

Theory

RC16 Summer 2019 Newsletter



Sociological
Theory

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Table of Contents

- 6** **Editors' Introduction**
Dmitry Kurakin and Dean Ray
- 8** **Graduate Student Spotlight**
Dean Ray
- 11** Vivekananda Nemana
- 11** Bonnie Rogers
- 12** Miguel Angel Montalva Barba
- 12** Latoya Council
- 13** Ilya Slavinski
- 13** Jalia Joseph
- 14** Sarah Adeyinka-Skold
- 14** Vinay Kumar
- 15** George Martin
- 15** Lily Ivanova
- 15** Dialika Sall
-
- 17** **“The Best”**
Dmitry Kurakin
- 18** Dmitry Kurakin
- 20** Diana Yanbarisova
-
- 22** **Theorizing Theory**
Theory and Media with Dean Ray
- 25** An Interview with Jeffrey Lane

28 Announcements

32 Member Publications

Editors' Introduction

Dmitry Kurakin and Dean Ray

In this issue, we continued the strategy we have chosen in the beginning of our editorship – to make the newsletter both more entertaining and making the sense of the RC16 community more vivid. Drawing from the obvious idea that the newsletter is not a purely academic genre, we think, it is in a unique position of getting an everyday, 'near-academic' life out of the shade and focusing on what is usually kept unsaid, or, in any rate, unwritten. So are the non-academic sources of our academic work, which give us ideas and examples that illustrate our hypotheses, and eventually shape our imagination itself.

Having that in mind, in this issue, we introduce a new section, 'The Best'. In this section, we will ask our colleagues to describe some non-academic or near-academic experience, which they think are 'the best' of their kind. The idea of the section came from Philip Smith. We would like to kindly encourage the RC16 members to write us with the ideas of 'The Bests' and with nominations of the authors of that shortwrites (including self-nominations) for the forthcoming issues. The idea of this issue 'best' also came from Philip Smith: in this newsletter's 'the best', Dmitry Kurakin and Diana Yanbarisova reflect upon non-academic, literary sources of the sociological inspiration.

The cross-cutting subject we chose for this issue – media – favors the chosen mission of widening the focus of academic interest beyond mere academic work, because movies, series and other media events are becoming a crucial meaning milieu where our ideas and intuitions are often originate from. In the section 'Theorizing Theory,' which we have launched in the previous issue, beginning with the concept of culture, Dean Ray provides a penetrating introduction to the sociological meanings of media, beginning with the classical book of Marshall McLuhan, and moving towards Jeffrey Lane's new book, 'The Digital Street', which is followed by the interview with Jeff himself.

Using the opportunities the ASA meeting in New York gave us, Dean Ray performed a series of the interviews to re-energize existing in some of the previous issues graduate students sections, and came up with the 'Graduate Students Spotlights'. Following the theme of this issue, he discussed with a dozen colleagues, their ideas about media shaping their theoretical imagination. He introduces the section with his own essay based on his experience of the Star Trek, which allowed him to dig for deep existential reflections about his own life (an impressive evidence of why we might need sociology to get a better understanding of ourselves! – the role, which is often and, we believe, mistakenly reserved exclusively for psychology). This introduction is followed by a series of bright insights about various and often-unexpected ways media-shows affect our professional gaze.

GRADUATE STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Theorizing the Sociological Imagination and its Relationship to Media

For this edition of our Newsletter we are trying to tune our sociological imagination to consideration of aspects of life which are both theoretical and in touch with the everyday experiences of people who call themselves sociologists. To this end, we have asked a group of graduate students the question “what television show had the biggest impact on your sociological imagination and why?”

I begin my response to this question by spotlighting the work of one of my fellow Canadian sociologists, Dorothy Smith (1987). She spryly theorized that our perception was fundamentally shaped by our social position. She would neatly summarize this through the concept ‘standpoint epistemology’. However, Smith took this phenomenological insight far further than a handy metonym, observing that the way we view relationships of power are shaped by our experience of such relations. For Smith, it is those who experience marginalization—such as women, racialized and queer people—who are most apt to understand marginalization in particular.

We may find a similar relationship between television and sociology. Perhaps it is our own marginalization which makes us most attuned to deciphering the displays of marginality and imbalances of power we experience through mediums like television. It is these fundamental experiences acting in concert which shape our sociological imagination. Therefore, television may act as a sort of laboratory where we implicitly

test each new interaction as a social psychological experiment, causing us to question or affirm the fundamental hypothesis we have developed about the social world.

There are many television shows that shaped my sociological imagination—*M.A.S.H.*, *The Young and the Restless*, *All in the Family*. However, there is one, more than any, which I feel confirmed, affirmed, and transformed many of my hypothesis about social life: *Star Trek*. The show, originally conceived by Gene Roddenberry, aired in several forms through-out my adolescence. I experienced the original series in re-runs airing after school on the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation—the only channel we had in my small, rural, northern town. I was able to follow much of *The Next Generation (TNG)* and *Deep Space Nine (DS9)* as they aired in syndication. *DS9* ended just after my tenth birthday and it was this show which profoundly structured my sociological imagination.

I want to speak about a particular two-part episode of *DS9* called “Past Tense”. In the episode three members of the crew accidentally travel back from the 24th century, landing in San Francisco in the year 2026. By this time, all major cities in The United States include ‘Sanctuary Districts’, large walled-up and overcrowded ghettos where the homeless and jobless are disposed of by the state, restricted from free-movement. Two of the crew-members wind-up in one of these sanctuary districts and before they know it are swept into a movement of historical significance when riots break out in the sanctuary.

Some of the dialogue reverberates with meaning in our present, one shaped by caged children and disaffected masses at our territorial edges and though we do not yet wall-up our homeless, this may not be far off. In one scene, Dr. Bashir is dismayed to discover untreated schizophrenics at a time when viable medications existed.

Bashir: There are any number of effective treatments for schizophrenia in this day and age. They could cure that man now, today, if they gave a damn.

Sisko: It’s not that they don’t give a damn. They’ve just given up. The social problems they face seem too enormous to deal with.

Bashir: That’s even worse. Causing people to suffer because you hate them is terrible, but causing people to suffer because you have forgotten how to care... that's really hard to understand.

Sisko: They’ll remember. It’ll take some time, and it won’t be easy, but the people in this century will remember how to care.

“Past-Tense” joins other important episodes of the *Star Trek* franchise that centre around moments closer to us in history. “The City on the Edge of Forever”, written by the enigmatic genius Harlan Ellison, also stands out as an episode that paints, in stark relief, homelessness and social dejection in the near-present. Shockingly, the cast of *DS9* were surprised to find that following the filming of the episode the mayor of Los

Angeles was considering creating fenced in 'Haven' districts to contain the city's growing homeless population (Greene 2017).

The show's depiction of homelessness reverberates also with my own experience. I found myself homeless from the age of 16 until 17 and then again in my mid-20s. My early homelessness had to do with being queer. Homelessness was once endemic to queer people and is still a social problem particular and prevalent to trans youth. Following this, during my mid-20s, I was homeless again during the beginning of my undergrad.

Very suddenly, I found myself sleeping in handicap washrooms and the front entrances to banks. I would select posh neighbourhoods close to the university so I could grab a quick shower in the morning at the athletic club where I stored some of my belongings.

Throughout it all, I was continuously reminded of the depth of human caring. One of the older ladies that worked in the cafeteria noticed me sleeping late at a table in the dining hall. She became a friend. A source of rides, cigarettes, and as much free coffee as I needed to get me through those difficult first few months. I still reflect on this time positively, mostly because it demonstrated to me how caring individuals could be even if the world as a whole was not. This was proof that the divide between empathy and apathy was more complex than I had imagined.

Eventually, I got a student loan, a roommate and an apartment but these experiences reinforced much of the experimental data I had accrued from shows like *Star Trek*. My own sociological imagination has always been sensitive to the experience of homelessness, particularly as I encounter it in Canadian cities like Toronto and American cities like Philadelphia and Chicago.

What you will find below is a series of interesting takes on cultural texts which in some way have shaped our standpoint and our sociology. At-least, you may discover something binge-worthy, at-most, you may discover an insight into the tastes and perceptions which are weaved together in both the imagination and the *habitus* of a sociologist.

Dean Ray



Name: Vivekananda Nemana
Institution: Princeton University
Area of Specialization: Economic Sociology and Culture, Science and Technology Studies

What show had the biggest impact on your sociological imagination and why?

So I used to watch a lot of Indian soap operas with my grandparents and they are really exaggerated, super over the top shows. They film a new episode every single day and these shows have gone on for 10 years, they've had thousands and thousands of episodes. I feel like that made me think about so much. I was really obsessed with these shows because they are ridiculous and it made me think about how characters are constructed and how tropes are reused because it is the same tropes again and again. I would say that had a really big impact on the way I think about culture and how symbols are always invoked just to tell a story. The sound of someone being slapped, this dramatic music creeps up afterward and you just know that something bad has happened.



Name: Bonnie Rogers
Institution: Columbia University
Area of Specialization: Education

What show had the biggest impact on your sociological imagination and why?

I think the show that had the biggest impact, maybe not my sociological imagination, but my imagination, in general, is *Star Trek*, especially the *Next Generation*. Some episodes, not all, but some episodes really take society to the limit. There is one episode for instance, I can't remember if this is in *The Original* or if this is in *The Next Generation*, where these two planets are at war but instead of actually fighting they select people by lottery to kill as part of their war. Thinking about the extremes that societies are pushed too, to formalize events like war and punishment, I think shows like that can really push those ideas. I think that show really expanded my imagination. It also took on a lot of topics that were taboo in the time they were out, like the first interracial kiss or an episode in the early 90s where a society didn't have gender and people in that society that wanted to have a gender identity, them being ostracized. They can do those things because it is not earth. It is a show, I think, about a lot. The

imaginary, the utopia, of this future perfect world is one thing that I don't like about it because I don't think that's possible and I that is one thing that informs my work.



Name: Miguel Angel Montalva Barba
Institution: Northeastern University
Area of Specialization: Urban sociology and whiteness

What show had the biggest impact on your sociological imagination and why?

The two shows that I can think of would be *Sex and the City* and *Will and Grace*. At the time, they shaped my views on a bunch of stuff. My work is not related at all, actually it is related. I do work on whiteness and urban sociology, so it is there. I think *Will and Grace* was just nice to have period on TV for the late-90s and early-2000s. *Sex and the City* was just women being sexual on television and being vocal, that really pushed the boundaries. Favourite episode, I don't think I have a favourite episode, but the whole thing in general was pretty cool.



Name: Latoya Council
Institution: University of Southern California
Area of Specialization: Gender, Work, Family, Race

What show had the biggest impact on your sociological imagination and why?

I think it would be *Queen Sugar*. I study work, family at the intersection of race, class, and gender. I think *Queen Sugar* does a great job of looking at family dynamics, giving historical context about slavery and sugarcane plantations. It also gets into sexuality and being a black woman as well as black women and labour and families. Ava Duvernay is great. Basically its about a black family, a lower middle-class family in Louisiana. They own a sugarcane farm. Their family's farm is actually connected to this white family's farm. They used to be share croppers, their family used to be share croppers for the white family. Then they were able to branch out over time on their own. Their father, he dies and he leaves this farm to his son and his daughter. The son is named Ralph Angel, Charlie is one daughter and the other daughter is Nova. They are all coming back home and asking whether they should keep or sell the farm. The older daughter is going through a divorce and her husband was involved in a cheating scandal. The son is formally getting out of prison, he's been out for a while but he still

can't find work and he has a son he needs to raise. The other sister Nova is a black lives matter advocate and she is in a fluid relationship. One moment she is with a white man and the next moment she is with a black woman. So it is all of that. They are all doing their own individual stuff but trying to figure out what to do with the farm together. They decide to keep it and you get this beautiful look at race relations in Louisiana where you have this white family that used to own this family during slavery but who now have to figure out how they compete with these people. As someone who studies work, family, race, it is a good look at the struggles and strategies that black people have to use to have some type of life and livelihood in a society that was never meant to see them and their humanity. I love how Ava Duvarney plays with that, but also criminality and sexuality.



Name: Ilya Slavinski

Institution: University of Texas at Austin

Area of Specialization: Mass Incarceration, Prison Policy, Race, Inequality

What show had the biggest impact on your sociological imagination and why?

I would say its *Avatar: The Last Airbender* because it touches on a bunch of really important sociological concepts like colonialism, gender, toxic masculinity, inequality, and so on and so forth. It is hard to watch that show and not think about sociology. There is one storyline with Katara being one of the main characters for a really long time and she has to struggle with people not taking her seriously because she is a woman, but eventually she gains people's respect and trust by doing twice as much and better work than the men in her circle.



Name: Jalia Joseph

Institution: Texas A and M

Area of Specialization: Race, Social Movements and Whiteness

What show had the biggest impact on your sociological imagination and why?

So I would definitely say *King of the Hill* because every episode is something different that puts society in a different way. There have been episodes on trans issues, racial issues, a variety of things that you wouldn't think would be in a cartoon. Cartoons are

ways in which we can teach things to our students and keep them engaged with all of these different knowledges.



Name: Sarah Adeyinka-Skold
Institution: University of Pennsylvania
Area of Specialization: Race, Gender, and the Family

What show had the biggest impact on your sociological imagination and why?

The television show that had the biggest impact on my sociological imagination was *All in the Family*. Before I went to college, I watched all of the episodes and I was just blown away with the issues that they were talking about at that time. There was this great episode where Edith, a robber comes into her house and she has to pretend that she's not there. Of course, all of the things with Archie Bunker and the political battles between Archie and his son-in-law. It was like sociology in a box! Amazing!



Name: Vinay Kumar
Institution: University of Buffalo, The State University of New York
Area of Specialization: Theory, Culture, Morality, Urban Sociology

What show had the biggest impact on your sociological imagination and why?

I don't watch much television, unfortunately. When I do, it's usually to watch sports—soccer, mainly—or comedy. Both may have had some sort of impact on my imagination, sociological and otherwise. *The Office* taught me about the power of rules—norms, morals, manners, and so on—and value of playfulness and the imagination.



Name: George Martin
Institution: York University
Area of Specialization: Urban Sociology, Memory, Knowledge

What show had the biggest impact on your sociological imagination and why?

An early-1990s sitcom comedy called *Night Court* had a weird influence on how I think about my work. The show was about a group of awkward characters fumbling through legal procedures in a New York City courthouse. What made it interesting was how the comic scenes in the court were totally unorthodox, yet still, ideas of fairness and inclusiveness were always being addressed.



Name: Lily Ivanova
Institution: University of British Columbia
Area of Specialization: Knowledge, Morality, and Emotion

What show had the biggest impact on your sociological imagination and why?

As an immigrant to Canada in my early years, it's hard to name particular TV shows that influenced my sociological imagination, as identifying with the characters depended on having some baseline cultural competencies and shared experiences I feel like I must have been missing. I would say *Daria* is the closest it got for me – her cynicism and alienation from the class and gender norms of all-American culture was one of the first TV experiences to illuminate and validate my sense of being an outsider.



Name: Dialika Sall
Institution: Columbia University
Area of Specialization: Immigration and race

What show had the biggest impact on your sociological imagination and why?

I would say that most recently *Black-ish* has been really good about incorporating a more sociological lens around black life in America, not only by highlighting the experiences of a black middle-class family on the West Coast, but also tackling these issues, regardless of structural assimilation, that all black people in America still have

to go through. So thinking about the criminal justice system, thinking about when you are one of a few black people working in predominantly white spaces and how you build community, thinking about issues of gender. These are things that I think are really important and that I appreciate. 'Juneteenth'* was an episode that comes to mind, where they highlighted that not everyone felt like July 4th celebrated the freedoms of all Americans, black people in particular were not necessarily free in that sense and those ideals didn't apply to them. So they highlighted the history around that and why it is important to celebrate those sorts of holidays. There are so many.

'Juneteenth'* was an episode that comes to mind, where they highlighted that not all Americans were free July 4th, 1776. Black people in particular were not freed until June 19th, 1865 so those July 4th ideals didn't apply to them. *Black-ish* highlighted this history and why it is important to celebrate these lesser known holidays.

“The Best”

Beginning with this issue, we are launching a new section where we will approach sociologists with questions about their “best” academic, near-academic, or even non-academic experiences. In each particular case, we will ask two or more scholars, preferably at different points in their careers, the same question about this “best”. The idea for this section comes from Philip Smith. I encourage members of the RC16 to write to the editors with ideas and suggestions for the next issue’s “bests”, as well as with nominations for scholars, which we could address with these questions in the future.

For this issue we selected the question, also proposed by Phil: “The best books I have read not by social theorists that is really insightful about how society or culture works”. I had a couple of ideas about whom to ask, but unfortunately did not succeed this time with recruitment. So, I found myself in the very last moment, having no better idea than to write it myself, and to kindly ask my colleague from the “Center for Cultural Sociology and Anthropology of Education”, Higher School of Economics, to write another piece on the same subject. Lucky for me, Diana Yanbarisova, who is not only a talented young sociologist and a passionate reader, but also a writer herself, kindly agreed to write a piece right away, for which I’m truly grateful.

Dmitry Kurakin



The best book I have read not by social theorists that is really insightful about how society or culture works

Dmitry Kurakin:

As a sociologist, I have to admit: good literature leaves sociology way behind when it comes to deep insights about social life. Examples are multiple. For me personally, writers such as Michel Houellebecq and Milan Kundera often seem to be much more sensitive and thorough in describing the finer nuances of contemporary life and culture than what us sociologists manage to accomplish. However, it is always hard to choose one particular “best”. My algorithm in such cases is to appeal to answers already given in the past.

Many years ago, when I was only beginning to explore sociology, I’d already been asked such a question. I gave it a thought and came up with “Foucault’s Pendulum” by Umberto Eco. Being a recent graduate of a physics department, enchanted by sociology, I was mostly impressed by the miraculous ability of social life to reveal solid entities emerging out of such “ephemeral” (especially for a former physicist!) substances as thoughts, ideas, and cultural symbols. In Eco’s book, the main characters run a publishing house that issues occult and esoteric conspiracy books (which they are quite ironic about). Driven by pure intellectual hooliganism, they begin to play with reconstructing an imaginary ancient “Plan”, embracing the most powerful esoteric movements and secret societies of the past, including Rosicrucians, Templars, medieval alchemies, Masons, and many others. They put in this endeavour all their passion, curiosity, and knowledge. At some point, the Plan suddenly gains flesh, becomes powerful and uncontrolled by its authors, finding true believers and fierce followers, and eventually devours its authors. Eco’s picture is even more astonishingly vivid than Simmel’s notorious essay on sociability, where he described the forms of sociation (*Vergesellschaftung*), which tend to gain the autonomy and control over their contents, people’s thoughts, urges, desires, instincts and interests, which once brought it to life. This still impresses me.

However, I think I should not limit myself with this memory, and should rather add something from my recent impressions. They are obviously driven by my academic work, which deals with the sacred, cultural structures, rituals, and mysteries. The two books I’m going to comment on – related, because one of them influenced the

other — are: Donna Tartt’s “The Secret History”, and “The Secret Place” by Tana French. Both explore strong relationship between intense friendship and the dark side of the sacred. They thus depict intimate and intensive friendship (beyond the “normal” intensity, which yet only reveals its true and non-fictional meanings and horizons) within tight groups of young people, close friends. Together they explore life in the keenest and most insightful way, which brings them to discovering the dark side of the sacred. Both stories are situated in educational environments. Both stories result in death (which is not a spoiler). The heights of the sociological thoughts about the sacred and collective life, such as Emile Durkheim’s theory of effervescence, Georges Bataille’s theory of transgression, and Roger Caillois’ theory of the impure sacred, can rarely be so concrete and thorough regarding the actual mechanisms of the sacred, shaped by people’s relations and their emotions. For making this connection visible and to let the readers feel its plausibility and truth, Donna Tartt places passionate relations between the members of the small group of friends within the conceptual framework of the Ancient Greek thought — by means of their classes with an inspiring university professor as their intellectual guide. Intellectual eagerness fused with interpersonal tension leads them to trying a real Bacchanal ritual, which necessarily results in destruction and death.

Tana French chooses other expressive means, and appeals to a sort of magical realism, which, in this case as in many others, allows for a more realistic description about reality than realism itself. Four girls in a select private school are bonded by an extremely intense friendship, which, as Durkheim prescribed, results in the emergence of the sacred, except that not in a vaguely pictured anthropological way, but rather in a concrete magical form of a witch-like power over natural forces. Getting into conflict with another super-power, an erotic attraction, the sacred turns to its dark side. The feature of the ambiguity of the sacred, somewhat obscure and difficult for understanding thus appears in the novel as intelligible and intuitively clear.

Literature can provide ideas and hypotheses about social life with cultural flesh much richer than sociological writings seem ever able to achieve. Paradoxically, this makes literature to be more appropriate method for building Geertzian “thick description” than sociology itself. Truly, a roundabout path is sometimes the fastest.



The best book I have read not by social theorists that is really insightful about how society or culture works

Diana Yanbarisova

National Research University Higher School of Economics

“26a” by Diana Evans can be seen as a story about the power of stories, about the narratives people live in. It tells about an English-African family with four kids balancing between two cultures. A Nigerian woman Ida pulled herself out of her village and eventually ended up with an English man in suburban London. Her actions were empowered by a family story of her grandma, who was the first and only woman in the village history “to shrink the world, to have made it alone to Lagos and come back twenty-three years later rich and self-made, smoking a cigar, wearing scarlet lip gloss.” She broke up the traditional narrative of an African rural woman's life path and opened new territories of an imagined future for the next generations.

At the same time Ida is always a stranger, she can't fit in the English world. As she watches along with the whole western world the television broadcast of the wedding of Prince Charles and Lady Diana (one of the greatest media events of the time) she continues to live with the stories of her motherland, inhabited by devils and spirits.

The major characters of the novel are Ida's children: twin sisters Georgia and Bessi. The key story for the narrative of their lives appears to become a Nigerian legend about twins told by their grandpa, Ida's father, when they first came to visit Ida's home village. In the past, twins were considered devil's children, and to break the curse, one of the twins, usually the younger one, was to be killed either by water or by fire. Then a ghost of a murdered twin entered the body of the living one and stayed there for one year preparing to leave for the world of the dead completely. This story affected girls in many ways later in life. Eventually it helped Bessy to overcome her sister's suicide.

For Georgia that trip to Nigeria was a turning point because of a traumatic experience. A local man attempted to rape her. This made her feel impure and contagious for the rest of her life. And this was where their “twinness” began to crack. Georgia never managed to share her trauma with Bessi. Since then she considered her mission to keep the dark, “devil”, side of life inside herself in order for Bessi to be happy and to have a normal life. Her suicide was in a way a sacrifice

to protect Bessi and at the same time – a mode of overcoming the longing for wholeness and purity which she symbolically reached by placing herself in Bessi's body after death, fulfilling the legend.

Dean Ray, York University, Canada

Theory and Media

The title of the section where we conduct interviews for the RC16 Newsletter is 'theorizing theory'. The idea here is to understand the ways that theoretical and empirical research are being transformed by changes in either the discipline or in the world around us. The goal, in the words of my co-editor Dmitry Kurakin, is to "trace these changes" through a "focus on relations between sociological theory and central thematic concepts, which, designating spheres of concrete research, simultaneously hold crucial stakes in theory, shaping vanguards of theoretical inquiry in empirical studies." In this edition we are focused on media.

Perhaps the most notable transformation is from media as a sort of transmission directed at a consumer to a process unfolding in a far more social and interactive way. Thus we no-longer speak of media alone but also of social media. Even in the domains of traditional media like news and entertainment, audiences regularly 'talk-back' to hosts and productions. It is this distinction which lends new credence to the theory initially proposed by Marshall McLuhan in his important book *Understanding Media: The Extension of Man* (1964).

Central to the arguments developed in this book, and there are a few, is that humanity is not merely contained within the body. For McLuhan, beyond our integument lies a material nexus, a medium, of technologies and practices which extend for us the range of abilities we each possess. He argues that the medium both conditions and controls "the scale and form of human association and action." Changes in the medium profoundly affect not only human character, but the variables of speed and time that provide context and measure for our existence.

Take for instance the telegraph. This wired technology transformed print by increasing the speed at which text could be transmitted between disparate spatial locations. To the variable of time, the telegraph lent a degree of synchronicity between locations never before imagined. While ‘print’ may seem to be the message of the telegraph, its true message, according to McLuhan, was a transformation in practice—whether the speeding up of association or the increasing simultaneity of collective experience. This is the real message of the telegraph. Now, one could inform their distant lover they were no-longer in love or alert a distant relative of the passing of someone dear. Now families could begin to mourn in concert even though they were spatially separate. Hearts could break more rapidly than was possible via mail.

We are witnessing a similar transformation in the medium with the mutation of media into digital social media. This, like the telegraph before it, alters our practices—our codes of association and our scripts of action. We now cultivate our presentation-of-self for different audiences. We ‘switch codes’ between mediums like Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook. Whereas a more intimate self-presentation may be acceptable on Facebook, a more calculated demeanour and deference may be necessary on Twitter. We interact with varying publics and these fragmented self-presentations are surely altering our character, splitting and fracturing our lives in a way presaged, long before the internet, by post-structuralist thinkers like Lyotard and Deleuze. Not only have we run out of shared grand narratives, but the codes which once weaved us together seem to be shattering and falling into an abyss like shards of multicoloured glass collecting outside of a bottling plant, soon to be swept into the dustbin of history.

In his new book *The Digital Street*, out now from Oxford University Press, Jeffrey Lane stakes a rather major claim to interpreting the transformation we are experiencing. Specifically, Lane documents how social media is transforming what Elijah Anderson calls the ‘code of the street’. However, Lane is not jettisoning the concepts of social theory, but is painstakingly rehabilitating them for the digital era. Lane demonstrates how transformations in the ‘medium’ are causing us to reconsider some of the most important ideas in social theory: from gender and social control, to the boundary between public and private life, to the stakes of surveillance for racialized youth.

It is my pleasure to introduce an exchange I had with Jeffrey following the 2019 American Sociological Association Annual Meeting in New York City about these transformations in the 'medium' and how they are altering the code of the street, or perhaps are being expressed through a 'digital street'. It is also my pleasure to highly recommend his new book *The Digital Street*.

Theorizing Theory

Interview with Jeffrey Lane, Rutgers University, USA

Dean Ray: What effect do you think social media will have on empirical sociology and sociological theory?

Jeffrey Lane: I think digital social media requires us to look again at our most taken-for-granted sociological assumptions and concepts. In the book study, when I saw the online networks and interactions of girls in Harlem, I saw that girls were the most important and central figures in neighborhood networks. We have a whole literature on urban neighborhoods and street life with boys and young men at the center because they appear more visible and dominant on the sidewalk, but young women are really at the center of neighborhood life and communication. With social dynamics more visible online we have new and more empirical data to test our ideas. We also need to study digital life because it's changing interaction and social life. That's the challenge—taking account of what's newly visible versus what's new, and being able to spell out these distinctions. It means integrating sociology with what's being said in communication, media, information, and other growing fields associated with internet technologies.

Dean: Will/should we all extend our concepts and shoe leather into digital spaces, or might digital spaces and new-wave concepts give rise to a reconsideration of the discipline?

Jeffrey: It's hard to think of social domains that aren't extending into digital space and being reshaped in the process, and I don't think sociologists should cede this ground to digital scholars. I see an opportunity for sociologists to use more online interaction in our studies and to collaborate and use the work of communication and media scholars. I certainly see myself as a sociologist and communication and technology scholar. There's a lot of exciting work happening at this intersection, including in soc depts and comm, media, and info depts. I'd like to see more integration with sociology and communication, in particular—fields that were once tightly connected, especially in the study of urban communities. Vikki Katz and Keith Hampton brought me onto a project with this very mission. They edited an excellent special issue of *American Behavioral*

Scientist. The Digital Street book is very much about bringing sociology and comm together in the name of urban community.

Dean: Should we throw the baby out with the proverbial bathwater and just create a new theory for the digital age and for online spaces?

Jeffrey: Sociology provides an essential baseline for the study of digital life and the role of social media in various domains. The fundamental sociological concern with the structures and outcomes of inequality give context for digital studies and allow us to evaluate changes and continuities online. I was interested in the code of the street and what happens when violence and policing in the neighborhood extends online, and the opportunities and risks that brings about for black teenagers experiencing higher rates of violence and criminal prosecution. Sociological concepts can help orient digital studies.

Dean: I realize you are a scholar and not an activist, but I wonder, from your experience, or the experience of your participants, how are people resisting online surveillance? Short of legislative change, what can we do as researchers to curtail online surveillance and preserve the possibilities of collective action which have always been one of the brightest hopes of the digital age?

Jeffrey: My study participants were black teenagers coming of age in Harlem, who were facing surveillance and a sense of being watched from a young age in the neighborhood (in stores, on the way to school, etc.) and online and through various communication technologies (BlackBerry Messenger, YouTube, Myspace, Facebook, etc.). Online, they learned to use different kinds of indirect or misdirected communication; they opened up multiple social media accounts to communicate differently with different audiences; they created private group pages; they deactivated accounts and went dark, etc. I think as online researchers we want to show the social complexity of online communication and the rich, interpersonal context in which any online interaction is embedded. By demonstrating that online communication can't simply be taken at face value, I'm making an empirical argument against mass surveillance, which assumes you can reliably evaluate people based on social media content.

Dean: This question has to do with our role in surveillance as ethnographers. Much of the way you developed your research was by surveilling your participants, in this sense, your insights into the 'digital street' may aid police in developing tactics and strategies to more fully access and police the online lives of those involved in the street. What are the implications and stakes of producing critical knowledges about peoples online lives when these insights might enact a sort of 'boomerang' effect where they enhance the capacities of police?

Jeffrey: The approach that I lay out in the book, what I'm calling digital urban ethnography, is about trying to understand the complexity of people over time and across situations, in the neighborhood and on the internet. The research starts with face-to-face ethnographic relationships built over time and based on neighborhood roles that extend online to follow the same people in person and on their social media feeds. The young people I got to know expected me to keep up with their social media because that communication was key to their identities and relationships. During the same time I was doing my fieldwork, police and prosecutors were surveilling and investigating some of the young people I was studying and eventually handed down several felony conspiracy indictments that were probably the first gang indictments anywhere in the world to use social media activity as criminal evidence. The young people in and around my study were the training data for police and prosecutors. I wanted my research to respond by showing the complexity of how young people use social media to manage street life and in other parts of their multifaceted lives. I also wanted to show how the indictments impacted the teenagers who were indicted, the people around them, and the neighborhood itself. These changes were complicated, and not all bad. There were new risks but also benefits to digital policing. I see this kind of sociological research as bringing about greater understanding and more thoughtful policy and practice.

Dean: On a lighter note and to conclude, what television show shaped your sociological imagination and why?

Jeffrey: *Maybe The Wonder Years.* The sociological imagination is about understanding how we're all a product of our time. That was certainly a message of that show.

Announcements

Call for Nominations

ISA RC16 Junior Theorist Prize

The International Sociological Association Research Committee in Sociological Theory (RC16) invites applications for the 2020 Junior Theorist Prize. The award is granted to the best paper in sociological theory authored by one or more junior theorist(s) and submitted to the competition. It is intended to provide motivation and recognition to a promising junior scholar in the field of sociological theory, as well as to encourage graduate student interest and participation in the ISA and RC16.

The award consists of a certificate with a citation and the travel costs (up to a maximum of USD \$750) of the winner(s) to present their work at the RC16 Mid-term Conference to be held 2-4 July 2020 at Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic.

Eligibility

Applicants must be currently enrolled in a Ph.D. program or have received their Ph.D. within five years of the deadline. Papers must have been published or accepted for publication no more than five years prior to the deadline, and must be authored by one or more junior theorist(s); those co-authored with tenured faculty members at a degree granting institution are not eligible. The publication can be in any of the ISA's three official languages (English, French, and Spanish), to a maximum length of 10,000 words. The winner(s) must be a member (or members) of ISA RC16 at the time of receiving the award, and must be available to attend the conference.

Nominations

Papers can be nominated by the author(s), or by a nominator (for example, a book or volume editor, supervisor, or other third party). Deadline for submissions is January 15, 2020. Details of the nominations, including a copy of the paper in electronic form, should be sent to the Selection Committee Chair, Martina Loew, TU Berlin, Germany: martina.loew@tu-berlin.de

Research Committee on Sociological Theory (RC16) Conference

Between progress and apocalypse: sociological theory in the twentieth-first century

2-4 July 2020

Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic

Call for Papers

The aim of the conference is to identify symptomatic motifs of our recent historical and intellectual situation which embraces radical visions of social change. Both established and alternative theoretical strategies are confronted by disruptions of institutional and discursive frameworks initiated by powerful technological transformations, growing social diversity and reoccurring patterns of populist political mobilization. This situation, nevertheless, from a sociological perspective cannot be considered unique. It bears striking resemblances to the repeated crisis constellations of modernity during the long nineteenth and short twentieth centuries. Thus rationalization, commodification as well as motifs of cultural cataclysm have been core themes of sociological theory during its classical as well its as contemporary phases. Does this deep disillusionment displace progress in both the current social imaginary and sociological theory?

The conference continues the RC16 tradition of encouraging submission of abstract and session proposals on the entire range of topics under the general heading of sociological theory.

Submission Details

Proposals should be submitted by 30 November 2019 on the website: <https://isatheory-conf.fss.muni.cz> The proposal consists of an abstract of maximum 300 words and a short biographical note (including your ISA & RC16 membership details if applicable). Acceptance will be confirmed by 30 January 2020.

Registration

The conference will begin on late afternoon Thursday 2th July and end on Saturday evening 4th July 2020.

Registration for the conference will open online in February 2020. The conference fee includes access to all sessions, lunch and refreshments, and Thursday evening reception.

A conference dinner will take place on Friday (3th July) evening, and bookings can be made at the time of registration.

Conference fee

ISA RC16 members: 120 EUR

Non-members 160 EUR

Accommodation

A limited amount of accommodation has been reserved at the Continental Hotel, and is bookable at the time of registration by February 2020. Accommodation will be allocated on first come basis. A full range of other accommodation options are also available in Brno downtown.

Organising Committee and Contact

The organising committee for the conference is: Csaba Szaló and Werner Binder. Queries and submissions should be directed to Csaba Szaló <szalo@mail.muni.cz>

Further details are also available on the website: <https://isatheory-conf.fss.muni.cz>

International mini-conference on civil sphere theory

– Brno, Czech Republic, July 2020

Jeffrey Alexander and ISA Research Committee on Sociological Theory (RC16) mid-term conference organizer Csaba Szabo and co-President Brad West, along with other international scholars interested in global issues and the civil sphere, are organizing a mini-conference on civil sphere theory (CST). Theorists and empirical sociologists can discuss, criticize, and inspire one another, interacting around a common set of intellectual symbols. The aim is to further develop, and revise, CST, continuing the discussions among nearly 100 sociologists from around the world that have produced "civil sphere" volumes on Latin America, East Asia, the Nordic countries, and radicalism, with volumes on India, Canada, and cultural trauma in process.

The one-day conference will take place on Thursday, July 2, 2020, in Brno, Czech Republic, ahead of RC 16's mid-term meetings (July 2-4, 2020), which will kick off that same evening with a joint reception.

Though this mini-conference is being organized around an ISA meeting, all intellectuals, theorists, sociologists and scholars interested in matters related to civil sphere theory are invited to participate; ISA membership or affiliation is not required, unless you wish to participate in the RC 16 mid-terms after (highly encouraged!). Brno local organizers will organize very reasonable housing and meals; covering such expenses, however, will be your own responsibility. (There may be a possibility of defraying some travel costs for young and emerging scholars who will be presenting papers.)

If you are interested in presenting a paper, please send a paper title and abstract to Jeffrey Alexander (Jeffrey.alexander@yale.edu) and Anne Marie Champagne (anne.champagne@yale.edu) by February 1, 2020. If you would like to attend without presenting a paper, please send us a letter indicating your interest. Note: This is an indication of interest only. We will be asking for a firm commitment by April 1, 2020.

Member Publications

New Books

Individualism, Holism and the Central Dilemma of Sociological Theory

Šubrt, Jiří. Charles University in Prague, Czech Republic

Individualism and holism, the concepts embedded in the title of this book, represent two key theoretical perspectives that have for many decades steered and shaped sociological thought. For over a century these two interpretative perspectives have also divided sociological theory into two camps, accompanied by a band of scholars trying to bridge this dualism.

According to American sociologist Jeffrey C. Alexander, individualist theories derive their appeal and strength from their underlying assumption that humans make decisions as individual, free, autonomous, and rationally and morally consistent beings. A related belief is that they are able to express these qualities in their actions regardless of the situation in society or what economic or moral conditions prevail.

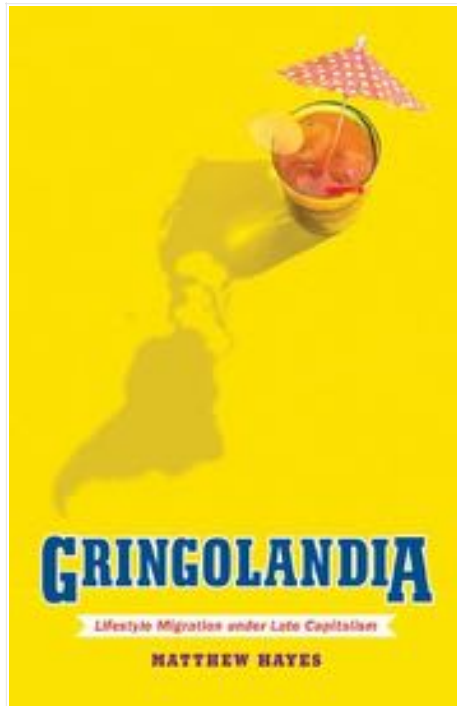
Holistic, or collectivist, theories, unlike individualism, assign primacy to social entities. This perspective is important because it creates the basic precondition through which entities can become the subject of deliberate sociological analysis. However, there is a price for fulfilling this precondition. The emphasis it places on the collective, and on larger entities, logically means that the individual will and free human decision-making tends to be lost from the field of view.

This book argues that these two perspectives, individualist and holistic, form the central dilemma of sociological thought. It provides an extensive review and critique of contemporary sociological approaches to this antinomy and examines attempts that have been made to overcome it and unite them. Moreover, the book proposes a new approach to solving this dilemma via the concept of 'critical reconfigurationism', arguing that the resolution of this dilemma is vital not just for sociological theory but also for empirical social research.

Published: 13 May 2019 Publisher: Emerald Publishing Limited Dimensions

<https://books.emeraldinsight.com/page/detail/Individualism-Holism-and-the-Central-Dilemma-of-Sociological-TheoryIndividualism,-Holism-and-the-Central-Dilemma-of-Sociological-Theory/?k=9781787690387>

Matthew Hayes



Gringolandia — University of Minnesota Press

Gringolandia offers a refreshing and powerful new perspective on lifestyle migration that demonstrates how it is caught up in the production of global inequalities informed by colonial legacies, the structures and practice of planetary gentrification, and the local class struggles this portends. Through his up-close ethnographic observations of the lives and motivations of North Americans ...

www.upress.umn.edu

Jean Sebastien Guy

Theory Beyond Structure and Agency | SpringerLink

"In this insightful and highly readable book, Jean-Sébastien Guy takes us on an intellectual tour de force that makes us see the social world in a different light. A fresh perspective and an essential

link.springer.com

Ariane Hanemaayer

The Impossible Clinic

A Critical Sociology of Evidence-Based Medicine

UBC Press

Evidence-based medicine (EBM) has failed. Once considered revolutionary, it has facilitated cookbook medicine that undercuts physicians' critical appraisal in individual decisions while increasing their responsibility for the improvement of health care.

The Impossible Clinic traces the emergence of, and problems inherent in, EBM – an approach that requires doctors to integrate research evidence into their clinical decision making. EBM attempts to translate the results of medical research into recommendations for practice, to bring science straight to the bedside with the goals of medical standardization. Ironically, however, when disciplinary regulation converges with EBM to produce systematic clinical practice guidelines, the outcome is antithetical to the aim. Ariane Hanemaayer uses a critical sociology approach to uncover the power relations underlying the contemporary organization of the medical profession, arguing that EBM persists because it has congealed within the dominant liberal political strategy of governance, which seeks to improve health care “at a distance,” at the least cost, and without investment in infrastructure.

As such, *The Impossible Clinic* is the first book to interrogate the history, practice, and pitfalls of EBM and how it persists due to intersecting relationships between professional medical regulation and liberal governance strategies. This persuasive indictment is essential reading.

This book offers compelling insights into the medical profession for scholars of critical sociology and the sociology of medicine and health. Those interested in the sociology of regulation, the history of medicine, social theory, and the health professions will also find it to be of interest.

<https://www.ubcpress.ca/the-impossible-clinic>

Redefining the Situation

*The Writings of Peter
McHugh*

Edited by Kieran Bonner and Stanley
Raffel

“McHugh’s work is an oasis where, by good fortune and serendipity, a new generation of exhausted sociological travellers may slake their thirst for refreshing intellectual resources to pursue deeper questions and reach towards more satisfying answers on a higher spiritual plane of ideas.” **Kieran Keohane, University College Cork**

Kieran Bonner is professor of sociology at St Jerome's University at the University of Waterloo.

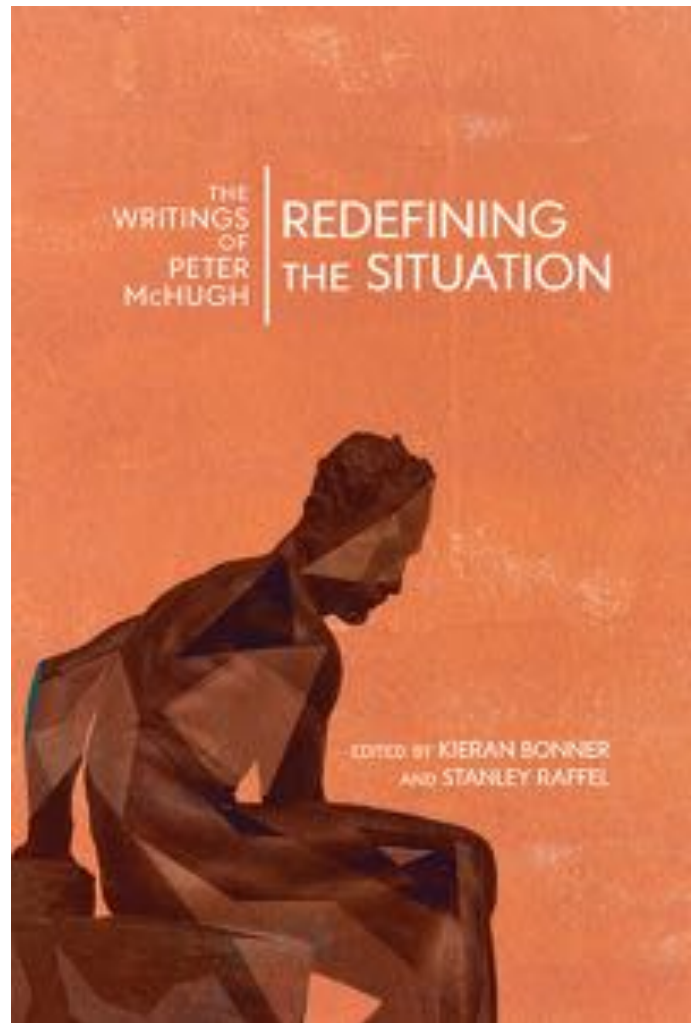
Stanley Raffel (1944-2018) was reader and fellow of sociology at the University of Edinburgh.

336 pages, 6 x 9

4 tables

ISBN 9780773556935

Formats: Cloth, Paperback, eBook



Writing the Body Politic

A John O'Neill Reader

Edited by **Mark Featherstone**, Keele University and

Thomas Kemple, University of British Columbia, Canada *Series: Classical and Contemporary Social Theory*

This book brings together key essays from the career of social theorist John O'Neill, including his uncollected later writings, focusing on embodiment to explore the different ways in which the body trope informs visions of familial, economic, personal, and communal life.

Beginning with an exploration of O'Neill's work on the construction of the biobody and the ways in which corporeality is sutured into social systems through regimes of power and familial socialisation, the book then moves to concentrate on O'Neill's career-long studies of the productive body and the ways in which the working body is caught in and resists disciplinary systems that seek to rationalise natural functions and control social relations. The third section considers O'Neill's concern with the ancient, early modern, and psychoanalytic sources of the post-modern libidinal body, and a final section on the civic body focuses specifically on the ways in which principles of reciprocity and generosity exceed the capitalist, individualist body of (neo)liberal political theory. The volume also includes an interview with O'Neill addressing many of the key themes of his work, a biographical note with an autobiographical postscript, a select bibliography of O'Neill's many publications, and an extensive introduction by the editors.

A challenging and innovative collection, *Writing the Body Politic: A John O'Neill Reader* will appeal to critical social theorists and sociologists with interests in the work of one of sociology's great critical readers of classical and contemporary texts.

To request a copy for review, please visit: https://m.email.taylorandfrancis.com/Review_copy_request

Eyerman, Ron, Sciortino, Giuseppe (Eds.). The Cultural Trauma of Decolonization: Colonial Returnees in the National Imagination. Palgrave Macmillan. Forthcoming in 2020.

This volume is first consistent effort to systematically analyze the features and consequences of colonial repatriation in comparative terms, examining the trajectories of returnees in six former colonial countries (Belgium, France, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, and Portugal). Each contributor examines these cases through a shared cultural sociology frame, unifying the historical and sociological analyses carried out in the collection. More particularly, the book strengthens and improves one of the most important and popular current streams of cultural sociology, that of collective trauma. Using a comparative perspective to study the trajectories of similarly traumatized groups in different countries allows for not only a thick description of the return processes, but also a thick explanation of the mechanisms and factors shaping them. Learning from these various cases of colonial returnees, the authors have been able to develop a new theoretical framework that may help cultural sociologists to explain why seemingly similar claims of collective trauma and victimhood garner respect and recognition in certain contexts, but fail in others.

<https://www.palgrave.com/gp/book/9783030270247>

Martina Cvajner. Soviet Signoras: Personal and Collective Transformations in Eastern European Migration. The University of Chicago Press. 2019.

Across the Western world, the air is filled with talk of immigration. The changes brought by immigration have triggered a renewed fervor for isolationism able to shutter political traditions and party systems. So often absent from these conversations on migration are however the actual stories and experiences of the migrants themselves. In fact, migration does not simply transport people. It also changes them deeply. Enter Martina Cvajner's *Soviet Signoras*, a far-reaching ethnographic study of two decades in the lives of women who migrated

to northern Italy from several former Soviet republics.

Cvajner details the personal and collective changes brought about by the experience of migration for these women: from the first hours arriving in a new country with no friends, relatives, or existing support networks, to later remaking themselves for their new environment. In response to their traumatic displacement, the women of Soviet Signoras —nearly all of whom found work in their new Western homes as elder care givers—refashioned themselves in highly sexualized, materialistic, and intentionally conspicuous ways. Cvajner’s focus on overt sexuality and materialism is far from sensationalist, though. By zeroing in on these elements of personal identity, she reveals previously unexplored sides of the social psychology of migration, coloring our contemporary discussion with complex shades of humanity.

<https://www.press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/book/chicago/S/bo43987818.html>

Article

Archer, M. & Vandenberghe, F. : (2019). *Le réalisme critique. Une nouvelle ontologie pour la sociologie*. Lormont: Le Bord de l'eau.

Bird, Greg & Heather Lynch. (2019). "Introduction to the Politics of Life: A Biopolitical Mess", *European Journal of Social Theory* pp. 301-316.

Boltanski, Luc Juliette Rennes, and Simon Susen (2018 [2010/2014]) 'Die Zerbrechlichkeit der Realität – Luc Boltanski im Gespräch mit Juliette Rennes und

Curran, Dean, (2018) 'From Performativity to Representation as Intervention: Rethinking the 2008 Financial Crisis and the Recent History of Social Science', *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour* 28(4): 492–510.

Curran, Dean (2018) 'Risk, Innovation, and Democracy in the Digital Economy', *European Journal of Social Theory* 21(2): 207–226.

Esposito, Roberto. (2019). "Postdemocracy and Biopolitics," *European Journal of Social Theory* pp. 317-324.

Heiskala, Risto: For a holistic social science: the NACEVP model applied to the environment, gender and populism. *Journal of Political Power* 11(2018), 3:322-340. Abstract below and full text available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/2158379X.2018.1523316>

Abstract: The paper builds a research programme reaching beyond the contemporary fragmentation of social sciences toward a holistic approach considering society as one whole and capable of bridging the gap between the human and natural sciences. It is based on Michael Mann's IEMP model studying the Ideological, Economic, Military, and Political power sources in historical sociology. Here it is extended to the NACEVP model, which is a social-theoretical research programme for the study of all objects covering Natural, Artefactual, Cultural, Economic, Violence-related, and Political power sources. Brief case analyses on environmental problems, gender, and the rise of populism follow as evaluations.

Ironstone, Penelope. 2019. "Me, My Self, and the Multitude: Microbiopolitics of the Human Microbiome," *European Journal of Social Theory* pp. 325-341.

Jasso, Guillermina, Robert Shelly, and Murray Webster. 2019. "How Impartial Are the Observers of Theory?" *Social Science Research* 79:226-246. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssresearch.2018.10.013> .

This paper develops a unified framework for studying justice and impartiality – identifying six opportunities for impartiality, four for observers and two for allocators;

generating the person-specific impartiality profile, including separate subprofiles for observer and allocator activities; and characterizing groups and societies by the impartiality profiles of their members. The immediate challenge is to measure the six kinds of impartiality. This paper takes a first step, focusing on three kinds of observer impartiality – the classic just-reward impartiality and the two new kinds identified by justice theory, framing impartiality and expressiveness impartiality. Understanding the two new forms of impartiality is important because their absence could destroy the good effects of impartiality in other justice elements. The paper reports the results of three factorial surveys carried out among college students in the United States, assessing the students' just-reward, framing, and expressiveness impartiality with respect to the earnings of fictitious workers. The paper makes three main contributions. Theoretically, it illuminates the marriage of justice and impartiality, leading to new insights and new research avenues. Methodologically, the paper develops new analytic and graphical tools for assessing observer impartiality. Substantively, the paper shows that (1) while just gender gaps in aggregate analyses of college students are almost nil (contrary to the just gaps found among adults), closer respondent-specific analyses indicate an intricate mix of subsets of respondents favoring one or the other gender; (2) framing impartiality is almost universal; and (3) expressiveness impartiality ranges from 28 to 57 percent, with an intriguing mix of results by sample and respondent gender. Overall these results suggest that there may be “little cultures” of justice and impartiality on U.S. college campuses. If that is so -- and pending future research on all six kinds of impartiality in a variety of samples across countries and over time and as well with respect to rewards other than earnings, such as grades, bequests, and prison sentences – we have offered a way to measure those cultures and understand them theoretically.

Kurakin, Dmitry. The Sacred, Profane, Pure, Impure, and Social Energization of Culture, in: *The Oxford Handbook of Cognitive Sociology*. NY: Oxford University Press, 2019. Ch. 26. P. 485-506.

In this chapter, I argue that the Durkheimian theory of the sacred is a crucial yet not fully recognized resource for cognitive sociology. It contains not only a theory of culture (which is acknowledged in contemporary sociology), but also a vision of culture-cognition relations. Thus, Durkheimian cultural sociology allows us to understand the crucial role the sacred/profane opposition plays in structuring culture, perception and thought. Based on a number of theories, I also show how another opposition— between the pure and impure modes of the sacred, allows us to explain dynamic features of the sacred and eventually provides a basic model of social change. While explicating this vision and resultant opportunities for sociological analysis I also criticize “cognition apart from culture” approaches established within cognitive sociology. I argue, thus, that culture not only participates in cognition but is an intrinsic ingredient of the human mind. Culture is not a chaotic and fragmented set of elements, as some sociologists imply to a greater or lesser degree, but a system; and as such it is an inner environment for human thought and social action. This system, however, is governed not by formal logic, as some critics of the autonomy of culture presuppose,

but by concrete configurations of emotionally-charged categories, created and re-created in social interactions.

<https://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780190273385.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780190273385-e-26>

Kurakin, Dmitry. Culture and cognition: The Durkheimian principle of sui generis synthesis vs. cognitive-based models of culture // *American Journal of Cultural Sociology*, Published Online First at October 04, 2019 (DOI 10.1057/s41290-019-00083-w).

Cultural sociology must catch up in taking seriously recent initiatives in the sociology of culture and cognition, represented by the works of Omar Lizardo, John Levi Martin, Stephen Vaisey, and others. However, aiming at progress in cultural analysis, these theories are partly driven by an epistemic logic alien to cultural theorizing, making the very concept of culture redundant. To identify the anti-cultural core of the ongoing cognitive turn in sociology, I propose an ideal-typical model — ‘the informational theory of communication,’ which reduces culture to information. Although many cognitive scientists and sociologists of culture and cognition are aware of the limitations and counter-productivity of this model, and it might not exist in a pure form, I argue that, first, it is still clearly traceable in many of their arguments, and, second, that it can be seen as a cultural logic underlying a substantial part of their arguments. I posit that replacing this logic of explanation with the Durkheimian model of sui generis synthesis, the concept of emergence, and the idea of ‘boundary conditions’ not only allows us to integrate the insights of cognitive science into sociology, but also opens a way for sociology to contribute to the cognitive sciences.

Full text (view only version): <https://rdcu.be/bS68l>

Luisetti, Federico. “Geopower: On the States of Nature of Late Capitalism,” *European Journal of Social Theory* pp. 342-363.

Lynch, Heather. (2019) “Esposito’s Affirmative Biopolitics in Multispecies Homes,” *European Journal of Social Theory* pp. 364-381.

Richter, Hannah. (2019) “The Eroticization of Biopower: Masochistic Relationality and Resistance in Deleuze and Agamben,” *European Journal of Social Theory* pp. 382-398.

Roudometof, Victor “Recovering the local: From glocalization to localization” (Forthcoming) *Current Sociology* DOI: 10.1177/0011392118812933
Addressing a major theoretical lacuna in the literature concerning ‘the local’ and

localization, different interpretations of the local are presented and critiqued and a different account of the local and localization as a focal point for social research is offered. In the article, it is argued that social theory needs to give the local its due and avoid surrendering the local to localism. The local is thematized in terms of the space/place nexus; although it is impossible to bind the local in terms of space, it is possible

to do so in terms of place. Hence, the suggestion is to think of the local as a place. Through these lenses, localization is conceived as a process of place-making, which in turn successfully differentiates the local from the related concepts of globalization and glocalization. The increasing pace of globalization emerges as a factor counteracting localization, thereby giving birth to various localisms. Possible avenues for developing alternatives to current versions of exclusivist localism are explored.

Simon Susen (2019) 'The Resonance of Resonance: Critical Theory as a Sociology of World-Relations?', *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society*, Online First, pp. 1–36.

Simon Susen (2018) 'The Economy of Enrichment: Towards a New Form of Capitalism?', *Berlin Journal of Critical Theory*, 2(2), pp. 5–98.

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Simon Susen (2018) 'Justification', in George Ritzer and Chris Rojek (eds.) *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Sociology*, 2nd Edition, Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, pp. 1–3 [DOI: 10.1002/9781405165518.wbeosj012.pub2].

Simon Susen (2018) 'Jürgen Habermas: Between Democratic Deliberation and Deliberative Democracy', in Ruth Wodak and Bernhard Forchtner (eds.) *The Routledge Handbook of Language and Politics*, London: Routledge, pp. 43–66.

Simon Susen (2018) 'Saussure, Ferdinand de', in Bryan S. Turner, Chang Kyung-Sup, Cynthia F. Epstein, Peter Kivisto, William Outhwaite, and J. Michael Ryan (eds.) *The Wiley Blackwell Encyclopedia of Social Theory*, Volume V, Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, pp. 2001–2006.

Simon Susen (2018) 'Language', in Bryan S. Turner, Chang Kyung-Sup, Cynthia F. Epstein, Peter Kivisto, William Outhwaite, and J. Michael Ryan (eds.) *The Wiley Blackwell Encyclopedia of Social Theory*, Volume III, Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, pp. 1278–1290.

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Simon Susen (2017) 'Between Crisis and Critique: The Fragile Foundations of Social Life à la Rodrigo Cordero', *Distinktion: Journal of Social Theory*, 18(1), pp. 95–124.

Simon Susen (2017) 'Following the Footprints of the "Postmodern Turn": A Reply to

Simon Susen (2017 [2014]) 'Reflexões sobre a ideologia: as lições de Pierre Bourdieu e Luc Boltanski', translated by Fernando Bee and Raphael Concli, *Perspectivas: Revista de Ciências Sociais*, 49(1), pp. 101–137.

Simon Susen (2017) 'Remarks on the Nature of Justification: A Socio-Pragmatic Perspective', in Charlotte Cloutier, Jean-Pascal Gond, and Bernard Leca (eds.) *Justification, Evaluation and Critique in the Study of Organizations: Contributions from French Pragmatist Sociology*, Book Series: Research in the Sociology of Organizations, Volume 52, Bingley: Emerald, pp. 349–381.

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Simon Susen (2017) 'Hermeneutic Bourdieu', in Lisa Adkins, Caragh Brosnan, and Steven Threadgold (eds.) *Bourdieuian Prospects*, London: Routledge, pp. 132–159.

Simon Susen and Patrick Baert (2017) *The Sociology of Intellectuals: After 'The Existentialist Moment'*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 205 pp.

Stimilli, Elettra, (2019) "Religion and the Spontaneous Order of the Market: Law, Freedom, and Power Over Lives," *European Journal of Social Theory* 399-415

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Abstract: Along with a general introduction to Jeffrey Alexander's sociology, in which I comment on some of the main lines of his sociological output over the years (social theory and metatheory, neofunctionalism, cultural sociology and the political sociology of civil society), I present here an unpublished interview with the author, conducted in October 2014 in Rio de Janeiro. During this interview, we talked about various aspects of his personal and intellectual trajectory, highlighting especially continuities and discontinuities over his theoretical journey, from the revisions of the classics of sociology to his more recent formulations on the civil sphere, passing through the place of the Parsonian legacy in his work.

Vandenberge, F. "The Normative Foundations of Critical Realism", *Journal of Critical Realism*, 18, 3, pp. 319-336.

Abstract: As a comment on the debate between Dave Elder-Vass and Leigh Price, I

propose a dialogue between Bhaskar and Habermas. If we could introduce critical realism into critical theory, we might be able to strengthen its critique of positivism. Conversely, if we introduce critical theory into critical realism, we might be able to defend with more force judgmental rationalism and moral realism. The intuition that will guide my reflections is that the dialogical reconstruction of Habermas and Bhaskar can uphold the 'holy trinity' of ontological realism, epistemic relativism and judgmental rationalism in the field of ethics. If we succeed in defending moral realism and judgmental rationalism, we will avoid the spectre of moral relativism.

Forthcoming Articles

Curran, Dean and David Tyfield (forthcoming) “Low-Carbon Innovation in China and the Misrecognition of the Moral Economy of Risk-Class” *Theory, Culture, and Society*