

TIMELINES

Newsletter of ASA History of Sociology and Social Thought Section, July 2021 (32)

INSIDE

ESSAYS

- Message from the Chair 1
"Reflections on the Secret of
Human Meaning": University
of Laverne Last Lecture,
No 24, 2020 3
Presidential Biographies
Update 8
2021 Election Results 9
2021 Section Awards 9
ASA HoSST Events 11

NEWS

- Recent Publications 12

EVENTS

- Scholar Activism and the
History of Sociology 14

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Kieran Durkin

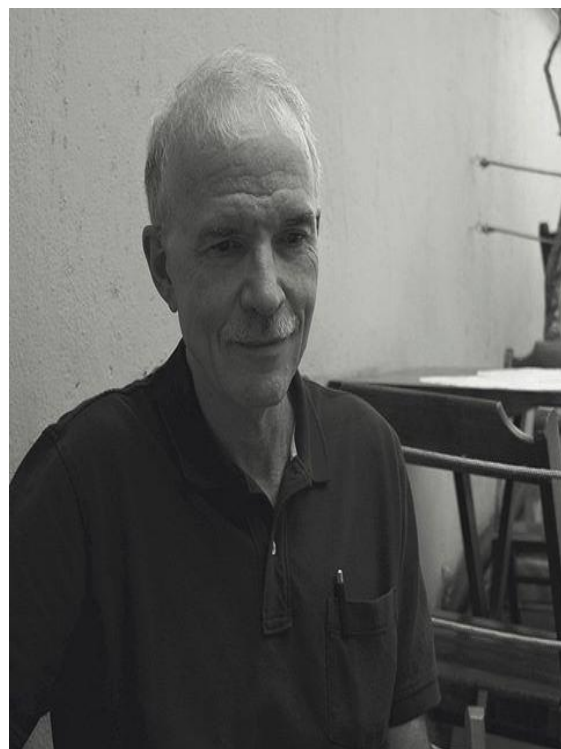
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Message from the Chair

By Kevin B. Anderson, University of California-Santa Barbara

What's in a name?
Well, as sociologists we know
the true answer is, "a lot."

This spring, we voted to change the name of our Section to History of Sociology and Social Thought. We discussed this briefly at business meetings in 2019 and 2020, and then held the vote. What follows are some of the reasons others and I had in mind in proposing this name change for our section, which has in recent years hovered around the minimum of 200 members.



Here I am speaking mainly for myself, as the person who proposed the change, but what I have to say is really the product of a long discussion since 2019, and even earlier.

First, it is clear many Section members were already doing history of social thought as well as history of sociology, if one looks at the papers presented at our sessions at ASA and other work our members have been doing. This can be seen in our ASA session this year also.

Second, there are a number of "unhoused" history of social thought people within the ASA. While the ASA continues to list "History of Sociology/Social Thought" as an "area of sociological interest" that can be checked-off when people join or renew their ASA membership, there is

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no ASA section for “History of Social Thought.” In 2019, 156 ASA members indicated HoSST as one of their areas of interest. [For comparison, 850 indicated Theory, 661 Comparative Historical Sociology, 1294 Sex and Gender, and 177 Marxist Sociology.] Thus, it is kind of surprising that up-to-now there never has been a section with the phrase “History of Social Thought” in its title.

Third, the term “social thought” will likely attract new people to our section. It is broader than social theory, let alone sociological theory. It will strengthen our hand in continuing the scholarly activity of working to rediscover and include people who were/are doing important and serious work in the ongoing challenge of understanding society and who have, for various reasons, been marginalized within Sociology’s disciplinary boundaries. These include scholars of race, gender, sexuality, climate, disability, decoloniality, critical race theory, and Marxism and critical theory, among others.

Fourth, the fairly large ASA Theory Section [membership 754 as of July 2021] has moved away from the history of social thought in recent years, giving us a niche to fill with this name change. Most departments continue to have theory courses at the undergraduate and, if applicable, the graduate level, that discuss and even debate the theoretical canon. Yet no ASA section devotes itself consistently to these kinds of issues. We have long been doing so and can continue to do so.

Fifth, we need not only to increase the size but also the diversity of our membership. Over the years, we have been somewhat successful in gender diversity, but less so with regard to race and ethnicity.

For all the above reasons, I think the name change will benefit us by describing more accurately what we are already doing and by attracting people interested in social thought (and theory) who may not realize that’s what we are doing. If we can reach 300 members [we are primed go over 200 by the time our membership drive ends this month, hopefully by more than just a few], then we would have 2 paper sessions at ASA meetings.

That issue – of increasing to 300 members – is something to consider for 2021-22. If we could do so, I would propose having one ASA session devoted more to the history of sociology and the other more to the history of social thought. Obviously, these boundaries are fluid. This year, with one session, there is a combination of both kinds of papers.

With these considerations in mind, I hope that all members enjoy the upcoming ASA Meeting and participation in the Section activities there and in the year that lies ahead.

Kevin

“Reflections on the Secret of Human Meaning”: University of Laverne Last Lecture, November 24, 2020: Delivered to ULV Faculty and Students and Former Students and Colleagues

By Glenn A. Goodwin

INTRODUCTION

Thank you for this opportunity to present my last lecture. I thought, for my last lecture, I would try to leave especially the young folks listening (students and colleagues) with something they may be able to actually *use* and perhaps even some of the gray backs present might find interesting as well. Thus, I have selected as a topic for my last lecture the “secret” of human meaning, what is the secret to living a meaningful life? As I was putting all this together, it occurred to me that my last lecture might well be framed as a strong testimonial and tribute to liberal arts and sciences education generally. I believe there

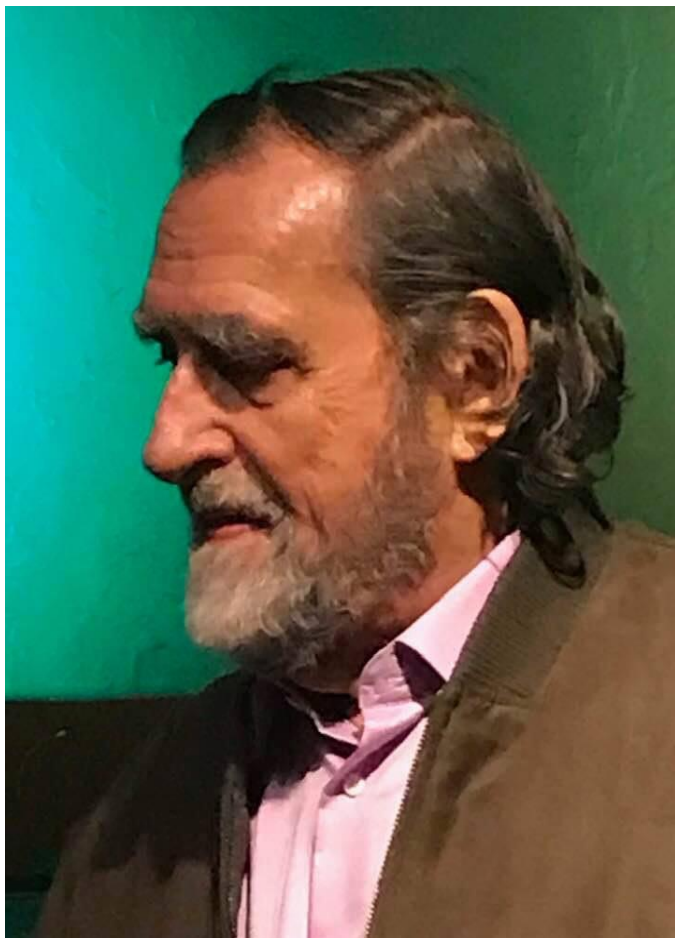
is a sense in which we as *faculty and students* are privileged to participate in such an educational endeavor and I hope I can make that privilege clear in my presentation.

This past semester I completed my 53rd year of teaching on a professorial level—of being a student of students. From the beginning of my teaching career, I started almost every course I ever taught with these wise words from Professor anonymous: “a good lecture is like a good sermon; it should comfort the disturbed and disturb the comforted.” I stand by that today—perhaps I can comfort some of you and disturb others of you. Also fundamental to my teaching is something an intellectual mentor of mine, C. Wright Mills, once wrote: “I will try to be objective; I do not, however, claim to be detached.”

One final caveat before we start this journey: in order to reveal the secret to living a meaningful life, it is necessary that I sketch the biography of the life that revealed it to me. I do so by practicing what Alvin Gouldner and Charles Horton Cooley (long before Bourdieu) referred to as reflexive sociological autobiography, and I do *NOT* do so easily in public. So, please bear with me.

SISYPHUS

Fundamental to what I shall present today is a familiarity with “The Myth of Sisyphus.” Briefly, the Gods had condemned Sisyphus, because he went counter to their wishes, to roll a gigantic boulder up a mountain for eternity. Part of the sentence was the fact that as soon as Sisyphus would approach the top of the mountain, the boulder would tumble back down to the bottom. Sisyphus would then start again, only to be rewarded by a repeat performance. Such was his “sentence.” Assuming a meaningful life brings with it a sense of contentment, of happiness, I wish the same for all of you—in the sense that Camus left Sisyphus *HAPPY* and *CONTENTED*.



THE LIFE

To begin my search for the secret of human meaning *via* my sociological autobiography I need to mention that my life consists of two births or, perhaps more accurately, one birth and one experience of having been “born again” (warning: so as not to lose any of you prematurely, my rebirth has nothing to do with the evangelical protestant sense of the term). As we will see, my “rebirth” has to do with the acquisition of consciousness circa 1962. Let me begin this journey.

My “first birth” was in the Perry Street Projects of Buffalo, New York where, as in most public housing projects, the “meaning of human meaning,” let alone the searching for the secret of human meaning, is seldom ever considered. *Survival* was the paramount interest in that milieu. With one exception of a house that we lived in for a couple of years, from which we were evicted, I lived in public housing projects until about 1954, graduated from high school in 1956 and entered college the same year. At the age of 17, I enrolled as a freshman at the University of Buffalo, the first member of the Goodwin Clan *ever* to attend College. My parents had somehow managed to save enough money to buy me one year of university.

My Mother worked at the local “factory” and became an AFL/CIO union activist, later to become Secretary of the then (very) unwelcomed union; I have fond memories as a child, frolicking with my sister on picket lines, eyeing the gigantic cisterns of wieners boiling for the pickets and their children to lunch upon. My father was, and remained until his death, an anarchist without ever knowing he was an anarchist—he distrusted all politics, politicians, the State, and anyone with authority. Dad was a railroad signalman and a salesman who travelled frequently. Years later, after my re-birth, I would come to understand the REAL existential loneliness of Willy Loeman in Arthur Miller’s *The Death of A Salesman*.

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Having played some football and participated in track and field in high school, I toyed briefly with both in University—very briefly. Athletics, I soon discovered, was serious business on the College level and this, coupled by the fact that I was flunking all—I repeat—*ALL*—of my courses, led me to rapidly postpone my dreams of becoming an accomplished athlete. I did, however, in the Summer of 1959 (the year before they entered the newly created American Football League), have one more flirtation with the sport, this time with the Buffalo Bills. After spending a couple of days at the Bills summer camp training site I took a look around and decided that flunking all my courses was clearly easier, more fun, and much less dangerous to my health! I would reflect back on that experience in later years and realize that there, on the football field, as in the Projects of Buffalo, any questions about the secret of human meaning seldom ever surfaced.

During this period of “pre-birth,” I worked for 7 years (all the while going to College) as a ward attendant on an active psychiatric ward at the County hospital. It was a ward that accommodated both citizens brought in from the community and prisoners transferred to the Ward from local jails and the Erie County Penitentiary. Almost every night there were brawls and, on occasion, riots (*one year* I recorded that I lost one shirt a week in those brawls—exciting for a non-conscious 18- or 19-year-old male). Looking back at this experience later in my life’s journey, I would realize the extent to which people got locked up for asking probing questions about the secret of human meaning.

Even though I entered the University in 1956, I never graduated until 1964. That 8-year quest for a B.A. was marked by flunking out of University time and time again. The pattern emerged as follows: every semester I would enroll for a full semester’s course load, flunk everything I took, be forced to take one or two courses in the evening division to “pull up” my GPA, re-enroll again full time and the

process would repeat itself. I recall that during those years I “majored” in English, Philosophy, Journalism, History, or whatever course I might have passed that particular semester. And then, at the close of the Spring, 1962 semester the University notified me that I had flunked out “finally and forever”—I would not be allowed to take any more courses in the evening division in order to raise my grades.

However, along the way I had taken a course in the sociology of bureaucracy and learned that oftentimes in large-scale organizations “records” can sometimes be “confusing” to the bureaucrats working with them. With this tiny bit of information in hand, and I would remind us, in the very much pre-computer age, I *attempted* to enroll for classes in early Fall, 1962. The Registrar and other University officials pulled my “records” and refused me registration, at which point I pleaded with them that there must be some kind of mistake; their records were on a “Glenn Goodwin,” and I was Glenn A. Goodwin, a totally different person. Not able to “reconcile” the problem on the spot, and having to get 32,000 students registered (again, sans computers!), they allowed me to “tentatively enroll” until they could sort out the confusion. By the time they sorted it all out, around mid-semester, I was doing good “A-level” work (in sociology), my professors spoke on my behalf, and I was allowed to continue. Even more importantly to me (my Professors also got something of a kick out of) *I had not only “discovered” sociology but was actually able to USE its wisdom!*

Also in 1962, the year of my “re-birth,” and over the next couple of years in sociology I either discovered or was re-introduced to Marx, Weber, Durkheim, Martineau, Simmel, Jane Addams, Mannheim, Comte, Kant, Hegel, and other great minds. In psychology I discovered or was re-introduced to Freud as well as his critics, Harry Stack Sullivan, Karen Horney, Erich Fromm, Victor Frankel, Rollo May, and R.D. Laing, among others; in Literature I came to appreciate Camus, Sartre, Steinbeck, Tolstoy, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Kafka, Dostoevsky, Virginia Wolf,

Samuel Beckett, James Baldwin, and others. I was also very lucky to have had articulate and brilliant professors.

It was in 1962 through roughly 1967 that my re-birth, my acquisition of consciousness, was fueled by beginning to ask questions about the meaning of human meaning; indeed, the question that literally burned my consciousness then (as now to a great extent) is: what is the secret of human meaning; how does one live a meaningful life? It was also in 1962, the year he died at the age of 46, that I discovered C. Wright Mills and his work (with Hans Gerth) on power and the social psychological dimensions of human existence.

The 1960’s were an inspirational decade. There was so much happening—America was a sociological goldmine, especially for a young, budding student of the discipline. There was the last gasp of the House UnAmerican Activities Committee (HUAC), the Civil Rights movement, the war in Vietnam, and the Nixon administration and all the new ideas I was learning, questions I was asking. I found myself on

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many picket lines, *ALWAYS* making sure, of course, that I was not in the “Stalinist” line (!); (I was *there*, in the public Chambers, when HUAC was forced out of Buffalo!); I was supporting SNCC (Student Non-Violent Committee) and CORE (Congress of Racial Equality) in Louisiana, helping to

register voters in Mississippi, all the while never really reflecting on *WHY* I was there and what those demonstrations and activities were all about praxis-wise. I just remember them “feeling good”—kind of natural, doing the right thing to be there. Camus once wrote in his essay “On Absurd Reasoning,” that we get into the habit of living before acquiring the habit of thinking—that assertion was clearly applicable to me, though I was soon to learn that the “living/thinking dichotomy” is not mutually exclusive but, rather, dialectical.

Along with the active participation in and confrontation with the *EXTERNAL* world, I was also having my mind opened with the discovery of great thinkers who seemed to understand *theoretically*

what the human condition was all about. When I asked my professors—my adopted “bureaucrats of the mind”—about reasons why the world required changing so drastically and immediately, they sent me home with Marx.

When I asked questions about the patients on the psychiatric ward where I worked—questions concerning the sources of estrangement, alienation, anomie, disenchantment that was so clearly exhibited by them—I was sent home, not with Freud or Jung, but with Durkheim, Max Weber, Simmel, Hans Gerth, and C. Wright Mills.

Those were great discoveries to have made. I did not need Marx to tell me that alienation could become rampant in the working class—I had seen it and, experientially, *I, myself had been it*. But Marx did explain to me the *structural sources* of such feelings and existence and offered suggestions for overcoming them. Marx, most of all, in his debates with Hegel, awakened me to the *dialectical quality* of human life—how living *AND* thinking was necessary; how theory *AND* praxis is necessary to live an enlightened life. This discovery of the dialectical quality of human life was to be extremely significant to me—years later, for example, I would read Schumpeter’s *Imperialism and Social Class* and would finally understand Schumpeter’s assertion that: “The machine of warriors, created by the wars that required it, creates the wars it requires.”

Max Weber, Durkheim, Mills, Comte, Tarde, Parsons all showed me the power that collectivities can have over individuals. Weber explained to me the origin of my guilt feelings whenever I wasn’t doing something the collectivity thought was “productive”—why, for example, when fishing on that placid lake in Canada, with my father and brothers (something I had done since boyhood), I would inevitably feel uncomfortable—unproductive—and begin searching for a book to read or an article to outline. The Protestant work ethic, though only ideational in content, gets exhibited time and again in real human

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beings struggling to achieve. Durkheim, in his classic analysis of suicide, showed me that being isolated from groups can kill you, being overly integrated into groups can kill you, to be too strongly regulated by social norms can kill you, and not to be regulated by social norms can kill you. By 1964, when I graduated with a B.A. in sociology my “re-birth” was complete. I went off to graduate school at Tulane University, in New Orleans, wondering how in hell one could live a meaningful life knowing all these things. Indeed, *WHAT WAS HUMAN MEANING ALL ABOUT??* Surely it had more to it than simple conformity or rebellion! By the way, true to form, my doctoral dissertation was on alienation among college students!

During my 3 years at Tulane, in addition to taking my doctoral courses in sociology and practicing as a TA, I spent my week-ends, again, by stuffing envelopes in the offices of SNCC or helping to register voters in Mississippi. I was also reading or, at times, re-reading philosophical arguments about epistemology. It was at that time, searching for the meaning of human meaning, that I read Descartes and came away somewhat satisfied with

his famous dictum: “Cognito, ergo sum” (“I think, therefore I am”). I was elated—finally I found the secret to human meaning!! THEN I delved more deeply into the existentialists from Kierkegaard through Nietzsche, Camus and Sartre and concluded the opposite: *I AM*, therefore I think. So, which is it? Is it some combination of both? What, exactly, defines my “*AM-NESS*”? And how do I *KNOW* this?

Upon reading David Hume in search of an empirical basis for how I *KNOW* something, I came away thoroughly confused!! Hume made the case that we cannot know about cause and effect—all we can ever know is associations between events! What??? Where do I look now—certainly, science cannot exist based only on associations between events! Somewhere I had read that Immanuel Kant had said to Hume: “You have awakened me from my dogmatic slumbers”. I had to dig further into *THAT!*

So, I read Kant's Critiques of Pure and Practical Reason, where Kant sends the epistemological search for the source of human knowledge heavily toward the human intellect. And so, there I was, trying to finish a dissertation, pass my courses, trying to change the world, and I couldn't even figure out what was "KNOWABLE," leave alone meaningful!! It was enough to drive one to madness!

At any rate, in 1967, I went off as an assistant professor to Wayne State University in Detroit, still puzzling over these epistemological and human meaning questions. An over socialized conception of the human person, as advocated in sociology, was helpful but something was missing from this equation. The sociological literature was clear that meaninglessness, anomie, as a social psychological condition was "bad"—even pathological—yet I had the feeling, later to be verified, that meaninglessness just might be a necessary condition for meaning. Could the ideas and insights of Camus, Sartre, Beckett, Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, and Hegel be reconciled somehow with sociological theory?

I remember thinking that, somehow, the key to human meaning, to living a meaningful life, was all wrapped up in that question and this question was to haunt me for the remainder of my years publishing and teaching in Academia, including the last 20 years I spent at ULV.

Circa 1970-71, it occurred to me that Camus was correct when, in *The Myth of Sisyphus*, he wrote that: "the absurd, rather than a conclusion, should be taken as a *starting point*." How, then does one acquire meaning in an absurd and contradictory world? And it was—then, 1967-roughly 1973 just such a world. Indeed, our world *today*, one could argue, is equally rife with absurdity and contradictions. When I was offered a job in 1969 at the Claremont Colleges I accepted and carried all these questions with me to California.

I left the country in 1974 on sabbatical to England and, eventually, to spending two years in Cairo, Egypt (at the AUC). It was in Egypt and my own personal struggle for meaning in such a strange and alien culture that reminded me anew of the relevance and

beauty of contradiction and absurdity. I was reminded, especially, that life can be overwhelmingly *BORING* with nothing but order *AND PREDICTABILITY*; yet, I knew, in my "search", that some order, some predictability is essential. Camus, once again, wisely wrote in his Notebooks, 1942-51 the following: "There is in me an anarchy, a frightful disorder...my whole life rebels against order. But, without it I should die scattered." Order! Disorder! meaning/meaninglessness! Reason-non-reason! – all these seemed to play a role in drawing a definitive conclusion about the secret of human meaning. But How? How to pull all these thoughts together? (Hang on! It's coming!)

Well, there I was, circa 1976, having returned from Egypt trying to render the reasonable unreasonable and the unreasonable reasonable! The more I developed these ideas over the years in and out of the classroom, the more the message of dialectic became clear: it is *NOT EITHER* reason *OR* non-reason, either meaning *OR* non-meaning. It was always *BOTH/AND*. Finally, I had reconciled the debate between Kierkegaard and Hegel!

Briefly, Kierkegaard had argued in his *Either/Or* and other works, that either human beings make the choice of a leap of faith—into the arms of God—OR run the risk of a life characterized by chronic and acute *angst*, a life of "sickness unto death" (title of another of his works).

Hegel, in his *The Phenomenology of Mind* and other works, makes the case for "both/and" in his application of dialectic (every thesis contains within it the seeds of its own change or destruction, leading to a new and elevated synthesis, a new "beingness"). Thus, "meaning" may be impossible without "meaninglessness"; the "*angst*" of Kierkegaard may be impossible without its opposite, etc. While Hegel is known mostly through Marx and his (Marx's) materialist interpretation of dialectics as applied to, *social systems*, Hegel's *Phenomenology of Mind* is filled with social psychological insights that I believe are directly applicable to questions concerning the nature, search for, and explanation of human meaning.

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Hegel's use of dialectics, for example, can be applied to G.H. Mead's social psychological explanation of how one acquires a "self," W. G. Sumner's "in-group/out group" phenomenon, to Festinger on dissonance theory, Heider on congruity theory, Newcomb on balance theory, Goffman's work on "Encounters" and "impression management", and Anselm Strauss' writings on negotiating social order, among others.

So, it was the influence of all the great minds summarized in this lecture that motivated me to seek the answer to the source of human meaning—to living a meaningful life. It was also the patience of all my students over these past 53 years, and especially the last 20 years at ULV, in tolerating me as I explored all this in the classroom. I should also recognize and thank many journal and book editors who, over the years, wrestled with aspects of my work. But now, the secret.

THE SECRET

A few weeks ago, when I was invited to deliver my "last lecture," I realized I had the opportunity to put a "period" in this search, to pull it all together. As I sat down to wrestle with my presentation, I recalled the exchange between Alice. B. Toklas and Gertrude

Stein, as Ms. Stein was being prepped for a surgery from which she would not survive: Alice B. Toklas looked at Stein, laying upon her deathbed, and asked: "But what is the answer?" and Ms. Stein, struggling weakly to sit up, responded: "Ah, but what is the question?" and it hit me like a thunderbolt! The answer had been there all along and I was overjoyed that I could, today, reveal the secret of human meaning and leave my listeners "contented," in the sense, again, that Camus left Sisyphus contented at the *BOTTOM* of the mountain.

And here is the secret:

The secret of human meaning lies in devoting one's life to asking the questions: what is the secret of human meaning and how does one live a meaningful life?" To know there is no meaning without non-meaning; there is no happiness without pain; to always be questioning the essence of one's life and one's living.

That old gadfly of Ancient Athens gave voice to the "secret," when he said: "the unexamined life is not worth living." And, with that, I conclude my presentation, just as I see Sisyphus, once again, start-up that mountain.

Presidential Biographies Update

News from the Committee on ASA Presidential Biographies

The Committee on ASA Presidential Biographies (CAPB) is currently in the process of revising the first wave of biographies of the association's former presidents available on its website: <https://www.asanet.org/about-asa/asa-story/asa-history/past-asa-officers/presidents>

The first wave covers the twenty-eight presidents serving from 1906 to 1938. Following open calls for proposals and individual invitations, twenty-three biographies have been assigned to date. The committee continues to welcome proposals for the five remaining biographies of James P. Lichtenberger (1922), John L. Gillin (1926), Emory S. Bogardus (1931), Luther L. Bernard (1932), and Henry P. Fairchild (1936).

The Committee seeks single or co-authored biographies that meet scholarly standards, while written in a publicly accessible style. Contributions shall not exceed 900 words, plus a select bibliography of original and secondary sources. All contributing authors are provided with publication guidelines in order to ensure consistency in style. The completed biographies are subject to a final editorial review by the committee prior to publication on the ASA website. All biographies will list the name of the author(s).

For further questions and to submit proposals, please contact the chair of the Committee, Stefan Bargheer: bargheer@aias.au.dk

Committee on ASA Presidential Biographies (CAPB):

Stefan Bargheer (chair)

Kevin Anderson

Kerby Goff

Bradley Nash, Jr.

David Swartz

Joyce E. Williams

2021 Election Results

Listed below are the officers elected in the 2021 Elections. The Section is deeply grateful to all candidates who volunteered to help keep us a lively place to call “home” at the ASA.

Chair-Elect (3-year term begins in 2021):

- James Dowd, University of Georgia

Council Members-at-Large (3-year term begins in 2021):

- Laura Ford, Bard College
- Taylor Paige Winfield, Princeton University

Council Members (1-year term begins in 2021)

- Joyce E. Williams, National Coalition of Independent Scholars
- Timothy M. Gill, University of Tennessee

Student Representative (2-year term begins in 2021)

- Yui Fung Yip, The University of Hong Kong

2021 Section Awards

We are pleased to announce the 2021 winners of the three annual HoSST awards for scholarly achievement--all have made important contributions to the study of the history of sociology and social thought. We also wish to acknowledge the careful work of the awards committee members in making these selections. Awards will be presented at the HoSST Business Meeting at the ASA, Monday, August 9, 12:45 to 1:15pm EDT (5:45 to 6:15pm BST), VAM, Room 69. Do plan on attending our business meeting to congratulate the winners and thank the committee members.

Distinguished Scholarly Publication Award: Andrea Cossu, Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology and Social Research at the University of Trento in Italy.

- The Distinguished Scholarly Publication Committee is pleased to announce that it has selected Andrea Cossu’s article “Clifford Geertz, Intellectual Autonomy, and Interpretive Social Science,” *American Journal of Cultural Sociology* (2019). Award committee members praised its analytic and theoretical contributions to the sociology of ideas, knowledge, and intellectuals; its historiographical contributions, especially regarding Geertz’s thought and the emergence of interpretive social science more generally; its attention to disciplinary historical context and to its “transdisciplinary thread;” and the accessibility and clarity of the writing.

- **Committee:** Chad Alan Goldberg (Chair), Natalia Ruiz-Junco, Kristin Marsh, Mathieu Desan.

Graduate Student Paper Award—Karmo Kroos, Åbo Akademi University, Turku, Finland

- The Graduate Student Prize Committee is pleased to announce that it has selected “How to Become a Dominant or Even Iconic Central and East European Sociologist: The Case of Iván Szelényi” by Karmo Kroos as the best graduate student paper in the history of sociology for 2021. Kroos seeks to generalize from the following dimensions of Iván Szelényi’s career and scholarship: topic selection, intellectual context, intellectual rivalry, international scholarly interest, effective dissemination, and the career impact of graduate students. Kroos most importantly places Szelényi’s work in historical, intellectual, political, and social context, along the lines of Lewis Coser’s “Masters of Sociological Thought.” Particularly rich is the paper’s exploration of 1960s-1970s Hungarian sociology and the historical impact of such Marxist social science internationally, including in American sociology. Overall, the paper represents important and original research not only in the history of sociology, but in the fields of the sociology of intellectuals and East European Studies as well.
- **Committee:** Johanna Bockman (Chair); Stefan Bargheer, Laura R. Ford, Paul Joosse, Dustin Stoltz.

Career Achievement Award 2021: Patricia Madoo Lengermann and Gillian Niebrugge-Brantley

- It is with great pleasure that we celebrate Patricia Madoo Lengermann and Gillian Niebrugge-Brantley as the recipients of the History of Sociology 2021 Career Achievement Award. Based on the multifarious merits of their candidacy, ranging from high-quality path-breaking scholarship to institution building and social activism, the Committee unanimously awards our section’s most prestigious honor to Lengermann and Niebrugge-Brantley. This is in recognition of their joint work of more than 35 years.

- Lengermann and Niebrugge-Brantley collaboratively began to advance the cause of a feminist sociology in 1986, when they co-presented a paper at a symposium on the work of Dorothy Smith held at George Mason University. From that date forward, they relentlessly promoted the work of women sociologists-- their highly productive intellectual partnership culminating in the publication of *Feminist Sociological Theory* in 1995, followed in 1998 by their seminal text, *The Women Founders*. Covering one hundred



early stirrings, *The Women* uncover the contribution of creation and establishment the years between 1830 and revealing the theoretical commitment of these remained hidden for exposed the process through voices were expunged from sociology. From Harriet Jane Addams and Anna Marianne Weber and

Beatrice Potter Webb, Lengermann and Niebrugge-Brantley detailed the silencing of early women sociologists and analyzed this erasure as a legacy of the discipline’s politics of knowledge, particularly in the U.S. context. Even more significantly, they explicated the social theories of these budding sociologists arguing that the critical issue of their rediscovery was not simply to reinstate women’s voices in the official history of the field. The point was rather to show the relevance and cogency of their sociological

theorizing. These women's ideas mattered, Lengermann and Niebrugge-Brantley maintained, and that is the reason why their work needed to be reintroduced in the sociological canon.

- As ASA past president Joe Feagin writes in his supporting letter, "This was, and is, a very major contribution to the history of sociology, and even more importantly to expanding the theory canon beyond the standard white men." Recentring the importance of reform and social activism at the core of the discipline's beginnings, Lengermann and Niebrugge-Brantley provided critical theoretical and methodological tools to reimagine a more equitable sociological practice. It's hard to overestimate the importance of their pioneering work for reassessing sociology and providing a corrective to the official narratives built on the bulldozing of the disempowered.
- There are several other achievements one could cite from the accomplishments of this powerful duo, but the Committee particularly wishes to emphasize Lengermann and Niebrugge-Brantley's significant contribution to the founding of our own section. As we have all learned from the 2018 report published in the History of Sociology section's newsletter, *Timelines*, Lengermann and Niebrugge-Brantley almost single-handedly fought for three years to bring the section to fruition. Against an ASA bureaucracy that did not want to recognize the value of history for the discipline, they pressed hard and eventually prevailed. In 1999 the section was born along with the newsletter, also a creation of their collaborative efforts. Professors Joyce Williams and Vicky MacLean state in their nomination letters, "For the first time, sociologists interested in the history of the discipline had an official ASA forum in which they could present their scholarship, engage in an exchange of ideas, interact with colleagues of similar interests, and attract graduate students to an area of sociology missing from most curricula." Another ASA past president, Mary Romero, adds in her supporting letter, "Their scholarly contributions have introduced the significance of the History of Sociology to other ASA sections, particularly the Sociology of Sex and Gender, and Race, Class and Gender. Over the years their scholarly writing, their generous work for the section, and for the ASA, has enriched the association."
- *Committee: Simonetta Falasca-Zamponi (Chair), Helmut Staubmann, David N. Smith, Anne Rawls, Anthony Blasi*

ASA History of Sociology and Social Thought Sponsored Events

ASA Section the History of Sociology Council Meeting: Mon, August 9, 10:00 to 10:45am EDT (3:00 to 3:45pm BST), VAM, Room 69

- Session Organizer: *Kevin B. Anderson, University of California, Santa Barbara*
- Chair: *Kevin B. Anderson, University of California, Santa Barbara*

History of Sociology and Social Thought: Mon, August 9, 11:00am to 12:25pm EDT (4:00 to 5:25pm BST), VAM, Room 13

- Session Organizer: *Kevin B. Anderson, University of California, Santa Barbara*
- Presider: *Jane Elizabeth McCamant, University of Chicago*
- "Designing Narratives and Semantic Comparisons: An Exploratory Essay," *Laura R. Ford, Bard College*
- "From Paris to Boston: A Trajectory with Pierre Bourdieu," *David L. Swartz, Boston University*

- “History and Biography in the 21st Century; C. Wright Mills Revisited,” *Lauren Langman, Loyola University-Chicago*
- “Multiracial Identities in the United States: Toward the Brazilian or South African Paths?” Reginald Daniel, *University of California, Santa Barbara*

Section on History of Sociology Business Meeting: Mon, August 9, 12:45 to 1:15pm EDT (5:45 to 6:15pm BST), VAM, Room 69

History and Sociology of Sociology Roundtable: Mon, August 9, 1:15 to 2:10pm EDT (6:15 to 7:10pm BST), VAM, Room 57

- Session Organizer: *Anne Frances Eisenberg, SUNY-Geneseo*
- Presider: *Peter Kivisto, Augustana College*
- “Du Bois on Religion. A Reappraisal Religion and Identity in Du Bois’s Writings,” *Sandro Segre, University of Genoa, Italy*
- “History of Anti-Racism: from Antebellum Abolitionism to the Sociology of Race Relations,” *Maria Elena ELENA Indelicato, University of Coimbra*
- “Paying inattention: The art of ignoring others’ work among Russian social scientists,” *Mikhail Sokolov, European University at Saint Petersburg*
- “Scholarly Exception: On Social-Gene Interaction, Culture of Poverty, and Forbidden Knowledge Claims in Sociology,” *Samuel David Stabler, CUNY-Hunter College and Shai M. Dromi, Harvard University*
- “The Unfettered and Un-sponsored Sociologist: Mixed Messages in Response to Erving Goffman’s Sociology,” *Francesco Ranci Ortigosa*

Also relevant to our section:

History and Sociology of Sociology: Sun, August 8, 12:45 to 2:10pm EDT (5:45 to 7:10pm BST), VAM, Room 29

- Session Organizer: *Mitchell Duneier, Princeton University*
- Presider: *Eviatar Zerubavel, Rutgers University-New Brunswick*
- “Falsification Immunity and the Theory Effect: The Never-ending Story of a Simple Mistake,” *Stefan Bargheer, Aarhus Institute of Advanced Studies*
- “The Immigrant Sociologist: Paul Siu at Chicago,” *Nicolas Eilbaum, Greensboro College*
- “The Socio-Analogical Imagination,” *Eviatar Zerubavel, Rutgers University-New Brunswick*

Recent and Current Member Publications

Matteo Bortolini:

- Bortolini, M. *A Joyfully Serious Man. The Life of Robert Bellah* is forthcoming, October 19, 2021, for Princeton University Press. [Here you can find a webpage.](#)

- Bortolini, M. “The Grudging Modernizer. A Trip to the Middle East and Cold War Social Science”, *Mi-nerva*, 59, 2, 2021, pp. 261-284, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11024-020-09413-6>. **Abstract:** The postwar era is generally recognized as a unique moment of impetuous growth of the social sciences, due to the interest of Western internationalist elites in the development of a set of pragmatically-oriented intellectual tools that could be of use in the confrontation between the self-proclaimed “Free World,” the Soviet bloc, and emerging postcolonial nations. In the last twenty years, however, doubts about the impact of the Cold War syndrome on the development of ideas, methods, and infrastructures of Western social science in the 1950s and the 1960s have been cast by historians and social scientists alike. This article uses the episode of the 1959 Middle East scholarly trip of a Harvard sociologist, Robert N. Bellah, to highlight the complexity and the ambivalence of individual trajectories, as well as the adumbrations of critical ideas and themes in the work of an intellectual who was a recognized, if peripheral, member of some of the most influential Cold War Social Science circles. A final hypothesis on a paradox of Cold War social science is advanced, according to which the need to staff centers and institutes for the training of Cold War technicians and elites put humanists and orientalist in the condition to influence those very students who should have been trained in the most advanced and practically-oriented social sciences.
- Bortolini, M. “The Return of the Repressed. On Robert N. Bellah, Norman O. Brown, and *Religion in Human Evolution*”, *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences*, 56, 1, 2020, pp. 20-35, DOI: 10.1002/jhbs.21995. **Abstract:** As much as Robert Bellah’s final work, *Religion in Human Evolution*, has been studied and dissected, no critic under- lined the importance of psychoanalysis for its main argument and its theoretical framework. The paper shows the influence exerted by a controversial interpreter of Freud, Norman O. Brown, on Bellah’s ideas, intellectual profile, and writing style in the late-1960s and early 1970s. While in search for a new intellectual voice, Bellah was struck by Brown’s work and began to make intensive use of his book, *Love’s Body*, both in his teaching and in his research of the early 1970s, during his so-called “symbolic realism” period. While Bellah abandoned Brown’s ideas and style in the mid-1970s, some of the basic intuitions he had during that period still survived as one of the major theoretical intuitions of *Religion and Human Evolution*.
- Bortolini, M., and A. Cossu, “In the Field but not of the Field. Clifford Geertz, Robert Bellah, and Interdisciplinary Success”, *European Journal of Social Theory*, 23, 3, 2020, pp. 328-349. DOI: 10.1177/1368431018823140. **Abstract:** The intellectual trajectories of social scientists Robert N. Bellah and Clifford Geertz are compared as a case study in the production of successful interdisciplinary work. Geertz and Bellah started from a similar position, in terms of scholarly habits, network centrality, and symbolic capital. However, while Geertz became an interdisciplinary star and left his mark in disciplines as diverse as history, sociology, and cultural studies, Bellah’s interdisciplinary appeal was more limited, while his ability to speak to the general public as a public intellectual was unmatched by Geertz. We thus review Bellah’s and Geertz’s parallel careers using a multidimensional analytical model intended to complete current field-based and performative-pragmatist models of intellectual success, arguing that interdisciplinary success can be accounted for by a combination of local ecological factors, images of intellectual work, and texts showing a high degree of cross-disciplinary fluency.

Laura R. Ford

- Laura R. Ford, *The Intellectual Property of Nations: Sociological and Historical Perspectives on a Modern Legal Institution* (Cambridge University Press, 2021)
- <https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/intellectual-property-of-nations/75331BF87E20037C2F9B77BAB10DB795>
- This book takes a long view on the emergence of intellectual property, as a new type of legal property. Drawing on macro-historical sociological theories, I argue that intellectual property emerged as part of a lengthy development in the ramping up of social power, a development that played a central role in

constituting the modern nation-state system. From the perspective of sociological theory, intellectual property may be seen as an infrastructure of state power, one that bridges public and private spheres of political and social life. In its current form, intellectual property is an infrastructure of state power that incentivizes innovation, creativity, and scientific development, which are understood to be engines of economic growth. In order to see how this infrastructure of state power emerged, however, I believe that we must follow macro-historical social theorists, such as Michael Mann and Max Weber, back to antiquity. What the journey reveals is the fact that legal instruments very similar to modern intellectual property have existed for a long time, and have been deployed, at times, for quite similar purposes. What the journey also reveals is the extent to which our modern conceptions of property and obligation are dependent upon ancient, legal traditions, particularly from Rome. Through this book I hope to contribute to reflection on the role that intellectual property is playing in our contemporary political communities and societies; on the close relationship between law and religion; and on the extent to which law's obliging force depends on written traditions stretching back to antiquity.

Chad Alan Goldberg

- Section Council member Chad Alan Goldberg (University of Wisconsin–Madison) is the editor of *Education for Democracy: Renewing the Wisconsin Idea* (University of Wisconsin Press, 2020). This collection of original essays from a variety of disciplinary perspectives traces the development of the Wisconsin Idea from its origins in early 20th-century Progressivism, with deep concern about what it means today and what it can mean in the future. The book includes a substantive introductory essay by Goldberg entitled “The University’s Service to Democracy.” The book elucidates and advocates the ideal of service to democracy as a compelling counter-vision to the utilitarian, market model of university purpose that is aggressively promoted in Wisconsin and elsewhere today.
- The *Journal of Classical Sociology* devoted a review symposium in its May 2020 issue to Goldberg’s previous book, *Modernity and the Jews in Western Social Thought* (University of Chicago Press, 2017). Contributors include Angel Adams Parham, Joseph Gerteis, Peter Kivisto, and Fuyuki Kurasawa.

Mark Solovey and Christian Dayé

- *Cold War Social Science: Transnational Entanglements*, edited by Mark Solovey and Christian Dayé, Palgrave Macmillan (2021). <https://www.palgrave.com/de/book/9783030702458>
- This book explores how the social sciences became entangled with the global Cold War. While duly recognizing the realities of nation states, national power, and national aspirations, the studies gathered here open up new lines of transnational investigation. Considering developments in a wide array of fields – anthropology, development studies, economics, education, political science, psychology, science studies, and sociology – that involved the movement of people, projects, funding, and ideas across diverse national contexts, this volume pushes scholars to rethink certain fundamental points about how we should understand – and thus how we should study – Cold War social science itself.

Upcoming Section Events

Scholar Activism and the History of Sociology: Celebrations, Critiques, and Futures Past

August 4-5, 2021

A Virtual Symposium

<https://princeton.zoom.us/j/95696385055>

**Sponsored by the ASA Section on the History of Sociology and Social Thought
New Voices Initiative**

Wednesday, August 4, 2021:

Opening remarks: 2:45 - 3:00 PM EDT

Panel 1: Scholar Activism (Specific Scholars): 3:00 - 4:15 PM EDT

Jonas Grahn – “Left Alternatives to Gunnar Myrdal’s Work on Race Relations in the US”

Nicolás Eilbaum – “The Immigrant Sociologist: Paul Siu at Chicago”

Manisha Desai and Rianka Roy – “Scholars Denied: The Theoretical Praxis of Savitribai Phule and the Women Activists of Satya Shodhak Samaj (Truth Seeker Society)”

Ning Yang – “A Post-Pandemic Revisit to Foucault’s Notions of Resistance and Body”

Panel 2: Scholar Activism (Movements): 4:30 - 5:45 PM EDT

Harry Murray – “Unlikely Activists: Sociologists and the Catholic Worker Movement”

Louis Edgar Esparza – “The Study of 20th Century Movements”

Jan Marie Fritz – “Clinical Sociology: Activist Scholar-Practitioners in the US and South Africa”

Thursday, August 5, 2021

History of Sociology Leadership Panel: 11:20 AM - 12:20 PM EDT

Jill Niebrugge-Brantley, Pat Lengermann, Kevin Anderson, Paul Joosse

Panel 3: Tracing the Field: 12:30 - 1:45 PM EDT

Cynthia Guzman, Dan Silver, Lars Döpking, and Lukas Underwood – “The Making of Sociological Thought – A Cosmopolitan Inquiry”

Timothy Black – “Writing Backwards to Move Forward: Centering Critical Sociology”

Justin Huft – “Sociology of Therapy”

Panel 4: Looking Forward: 2:00 - 3:15 PM EDT

Rose M. Brewer – “Transformational Scholar Activism: A Radical Sociological Alternative”

Endia Louise Hayes – “Haunting as Method: Notes on Sociologically Approaching (Anti)Socialities”

Aristide Sechandice – “Dysfunctions of Evaluation Standards in Contemporary Sociology”

Closing remarks: 3:15 - 3:30 PM EDT