

NEWSLETTER OF THE
Comparative & Historical SOCIOLOGY
SECTION OF THE AMERICAN SOCIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

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New Editor Sought for Section Newsletter

We are looking for someone — or a team of someones — to edit our section newsletter. Our current editor, John Hall, will be “retiring” after this issue, and we’d like to find a replacement as soon as possible. The position provides an excellent opportunity to help shape debates about the practice and guiding methodological principles of comparative and historical sociology. Particularly in this period of re-examination of our field, such debates are critical to the further development (and spread!) of our distinctive approaches to social research. Discussion of the newsletter will be an important item on the agenda of our business meeting at the ASA (Wednesday, August 23, 9:30 a.m.); this should help the incoming editor(s) in formulating her/his/their plans.

If you are interested in taking up the position, or simply would like more information, please don’t hesitate to contact me (Orloff@SSC.Wisc.edu), our incoming Chair, Andy Abbott (Dept. of Sociology, University of Chicago, Chicago, IL 60637), or John Hall (JRHall@UCDavis.edu). And don’t hesitate to volunteer if you are new to the section — this is a great way to get involved.
—Ann Orloff, Chair

Outgoing Editor Thanks Contributors, Others

It has been a great pleasure editing this newsletter over the past two and a half years. Help came from many sources. I am especially grateful to the contributors of major essays during my time as editor, and to the graduate students at the University of California-Davis who have served as assistant editors — James Curiel, John Dale, Mark Lettiere, and Maureen Sullivan.

—John R. Hall, Editor

Issues in Sociohistorical Inquiry:

Studying Medieval Society and Culture From a Sociological Perspective

**Lutz Kaelber
Indiana University**

Despite continued interest in historical comparative research, sociologists have rarely addressed medieval culture and society. Three critical questions may come to mind immediately. First, why study this topic? Second, are not all sources pertaining to this period part of an elite culture and essentially of clerical origin, saying little about the thoughts and ways of life of ordinary people? Third, what can sociologists contribute to the existing body of literature dominated by historians?

At the beginning of our discipline some of the founding fathers addressed

medieval society in their writings. For Karl Marx (1982, pp. 162-63, 222-23, 484-85) the Middle Ages was important for being the historical stage of feudalism. In his view, social relations in medieval civilization were determined by the feudal mode of production. Closer to an investigation of *cultural* phenomena came Max Weber (1978, pp. 513-15, 599, 1212-1372), who looked primarily to medieval Christianity and the occidental city as important socio-cultural and -political factors in the course of Western rationalization. In a sense, the

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Section Poses for Collective Portrait

**Jeremy Hein
University of Wisconsin-
Eau Claire**

Comparative and Historical Sociology (CHS) is currently eleventh in size among the 34 ASA sections, with Aging immediately above and Collective Behavior/Social Movements immediately below. Becoming chair of the section membership committee in August 1994 made me realize that almost nothing was known about section members other than their number

(540). To find out who belongs to CHS I began by coding a print out of section members showing name and address. I then cross-referenced this list with the *ASA Guide to Graduate Departments* and the *ASA Directory of Members*. Other information was supplied directly by the ASA thanks to Elizabeth Czepiel and Connie Castillo. The section’s first collective portrait emerges from these data (notes on coding, missing cases, and other methodological issues available upon request).

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Comparative & Historical Sociology

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Submissions other than short notices should be submitted via email or on 3-1/2" diskette with wordprocessing format specified.

FUTURE PUBLICATION DEADLINES:

Fall: September 15, 1995
Winter: December 15, 1995

Message From the Chair

Ann Shola Orloff

What is the future of comparative and historical research in sociology? One of our candidates for Chair of the section, Andy Abbott, recently called for a "serious retrospective of where the section has been and where it is going... [we] seem to be at a crossroads, [with] the focus of disciplinary attention... in some ways ...moving elsewhere." Yet he also notes the increasing importance of comparative work, and in this agrees with our other candidate, Jack Goldstone, who called for increasing the recognition throughout the discipline of our particular analytic perspectives and research. I hope Andy and Jack — and all of you — will see the sessions we've organized for the upcoming meeting as beginning the kinds of questioning we need to do, as well as promoting an appreciation of the kinds of work we are already doing.

The sessions our section is sponsoring for the upcoming annual meeting are aimed at providing some guidance in finding answers to key theoretical, methodological, and epistemological questions facing us. We will have a miniconference of two sessions on the afternoon of our session day, Wednesday, August 23. At 2:30, we have a panel, organized by Sonya Rose, of some of our section's leading commentators on theoretical and epistemological issues: Ava Baron, John Hall, Peggy Somers, Marc Steinberg and George Steinmetz discussing the question, "Between Postmodernism and Political Economy: Is There a Middle Way?" Following this (at 4:30), Charles Ragin and I have organized a group of some of our best comparative analysts to discuss "Strategies, Evidence and Logic in Comparative Research: Intensive vs. Extensive Research" with illustrations drawn from their own research; participants are Michael Burawoy and Ted Gerber, Tom Janoski and Vanessa Tinsley, Ed Amenta, and Karen Barkey. We have asked the panelists to address the critiques being made of comparative work, as well as showing us the benefits of comparative analysis by example. Our focus on

comparison is also reflected in our "author-meets-critics" panel (at 10:30) on Donald Levine's new book, *Visions of the Sociological Tradition: Toward a Dialogic Narrative* (University of Chicago Press, 1995), a comparative and historical analysis of the development of modern theory in a number of Western countries. Panelists are Edward Tiryakin, Dirk Kasler, and Charles Tilly. Finally, we will also be co-sponsoring a session on "Comparing Across Difference," organized by Nancy Naples, Joey Sprague and myself, with the section on Sex and Gender, to be held on Monday, August 21 (their section day). In recent years, and thanks in particular to the work of feminist scholars of color, we are increasingly sensitive to the ways our positions in intersecting systems of social relationships and in historically-specific contexts creates diverse experiences and understandings — a diversity that occurs on multiple planes. Scholars in the Sex and Gender section have tended to focus on intra-national variation associated with gender, race/ethnicity and class, while those in Comparative and Historical Sociology have tended to concentrate on cross-national or over-time variation. In both cases, the result has been stimulating — but sometimes also paralyzing: a flowering of descriptions of our diversity and a reluctance to generalize across it. In this discussion, we hope to address the question of whether—and how—it is possible to develop analytic strategies that allow us to generalize across diversity without giving hegemonic status to one set of experiences. Panelists include Raka Ray, Julia O'Connor and Evelyn Nakano Glenn; Joey Sprague and I will comment.

Other section activities include roundtables, organized by Desley Deacon, which lead off our section day — 8:30 a.m. on Wednesday; these will be followed by our business meeting at 9:30 a.m. Our section reception, a cooperative event with the Political Sociology section, will be held on their section day, Monday, August 21, at 6:30 p.m. We will again announce award winners at the reception. I hope to see you in Washington. ■

Comparative and Historical Sociology at 1995 ASA meetings

Monday, August 21, 10:30am

230. With Section on Sociology of Sex and Gender. **Comparing across Differences.** Organizers: Nancy Naples, University of California, Irvine; Ann Orloff, University of Wisconsin, Madison; Joey Sprague, University of Kansas; Presider: Ann Orloff, University of Wisconsin, Madison. Two Worlds of Welfare State Research, Julia S. O'Connor, McMaster University; Bounded Expectations: Notes on Comparing Women's Movements, Raka Ray, University of California, Berkeley; [Title to be announced], Evelyn Nakano Glenn, University of California, Berkeley. Discussion: Ann Orloff, University of Wisconsin, Madison; Joey Sprague, University of Kansas.

Monday, August 21, 6:30pm: Reception, with Political Sociology Section.

Wednesday, August 23, 8:30-9:30am

410. **Refereed Roundtables,** organizer, Desley Deacon, University of Texas, Austin. **1. Revolutions, States, and Intellectuals.** Whose Science? Culture, Politics and Intellectuals in the Late Ottoman Empire, 1839-1924. Recep Senturk, Columbia University; State and Social Change from Ibn Khaldun and Theda Skocpol's Point of View, Taghi Azadarmaki, Tehran University. **2. The Military, Class, and Ideology.** MIA and the "Disappeared" A Comparative Historical Analysis, Duncan C. Schlag, Pennsylvania State University, and C. Allen Haney, University of Houston. **3. Gender, Questions, and Memory.** Dialogics, Memorable and Otherwise: A Consideration of Memory, History and Imagination in Historical Sociology, Jessica Fields, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill; The Overlooked Contributions of Women to the Development of American Sociology, An Examination of AJS Articles from 1895-1926, Laurie E. Smith, East Texas Baptist University; Domestic Work and Sponsored Mobility: Race and Ethnic Differences in the U.S. in 1900, Christine E. Bose, State University of New York, Albany. **4. Marxism as Ideology and Theory.** Modernization, World System and Marxian Theories of Development: A Critical Comparison of Uganda and South Korea, Lawrence P. King, University of California, Los Angeles; The Marxist Phenomenon in Chinese Society: From Revolution, Myth, toward Transcendental Order, Xun Xu, State University of New York, Albany; Between Totalitarianism and Postmodernity, Peter Beilharz, La Trobe University. **5. Collective Action, Culture and Structure.** Canada's Imperfect Union: Labor, Politics and Industrial Unrest, 1948-1990, Tom Carroll, Indiana University, Bloomington, and Michael Wallace, State University of New York, Albany; All Work and No Play. The Effect of Culture, Ideology and Structure on the Movement to Regulate Child Labor, Andrew J. Fish, State University of New York, Stony Brook; Network Ties and Collective Action: Solidarity and the Diffusion of the Rebecca Riots, Mim Thomas, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. **6. States, Politics, and Power.** Organizing Interest in the Field of Power: German Conservatism in the Nineteenth Century, Orville Lee, Northwestern University; Crisis and Abdication: A Compar-

ative Inquiry into Processes of Republican Breakdown, Ivan Ermakoff, University of Chicago; A Critical Review of the Various Theories on the State and Their Positions on the Issues of State Autonomy and Capacity, Christopher Paul, University of California, Los Angeles.

Wednesday, August 23, 9:30-10:15: Business Meeting.

Wednesday, August 23, 10:30am

429. **Author Meets Critics: Donald N. Levine, *Visions of the Sociological Tradition*** (University of Chicago Press, 1995). Organizers: Charles Camic and Ann Orloff, (University of Wisconsin, Madison. Presider: Ann Orloff, University of Wisconsin, Madison. Book Author: Donald N. Levine, University of Chicago. Critics: Edward A Tiryakian, Duke University, Dirk Kasler, University of Marburg, Charles Tilly, New School of Social Research.

Wednesday, August 23, 12:30pm

437. Regular Session, Historical Sociology: **Aspects of European State Formation in Comparative and Historical Perspective.** Organizer: Marc W. Steinberg, Smith College. Presider: Julia Adams, University of Michigan. Putting the State on the Map: Cartography, Territory and European State-Building, Michael Biggs, Harvard University; Comparative Aspects of Statebuilding in Early Modern India and Europe, Madhabi Rupa Roy, Harvard University; The Passport and the Modern State, John Torpey, United States Institute of Peace; Do Revolutions Matter? Elite Conflicts and Mass Mobilization from the Medici to Yeltsin, Richard Lachmann, State University of New York, Albany. Discussion: Julia Adams, University of Michigan

Wednesday, August 23, 2:30pm

460. Miniconference: **Between Postmodernism and Political Economy: Is There a Middle Way?** Organizer and Presider: Sonya O. Rose, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Panel: Ava Baron, Rider University; John R. Hall, University of California, Davis; Margaret R. Somers, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor; Marc W. Steinberg, Smith College; George Steinmetz, University of Chicago.

Wednesday, August 23, 1995, 4:30pm

473. Miniconference: **Strategies, Evidence, and Logic in Comparative Research: Intensive vs Extensive Research.** Organizers: Ann Orloff, University of Wisconsin, Madison, and Charles C. Ragin, Northwestern University. Presider: Ann Orloff, University of Wisconsin, Madison. Ethnography Meets Survey Research: Class Structure, Class Consciousness and Worker Control in the United States and Russia, Michael Burawoy and Theodore Gerber, University of California, Berkeley; The Benefits of Comparative Methods in Historical Study: Examples from Research of the Origins of the U.S. Welfare State, Edwin Amenta, New York University; Comparisons and Narratives of Nation-state Building, Karen Barkey, Columbia University; Making Institutions Dynamic in Cross-National Research, Thomas Janoski, Christa McGill, and Vanessa Tinsley, Duke University. Comments: Charles C. Ragin, Northwestern University, and Ann Orloff, University of Wisconsin, Madison. ■

Section Portrait (from page 1)...

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS. Nearly two-thirds of CHS members teach in graduate programs, a proportion I suspect is comparatively high (see table 1). Only a crude basis of a comparison is available to support this assertion. If all faculty listed in the *ASA Guide to Graduate Programs* were members of the ASA, they would comprise only 51 percent of the association. Assuming that only 75 percent are members yields an even lower proportion: 38 percent.

The apparently large proportion of CHS members in graduate programs may result from undergraduate faculty not joining sections as frequently. In our section only 24 percent of graduate-program members belong exclusively to CHS, compared with 44 percent of undergraduate-program members. Conversely, 26 percent of members at graduate programs belong to three or more other sections, compared to only 19 percent of members at undergraduate programs.

The section has a slight over representation of student members. This pattern probably results less from the section's proportion of members in graduate programs than from students being over represented as members of all sections (27 percent). Despite their adequate representation in CHS, recruiting more students should be a priority for the section because it is essential for section growth. Students comprise 39 percent of the largest ASA section (Sex and Gender), 38 percent of the fourth largest (Culture), and 32

percent of the fifth largest (Racial and Ethnic Minorities). Overall, the correlation between percent student members and section size is .52 (.57 excluding Medical Sociology, the second largest section). To achieve section growth we will have to do better than the current ratio of about 2:1 for graduate-program members to student members.

Student members also deserve special consideration because their section affiliations are concentrated in CHS. Only 12 percent of members with a Ph.D. belong exclusively to CHS, compared to 23 percent of student members. Conversely, 30 percent of Ph.D. members belong to three or more other sections, in contrast to only 22 percent of student members.

In comparison to ASA membership, women are slightly under represented in our section. Since data on male and female membership are not available for all sections, it is possible that the comparative scarcity of women in CHS merely reflects women joining sections at a lower rate than men. In fact, there is very little difference in the number of sections men and women in CHS belong to: 28 percent of both men and women belong to CHS only and 24 to 25 percent belong to only one other section. There is a small difference in belonging to three or more sections: 21 percent for women and 25 percent for men.

The income of CHS members varies from the ASA as a whole. The section has a much smaller proportion of the lowest income members. Income disparity narrows for the higher income members. Nonetheless, 51 percent of our members earn \$40,000 or more compared to only 44 percent of all ASA members. Data on the income of ASA members who join sections is needed to fully substantiate that CHS members tend to have high incomes.

Promoting cross-national research is a leading goal of CHS and thus the proportion of foreign members in our section is worthy of particular attention: it is only one percentage point greater than for the ASA. At 12 percent foreign

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Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of CHS and ASA Members (in percent)

	CHS	ASA
Program*		
Graduate	64	NA
Undergraduate	36	NA
Education		
Ph.D.	72	76
Student	28	24
Sex		
Male	64	59
Female	36	41
Income*		
≤ 14,999	2	13
15-19,999	7	8
20-29,999	13	14
30-39,999	27	22
40-49,999	23	19
≥ 50,000	28	25
Residence		
United States	88	89
Foreign	12	11
Foreign Residence		
Europe	40	26
Asia	29	20
Canada	20	37
Africa	5	8
Latin America	3	5
Australia and New Zealand	3	4

*Excludes graduate students

N = 540 for CHS and 13,048 for ASA

Table 2. Section Affiliations of CHS and ASA Members (in percent)

	CHS	ASA
Other Sections		
None	30	NA
One	23	NA
Two	23	NA
Three or more	24	NA
Largest Other Sections		
Political Sociology	16	3
Theory	12	5
Political Economy	11	2
Sociology of Culture	9	5
Marxist Sociology	7	2
Largest ASA Sections		
Sex and Gender	6	7
Medical Sociology	1	6
Organizations and Occupations	4	5
Sociology of Culture	9	5
Racial and Ethnic Minorities	3	5

N = 540 CHS members and 17,446 section memberships for ASA

Section Portrait (from page 4)...

members still make a significant contribution to section membership when measured against the contribution of U.S. states. The single largest state for CHS members (California) accounts for only 13 percent of all members, while the second (New York) accounts for only 12 percent. Data on our section suggests that foreign ASA members do not join sections at the same rate as domestic members. Where only 28 percent of domestic members belong exclusively to CHS, the CHS is the sole section for 40 percent of foreign members.

Although the overall representation of foreign members in CHS parallels that for the ASA, there is considerable variation in their regional distribution. CHS has a much larger proportion of European members as well as an over representation of Asian members. Conversely, Canadian members are quite under represented. There are strong regional differences in section memberships among foreign memberships, although their small number reduces the meaning of the percentages. Asian and Latin American CHS members belong to more sections than do European and Canadian CHS members.

SECTION AFFILIATIONS. The plurality of our members belongs only to CHS, but the section nonetheless has strong links to other sections (see table 2). CHS's ties to other

sections through multiple-section members are heavily concentrated: five sections account for 55 percent of all affiliations. Two of these sections are larger than CHS while three are smaller. CHS members have a particularly strong affinity for Political Sociology, Political Economy, and Marxist Sociology. At the same time, CHS is adequately linked to the five largest ASA sections, with the exception of Medical Sociology. Theory's position as the sixth largest section further adds to CHS's web of section affiliations.

CONCLUSION. This collective portrait of CHS members suggests both strengths and weakness in the section. I see the greatest strength in the section's strong representation in two of the six biggest sections and adequate representation in three of the others. To me this means that CHS members are connected to the main currents of contemporary sociology, which keeps our section vital and helps disseminate CHS. The section also can take pride in its strong European and Asian membership. At the same time, increasing foreign membership should be a priority for the section, particularly in Latin America and Canada. Yet the main route to growth must come from recruiting more student members, with a ratio of one graduate-faculty member per student member as our goal. Of course the main conclusion drawn from this collective portrait is that the composition of the section is just as important as the size of the section. ■

Medieval Study, continued from page 1...

thoughts of these pioneers marked simultaneously the beginning and the end of sociological inquiries into medieval culture, since sociologists have shown little interest ever since—a deplorable development (see, e.g., Homans 1960 for a rare exception). For the Middle Ages in Europe witnessed remarkable social and cultural change, with a rich diversity both in the ways in which individuals and communities constructed meaning, generated cultural artifacts, and articulated identities, and in the institutional contexts that structured and constrained these creative processes. Economically, the period between c.500 and c.1500 witnessed the shift from a gift and barter system with little if any surplus to a profit economy that generated the splendid display of wealth and power in the urban centers of trade; politically, areas of tribal rule with continual political instability developed into firmly organized territorial monarchies and nation-states in the making; socio-culturally, communities relying on a social bond generated and upheld by highly local patterns of interaction were supplemented and on occasion, supplanted by social networks wider in scope and more anonymous and transient in nature; in religious terms, the relative unity of Christian faith under the auspices of the Catholic church gave way to an array of lay religious movements, some on the fringes of orthodoxy, others heterodox in nature. These developments (of which evidently only a glimpse can be offered here), I submit, are important and interesting enough to warrant sociological attention.

If there is reason for historical comparative sociology to take an interest in the Middle Ages, a skeptic might nevertheless question whether the analysis of medieval cul-

ture and society is a feasible one, as much if not all we know about has been passed on to us through the lenses of upper, clerical culture, with little evidence of the culture of non-elites. This in fact is one of the most persistent misconceptions about the sources that can inform us about medieval life. Especially for the later Middle Ages, many sources exist that did not originate in clerical circles, and even those that did can provide ample information about the beliefs and practices of everyday women and men. Let me illustrate this point with some materials I work with in my own research on lay religious movements in the Middle Ages, each with different strengths and problems. The case I wish to choose is the Waldensians, one the largest of these movements. Evidence of Waldensian practices and beliefs can be derived from primary sources consisting of three types of documents. The first type of document is Waldensian writings. Among the most interesting is the *Liber antiheresis* of Durand of Huesca, probably composed around 1186/87. Written by a companion of Waldes, the founder of the Waldensians, it is a splendid affirmation of early Waldensian religious life and expression of their theological and social views. However, as is generally the case with heretical texts in the High Middle Ages, this document focuses on the lives and thoughts of the spiritual leadership, not on the views and behavior of Waldensian supporters and followers. To a lesser degree, this also holds true for the second type of document, reports by ecclesiastical observers. Ecclesiastical observers used their first-hand experience with Waldensians to reveal the heretics' particular characteristics and warn others of their (alleged) depravity. In order for a warning to be efficacious, at least some reports had to be reasonably accurate, especially

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Recent Books in Historical and Comparative Sociology

Weber and Toennies, by Werner J. Cahnman, edited by Joseph B. Maier, Judith Marcus, and Zoltan Tarr, Transaction Publishers, 1994. Selected Cahnman essays on Weber and Toennies demonstrate how historical sociology can find and explain linkages between seemingly disparate events in time and place.

Virtuosity, Charisma and Social Order: A Comparative Sociological Study of Monasticism in Medieval Catholicism and Theravada Buddhism, by Ilana Friedrich Silber, Cambridge University Press, 1995. Merges Weberian sociology with Maussian tradition of gift analysis to explore the social position of virtuoso ascetics in traditional Theravada Buddhism and medieval Catholicism.

Urban Leviathan: Mexico City in the Twentieth Century, by Diane E. Davis, Temple University Press, 1994. Historical analysis of the urban foundations of state formation in post-revolutionary Mexico, with emphasis on the consolidation, transformation, and unraveling of state-class alliances under one-party rule.

The Revolution Deferred: The Painful Birth of Post-Apartheid South Africa, by Martin Murray, Verso, 1994.

Back From the Future: Cuba Under Castro, by Susan Eckstein, Princeton University Press. Uses primary sources and interviews to explore the political economy of the Castro period.

Medieval Study, continued from page 5...

in the earlier periods, when ecclesiastics knew little about Waldensian life and had to rely heavily on information provided in such reports. But again, ecclesiastical observers frequently focused on leaders rather than followers, and they gave more weight to the Waldensians' theological peculiarities and allegations of socio-moral deviance, rather than to their everyday life. The third type of document is inquisition records, which exist from the 1240s onwards. Inquisition records are at the same time the most problematic, challenging, and revealing sources on Waldensian culture. They are problematic because the probative value of statements often obtained under conditions of forced compliance is difficult to assess (although torture was used less frequently and at later periods than commonly assumed). They are challenging because of the sheer number of depositions that are now available in printed form and the wealth of details they contain. They are revealing because they contain direct references to the religious and social customs of the ordinary members of the Waldensian congregations. The latter is particularly the case for a smaller number of statements made by Waldensians who firmly stood up for their convictions, despite the obvious threat to their well-being by some inquisitors. The value of such exceptional statements, which provide the closest insights into the Waldensians' cultural and religious life and are among the best available on forms of popular religiosity in Western history prior to the Reformation, has become increasingly recognized in historical scholarship (for further details, see Kaelber 1995).

The availability of sources on medieval culture and society therefore is much less of a problem than the lack of sociologists capable of accessing them. Indeed, let us be reminded that at a time when it is not uncommon that graduate departments in sociology allow their Ph.D.s to obtain a

degree without being able to read a foreign language, reputable departments in history hold fast in requiring reading knowledge of Latin, French, German, and Italian as a bare minimum from their doctorate medievalists. But once some of these hurdles are passed, there is much that sociology can contribute. Sociologists have generally a much stronger grounding than historians and scholars from other related fields (e.g., comparative literature or languages) in social theory. Social theories are tool kits providing concepts and general schemes of the workings of empirical phenomena that sociologists are trained to use for identifying, describing, and analyzing historical processes. Furthermore, because of sociologists' greater proclivity toward employing a comparative approach, their research is potentially better able to uncover both the particularities of certain phenomena and communalities across a range of cases. Finally, sociologists are more inclined to look at the interplay of meaningful actions and structural contexts of culture, rather than confining their research to one level of analysis or the other. At least in the field of medieval culture and society, we have barely begun to make use of these comparative advantages of our discipline.

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