

Comprehensive Exam Reading List

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Introduction

This page hosts the reading list and notes for my PhD comprehensive exam in Sociology at the University of Washington. It's a work in progress, created using the **bookdown** R package.

Chapter 1

Rationale

1.1 Organizing themes and questions

Structure, culture, reproduction.

What are the social processes by which a sense of *community* is created, sustained, or lost? Namely, how do network structures and cultural meanings interact to produce and reproduce bounded social groups to which individuals can perceive and feel that they *belong*?

Scale, geography, technology.

How does scale, from local to global, shape the experience of or even possibility for community? What's the continued salience of physical space for shaping local difference, against the ability of technology to homogenize and unify at bigger scales?

Practice, interaction, identity.

What kinds of micro-level, interactional practices work to create community? When do social identity categories become salient axes for organizing communities? How do ordinary people and researchers understand these different identities operating simultaneously—as analogous, competing, or intersecting?

Power, visibility, stigma.

How do *different* communities interact, especially across differentials of power? How do they maintain distinctions, or merge? Specifically, what role do visibility and stigma play in the marginalization and stratification of minority groups?

Consequences of community.

What does community *do* for people? Does it provide a motivation for participation in social action, and meaningful objects for people to attach to—for instance, a reason to care about the fates of some places and not others? It's typically conceived as bottom-up and organic—when and how is it coopted, by formal organizations, corporations, or the state?

1.2 [TODO] Narrative rationale

Chapter 2

Reading List

2.1 Structure, culture, reproduction

Blau, Peter M. (1977a). “A Macrosociological Theory of Social Structure”. In: *American Journal of Sociology* 83.1, pp. 26-54.

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Granovetter, Mark (1973). “The Strength of Weak Ties”. In: *American Journal of Sociology* 78.6, pp. 1360-1380.

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Healy, Kieran (2015). “The Performativity of Networks”. In: *European Journal of Sociology* 56.02, pp. 175-205. DOI: 10.1017/S0003975615000107.

Hwang, Jackelyn (2016). “The Social Construction of a Gentrifying Neighborhood: Reifying and Redefining Identity and Boundaries in Inequality”. In: *Urban Affairs Review* 52.1, pp. 98-128. DOI:

10.1177/1078087415570643.

Jenkins, Richard (1994). "Rethinking Ethnicity: Identity, Categorization and Power". In: *Ethnic & Racial Studies* 17.2, p. 197.

Lee, Monica and John Levi Martin (2018). "Doorway to the Dharma of Duality". In: *Poetics* 68, pp. 18-30. DOI: 10.1016/j.poetic.2018.01.001.

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Lizardo, Omar (2006). "How Cultural Tastes Shape Personal Networks". In: *American Sociological Review* 71.5, pp. 778-807. DOI: 10.1177/000312240607100504.

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McPherson, Miller, Lynn Smith-Lovin and James M. Cook (2001). "Birds of a Feather: Homophily in Social Networks". In: *Annual Review of Sociology* 27, pp. 415-444.

Mohr, John W. (1998). "Measuring Meaning Structures". In: *Annual Review of Sociology* 24.1, pp. 345-370. DOI: 10.1146/annurev.soc.24.1.345.

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Tönnies, Ferdinand (2001). *Community and Civil Society*. Ed. by Jose Harris. Trans. by Margaret Hollis. Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press. 320 pp.

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Vaisey, Stephen and Omar Lizardo (2010). "Can Cultural Worldviews Influence Network Composition?" In: *Social Forces* 88.4, pp. 1595-1618. DOI: 10.1353/sof.2010.0009.

Vilhena, Daril, Jacob Foster, Martin Rosvall, et al. (2014). "Finding Cultural Holes: How Structure and Culture Diverge in Networks of Scholarly Communication". In: *Sociological Science* 1, pp. 221-238. DOI: 10.15195/v1.a15.

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White, Harrison C. (2008). "Notes on the Constituents of Social Structure. Soc. Rel. 10 - Spring '65". In: *Sociologica*, pp. 0-0. DOI: 10.2383/26576.

--- (2012). *Identity and Control: How Social Formations Emerge*. 2nd. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Zerubavel, Eviatar (2002). "The Fine Line: Making Distinctions in Everyday Life". In: *Cultural Sociology*. Ed. by Lyn Spillman. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, pp. 223-232.

2.2 Scale, geography, technology

Anderson, Benedict (2016). *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Verso. 240 pp.

- Borer, Michael Ian (2006). "The Location of Culture: The Urban Culturalist Perspective". In: *City & Community* 5.2, pp. 173-197. DOI: 10.1111/j.1540-6040.2006.00168.x.
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- Certeau, Michel de (2011). *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Trans. by Steven Rendall. Third edition. Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press. 256 pp.
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- Greene, Theodore (2014). "Gay Neighborhoods and the Rights of the Vicarious Citizen". In: *City & Community* 13.2, pp. 99-118. DOI: 10.1111/cico.12059.
- Hampton, Keith and Barry Wellman (2003). "Neighboring in Netville: How the Internet Supports Community and Social Capital in a Wired Suburb". In: *City & Community* 2.4, pp. 277-311. DOI: 10.1046/j.1535-6841.2003.00057.x.
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- Tufekci, Zeynep (2017). *Twitter and Tear Gas: The Power and Fragility of Networked Protest*. OCLC: ocn961312425. New Haven ; London: Yale University Press. 326 pp.
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2.3 Practice, interaction, identity

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- Eliasoph, Nina (1998). *Avoiding Politics: How Americans Produce Apathy in Everyday Life*. Cambridge University Press. 350 pp.
- Eliasoph, Nina and Paul Lichterman (2003). “Culture in Interaction”. In: *American Journal of Sociology* 108.4, pp. 735-794. DOI: 10.1086/367920.
- Horowitz, Adam and Charles J. Gomez (2018). “Identity Override: How Sexual Orientation Reduces the Rigidity of Racial Boundaries”. In: *Sociological Science* 5, pp. 669-693. DOI: 10.15195/v5.a28.
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- Tavory, Iddo (2016). *Summoned: Identification and Religious Life in a Jewish Neighborhood*. University of Chicago Press. 224 pp.
- Wirth, Louis (1928). *The Ghetto*. Transaction. 306 pp.

2.4 Power, visibility, stigma

- Brown-Saracino, Japonica (2011). “From the Lesbian Ghetto to Ambient Community: The Perceived Costs and Benefits of Integration for Community”. In: *Social Problems* 58.3, pp. 361-388. DOI: 10.1525/sp.2011.58.3.361.
- Douglas, Mary (1966). *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*. Routledge & K. Paul. 212 pp.
- Du Bois, W. E. B. (1995). “Of Our Spiritual Strivings”. In: *W.E.B. Du Bois: A Reader*. Ed. by David L. Lewis. 1st ed.. New York: HHolt and Co.
- Foucault, Michel (1990). *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*. Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group. 116 pp.
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- Marx, Karl (1972). “On the Jewish Question”. In: *The Marx-Engels Reader*. Ed. by Robert C. Tucker. New York, Norton.

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Wynter, Sylvia (2003). “Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom: Towards the Human, after Man, Its Overrepresentation—An Argument”. In: *CR: The new centennial review* 3.3, pp. 257-337.

2.5 Consequences of community

Collins, Patricia Hill (2010). “The New Politics of Community”. In: *American Sociological Review* 75.1, pp. 7-30. DOI: 10.1177/0003122410363293.

Joseph, Miranda (2002). *Against the Romance of Community*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Lichterman, Paul (1996). *The Search for Political Community: American Activists Reinventing Commitment*. Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press. 292 pp.

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Putnam, Robert D. (2001). *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. Simon and Schuster. 550 pp.

Putnam, Robert D, Robert Leonardi and Raffaella Y. Nanetti (1994). *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*. 1 edition. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. 258 pp.

Walton, Emily (2018). “The Meaning of Community in Diverse Neighborhoods: Stratification of Influence and Mental Health”. In: *Health & Place* 50, pp. 6-15. DOI: 10.1016/j.healthplace.2018.01.001.

Chapter 3

Memos

3.1 Reorganization

Practices and identity are more central to the “how” of community; to inclusion and belonging.

Geography and technology are things that moderate or mediate it.

Need to merge the sections on exclusion, power, and (political) consequences, maybe.

This reframes what’s central and what’s peripheral in the exam.

Chapter 4

Reading Notes

4.1 Tönnies 1887, *Community and Civil Society*

4.1.1 introductions

[NB: editor Jose Harris is a woman, and I think her name is pronounced “Josie” not “José”]

This edition is less about sociology than about political theory, but I think that’s okay if it’s a good critical translation. It isn’t the classic translation that would have informed 20c sociology.

All the talk of Hobbes is giving me flashbacks.

A lot of Tönnies is about different forms of property and law. [Do queer communities lack a political economy? Property, industrial base, etc...? Reminds me of the position of women in society, more than of people of color. Ani DiFranco: “Who says I like right angles?”]

tried to be analytical, not normative, but I sense skepticism from the editor.

Original English translation by Charles Loomis was the foundational one for US sociology

Maybe read Parsons’ Note on Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft

relative pronouns are much more confusing in English than German, probs even more so than French

nice discussion of terminology and translation

4.1.2 main text

[7] scientific thinking, calculating, measurement, identity, prototypes, names + numbers

I feel like the Gemeinschaft/Gesellschaft is less clear cut than it sounds on [18]: certain things seem like they could be either depending on how you look at them or experience them. Queer communities, academic communities. (Also, no one talks about queer societies in English, anyway...)

Starts Gemeinschaft with (heteronormative) kinship [22] (but queer folk use the same language of kinship for reasons); note that he almost immediately talks about (gendered) power, inequality, authority [23-25]; power and protection [27];

blood -> place -> spirit = kinship -> neighborhood -> friend/comradeship; home -> village -> town [27-29] [think about this more] [why are gayborhoods so often called villages? maybe because queer worlds are small worlds]

Wherever human beings are bound together in an organic fashion by their inclination and common consent, Community of one kind or another exists. [28]

how community can generate inequality [32]; language, will, understanding, and love -> “the fundamental laws of all community”, *concord* [33-4]; [I hear echoes of Saussure in this section; the various editions of this book would’ve evolved in parallel with CLG]; ties to Anderson in the next.

A whole town, or a village, or a nation, a tribe, a clan and finally a family can all in the same way been seen and understood as a particular type of guild or religious community. And vice versa—all these many different structures and formations are contained within the idea of the family and all proceed from it as the universal expression of the reality of Community. [36]

translator’s footnote on Stadt vs Großstadt; also this: “And we forget that living together is a primal fact of nature; it is isolation, not co-operation, that needs to be explained.” [38]; [this section is about property / in-common]; gets to households, is probably going to say things I disagree with. I don’t think Jane Jacobs would agree with him about who has the advantage in relationship between town and country [42]; feudal relationships aren’t contracts, but understandings [46]; religious/economic/artistic/political integration of the city

Gemeinschaft/Gesellschaft: unity/detachment [52]; [again, these are ideal types, operating simultaneously]; commentary on preferences/values;

4.2 Anderson 1983, *Imagined Communities*

Is “community” itself a concept bounded by language/nation? Anderson talks about the difficulty of finding a similarly warm and fuzzy word in French, and argues that English community has more in common with German Gemeinschaft than Latin *communitas*. I know that in France, *communautarisme* is a bad thing, and as something imported from the US. (I should read more about this, both in terms of ethnicity and in terms of sexuality.)

At the same time, one of his key examples is of national communities in Latin America. So, how does *comunidad* *feel* in Spanish? My personal hunch is that it does exist as a meaningful word with positive connotations. But, I could be thinking primarily of latinx communities in the US, whose political understandings of community are inflected by English.

4.3 Collins 2010, “The New Politics of Community”

[this was the 2009 ASA presidential address. it’s useful because it’s an opinionated take on the state of a particular facet of the discipline. it happens to be one that resonates strongly with me.]

links “community” to power relations, which are about knowledge and culture, symbol and structure

link to Jennifer Nash: discussion of political love

Tönnies: family, community, love

idea of community used to reinforce and challenge social inequalities

analogy with feminist politicization of the family

the construct of community is neglected *because* associated with women, ethnic groups, religious minorities, etc

why community?

- language of community is ubiquitous in US; often associated with place, neighborhood
- versatile, malleable, easy to use, but taken-for-granted

- varied/contradictory meanings & practices
- strong feeling, motivator for action
- matters to everyday experience of social inequalities

[I like *community* because it brings together place, culture, networks. PHC is adding power to that mix (kind of like Talja Blokland).]

[Should I read Du Bois, *The Philadelphia Negro*, as a classic community study?]

communities as political projects (discusses five sites, with criteria)

- gated communities (real/metaphor, public/private): boundary work
- grassroots politics (language of community)
- imagined communities (nations, beyond face-to-face, mediation—and its consequences for the powerful center)
 - bottom-up public sphere? [she’s still optimistic, but this was 2009];
 - beyond geography?

This is key, though:

When reframed through power relations, imagined communities can be marshaled for oppressive or emancipatory political projects.

- community service (military vs care work)
- community organizing (identity and affinity politics; she’s not into this binary; links it to community vs civil society)

again, “intersecting systems of power relations”; community for relational thinking (contrasted to binary thinking in use of categories); helpful for thinking social change & reconfigurations of social space (“In a situation of fluidity and seeming interdependence, who knows who belongs where?”), in context of flexibility and ambiguity (*because* the concept is flexible); symbolic boundary construction; key: community can do both, it’s not inherently emancipatory or oppressive; community and democracy/egalitarianism? (US pragmatist tradition, including Du Bois)

Nineteenth-century African American journalist Ida Wells-Barnett’s anti-lynching crusade illustrates the effectiveness of joining an unshakable commitment to community with a passion for social justice. ... Black people were not her mass, her mob, her public, her population, or a statistical collection of potential lynching victims—they were her community.

Footnotes situate her in the sociological conversation about community and make her methods and epistemologies more explicit.

[do I like communities because they’re a meso-level social construct? PHC says they link individuals to social institutions]

[she applies community to sociology as a discipline in a really reflexive and insightful way]

[this piece makes it obvious how useful sociology of culture is: meanings, boundaries, categories, relational thinking...]

[Nathan Jurgenson was one of her RAs]

Appendix A

Additional readings

A.1 Existing work on LGBTQ community

[These are key examples of work on LGBTQ community. I've worked backward from them to determine what concepts and readings I should include. They're the sources of key themes like place, cultural reproduction, and group membership.]

Brown-Saracino, Japonica. 2017. *How Places Make Us: Novel LBQ Identities in Four Small Cities*. 1 edition. Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press.

Kelly, Brian C., Richard M. Carpiano, Adam Easterbrook, and Jeffrey T. Parsons. 2014. "Exploring the Gay Community Question: Neighborhood and Network Influences on the Experience of Community among Urban Gay Men." *The Sociological Quarterly* 55(1):23–48.

Orne, Jason. 2017. *Boystown: Sex and Community in Chicago*. Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press.

Pfeffer, Carla A. 2014. "'I Don't Like Passing as a Straight Woman': Queer Negotiations of Identity and Social Group Membership." *American Journal of Sociology* 120(1):1–44.

A.2 Methods