

NEWSLETTER OF THE
ALTRUISM & SOCIAL SOLIDARITY
 SECTION-IN-FORMATION OF THE AMERICAN SOCIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1

MAY 2009

FROM THE EDITOR

I am pleased to introduce the inaugural issue of the newsletter of the Altruism & Social Solidarity Section-in-Formation. This newsletter serves as a forum for news, essays, and announcements for sociologists interested in altruism and solidarity. This is a vibrant field of study, but many ASA members are unfamiliar with the important role that sociology has played in the establishment of this area of scholarship (including the fact that a sociologist coined the term “altruism”) as

well as exciting new research. This publication seeks to disseminate this information, so please bring to my attention any relevant books or research projects.

Highlights in this issue include a short history of the Altruism & Solidarity Section-in-Formation by Vincent Jeffries and others, Samuel Oliner’s reflections on his decades of experience teaching and researching altruism, and a summary of Jay Weinstein’s Presidential Address on

“rational altruism” given at the April 2009 meetings of the North Central Sociological Association. Those familiar with the classic work of Pitirim Sorokin will see his enduring influence throughout these pages.

Don’t forget to join the Altruism Section when you renew your ASA membership and please stop by the altruism research roundtable at the ASA meeting in San Francisco. Hope to see you there!

—*Matthew T. Lee*

ESTABLISHING THE FIELD OF ALTRUISM AND SOLIDARITY

This article is an abridged version of a paper published in *The American Sociologist*, by Vincent Jeffries (California State University, Northridge), Barry V. Johnston (Indiana University

Northwest), Lawrence T. Nichols (West Virginia University), Samuel P. Oliner (Humboldt State University), Edward Tiryakian (Duke University), and Jay A. Weinstein (Eastern

Michigan University). It describes the rationale behind this Section-in-Formation as part of a broader attempt to establish the field of altruism and solidarity in sociology.

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ASA ROUNDTABLE ON ALTRUISM

Table 11: “Research on Altruism and Solidarity”

Saturday, August 8th

2:30pm - 4:10pm

Parc 55 Hotel

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NCSA PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS FOCUSES ON ALTRUISM

Jay Weinstein, Professor of Sociology at Eastern Michigan University, delivered the Presidential Address for the North Central Sociological Association in Dearborn, MI, on April 18, 2009. His address should be of great interest to members of the Altruism & Solidarity Section, as it carried the provocative title, "What the World Needs Now: A Model of Rational Altruism." In his remarks, Weinstein challenged the widely-held view that social-economic rationality is rooted in egoistical behavior. As an alternative, he outlined a formal model of motivation rooted in the notion of altruism as conceived by sociologists such as Comte and Sorokin, as well as political scientist Kristen Monroe. This model suggests that altruism—once rooted in a strong perception of a common humanity—can be seen as a legitimate "rational choice." Weinstein illustrated the practicality of the model through the example of Gandhian Economics. His arguments represent a strong challenge to those who conflate rationalism with egoism. Look for his address in the Fall 2009 issue of *Sociological Focus*, due out in early November.

—Editor

PAUL SCHERVISH GIVES THOMAS H. LAKE LECTURE

As some of you may know, I recently was privileged to present the 2008 Annual Thomas H. Lake Lecture on Faith & Giving. This lecture was sponsored by the Lake Family Institute on Faith & Giving at the Center on Philanthropy at Indiana University.

I am grateful to the Lake Family Institute for allowing me to provide you an opportunity to read the printed version of the lecture (contact me at the email address at the end of this article). I encourage you to visit the Lake Institute's website if you would like to purchase a

bound copy of the lecture and to learn more about the Institute.

In the lecture I focus on giving as spiritual exercise. Spiritual exercise is the ascetical practice that deepens our souls and the ensuing way of life or spirituality that informs our daily thinking, feeling, and acting.

My purpose was to explore the spiritual path by which the interaction of receiving and giving, once enlivened in our soul, animates the care and compassion we carry out in our personal relationships and in the community. There is no boundary between inner life and outer life - each

flows into the other at every moment. As I write at the beginning of the essay:

"More than at any occasion in the past, I delve explicitly into the territory of personal formation that guides us to fuller hearts, wiser insights, and more caring practices. I examine the inner life of receiving and giving as spiritual exercise in the realms of soul, relationships, and community."

As always, I welcome your comments and feedback (cwp508.bc.edu).

—Paul Schervish,
*Center on Wealth
and Philanthropy*

ALTRUISM SECTION ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING AT ASA

Sunday, August 9th
8:30am - 10:10am
Hilton Hotel
Attendance is critical!

HELP US BECOME
A REGULAR
SECTION OF THE
ASA...

JOIN THE
ALTRUISM &
SOCIAL
SOLIDARITY
SECTION-IN-
FORMATION
TODAY!

“My Experience with the Field of Altruism,” by Samuel P. Oliner

I would like to thank Professor Vincent Jeffries for his efforts in helping establish the important section of *Altruism and Solidarity* in the ASA. Additionally, I would like to thank other colleagues who were instrumental in helping make this section to become a permanent part of the ASA. This area of research has been a long time coming.

As a student in Brooklyn College in the 1950s, when I brought up research by Pitirim Sorokin on altruism, the professor dismissed it with a wave of his hand and said that, “Sorokin was a philosopher of love with little to contribute to sociology”. It took me many years later to realize that in fact, love, altruism, and compassion are social phenomenon that should be studied by sociologists and other social scientists. Due to my personal experience with altruistic rescuers in Nazi occupied Europe, who risked their lives to save me, I began research along with Dr. Pearl Oliner on rescuers and heroic altruism which eventually led to the publication of *The Altruistic Personality: Rescuers of Jews in Nazi Occupied Europe*(1988). Sorokin was my initial inspiration to look into the nature of altruism and love. The field of altruism should not be overlooked or brushed aside; it should be examined carefully and included in the contemporary sociological discourse.

It is well known that there are several varieties of human behavior. Among them are war, genocide, prejudice, slavery and other forms of

oppression that I label as evil. Altruistic behavior is an antidote to a violent and polarized world. Currently there is a substantial amount of research showing that helping others benefits communities and the world as a whole. Our newest book *Altruism, Intergroup Apology, Forgiveness, and Reconciliation*(2008) seeks to establish a basis for the positive potential of selfless human relations between groups in the forms of altruism, inter-group apology and forgiveness. This is but one of the many avenues which can be examined in the study of altruism and solidarity. The importance of altruism as an area of research is proven by the increasingly number of interdisciplinary scholars who are working on research involving some form of altruistic behavior.

I have been teaching the Sociology of Altruism course for a number of years and have found it to be rewarding because of student interests as well as high enrollments. Students registered for the class because they were interested in the subject matter. Had we offered two sections of the course, they would undoubtedly fill. Since I retired, a colleague by the name of Stephen Stamnes has been teaching this course for the last 8 years. His student evaluations of the course and faculty were outstanding. Mr. Stamnes found the course to be equally rewarding.

—Samuel P. Oliner, Humboldt State University and Founder/Director of the Altruistic Personality and Prosocial Behavior Institute

NEW YORK TIMES OP-ED ON ALTRUISM

On April 12, 2009, *New York Times* Op-Ed Columnist Frank Rich argued that a “bankrupt culture” had spawned the recent financial meltdown in the United States and that a cultural shift towards altruism—not just an economic solution—is a necessary component for moving out of recession. Quoting a Great-Depression-era play, Rich suggests that we need a collective reappraisal of how to make our lives “something good” and realize that “life shouldn’t be printed on dollar bills.” Similar themes can be found in this newsletter, particularly in Jay Weinstien’s Presidential Address (p. 2) and Edward Tiryakian’s essay (p. 12). Pitirim Sorokin would certainly agree.... —Editor

The African Activist Archive Project: A New Web-Based Resource for Solidarity Scholarship

One of the most significant modern American movements of solidarity (and much altruism) actually defeated the foreign policy of a sitting President (Ronald Reagan), whose veto of the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986 was overturned by Congress, signaling the end of U.S. government support for the apartheid government. And it emerged from mobilizations of more than 100 local community, university, religious, NGO, and labor organizations as well as city, county, and state governments.

This historic movement is given new attention in the new African Activist Archive Project website (<http://africanactivist.msu.edu>) developed by the Michigan State University African Studies Center with MATRIX digital social science humanities center.

This project is preserving records and memories of activism in the United States that supported the struggles of African peoples against colonialism, apartheid, and social injustice from the 1950s through the 1990s.

The project is assembling excellent materials for teaching about community mobilizations, including: an online archive of historical materials - pamphlets, newsletters, leaflets, buttons, posters, T-shirts, photographs, and audio and video-recordings; personal remembrances and interviews with activists; and a directory to the many archives of organizations and individuals deposited in libraries and historical societies that are available for further research.

The earliest documents on the website are about the 1962 American Negro Leadership Conference on Africa which included Martin Luther King, Jr. and other key civil rights leaders of that time. The website also includes documents of the Patrice Lumumba Coalition, the Polaroid Revolutionary Workers Movement, Winnie Mandela Solidarity Coalition, and the Pan-African Liberation Committee at Harvard University. Among the audio materials is Harry Be-

lafonte welcoming African National Congress President Oliver Tambo to a 1987 reception in New York.

The website now contains 1350 items of all types of media, including more than 800 documents, 19 streaming videos and 11 streaming audio files, a new T-shirt collection - with up to four images of each (more coming in the months ahead), and galleries of posters, photos, and buttons.

There is representation from many organizations from across the country - 74 US organizations, most of them local groups, in 21 states and the District of Columbia. We have newsletters from 18 organizations, brief descriptions of more than 100 US organizations, and information about many physical archives.

There are many ways to navigate around the site. You can start from Galleries (including Remembrances or types of media, e.g. photos, documents, video) or begin on the Browse page with the organization name, a U.S. state, or the African country that is the focus of organizing. The Advanced Search page allows you to search across all types of media. Also, from each page displaying an item (e.g. photo, document, video), you can link to other items of the same organization or of the same African country of focus.

We are eager to communicate with people who have activist materials that they might wish to have included in this online archive. The project would particularly like to document more solidarity work by African American organizations. Donations of physical archives also are possible to the MSU Library's expanding African Activist Archive Special Collections. If interested, please contact Project Director Richard Knight in New York (rknight1@juno.com) or MSU director David Wiley (wiley@msu.edu).

—David Wiley, Michigan State University

Grant Announcements: Two Templeton-Funded Projects Study Altruism

SCIENCE OF GENEROSITY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME

The University of Notre Dame has launched the Science of Generosity, a project funded by a \$5 million grant from the John Templeton Foundation to Christian Smith, the William R. Kenan Jr. Professor of Sociology and director of the University's Center for the Study of Religion and Society.

"The goal of the project is to mobilize top-quality research across various disciplines on the origins, expressions and effects of generosity," Smith said, noting that the project defines generosity as the spirit and practice of giving good things to others freely and abundantly. "This includes time, aid, attention, blood, possessions, encouragement, emotional investment and more. In countless ways, the world wants for significant growth in the virtue of giving." The grant is the largest ever received by a faculty member in Notre Dame's College of Arts and Letters.

In addition to funding academic research at the University, the Science of Generosity initiative will host a competition among international scholars in fields such as sociology, economics, psychology, behavioral economics, education, law and religious studies. The first phase of the competition will award \$250,000 to \$500,000 to four to eight of the most promising research proposals. The second phase will fund a number of smaller awards, totaling another \$1.2 million.

Current academic studies on generosity are a scattered constellation of research projects operating under different terms such as philanthropy, giving, charity and altruism, Smith noted, but he anticipates a more unified field will develop around the Notre Dame initiative. To that end, he has assembled a board of advisers from experts in related fields, including William Damon (Stanford University), Glen Elder (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill), William Galston (Brookings Institution), and Jonathan Haidt (University of Virginia). Findings will be made available as the project develops on the project Web site: <http://generosityresearch.nd.edu> **Contact:** *Christian Smith, chris.smith@nd.edu*

GODLY LOVE PROJECT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF AKRON AND THE INSTITUTE FOR RESEARCH ON UNLIMITED LOVE

To what extent can emotionally powerful experiences of a divine flame of love move us beyond our ordinary self-interested concerns and help us express unlimited love for all others? In order to find an answer, an interdisciplinary group of social scientists and theologians funded by the John Templeton Foundation have been working for over a year on the three-year "Flame of Love" research project.

This collaborative effort has been led by Stephen Post, President of the Institute for Research on Unlimited Love (www.unlimitedloveinstitute.org), and University of Akron professors Margaret Poloma, Matthew Lee, and John Green. They are joined by a group of 18 nationally prominent social scientists and theologians from the U.S. and Canada who comprise the Institute Core Research Group. The primary goal of the Flame of Love Project is to use multiple methods to investigate the phenomena of "Godly Love," which according to Poloma, is "born out of the experience of loving God, being loved by God, and ultimately being motivated by this dynamic interaction to engage in selfless service to others." The Templeton Foundation provided \$2.3 million to fund projects such as in-depth interviews of exemplars of Godly Love, a national survey on Godly Love conducted by the University of Akron's Bliss Institute of Applied Politics, and five subprojects to other universities at up to \$150,000 each.

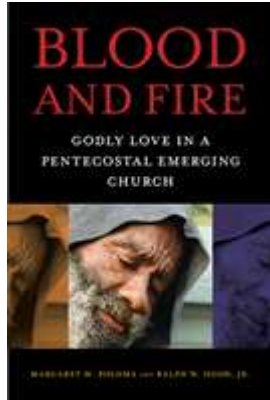
Web site: www.godlyloveproject.org **Contact:** *Matthew T. Lee, flameoflove@uakron.edu*

Books of Interest

BLOOD AND FIRE: GODLY LOVE IN A PENTECOSTAL EMERGING CHURCH

BY MARGARET M. POLOMA AND RALPH W. HOOD, JR.

What does it mean to live out the theology presented in the Great Commandment to “love God above all and to love your neighbor as yourself”? In *Blood and Fire*, Poloma and Hood explore how understandings of Godly Love function to empower believers. Though Godly Love may begin as a perceived relationship between God and a person, it is made manifest as social behavior among people.



Special Offer! Purchase the book *Blood and Fire* through the Flame of Love Project website and receive a 40% professional discount. For more details, see www.godlyloveproject.org.

ABOUT THE BOOK :

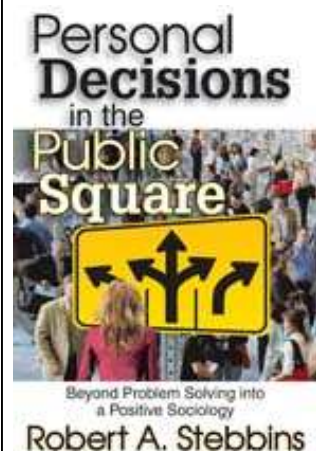
Blood and Fire offers a deep ethnographic portrait of a charismatic church and its faith-based ministry, illuminating how religiously motivated social service makes use of beliefs about the nature of God’s love. It traces the triumphs and travails associated with living a set of rigorous religious ideals, providing a richly textured analysis of a faith community affiliated with the “emerging church” movement in Pentecostalism, one of the fastest-growing and most dynamic religious movements of our day.

Based on over four years of interviews and surveys with people from all levels of the organization, from the leader to core and marginal members to the poor and addicts they are seeking to serve, *Blood and Fire* sheds light on the differing worldviews and religious perceptions between those who served in as well as those who were served by this ministry.

Blood and Fire argues that Godly Love--the relationship between perceived divine love and human response--is at the heart of the vision of emerging churches, and that it is essential to understand this dynamic if one is to understand the ongoing reinvention of American Protestantism in the 21st century.

PERSONAL DECISIONS IN THE PUBLIC SQUARE: BEYOND PROBLEM SOLVING INTO A POSITIVE SOCIOLOGY

BY ROBERT A. STEBBINS



This book looks into how, why, and when people pursue those things in life that they desire, the things they do to make their existence attractive, worth living. Robert A. Stebbins calls this “Positive Sociology,” the study of what people do to organize their lives such that they become substantially rewarding, satisfying, and fulfilling. For most people in Western society, there is much more to life than eliminating or adequately controlling crime, drug addiction, urban pollution, daily stress, domestic violence, and overpopulation. Significant levels of success in these areas bring a noticeable measure of tranquility to people substantially affected by them, but they do not, in themselves, generate positiveness in daily life.

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The Institute for Research on Unlimited Love: Supporting Innovative Research on Altruism Since 2001

The Institute for Research on Unlimited Love was named by the late Sir John Templeton and constituted one of his favorite initiatives. Sir John wrote two small books in the late 1990s, one entitled *Agape Love* and the other *Unlimited Love*. He equated the two concepts, though he felt that in a world where few people speak Greek, “unlimited” was to be preferred. Founded in 2001, the Institute is dedicated to high-level scientific and spiritual progress in our understanding of a love that many hold sacred, and the experience of which transforms the heart toward higher degrees of benevolence for all humanity. Sir John had in mind a warm unselfish love that is not held hostage to reciprocal calculations, that extends to all, and that raises every possible question about human nature and ultimate reality, including the nature of God and grace. This is the kind of love that is found in the great spiritual traditions, that gets people down to New Orleans after Katrina, that makes otherwise competent medical students real healers, that enlivens the pursuit of justice, and that is fundamental to human flourishing. Most essentially, this is the love revealed in the life of Christ. The Institute is a non-profit 501(c)(3) public charity. Please go to www.unlimitedloveinstitute.com for details.

The Institute began at a meeting in a coffee shop on Coventry Road in Cleveland Heights in June 2001 after Sir John, via the Templeton Foundation, promised up to \$8.9 million of support, replete with various matching mechanisms. The Institute has since gained coverage in more than three thousand newspapers, magazines, radio and television venues. These include lead spots in the *New York Times*, “O” Magazine, ABC 20/20, the *Boston Globe*, *The Hour of Power*, the Hallmark TV Channel, the *Christian Science Monitor*, the *Los Angeles Times*, *Psychology Today*, *Reader’s Digest*, and even *Whad-Ya Know*. The Institute

has been the focus of more than 200 radio talk shows, including the Dr. Mehmet Oz Show, the NPR Christmas Eve “Talk of the Nation,” NPR Weekend Edition, Dennis Prager, and the BBC World News Easter Special. Nearly 1000 people from 40 countries attended our conferences on *Works of Love: Scientific and Religious Perspectives on Altruism* in 2003 and 2007.

The Institute has funded nearly 70 scientific research projects at universities including Harvard, Yale, Stanford, Princeton, Chicago, Emory and Case Western Reserve University. It has been featured in conferences from Sydney to the Kyoto Awards.

The Institute is focused almost entirely on the interface of science and theology centered on our perceptions and experiences of what many would refer to as Godly love. A new research project (2008-2010), in collaboration with sociologists Margaret Poloma and Matthew Lee of the University Akron, and John C. Green, Director of the Bliss Institute of Applied Politics, examines the social impact of people’s experiences of such love (see page 5 of this newsletter). A second initiative (2006-2011), based at the Center for the Study of Law and Religion of the Emory University School of Law, examines “love of neighbor” in relation to the pursuit of happiness. Both projects are supported by the John Templeton Foundation. Recently, a major project has been funded to study the 12th step of helping others in AA. We are planning a project on Unlimited Love in the Abrahamic traditions, with a focus on how such traditions successfully enhance our sense of a universal love, and of how they fall short in ways that are sometimes deeply destructive.

—*Stephen G. Post, President of the Institute for Research on Unlimited Love*

Syllabus for Stephen P. Stamnes' Altruism Course: "Sociology of Altruism and Compassion," Spring 2009

Sociology 308

Sociology of Altruism and Compassion

Spring, 2009

INSTRUCTOR: Stephen P. Stamnes

OFFICE: BSS 532

TELEPHONE: 826-3142 EMAIL: sps1@humboldt.edu (PLEASE NOTE: The most effective way to get in touch with me is in person during office hours or by telephone voicemail. I check email less frequently than voicemail. I do respond promptly to all voicemail messages.)

OFFICE HOURS: Tuesdays, 2:30 – 3:45 p.m., and Thursdays, 2:15 – 3:15 p.m.

CLASS MEETING: Tuesday, 4:30 – 7:20 p.m., SH 109

REQUIRED TEXTS: *Amazing Grace* by J. Kozol; *The Psychology of Helping and Altruism: Problems and Puzzles* by D.A. Schroeder, et al.; *Toward A Caring Society* by P.M. and S.P. Oliner; and packet of readings. All readings are required and available in the HSU Bookstore.

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course, Sociology of Altruism and Compassion, will focus on sociological perspectives and also utilize some research from the disciplines of social psychology, and education in an exploration of altruism and pro-social behaviors. It will provide students with the opportunity to examine the genesis of individual and collective acts altruism; the agents of socialization that encourage pro-social behaviors; the role of sympathy, empathy and compassion in altruistic acts; the factors that motivate individuals to move from feeling to action; heroic altruism; hyper-individualism in U.S. society as a possible impediment to altruism; methods by which we can infuse an ethic of caring into our society; altruism and care for the environment; and methods by which individuals can function as social change agents for the creation of a more caring society.

SOC 308 meets General Education upper division Area D course requirements by addressing issues in the following areas: culture; place; behavioral, emotional and cognitive processes; and human interaction and organization. (Refer to catalog for Area D objectives and learning outcomes 1 through 3.)

COURSE OBJECTIVES: Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- define altruism and prosocial behavior;
- differentiate between the feelings of compassion and an altruistic act and describe the factors which have an effect on the movement from feeling to action;
- describe the genesis and influencing factors of altruism;
- differentiate among nature, nurture, and an interactionist and situational factors influencing the development of an altruistic predisposition;
- experience and assess their own involvement in altruistic actions;
- discuss the phenomenon of hyper-individuality in the United States and its possible role as an impediment to altruism;

Continued on next page....

- identify ways in which altruistic acts can be extended to non-human entities, e.g., the environment, animals, etc.;
- explore education as an exemplar of methods by which we can create more caring institutions that revolve around community.
- identify ways in which individuals can function as social change agents in the process of creating a more caring society.

LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR SOCIOLOGY MAJORS:

This course explicitly contributes to students' acquisition of skills and knowledge relevant to the following learning outcomes. Students will demonstrate:

- effective communication through written and oral modes
- critical and creative thinking skills in acquiring a broad base of knowledge and applying it to complex issues
- competence in a major area of study
- appreciation for and understanding of an expanded world perspective by engaging respectfully with a diverse range of individuals, communities, and viewpoints.

SOCIOLOGY MAJOR LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Graduates with a B.A. in Sociology will be able to:

- think critically about social justice efforts and inequalities in communities and environments
- communicate effectively in oral and written forms as well.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

- Regular class attendance is required. You are expected to attend all sessions of the course throughout the semester. This is particularly essential when you consider that 40% of your grade for the course will be determined by work completed in class which cannot be made up after the fact.
- Students need to complete all reading assignments prior to class meetings so that you are able to actively participate in discussions and group activities. Again, this in-class work will account for 40% of your grade for the course, and you will need to be prepared so as to be able to fully participate.
- Students will complete three altruistic actions and turn in:
 1. A journal with thoughtful weekly entries of at least one written page per entry that incorporates or critically analyzes readings, concepts, videos, topics raised in group discussion, and/or your experiences performing altruistic actions in the field as part of your action research
 2. an action research paper that details and analyzes the experiences using the concepts and theories from the course readings for the analysis section of the paper. (For more information on the journal and action research paper, see the instructions for the action research paper.) Please note: If you are a Sociology major or a non-major taking the course for four units instead of three, see me for additional requirements for the research paper.

Continued on next page....

- Students will make a short presentation of their findings to a small group of five to six of their colleagues in class.
- Students will complete a final exam.

GRADING POLICY: GRADES WILL BE BASED ON THE FOLLOWING:

- Class participation, attendance, jigsaw cooperative learning activity, group work, etc.: 40%
- Action research paper: 30%
- Journal of altruistic activities (basis for action research paper) with at least 10 entries made throughout the semester: 10%
- Presentation of action research findings to a small group of colleagues: 10%
- Final examination (group): 10%

OUTLINE OF WEEKLY TOPICS AND ASSIGNED READINGS:

Note: Readings must be completed by the class for which they are assigned. This is essential due to the nature of this class which will involve cooperative/interactive learning. Students will be graded on their contributions to the group process which need to include informed opinions based on timely completion of all assigned readings.

1-20: Introduction

1-27: Hyper-individualism and Indifference

READ: Kozol, pp. 3 – 138; AND On ONCORES (electronic) and regular reserve: Evans, Readings in Collective Behavior, pp. 284 – 295 (Rosenthal, 38 Witnesses) Note: Copies of this reading will also be on my office door for you to read/copy and return.

2-3: Hyper-individualism and Indifference (continued)

READ: Kozol, pp. 141 – 256; AND Schroeder, pp. 1 – 24

2-10: First half of class: Individual Altruism (Genesis of individual altruism, nature v. nurture, sociological/sociobiological perspectives, agents of socialization that may encourage pro-social behavior)

READ: Schroeder, pp. 91 – 156; AND Packet, pp. 39 - 54

Second half of class: Individual Altruism (From feeling to action, sympathy, empathy, compassion, personal characteristics and individual/contextual differences)

READ: Schroeder, pp. 25 – 90, 157 – 166; AND Packet, pp. 1 – 9

2-17: Individual Altruism (Religion/spirituality, secular humanism as motivating factors in altruism, models of altruism)

READ: Packet, pp. 10 -21, AND 55 – 62

2-24: Individual Altruism (Models of altruism continued, transition from every-day occurrences of altruism to heroic altruism, models of heroic altruism)

READ: Packet, pp. 27 – 38

3-3: Heroic Altruism

READ: Packet, pp. 63 – 71

3-10: Heroic Altruism (Heroic rescue during WWII, altruism as a life choice)

READ: Schroeder, pp. 167 – 183

Continued on next page....

- 3-24: First half of class: Heroic Altruism (Carnegie recipients, contemporary examples of altruism as a life choice)
 READ: Handouts distributed in previous class
 Second half of class: Altruism in Society (Infusing an ethic of caring into education)
 READ: Packet, pp. 72 – 82 and handouts distributed in previous class
- 4-7: Altruism in Society (Analysis of corporatized society and capitalism and their relation to altruism and a caring society)
 READ: Handouts distributed in previous class
- 4-14: Altruism in Society (Infusing an ethic of caring into society)
 READ: Oliner and Oliner, Chapters 1 through 5
 Jigsaw activity: Delegates from the Bonding, Empathizing, Learning Caring Norms, and Practicing Care/Personal Responsibility groups will present and facilitate discussions.
- 4-21: Altruism in Society (Infusing an ethic of caring into society)
 READ: Oliner and Oliner, Chapters 6 through 10
 Jigsaw activity: Delegates from the Diversifying/Networking, Resolving Conflicts, and Making Global Connections groups will present and facilitate discussions.
 DUE: Action Research Paper – Firm due date
- 4-28: Altruism and Care for the Environment (Extending the ethic of care beyond humans to other living entities)
 READ: Packet, pp. 22 – 26 and handout distributed in previous class
- 5-5: Agency and Community (Individual action toward a more caring society)
 READ: Schroeder, pp. 219 - 288
 DUE: Student presentations of action research findings

FINAL EXAM: TUESDAY, 5-12, 5:00 – 6:50 P.M. (NOTE: THIS IS A DIFFERENT TIME THAN OUR USUAL CLASS MEETING TIME. HOWEVER, WE WILL STILL MEET IN SH 109.)

THIS SYLLABUS IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE AT THE DISCRETION OF THE INSTRUCTOR.

Additional information:

ACADEMIC HONESTY: Students are responsible for knowing policy regarding academic honesty. For more information, visit: Academic Honesty Policy or HSU Catalog.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: Persons who wish to request disability-related accommodations should contact the Student Disability Resource Center in House 71, 826-4678 (voice) or 826-5392 (TDD). Some accommodations may take up to several weeks to arrange. Student Disability Resource Center.

ADD/DROP POLICY: Students are responsible for knowing the University policy, procedures, and schedule for dropping or adding classes. Schedule Adjustments (Adding or Dropping).

EMERGENCY EVACUATION: Please review the evacuation plan for the classroom (posted on the orange signs), and review Campus Emergency Preparedness http://studentaffairs.humboldt.edu/emergencyops/campus_emergency_preparedness.php for information on campus Emergency Procedures. During an emergency, information can be found campus conditions at: 826-INFO or Emergency Conditions.

ATTENDANCE AND DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR: Students are responsible for knowing policy regarding attendance *and disruptive behavior: Class Attendance and Disruptive Behavior.*

BEYOND RATIONAL CHOICE THEORY: BRINGING BACK ALTRUISM

An entire generation of sociologists, political scientists and economists have been weaned on rational choice theory (RCT), whose high priest in sociology was James Coleman's foundation work *Foundations of Social Theory*. Although its roots are much older, going back to utilitarianism, game theory, and neo-liberal economics, RCT took off in the Reagan era, thriving on the deregulated markets that flourished from 1982 to 2008.

The first decade of this century saw increasing internal criticisms of RCT, and more telling, structural anomalies in the economic system which generated growing inequalities, rather than growing plenty for all. The great crash of 2007-? has dealt a crushing blow to RCT, and the psychology of economic individualism which has bred greed and corruption at highest levels.

Where to go for alternative models? This, I venture to say, will become the preoccupation of the new decade. This is a ready-made terrain for a new generation of scholars, and they should start right away by looking at seeds planted half a century ago by Pitirim Sorokin in his overlooked studies of altruistic behavior. Already, there is a scattering but growing interest in philanthropy, not small-scale but very large scale philanthropy. Yet philanthropy is not the sole alternative, since there can be abuses in philanthropic giving (e.g., to benefit one's family via trusts and foundations). Altruism of the sort practiced by lay and religious individuals and NGOs, such as MSF (Doctors without Frontiers), Amnesty International, and Habitat for Humanity are exemplary in helping alleviate and eradicate calamities besetting the poor and the voiceless, at home and abroad.

In the new post-electoral climate, as elected officials seek remedies for the global financial crisis, so can sociologists follow in the trail set by Sorokin to address the social and spiritual crisis. To come together at professional meetings, such as in San Francisco in August 2009, and map out the return of altruism as a new path for sociologists in different areas of specialization, is to hear the call of Pitirim Sorokin, much as he called us in his ASA presidential address. It is not the call of yesterday, but the call of tomorrow that should be an exciting one for a new generation of sociologists, as they lay to rest the "old" call of RCT and hear the call of the new altruism in empirical and theoretical undertaking.

—Edward Tiryakian, *Duke University*



International Project Team of 1000 Women for the Nobel Peace Prize 2005

The study of altruism and social solidarity is long overdue as a recognized field of specialization within sociology. Considerable attention has been given by sociologists to the study of negative phenomena, such as criminal behavior, racism, sexism, and other forms of behavior that threaten society and deprive individuals of security or their basic rights. In contrast, our discipline has tended to give more limited attention to positive forms of social behavior and organization, such as the study of altruism and solidarity.

It is time for sociology to become a full partner with other disciplines in the development of this vital scientific field. Sociology has a body of theory and research in areas such as culture, institutions, stratification, organizations, and social processes that can be integrated with the existing state of the field and its greater emphasis on individual and psychological factors and levels of analysis.

The study of altruism and social solidarity provides diverse topics for each of the four forms of sociological practice: professional, critical, policy, and public. As a foundation, there is a substantial body of theoretical and empirical work that exhibits a wide variety of substantive topics within this specialty area of professional sociology.

Further, this topic brings a unique critical perspective to the practice of sociology. In positing altruism and solidarity as positive values, it focuses on gaining knowledge and understanding of the nature, sources, and consequences of altruism and solidarity on individuals lives and on society. Such a focus can give purpose to sociological practice and ultimately serve the general public by providing scientifically based insights regarding these phenomena. Knowledge and understandings of altruism and solidarity have diverse applications in policy sociology. Potential projects of policy theory and research range from increasing altruism at the most micro individual level to formulating ways of changing social institutions and the general culture toward greater solidarity.

Finally, the study of altruism and social solidarity provides unique and promising avenues for contributing to a vigorous public sociology by engaging in dialogue with publics both specific and general. Such topics are inherently relevant and address the concerns of large numbers of people.

THE NATURE OF ALTRUISM AND SOLIDARITY

A general consensus emerges in the scholarly literature regarding the definition of altruism. With a dual emphasis on both motive and behavior the common feature of all forms of altruism is regarded as the intent to enhance the welfare of another in some manner. The giving and self-sacrifice involved in altruism are recognized as ranging from minimal accommodation to the other to a universal unconditional love.

Solidarity can be viewed as referring to the positive ways of relating to others entailed in altruism as they are manifested in a form of interaction or in social relationships. Solidarity interaction is characterized by attributes such as mutual help, harmony, love, peace, and constructive creativity. This form of interaction can vary from low to high. It can occur in both interpersonal and intergroup relations, ranging from the micro to the macro.

AREAS OF THEORY AND RESEARCH

A considerable body of empirical research and theory provides the foundation for further work in the study of altruism and solidarity. Although a portion of this professional base derives from psychology and is primarily oriented toward the individual personality, attention is also given to more sociological concerns. In recent years there has been increased interest and activity in the study of altruism by scholars in diverse disciplines. Several substantive areas can be identified in briefly surveying the existing state of the study of these topics.

The Altruistic Personality

A considerable body of research findings indicates that some individuals are consistently kinder, more compassionate, more helpful, and more willing to sacrifice for others. Although there has been some research on the sociocultural sources of the altruistic personality, the preponderance of research and theoretical development has dealt with psychological topics.

Virtues and Character Strengths

The development in recent years in psychology of a major tradition called "positive psychology" has given a central theoretical and research focus to the concept of virtue. The study of the virtues has been characterized in terms of human strengths

and welfare. A number of operational measures of the different virtues have been developed. The study of the virtues has been related to altruism in various ways that give promise to further theoretical development and research.

Sociobiology and Evolutionary Theory

For some time evolutionary theory has been influential in the study of altruism. The analysis of the relation between evolutionary theory and altruism has taken new directions in recent years. One area of interest is the degree of biological determinism in the nature and extent of altruism. Another focus is the influence of the processes of adaptation and selection in altruism.

Increasing Altruism

A major area of theory and research which is particularly related to policy and practical application is the investigation of the methods through which altruism can be increased. This question can be explored both with respect to individual personalities, and in terms of the general level of altruism in groups and in intergroup relations.

Interpersonal and Intergroup Forgiveness

Apology and forgiveness are ways to help people to reconcile and to establish harmonious relations with one another. This is true between individuals, in interpersonal apology and forgiveness, and also between groups, in intergroup forgiveness. The idea of groups and nations being able to reestablish good relations through the process of intergroup forgiveness is a promising avenue of further research. Altruism is apparently one of the important factors in the process of forgiveness in these different contexts.

Volunteerism

Volunteerism is a form of altruistic behavior that involves planned and sustained activities of a social nature that are intentionally directed toward helping others in some manner. It goes beyond single acts of prosocial behavior to continuing participation in altruistic activities. The work of Jane Addams and others in the settlement sociology movement is one exemplar of this focus. Here, theory and research were incorporated within efforts to build solidarity and "the neighborly relation" within systems of social relations.

Conflict Resolution

The investigation of techniques of conflict resolution is an important area of research and theory in the study of solidarity. An example is provided by

the research literature on the technique of "sustained dialogue" that has been used to reduce antagonisms and build solidarity in long-standing conflicts, such as in Northern Ireland.

Social Movements

Another application of the study of solidarity is in the building of solidarity in social movements. A specific manifestation is the literature on the recent development of "engaged social movement scholarship." In this context, professionals and activists engage in cooperative efforts to ameliorate social problems and extend the general welfare.

Social Institutions

The characteristics of social institutions can have a major impact on whether or not altruism is developed and maintained in individual attitudes and behavior. The influence of both family and religious institutions upon altruism has been the subject of some degree of research. Considerable evidence shows the importance of the family as a source of socialization in altruism. Religion appears to be associated with altruism under certain conditions. A recent development in this area is the analysis of the relationship between the meaning and sources of love in religious traditions and the scientific study of love.

Culture

Despite the obvious importance of studies of the relation between culture and the incidence of altruism there is limited systematic empirical evidence relating cultural and altruistic variations. There are indications that the nature of both cultural values and the normative system are related to variations in altruism.

Gender

The study of gender and altruism provides a context for examining the influence of general cultural expectations, gender roles, situational factors, and biological differences on attitudes and behavior.

Organizational Studies

Altruism can be studied in terms of the policies and actions of organizations. Studies have been done at the organizational level of analysis focusing on various manners of giving on the part of both religious denominations and corporations. Another area of study is "venture philanthropy" in which startup resources are provided to nonprofits and charitable groups.

Social Stratification

One area of investigation in studying the relation of social stratification and altruism is the study of power holders in government and in the economy. Focus has been placed on the conditions necessary to limit the misuse of power and to encourage policies and actions that manifest sympathy and mutual aid.

Global Altruism

The development of a systematic approach to the study of altruism and solidarity with global society as the unit of analysis is a potentially vital focus in the study of globalization. The comparative level of national giving to development assistance and the activity of international NGOs are examples of research areas.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The purpose of establishing a Section on Altruism and Solidarity is to provide codification, research, and discussion on these topics at regular meetings of the American Sociological Association and regional sociological associations.

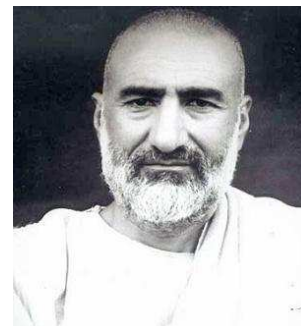
The sociological study of altruism and social solidarity by sociologists has not developed to a level reflecting its theoretical and practical importance. The establishment of a Section on Altruism and Solidarity will change this situation

by formally identifying and defining this topical area within the discipline. For a number of sociologists, especially those still pursuing graduate studies or in the early years of their careers, the updating of knowledge about altruism and solidarity, the testing of relevant hypotheses, and the separation of claims that are speculative from those with a basis in empirical science promises to be an engaging and rewarding undertaking. Moreover, much of the promise associated with an increase in concerted theoretical development and research on these topics comes from the potential for applying the findings from this work: in the formulation of social policy, in educational reforms, in clinical contexts, in social institutions, in social movements, and wherever sociological practice stakes its claims.

The intrinsic scientific and public relevance of altruism and solidarity and their obvious value in a world beset by individual and intergroup discord and violence indicates the importance of establishing the study of these topics as a formally recognized section within the American Sociological Association. It is important that the sociological study of the nature and sources of these phenomena be supported and the mechanisms be put in place to move the discipline of sociology to the forefront in theoretical development and empirical testing in this vital area of scientific investigation.



Peace March in Washington DC, 1967



Badshah Khan:
Non-violent
Soldier
of Islam



Personal Decisions in the Public Square, *continued from page 6*

The principal wellspring of *Personal Decisions in the Public Square* is, in large part, the sociology of leisure, a “happy science.” It is focused on the attractive side of life. Among the basic concepts in the sociology of leisure are activity and human agency. The centrality of positive activity is one of its hallmarks and separates it from other social science specialties. The examination of Stebbins’s new kind of positive sociology centers on conceptual roots found in the approach known as the serious leisure perspective. This theoretical framework synthesizes three main forms of leisure (serious, casual, and project-based) showing their distinctive features, similarities, and interrelationships. Notwithstanding the importance of leisure, positive sociology must also consider the two other domains of life: work and non-work obligation.

This new approach focuses the pursuit of “that which makes life worth living.” In this way, this project explores ideas which are important to all people, such as, negotiating the right work/family or obligation/leisure balance and the tricky relationship between money and happiness. For research scientists or the general public the arguments presented may lead toward a better understanding of negotiating situations in a way that would be more positive than approaching them as “problems” which need to be solved.

Robert A. Stebbins is faculty professor in the Department of Sociology at the University of Calgary. Among his many books are *New Dimensions in the Theory and Research of Serious Leisure*, *Exploratory Research in the Social Sciences*, and *Serious Leisure: A Perspective for Our Time*.

A NEW SCIENCE OF VIRTUES

In what ways might the humanities and the sciences cooperate to develop richer understandings of virtue for modern societies?

In order to answer this questions, the Arete Initiative at the University of Chicago is pleased to announce a new \$3 million research program on a New Science of Virtues. This is a multidisciplinary research initiative with contributions from individuals and from teams of investigators working within the humanities and the sciences. The initiative supports highly original, scholarly projects that demonstrate promise of a distinctive contribution to virtue research and have the potential to begin a new field of interdisciplinary study. Letters of Intent were due March 2, 2009.

In 2010, about twenty (20), two-year research grants will be awarded ranging from \$50,000 to \$300,000. Scholars and scientists from around the world were invited to participate in a research grant competition. For more information about a New Science of Virtues, go to: www.scienceofvirtues.org or send an email to virtues@uchicago.edu.



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