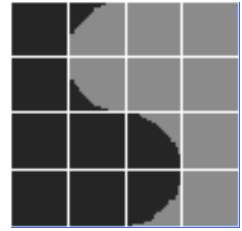




Evolution, Biology & Society



Summer, 2015. Newsletter of the ASA Section on Evolution, Biology & Society Volume 11, No. 1

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Virginia Commonwealth University

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K. Jill Kiecolt (2014-2017)
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University of North Carolina

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Bruce K. Friesen
University of Tampa

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New Council Members (2015-2016)

A hearty welcome to the following members elected to Council in the spring 2015 ASA elections. Introductions appear later in this newsletter. The official term for new members begins at the end of our Business Meeting at the ASAs in Chicago.

Colter Mitchell, Chair-Elect
University of Michigan

Christopher Chase-Dunn
UC Riverside (2015-2018)

Jacob Cheadle (2015-2018)
University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Dudley Poston
Texas A&M University (2015-2018)

Outgoing Council Members:

Susan Short
Colter Mitchel (transitions from Council member to Chair-Elect).

Thank you for your service

New Newsletter Editor – Introduction



Bruce K. Friesen
University of Tampa

I'm pleased to have the honor to serve as our section's newsletter editor. Newsletters still fill an important need in this age of instant digital information-sharing. They provide a snapshot of the overall health and vibrancy of a section, serve as a permanent public record of activities, and provide an opportunity to focus more intently on current research questions and promising new areas of focus. As a former ASA section chair (Human Rights), I understand the role newsletters play in providing a more personal connection to authors and an informal yet important mechanism for providing critical feedback on each other's work. This helps foster opportunities for networking at each annual meeting, and an induction of new members into an intellectual community. I look forward to being a part of it all.

I began life as an academic as a qualitative sociologist, adopting the default sociological assumption of human nature as largely a *tabula rasa*. I have, however, always considered myself a renaissance type of person and continue to read widely outside of my own field and discipline. Quality research and new findings, particularly in the areas of genetics, neuroscience, and child development, have dragged me – sometimes kicking and screaming – into accepting a more fully-informed point of view on human nature. I drew on these insights when I wrote a recently published monograph entitled, *Moral Systems and the Evolution of Human Rights* (Springer 2015). Still, I have more to learn, and I expect I am not alone.

Submit your publication list (with or without abstracts), ponderings, book and article reviews, and more, to bfriesen@ut.edu. I look forward to hearing from you.

A Note From the Chair



David Franks
Virginia Commonwealth University

Our section does not have a great number of members, but this should not be a surprise nor cause for lament. What it means is that sociologists in general have to be educated to understand how much of our evolution and biology is relevant to the world of the social. This education is our job and for me, our low membership simply means that too few sociologists are aware of this relevance and thus we have a lot educating to do.

In this little piece, I will refer to my specialty, the social nature of the human brain, and will leave it to the likes of Guang Gou and Michael Shanahan to tell us about the relationship between the social and genetics. Selected references to neurosociology would be *Neurosociology: the Nexus between Neuroscience and Social Psychology* and *Social: Why Our Brains are Wired to Connect*. I wrote a brief review on that book for our newsletter earlier.

Too often the biological and the social are seen as complete opposites. This is particularly true for genetics with the traditional notion of nature versus nurture. Seeing them as opposites pits one against the other. As I have suggested elsewhere, the so-called opposites overlap and are inseparably involved with each other. The best formula is to cancel the notion of total opposition but at the same time, not to merge them so much that their essential differences are not retained. For a commonly cited example, there are times that culture overrides our sexuality.

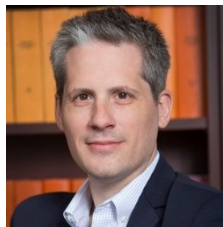
This means our task is important and at times difficult. Only a limited number of sociologists have the knowledge and the will to do it. The upshot of this is limited membership or not, I think we all can stand proud of our participation in the section.

Introducing: New ESB Council Members



Christopher Chase Dunn

Christopher Chase-Dunn is Distinguished Professor of Sociology and Director of the Institute for Research on World-Systems at the University of California-Riverside. He received his Ph.D in Sociology from Stanford University in 1975. His research focuses on interpolity systems, including both the modern global political economy and earlier regional world-systems. Chase-Dunn is the founder and former editor of the *Journal of World-Systems Research* and the Series Editor of a book series published by *The Johns Hopkins University Press*. In 2001 he was elected a Fellow of the *American Association for the Advancement of Science*, and in 2008 he was elected Distinguished Senior Scholar of *The International Political Economy (IPE)* section of the *International Studies Association*.



Jacob E. Cheadle

Jacob E. Cheadle is Happold Professor of Sociology at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. He received the Ph.D. in Sociology and Demography from Pennsylvania State University in 2005. His areas of interest are social network analysis, quantitative research methods, health and development, social neuroscience & neuro-sociology, biosociology & biodemography. A forthcoming publication (with others), entitled "Perceived Discrimination and Markers of Cardiovascular Risk among Low-Income African American Youth," will soon appear in the *American Journal of Human Biology*.



Colter Mitchell

Colter Mitchell is Assistant Professor in the Survey Research Center, a Faculty Associate at the Population Studies Center, a Research Affiliate at Center for Human and Growth and Development and the Associate Director of the Biosocial Methods Collaborative at the University of Michigan. Mitchell completed a postdoctoral fellowship at Princeton University after receiving PhD in Sociology from the University of Michigan. His research focuses how social context interplay with an individual's genetic and epigenetic makeup and neurodevelopment to influence their behavior, wellbeing, and health. He has a recent publication in the *American Journal of Sociology* (2015), "Family Structure Instability, Genetic Sensitivity, and Child Well-Being" with Sara McLanahan, John Hobcraft, Jeanne Brooks-Gunn, Irwin Garfinkel, and Daniel Notterman 120(4):1195-1225.



Dudley L. Poston

Dudley L. Poston, Jr. is Professor of Sociology and the Abell Professor of Liberal Arts at Texas A&M University. He arrived at Texas A&M in 1992. He previously served on the sociology and rural sociology faculties of University of Texas-Austin (1970-1988) and Cornell University (1988-1992). He also holds adjunct faculty positions at People's University, Beijing; Fuzhou University, Fuzhou, China; and Nanjing Normal University, Nanjing, China. Poston teaches classes in demography, statistics, and demographic methods.

A hearty welcome to new members of Council!

New Publications and News of Section Members

Abramson, Corey. 2015. *The End Game: How Inequality Shapes our Final Years.* Harvard University Press.

“Corey Abramson’s portraits of seniors from diverse backgrounds offer an intimate look at aging as a stratified social process. They illustrate that disparities in wealth, access to health care, neighborhood conditions, and networks of friends and family shape how different people understand and adapt to the challenges of old age. Social Security and Medicare are helpful but insufficient to alleviate deep structural inequalities. Yet material disadvantages alone cannot explain why seniors respond to aging in different ways. Culture, in all its variations, plays a crucial role.”

Blute, Marion. 2015. “Modes of Variation and Their Implications for an Extended Evolutionary Synthesis” Pp. 59-75 In Jonathan H. Turner, Richard Machalek & Alexandra Maryanski (Eds.) *Handbook on Evolution and Society: Toward an Evolutionary Social Science.* Paradigm Publishers.

Blute, Marion. 2014. Review of James Tabery, *Beyond Versus: The Struggle to Understand the Interaction of Nature and Nurture.* Cambridge, Mass. The MIT Press. *History and Philosophy of the Life Sciences* 36(3) 464-465.

Blute, Marion. 2014. “Hamilton: Heir of Darwin and Fisher?” Review of Ullica Segerstrale: *Nature’s Oracle: The Life and Work of W. D. Hamilton.* *Biological Theory* 9(2): 229-231.

Chacon, Yami, David Willer, Pamela Emanuelson and Richard Chacon. 2015. "From Chiefdom to State: The Contribution of Social Structural Dynamics." *Social Evolution and History* (forthcoming).

As many of us know, the rise of the state has long been an issue in the study of social evolution. This paper builds on Bob Carneiro’s (1970) “A Theory of the Origin of the State.” *Science*, 169:733-738, long a classic in social evolution. Bob’s theory finds the origin of the state in ongoing, intensifying conflict between villages under circumscription. When circumscribed, defeated villages cannot

escape the demands of conflict winners. Our new paper agrees and adds new theory that looks at the social structures of chiefdoms, the social formation that comes just before the state. The key to our new theory is that chiefdoms take three distinct forms, the structures of each of which contain what Marx would call the seeds of their own destruction. As in Marx, in our theory, the destruction of the old form unveils the new form that had been growing in the womb of the old society.

David Franks will be writing a chapter on Neurosociology for Rosemary L. Hopcroft’s *Oxford Handbook on Evolution, Biology and Society*. Due date is May, 2016.

He will also have a short piece in the next ASA newsletter on how Neurosociology is not necessarily reductionistic and leaves room for agency.

David is updating his *Neurosociology: The Nexus between Neuroscience and Social Psychology*.

Firat, Rengin and Pascal Boyer. 2015. “Coalitional Affiliation as a Missing Link Between Ethnic Polarization and Well-being: An Empirical Test from the European Social Survey.” *Social Science Research*, Vol. 53, pg. 148-161.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ssresearch.2015.05.006>

Friesen, Bruce K. 2015. *Moral Systems and the Evolution of Human Rights.* The Netherlands: Springer.

This monograph offers a unique account of the vast change in moral systems (both religious and secular) over time, positing that moral systems evolve to integrate an ever-greater diversity of peoples into a community. New findings from neuroscience, child development, experimental economics, and great ape societies are used to identify the contingencies and challenges of moral evolution.

Colter Mitchell currently co-directs two NIH R01 projects utilizing the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing study (FFCW). FFCW is a nationally and city representative ongoing study of children born to predominantly low-income families and assessed at birth, 1, 3, 5 and 9 years and are currently being assessed at 15. It has emerged over the past decade as a leading source of information about the social environment and its influence on child health and wellbeing.

New Publications and News of Section Members (continued)

The second NIH FFCW project's central hypothesis is that poverty increases the occurrence of four types of stressors (exposure to danger, family conflict, residential instability, neglect), which leads to HPA axis dysregulation, increased amygdala activation and less mature regulatory connections from the ventromedial prefrontal cortex to the amygdala; extended exposure to poverty-related stressors leads to a protracted period when the HPA axis and amygdala are hyper-active, resulting in a systemic shift toward greater allocation of neural and cognitive resources to negative events and more negative affect, including anxiety and depression symptoms, as measured with self- and parental-reports. Affective function is being assessed at four levels of analysis: 1) brain (with functional MRI assessments to assess activation and connectivity in response to emotional faces and with diffusion tensor imaging to measure structural connectivity); 2) HPA axis (by measuring cortisol in response to a stressor and DHEA); 3) behavior (using an attention bias measure); and 4) self- and parent-report measures of negative affect.

Nielsen, François and J. Micah Roos. 2015. "Genetics of at the Turn of the 21st Century." *Social Forces*. [Advanced publication June 17 2015, pp.1--27, doi: 10.1093/sf/sov080].

We use structural equations methodology with data on 1,576 pairs of variously related young adult siblings (MZ twins, DZ twins, full siblings, half siblings, cousins, and nonrelated siblings) to distinguish the roles of genetic and environmental influences on educational attainment. Using quantitative genetic (ACE) models, we find that the role of genes in educational attainment is relatively weaker (23 percent of the variance) and the role of the shared family environment stronger (41 percent of the variance for twins and 30 percent of the variance for non-twin siblings) than is typically found for cognitive outcomes in young adults. Comparative evidence suggests that inequality of opportunity has increased in the United States over past decades, and is higher there today than in other industrial societies.

Turner, Jonathan H., Richard Machalek, and Alexandra Maryanski (eds). 2015. *Handbook on Evolution and Society: Toward an Evolutionary Social Science*. Paradigm/Routledge.

A 650 page book with 31 chapters organized into several sections: General Issues in Evolutionary Analysis in The Social Sciences; Sociobiology and Evolutionary Psychology; Evolutionary Sociology; Sex, Gender, and Mating; Cooperation, Hierarchy and Social Control; and From Primate Legacies to Future Directions.

A Word From the Incoming Chair



Marion Blute

University of Toronto at Mississauga

I am pleased to become your section chair for the next year and hope to do as good a job as has David Franks to whom we all owe a big "thank you." The topics of evolution - biological, sociocultural and their interaction including gene-culture coevolution - have been my central interests throughout my career, as I am sure one or more of them have been for many of you. I hope to get a chance to meet as many of you as possible whom I have not yet had a chance to meet in Chicago. I will be looking for help from all of you. I will pass around a sheet at our business meeting which I hope you will attend (and send out an e-mail after the meetings for those who do not make it this year) asking you to indicate the kind of things you might be interested in becoming involved in. Until then . . .

ASA Sessions of Interest

You are invited to attend the following paper sessions, business meeting, and ESB Section Reception at the 2015 ASA Meetings in Chicago, Aug. 22-25. Check your program onsite in Chicago for the location of each event. For more information on the ASAs, visit asanet.org.

Paper Session: Mon, August 24, 4:30 to 6:10pm, TBA. Session 467: Section on Evolution, Biology and Society Paper Session: Sexualities and Other Evolutionary and Biological Themes in the Study of the Social World.

Organizer and Presider: Michael Hammond.
Presentations:

1. The Trivers-Willard Hypothesis Reconsidered: Is Natural Selection at Work in the U.S. Families? *Michaela Kathleen Curran, University of California-Riverside.*
2. Mechanisms for a Trivers-Willard Effect on Educational Attainment in the U.S. *Rosemary L. Hopcroft and David O. Martin, University of North Carolina-Carlotte.*
3. Contrast Effects in Social Evolution and Bauman's Liquid Modernity. *Michael Hammond, University of Toronto.*
4. On the Elementary Neural Forms of Interaction Rituals. *Marie Bruvik Heinskou and Lasse Suonperä Leibst, University of Copenhagen.*
5. Genetic and Environmental Influences on Status-Related Outcomes in the Early Lifecourse. *Jason Micah Roos, University of California-Berkeley, and Francois Neilsen, University of North Carolina.*

ESB Business Meeting.

Mon., Aug. 24, 2:30 to 4:10pm. TBA.

ESB Joint Reception with Rationality and Society Section and Mathematical Sociology Section.

Sat., Aug. 22, 6:30 to 8:30 pm. TBA.

2015 ESB SECTION STUDENT PAPER AWARD:

Congratulations to the authors, who will receive their award at our 2015 ASA Business Meeting in Chicago!

Liu, Xexuan and Guang Guo. "Lifetime Socioeconomic Status, Historical Context, and Genetic Inheritance in Shaping Body Mass in Middle and Late Adulthood." *American Sociological Review* (forthcoming).

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