

Culture

Section of the American Sociological Association

A Message from the Chair

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Beauty in Paris:

The Emotional Excitement of Memory

*At the end of the summer, it seems an appropriate time to write about a travel destination. This essay tries to make sense of how cities move us with their beauty, using Paris as an example. I have written in the first issue of *Cultural Sociology* about the genealogical method I employ to make my case, so I make no effort to justify it here. I give you instead an exercise in analyzing material culture and the built environment – the kind of work that I have done most of my life. I treat spaces less as sources of social control than as carriers of memories, abilities, dreams, identities and ambitions. Without knowing why, we can find ourselves deeply moved by places. I am considering how and why this works.*

When most people think of cities, they conjure up images of industrial centers with showplace office buildings, smelly manufacturing districts, elegant neighborhoods for the rich, and narrow skid row streets full of poverty and violence. They are places that are as ugly as they are beautiful, and exude power not only in their magnificent buildings and massive parks, but also in their destroyed riverfronts and burnt-out neighborhoods. Many of these cities are laid out in grids of streets that obscure the original topography of the places, and create an artificial world that testifies to the domination of human beings over places. Many new cities have an openness of structure that (as James Scott reminded us) has aided in the surveillance of populations as well added to the grand views along boulevards and parks.

To talk about the beauty of the city while understanding the hardship of these places requires looking under the surface of contemporary urban life, where layers of history show cities to have been designed as embodiments of hope. They have been erected as places of refuge from the threats and unhappiness of everyday life —as sites of utopian dreaming. Behind the history of industrial cities with their capitalist culture of wage-labor, consumerism, and massive exploitation of resources, there remain memories of urban dreams not just about wealth, but virtue and beauty. Although in this industrial or post-industrial era we tend to forget this tradition, dreams of hope and happiness (as much as high wages) have historically (over the last millennium) made cities magnets for the imagination and socially conscious design as well as people.

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Culture

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Editor's Note

Please let me know your ideas for submissions!

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2006 Section Award Statements

Best Book Award: Eiko Ikegami

We received 47 books for this year's competition; more than a dozen books, if chosen for the book prize, would have made the Culture Section proud. Ultimately, the committee decided to make four awards. We awarded the book prize to Eiko Ikegami, for her book *Bonds of Civility: Aesthetic Networks and the Political Origins of Japanese Culture*. We also decided to award "honorable mention" to books by Paul Lichterman, Philip Smith, and Robin Wagner-Pacifici. I provide brief descriptions of all four books below.

Paul Lichterman's *Elusive Togetherness: Church Groups Trying to Bridge America's Divisions*, was published in 2005 by Princeton University Press. Lichterman is interested in what Robert Putnam calls "bridging social capital," which refers to the types of associational ties that help to create solidarity and empathy between different types of groups and across lines of social difference. Lichterman is unsatisfied with Putnam's assumption that one can map directly from a type of group attachment to a form of social capital; instead, as a good cultural sociologist, he insists that the cultural forms that bring a group together and shape its civic practices are going to be consequential for the kinds of social capital that they are able to support. Lichterman's book is a close ethnographic study of how different "group building customs" emerge in religiously-based civic groups. Ultimately, Lichterman argues that bridging relationships are only possible when civic groups employ customs that invite flexibility and social reflexivity. Filled with insights that challenge the received wisdoms about religion

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Chess players in the Luxembourg gardens, Paris.

Material cultural forms — physical entities like buildings, statues, streets, and parks — are necessarily carriers of memory. They show us where we (as human beings) have been, what we have done, how we have lived, and how we relate to the natural world. The learning psychologist, Don Norman, says some artifacts like an abacus, a desk, museums, books, and computers should be understood as “things that make us smart.” They are designed to give us memory of counting systems, sorting techniques, ways of organizing knowledge, means for defining beauty, and techniques of computational problem-solving. He argues that cultures pass on ways of doing work in the design of their tools and the content of their books. The fact that these practices are embedded in objects helps to recreate even complex social processes. If we are told to build our own house and given nothing to use for the job, we are in a very different position than if we are given a pile a lumber, some concrete blocks, metal frames, nails, hammers, saws, screws, screw-drivers, measures, T-squares, and levels. Each of the tools suggests problems for building the structure and ways to avoid them. (They also show the emphasis on measurement and geometrical forms in Western building traditions.) If we are not discouraged by the enormity of the task suggested by the array of tools, we can probably build a better house (certainly a more conventional one) by using the capacities built into these artifacts.



Gardeners with their tools in the Luxembourg gardens

What Norman does not discuss is that objects — from cities to hammers — also carry emotional residues and information: desires, fears, and conceptions of what human beings want and need.

Randall Collins provides a way to think about the emotional side of material life in the book, Interaction Ritual Chains. He argues that nodes of emotional excitement exist in sites of innovative ritual that spawn new social networks. There is, I want to argue, a historical counterpart to this type of excitement — another kind of connectedness and sense of possibility that is echoed in the material order. The past is full of memories, some of which also carry emotional excitement because they tap earlier moments of utopian dreaming and social formation. Places that carry these marks of the past create a sense of wonder.



Fortress design, Travaux de Mars

Modern cities are a complex set of tools for living collective life. So, they embody a rich array of memories about how this has been done: transportation strategies, water supplies, building materials, manufacturing processes and food supplies. They contain and convey, too, a history of the lust for power and the violence done in its pursuit. These are the elements of culture that are easy to name, and analyze. Less noticed and articulated are the signs left in cities of utopian yearnings that have brought people into cities in the first place.

Cities before industrialization were sites of trade, manufacture, and power, but they were also importantly places of refuge. The walls around medieval or Renaissance towns were not just devices for securing a way of life, but a means of defining it. They helped to establish cities as places apart from the rest of the world where people could conduct their lives with less interference. Looking at the history of urban wall systems and their cultural associations can help us tease out the material bases for the excitement of urban life.

The Circular Cities of Languedoc

In 1992, Krzysztof Pawlowski described a newly-discovered and distinct pattern of urban development in SW France: one he dubbed the *circulades Languedociennes*. These towns grew inside round wall systems originally built for collective storage of farm products along the rich rivers valleys of the Aude and Hérault. These structures were not narrow towers like silos, but more the size of a large plaza with internal structures for housing valued goods. In times of trouble, peasants could join their goods and seek safety behind the defenses of these *circulades*.

The proto-cities were built as the Roman Empire collapsed, when pirates and other invaders started to attack the area on a regular basis. Local farmers felt the need for defensive structures and built the *circulades*. These early refuges were designed as circles. This form was not the easiest to construct. Straight walls were easier to build. But circles represented perfection, and were particularly used by Celts, many of whom lived in the southwest of France. Celtic crosses, for example, combined the crucifix with the circle. This distinctive form was widely employed in Celtic manuscripts like the Book of Durrow and Book of Kells and marked the gospels as sacred truth. The circle was also used more generally in medieval maps to describe the earth as Creation, representing God's achievement as a perfect form. And the circle represented Eden, too, the perfect garden. The *circulades*, then, had a form with utopian significance. They were enclosed structures representing God's work and containing the kind of natural abundance associated with Eden. Behind the stonewalls, the ills of the world could be held at bay.

At first, the *circulades* protected a bit of common land and provided storage for foodstuffs. Families lived outside these facilities in more dispersed land-holdings. Eventually, Pawlowski tells us, these structures became sites of habitation. The walls enclosed a large enough area so that people could move inside them during times of trouble, living off the food supplies they had accumulated there. Eventually, some groups built housing inside the walls: first, temporary shelters, then, permanent homes.

People often imagine that cities grew first as human settlements and sites of trade, adding parks and plazas to make them healthier and more livable. But the early cities of southern France, in their original form, were more like gardens than habitations, and more like warehouses than trading centers.

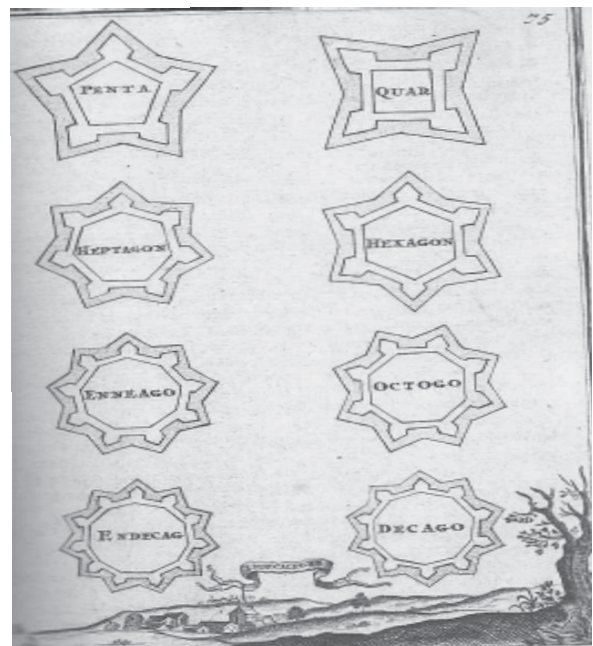


Circular town plans in northern France, Travaux de Mars

The *circulades* were a regional phenomenon, but even outside Languedoc, medieval cities in France were built with defensive walls and contained large open spaces. And the interior gardens were frequently depicted in manuscripts as Eden. Cities were not just places of exchange, manufacture, and dense living, then, but also sites of safety, cooperation, and spiritual hope, designed strategically to organize and stabilize relations to nature that could make life on earth – even after the fall – more like Eden.

The Ideal City Tradition

The form of utopian city planning that historians know best and ordinarily take as precursor to the modern metropolis was the ideal city that developed in Italy and France in the 15th-16th centuries. This was the period when humanists were dreaming of utopian social engineering, and took cities as the proper site of human improvement. Drawing on the classics, they wrote about urban architecture and city planning, trying to develop principles for more perfect, controlled, and visibly built environments. These would embody, project and encourage the highest qualities in people, and protect the populations from outside threats.



Fortress shapes, Travaux de Mars

These urban areas were set out as geometrical figures that were ideally circular (pentagons, octagons, etc.) and structured internally with either grids of streets or roads in concentric circles connected with radiating thoroughfares. These spaces had a mathematical orderliness thought to yield social order; they appealed to human rationality, and seemed themselves born of careful reasoning. With their vast star-shaped wall systems, they often looked like compass roses; indeed, in some ideal cities (ones following Vitruvius precisely), the doors in the walls were aligned with wind directions to encourage healthful circulation of air, and prevent ill winds from entering the city and disturbing its population. This was utopian thinking embedded in design, conveying the hope that a more perfect social world could be engineered into existence using material means.

Like the *circulades*, cities built in this Renaissance tradition were also importantly defensive structures. They had elaborate walls designed to withstand cannonballs. Many of the Renaissance writers on ideal city planning were military engineers for whom a perfect interior world depended on good defenses. To the extent that ideal cities were understood as classical in provenance, were thought to carry both a military intelligence and social wisdom that had been lost over time. This city was hoped to be a better refuge for inhabitants to escape the hazards of worldly forces, and an elevating environment to promote the best qualities in the citizenry.

The Mesnagement Tradition

There was another a strain of utopian design that developed in the 16th century in the southwest of France: the *mesnagement* tradition. This school of estate management and political philosophy mainly addressed rural development, and as a result has been ignored in accounts of European urban development. But it was important to the rebuilding of Paris under Henri IV.

Proponents of this school of thought associated rational estate management with the restoration of Eden — antidotes to the wildness of nature distorted by the Fall. They described how to make a pacified, rational, market-oriented, and Edenic nature through intellect and virtue, using the fundamental generativity of the earth.

Olivier de Serres was one of the major proponents of *mesnagement* philosophy. He argued that the kingdom of France should be treated as a great estate, and developed using *mesnagement* principles. The resulting “second nature” would have a well-planned infrastructure (water and road systems) as well as a diverse set of manufactures, including silk production. Serres advocated planting mulberry trees, and raising silk worms on their leaves. And Henri IV, based on this advice, brought hundreds of mulberry trees to the Luxembourg gardens in Paris and urged nobles in the city to plant them, too. He was not just promoting commercial agriculture this way, but bringing the city closer to Eden. Paris was meant to be more beautiful and abundant.

For those trained in Christian humanism, believing that nature had been distorted by the Fall and expulsion from Eden, the earth needed restoration through human effort. Nature had to be changed to reveal its true perfection, and this meant, among other things, urban improvement.

The Beauty in Paris

These utopian movements may not be familiar to us, but their heritage is part of architecture and city planning. Buildings are meant to carry ideals. People respond to these forms—even if they have no sense of their specific history. There is a sense of depth to the culture that imbues cities like Paris with a seemingly inexplicable vibrancy. Visitors often speak about the excitement of being in Paris. They see it in the streets, monuments, and museums — the built environment. They walk through old parts of the left bank, gawking or trying not to gawk at the buildings and gardens around them. They say the beauty is overwhelming but emotionally invigorating.



Modern apartment building with balconies

Modern cities — in spite of their industrial overlay — carry the hopes of early utopian planners not just in the old buildings and parks that have survived from the period, but also in newer structures inspired by the forms of their predecessors. Material cultural traditions have genealogies, giving places like cities family resemblances to one another over both time and space. That is why it is easy to see memories of the ideal city, *mesnagement*, and even the *circulade* patterns of urban development, in contemporary cities, such as Paris.

The ideal city tradition with its military forms, Roman roots, and utopian dreams is everywhere in Paris. The military architecture from this tradition is appropriately highlighted at Vincennes, the site of the military school. The old city walls are gone in most of the city, but are replaced with broad boulevards that still follow the footprint of these embracing structures from Montparnasse in the south to Blvd St. Martin and Blvd de la Chapelle to the north. The gate or Porte St. Denis evokes Rome in its form and neo-classical design. The Arc de Triomphe du Carrousel echoes its style, and acts along with its more famous counterpart as symbolic gates to the Champs-Elysee (Elysian fields). Military allusions also less dramatically colonize the walls of apartment buildings from the 19th and early 20th century. They are festooned with laurels, classical signs of victory that were also familiar to the French in formal gardens.

**8th Annual Conference of the European Sociological Assn.
Conflict, Citizenship and Civil Society
Glasgow, 3rd - 6th September, 2007
Includes Research Network in the Sociology of Culture,
Research Network in the Sociology of Arts,
and a Research Stream in Memory, Culture, and Conflict.
Deadline for abstract submissions: February 15, 2007.
<http://www.esa8thconference.com/>**



Apartment festooned with laurels

Paris is also full of showy buildings erected in imitation of Renaissance Italian villas to mark the linked power of money and aesthetics. The arcades and park of the Place de Vosges are designed in the Italian style, and reference early French yearnings to join the Renaissance, using ideal forms. Other squares also date from the 16th and 17th centuries, and embody the integrated architecture and a geometrical orderliness hoped to pacify and elevate the urban population. The point was to perfect civic life, using measurement and geometrical forms as means for embodying and conveying analytic intelligence.

The *mesnagement* tradition is also a visible and vibrant part of Paris today. Its traces are most apparent in the *quartier* that runs from the Louvre up the Champs-Elysees. This section of the city used to be a suburb, and home to tile makers and gardeners. This was where royal gardeners traditionally lived, and where market gardeners used *mesnagement* techniques, including intensive gardening, to supply the hungry city. It remained more open than the squares and meandering streets closer to the center of Paris.

In the 17th century, the Tuileries palace and Louvre were improved, and Le Notre extended the Tuileries gardens, making the area an idyllic site of peace, beauty and abundance, where people could enjoy good conversation, do a little business, and take a simple promenade. It was not, importantly, a place where wild nature was evoked, but a built environment whose artificiality was central to its charm. The park was a public asset, too. Even though it was a massive royal garden, it was open to the public, and helped define Paris, not just the palace, as a place apart.

A more surprising outgrowth of the *mesnagement* movement is the French passion for glass houses, which was derived (at least in part) from Serres' writings on the culture of exotic plants, the plant trade, and French techniques of intensive gardening for market purposes.



Orangerie in the Luxembourg gardens

Suburban market gardeners used cold frames and hot houses extensively to serve the urbanites' tastes for exotic foods and produce out of season. Royal gardens also were furnished with great orange houses to provide tender fruits and flowers.

With the development of steel and glass construction techniques, glass houses left gardens, and reappeared in train stations and department stores. Still, they were used to improve infrastructure and serve markets. These spaces were marked as hothouses and emporiums —where rare commodities could be nurtured and sold for a profit. These sites were like the commercial gardens that had been so essential to urban development in Paris.

As the commercial side of *mesnagement* thinking was re-appropriated for industrial purposes in Paris, yearning for nature returned in French architecture and design. Art Nouveau transformed metal and glass into flowers and vines that seemed to grow over buildings, into furniture, and around the metro.



Apartment building with stone vines

There was nothing natural about the stylized structures, but they still evoked the *mesnagement* writings of Serres' predecessor, Bernard Palissy. "I contemplated the branches of the vines, of peas, gourds, which seemed as though they had some sense of their weak nature; for being unable to sustain themselves, they stretched certain little arms like threads into the air, and finding some small branch or twig, came to unite and attach themselves, never again to part thence, that they might sustain the parts of their weak nature..." Palissy saw lessons about interdependence in vines; later urban designers used these vulnerable life forms on the walls of apartment buildings, where families used common space to strengthen themselves for life in the city.

It is easy to see the *mesnagement* and ideal city traditions in Paris. This is a city built with gardens and self-consciously made a monument to Roman-style power. But how could it be influenced by the *circulades languedociennes* if these were forgotten until 1992? No architect could invoke this heritage knowingly.

The answer is that the *circulades* themselves were a confluence of cultural forms. Circles remained symbols of perfection, and continued to be valued for their purity even by high

modernists who denied their spiritual significance. The impulse to collect was also not exclusive to *circulades*; these cities were just an extreme case.

Collection was in fact a general urban pastime in trading cities both in the Mediterranean and the Atlantic. Merchants imported some goods just to export them again, but many items stayed—picked up by collectors as an expression of their curiosity and learning. These things found their way into museums, libraries, zoos, and botanical gardens. They were valuable less for their market worth, but than the cultivation and learning they could provide. Most were “things” that Norman would say, “make us smart.” Artworks and bits of natural history may not be as essential to physical sustenance as the grains, oils and wines of the *circulades*, but they embody something important to human life – the possibility of emotional excitement and personal or social transformation.

Cities are designed as engines of political and economic ambition. But they are not just physical expressions of the triumphs of a Napoleon or Donald Trump. People do not simply



Flying children photograph exhibit in the Luxembourg gardens

arrive in cities pushed by poverty and need, either. They come to seek a better life. Sometimes this means relief from hunger; other times, it means excitement, novelty, and change. Cities like Paris are vibrant. They are places in which new nodes in networks are being elaborated all the time. The sense of possibility is reinforced in the built environment with grand architecture, small shop signs, and garden plantings. The passions Paris evokes might seem diffuse and their origins hard to pinpoint, but the sights people seek clearly connect the past to the future in some obscure way. If we cannot name the historical moments they evoke, we can surely follow the signs through the city: façades full of vines, roundabouts and circular pools, triumphal arches marking “obligatory passage points,” and grand museums dominating the river. Paris ratifies the possibility of change. The cityscape itself seems to claim the power of transformation; here walls can dissolve into boulevards and vines can find eternal form in stone.

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2006 Culture Section Awards, continued

and civic engagement, this book demonstrates clearly why Lichterman is one of the most important ethnographers on the scene today.

Philip Smith’s *Why War? The Cultural Logic of Iraq, the Gulf War, and Suez*, was published in 2005 by University of Chicago Press. One of the leading voices of the “Strong Program” of Cultural Sociology, Smith uses this book to develop a theory about the narrative foundations that support military intervention. Comparing the political discourse in four nations, in the lead-up to three different wars, Smith finds that apocalyptic narratives are the only ones that are able to justify military intervention. By contrast, realist and tragic narratives are both associated with delegitimation, and tend to support only minimal military intervention or no intervention at all. In his treatment of such an important and timely issue, Smith provides a powerful demonstration of why cultural sociology should have a prominent position in the space of public dialogue.

Robin Wagner-Pacifici’s *The Art of Surrender: Decomposing Sovereignty at Conflict’s End*, was published in 2005 by

University of Chicago Press. This book continues Wagner-Pacifici’s ongoing and fascinating project, which is to develop a political semiotic of violence. In this latest contribution, Wagner-Pacifici outlines the representational and performative dimensions that accompany and help to produce the end of war. Relying on an impressive variety of different data sources, Wagner-Pacifici provides a close empirical examination of three military surrenders: the Thirty Years’ War of the 17th century, the American Civil War, and World War II. She demonstrates clearly that surrender is not accomplished through a simple defeat and retreat from battle of the vanquished party. Rather, a successful surrender ritual requires that both parties return to the scene of the battle – not only to reenact the outcome of the battle, but also to reconfigure the identities and the relationships of the involved parties. The performance of surrender involves acts of witnessing, exchange, and sovereignty that, taken together, allow the magnanimity of the victor to be inscribed in the mythical narratives of History. Beautifully written and filled with insights, this is a book that has a lot to teach to cultural sociologists.

The Culture Section's book prize award goes to Eiko Ikegami's *Bonds of Civility: Aesthetic Networks and the Political Origins of Japanese Culture*, which was published in 2005 by Cambridge University Press. This is an amazing book, which combines cultural sociology, political theory, comparative-historical sociology, and network analysis in order to explain how Japan was able to emerge so rapidly as a modern nation following the Meiji Restoration of 1868. Ikegami's explanation emphasizes the development of "aesthetic publics", which developed during the Tokugawa period as a loose network of cultural circles devoted to tea ceremonies, poetry, music, and other performing arts. These aesthetic publics stimulated the formation of horizontal associational networks that defined common practices of sociability and reinforced a common identity about Japan, while maintaining autonomy from the dominant power of the Tokugawa shogunate. For the individuals who par-

ticipated in the rituals of sociability that developed in these aesthetic publics, there was a chance to decouple themselves from feudal network constraints and an opportunity to move back and forth between different identities. With the demise of the formal Tokugawa hierarchy after the country was opened to the West, this informal and multilayered network of aesthetic publics provided a well-developed communicative and cultural infrastructure that the country could rely upon, as it reconstituted itself as a modern nation-state. Ikegami's new interpretation of Japanese society makes a number of important theoretical interventions, which force the reader to rethink the Habermasian theory of the public sphere in a way that is far more attuned to the complex relationship between culture and politics. Drawing upon a stunning variety of evidence that spans centuries of Japanese history, this is a fascinating and powerful book.

Committee Members: Ronald N. Jacobs (Chair), Laura Edles, Francesca Polletta

Best Article Awards: Jason Kaufman, Orlando Patterson; Jeremy Brooke Straughn

The Committee received 47 articles. Of these roughly one-third were in *ASR*, *AJS* or *Social Forces*—suggesting that sociology of culture is not only vibrant as a sub-field, but also has become somewhat, dare I say it, institutionalized and mainstream. We felt as a committee (and all of our decisions were unanimous) that two articles rose to the top of this very strong group, and we also felt that we had no real way to distinguish among them. For this reason, we decided on co-winners.

In alphabetical order, we awarded the prize to Jason Kaufman and Orlando Patterson for "The Global Spread of Cricket" which appeared in the February 2005 issue of *ASR*; and to Jeremy Brooke Straughn for "'Taking the State at Its Word: The Arts of Consensual Contention in the German Democratic Republic,'" published in the May 2005 *AJS*.

Kaufman and Patterson engage and extend sociological diffusion theories. Contagion theories that take an a-contextual approach to the object or practice that is diffused often underlie standard diffusion models. Kaufman and Patterson argue that history and culture matter. Their case study is "cricket"—which is a felicitous choice as its origins are exclusively British and as a sport, cricket came into prominence in the mid-19th century. Thus, their choice of subject makes it possible to contribute to theories of nationalism and colonialism as well as globalization. The authors study the spread of cricket as a cultural practice and competitive sport to 10 British colonies from 1800 to World War II. Among that group they have eight successful cases and two failures—the US and Canada.

Cricket in England was the province of elites in public schools. Transported to the colonies, cricket became a practice of national incorporation. In colonies where the status of elites was stable, cricket diffused more effectively as these elites not only promoted the sport but also remained engaged with the sport as it trickled down to the lower status orders. Paradoxically, the sport never was promoted in Canada and the US precisely because it was viewed as a high status game.

Elegantly written, meticulously researched and cogently argued, Kaufman and Patterson make the important claim that diffusion processes are closely related to the distribution of social status in a society and the capacity of elites to control access to material and cultural resources. The larger more general claim that the authors make is that the globalization of practices—social, cultural, political—cannot be understood independently of a society's underlying structure of inequality combined with the specificities of national culture.

Jeremy Straughn's "Taking the State at Its Word" is a conceptually innovative, empirically imaginative and analytically rigorous account of dissent in the German Democratic Republic (more conventionally known as East Germany). Addressing the social movement literature and extending it to include an idea of dramaturgy and performance, Straughn comes up with the analytic device, "*consensual contention*." This is particularly useful in the case of the GDR because social analysts have typically questioned how the regime fell so rapidly given that dissidents had long left the country and the intellectuals who remained were fully incorporated in the Communist regime.

Straughn's notion of consensual contention explains this question by arguing that consent has two dimensions: a *behavioral axis* that speaks to what social actors do; and a *motivational dimension* which he calls *standpoint*. Performance is central to standpoint. Straughn's argument is that a political actor or set of actors can perform consent while actually being in contention with a regime. Thus the large number of political actors who performed consent while actually engaging in contention was the hairpin fracture that split apart the GDR when the propitious moment arrived in 1989.

To make his argument Straughn uses two transcripts of public performance, an interview with a former activist and a recorded transcript from a group of artists and writers who were trying to influence regime policy. Straughn's article is an important contribution to the field of politics and culture and to the subfield of cultural studies of non-democratic regimes.

Committee Members: Mabel Berezin (Chair), Nina Eliasoph, Eric Magnuson

Best Graduate Paper Awards: Kim M. Babon; Jason L. Mast

The Best Graduate Student Paper award was given to two papers: Kim M. Babon (University of Chicago) authored "Composition, coherence, and attachment: The critical role of context in reception" and Jason L. Mast (UCLA) wrote "The cultural pragmatics of event-ness: The Clinton/Lewinsky affair". The committee was uniformly impressed with the quality of the 46 papers submitted.

Kim Babon's paper describes the importance of context in audience reception of cultural objects. Based on case studies of public sculpture, Babon develops a theory of how audiences evaluate art based on its location. Places like Boston's Beacon Hill or New Orleans French Quarter develop a strong identity. Audience expectations—called "place expectations" by Babon—are linked to the identity of the place. Types of place expectations form what Babon names a "contextual eye," which operates as a filter, similar to gender or education, to condition and limit audience evaluations of cultural objects. With its

Committee Members: Anne Kane (Chair), Grant Blank, Alexander Riley

2007 Culture Section Prize Committees

Best Article Prize. Works published in 2004-2006 are eligible. Authors can submit their own work, or nominations may be made by others. Send a copy of the nominated article electronically to each member of the prize committee: Denise Bielby (Chair), University of California, Santa Barbara, bielbyd@soc.ucsb.edu; Ron Lembo, Amherst College, ralemb@amherst.edu; Bennetta Jules-Rosette, University of California, San Diego, bjulesro@ucsd.edu. The deadline for nominations is February 1, 2007.

Best Book Prize. Section members, authors, or publishers may nominate books published in 2005-2007. Self-nominations are welcome. Send a nominating letter, including a description of the book and its significance, as well as a copy of the book, to each member of the prize committee: Sarah Corse (Chair), Department of Sociology, P.O. Box 400766, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA 22904, corse@virginia.edu. Doug Hartmann, Sociology Department, University of Minnesota, 909 Social Science Tower, Minneapolis, MN 55455, hartm021@umn.edu; Tia DeNora, Sociology, HUSS, University of Exeter, Armory Building, Rennes Drive, Exeter EX4 4RJ U.K., T.DeNora@exeter.ac.uk. The deadline for nominations is February 1, 2007.

Best Student Paper. Any work (published or unpublished but not previously submitted for this prize) by someone who is a student at the time of submission. Papers may not exceed 30 pages. Authors can submit their own work, or nominations may be made by others. This award includes a \$300 prize to reimburse part of the cost of attending the 2007 ASA Annual Meeting. Send a copy of the paper electronically to each of the committee members: Laura Grindstaff (Chair), UC-Davis, lgrindstaff@ucdavis.edu; Grant Blank, American University, grant.blank@acm.org; David Halle, UCLA, dhalle@ucla.edu. The deadline for nominations is February 1, 2007.

thoughtful, well-written combination of careful analysis of original data and skillful theoretical innovation, this paper represents a fine example of what is best in contemporary sociology of culture.

Jason Mast's paper combines an innovative theory of cultural pragmatics with intricate empirical analysis of a pivotal event in contemporary political culture. Mast analyzes "Monicagate" as a national social drama and describes the performative interactions of political elites, social critics, and the media. In so doing, Mast demonstrates both the broad narrative structures that shape social actors' and audiences' interpretations of event processes, as well as actors' ability to creatively strategize action in the context of those symbolic structures. The paper contributes to the theoretical reconciliation of the "structure" and "practice" approaches to cultural analysis, and supplies an empirical exemplar in the study of political cultural processes.

2007 ASA Culture Section Sessions, NYC

OPEN-SUBMISSION SESSIONS:

1. Sociology of Culture Section Refereed Roundtables

Session Organizer: Omar Lizardo, University of Notre Dame, olizardo@nd.edu

2. Thick Description and Causal Claims in Cultural Analysis

Session Organizer: Brian Steensland, Indiana University bsteens@indiana.edu

3. New Perspectives on the Arts and Society

Session Organizer: Vera Zolberg, New School for Social Research, zolbergv@newschool.edu

4. Cultural Contexts of Work and Industry

Session Organizer: Mary Blair-Loy, University of California-San Diego, blair-loy@ucsd.edu

5. Is Another World Possible? Culture and Political Change in Activism and Policy

Session Organizer: Elizabeth A. Armstrong, Indiana University, elarmstr@indiana.edu

6. Structure and Practice in Cultural Analysis: Power and Process

Session Organizers: Nina Eliasoph, USC, eliasoph@usc.edu, and Laura Desfor Edles, California State University, Northridge, laura.d.edles@csun.edu

INVITED SESSION

7. Cultural Sociology and Disciplinary Change: A Twenty-Year Assessment

Panel Organizer: Jeffrey C. Alexander, Yale University, jeffrey.alexander@yale.edu

Call for Papers: CULTURAL SOCIOLOGY, NEW JOURNAL IN MARCH 2007 Cultural Sociology is an official publication of the British Sociological Association. It is the first journal explicitly to be dedicated to the sociological comprehension of cultural matters. It will act as a key meeting point for sociological analysts of culture coming from a wide range of theoretical and methodological positions, and from a great variety of national contexts. It will be a locale where different analytical traditions in cultural sociology and the sociology of culture can engage with and learn from each other. **Cultural Sociology** seeks high quality papers in the fields of cultural sociology and the sociology of culture. Please see <http://cus.sagepub.com> for full submission details. *All submissions should be sent electronically (preferably as Microsoft Word documents) to: culturalsociology@abdn.ac.uk* Sign up for a FREE electronic subscription to Volume One: www.sagepub.co.uk/cus

Yale Center for Cultural Sociology

Applications are invited for the position of Scholar in Residence at the Yale Center for Cultural Sociology. There will be two such positions every academic year, one in the Fall and one in the Spring semester. We are particularly interested in applications from mid-career and senior researchers currently working in the United States who are looking for a supportive and stimulating sabbatical environment. The position comes with an honorarium of \$3000 to cover miscellaneous expenses. The honorarium is a supplement, not a substitute, for living expenses, which applicants would be expected to fund from other sources. For information on the center see <http://research.yale.edu/ccs/>. Applicants should send a CV, a brief statement outlining how their research interests fit with the Center and an indication of when they would like to take up a scholarship to nadine.casey@yale.edu. Deadline for applications January 15, 2007

Third Annual UCSD Culture Conference

Save The Date--Friday, May 4, 2007

The Great Hall, University of California, San Diego

Michele Lamont (Harvard University) and Katherine Newman (Princeton University) will be this year's keynote speakers.

We will continue to have a panel addressing the use of culture in sociology's subfields, featuring:

Marion Fourcade-Gourinchas (UC Berkeley) on economic sociology

Richard Madsen (UC San Diego) on religion

Dawne Moon (UC Berkeley) on sexuality

John Skrentny (UC San Diego) on race and ethnicity