

JOIN AN IMPORTANT NEW AMERICAN SOCIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION SECTION

A section on "Altruism, Morality, and Social Solidarity" is in formation. Please consider joining us to participate in the activities and to work toward realizing the goals set forth in our Mission Statement.

MISSION STATEMENT: ALTRUISM, MORALITY, AND SOCIAL SOLIDARITY SECTION

Sociologists have long been concerned with how to build the good society. The section on altruism, morality, and social solidarity directly addresses this question.

In the broadest sense, the subject matter of altruism and social solidarity consists of activities intended to benefit the welfare of others. These activities span the micro-macro continuum, from individual, to interpersonal, to organizational, to global. They include phenomena such as generosity, forgiveness, unlimited love, virtue, philanthropy, intergroup cooperation, and universalizing solidarity. The subject matter of morality entails distinctions between good and evil, and between right and wrong. Such distinctions are an important aspect of each person's thoughts, actions, and moral judgments. They are also a component of all cultural systems, providing meanings that define for each collective some sense of the desirable and the undesirable. Norms regarding individual and intergroup relations are a part of these cultural systems. As a result, altruism and social solidarity are inevitably related to moral culture.

This foundational subject matter includes several general areas of theoretical development and empirical research. The first area is understanding the nature and variability of these phenomena, their forms and processes, and their anticipated and unanticipated consequences, at all levels of analysis. The second area is exploring the relationships that exist between altruism, social solidarity, and morality. This includes investigating the conditions under which cultural systems of morality vary, from mandating behavior harmful to others, to restricting concern for others to particular groups, to promoting a universalizing solidarity that potentially includes all persons and groups. The third area is the relationship between altruism, morality, and social solidarity and other sociocultural phenomena, such as the unequal distribution of power/authority and resources, the characteristics of social structures and of cultural systems, and the influence of different social institutions.

The intrinsic scientific, policy, and public relevance of this field of investigation in helping to construct "good societies" is unquestionable. The subject matter of the section gives scholars a unique opportunity to contribute to understanding the conditions necessary for a broad vision of the common good that includes all individuals and collectives.

Section activities are directed towards establishing the study of altruism, morality, and social solidarity as a recognized field of theoretical development and empirical research within the discipline of sociology. These activities include the following: providing for regular exchanges of information through the section Newsletter and the Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association; formally recognizing outstanding theoretical, empirical, and applied work in the field of altruism, morality, and social solidarity through annual awards; and linking with other scientific groups working on genetic, psychological, and cultural aspects of these phenomena.

In doing so, we seek to develop and augment a community of scholars motivated to gain greater knowledge and understanding of altruism, morality, and social solidarity. We emphasize the importance of the investigation of the policy implications of this knowledge, and the dissemination of information to publics regarding aspects of altruism, morality, and social solidarity that will benefit individual lives, the social organization of society, and the prevailing culture.

VISIT OUR SECTION HOMEPAGE

Copies of the Section Newsletter and other documents are available on our Homepage: <http://www.csun.edu/~hbsoc126/>.

TO JOIN

The ASA website is www.asanet.org. From there go to "Membership Information," then "Join or Renew," and finally "Join a Section." We are third on the list of sections: "Altruism, Morality, and Social Solidarity (47)." Check to join the section, then go to "Payment," which is only \$5.