



Social Psychology

Spring 2004

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CHAIR'S REMARKS*

Guillermina Jasso
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From the Chair's Desk: The Fundamental Nature of Social Psychology

In my Fall 2003 letter, I proposed a simple color-coding tool for highlighting the sociobehavioral mechanisms and processes that lie at the heart of the human experience. Coloring all **status** words red (including synonyms like **prestige**), all **justice** words blue, all **power** words green, and so on quickly makes transparent the implicit vision of human behavior in whatever we are reading or writing.

In this letter I would like to go one step further, and propose that we highlight as well all the personal characteristics in play, say, purple for the personal quantitative characteristics like **beauty** and **wealth**, and orange for personal qualitative characteristics like **sex** and **ethnicity**. Personal characteristics have the fascinating property that they operate to structure social relations, which is why Peter Blau, in calling attention to their fundamental importance in his 1974 ASA Presidential Address, called them "Parameters of Social Structure." Personal characteristics combine with the primordial sociobehavioral mechanisms – **status**, **justice**, **power**, inter alia – to produce, at the micro level, the identities which make individuals distinctive and, at the macro level, the cultures which make societies distinctive. That some individuals and some societies are obsessed with beauty and others with wealth, some with power and others with status – these become conceptual tools to render intelligible and orderly a wide range of behavioral and social phenomena, from sentiments and individual behaviors to interactions between individuals, interactions between groups, and, indeed, large-scale social movements.

(continued on pg. 6)

In this edition of the newsletter:

The 2004 Cooley-Mead Award Winner
Molm on Integration and Differentiation
Howard on Teaching Portfolios
DaSilva on Compound Connections in Exchange

EDITOR'S COLUMN

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Taking over the newsletter from Jane Sell was a rather daunting task as Jane has done an excellent job with the newsletter these past few years. First of all, I would like to thank Jane for all of her help in making this transition a relatively smooth one. I also need to thank all of the contributors to this issue. Their willingness to write columns really made my job much easier. I'm hopeful that other members of the section will be just as willing to contribute to future issues. Just in case anyone missed that hint, I would like to encourage people to contact me with any ideas for columns or items to be included in the newsletter. Even though this newsletter was just finished, it is already time for me to line up contributors for the summer issue.

Some of the ideas for topics that I will discuss in future issues come largely from my experiences teaching here at California State University-Los Angeles. The fact that CSULA is a largely minority campus, many of the students are the first in their families to go to college, and most students begin at community colleges (which is a trend which will shift to all students starting their careers at CCs given the plans of the new governor) present some unique challenges and opportunities for teaching and researching in sociology.

The next issue of the newsletter will of course focus on the upcoming ASA meetings in San Francisco. Please forward any announcements or information relevant to the meetings to me at gpeters@calstatela.edu.

2004 ASA Annual Meeting
August 14-17, 2004
San Francisco, CA

The Cooley-Mead Award Committee is proud to announce the 2004 recipient of the award:

KAREN COOK
Stanford University



CANDIDATES FOR SECTION OFFICERS

The following individuals have been nominated to serve as section officers:

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Ronald Cohen
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Stefanie Mollborn
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Integration and Differentiation

Integration and differentiation: One brings us together, creating bonds of attachment, commitment, and trust; one pulls us apart, creating differences in power, status, and benefits. As Blau observed 40 years ago, both are fundamental processes of social life that deserve our attention. Yet, as sociologists, we have tended to focus more on understanding processes of inequality and conflict than processes of solidarity and trust. This has certainly been true in the social exchange field, which has long been dominated by the study of power. In recent years, however, exchange theorists have increasingly asked what brings people together: What produces commitment? How does trust develop? What processes lead to enduring bonds of attachment?

One answer to these questions is structure: just as structure determines power and inequality, it can also produce behaviors that lead to commitment and affective bonds. Unequal dependencies produce the former effect, equal dependencies the latter. But is structure all that matters? Again, if one were to peruse the exchange literature of the last two decades, that could easily be the conclusion. Just as power has been the dominant process to be explained, network structure has been the primary causal force studied.

But structure is only part of the picture. Several years ago I became interested in how the form of exchange, independent of structure, affects fundamental exchange processes. I began a research program comparing negotiated exchange, in which actors jointly negotiate the terms of strictly binding agreements, with reciprocal exchange, in which actors individually give benefits to another without negotiation. Reciprocal exchanges were the focus of the classical exchange theories of Blau and Homans and the subject of my research during most of my career.

Initially, my interest was in how the relation between network structure and power varies between these two forms of exchange. But I soon discovered that their most striking differences were in actors' evaluations of their partners and relationships. Independent of network structure and behavior, reciprocal exchanges produce stronger integrative bonds than negotiated exchanges. In a series of experiments, my colleagues (Nobuyuki Takahashi and Gretchen Peterson) and I found that actors engaged in reciprocal exchange like their partners more, trust them more, feel more committed to them, and perceive them as fairer. My more recent work shows that these positive evaluations of the partner also extend to the relationship; perceptions of relational solidarity are much stronger in reciprocal than in negotiated exchanges.

What is it about reciprocal exchange that produces stronger affective bonds, independent of structure and behavior? Is it the greater risk and uncertainty of this form of exchange, which is necessary for the development of trust and commitment? Is it the greater salience of the cooperative (versus competitive) aspects of exchange, produced by the greater ambiguity of intent and more gradual development of inequality in reciprocal exchange? Or is it reciprocity per se; i.e., does the act of voluntary reciprocity provide expressive benefits that are not acquired through negotiated exchange, where reciprocity is a trivial byproduct of a bilateral agreement?

These are the questions I'm currently pursuing. In a series of experiments, two of my graduate students (David Schaefer and Jessica Brown) and I are testing the independent effects of these three causal mechanisms. So far, our research has confirmed the effects of risk on integrative bonds, by showing that negotiated exchanges with nonbinding agreements produce significantly greater trust and solidarity than those with binding agreements — and, when nonbinding agreements are honored at very high rates, levels of trust comparable to those in reciprocal exchange. Experiments now in progress are testing the effects of the other two mechanisms: the relative salience of conflict and the value of voluntary reciprocity.



TEACHING PORTFOLIOS

Over the past decade, teaching portfolios have become an important component of a professional dossier, whether that of a graduate student on the academic job market, a faculty member preparing materials for a promotion case, and/or any instructor seeking to document and enhance her/his teaching skills.

What is a teaching portfolio? A portfolio is a collection of material that illustrates the nature and quality of both an individual instructor's teaching and students' learning. Portfolios reflect particular aspects of teaching and learning -- they are not trunks full of teaching artifacts and memorabilia. A portfolio combines specific evidence of instructional strategies and effectiveness and thoughtful reflections on those strategies, in a way that captures teaching's intellectual substance and complexity.

What are the Purposes of Teaching Portfolios?

(1) Portfolios can serve as a remarkably useful tool for tracking and stimulating one's growth as a teacher. In the very act of preparing them, one is encouraged to think, actively, about teaching. Ideally, development of a portfolio will start the day an instructor enters a classroom for the first time - for many, this will be one's first assignment as a TA.

(2) Portfolios also serve as a useful tool for assessing one's pedagogical effectiveness; they help us monitor how well we are doing.

(3) Portfolios also contribute to developing a pedagogical community, serving as a tool for encouraging conversations with others about teaching. Portfolios can contribute to creating and sustaining a culture that not only values, but is purposeful about, teaching.

(4) Portfolios are also tools for accountability. Portfolios can be one component of tenure, promotion, and general merit reviews. Portfolios can be used to demonstrate what we do in the classroom, and why, to legislatures, parents, and accrediting bodies. For graduate students in particular, portfolios have become a vital part of a job application package. There is no better way to demonstrate who one is as a teacher, and one's dedication to this profession, than submission of a well thought-out portfolio.

What are the Components of Teaching Portfolios?

At a minimum, a teaching portfolio should include:

- (1) A description of one's teaching training, experience, and responsibilities;
- (2) Statement of teaching philosophy;
- (3) Methods and strategies (including rationales);
- (4) Description of course materials: Syllabi, assignments, handouts;
- (5) Philosophy of examination and assessment;
- (6) Efforts to improve teaching (curricular revisions, and what inspired you to make them; experiments in pedagogy and methodology; conferences and workshops);
- (7) Teaching goals: Short- and long-term;
- (8) Appendices: syllabi, sample handouts and assignments, sample examinations, sample course evaluations (from students, colleagues, and your own self-assessment).

These should accurately represent your strengths and your weaknesses. Graduate students will want to make sure to have feedback from faculty. (Faculty can write more nuanced reference letters if they have been closely involved in and familiar with your teaching.) Note that it may be useful to develop several versions of a portfolio, one for yourself and your pedagogical community, and another directed toward those to whom you are accountable.

What are the Contributions of Portfolios to Professional Development?

(1) Portfolios encourage you to start your teaching career purposefully. Keeping track of what works and what doesn't is very hard to do during a busy academic quarter. Developing a portfolio is an excellent way to encourage yourself to take this time. One example: take a few minutes after each class to jot down notes on what was successful and what was less so.

(2) Portfolios contribute to developing a sense of one's self as a teacher. The more self-conscious attention one directs toward teaching, the more this is like to become part of one's professional identity.

(continued on pg. 6)

GRADUATE STUDENT PROFILE

Blane DaSilva

University of South Carolina

bdasilva@mailbox.sc.edu

Blane DaSilva is Ph.D. candidate at the University of South Carolina. His primary interests are network exchange, group processes, organizations, and education. Blane's dissertation is entitled, "Compound Networks: Extending Network Exchange Theory." His dissertation has three main components: (i) network exchange theory competition (ii) experimental research of compound connections; and (iii) application of this research to Resource Dependency Theory.

For over 20 years theory competition in network exchange has led to theory growth. In his dissertation Blane points out that differences in theoretical focus and methodology, however, may make some comparisons inappropriate. In discussing these differences Blane hopes to clarify the points at which theory competition is valid and make suggestions that might facilitate future competition and theory growth in network exchange.

Blane's dissertation research uses Network Exchange Theory to model power distribution in compound exchange networks. This research has been funded by a National Science Foundation Dissertation Improvement Grant and is primarily experimental. Blane uses three types of connection (exclusive, null, inclusive) to model compound connections. A connection is an initial condition of a structure that designates how events across relations are linked. Connections are compounded when one connection type occurs across subnetworks and another occurs within one or more subnetworks. The theory of this research asserts that the effect of a single connection type and the effect of compounding connection types can be very different.

Different types of compound connection produce different exchange ratio outcomes. Blane's research investigates fifteen types of compound connection exhausting the theoretical combinations of the three types of connection in networks with two subnetworks.

Blane has developed, administered, and analyzed over 70 experiments investigating these compound exchange networks. This research has led to a theoretical extension of Network Exchange Theory that facilitates its application in the field.

Blane applies the extension of Network Exchange Theory to Resource Dependency Theory. Resource Dependency Theory is concerned with how organizational environments affect organizations both internally and externally. The theory attempts to explain how external constraints, such as supply structures, exert control and influence on an organization. Blane's research is used to create a more developed modeling of environmental impact on organizations.

Blane's interest in exchange networks and group processes derived from his thesis work on the impact of athletic participation on minority male athletes. More specifically, he examined the role of social capital in the human and cultural capital development of black male student-athletes. A year-long ethnography in three Miami high schools led to the identification of processes involving power, status, influence and social capital as vital to understanding the effects of athletic participation. Blane's long-term research goals include applying theories of network exchange and group processes to substantive areas such as education and organizations, using both experimental and qualitative methodology.

In addition to continuing his research, Blane has a strong commitment to teaching. He has independently developed and taught the following courses: Introduction to Sociology, Qualitative Research Methods, Sociology of Sport, Sociology of Education, Social Problems, and Sociology of Crime. Blane hopes to continue a balanced mix of teaching and research throughout his career as a professor.

CHAIR'S REMARKS, continued.

These are among the fundamentals of social psychology. And they are among the fundamentals of sociobehavioral science. That is why progress in our understanding of sociobehavioral processes requires that social psychology be at the core, and not merely a "field" or an "area" among twenty or thirty fields or areas. Sustained highlighting of the fundamentals of social psychology in the myriad applications to which we devote our energies – marriage and the family, crime, immigration, organizations, international conflicts – has the potential to increase our knowledge not only of those disparate applications but also of the fundamental principles governing the sociobehavioral life.

As we gather in San Francisco next August, there will be much to celebrate. The Program Committee has done an outstanding job of bringing together an exciting set of papers for us to think about. And the Cooley-Mead Award Committee has made a sterling decision, choosing Karen Cook as this year's winner. Karen's work exemplifies the vision of social psychology as fundamental to sociobehavioral science, and Karen has tirelessly promoted this vision. The Section's sessions, Karen's Cooley-Mead address, and all our other efforts provide new knowledge and the tools for gaining further new knowledge. Taking stock, looking at the road we have traveled, and the exciting road ahead, we can celebrate at the Section Reception and be glad for what we have learned and for our good fortune in traveling companions.

TEACHING COLUMN, continued.

- (3) Developing a portfolio requires habits of organization, purposefulness, of self-assessment, growth, and change. These will stand one in good stead in any professional activity.
- (4) Portfolios contribute to improving one's teaching, and, importantly, enable demonstration of that improvement. This is impossible to do if does not keep records from the very beginning.
- (5) Portfolios enable development of a pedagogical community.
- (6) For those who are students, portfolios can help you find an academic position. The great proportion of the academic positions in sociology available today are at teaching institutions. It is imperative to be able to demonstrate one's pedagogical skills. For those who are already academically employed, portfolios can help you retain those positions!

CALL FOR PAPERS

Scott A. Hunt is the editor-elect for the *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*. JCE publishes theoretically, methodologically, and substantively significant studies based upon participant-observation, unobtrusive observation, intensive interviewing, and contextualized analysis of discourse as well as examinations of ethnographic method. Submissions from all substantive areas and theoretical perspectives are welcomed. E-mail manuscript submissions (in Word or WordPerfect format) may be sent to sahunt00@uky.edu. Hardcopy submissions and all other correspondence should be sent to Scott A. Hunt, Editor, *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, Department of Sociology, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky 40506-0027. A processing fee of US\$10 must be submitted via a check or money order made payable to the *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*.

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SSSI Liaison

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Attention Graduate Students!

Social Psychology Section Graduate Student Paper Award.

The Social Psychology section of the American Sociological Association is accepting submissions for the Graduate Student Paper Award. The paper should be article length and it can be based on a master's or doctoral thesis, course or conference paper, or a paper submitted to a journal (but not yet published). Co-authored papers are acceptable if both the authors are students. Note that the prize will be shared if the winning paper is co-authored. The recipient will receive some financial support to attend the ASA meetings in August in San Francisco, where the award plaque and certificate will be presented. Papers should be submitted NO LATER than Monday, June 14, 2004 and the winner will be notified no later than July 1. We STRONGLY encourage electronic submission of the paper although paper submission is welcome. All submissions should be sent to: Anne F. Eisenberg, Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, SUNY-Geneseo, 123D Sturges Hall, Geneseo, New York 14454; eisenber@geneseo.edu.

Social Psychology Section Website:

<http://web.ics.purdue.edu/~towens/socialpsych/>

Name: _____ Address: _____

E-mail: _____

_____ I am an ASA member and want to join the Social Psychology Section. Enclosed is a check for \$12.00 for section dues this year (\$5.00 for students). Make checks payable to the **American Sociological Association**.

_____ I am not an ASA member but am interested in joining the Social Psychology Section. Please send me information about membership in the ASA. **Mail to:** Membership Services, American Sociological Association, 1307 New York Avenue NW, Suite 700, Washington, DC 20005-4701.