



Social Psychology

Summer 2004

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CHAIR'S REMARKS*

Guillermina Jasso
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From the Chair's Desk: Social Psychology in the Larger World of Human Behavior

In my Fall 2003 and Spring 2004 letters, I proposed a simple color coding tool for highlighting three elements that lie at the heart of the human experience: sociobehavioral mechanisms and processes like **status**, **justice**, and **power**; personal quantitative characteristics like **beauty** and **wealth**; and personal qualitative characteristics like **sex** and **ethnicity**. Together these elements combine to produce, at the micro level, the identities which make individuals distinctive and, at the macro level, the cultures which make societies distinctive. Color coding the elements may help accelerate progress in achieving accurate description of their operation.

In this my final letter as Chair of the ASA Social Psychology Section, I reflect on the fundamental nature of the processes we study and the different levels of depth at which we work. Studying status, justice, and power separately. Much of our work begins with a model of one of the primordial sociobehavioral processes; we draw out implications and test them. We assess the differential importance of competing personal quantitative characteristics and competing personal qualitative characteristics within the operation of each of these processes. This is important, the honest labor of the builder who guards the integrity of every brick. Studying status, justice, and power jointly. Now we assess the differential importance of the various primordial sociobehavioral processes, analyzing the conditions under which individuals and societies come to be in thrall to one or another of them.

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In this edition of the newsletter:

Hallett in the Research Corner
Carrothers and Benson in the Teaching Corner
Tinkler in the Graduate Student Profile
ASA Section Program

EDITOR'S COLUMN

Gretchen Peterson

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Hopefully this edition of the newsletter will reach everyone before the annual meetings. It contains information about the many section activities along with some wonderful contributions for our research and teaching corners.

Because of the space limitations, I am preempting the substantive portion of my column so that all the meeting information can be included. I look forward to seeing everyone in San Francisco.

[ASA Schedule - Social Psychology Section](#)

Saturday, August 14

8:30-10:10am - Basic Sociobehavioral Processes and the Economy

Organizer: Eva M. Meyersson Milgrom

Participants:

1. John Reynolds, Brandy Harris, Emily Marie Boyd, Stephanie Woodham Burge, and Cheryl Robbins - Does Being Planful Always Pay Off? Agency, Economics, and Achievements by Midlife
2. Jean Oggins - Food Assistance and Its Relation to Life Quality Among Poor Clients During Welfare Reform
3. Gabrielle Raley - Making It vs. Faking It: Emotional Labor in White-Collar Business Books
4. Stoyan Sgourev - Motivation for Improvement and Network Structure: Going the Extra Mile in Networks of Peers
5. Kimberly R. Manturuk and Lars Jarkko - What Workers Really Think: Measuring the Psychological Contract

10:30-12:10am - Integrating Basic Sociobehavioral Processes, Biology, and the Life Course

Organizer/Presider: Michael J. Shanahan

Discussant: Linda K. George

Participants:

1. Mary Elizabeth Hughes, Linda J. Waite, John T. Cacioppo, and Louise Hawkley - Marital Biography and Health at Mid Life
2. Elaine Wethington and Barbara Ganzel - Life Adversity and Allostatic Load: A Reformulation of Theories on Social Stress
3. Alan Booth, David R. Johnson, and Douglas A. Granger - Testosterone, Marital Quality, and Role Overload
4. Andrew J. Perrin and Hedwig Eugenie Lee - Theorizing Environment: Sociological Principles and Biological Effects

2:30-3:25 - Roundtables

Table 1. Expectation States and Exchange

Participants: Timothy J. Gallagher, Stanford W. Gregory, Paul J. Hartung, Sarah Harkness, Allison J. Bianchi, Martha Foschi, Jerilee Valenzuela, Kinga Anna Wysienska, and Joanna Heidtman

Table 2. Sex and Relationships

Participants: Sarah Brauner, Diane H. Felmlee, Heather Kohler Flynn, Peter Riley Barr, Bryan R. Johnson, and Cardell K. Jacobsen

Table 3. Narrative and Community

Participants: Thomas E. DeGloma and Max Arthur Herman

Table 4. Negative Emotions

Participants: Katherine F. Bartley, Mark A. Konty, Jeff Joireman, and Blythe Duell

Table 5. Identity: Family, School, and Work

Participants: Alicia D. Cast, Pam Hunter-Holmes, Allison J. Bianchi, Donna Ann Lancianese, Christopher D. Moore, and Dawn Robinson

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I came into social psychology indirectly, via cultural sociology and ethnographic research. As a graduate student at Northwestern (where culture is King), I read an abundance of Bourdieu at the same time that I happened to be doing an ethnographic project on waiters and waitresses, based partly on the ideas of Goffman. Though Bourdieu didn't make his way into what became my Master's Thesis (Hallett 2003a), I became interested in his macro concept of "fields" and the corresponding micro concept of "habitus." These concepts as provided a micro-macro, structure-agency link, the kind of which had been underdeveloped in the interactionist literature that I had been reading. At the same time Bourdieu left unanalyzed the mediating level of social interaction. I read Bourdieu as a sympathetic, yet critical, interactionist, and I began to think about a Goffman-Bourdieu synthesis.

On the surface this may seem absurd. After all, Bourdieu depicts action as highly conditioned by the dispositions of the habitus, while Goffman's approach involves greater spontaneity and strategy on the part of actors. However, both men drew from Durkheim (Collins 1994: 182, 218, 306), and they deeply respected each other. In addition to editing the French translations of Goffman's work, Bourdieu eulogized Goffman and applauded his efforts to "grasp the most fleeting and elusive, and very often the most decisive, aspects of social existence" (Bourdieu 1983: 112). Likewise, Goffman was planning a major presentation of Bourdieu's work for the American Sociological Association before he fell ill (Winkin 1983).

Whatever mutual respect the two had for each other, I would like to suggest a linkage between the habitus and the presented self. Bourdieu describes the habitus as a set of "durable, transposable dispositions" (Bourdieu 1977: 72) manifest as a person's "corporeal hexis," a "style of expression" (Bourdieu 1988: 56).

For social psychologists, it is tempting (but incorrect) to view the habitus as a kind of embodied "self" that motivates action. From this perspective, wedding Bourdieu and Goffman may seem antithetical. After all, Goffman is famous for stating that the self "is not an organic thing that has a specific location. . . it is a dramatic effect arising diffusely from a scene that is presented" (1959: 252-253). The body is simply an empty "peg" upon which performed selves are "hung" depending on the needs of the situation. Yet Goffman distinguishes between the conscious, intentional "signs-given" during interaction and the unconscious, unintended "signs given-off" which can undermine the presentation of self. As I see it, these unintended "signs given-off" are manifestations of the unconscious tastes and dispositions of the habitus (Hallett 2003b: 132).

The habitus plays an important role in interaction because it is so unconscious. Upon presenting a certain self, it is too difficult for the actor to monitor every movement they perform, even a highly conscious, manipulative actor. Therefore, the actor unwittingly interacts in ways consistent with the habitus (dispositions). This way the actor does not risk betraying his/her performance, because the unconscious signs given-off (reflective of the dispositions of the habitus) are consistent with the act. Hence not "just anybody" can become a movie star. The process of becoming a movie star is not just learning how to "act," but also an inculcation of the dispositions that make the act credible (Let's not forget the horrendous movies that often mark and the early careers of stars).

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[ASA Schedule Continued...](#)

[Section Roundtables Continued...](#)

Table 6. Self-Appraisal

Participants: Ryuhei Tsuji, Motoko Harihara, Laura Ann Auf der Heide, Koji Ueno, and Deborah Carr

Table 7. Gender

Participants: C. Lynn Carr, Karen T. Van Gundy, Margaret S. Kelly, Cesar J. Rebellon, and Julie Pelton

(continued on pg. 5)

TEACHING COLUMN

Robert Carrothers and Denzel Benson

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When reviewing the previous teaching columns published in this newsletter, we noticed quite a few contributors mention that social psychological information “naturally” appears in the material they use for other courses. Some take the position that this occurrence is quite intentional, while others note that it is something that simply “happens” since they’ve trained their minds to think in a certain way irrespective of what particular course they may be teaching other than “social psychology.” Regardless of the mode of inclusion, we believe such occurrences are, on balance, for more positive than troublesome. This is particularly the case when information from social psychology can bring clarity to material from any course that, to many students, may seem particularly “dense.” This is often the case with some topics in the introductory course.

Last year we published the results of a content analysis of the treatment of symbolic interaction theory in textbooks targeted to the teaching of introductory sociology (Teaching Sociology, April 2003). For social psychologists in sociology, the results of the survey were probably not surprising. With some notable exceptions, the general picture of SI painted by these texts was one of an aging, astructural theory that has been most useful as the “loyal opposition” to functionalism. In a few texts, the discussion of SI was reflective of contemporary scholarship in the theory but much more often we found the worst-case scenario— the brief mention of some “micro-theory” in the sociological theory section with some applications of the theory in some of the “content” areas such as “socialization.” Often the most recent works cited are those of Goffman. We believe such information is significant for at least three interrelated reasons. One, if a student is exposed to any sociological material at all during their college career, it is likely to be in an introductory/survey course; 2) a preeminent sociological theory reflecting social psychology concerns is being misrepresented, under-represented, or ignored in many of the widely used textbooks; and, 3) if we DON’T let accurate social psychological information “seep into” our teaching of introductory courses, students may never have the opportunity to be exposed to information that can be highly beneficial to their understanding of important social phenomena.

For example, one of the most consistent complaints we have heard from novice students over the years is that they simply don’t understand the concept of social structure and especially how “this structure-thing has any impact on me”. This, at its core, is a social psychological issue— how is structure created and how does it affect the individual once it’s there? By introducing elements of social psychology into introductory classes in a deliberate way, we can help students to see the process that creates structure, the way structure can change, and the way that pre-existing structures guide and shape human behavior. For example, before addressing the chapter on social structure, it might be useful to spend a prior class meeting discussing the topic of the “social construction of reality.” That is, before they begin to flounder in the mystical waters of the study of “preexisting patterns of social behavior guiding our thoughts, actions, and behaviors,” introduce some of the ideas of W.I. Thomas and G. H. Mead. Ask students to talk about and provide illustrations, of how it is possible for a single individual to believe something is real, and through networks of interaction, pass this belief along to so many people that they all start to believe it to be true and allow it to effect their behavior. We have found it useful to have students complete a small “reflective” paper on an illustration of this process. Following a class discussion on such ideas, few students have any trouble thinking of an illustration from their own life, the life of a family member or from “events of the day.” This provides the opportunity for students to get a “sense” of how it is possible for ordinary people to create and maintain a pattern of behavior (a structure) rather than simply accepting the testimonial of the “expert” at the front of the class declaring with considerable solemnity that “structure exists”.

By way of application to content areas, it may be useful to discuss some of the ideas of Stryker’s identity theory when discussing something like role conflict and possible explanations of how an individual perceives and manages the “demands” of a hectic life. (continued on pg. 7)

GRADUATE STUDENT PROFILE

Justine Tinkler
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Justine Tinkler is a Ph.D. candidate at Stanford University. Her primary interests are in social psychology, the sociology of law, and race and gender inequality. Justine's dissertation incorporates all of these interests by asking what drives resistance to laws aimed at reducing inequality and testing the theory using the case of sexual harassment law. Justine argues that laws, as formal structures, impose rules for appropriate behavior. When laws apply to behaviors that are customary and widespread, such as has historically been the case with equal opportunity laws, they send the message that "normal" people need to change. Justine identifies three sources of resistance that laws encounter when they work toward destabilizing "normal" patterns of interaction. The first is the established status order among social groups, and the latter two are perceived threats to privileges and norms of social interaction. Given the existing race and gender status hierarchy, she suggests that it is possible that laws or policies aimed at equalizing interactions could achieve the opposite effect, activating existing unequal status beliefs by making them relevant to interaction. To test the theory and examine whether it can be generalized, Justine's dissertation uses both experimental and survey research methods. Justine was awarded a National Science Foundation Dissertation Improvement Grant to help fund this study.

Justine's dissertation is informed by two previous research projects that apply social psychological theories to the issue of sexual harassment. In a study using survey data to examine how people define sexual harassment, she found that people's general beliefs about sexual harassment were more important than their knowledge of the law in defining it. In fact, for people who had resistant beliefs, familiarity with the law actually decreased the odds of defining sexual harassment according to its legal definition.

This finding provided the motivation for another project in which Justine and two other graduate students at Stanford conducted an experiment assessing the effect of being informed of a workplace sexual harassment policy on men's gender beliefs. The results provided evidence that the dissemination of sexual harassment policies can make gender salient, thereby activating more traditional gender beliefs. Justine's work on the topic of sexual harassment received the Stanford Sociology Department's Barbara and Sanford Dornbusch Award For A Contribution to the Understanding or Solution of a Social Problem. While her work thus far has focused on sexual harassment law, her long-term research goals include applying her theory of resistance to other equal opportunity laws such as affirmative action, racial integration mandates, and sexual orientation protections. Justine is also committed to her teaching. She has taught a course at Stanford on Friendship, Status, and Social Pressure, and has been a teaching assistant for courses in graduate research methods, the sociology of gender, race and ethnic relations, and writing in sociology. In addition, she works as a statistical and qualitative software consultant for the Stanford Social Science Resource Center.

[ASA Program Continued...](#)

[Section Roundtables Continued...](#)

Table 8. Cooperation

Participants: Karin Sanders, Birgit Schyns, and James A. Kitts

Table 9. Affect and Emotion

Participants: Lisa Troyer, Mary R. Rose, James D. Clark, Janice Nadler, Robert Gottlieb, and Pauline Rosenau

Table 10. Potpourri

Participants: James W. Coleman, Tracy E. Crosby, Yasusuke Minami, and A. Paul Hare

(continued on pg. 7)

CHAIR'S REMARKS, continued.

This is the integrative work of the builder who ensures that all the bricks fit together seamlessly and coherently. Searching for the fundamental forces which generate the operation and importance of status, justice, and power and of the personal quantitative characteristics and the personal qualitative characteristics. The physicist Enrico Fermi devoted an hour a day to pure speculation about the fundamental nature of the physical world. In that spirit, I offer a list of four candidates for basic forces governing human behavior:

- * To know the causes of things
- * To judge the goodness of things
- * To be perfect
- * To be free

However wide of the mark these candidate forces may be, the exercise of analyzing them and attempting to draw out their implications for the primordial sociobehavioral processes and for the interplay of personal characteristics will sharpen our tools and yield new ideas and insights and new questions. This is the work of the builder who watches over the entire house and every room within it. Combining all our efforts, this portfolio of work at different levels of depth will get us one step closer to the Holy Grail of reliable knowledge about human behavior.

It has been a privilege to serve the Social Psychology Section as Chair. Besides looking ahead to San Francisco to the exciting new research that the Program Committee has assembled and the Cooley Mead Award celebration of Karen Cook's contributions, I look back to thank all the members of the Section, all the officers of the Section, all the members of committees of the Section for their selfless and conscientious devotion to sociobehavioral research and the infrastructure for sociobehavioral research. I am glad for what we have learned and for our good fortune in traveling companions. We have much to celebrate at the Section Reception.

RESEARCH COLUMN, continued.

The same can be said for Goffman's con men (1952). Con men are successful not simply because of their efforts at self presentation, but also because they have acquired the dispositions needed to be a good faker. For a typical person to disregard the dispositions of the habitus, to engage in performances that are totally foreign, is to risk humiliation on the part of signs given-off, manifestations of the habitus that is rejected. As such the habitus shapes the presentation of self, but the self-presented remains situated. The habitus is not a "self" so to speak, nor is the body an "empty peg" (Hallett 2003b: 132). In this way the habitus places some bounds on interaction and shapes the presentation of self. Though bounded, interactions retain a level of spontaneity. The outcome is social, but not over socialized.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1977. *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1983. "Erving Goffman, Discoverer of the Infinitely Small." *Theory, Culture, and Society* 2, 1: 112-113.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1988. *Homo Academicus*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Collins, Randall. 1994. *Four Sociological Traditions*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Goffman, Erving. 1952. "On Cooling the Mark Out: Some Aspects of Adaptation to Failure" *Psychiatry: Journal for the Study of Interpersonal Relations*. 15, 4: 451-463.

Goffman, Erving. 1959. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday.

Hallett, Tim. 2003a. "Emotional Feedback and Amplification in Social Interaction." *The Sociological Quarterly*. 44, 4: 705-726

Hallett, Tim. 2003b. "Symbolic Power and Organizational Culture." *Sociological Theory*. 21, 2: 128-149.

Winkin, Yves. 1983. "The French (Re)presentation of Goffman's 'Presentation' and Other Books." *Theory, Culture, and Society* 2, 1: 109-111.

TEACHING COLUMN, cont.

Students can see this relationship because they perceive that they are “stressed” and “overwhelmed.” Very likely they have 4-6 classes, are gainfully employed, family responsibilities of some kind, high school and college friends, and a social life— they understand being pulled in five directions at the same time. Using the concept of a “salience hierarchy of identities,” have students reflect on the identities they have and which ones are most important to them in terms of their impact on how they spend their time and influence how they feel about themselves. The inherent logic of the theory allows students to see meaningful aspects of their life reflected in sociological concerns while connecting their personal decision making to the structural expectations placed on them by each of the identities. For a social psychological “double-header” follow this discussion with Goffman’s “presentation of self” and ask them to consider whether Goffman’s situation based conceptualization of roles is more or less useful and explanatory than Stryker’s relatively stable identity hierarchy. At the end of these discussions, students will have multiple examples of how the expectations of structure (environmental and group based for Goffman, identity and role based for Stryker) impact their everyday existence. Additionally they are engaged in the material through their personal experiences and they have used these experiences to evaluate the usefulness of social psychological theory— and perhaps even enjoyed the process. Sadly, our research (noted above) found that if the instructor relies on textbook material, the events just described may never occur. The ideas of writers and researchers in the “Iowa” school tradition of SI in general, and identity theorists in particular, were mentioned in only four of 40 texts we surveyed (which is, incidentally, far fewer appearances than that fountain of sociological social psychology, Sigmund Freud).

So if we follow the material in the great majority of introductory texts, we will not do well in representing one of the major explanatory positions in sociological social psychology and students will not have the opportunity to see how useful such material is to their lives.

If we ignore the opportunity to integrate conceptually sound, scholarly based, social psychological material into our Intro or Principles classes, we not only miss the opportunity of simple exposure, we fail to provide the students with a tool that is most likely to “hit home” with them and give them the ability to understand a variety of topics in sociology. In short, don’t be afraid to let good social psychological material flow to wherever it is most useful even if it doesn’t appear in “THE TEXTBOOK.”

[ASA Program Continued...](#)

[Section Roundtables Continued...](#)

Table 11. Medical Research

Participants: Deborah R. Barnbaum, Susan Roxburgh, and Kenneth J. Branco

[3:30-4:10pm - Section on Social Psychology Business Meeting](#)

[4:30-6:10pm - Basic Sociobehavioral Processes and Culture](#)

Organizer/Presider: Gary Alan Fine

Participants:

1. John F. Stolte - An Empirical Assessment of Emerson’s Theory of Value: Advances in Sociological Miniaturism
2. Karen Dann-Lynch - How Do They Do It: The Typologies and Sociocognitive Strategies of Role Switching
3. Norbert Wiley - The Linguistics of Inner Speech: Saussure Meets Symbolic Interaction
4. Pawan H. Dhingra - Bridging Multiple Identities: Immigrants Manage Cultural Scripts Across Work and Home
5. Christena Nippert-Eng - Concealment and Disclosure: Wallets, Purses, and Identity Work in Modern Societies

[6:15-7:00pm - Cooley-Mead Award Ceremony](#)

Honoree: Karen Cook

[7:00-8:15pm - Section Reception](#) (Joint with Section on Children and Youth)

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ASA Program Continued...

Sunday, August 15

2:30-4:10pm - Integrating Theories of Basic Socio-behavioral Processes

Organizer/Presider: Jonathan H. Turner

Participants:

1. Michele Williams and Emily Chang - The Role of Affect in TRust DEvelopment and Cooperation
2. Steven Hitlin and Glen H. Elder - Adjudicating Agency
3. John Baldwin and Janice I. Baldwin - Integrating Theories of Basic Socio-Behavioral Processes
4. J. Scott Lewis and Jeffrey A. Houser - The Function of Free Riders: Toward a Solution to the Problem of Solidarity

Other Sessions of Interest:

Sunday, August 15

10:30am-12:10pm - Group Processes I: Trust and Solidarity

12:30-2:10pm - Group Processes II: Status and Identity

GROUP PROCESSES CONFERENCE

Friday, August 13

8:30am - 5:00pm

Renaissance Parc 55 Hotel

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.