

Trajectories

Fall 2011

Newsletter of the ASA Comparative and Historical Sociology Section Volume 23, No. 1

SECTION OFFICERS 2011-2012

Chair

Neil Fligstein
University of California-Berkeley

Chair-Elect

Julian Go
Boston University

Past Chair

James Mahoney
Northwestern University

Secretary-Treasurer

Ho-fung Hung
Johns Hopkins University

Council Members

Dylan John Riley, *UC Berkeley* (2014)
Mounira Maya Charrad, *U Texas-Austin* (2014)
Greta Krippner, *U Michigan* (2013)
Nina Bandelj, *UC Irvine* (2013)
Isaac Martin, *UC San Diego* (2012)
Ivan Ermakoff, *U Wisconsin* (2012)
Elizabeth Pearson (Student, 2014)

Newsletter Editors

Emily Erikson, *Yale University*
Isaac Reed, *University of Colorado*

Webmaster

Robert Jansen, *University of Michigan*

FROM THE CHAIR.....	1
LETTERS: What happened to the comparative in comparative historical sociology?	
Another reply by Edward A Tiryakian	3
SURVEY RESULTS	5
MEMBER PUBLICATIONS	10
Call for Member Information.....	13

From the Chair

All Sociology is Historical and Comparative

Neil Fligstein

University of California-Berkeley

As chair of the section, I decided to take this as an opportunity to engage in a rant, a rant defending what folks who are members of this section do.

I am sitting and writing this in a hotel in Barcelona. It is November 20, 2011 and today is an election. In Spain there is twenty percent unemployment and the knowledge that even more fiscal austerity is coming. In the wake of this, one might expect more social unrest and a left wing social movement. But today, if the polls are right, the Popular Party, a Center Right Party, will sweep the election bringing into power a man who has campaigned on a platform to cut the size of government substantially. Across Europe, in the past two weeks, two governments, Greece and Italy have fallen. The financial crisis has replaced them both with men whose main claim to fame has been close ties to the European Un-

ion and the European Central Bank. From close up, it looks like democracy has been circumvented in these two countries and the so-called technocrats look mostly like people in sympathy with the bankers who brought us the financial crisis.

The situation in the U.S. is shockingly similar. Our right wing social movement, the Tea Party, is funded by people who made their fortunes in the financial community. Their proscription for America is less government, lower taxes for the wealthy, and a plethora of onerous measures designed to cut back on the American welfare state. The most likely Republican candidate for president, Mitt Romney, made his money buying up companies, loading them with debt, and laying off workers.

The past few months have witnessed a more populist social movement, the Occupy Wall Street movement. A few weeks ago, in a dozen of the well over one hundred cities with occupations, mayors (who have grown tired of the occupiers) coordinated an attack to clear off many of the largest of these encampments. What happens next remains to be seen. A year out, most polls suggest that in spite of the "Occupy" social movement, we will once again have a Republican president.

The past few weeks have seen the issuance of a series of reports about poverty and wealth written mostly by economists (and these reports have been coming on and off for the past twenty years). These reports, because of the Occupy Movement, are finally gaining traction in the press. But I have been struck by how much of the press is trying to ignore the movement, its size, and its spread across the country and the world.

So where are we sociologists in all of this? I am sad to report that the American sociological presence studying the financial crisis here (and abroad), the increasing inequality in income and wealth in America (and abroad),

the assault on the American welfare state (and abroad), and almost every other important historical event in America (and around the world) of the past thirty years is sadly lacking. I can count the number of American sociologists interested in Europe on my two hands. Even more troubling, I can say the same thing for the number of sociologists who have done serious work on the changing nature of income and wealth inequality and the transformation of work in the United States which has led to lower pensions, less secure health care,

and of course, greater fear of job loss. American Sociologists, for all of their professed interest in social change, have to a large degree missed many of the important social changes in their own society of the past thirty years.

Why is this? I would argue that our

field has become overly concerned with creating smaller and smaller subfields, most of which attempt to take their subject matters as a reality sui generis that have no history and have no place. This causes them to fetishize the present and encourage them into a kind of myopia that makes them unable to understand how these things have come to be and why they are always in the process of dynamic transformation. It has relegated historical and comparative sociology to being a method, not part of how one thinks about any particular area of study. It has treated historical and comparative sociology as a backwater whereby sociologists are interested in quaint things like other countries or other times that are by definition on the periphery of sociology. From the dominant perspective, this is because the core of sociology is supposed to be about something called "theory." But what counts for theory in most sociological subfields are conceptual differences of opinion that mainly divide scholars into even smaller tribes of self-referential groups.

This is not good. As history is producing a series of mind numbing changes, the ongoing

American Sociologists, for all of their professed interest in social change, have to a large degree missed many of the important social changes in their own society of the past thirty years.

Letters

world financial crisis, the Arab spring, and the continued development projects going on in Brazil, India, and China, sociology is left with little or nothing to say. Most sociologists interested in American society have shown little sense of how it has all changed in the past thirty years. The core of many sociologists' interests is American social problems. But, the narrowness of the definition of these problems means that many scholars have failed to appreciate how the past thirty years have changed work, the sources of poverty and opportunity, and the slow decline of the American middle class. If you want to know anything about these changes, you read labor economics not sociology.

For all of this, I have one cure: historical and comparative sociology is not just a section, a method, or a set of unconnected studies that people engage in for obscure reasons. It should be at the core of how we look at any social process. One cannot study social stratification without understanding its dynamics over time. One cannot do political sociology without a historical sense of institutions and the nature of their current crises and how they are resolved. It is impossible to study the economy without realizing that how firms make profit and their linkages to the government have evolved over time and this has had a profound effect on people's life chances. Sociology that tries to create understandings of society without regard to context or history cannot help but miss what is going on.

The next time someone who is a sociologist studying a narrow slice of America (without realizing it) asks you why you are studying something either historical or in another society, you should tell them that what they study is historical (it is happening now) and comparative (in the U.S.), but they just don't realize it. Then, if this does not come off as too snarky, suggest that you might be willing to help them do better.

Editors' Note: Last issue we featured a letter to the editor by Saïd Amir Arjomand's and replies by James Mahoney and Immanuel Wallerstein. This issue we are pleased to add a letter by Edward A. Tiryakian to the debate.

Edward A. Tiryakian

Duke University

The challenge issued earlier by Saïd Arjomand to deal more adequately with comparative social change has generated in the Spring 2011 issue of *Trajectories* a lively round of discussion. What is lost from sight is that beyond the best of single state historical analyses, there are all too few comparative analyses of civilizations. It is the latter which deserve recognition as macro units of socio-historical change, with a distinguished list of contributors from Weber and Mauss down to Benjamin Nelson, Sorokin, Elias, Huntington, and the late S.N. Eisenstadt. Recently, in addition to Arjomand's own work on Islam, Luis Roniger, a political scientist and student of Eisenstadt, has taken up Eisenstadt's lead on taking Latin America as a civilization, not as a congeries of states.

In his reply to Arjomand, Immanuel Wallerstein indicates his disdain for "civilization" and "culture" as analytical tools in contrast to his "historical system". Of course, his "world-system" system provided macrosociology with an interesting road map, but it is one which needs to be updated by noting the "cultural turn" that a renovated civilizational analysis has sought to bring about (Arjomand and Tiryakian 2004). This on-going theoretical exploration gives a central place for civilizations as dynamic, large bundles of *cultural capital* (Tiryakian, forthcoming) within the world setting. Given that Wallerstein's own analysis of "world-system" began with the same 16th Century start as did Weber's point of departure, a broader and more contemporary comparative analysis might treat this as what we have started to call a "civilization of modernity". Getting out of the frame of viewing civilizations and culture as static concepts

would assist in a new and more adequate road map for comparative historical analysis.

References:

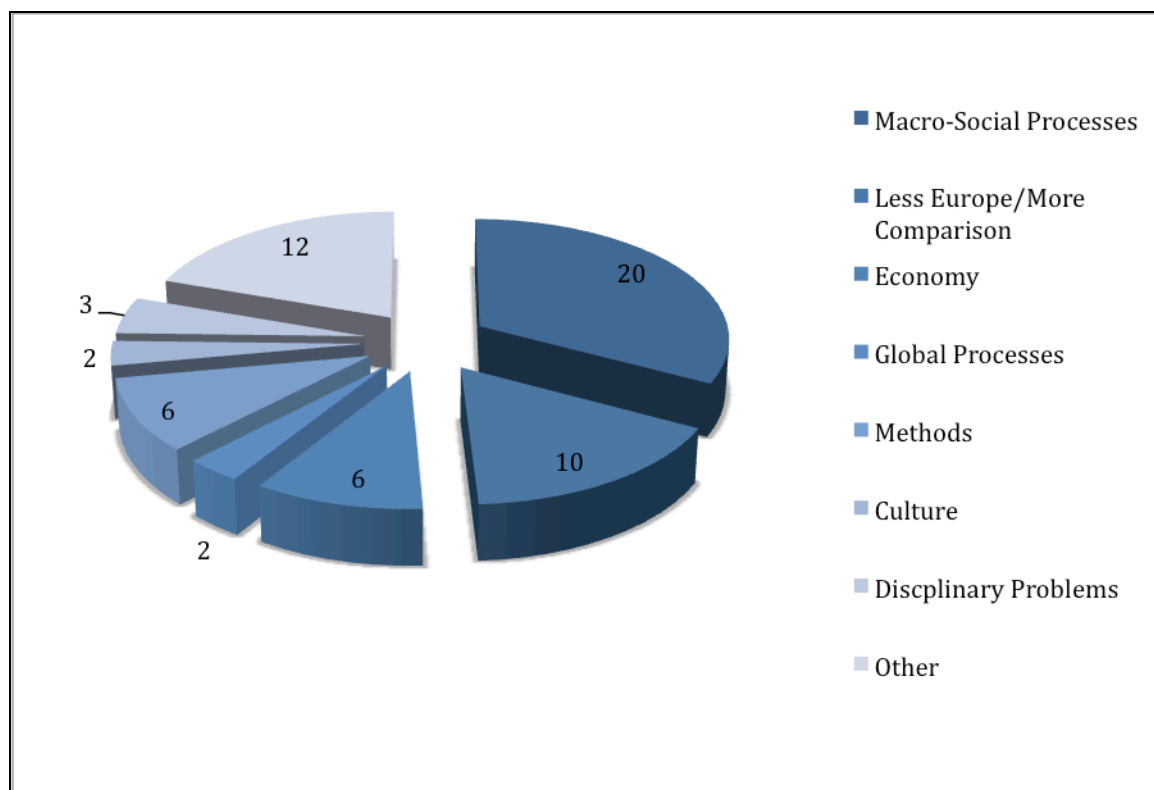
Arjomand, Saïd A. and Edward A. Tiryakian, eds. 2004. *Rethinking Civilizational Analysis*. London and Thousand Oaks, CA.: SAGE.

Tiryakian, Edward A. forthcoming. "Civilization", in George Ritzer, ed. *Blackwell Encyclopedia of Globalization*. New York: Wiley-Blackwell.

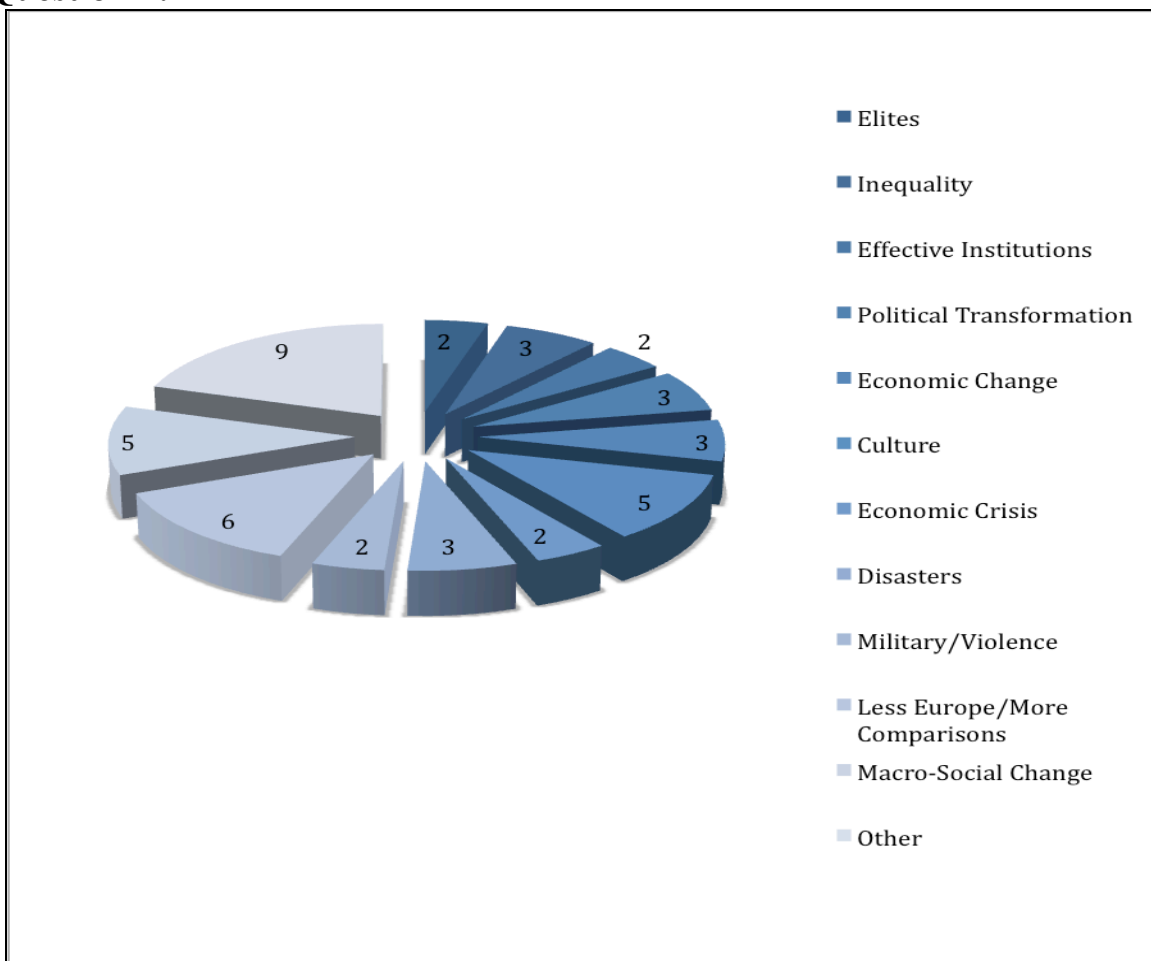
Survey Results

Editors' Note: We sent a short survey to the comparative-historical section email list-serv. We would like to sincerely thank all who participated as well give extra thanks to the chair, Neil Fligstein, who received a large proportion of replies and assisted above and beyond the call of duty. All topics that received more than one vote are presented in the graphs. A significant amount of editorial discretion was exercised in grouping answers; a condensed version of all answers are included in the appendix. There were 28 respondents, 122 separate answers, and some answers were counted towards more than one category.

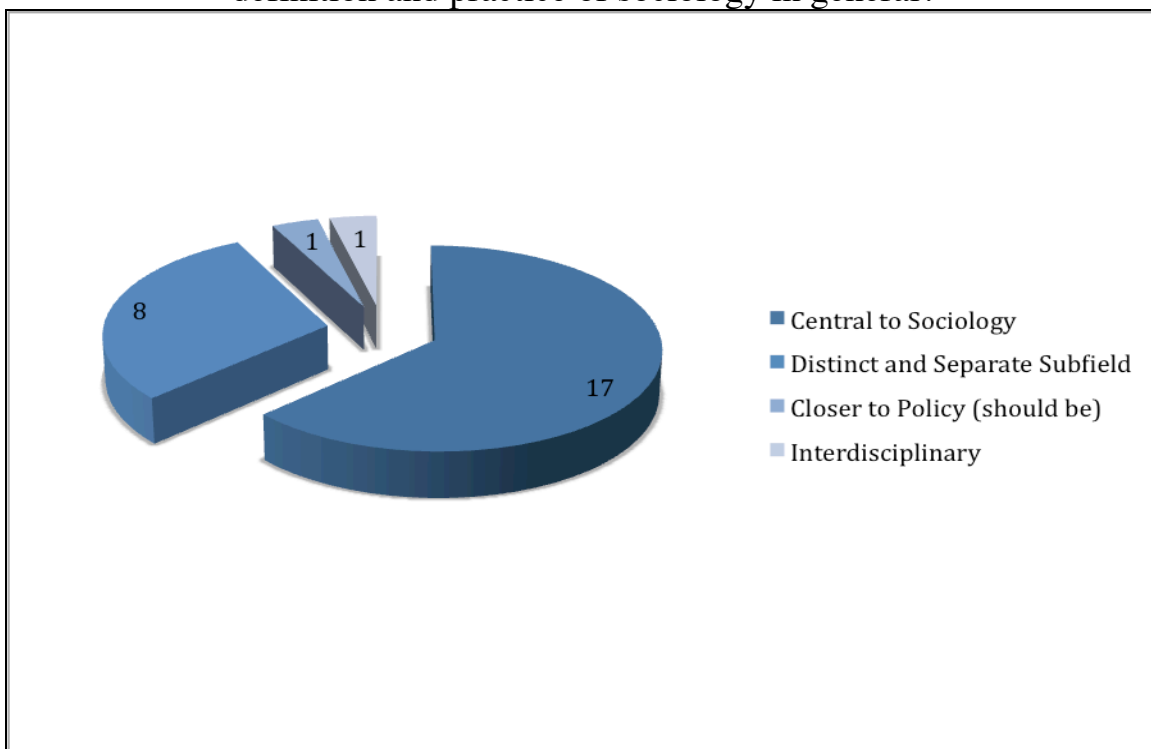
Question 1: What are the most important theoretical, substantive, and/or methodological issues in comparative historical research today?



Question 2: To what issues should the field as a whole be directed?



Question 3: How should the field relate to the discipline at large/contribute to the definition and practice of sociology in general?



Appendix: Responses*Question 1:*

Set Theory Logic
 Causal Analysis
 Culture
 Global Economy
 Collective Goods
 Philosophy of Social Science
 Relation to History
 Sociological Historicism
 Empires and Colonialism
 Forms of Capitalism
 Collective Action
 Intellectuals and Science
 Ancient World
 Transnational Comparison
 Archival Methods
 Events in Time
 Small N Problem
 Micro-foundation of Macro-structures
 Development
 Democratization
 Rise of Nation States
 Achieving Gender Parity
 Democratization
 Industrialization
 Decline of Violent Conflicts
 Dynamics of Capitalism
 Moving beyond Eurocentricism
 Religion
 Less Europe, More Asia
 Non-Western Societies
 Global History
 Agency
 Relation of Culture and Structure
 Comparative Modernities
 Coherent Research Program
 Economic Development
 Tenure for Junior Faculty
 Bad Phrasing of Question
 Wrong Question
 Theorizing Units of Analysis
 Informal Coordination of Research
 Mixed Methods
 Economic Development
 Institutional Change
 Arab Spring
 Political Instability of Nation States
 Modernization of China
 Economic Crisis
 Macro-social Long-term Change
 Rise and Decline of Civilizations

Pooled Cross-section & Time Series Analysis
 Ethnographic Research
 Patrimonialism
 Authoritarianism
 Totalitarianism

Question 2:

Elite Classes
 Oligarchy
 Inequality
 Effective Institutions
 Rise and Fall of Political Forms
 Collective Action and Contestation
 Evolving Economic Systems
 Epochal Cultural Shifts
 Relation of Knowledge/Science to Economic Change
 Economic Crisis
 Disasters
 Inequality
 Global Warming
 Violence
 Stupid Question
 Gender/Sexuality
 Culture
 Social Change
 Developing Core Knowledge
 Moving Beyond Eurocentrism
 Religion
 Non-Western Societies
 Military and Violence
 Large-scale Historical Perspectives
 Modernization Processes
 Desire for Centralized Governance
 Regime Change
 Culture
 Relation between State and Economy
 Inequality
 Technology and Social Change
 Religion and Social Change
 Theory and Method, not Substantive Topics
 Recreating Social Conditions of the Past
 Comparative-Historical Method
 Less Euro/US-centric
 Culture
 Global Warming
 Macro-historical Changes
 US State
 Financial Crisis
 Comparison across Nations
 Global Institutions

Question 3:

Distinctive Methodology

Reflexive Critique

Relating Structure, Events, Practices

Relating Structure and Culture

New Perspectives

Stupid Question

New Perspectives

Distinctive Subject Matter: Social Change

Theoretical Development

Moving beyond Eurocentrism

Historicizing Assumed Notions of Research

Global Crises

Macro-Processes

Historical Perspective

Big Picture People

More Policy Relevant

Stay Separate

Centrality to all Research

Progress

Interdisciplinarity

Defined and Well-populated Subfield

Center of the Field

Distinct Subfield

Improved Perspective for Entire Field

Member Publications

- Abend, Gabriel. 2011. "Thick Concepts and the Moral Brain." *European Journal of Sociology* 52(1): 143-72.
- Adams, Julia and Mounira M. Charrad, eds. 2011. *Patrimonial Power in the Modern World*, vol. 636 of *The Annals, The American Academy of Political and Social Sciences* (New York, NY: Sage).
- Charrad, Mounira M. 2011. "Gender in the Middle East: Islam, State, Agency," *Annual Review of Sociology*. 37: 417-37.
- de Leon, Cedric. 2011. "The More Things Change: A Gramscian Genealogy of Barack Obama's 'Post-Racial' Politics, 1932-2008." *Political Power and Social Theory* 22: 75-104.
- Eckstein, Susan, and Thanh-Nghi Nguyen. 2011. "The Making and Transnationalization of an Ethnic Niche: Vietnamese Manicurists." *International Migration Review*. 45 (3): 639-674.
- Ermakoff, Ivan. 2011. "Patrimony and collective capacity. An Analytical Outline," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 636 (July): 182-203.
- Fein, Helen and Walter Ezell and Herbert F. Spierer, 2011. "Recognition of Genocide in Bosnia: Frameworks of Interpretation in U.S. Newspapers." In *Human Rights and Media*, vol. 6 ed. Diana Papademas. U.K.: Emerald Group.
- Go, Julian. 2011. *Patterns of Empire: the British and American Empires, 1688 to the present*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Göçek, Fatma Müge (co-edited with Ronald Grigor Suny and Norman Naimark). 2011. *A Question of Genocide: Armenians and Turks at the End of the Ottoman Empire* New York: Oxford University Press.
- Göçek, Fatma Müge. 2011. *The Transformation of Turkey: Redefining State and Society from the Ottoman Empire to the Modern Era*. London: I.B. Tauris Publishers.
- Gould, Mark. 2011. "More Than Just Social Structure: The Poverty of Cultur(al) Analysis." *The Du Bois Review* 8 (2) (2011): 476-88.
- Haglund, LaDawn and Rimjhim Aggarwal. 2011. "Test of Our Progress: The Translation of Economic and Social Rights Norms Into Practice." *Journal of Human Rights*. 10:1-27.
- Halfmann, Drew. 2011. *Doctors and Demonstrators: How Political Institutions Shape Abortion Law in the United States, Britain and Canada*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Hall, John R. 2011. "The Birth of Occupy UC Davis," *Possible Futures*, a project of the Social Science Research Council, November 23, <http://www.possible-futures.org/2011/11/23/the-birth-of-occupy-uc-davis/>.
- Herzog, Ben. 2011. "The Revocation of Citizenship in the United States." *The European Journal of Sociology* 52 (1) 77-109.

- Hess, Andreas and Christian Fleck, editors. 2011. "Sociology and Communism," special issue of *Comparative Sociology* 10(5).
- Hough, Phillip A., 2011. "Guerrilla Insurgency as Organized Crime: Explaining the So-Called 'Political Involvement' of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia," *Politics and Society* 39:3, September, pp. 379-414.
- Jansen, Robert S. 2011. "Populist Mobilization: A New Theoretical Approach to Populism." *Sociological Theory* 29(2): 75-96.
- Kane, Anne. 2011. *Constructing Irish National Identity: Ritual and Discourse during the Irish Land War, 1879-1882*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan (Cultural Sociology series).
- Koenig, Matthias. 2011. "Jenseits der Säkularisierungstheorie? Zur Auseinandersetzung mit Charles Taylor". *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie* 63(4): 649-673.
- LaRossa, Ralph. 2011. *Of War and Men: World War II in the Lives of Fathers and Their Families*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Lybeck, Eric Royal. 2011. "For Pragmatic Public Sociology: Theory and Practice after the Pragmatic Turn." *Current Perspectives in Social Theory* vol 29: 169-185.
- Mann, Keith. 2011. "A Revival of Labor and Social Protest Research in France: Recent Scholarship on May 1968." *International Labor and Working Class History* 80: 203-214.
- Mann, Michael 2011 *Power in the 21st Century: Conversations with John A. Hall*. Cambridge 7 New Malden, Mass.: Polity Press.
- Mayrl, Damon. 2011. "Administering Secularization: Religious Education in New South Wales since 1960." *European Journal of Sociology* 52 (1): 111-42.
- Moon, Rennie and Jeong-Woo Koo. 2011. "Global Citizenship and Human Rights: A Longitudinal Analysis of Social Studies and Ethics Textbooks in the Republic of Korea." *Comparative Education Review* 55: 574-99.
- Morawska, Ewa. 2011. "Diaspora Diasporas' Imaginations of the Homeland: Exploring the Polymorph." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 34(6): 1029-48.
- Morawska, Ewa. 2011. "Different Times, Different Places, Different Standpoints," *Sociological Research Online*, 16(3) <http://www.socresonline.org.uk/16/3/18.html>.
- Morawska, Ewa. 2011. "Ethnicity as a Primordial-Situational-Constructed Experience: Different Times, Different Places, Different Constellations." *Studies in Contemporary Jewry* XXV: 3-25.
- Morawska, Ewa. 2011. *A Sociology of Immigration. (Re)Making Multifaceted America*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Nepstad, Sharon Erickson. 2011. *Nonviolent Revolutions: Civil Resistance in the Late 20th Century*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Post, Charles. 2011. *The American Road to Capitalism: Studies in Class-Structure, Economic Development and Political Conflict, 1620-1877*. Leiden, Netherlands: Brill. (Paperback March 2012: Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books)

- Ragin, Charles C. and Garrett A. Schneider. 2011. "Case-Oriented Theory Building and Theory Testing." *The Sage Handbook of Innovation in Social Research Methods*. Malcolm Williams and Paul Vogt (eds.), London: Sage.
- Reed, Isaac Ariail. 2011. *Interpretation and Social Knowledge: On the use of theory in the human sciences*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Savelsberg, Joachim J. and Ryan D. King. 2011. *American Memories: Atrocities and the Law*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Schalet, Amy T. 2011. *Not Under My Roof: Parents, Teens, and the Culture of Sex*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press
- Shim, Jae-Mahn, Gerard Bodeker and Gemma Burford. 2011. "Institutional Heterogeneity in Globalization: Co-development of Western-Allopathic Medicine and Traditional-Alternative Medicine." *International Sociology* 26 (6): 769-788.
- Spires, Anthony J. 2011. "Contingent Symbiosis and Civil Society in an Authoritarian State: Understanding the Survival of China's Grassroots NGOs." *American Journal of Sociology* 117(1): 1-45.
- Spires, Anthony J. 2011. "Organizational Homophily in International Grantmaking: US-Based Foundations and their Grantees in China." *Journal of Civil Society* 7(3): 305-331.
- Stoner, Alex and Eric Lybeck. 2011. "Bringing Authoritarianism Back In: Reification, Latent Prejudice, and Economic Threat." *Logos: A Journal of Modern Society & Culture*. vol 10, Issue 4.
- Valiani, Arafat. 2011. *Militant Publics in India: Physical Culture and Violence in the Making of a Modern Polity*. New York, N.Y.: Palgrave.
- Weil, Frederick. 2011. "Rise of Community Organizations, Citizen Engagement, and New Institutions," in Amy Liu, Roland V. Anglin, Richard Mizelle, and Allison Plyer, editors, *Resilience and Opportunity: Lessons from the U.S. Gulf Coast after Katrina and Rita*, pp. 201-219. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press.
- Wheatley, Christine. Forthcoming. "Push Back: U.S. Deportation Policy and the Reincorporation of Involuntary Return Migrants in Mexico." *The Latin Americanist* (Special issue: Latin American Migration).
- William Minter. 2011. *African Migration, Global Inequalities, and Human Rights: Connecting the Dots*. *Current Issues Paper No. 46*. Uppsala, Sweden: Nordiska Africainstitutet.
- Woodberry, Robert D. 2011. "Religion and the Spread of Human Capital and Political Institutions: Christian Missions as a Quasi-Natural Experiment." Pp. 111-131 in *The Oxford Handbook of the Economics of Religion*, edited by R. McCleary. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Call for Member Information

Let's make sure that the website of the Comparative and Historical Sociology section remains a vibrant hub of intellectual exchange! Please keep the Web Editor updated with your latest information, including: (1) the current link to your professional web-page; (2) citation information and links to your latest article and book publications; (3) announcements and calls for upcoming jobs, conferences, and publications pertaining to comparative and historical sociology. And be sure to visit the website (<http://www2.asanet.org/sectionchs/>) to learn about recent and upcoming section activities—and to browse current and back issues of the newsletter.

Please email your information to Robert Jansen, CHS Web Editor:
rsjansen@umich.edu.

Contributions to Trajectories are always welcome: please contact the editors at emily.erikson@yale.edu and isaac.reed@colorado.edu.