

# Social Psychology

Winter 2002

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Carmi Schooler  
NIMH  
[schoolec@irp.nimh.nih.gov](mailto:schoolec@irp.nimh.nih.gov)

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[gj1@nyu.edu](mailto:gj1@nyu.edu)

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Washington State University  
[mkonty@wsu.edu](mailto:mkonty@wsu.edu)

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### Newsletter Editor

Jane Sell  
Texas A&M University  
[j-sell@tamu.edu](mailto:j-sell@tamu.edu)

## CHAIR'S REMARKS\*

Carmi Schooler  
NIMH  
[schoolec@irp.nimh.nih.gov](mailto:schoolec@irp.nimh.nih.gov)



This year's section program will focus on "Social Structure in Sociological Social Psychology: A Distinctive Concern". The implied distinction is between sociological social psychology and psychological social psychology. I obviously feel that sociological social psychology has something to offer that psychological social psychology is lacking. That something is a concern with social structure—a concern that is apparent throughout sociological social psychology and as far as I can tell generally lacking is psychological social psychology.

That a sociologist would tend to see his discipline in a relatively more favorable light than he would see psychology is not particularly newsworthy, but I am trained as a psychologist, although of course, I also function as a sociologist. Following such a dual disciplinary career has both its good and bad sides that parallel the more general advantages and disadvantages of cross disciplinary research.

What are the benefits of cross-disciplinary approaches? For many research questions, interdisciplinary and cross-field approaches can decrease the likelihood that relevant empirical and theoretical considerations that do not seem important from the vantage point of some particular field will be overlooked, while increasing the likelihood that innovative methodological techniques developed in one field will be applied to the other. This is particularly the case when research questions center on causal connections between different levels of phenomena generally investigated by different disciplines.

But there are many challenges and costs to cross-disciplinary approaches as well. It is difficult to keep up with the literature in different fields (and as most of us have observed, it is not uncommon that some research just ignores relevant literature in other disciplines). There are theoretical concerns, methodological biases and customs that are not shared across fields that can affect the likelihood of publication in a given discipline's journals. Also, there are issues of "guild control" which may arise: who can teach what course for example. As famous examples at Michigan, Harvard and Columbia illustrate, such theoretical, methodological and guild issues, often make the best intentioned cross-disciplinary departments founder.

Despite the problems, I find the juggling and balancing necessary to function across disciplines theoretically exciting and personally fulfilling. I hope that a positive outcome of my cross disciplinary experience will be that the attention our section will be paying to the importance of social structure at our sessions at the 2003 ASA meeting may jiggle the curiosity of some psychological social psychologists.

\*This column is a shortened, modified and somewhat differently focused version of a column I was asked to write for the American Psychological Society Observer, when that organization found out that one of its members had become the chair of the ASA Social Psychology Section.

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## EDITOR'S COLUMN

Jane Sell  
Texas A&M University  
[j-sell@tamu.edu](mailto:j-sell@tamu.edu)



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## GRADUATE STUDENT PROFILE

Jim Yocum  
University of Wisconsin  
[jyocom@ssc.wisc.edu](mailto:jyocom@ssc.wisc.edu)



Thanks first to Philip Bonacich for his leadership this past year. Further thanks to all of you who have volunteered to serve on committees and a special note of appreciation to Peter Burke and now Tim Owens for developing and maintaining the website. In this edition, we highlight a discussion with the 2002 Cooley-Mead Award Recipient, Bernard P. Cohn. Additionally, Robert Shelly discusses his research on emotions and expectations states. In the teaching column, Kathy Kuipers discusses her classroom illustrations of social networks. Jim Yocum talks about his varied social psychological research interests and his graduate program at the University of Wisconsin.

In the future editions, we will examine the issues of intellectual property and commercialization associated with universities.

I am a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Wisconsin - Madison. My research applies psychological and social psychological theories to topics in the sociology of law, crime, and deviance. In particular, I am interested in how perceived variability within categories - for example a person's personal beliefs and expectations about how similar criminals are - affects how people interpret and evaluate deviant behavior.

My dissertation research has three main components. First I am developing a computer program that will, in a laboratory setting, allow me to expose participants to stimuli (sets of "stick figures"), the variability among which can be manipulated. Different groups of participants will be exposed to beliefs about variability among the stimuli, enabling me to explore the roles that linguistic categories (e.g. "criminal"), *actual* category heterogeneity, and task ambiguity affect judgments of the degree and nature of deviance among the stimuli.

A second component of the laboratory-based study focuses on the social transmission of homogeneity beliefs to new, inexperienced participants. In the tradition of Sherif's famous autokinetic studies of norms, I am interested in examining how participants collectively create understandings and beliefs about category variability and extremity, and how these are transmitted to new members of the community. Using my program, I explore how the factors mentioned above contribute to the development and institutionalization of these perceptions, beliefs, and their concomitant judgments.

In order to extend these ideas to a real-world setting, I am developing a factorial vignette study that, as the third component of my dissertation, will examine beliefs about deviance and extremity using familiar categories such as "criminals." By varying the availability of linguistic categories, I am investigating how beliefs about homogeneity affect evaluations of the seriousness and extremity of behaviors with contemporary relevance.

While my current research tends to be heavily empirical, and my research techniques relatively quantitative, I believe in bringing a variety of methodological and theoretical tools to bear on a problem. I hope to continue exploring the role of beliefs about homogeneity and their institutionalization with further experimental work, as well as more qualitative methods including conversation analysis.

My undergraduate interest in social cognition originated from undergraduate work at the University of Washington - Seattle, where I graduated with a B.S. in psychology and a B.A. in sociology in 1995. In the psychology department there I provided research assistance on experimental studies on person- and relationship-schemas, and how different types of schemas affect socially supportive behavior in romantic couples. My sociological training at the University of Wisconsin has prompted an interest in theoretical arguments about "constitutive" or "cognitive" effects, stemming from cognitive anthropology, the "new institutionalism" in sociology, and broader discussions of social constructionism.

While my dissertation research has been primarily micro-sociological, I also am interested in macro-level research, including contemporary punitive attitudes towards criminals in the United States. Currently I am providing research assistance for Professor Pamela Oliver, who is exploring the causes and consequences of large (and growing) racial disparities in rates of incarceration in the United States. Other interests of mine include the relationships among sociology, social psychology, and psychology more generally; the sociology of science; rational choice debates; micro-macro theory; evolutionary psychology; and methods and statistics. I also have a strong commitment to teaching, and recently received an award for teaching excellence from the Department for Sociology for my work as a Teaching Assistant.

### GRADUATE STUDENT PAPER AWARD—2002

By Scott Feld, Chair of the Student Affairs Committee

I am delighted to report that out of a competitive and diverse set of entries to our award competition, the committee (consisting of Blane DaSilva, Linda Francis, Jeffrey Houser, Shirley Keeton, James Moody, and Scott Feld) has chosen the 2002 award winning paper and designated three other papers for Honorable Mention. The 2002 Graduate Student Paper Award goes to "The Effects of Status Violations on Hierarchy and Influence in Groups" by Reef Youngreen and Christopher D. Moore, both of the University of Iowa. The three papers chosen for Honorable Mention (listed in no particular order) are: "Emotional Feedback and Amplification in Social Interaction" by Tim Hallett, Northwestern University; "The Role of Reflected Appraisals in Racial Identity: The Case of Multiracial Asians" by Nikki Khanna, Emory University; and "Behavior, Belonging, and Belief: A Theory of Ritual Practice" by Douglas A. Marshall, University of Virginia. These four papers show the strength, diversity, and excitement of current work in Social Psychology. The Youngreen and Moore paper is a fine example of ongoing experimental work in the status consistency tradition. The Hallett paper reports interesting participant observation using a symbolic interaction paradigm. The Khanna paper uses survey research to explore issues of identity. And the Marshall paper draws upon wide ranging sociological and social psychological research towards developing sociological theory of ritual practice. These papers indicate the vitality in this new generation of social psychologists, and should encourage us all in the future development of the field.

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## A DISCUSSION WITH BERNARD P. COHEN: KNOWLEDGE, THEORY, AND APPLICATION

by Jane Sell

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Dr. Bernard Cohen, the recipient of the 2002 Cooley-Mead Award, is renowned for his commitment to theory development and application. This commitment results from a fascination with the pursuit of science. In fact, he was convinced to change his undergraduate

minor from government to social relations by two things: a government professor who commented that “there is not now or never will be a science of government,” and an exciting undergraduate course in social psychology with Jerome Bruner. His senior honor thesis focused on friendship choices in high school and how these choices demonstrated ethnic and racial cleavages. He maintained that this research experience was such a “kick” that he decided to apply to graduate school. He started his graduate career in the psychology department at the University of Minnesota and worked with Stanley Schachter and Leon Festinger. While many students found Festinger to be somewhat difficult to work with, Bernie did not. “I was used to the general style of interaction. “The word was that Festinger would always tell you that you were full of \*\*\*\*. It was a bad sign if this took 30 seconds, but a good sign if it took him 30 minutes.

But while Cohen enjoyed his work in social psychology, he learned he had no interest in the “other things” that defined psychology: personality, animal studies, etc. So, he left Minnesota and returned to Harvard where he worked with Bales and Bush. The general scientific approach was very attractive to him and when asked about his major influences he cites, Bush, Festinger and Stouffer. His dissertation (which later became a book) concerned conformity. What has happened to the general study of conformity? “That’s what I want to know,” Cohen replied. “As for myself, I became more interested in more general theory development and construction.”

Dr. Cohen’s first job was a joint position at Harvard and MIT. At MIT, he worked at the computation center and was a fellow at the Institute for Advanced Study. At that time, he was the only social scientist there, and he said that he was essentially paid to learn FORTRAN. He taught half time or one course a semester. He taught Introduction to Computers and an undergraduate Methods course. This Methods course was planned by two sociologists (Cohn and Dandy Dornbusch), two social psychologists (George Mandler and Ray Hyman) and a social anthropologist (Dell Hymes). After two years of teaching at MIT and Harvard, Cohen accepted a job at UC-Berkeley.

But, he stayed a very short time—one year. His short stay was a consequence of Sandy Dornbusch’s recruitment to Stanford to expand and deepen the sociology department.

The Stanford provost at the time was sympathetic to the development of a sociology program that emphasized a more formal or mathematical approach. Dornbusch recruited Cohen, Joe Berger, Dick Scott and Frank Camilleri the first year and then Buzz Zelditch somewhat later.

How did he become interested in Research and Development groups? This is one of those random opportunity issues. He met a chemist at a dinner party and while exchanging ideas about research gained entrée to research and development groups. One of his interests was to determine if status characteristics theory applied to permanent, long-term groups. Further, he was curious to see if the theoretical tools could explain productivity. “This, naturally related to my major interests: creating, testing and applying theories.”

“Lately, however, I have been changing my views on some theory construction issues, in particular, on the issue of falsification.” I have been wondering who does falsification? I am a bit disenchanted...” and as a result, have become very instrumentalist. “In particular, although my views began to change before I read him, I have been very influenced by the philosopher, Larry Laudan. So since my book, *Developing Sociological Knowledge*, I have changed a bit. And this is something my Cooley-Mead talk addresses.”

And how does Cohen feel about the discipline and academia in general. One general problem is the “corporatization of the university.” But, Cohen noted, “the recession may actually help.” That is, “I am hoping that recent events underscore the issue that “idols have clay feet.” And, about sociology, “I was more worried in the past.” He felt that relativism was really at its height in the 60s and 70s and that standards had slipped considerably. However, he believes that this has changed and is strongly encouraged by what he sees in social psychology. In particular, “I see a lot of very good young people coming along.” But, he cautions that sociologists in general and social psychologists specifically need to be concerned about the discipline. “Sociologists want to be too pure.” What end does such purity serve? “We need to take theories and show how they solve practical problems.” This is an important legitimation for our theories. It is true that I have not always felt so strongly, and that, in fact, I wrote, long ago, a paper entitled, “In praise of Irrelevance.” But we need to consider our place in the university and the community. “We need to do some things to pay the rent.” This is one (of many!) reasons Bernie Cohen admires his wife, Elizabeth. Her work clearly demonstrates a commitment to try to solve practical problems.

How is that the theories and applications actually get developed? As an illustration, Cohen points to the development of status characteristics theory—the development involved “endless meetings” with others in the Stanford theory construction group. And this demonstrates one of the points he emphasized in his Cooley-Mead Address, “It takes a team.”





Kathy J. Kuipers  
Stanford University  
kuipers@stanford.edu

As a social psychologist, my teaching repertoire includes classes in social psychology, group processes, and socialization. But I also teach broader, core courses such as research methods and a writing-in-the-major course. When I teach research methods, I include a section on social ties and networks of relationships and the accompanying methods of data collection and analysis. One of the key features of the class, as I teach it, is the opportunity for students to be “hands-on” with their own research ideas, collecting their own data and analyzing it. For the section on social ties, students are required to do their own sociometric analysis of an organization or group—examining friendship patterns, work relationships, or social distance ties. To prepare students and to help them understand what they will do, I conduct a sociometric analysis of the relationships among class members as an illustration, using a modification of an exercise suggested by Bruce Berg in *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences* (1998).

The day before we are to discuss sociometric analysis, I distribute a questionnaire to all of the students in the class, asking them to report on their relationships with every other member of the class. Each student receives a class list of all students enrolled and another list describing the possible nature of class relationships to which they should refer to identify their own relationships. I use a six-point Likert-like scale of relationships: (1) This person is my best friend; (2) This person is a friend (with whom I socialize outside of class); (3) This person is a class friend (only known through this and/or other classes); (4) I don't know this person; (5) I don't care for this person; or (6) I dislike this person. Students are instructed to put the corresponding number from the relationship statement next to each name for which it applies. Of course, they should not use the number one more than once and they should place a zero next to their own names. While I discourage talking, there are often a few minutes of discussion before they begin while some students ask others their names—they often recognize faces of class friends, but don't remember names.

After class, I analyze the data. Usually I do this by hand—but various networks software and even spreadsheets can be used for analyzing ties in large classes. I create a matrix with the code for each tie or connection entered. Then, based on the spreadsheet, I draw a sociogram to graphically show the patterns of friendship ties (indicated by numbers one, two, and three in the matrix) among the members of the class on that given day. Of course, there are often a lot of fours in the matrix, but that's o.k. Most students know only a small group of other students in the class and some are not connected at all.

In the next class meeting, I begin the class discussion with examples of some of the old sociometric analyses used to study networks as patterns of attraction or rejection. Theories of power and influence, friendship, and exchange can also be discussed here.

Then I demonstrate how we can collect data to illustrate such theories. Typically, a sociometric questionnaire asks respondents to name three (or five) individuals in their group or organization with whom they have a specific type of tie (for example, the persons who provide social support, who are liked as friends, or who are liked least in the group.) While this peer nomination procedure results in a picture of egocentric networks within the group, an alternative procedure yields more complete networks of all possible ties. Group members are presented with a list of names of all peers and asked to rate each one, usually using a five-point Likert-like scale—a series of statements that moves from positive to

negative assessments of their relationships to group members. This procedure is the one I use in my classroom demonstration, although I add a sixth choice: class friends.

I show them the resulting data (presented in the matrix) and the corresponding sociogram. Each person in the class is identified by letters in the matrix—in the row that indicates how they identified their relationships with other class members and in the column that indicates how they were identified by others in their relationships. (The letters or fake initials are chosen to hide each student's identity—and sometimes fictional students are also added to further disguise identities.) In the rows at the bottom of the matrix, totals of relationships types numbered one, two, and three are summarized to identify individuals who are most frequently selected as some type of friend by others. We discuss this social acceptance structure, the relative position of each student in terms of being accepted, and how acceptance is related to power and leadership in the class.

In the sociogram, the students can view a picture of their peer rating choices. The letters representing each student are connected by unidirectional arrows, nonreciprocal ties, or bidirectional arrows, reciprocal ties. Of course, some students are not tied into the resulting network at all and they are shown as isolates on the sociogram. Individuals who choose each other are considered to be “mutual pairs” and three or more people who choose one another are a “clique”. Someone who is chosen by many and is central to the structure of the class is a “star.” The patterns of ties displayed may be more or less clear depending on the data, although there are usually some patterns to talk about: the presence of cliques, powerful positions where students act as intermediaries between two cliques, or satellites of students with ties to and influenced by a single other student.

In social psychology classes, this exercise is useful for illustrating how networks analysis is related to areas such as balance theory, network formation, exchange theory, range and density of social network relationships, and centrality and structural power in networks.

I end the class by telling students about how I might use the data collected. I look at ties to tell me who knows whom—who might be likely to study with whom—who might need to be careful not to plagiarize from whom. These discussions always raise students' interests as they clearly connect what networks can show us about the social structure of our own class. I also talk about how I might construct discussion groups or study groups to help students expand their range of contacts and of information. Finally, I talk about centrality and how it's related to power. We find the central people in the class and assess their influence on others. I also talk about who I will need to be nice to, or at least please, in order to get high course evaluations. Students like to think about the power they might have in this situation.

The obvious value of this exercise is to acquaint students with a first-hand way in which to examine the nature of social ties and how patterns of ties are related to a number of social psychological processes. Additionally, students show a strong interest in this exercise because it tells them something that is not obvious, adding to the claim that sociology can help explore the nonintuitive. An added benefit is the information it provides instructors—helping us to understand the social acceptance structure of our classes. Finally, it demonstrates to students how a sociological view of the world can go beyond theory and be put to practical use in the workplace, the family, and even in classroom situations.

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## Theory and Research Column

Robert K. Shelly  
Ohio University  
shelly@ohio.edu



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### SENTIMENTS AND STATUS PROCESSES

My interest in how sentiments and status processes are related to one another began in graduate school when I read *The Theory of Social Structure* by S. F. Nadel. This interest percolated for a time and resurfaced when I was a beginning faculty member. Rich Conviser, who has since left the academy, was working on this problem at the same time I was in the early 1970s. We compared notes, talked a bit and both moved to other projects. In the late 1970s I wrote a research proposal to apply the Camilleri and Berger decision making model in the standard expectation state experiment in cohesive and non-cohesive dyads. The proposal was not funded, but another one I wrote in another area was. I shifted to naturalistic research on group processes in a population of rural elderly and dropped the study of sentiments, cohesiveness, and status in experimental settings for a time.

A conference at the University of South Carolina organized by Murray Webster in November of 1984 (The First International Conference on Group Processes) drew me back to the work on sentiments and status. I developed a paper for the conference that reviewed the work on sentiments to that time, the problems of applying status structure ideas to the study of sentiments, and other issues. The paper was subsequently published in the collection of essays from that conference. Shortly thereafter, John Skvoretz and Tom Fararo published their path breaking work on E-State Structuralism. This approach on how inequality organized behavior helped me focus my work.

Murray Webster, Joe Berger, and I began a research project in 1986 that led to several papers. Joe has never taken credit for his contributions to this project and there is only one conference paper with his name on it. The three of us worked on how status, sentiment, and authority patterns organize interaction in face to face groups. The paper in *Advances in Group Processes, Volume 10* on how sentiments organize interaction came about as a direct outgrowth of this project. The manipulation of sentiments was very weak in this experiment, but subjects seemed to adjust their behavior as if sentiments organize interaction similar to the way status processes organize interaction. Murray and I went on to write other reports from this project but did not expand the analysis of the sentiment conditions of the study.

As it became clear that this data was not robust enough to support intensive examination of sentiments as state organizers, I began to look for other ways to examine the phenomenon. I did not have a laboratory at Ohio University at this time, and the use of questionnaire techniques was appealing. The first attempts were not very satisfying. It does matter how one asks questions in this area, the number of actors presented in a vignette, how seriously subjects take the project when completing the questionnaire, and the nature of the task (rating versus choice). I tried many of the

possible combinations and finally hit on some that seemed to make sense and that produced high quality data. While I was collecting and analyzing data, Joe was providing important ideas about models, instrument design, and general encouragement. I presented several papers at conferences, sent manuscripts off to journals with little success, but continued to refine the model, techniques, and writing. The paper in *Social Psychology Quarterly* in 2001 on how sentiments lead to expectations was the culmination of these efforts.

Students have become interested in the problem over the years. One of them, Ed Bassin, wrote his honors thesis on the topic. We published his results in *Sociological Focus* in 1989. A group from a class in 2000, including Ian Handley, Jessica Baer, and Stacey Watson, worked on a more psychological approach that compared emotions and sentiments and developed a paper we published in *C.R.I.S.P.* in 2001.

There are still issues to unravel. For instance, sentiments may affect expectations and behavior in one of two ways. In one case, they may be constituent elements, just like status characteristics, in the expectation formation process. In the other case, they may simply affect the translation of status based expectations into behavior. How and under what conditions one model is appropriate as opposed to the other is an obvious question. It would be useful to examine how sentiments and emotions are related to one another and to status processes. Mike Lovaglia and Jeff Houser have been working on one aspect of this part of the problem with some promising results. A variety of other research questions remain to be investigated in this area with both applications and theoretical research.

### Future ASA Meetings

**2003**

August 16-19  
Atlanta, Georgia

**2004**

August 14-17  
San Francisco, California

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## SCENES FROM ASA 2002

The three Cooley-Mead Recipients from Stanford  
(Buzz Zelditch, Joe Berger, Bernie Cohen)



Willie Jasso and Henry Walker



Kathy Kuipers and David Knottnerus



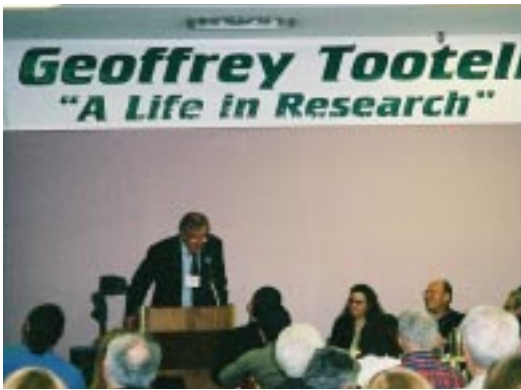
Noah Mark, Doug Heckathorn, David Willer and  
Kichero Iwamoto

Karen Cook  
and Bernie  
Cohen



Dick Scott and Barbara Meeker





Geoff Tootell

Joe Berger and Brent Simpson



Barry Markovsky



Richard Serpe and  
Mathew Hunt



Murray Webster, Martha Foschi, Bob  
Shelly and Hans Lee



Lynn Smith-Lovin, Carmi Schooler and Linda Molm



Mel Kohn, Elizabeth Cohen (in background), Tim Owens, Jeylan Mortimer

COOLEY-MEAD AWARD

The Cooley-Mead award is given annually to an individual who has made lifetime contributions to distinguished scholarship in social psychology. In addition to receiving the Award, the person presents an address to the Social Psychology Section at the American Sociological Association's Annual meetings. To nominate an individual or for more information contact: Robert Shelly at shelly@ohio.edu

WANTED!

Newsletter Editor

Social Psychology Section Newsletter, 2003

Interested in editing the newsletter?  
For information, contact Carmi Schooler or Jane Sell

GRADUATE STUDENT PAPER AWARD

The Social Psychology Section of the American Sociological Association is asking for nominations for the Graduate Student Paper Award. The paper should be article length. It can be based on a master's or doctoral thesis, course papers, or a paper submitted to a journal or conference. Co-authored papers are acceptable if authors are students, but the prize must be shared. The recipient will receive financial support to attend the ASA meetings in August in Atlanta where the prize will be awarded. Papers can be electronically transmitted to: Jeffrey Houser at: jhouser@bgnnet.bgsu.edu

The Social Psychology Section Homepage: <http://web.ics.purdue.edu/~towens/socialpsych/>



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_ 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**.

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