: “but that’s just the evil journal and peer review system,” think again. The increasing heteronomy of university book publishers vis-à-vis the market is even more glaring than anything happening at the level of journals; theory books are long, wordy and demanding. They cannot be marketed, “Gladwellized” or sensationalized in the same way as empirically ori-

ented books. So if you are planning on writing a book entitled: *Going Giddens: The extraordinary rise and increasing appeal of the structure/agency problematic*, you might just be out of luck.

3. *The rapid rise of multiple modes and genres of doing theory.* With the dissolution of the proper material conditions for the doing of theory, comes the partial deconstruction of any sort of “hierarchy” in modes of doing theory. In the good ol’ days the guidelines were simple, because the field had a coherent structure, and the sources of theoretical capital were clear. All the consecrated, incumbents in theoretical sociology’s strategic action field (e.g. Collins, or Alexander, or Turner, etc.) began their careers with some sort of serious engagement with the classics (as defined by Parsons). Then they went on to engage in their own tweaking of the classical tradition, possibly infused with a heavy dose of post-classical influences (e.g. structuralism, post-functionalist sociology, symbolic interactionism, pragmatism, etc.). Today, things are not so simple. Even though we have better historiographic and exegetical sources on the classics, work on classical sociology by young theorists is very scarce. The theoretical capital that can be accrued by turning to so-called “contemporary theorists” across the human sciences is equally problematic from an evaluational point of view within sociology, because the contemporary theorists simply lack the consensual field-wide recognition enjoyed by the classics.

What theory really means

Gabi Abend wrote a paper (presented at one of the first JTS conferences) in which he distinguished seven different meanings of the word ‘theory.’ I think seven is a lower bound, and we can spend the next forty years arguing about whether there are seven or twenty “meanings” of theory. The main point is that theory and theorizing is just not a single thing. Yet, the problem is that this is not just a definitional or “lexicographic” issue, or even an issue of the fundamental polysemy of all meanings; it is a *reality*, an objective fact that there are multiple modes of doing theory and that these modes entail a different set of initial dispositions, a different history of acquisition, and ultimately the mastery of distinct (and possibly conflicting) sets of skills. I think that the proper metaphor is that there exist different “genres” of theory, and that we can all become proficient (realistically) in one, two, or at most three of these genres. As theory becomes devalued, and the field becomes increasingly heteronomous, the basic danger is to rush into thinking that our salvation entails the privileging of any one of these genres (e.g. the one preferred by so-called “Analytical Sociologists”) to the denigration of all others (e.g. theory in the classical mode, or theory in the meta-methodological mode). This (essentially retrogressive) temptation must be fought at all costs. (*continued pg 8*)

Lizardo, continued

Consider for instance, the book that won this year's theory prize, John Martin's *The Explanation of Social Action*. While I think that it would be a clear instance of sociological malpractice to ever advise any young (or old) theorist to imitate John, the point that I want to make is that this book is a multi-genre book; it combines at least five genres of doing theory: conceptual clarification, classical and contemporary theory, meta-theory, meta-methodology and analytical theory. The same can be said for Isaac Reed's brilliant *Interpretation and Social Knowledge*, which combines all of these genres with an ambitious attempt at trans-disciplinary unification. For me, this is the sort of theoretical work that deserves to get (and indeed does get) our highest praise. But the problem is that both John and Isaac are increasingly bizarre, even counter-institutional figures among (relatively) young theorists. So the question that I want to pose to both the young and the old theorists among you is: how can we set it up so that we can get more Isaacs and Johns?

Jansen, continued

in grad school and wrote a paper that you considered submitting to a journal. But by this point in your training, you've been thoroughly disabused of your theoretical aspirations. You may have been told that your seminar paper was too exegetical for *ASR*. Or maybe you took a look at the ASA job bank and didn't see quite as many ads for a Hegel specialist as you had expected. Or perhaps you just got caught up in doing some good empirical work that was rewarding in itself. At any rate, "theorist" is no longer how you describe yourself at dinner parties.

But then the JTS call for abstracts appears in your inbox; and this gets you thinking about your work in new ways. "If I were to present something from my dissertation to a room full of theorists, what would I present?" Of course, if you think like this for more than a few minutes, it becomes clear that you should just submit an abstract. After all, you'd spend more time considering it than you would just writing 800 words. So you do it. And then you get back to your dissertation.

The hypothetical paths diverge here. If your abstract is accepted, then you actually have to write something; and you must confront the sometimes vexing question of what it means to write a "theory" paper. But you muddle through. If your abstract is not accepted, you're of course disappointed. But once this feeling has shaded into relief at not having to produce a paper, you remember that the JTS will still be taking place and that you're welcome to attend. So you book your flights a day early. Thus, the very *existence* of the JTS incentivizes young sociologists to consider whether their work might be interesting to a theory audience.

Stage 2 (At the JTS). Whether you're presenting or not, then, you show up—and you're pleasantly surprised! Rather than the intimidating crowd you'd been imagining, you encounter a diverse group of peers who are actually interesting (*and interested!*). You see good theoretical work being supported by a vibrant intellectual community. You respond to other people's work; you think more about your own work; and you find yourself thinking theoretical thoughts. You have great conversations and make friends with others thinking along similar lines. You meet senior scholars—who are there precisely to see what the young theorists are up to—and they encourage you to press on. And if you're lucky enough to have presented a paper, you're

happy to find that most people actually liked it, gave you good feedback, and encouraged you to send it out. In short, whether you present or not, interactions at the JTS provide positive reinforcement to the theorist identity formation process: they lead you to reconsider your opinions of theory and "theorists"; and they help you to see your work from the perspective of others in the field.

Stage 3 (Post-JTS). If you didn't present, you think seriously about trying again next year. If you did present, this means that you somehow ended up with a drafted paper. So with a headful of helpful comments, you set to revising. And rather than targeting that specialty journal that you originally had your eyes on, you start thinking of your paper as something suitable for publication in *Sociological Theory* or *Theory and Society*. You send out the paper, and, eventually, it's accepted! *Contra* your previous sense of self, you've somehow ended up publishing in a theory journal. And so it starts.

Stage 4 (Going Forward). Of course, now that you're in love with the JTS, you keep coming back for more—and dragging your friends along with you. And now that you've published in a theory journal, you start receiving theory manuscripts to review. You start having *opinions* about the work you're reviewing—you become *invested*. You join the Theory Section and start attending section business meetings. You develop friends and networks. And before you know it, *other* people start to think of *you* as a "theorist."

Why does all this matter? First, it matters for institutional reasons. As more people come to appreciate the field and to identify as theorists: the JTS will stay vibrant, the Theory Section will thrive, and the profile of theoretical work will increase. But second, my hunch is that the sort of identification that the JTS cultivates leads not just to more theory, but to *better* theory. That is: identity has *consequences* for intellectual practice. Identifying as a theorist leads to reflexivity about the practice of theorizing and about the role of theory in one's own work. And wrestling with such issues implicates you in a community of others who are doing the same. This means more conversation, more critique, and more innovation. The JTS, in its very short lifetime, has played a powerful role in advancing this process.

Krause, continued

What is theory?

It is useful to distinguish (at least) four questions about the role of theory: What does theory mean?² How is theory practiced? What institutional form does it take? And what role does it play in individual biographies and careers? I think it is important to distinguish these four questions from each other, and, within each, to distinguish the observational from the normative, so that we arrive at a better sociology of sociology and, so that we can distinguish the different normative questions from one another. We might say, for example, in answer to the first question, theory is this or that and it is the essence of sociology without advocating a specific form of institutionalisation or calling for a specific professional identity for theorists.

The anti-subfield subfield

I want to offer some observations on the question of how theory is institutionalised, and it is best to address this in a comparative context. Among those who identify as theorists, comparative discussions about the role of theory tend to be about the *status* of theory in comparison (most often) to the past or to Europe. The conclusion is that theory in US sociology is somehow less valued and less autonomous than it used to be or than it is in other national contexts.

But if we think about forms of institutionalisation rather than some estimate of status and compare it to other disciplines, a different picture emerges. It seems that there are three ways in which theory is institutionalised in other disciplines, which differ from the situation in current US sociology - and I would say that these models are not necessarily preferable.

1. Some disciplines, it seems, do not do theory separately at all - there are no (strong) theory sections and few theory courses. I am thinking here of anthropology and psychology, and perhaps history. Reflection on the overarching concerns of these disciplines is practiced instead through the teaching of method and the history of the discipline.

2. Other disciplines have highly autonomous subfields called "theory"; but these are not necessarily considered to have important things to say to the rest of the field. Political theory seems to be such a case. It is certainly a valiant subfield, with its own very strong journals and its own jobs. But it seems to me to have a very separate prestige hierarchy and while it has strong interdisciplinary prestige, it is also rather isolated within the discipline of political science. If we think, on the other hand, about the list of commentators we have had at the Junior Theorist Symposium, these are people who are known as theorists but also play important roles in the wider discipline.

3. In the extreme version of autonomy for "theory," reflexivity is delegated to other disciplines. The philosophy and the history of science have a strong place at (elite) universities, but, again, I think have lost any (realistic) claim of speaking to the concerns

of the scientists themselves.

I think what we have, therefore, is not all bad. If we compare to other subfields within sociology, even more reasons emerge for why we might be wary of too much autonomy, which might encourage us to embrace our role as an anti-subfield subfield. Here, I echo a long tradition in debates about theory with a specific emphasis: I have argued elsewhere that sociological subfields tend to be constituted around certain paradigmatic research objects, or model systems (which has certain advantages and certain disadvantages).³ The sociology of professions is built on the study of doctors, for example. Urban sociology pays an inordinate amount of attention to Chicago, New York and LA. Theory, in this analysis, seems like an odd case among sociological subfields in that it either has no model system of its own, or if it has one, it consists not of sociological objects but of texts - where urban sociology has "Chicago," theory has "Suicide." I at least do not think we should formalise a subfield too much around what is essentially a literary canon, not a set of cases, especially as we are not usually well trained to do literary analysis.

For the sake of discussion, then, I will put my questions on the table and, if my observations make any sense, I will turn to the more normative, or pragmatic, dimension of this and ask, how the section in general and the JTS in particular can best contribute to and exploit this unique role of serving as an anti-subfield subfield?

1 See Michèle Lamont (2004) "The Theory Section and its Satellites" and responses by Chandra Mukerji, Andrew J. Perrin, Adrian Favell, Elizabeth A. Armstrong, Paul Lichterman, Stephen P. Turner, Nina Eliasoph, Douglas J. Goodman, Michael Hechter, Donald N. Levine, and Adam Kissel, available at <http://www.csun.edu/~egodard/asatheory/2004debate.html> [accessed October 1 2012]

2 Gabriel Abend (2008) "The Meaning of 'Theory'", *Sociological Theory* 26 (2):173-199. The question is potentially broader than the one Abend addresses, so there is room for more empirical work. The paper focuses on what people *should* mean when they use the word 'theory' if they were at all coherent. It does not dwell on the performative dimensions of uses of the word "theory."

3 Michael Guggenheim and Monika Krause. 2012. "How Facts Travel. The Model Systems of Sociology." *Poetics* 40: 101-117.

Reed, continued

“positioning yourself [vis-à-vis names recognizable as ‘theorists’].”² I tend to agree with these complaints, though I am more skeptical about Abbott’s repetition of the now-classic mantra that thinking about theorists is not, or cannot produce, theory. But the overall point of his arguments, as I took them, was that theorizing involves abstract thinking about the social world, and, to a certain degree, involves conceptual innovation in abstract thinking—as long as it is recognized that such conceptual innovation involves a lot of borrowing, hijacking, and reappropriating. This seems like a reasonable place to start, especially if more specific definitions of theory are either (1) not currently forthcoming in the discipline, or (2) cannot generate enough consensus for a conference to be convened under their rubric.

If we take this seriously, however, it does have specific consequences for the emerging institution of the JTS. If it is going to be a space for creative and abstract thinking, it should be a space of conceptual risk taking. And that means that its papers should not always work, should not always succeed, should invite harsh criticism *of a conceptual nature* from commentators, and should, in the end, not really look like what we are used to paper presentations looking like from the “junior” set.

In other words, papers at a theory conference should depart from the standard way of making, and defending, a knowledge claim in sociology. That standard format—especially in its oral form, where it begins to approach the job talk—necessarily has to have a lot of well-built defenses, orchestrated positionings vis-à-vis the literature, and so on. This is, perhaps, how it should be, and even if it is not how it should be, it is certainly what results from any attempt to survive the review process. In contrast, papers at the JTS tend towards a weird attempts-at-conceptual-advance, and away from well-codified exposition. And this means they should risk falling apart. So, if the conference is succeeding, more papers should be failing—and failing spectacularly.

This argument is, among other things, a defense of my own disaster of a JTS paper, which couldn’t even get past a pleading attempt to suggest that Roy Bhaskar’s work was full of contradictions, and that somehow, someday, a different epistemology was needed.³ Still, I do believe I learned more from that failure, amidst the smart and open-minded JTS crowd, than I did from many of my more slick and successful presentations since I have “learned my lesson.” Perhaps the JTS should be retained, and even guarded, as a space for such valuable failures.

In so far as this is a problem—that is, that the JTS is becoming a bit too well-groomed—it is, perhaps, a predictable result of the JTS’ own success. As getting into the conference becomes a mark of status, and obtains increasing visibility, that visibility creates new pressures on performance. The audience for the JTS grows, and perhaps even more so the secondary audience—the people who ask the people who were at the JTS how the papers went. Or at least we think it does! And this increasing (or increasingly imagined?) audience for the JTS means

that “sociology” as a field of symbolic struggle and competition will have more and more impact on the construction of presentations by presenters. And this means those papers will tend, over the long run, towards the job talk, not the theoretical exploration. This is a surmountable problem, however. In the end, the JTS is *not* where jobs are given out. It is *not* where the major empirical research discoveries are vetted for publication. It is, simultaneously, not peripheral. In sociology, “theory” does retain some status advantages. We should use those advantages not to incrementally increase the visibility of certain empirical knowledge claims, but rather to create a clearing for abstract thought experiments. We should sustain the JTS as a space wherein the norms that usually surround the successful performance of empirical knowledge claims are somewhat weakened. The weakening of such norms of presentation, accompanied by the intense and thorough vetting of papers that occurs before the JTS, could create a space of conceptual play that one rarely has access to as a junior person in the contemporary academy. That, I would propose, is the potential value of the JTS; it is what the JTS can do for “theory.”

1. Efforts that began at the JTS. Gabriel Abend, “The Meaning of Theory” Paper presented at the Junior Theorists Symposium, Pennsylvania University, 2005.
2. Andrew Abbott, “Andrew Abbott’s Short List of Rules for Theorizing,” Comments at the Junior Theorists Symposium, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, 2011.
3. Isaac Reed, “Three Models of Knowledge in Social Science: Realist, Normative, Interpretive.” Paper presented at the Junior Theorists Symposium, Pennsylvania University, 2005.

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Dear Colleagues,

The Justice 21 Committee of the SSSP is pleased to announce the publication of the volume *Agenda for Social Justice, Solutions 2012*, which represents a continuing effort by our professional society to nourish a "public sociology" that will be easily accessible and useful to policy makers, academics, activists, concerned citizens, and students. It is also a way to give something back to the people and institutions that support our scholarly endeavors. We hope that you find it helpful in your challenging work of crafting successful solutions to contemporary social problems. In all, it contains 11 chapters written by SSSP members, covering a variety of social problems covering a variety of pressing social problems, as follows:

The main web site for the project is as follows: <http://www.sssp1.org/index.cfm/m/323>. From this site, the following options for accessing the project are available:

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Sincerely,

Glenn W. Muschert
SSSP Secretary & Chair, Justice 21 Committee

Also on behalf of the Justice 21 Committee Members:

Kathleen Ferraro
Brian V. Klocke
JoAnn Miller
Robert Perrucci
Jon Shefner

Martin and Frye, continued

that it is substantively the case that major weighty decisions such as those you give as examples—choosing a career, a partner to marry, or a major in college—are actually made through some sort of conscious discursive reasoning (or application of schema). I think the weight of the evidence tells us that although deliberations may indeed take place, and in fact, lists and spread-sheets can be made at pivotal points, what we might retrospectively *call* “weighty decisions” are actually conglomerates, most of which are non-decisions and non-actions. By the time of the “deliberation” and the discursive reasoning, almost all the “decision” has already taken place, because we have already shaped our environment so that we only need to look around to figure out where we have already guided ourselves, by means of previous actions that have already foreclosed enough options that a calculus is not as silly as it would be for a more open-ended choice. If deliberation is prolonged, it is simply that we have failed at a successful trajectory. I can’t be alone in not actually having deliberated about any of the choices you suggest, nor simply stumbling into them, but following the beckoning of the things themselves.

And that’s where I think field theory is good: when we know who we are and what are the qualities of objects, we don’t need to deliberate, for the affordances of the objects pull or push us. But when we aren’t sure who we are, we may think a great deal, and we *use the objects* to know our own position. Hence I think the best thing to do is to ask people how things appear to them, *before* they act. But not to explain their reasons or thoughts—rather to describe the *qualities* of things. It would be an extraordinarily cognitively demanding sort of narcissism to wonder about what “I” am going to do outside of a situation of dialogue (challenge or explanation) that, as Mead would say, provokes the arising of a *self-consciousness* via taking the perspective of the other. Indeed, I would think that the answer to a question “Should I become an X, marry Y or major in Z” is always no—how can you love Y if you’re

thinking about yourself? Fortunately for us, it seems that a theory of action is pretty much free to do without great attention to the rare and misleading cases of deliberation.

MTF 2:

Motivations are not “empirically, visibly retrospective verbal productions.” Those are what people say when you ask them to explain the motivations underlying something that they have already done. The word “motivation” etymologically and essentially involves what moves one to act, and this is inherently a thing that occurs before the action. It seems we agree here that motivations are difficult to empirically study. So perhaps a productive direction might be to exchange ideas about ways that we might better study motivations. But the fact that when we ask people to describe the motivations underlying their behavior all we get are their post-hoc justifications does not indicate that motivations and justifications are the same thing.

We miss the mark when we look only for correspondence between plans and outcomes when searching for how deliberation fits into a theory of action. This is a key failure of our standard theories of action. Ponderings and deliberations about the future matter not only because they are sometimes realized, but also because they shape our experience of our present lives. Regardless of whether these deliberate moments are actually the tip of an iceberg of subconscious actions and non-actions, they are central in how we perceive our lives. We don’t just ask “why did you marry John?” but “Do you think you’ll marry her?,” “do you want to have kids? How many?,” etc. And these questions, voiced by others and asked to ourselves, force us to consider different ends in light of the people we want to be.

In my work, I have found that future aspirations (again often formed in opposition to present objective conditions, or the “affordances” that surround us) are fashioned around shared understandings of what makes a person virtuous or worthy of esteem. We consider not only what we think will make us happy but what our

better angels, our future better versions of ourselves, would do. These visions of our idealized future selves structure our understandings of our present selves, and people reference aspirations in interactions with others to show that they are deserving of respect and good fortune. A life in which one imagines a brighter future is experienced differently from a life in which one does not, independent of any differences in the “affordances” of people’s present environment and of whether these imagined futures are one day realized.

JLM 3:

Yes, I do think that ponderings give us important information, just as you say, because in focusing on the *future* as opposed to the past, people are better able to describe the affordances of the things that confront them in their experienced world. Once they have acted, it is very difficult to get them to discuss things apart from the justification-motivation complex that begins to grow over all memories once they are reflected upon by a discursive-narrative consciousness. But there are two problems that aren’t yet resolved.

The first is that I am still concerned that you are equating *pondering* with some sort of *impulsion*—that is, that (as Hobbes might have it) we deliberate, considering appetite and aversion associated with each choice until, like a little lotto ping pong ball, our decision pops out. I think that’s not empirically justified. And so when I say that we need to remember what “motivations” empirically are, it’s about staying close to the empirical.

It’s always a tempting first try to take the phenomenon you’re trying to explain and stuff it back into the object of explanation—then you can pull it out like a rabbit from a hat. So the phlogiston theory of combustion was that there is something potential-fiery in objects (phlogiston), and they burn because the phlogiston in them comes out and is actualized. These theorists were over hasty, and needed to remember that the only place they empirically saw evidence of fire was in the burning, not the pre-burning. It was overly convenient to assume it into the objects. And that’s our theory of motivation. The great thing about (*continued pg 13*)

Martin and Frye, continued

motivations is that they're one of those interesting classes of phenomena that may only come into existence as a genus when we ask about them. For that reason, we can always confirm our theories of them.

The second problem is that, if we assume that ponderings *are* important for action (even if not in the Hobbesian way), how would we ever tell? Because in sociological research, we don't in any but a vanishingly small number of cases come upon such moments of pondering. Rather, we elicit them. They might be related to unelicited moments of pondering, but they might not. The unelicited might be related to action, but they might not. It's not quite as perverse as the problem of motivation ("why did you do X"), but if we *ask* people to ponder in front of us, we can't then *conclude* that "pondering is important for action." That's like proving that the refrigerator light is always on, because every time we open the door, the light is on!

MTF 3

With regards to the first problem that you mention above, you're still approaching the question of whether deliberations about the future ("ponderings") should be thought of as motivating actions ("impulsions") from a very instrumentalist perspective—does X thought result in Y action? But our future imaginings do much more than simply trigger a domino chain of events leading to a pre-specified outcome. They shape our experience of our world right now. I'm not saying that we can explain where someone goes to college by the hours she spent pondering different college websites, but rather that these different future imaginings, and the extent to which each one resonates with her, affect how she experiences her life as a high school senior. More broadly, if a person believes that she is heading towards a brighter future, then she perceives her life to be tinged with promise and hope, even if she doesn't have the opportunity to *do* anything differently than someone who believes that her life can only get worse.

With regards to the second problem—how to get at these moments of pondering rather than elicit them -- this is indeed a tricky question. One strategy that might bring us closer to this goal is to talk to people during what Swidler would call "unsettled times"—either times when their own lives are in flux (college freshmen, people entering into a new relationship or actively internet dating) or people experiencing moments of widespread societal transformation (Bourdieu's (2008) analysis of expanded access to secondary education in France, cities in sub-Saharan Africa that are rapidly expanding, factories in China that pop up in the middle of former countryside).

When people are in new social situations, and don't yet know the lay of the land in terms of what is appropriate for "people like them" to do, then they carefully and intentionally notice what others do and try to discern norms or regularities from them, to avoid behaving in ways that would make them stick out. To choose a mundane example that most sociologists are likely familiar with, I distinctly remember the feeling of being a first-year graduate student and purposefully and self-consciously trying to figure out what kinds of unspoken rules existed in the department in terms of student-faculty interactions and the like. And a few months ago, before our first departmental colloquium of the semester, a new postdoc in our department asked me whether it was ok for him to sit where he was sitting— at the table in the center of the room, rather than on one of the chairs lining the walls of the room. This is an example of a moment of pondering that we can assume is also an impulsion—he was unfamiliar of the unspoken patterns of behavior and hierarchies that operate in our department, noticed that many students were choosing to not sit at the table, and this led him to reflect on his own behavior and wonder whether he should change his course of action. During these moments of life-transition, even small actions can involve substantial deliberation and careful thought.

During times of broader societal transformations, beliefs and ideals are more frequently objects of public discourse and private discussion, as people seek to make sense of the changing social field. In his analysis of the epistemological factions in American sociology during the 20th century, George Steinmetz differentiates between "settled" and "unsettled" fields (2005; 2007). He describes how while the sociological field *settled* around the tenets of methodological positivism during the 1950s, by the 1970s, this disciplinary field had become *unsettled*, with historical and interpretative perspectives increasingly well-represented among leading scholars and influential texts. He points out that as fields become unsettled, beliefs that "used to be *doxic* [are] forced to become more explicit" (2005, p. 111).

By seeking out these moments of flux, when individuals enter into new social fields or when the fields themselves become "unsettled," we can begin examine moments of pondering as they unfold rather than retrospectively eliciting them.

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Members' News and Notes

Corrections from previous issues

In the Fall 2011 version of the newsletter, Richard Hogan's institutional affiliation should have read Purdue University (article entitled "Reflections on Nearly Three Decades of Teaching Sociological Theory")

In the Spring 2012 newsletter, Hans Bakker's name was misspelled for the article entitled "Weber's Oscillation Thesis: Patrimonial Prebendalism and Feudalism"

In the Spring 2012 newsletter, Debbie Kasper's title was incorrect. It should have read: "The Big Picture: How a General Framework Can Facilitate Teaching, Learning, and Using Sociological Theory"

New Publications

Articles

- Abrutyn, Seth, and Jonathan H. Turner. 2011. "The Old Institutionalism Meets the New Institutionalism." *Sociological Perspectives* 54(3):283-306.
- Aneesh, A. 2012. "Negotiating Globalization: Men and Women of India's Call Centers," *Journal of Social Issues*, Volume 68, Issue 3, 514-533.
- Blute, Marion. 2011. "Super Cooperators?" *Trends in Ecology and Evolution* 26(12):624-625.
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- Chan, Cheris Shun-ching. 2012. "Culture, State, and Varieties of Capitalism: A Comparative Study of Life Insurance Markets in Hong Kong and Taiwan." *British Journal of Sociology* 63(1):97-122.
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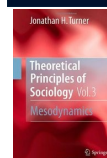
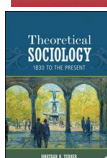
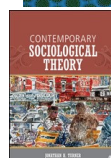
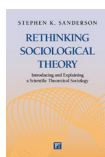
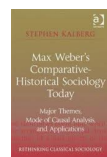
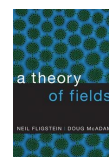
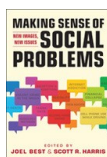
Members' News and Notes (continued)

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Members' News and Notes (continued)

Awards

- Claudio E. Benzecry** (University of Connecticut), *The Opera Fanatic: Ethnography of an Obsession* (University of Chicago Press) won the Mary Douglas Award given to the Best Book in the Sociology of Culture by ASA's Sociology of Culture section.
- Cheris Shun-ching Chan** (University of Hong Kong), *Marketing Death: Culture and the Making of a Life Insurance Market in China* (Oxford University Press) was recipient of the Best Book on Globalization Award, the Global Division of the Society for the Study of Social Problems and was featured on Up Close, an audio research talk show at the University of Melbourne, and at Radio Netherlands Worldwide Chinese service.
- Andy Clarno** (University of Illinois at Chicago) was awarded the Fund for the Advancement of the Discipline from the American Sociological Association and the National Science Foundation for his project entitled "The Empire's New Walls: The Politics of Security in South Africa and Palestine/Israel"
- Claire Decoteau** (University of Illinois at Chicago) was awarded the Fund for the Advancement of the Discipline from the American Sociological Association and the National Science Foundation for her project entitled "Opening Pandora's Box: The Vaccine-Autism Controversy and the Social Construction of American Biomedicine"
- Julian Go** (Boston University), *Patterns of Empire: The British and American Empires: 1688 to the Present* (CUP 2011) has been awarded the American Political Science Associations' J. David Greenstone Book Award for the best book in Politics and History published in 2010 and 2011 and the Best Book Prize in Global & Transnational Sociology from the American Sociological Association
- Ivan Ermakoff** (Professor of Sociology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison) is the recipient of the 2012 Lewis A. Coser Award for Theoretical Agenda-Setting. "This prize recognizes a mid-career sociologist whose work holds great promise for setting the agenda in the field of sociology." Ivan Ermakoff will be delivering the Coser Lecture at the August 2013 ASA meetings in New York.
- George Steinmetz** (University of Michigan) received grants for his project on "Social Scientists and Imperial Politics: Britain, France, and Germany, 1930s-1960s": ASA/NSF Fund for the Advancement of the Discipline; National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowship; Norbert Elias Foundation Fellowship, German Literature Archive, Marbach; and funding from the Office of the Vice Provost for Research and Letters and Sciences Division, University of Michigan.
- Bin Xu** (Florida International University) won the Fund for the Advancement of the Discipline from the American Sociological Association and the National Science Foundation for his project, "Some Sufferings Are More Equal Than Others: Collective Memory of the Zhiqing Generation."

Other Congratulations For:

- Ellis Godard** was awarded tenure and promoted to Associate Professor at California State University Northridge
- Chad Alan Goldberg** was awarded membership at the Princeton Institute for Advanced Study for 2011-2012.
- Erin Metz McDonnell** began a position at Notre Dame as a Kellogg Assistant Professor of Sociology in 2011.
- Larry Nichols** served as President of the North Central Sociological Association for 2011-12.
- Sal Restivo** was awarded a Senior Postdoctoral Fellow, Center for Intercultural Communication and Interaction, University of Ghent, Ghent, Belgium, 2012.
- George Ritzer** was awarded the 2012-13 Robin Williams Lecturer by the Eastern Sociological Association.