

Culture

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A Message from the Chair

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This is my last opportunity to have the platform as chair of the Culture Section to invite comment on some issues that I feel are engaging; so I hope you, the readers, will respond!

One of the exciting aspects of applying a Sociology of Culture angle of vision to an area of research is the opportunity to explore the interplay between the values of social groups and their translation into the norms that structure social behavior. The media and the exhortations of those who engage in social criticism are good sources. Thus, current attention to “care” and “caring behavior” has become of interest.

What caring is, who is responsible for it, whether its tasks represent choices or “natural” propensities are questions and assumptions lodged in the culture having to do with the assignment of both the emotional and physical division of the labor of caring. Types of caring behavior are curiously gender-identified. Moral invectives accompany assumptions causing women to feel they are responsible for caregiving in the home and in the non-commercial part of society. Engaging in caregiving activity may cause stress, as it plunges the giver into relationships in which sympathy and empathy are mandated. Not everyone wants to be so engaged. But once being assigned a caregiving role (or falling into it) not doing it often causes guilt. Few women can just say “no” to being a primary caregiver to children. Men who take on caring assignments in these domains in a moment of crisis (such as the illness of a spouse or a parent), or in a particular point in their life (e.g. as a nurse in the army during battle) may get applause and become heroes, but should they do them “too long” they may be regarded as wimps. Their self-evaluations may also suffer. The culture becomes embedded in our psyches.

Care is also a concern of political culture, as our legislatures decide whether they should take on the obligations

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Editor's Note

I continue to welcome your ideas for submissions!

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Western Sociology and Its Limits

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Ron Lembo's essay on the failure of the sociology of culture to address the theoretical challenges of changing times, is a valuable intervention, and deserves a response. In my view, he is correct to point out that sociologists increasingly find arguments many scholars in the social sciences and humanities make, arbitrary and subjective, even trivial. Post-modernism has become the big tent under which most of these arguments are grouped, by opponents and adherents alike. The term is thus more an indication of battle-lines drawn than of precise theoretical differences. Lembo suggests that the central failure of cultural sociology in coming to grips with new developments may lie in its inability to grasp the cultural logic of commodification. An overly economic characterization of capitalism and its effects has indeed led to macro-theories that

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In the Margins of Culture: Towards a Third World Cultural Studies

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Within the sociological approach to culture in the U.S., cultural studies is clearly a marginal perspective. Within cultural studies itself — especially as practiced in the U.S. and Europe — the Third World is also somewhat marginal. Yet, out of the many variants of cultural studies — from the original English contributions of Raymond Williams (1960), E. P. Thompson (1966) and later Stuart Hall, to the subaltern studies of Ranajit Guha (Guha and Spivak 1988), the Marxist literary criticism of Aijaz Ahmad (1992), Edward Said's path-breaking contributions to the study of culture and politics (1978, 1994), and the burgeoning fields of postcolonial studies and Latin American postmodernism — comes what may be thought of as a distinctive (if broad) field called Third World cultural studies (TWCS), where the woven threads of lived experience, subjectivity, agency, dreams and visions under-

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of caring for those who do not have the personal or physical resources to do so themselves. President Bush, furthermore, has argued that “compassionate conservatism” should orient caring activities, further suggesting that such acts ought to be in the private rather than the public realm.

The task of pinpointing particular actors and institutions to take on caring roles has been taken on by those who place themselves along the spectrum from the conservative camp to the radical. The conservative camp sees caring behavior as most appropriately exercised by religious and private institutions, and by families. Yet “families” are often a code word for women when discussion turns to behavior. Not only conservative thinkers make these assignments. Some feminist scholars, for example, have expressed concern that as women have moved into the paid labor force they have left an unmet gap between the needs of children, old people and social needs formerly met by their volunteerism. Few suggest that men fill the gap. There have been some important proposals by such theorists as Barbara Bergmann suggesting that the care of very young children be taken out of the family through a program of universal preschool care—an idea probably regarded as radical in this cultural environment.

The caring activities of society, from child care and nursing care, to the attentiveness and activity on behalf of the arts and the environment, are loaded with assumptions about duties and obligations that define social roles.

All these issues inform my current research into the factors that influence lawyers’ choices to enter “public service” careers or to do considerable amounts of “pro bono” work. First of all, there is a debate on whether lawyers have an obligation to engage in uncompensated pro bono work as part of the “service ideal” of the legal profession. Secondly, the question is what kind of work they ought to be doing. As with all cultural definitions, they have changed a lot. Notions of serving “the deserving poor” who were the widows and orphans of an earlier period were considerably expanded during the “great society” programs of Lyndon Johnson. With the beginning of the Legal Services Corporation the notion of the “underserved” replaced the category of widows and orphans. Lawyers in commercial firms who commonly, in the past, devoted pro bono time to such activities as working on the legal business of their city’s symphony orchestra or

art museum might not now be regarded as helping society in the same way as a lawyer working on a capital case is today. What is public interest anyway? Lawyers are torn between those who feel “social impact” law (such as work in the ACLU protecting first amendment protections of free speech) is the most important kind of public interest law, and those who believe the only authentic public interest work is direct service to needy people who do not have the funds to hire lawyers to help them navigate the legal entanglements of immigration law, landlord-tenant cases or divorce litigation. I am reminded of the excellent studies of authenticity reported in the papers assembled by Charles Kadushin for last year’s ASA program—such as the papers that explored competing ideas of what is “real” as in the cases debated as to whether one can be a member of a religious group if one is entirely secular, or what it takes to define a piece of music as really “country music.”

My research seeks to outline these issues underlying such questions and get a handle on the wider cultural perspectives that feed into legal practice. What kinds of other questions are we exploring? Does the generalized notion of a division of labor regarding caring come into play in the professions? Do women lawyers more than male lawyers engage in “do good” work? Must work on behalf of others be uncompensated for it to be regarded as public service work, or can one become wealthy in the pursuit and still be regarded as engaging in care work?

There are no absolute answers to these questions. The definitions are always negotiated and it is unclear as to who has to power to define them. Nevertheless, it is interesting and intellectually profitable to lay them out and see the impact of cultural assumptions that are embedded in the choices people make about the work they choose, whether for pay or not for pay, and in the role assignments with their accompanying prescriptions for appropriate attitudes they acquire by virtue of their sex, or race, or class.

I would also like to invite members of the section to be in touch with me about items they would like to address at the Council Meeting or Business Meeting of the Section. Please get in touch through email : cepstein@gc.cuny.edu. Looking forward to seeing you at the meetings and program events of our section this summer.

Western Sociology and Its Limits, continued

lack the subtlety and nuance needed to capture the dispersed and ephemeral phenomena of a world being reshaped by the forces of media and markets.

I would like to extend Lembo’s observations and briefly consider the relation between sociology and the other social sciences, to try and illuminate the sense of crisis he indicates. Sociology’s great strengths, in my opinion, are in the power of its macro-theoretical perspectives and in its insistence on studying the empirical world as it is, rather than as it ought to be. Yet the institutional politics of the academy and the difficulty of freely bridging disciplinary boundaries have led

to the attempt to reproduce sociology as a self-sufficient discipline, without the kinds of interchanges with anthropology, history and politics that characterized its earlier development. Meanwhile, the domain of sociology is changing, leading to a gulf between sociological theory and its terrain. Reflecting on the history of the discipline will clarify why I think sociology is unable to address the material before it.

The origins of sociology as a discipline lie in the problem of order, in most accounts instanced in efforts to understand the crises generated in the wake of modernization. As Eric Wolf has observed, the idea of society as an entity *sui generis* implied the modern nation-state as its tacit institutional

locus, and as its preferred perspectival basis. Sociology was rooted in the experience of Western European nation-states, as the latter sought to extend their sovereignty to the sphere of ordinary citizens (as T. H. Marshall has pointed out), and to intensify the administration and surveillance of social reforms and their outcomes. Working with an emphasis on consensus and order, sociology grew through its conversation with Marxism, as Michael Burawoy has argued, wrestling with questions about historical change and the transnational dimensions of power better addressed by Marxian thinkers at Western Europe's margins. With some exceptions, like Georg Simmel and Walter Benjamin, neither of these intellectual traditions addressed questions of experience and of daily life, focused as they were on more large-scale explanation. Max Weber's dichotomy of fact and value was an acknowledgment of the high altitude of most sociological theory, relative to the interpretive tools needed to engage with real social action. His separation preserved this dichotomy, however, making it harder to overcome the disjuncture between social theory and the world it sought to clarify. The difference was that the level of social explanation addressed intentional-laden facts which were treated as "objective," tacitly ignoring not only their interpretive dimension, but as well the "subjective" residue of daily life. The realm of daily life was encompassed rather through statistics, in disciplines like demography, which treated populations as quantifiable units rather than as containing multiple coexisting realms of experience.

Meanwhile, the main forces of social change work through institutions that impact precisely the plane of ordinary existence, e.g., media and markets, that harness the energies of individuals in transforming the mundane world. The hallmark of modernity, and its imputed political complement, democracy, is that the masses enter history as full-fledged actors, and everyday life takes center-stage. Sociology is thus faced with the challenge of reworking its theoretical tools, which after all were fashioned in the apprehension of mass democracy, not in its cause.

This may seem like a controversial proposition. I think it can be illuminated if placed against the trajectory of its most proximate discipline. While sociology studied western industrialized societies, anthropology focused on "others" who, increasingly, crossed the oceans and learned to talk back to those studying them. Anthropology was thus forced to reconsider its epistemological stance, and to confront its historical formation vis-a-vis colonialism. By comparison, sociology has escaped such a challenge. The discipline's

self-image as liberal and reformist exempts it from the kind of frontal attack anthropology has suffered (for instance in the work of Talal Asad, or of James Clifford and George Marcus). Although some leading practitioners did pay attention to the phenomena of everyday life, much of it did not feed back into reconceptualizing macro theory, as for instance with ethnomethodology and symbolic interactionism, although it had the potential to do so.

The limitations of sociology are clearer outside the west, where the norms of "developed societies" have a more precarious existence than they do in Europe and the U.S. In the era of developmentalism, non-western societies had to be "developed" by state power, in a method euphemistically called modernization, although the means for doing so were hardly modern or democratic. The results of this process are no secret. We are witnessing the large-scale failure of secularism as a policy. Religion is plainly a medium through which the majority understand the world, rather than a detachable body of belief and practice sequestered within private life (as Robert Bellah has argued, for example). I do not believe this is anti-modern reaction. Here too the masses seek to occupy the stage of history, and everyday life has acquired an unprecedented visibility, unsettling traditional thought and time-honored ways of life. What is required is to separate modernity as a set of abstract, universalistic norms from the processes whereby those norms are sought to be achieved: the journey, not the arrival matters.

I suggest that in the west as well, sociology has overly identified itself with a normative conception of modernity, due to a disciplinary division of labor now overtaken by events. As the terrain of "the west" itself gets more interpenetrated by "the rest" with globalization, and riven by increasingly visible conflicts of race, class and gender, the abstract character of modern norms becomes clearer. Sociology's response has been to insist on the importance of these norms. The failure to realize these norms, however, should lead to closer empirical investigation, not reductive categorization, and must lead to new theories about the varieties of modernization rather than a simple reiteration of old truths. Opening the realm of daily life to theoretical investigation would require historicizing the place of the west and considering anthropological insights into the mutual constitution of self and other. Both of these tasks became sidelined. Rather than cry wolf against postmodernism, it may be more useful for sociologists to reassess the historical development of their discipline, and come to terms with it.

In the Margins of Culture: Toward a Third World Cultural Studies, continued

line the centrality and embeddedness of culture in everyday life. Peter Chua has defined the perspective in the following terms: "Third World cultural studies explores what culture is in all aspects of life, what we mean by it, what we do with it, and its unique political and historical relations with the 'Third World.' It analyzes and politicizes the ways in which making sense of all parts of the world and of our place as individuals, groups, communities, and nations within it are cultural processes. It examines how cultural meanings are transmitted and considers how the selection and interpretation of cultural

messages are essential to the process through which our identities are constructed" (Chua 1996, cited in Foran 2000). A specifically Third World cultural studies represents a political approach to culture, and a cultural approach to politics, focusing on how political cultures and discourses circulate and compete — features which are not intrinsic or exclusive to Third World cultural studies, yet which seem in my view to happen here more often than in what we might term "First World" cultural studies, let alone the conventional "sociology of culture" approaches in the U.S.

The purpose of this essay is to introduce the idea of a “Third World cultural studies” and to point toward some recent work in this field, thus broadening the scope of the ASA culture section, in ways roughly analogous with Ron Lembo’s Winter 2000 contribution to the Newsletter, “The Road to Nowhere: Reflections on the Current State of the Sociology of Culture.” I hope this will also be an opening to the very large numbers of ASA members interested in globalization, race/ethnicity/nation, and feminist studies, in addition to culture more generally.

I would like, therefore, to immodestly explore the shape of the field of Third World cultural studies with reference to several projects I have worked on over the past two decades: my dissertation and first book on Iran, which sensitized me to the importance of culture in the study of social movements (work extended more recently with Jean-Pierre Reed); a forthcoming volume co-edited with colleagues Kum-Kum Bhavnani and Priya Kurian on a field we call “women, culture, and development”; and finally, a media study of a key episode in the cold war in which the term was crystallized for me.

Political cultures of opposition: conceptualizing agency in the sociology of revolutions

I came to the study of culture in the early 1980s while working on the Iranian revolution, in an encounter with theories about revolutions, most influentially Theda Skocpol’s ambitious structural interpretation of the French, Russian and Chinese revolutions, where she famously argued: “Revolutions are not made; they come” (1979: 17). As this went against my own theoretical and political instincts I set about trying to show how people had made the revolution in Iran. To do this, I had to think through how political economic structures — themselves greatly but not solely shaped by the west in a process of dependent development — were challenged by the actions of social groups. The key to this puzzle for me gradually crystallized into the notion of “political cultures of resistance” — the various ways that people creatively draw on experience, emotions, subjectivity, sedimented traditions and ideological refashionings to make sense of political and economic exclusion and to mobilize themselves and others in revolutionary struggles (Foran 1993, 1997; I owe much to Sivanandan 1980 for the germ of the idea).

How then, do culture and agency matter in the causality of revolutions? Jean-Pierre Reed and I (forthcoming) have recently argued that prior to revolutions, individuals, groups, and organizations articulate multiple political cultures of opposition to the regime, and that these may draw on diffuse folk beliefs and historical memories of struggle, shared “structures of feeling” (Williams 1960) fashioned out of reactions to common experiences, and eventually, perhaps, explicitly revolutionary manifestos and formally articulated ideologies. By “political culture,” we mean not the 1960s’ North American political science concept of the same name, with its measures of “tradition” and “modernity” (see Pye and Verba 1965 and Coleman 1968, among many others), but the plurivocal and potentially radical ways of understanding their circumstances that various groups within a society sometimes articulate to make sense of the political and economic changes they are living through. Other theorists invoke aspects of the same idea, notably Sewell (1985), Skocpol (1985), and Selbin (1997), as well as Charles Tilly, with his passing but suggestive reference to “cultural repertoires of revolution” (1978: 151-9, 224-5), Ann

Swidler, with her influential metaphor of a “cultural tool-kit” (1986), James Scott’s work on “hidden transcripts” (1990), or even earlier, C. Wright Mills’s “vocabularies of motives” (1963 [1940]: 442). The qualifier “political cultures of *opposition and resistance*,” however, distinguishes this notion from the American sociology of culture tradition. The fact that such cultures tap everything from historical memories of past conflicts to inchoate sentiments about injustice to long-standing religious idioms and practices to more formally elaborated political ideologies moves beyond the polarization of the Skocpol-Sewell debate by embracing all of what they respectively pinpoint as relevant and trying to show how these might articulate with each other. Our insistence that such political cultures are plural and multiple, that they can be secular as well as religious, and that different social groups may embrace different versions, takes us beyond the excellent work of Farideh Farhi (1990) and Mansoor Moaddel (1993) on cultural aspects of the revolutions in Iran and Nicaragua. In this we are in agreement with Jon Cruz that cultural elements (which he calls “tropes”) interpenetrate each other in complex and sometimes politically powerful ways (see Cruz 1999; I also owe the title of this essay to an echo of this book). We show how this is true both of liberation theology and Sandinismo in Nicaragua, and of their relationship with each other, as well as the more diffuse idioms and sentiments of nationalism, social justice, human dignity, and democracy that underpinned them.

To capture the cultural and ideological dimensions of this intervention of human agents onto the historical stage, then, we have proposed the notion of “political cultures of opposition and resistance.” Figure 1 captures this conceptual complex in a preliminary, schematic fashion.

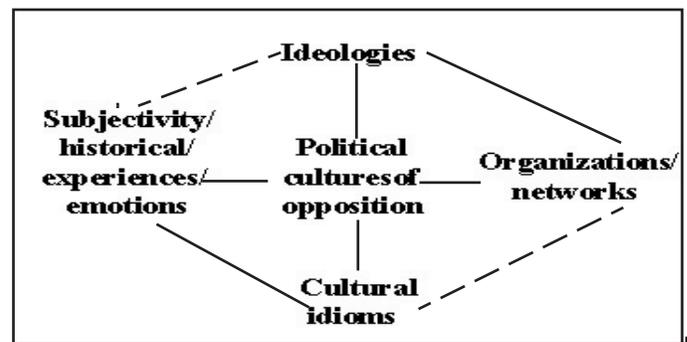


Figure 1. The role of culture in the making of revolutions

We argue that organizational capacity, lived experience, emotions, culture, and ideology come together under certain circumstances to produce revolutionary political cultures. This suggests that political cultures of opposition are a product of, and in turn have an impact upon, a range of discursive and material elements: from the historical experiences that shape subjectivity and arouse emotions that E. P. Thompson (1966) has identified, to *all* the issues uncovered by Skocpol and Sewell on the spectrum from cultural idioms to formally articulated ideologies, and through the organizations and networks of social actors who make revolutions happen (or not). The dotted lines indicate the more indirect linkages between subjectivity and ideology on the one hand, and cultural idioms and social forces on the other. All of these elements pass through and are held together by our notion of political cultures

of opposition and resistance at some point in the chain, and complex two-way relations are not ruled out.

Different groups, classes, and actors will construct intricate combinations of these political cultural elements, sometimes weaving them into critiques of the regime with great mobilizational potential. How capable these multiple political cultures are of bringing together diverse sectors into a broad and unified opposition may spell the difference between success and failure. Often a *range* of specific political cultures and ideologies will be activated and elaborated to mobilize opposition in a society; indeed, this is logical in light of the complexities of Third World social structure and the need for a broad coalition of social forces (usually in the shape of a *populist alliance*) to initiate change (Foran 1993). Such social forces may be the standard ones of class, but this must be handled with particular care, as E. P. Thompson reminds us, and not in isolation from gender and race as two other central principles of social stratification and partial determinants of political identities, as much recent scholarship on revolutions has argued (see Moghadam 1997, McAuley 1997, Foran, Klouzal, and Rivera 1997, Shayne 1999, Kampwirth forthcoming, Foran 2001).

Women, culture, and development: new approaches in the sociology of development

In another recent project, a volume co-edited with Kum-Kum Bhavnani and Priya Kurian, *Feminist Futures: Re-imagining Women, Culture and Development* (London: Zed, forthcoming), we propose a new take on Third World development issues that centers culture. What “women, culture, and development” (WCD) can be rests on an assessment of the vast potential of creatively combining the three fields of critical development studies, feminist studies and cultural studies. Each needs the others to see its own blind spots. Each can contribute an angle of vision that is indispensable for breaking out of the impasse of the crisis of development.

Our vision of WCD is one where analysis can move flexibly between political economic macrostructures and local discourses and practices (see Freeman 2001 and Bergeron 2001 and the many works they cite for similar approaches). It would be one where scholars can center the activities and struggles of Third World women, learning from their great variety and seeking to articulate paths to the dialogue that must precede any wider unity across lines of race, sex and world, and where Third World actors are neither victim nor hero (see Jameson 2000) but play leading parts in the struggle against globalization from above. Indeed, development studies should confront and appropriate globalization — not the other way around — forging alliances with cultural and feminist studies. This kind of scholarship and analysis (for it is not carried out only in the academy), to which many people are already contributing, is not new, but deserves a name, for which we see no better term at present than “women, culture, and development”.

Media studies and analysis of the cold war

Third World cultural studies represents an approach to culture that can also bring a critical perspective to First World cultural practices. In the essay where I first coined the term (I have been teaching a graduate seminar on it since 1994; Peter Chua’s discussion of the term above is from a 1996

paper for this seminar), “Discursive Subversions: *Time Magazine*, the CIA Overthrow of Mussadiq, and the Installation of the Shah” (2000), I assess the 1953 coup against the radical reformer and prime minister of Iran, Muhammad Musaddiq, a non-communist advocate of democracy who sought to break with a history of dependency and Western influence in his country’s economy and political affairs. Like Sukarno in Indonesia, Gandhi and Nehru in India, Nasser in Egypt, Nkrumah in Ghana, Ben Bella in Algeria, and Ho Chi Minh in Vietnam,, Musaddiq’s nationalism and (like Arbenz and Arevalo in Guatemala, and later Allende in Chile) his democratic aims were fatefully misrepresented in the West, especially in the pages of *Time*, the *New York Times*, and other mainstream publications. Dominant U.S. constructions of Musaddiq were based on Orientalist and cold war discourses, and served to further solidify such discourses. This contributed directly to the atmosphere — the “structure of feeling” (Williams 1960) — in which a coup was conceived and made. While the *New York Times* studiously avoided mention of U.S. actions in Iran, Luce’s publications *Time* and *Life* were instrumental in castigating the Truman administration’s indecisiveness in the region, and contributed to the election of a Republican administration that was more willing to intervene in Iran’s internal affairs. Against this should be seen the difficulties of countering this discourse, whether in the pages of *The Nation* or through Musaddiq’s own efforts to address the American people. The covert policies that produced the coup were in their turn produced by a cold war discourse that *Time* shaped decisively, and the “success” of the coup forged a precedent that led to further interventions in Guatemala and Cuba, among other places, in the decade that followed.

All the causal links in the chain that produced the coup may never be identified, but a Third World cultural studies perspective on the events suggests the plausibility of such a chain, and insists that the discursive subversion of the Musaddiq administration practiced by the U.S. media played a material role in the history of the cold war, most fatefully in Iran itself.

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In sum, Arvind and I urge members of the Culture section to study some of the many works from and about the Third World that deal with culture in ways that are partly consonant with, and partly critical of, much of what is done in the name of the sociology of culture in the United States. We join with Ron Lembo in seeking to bring new theories, disciplines, and subject matters into the broad field of the study of culture. We will all be the richer for it.

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**Report on Princeton Conference:
Consolidating Cultural Approaches to Inequality**
Adriana Abdenur and Nicole Esparza, Princeton University

On April 19-20, Princeton hosted a conference titled "Race/Ethnicity, Self/Culture, and Inequality." The meeting brought together eminent scholars from the fields of sociology, anthropology, and psychology in an attempt to formulate a more integrated disciplinary and interdisciplinary research agenda for the study of inequality. In order to complement the field's structural focus, the conference explored the role of culture in the production and reproduction of inequality.

Traditionally, the literature on inequality has considered culture through the lens of norms and beliefs, for instance in the culture of poverty thesis. The approaches represented at this conference incorporated more nuanced analyses of meaning-making and repertoires. The conference was put together with the explicit goal of promoting greater dialogue among scholars working separately on similar topics. Michèle Lamont (Sociology, Princeton University), the conference's organizer,

outlined three objectives for the meeting: to integrate cultural, social psychological, and structural aspects of inequality; to explore how the self is shaped by race and class identity; and to explore the potential contributions of comparative approaches to research on the topic.

The opening panel, “Self, Culture, and Structure in Theoretical Perspective,” laid out some of the analytical tools for the study of culture and inequality. Ann Swidler (Sociology, University of California at Berkeley) outlined a framework for thinking about culture that acknowledges that culture contains multiple meanings and that people draw differently from cultural repertoires at different times. Swidler believes that culture does not match the domains of institutions closely; it is precisely the *less* institutionalized arenas of life that generate new cultural idioms most profusely. Drawing from her book *Talk of Love* (2000), she noted that, when the institution of marriage does not solve problems, people use repertoires to fill in the gaps. In tying this work to recent research on identity, Swidler argues that action schemas – a default option people employ to understand the world – are used to draw boundaries between social groups. At the same time, people are not bound by a unitary identity; they activate different identity labels according to context. By desimplifying the notion of a one-size-fits-all culture, Swidler acknowledges human agency while also recognizing that choices are limited; culture is thus both enabling and constraining.

The relationship between the self and the collective was also addressed by Mustafa Emirbayer (Sociology, University of Wisconsin-Madison). Emirbayer draws on the works of Sorokin (1957) and Parsons and Shils (1951), which distinguish among three analytically distinct relational contexts of action (social systems, cultural systems, and personality systems). However, Emirbayer’s point of departure is neither the system nor the individual; he conceptualizes the personality system (the collective-psychological) in transpersonal or collective terms. More specifically, he focuses on emotional ties to argue that they are themselves a potential source of structure. Emirbayer stresses that expanding our understanding of racial inequality requires further elaboration of mappings (the typology of the three contexts of action) and mechanisms (recurrent causal sequences, such as identification, idealization, and projection). He calls for an expanded inventory of such mechanisms and mappings, which would yield a more generalizable approach to the role of emotions in inequality.

In contrast to these two largely theoretical approaches to inequality, Nicole Shelton (Psychology, Princeton University) offered empirical findings on the effects of discrimination from the field of social psychology. Shelton’s studies address the implications of discrimination from the target’s perspective, as well as the influence of discrimination on mental health outcomes. Her work emphasizes how variations in the meaning and salience of ethnic groups moderate minority individuals’ experience of discrimination. Her findings show that a high degree of group identification can help buffer those individuals from the adverse effects of discrimination. In addition, the studies show that endorsing a nationalist group ideology dampens the effects of discrimination. Finally, because they are less ambiguous, blatant displays of discrimination pro-

duce less stress than subtle displays. These results show how powerful perceptions of inequality are while also highlighting the malleability of those perceptions.

Discussant Dale Miller (Psychology, Princeton University) outlined how social psychologists think about the self, culture, and identity. Miller pointed out that substantial inequalities do not automatically yield substantial differences in psychological experiences. Social psychologists like Shelton try to understand these patterns by looking at the perception of discrimination. For instance, discrimination often occurs through in-group favoritism, which is rarely acknowledged by in-group members as active discrimination. Miller noted that these studies would benefit greatly from more precise definitions and accurate measures of fundamental concepts. The issue of basic definitions and language was taken up even more vociferously by John Borneman (Anthropology, Princeton University), who called for greater examination of words like emotions and discrimination and expressed skepticism at the ability of sociological theory to elaborate generalizable frameworks in the study of culture and inequality.

These problems of definition have been tackled in many ways by scholars of race. In the second panel, “Self, Racism, and Intra-Racial Differences,” the presenters addressed various types of settings in which race impacts the construction of the self. Claude Steele (Psychology, Stanford University) drew on a general stereotype threat theory that posits that as people engage in a social setting they sometimes face the possibility of being devalued based on one or more identities. Cues indicating this possibility can trigger an appraisal process in which Steele has identified a major tension: When the threat of devaluation emerges in a setting to which the individual aspires to belong, the impulse to be vigilant about threats conflicts with the impulse to overlook those same cues. This tension can become a long-term characteristic of the individual’s experience in that particular setting. Steele illustrated this theory by summarizing several experiments, one of which tested minority students’ perceptions of bias in instructor evaluations. His conclusion that ambiguity isolates the individual from the feedback, leading to a loss of motivation, resonates with Shelton’s findings that ambiguity in displays of discrimination produces adverse mental health outcomes.

Whereas Steele studied a variety of social settings, anthropologist John Jackson (Harvard Society of Fellows) focused on a specific setting to illustrate the richness and fluidity of symbolic meanings. Jackson drew on his recently published book *Harlemworld* (2001), an ethnography of class relationships among Harlem residents. Jackson explained that gentrification has prompted Harlemites to draw on different discourses to justify who belongs in the neighborhood. For example, the hip-hop generation of Harlemites has constructed a fantasy Harlem — a Disneyfied “Harlemworld” — that is completely abstracted from the realities of the flesh-and-blood neighborhood. In hip-hop songs, Harlemworld is a homogenous landscape of mansions, limos, and private jets. This mythical reinterpretation — an act of rejection and renewal

— shows how local identities are reshaped through cultural production.

Religion is often a key moderator in this process. Nancy DiTomaso (Business School, Rutgers University) talked about her interview-based research exploring attitudes towards racial inequality among working class and middle class people by focusing on their interplay with political orientation and religious beliefs. DiTomaso sees the construction of meaning about both identity and politics as cultural productions that are mediated by religion. She has found a correlation between conservative political opinions of race relations and social welfare topics and the degree of religious identity.

A more longitudinal approach was seen in the presentation by Frank Furstenberg (Sociology, University of Pennsylvania) who provided an overview of his thirty-year study on the impact of teenage pregnancy. Furstenberg conducted three waves of interviews beginning in the mid-sixties and found that by the mid-nineties the differences between teenage mothers and their peers had diminished considerably. He uses these results to critique the popular notion that teen mothers become chronically welfare-dependent. Furstenberg has found that many of the women in his study eventually went back to school and successfully entered the job market. His study contradicts the culture of poverty literature by illustrating how culture and structure interact: rather than assuming that a specific set of values yields consistently negative outcomes, he shows that many of these women, with their families' support, were able to overcome structural barriers through resilience and strategy.

In his discussion of Furstenberg's paper, Mitchell Duneier (Sociology, University of Wisconsin-Madison and UCSB) framed those findings explicitly in terms of cultural repertoires, highlighting that the women in the study led their lives in a continuing dialogue with the stereotypes attached to them. Likewise, Duneier called for the incorporation of social psychological approaches into studies of inequality. He pointed out that Steele's paper shows that, while stereotypes are powerful, even small encouragements can lead to substantially more positive outcomes. Duneier also addressed the work of Jackson and DiTomaso in terms of cultural production, noting that macro-structural change in Harlem can be seen in the neighborhood's changing identity and that political leanings are strongly influenced by religious beliefs.

The variety of methods used to study race also characterizes approaches in class and in part reflects competing definitions of class. In the third panel, "Self and Class Differences," class was operationalized either in terms of lifestyles or in terms of occupation. Annette Lareau (Sociology, Temple University) presented her ethnographic work on the parenting practices of middle-class mothers. Lareau notes that scholars of inequality tend to focus on unequal distribution of resources; she focuses instead on the strategies that people employ when using those resources to solve day-to-day problems. She also points out that sometimes studies of inequality focus too narrowly on race at the expense of class; she therefore tackles these two dimensions simultaneously.

More specifically, she argues that, while black middle-class families often encounter race-specific problems, they draw on generic middle-class resources to solve them. Her vivid account of the Marshall family shows how black middle-class mothers transmit to their children the sense of entitlement and negotiation skills that are typical of middle-class, while also transmitting the strategies needed to navigate situations of potential discrimination.

This lifestyle-based definition of class is also central to Maria Kefalas' (Sociology, St. Joseph's University) study of housewives in a predominately white working-class suburb of Chicago. Kefalas focuses on the relationship between consumption and post-industrial cultural labor, arguing that home ownership and care in this setting are fundamental to definitions of self-worth and mutual moral pronouncements. The housewife women, some of whom get down on their knees to trim the grass with scissors, engage in a social performance that is simultaneously a genuine process of identity construction. The house becomes an extension of the self, and the housewives use cleanliness and domesticity to uphold their family's respectability. Kefalas interprets this symbolic work as a symptom of the economic insecurity of working-class families aspiring to middle-class status. Her work resonates with Michèle Lamont's work on boundaries in that it illustrates how social groups sometimes draw on moral criteria to assert their dignity.

In contrast to Lareau and Kefalas' ethnographic work, David Grusky (Sociology, Cornell University) employs a quantitative approach to class analysis by tackling the postmodern view that classes are losing their historical role as pivotal axes of social organization. In his work with Kim Weeden, he argues that there is inadequate evidence to support this perspective and proposes that students of class focus on a more disaggregated level, that of relatively small clusters of detailed occupations. At the level of these disaggregated "micro-classes," the effects of class are stronger because the division of labor gives rise to deeply institutionalized social groups. According to this perspective, social closure operates not at the aggregate level but rather at the disaggregate level of occupations. Grusky and Weeden compared the effects of class at those two levels of analysis and found a decline in differences between the effects of conventional class categories but great stability in class structuration at the micro-class level. Their study is particularly original because it allows them to identify what aspects of class structuration (identity, lifestyle, political, attitudes, etc.) change at the big-class and micro-class levels.

Discussant Carolyn Rouse (Anthropology, Princeton University) commented on the importance of Kefalas' work for looking at consumption as a means of identity construction. Additionally, she noted that work on inequality should also look at institutions as contributing to social mobility. Likewise, Paul DiMaggio (Sociology, Princeton University) noted that Lareau's account of the Marshall family is precisely what Swidler means when she says that culture differs in the availability and use of toolkits. DiMaggio pointed out that the intimate connection that people make between their homes and their selves

reflects the important role of emotions in constituting identity that Emirbayer elaborates in his paper. The comments by Rouse and DiMaggio highlighted the common quest — seen in all three presentations — to establish where and how, both culturally and structurally, social boundaries develop.

Boundary formation was explored within the context of immigration by Mary Waters (Sociology, Harvard University) in the opening presentation of the third panel, “Immigration and Culture: European and American Perspectives.” In her collaborative work with Philip Kasinitz and John Mollenkopf on the second generation in New York City, Waters assesses how young adults construct their identities vis-à-vis both their parents’ original cultural practices and the complex mainstream cultural landscape of New York. Her presentation stressed the role of local immigration history in shaping the institutions that facilitate integration. In particular, she cited past waves of white immigration and the legacy of the civil rights movement in rendering New York immigrant institutions as uniquely accommodating. These ideas are bolstered by the research project’s multi-method, comparative study of six immigrant groups. Waters concluded by calling for a reassessment of the term generation and for greater attention to the complexity of “mainstream” culture.

Yet another dimension of generation — the increasingly transnational aspects of immigration — was analyzed by Peggy Levitt (Sociology Wellesley College and Harvard University). Levitt drew on her study of Pakistani immigrants living in Massachusetts and their families back home to show how immigrant groups can selectively assimilate by drawing on two national cultural repertoires. In the case of Pakistanis, this transnational array of cultural tools leads immigrants to selectively adapt their practices and institutions to the local context. While religion plays a key role in the assimilation process, class shapes institutional templates and the nature of immigrants’ contact with other groups. These highly educated Pakistani immigrants work alongside native-born Americans yet seldom interact with them in social settings. The immigrants maintain those cultural practices that are most easily translatable to the local cultural context and either discard or modify those that seem inconsistent with the perceived advantages of the local environment. This selectivity is facilitated by the malleability of “Pakistaniness,” which is itself an identity in flux. Levitt highlights the need for reference to the country of origin, since immigration often entails cultural change there as well as in the country of destination.

The issue of second generation was addressed from a cross-national comparative perspective by Richard Alba (Sociology, SUNY-Albany). By examining the institutions that define the mainstream and therefore shape assimilation in the US, France, and Germany, Alba compares processes of boundary blurring with those of boundary crossing. His key idea is that boundaries separate the mainstream from the minority, and that their salience and permeability shape the process of immigrant incorporation. He argues that France and Germany have more crystallized mainstreams because their histories of state formation and major religious conflicts yielded less permeable boundaries. In the US, on the

other hand, boundaries have shifted to accommodate more groups, particularly Jews and Catholics. Alba’s work, like that of Waters and Levitt, suggests that comparative international approaches to immigration would produce much more sophisticated understandings of boundary work across settings and generations.

Both discussants for this panel, Mario Small (Sociology and Office of Population Research, Princeton University) and Louise Lamphere (Anthropology, University of New Mexico and Russell Sage Foundation), noted that the cultural and the political are often conflated; for instance Small wondered whether the differences in assimilation seen in Alba’s work were the result of different national cultures or different political systems. While the cultural and the political obviously interact at a number of different levels, distinguishing them analytically would produce a clearer picture of how historical legacies and institutional frameworks impact patterns of assimilation.

Analytical distinctions were the main preoccupation of the concluding panel, which brought together scholars from the three fields represented in the conference to discuss to the overarching theme of comparative research. Rogers Brubaker (Sociology, UCLA) warned against imposing prefabricated schemas when studying inequality and culture comparatively. His principal concern regarding cross-national research is the use of aggregated units of analysis like the nation. Brubaker drew a distinction between comparative research and comparativism, arguing that studies of the self and culture are intrinsically comparative. He proposes that researchers let go of their presumptions about collective boundaries and instead identify important loci of action over the course of research.

A similar concern was voiced by Adrian Favell (Sociology, UCLA), who noted that the rise of the nation state has led sociologists to erroneously carve up the world into self-contained social systems. In fact, noted Favell, boundaries are porous and cultural systems interpenetrate, particularly in this age of massive immigration. Moreover, much of present-day cross-national research — particularly that focusing on the US and Western Europe — tends to err on the side of exceptionalism. Favell is especially concerned with the habit of drawing comparisons between the US and individual Western European countries; a more appropriate point of departure would be to compare the United States with Europe as a whole.

Comparative research in each field would benefit from incorporation of work done in other areas. For instance, Shibon Kitayama (Psychology, University of Kyoto) showed how different cultural environments in Japan and the United States produce differences in cognitive styles. One of his key points is that people will focus on and feel most emotional about those things that are emphasized within their culture. The extent to which people are engaged in patterns of collective action influence how they perceive the self and human agency. Kitayama suggests that psychology may be far more social in origin than psychologists have so far assumed and that psychological processes are far more real than social scientists have so far imagined.

Despite the strong argument for interdisciplinary dialogue supported by Kitayama's work, persistent differences in definitions create obstacles for this type of collaboration. Vincent Crapanzano (Anthropology, CUNY) reiterated John Borneman's skepticism about the language of inequality. Crapanzano noted that the category of race does not translate smoothly across national contexts. Like Brubaker, he criticized the use of such categories on the grounds that they are products of researchers' presuppositions. Crapanzano insists that scholars resist the temptation to simplify excessively, stressing that discussions at the meta-level are necessary for grasping the complexity of social life. He thus cautions against overextending comparisons across contexts when the basic communicative exchanges imply nuanced yet vastly different interpretative frameworks.

John Bowen (Anthropology, Washington University) proposed a way to tackle these conceptual problems by arguing that comparative research would benefit from the further consideration of three key concepts: distribution, trajectories, and repertoires. Bowen criticizes the emphasis that social scientists place on differences between means and their negligence of within-group variation, noting for instance that often the most enduring and vicious debates are internal to groups. He thus proposes a shift from means and groups to trajectories, which allow us to think more deeply about discontinuous variables. Some of this variability is due

to the different accessibility of repertoires, which generate a multitude of interpretations.

The extent to which these discussions will foster interdisciplinary research remains to be seen. The presentations outlined above showcased the wealth of theoretical frameworks and methodologies available to researchers of inequality, yet they also revealed disciplinary fault lines that often obstruct dialogue between researchers interested in the same topic. Gaps along another axis – that between theory and empiricism – also persist even within disciplines and could profit from refinement of the language and measurements used to study the various facets of inequality. At the same time, the conference highlighted certain key themes that seem particularly promising in the effort to further consolidate cultural approaches to inequality. In general, serious and systematic consideration of perceptions of inequality is needed for a more sophisticated understanding of how the self, context, and collectivities interact, including boundary-related processes. For instance, several presentations explored from different angles how ambiguity in situations of potential discrimination can influence outcomes that are both internal and external to the individual. Likewise, perceptions of mobility are powerful determinants of behavior and yet are highly susceptible to change. A related theme, the role of emotions in inequality,

Announcements

Section Election Results

Chair-Elect: **Robin Wagner-Pacifici**
Secretary-Treasurer: **Sarah M. Corse**
Council: **Bethany Bryson and Jeffrey Olick**

Network Activities at ASA

The Symbolic Boundaries Research Network will meet again this year during the Culture Section roundtable session. We will use the time to catch up on everyone's research activities and interests, but we also hope to schedule a separate time for brainstorming on two topics: (1) plans for a longer meeting next year and (2) another edition of the Symbolic Boundaries Working Paper Series. The first edition may be found online (along with a list of members and their research interests) at symbolicboundaries.net.

The Space&Place Network will present a network panel roundtable. Bill Holt will preside over presentations by Tom Gieryn (Indiana), Charles C. Gordon (Carleton), and Volker Kirchberg (William Paterson). For inclusion on the Space & Place network mailing list, email Bill Holt at: wghol@conncoll.edu

Publication Opportunity

Call for Papers for Special Issue of *Sociological Perspectives on Media, Popular Culture, and the Arts*
Guest Editors: Denise D. Bielby and William T. Bielby, University of California, Santa Barbara.

We invite submissions of original empirical, theoretical, or methodological scholarship that advance sociological understanding of media, popular culture, and the arts. Among relevant topics are: relationships between audiences and those who create culture; aesthetics and criticism; social practices and new media; sociology of performance; culture industries and culture work; inequality and difference in media production and media texts. Regardless of theoretical perspective or methodological approach, we are especially interested in papers that transcend the boundary between humanistic interpretation and scientific explanation.

Deadline: September 15, 2002. Send 5 copies to Peter Nardi, Editor, *Sociological Perspectives*; Dept. of Sociology; Pitzer College; 1050 N. Mills Avenue, Claremont, CA, 91711. Please check a current issue or the web page (www.ucpress.edu/journals/sop/) for submission information. Please note that submissions will undergo the blind review process.

From Lynn Rapaport:

I'm soliciting papers for a session I am organizing on "Sociology Through Popular Culture" for the 36th World Congress International Institute of Sociology Conference (www.iis2003beijing.com.cn) to be held in Beijing, China, July 7-11, 2003. If you are interested in giving a paper, please contact me. Thanks! Lynn Rapaport, Pomona College, 420 N. Harvard Ave., Claremont, CA 91711, (909) 607-4349, lrapaport@pomona.edu.

From Lyn Spillman:

"Authority in Contention," August 14-15 2002, University of Notre Dame

Culture section members interested in social movements are invited to attend a pre-ASA conference organised by the Collective Behavior and Social Movements Section, and to join the "Culture and Contention" working group which will meet at the conference. I hope culture-oriented people can form a strong presence at what promises to be an interesting and important meeting.

The conference, "Authority in Contention: Interdisciplinary Approaches" will be held on Wednesday August 14 and Thursday August 15 at the University of Notre Dame. Plenary speakers include David Snow, Myra Marx Ferree, Francesca Polletta, Verta Taylor, and Doug McAdam. The conference will explore the relationship among diverse forms of institutional and extra-institutional authority that are implicated in political mobilization and collective action, conceptualizing social movements as collective challenges to authority structures broadly construed. You can check out the schedule and find out more at <http://www.nd.edu/~dmyers/workshop/detail.html>

The conference working group on "Culture and Contention" will provide an opportunity to discuss ideas and work in progress on culture and social movements, and a forum to develop reactions to plenary and paper sessions from a cultural perspective. You are invited to submit short (2-5pp) discussion papers to the working group listserv (CBSMGROUP4@listserv.nd.edu) over the summer. You can join the listserv when you register for the conference, or by emailing conference co-organizer Eugene Walls at walls.5@nd.edu

Section Sessions at ASA Meetings

Saturday, August 18:

Section on Sociology of Culture Council Meeting (to 8:15 a.m.) 7:00 AM

Section on Sociology of Culture Paper Session. *Diffusing Cultural Sociology: Intellectual Fields and Institutional Boundaries* 8:30 AM

Section on Sociology of Culture Invited Panel. *Technology, the Internet, and the Culture of Social Connectedness* 10:30 AM

Section on Sociology of Culture Paper Session. *"Queering" Cultural Sociology: Innovative Studies of Race, Gender, and Sexualities* 2:30 PM

Section on Sociology of Culture Refereed Roundtables (one-hour) 4:30 PM

Section on Sociology of Culture Business Meeting (40 minutes) 5:30 PM

Sunday, August 19:

Section on Sociology of Culture Paper Session. *Formal Methods and Cultural Analyses: Exemplar Studies* 8:30AM

Section on Sociology of Culture Paper Session. *Interpretive Studies of Culture* 10:30 AM

Mark your calendars for the Sociology of Culture reception on Sunday, August 18 at 6:30 p.m. at the Chicago Hilton!

"BOOKS OF NOTE" will return next issue

Judith Huggins Balfe, Jan. 23, 1938 - Mar. 13, 2002

Vera L. Zolberg, New School University

Joni M. Cherbo, cultural consultant and researcher, New York City

Judith Huggins Balfe, Professor and Chair of the Department of Psychology, Sociology and Anthropology at the College of Staten Island, CUNY, and Associate of the CUNY Graduate Center since 1988, passed away on March 13, 2002, after a long and valiant battle with cancer. She left behind her husband, Harry, daughter Jiffy, son Tom along with numerous friends and colleagues.

Going against the grain of “normal” American sociology, Judy was one of the pioneers in the sociology of art and culture, once a marginal field in the discipline. Less than a decade ago, sociologists interested in the arts and culture were unable to obtain even one hundred signatures on a petition to create the Culture Section. Now the Culture Section has become one of the largest, most dynamic units of the ASA. While this transformation is due to a combination of factors, it would not have happened without the extraordinary efforts of a dedicated band of brothers and sisters. Among them, Judith Balfe played an indispensable part.

Judy’s entire academic career was devoted to understanding the role and importance of the arts in society. She conducted a disciplined thoughtful analysis of crucial topics in the field: the support structures that permitted the arts to survive and flourish in society; contemporary arts audiences (or lack of them); varieties of arts patronage; the possibility of a vital art world in a democracy; and a subject that most sociologists avoid — assessing the quality of artistic creations.

Judy’s academic trajectory exemplifies a sustained commitment to the aesthetic foundation of her education. She earned her BA in art history at Wellesley in 1960, where she was Phi Beta Kappa in her junior year, and worked in arts education at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. She began her graduate studies belatedly at the New School for Social Research where she received the MA in Sociology in 1975. Subsequently, in 1979, she completed the PhD at Rutgers University. She taught at Fairleigh Dickinson, Rutgers, and settled at the College of Staten Island, from 1985 until January of 2002, when her illness forced her to retire in 2002.

During her years at Staten Island, she was awarded research grants by her own institution, and the National Endowment for the Arts. She published numerous, often pathbreaking studies in the field of arts and culture. In 1996, with Rolf Meyersohn, Richard A. Peterson, and Darren Sherkat, she produced the study, *Age and Arts Participation*, with Special Focus on the Baby Boomers, for the National Endowment for the Arts. The study found that the high arts were losing their audiences. As a result, she was interviewed by a number of newspapers — The New York Times, The L.A. Times, and many others. Her edited book, *Paying the Piper: Causes and Consequences of Art Patronage*, to which she contributed an article, was published in 1993 by the University of Illinois Press. In 1998, with Joni M. Cherbo, she edited *Arts Education Beyond the Classroom* for the American Council for the Arts, and with Margaret Wyszomirski, *Art, Ideology & Politics*, published by Praeger in 1985. Another of her important publications was the study (with Margaret Wyszomirski), “The Commissioning of Public Art” in *Public Art, Public Controversy: “Tilted Arc” on Trial* (ed. Sherrill Jordan 1987). Her last work in the field was “Public Involvement in the Arts” (with Monnie Peters), in *The Public Life of the Arts in America*, edited by Joni M. Cherbo and Margaret J. Wyszomirski for Rutgers University Press, in 2000. Besides teaching and administrative duties, Judy was a longtime editor of the journal, *Arts Management, Law and Society*, one of the only academic journals devoted exclusively to the arts and cultural field.

Her primary academic circles were twofold — the ASA Culture Section and, perhaps more important to her, Social Theory, Politics and the Arts. STPA has been in existence for over a quarter century, a mix of social scientists (Howard Becker is one its founders), administrators and educators, foundation officers, cultural policy scholars, cultural economists and political scientists among others in related fields, who meet yearly at different university venues to share academic works, insights, research results, practical experience, and engage in serious and not so serious activities. For Judy Balfe, the STPA crowd was truly her second family, combining familiarity, affection, and no-holds barred debate. *Paying the Piper* was dedicated to the “crowd at Social Theory, Politics, and the Arts Conferences.”

Beyond her deep involvement in the sociology of the arts and cultural policy, she was also alert to the subtleties of cultural practices in the interstices between micro patterns of behavior and institutional life more generally. She was alert to the subtleties of cultural practices in the family domain. Bouncing off her own kinship experiences, she studied cultural conceptions and consequences of joint ownership of family property and its sociological importance. “Passing It on: The Inheritance of Summer Houses and Cultural Identity,” appeared in *The American Sociologist* 26:4, and was subsequently published in collaboration with her brother, Kenneth Huggins on the internet.

Judith Balfe was a true humanitarian, deeply loyal and affectionate to her family, friends and colleagues. She was a leader in her work and her church. Her vivacious, optimistic personality and quick mind brought many newcomers into the field of sociology of art and culture and sustained them as they worked in the field, especially in its early years. She nurtured STPA like a mother hen. She never flinched from maintaining the integrity of her beliefs in quality, whether in the arts, or in other domains. Judy was an inspiration to all of us who had the gift of knowing and working with her. Her premature departure is too stark for the full expression it deserves. We miss her deeply.

