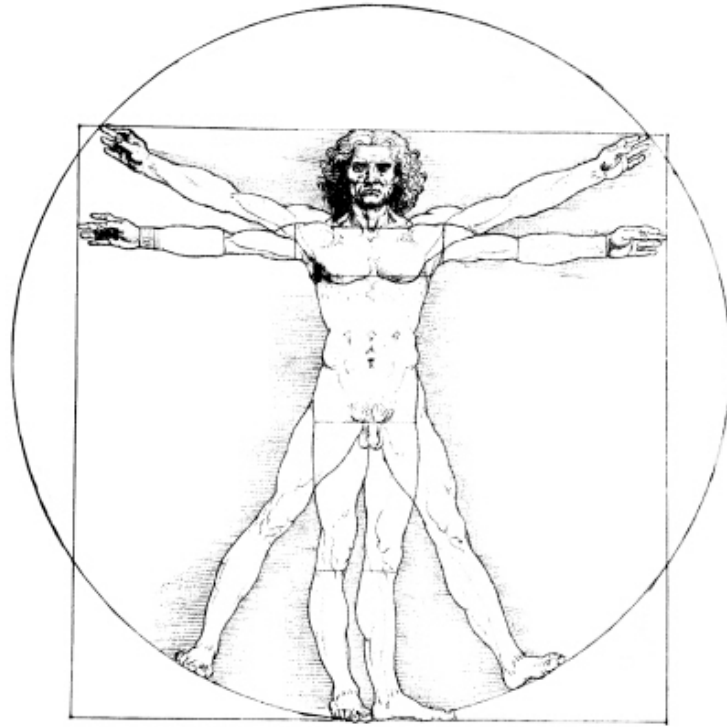


# MEASURING CULTURE



UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA  
VANCOUVER, B.C.  
OCT. 4-6, 2012

# ***Measuring Culture***

***Oct. 4-6, 2012***

University of British Columbia, Vancouver B.C.

Organized by Amin Ghaziani & John Mohr

Social scientific studies of “culture” have made significant progress on conceptual clarification of the concept, yet they have remained curiously quiet on questions of measurement. In other words, scholars have made great strides in defining the culture concept, but our methodological repertoire for how to systematically study it has lagged far behind. This conference, “Measuring Culture,” will develop, critique and disseminate methodological innovations for the study of culture. In particular we hope that the conference will: (i) help redirect the study of culture toward greater methodological precision; (ii) help heal the qualitative-quantitative divide in the field; (iii) develop cross-national professional networks among junior scholars in the U.S. and Canada; (iv) elevate the profile of young scholars who are working to establish themselves as leading voices in this emerging area; and (v) produce an edited volume of published papers that will guide future scholarship and graduate education.

## **Funding:**

The Measuring Culture conference has been generously funded by the UBC Department of Sociology; a Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS) Seed Fund Grant from the UBC Dean of the College of Arts; an HSS Symposium Grant; and the UBC Vice President Research and International.

## **Day 1 (Thursday, October 4, 2012)**

**5:30 PM** Conference Attendees: Shuttles depart Sylvia hotel  
**6:00-7:30 PM** Welcome Reception, Hosted by the UBC  
Department of Sociology  
**8:00 PM** Dinner

## **Day 2 (Friday, October 5, 2012)**

**7:45 AM** Shuttle departs Sylvia Hotel (to UBC)  
**8:30-9:00 AM** Breakfast & Coffee  
**9:00-9:30 AM** Welcome, Coffee, & Introductions  
**9:30-10:00 AM** Amin Ghaziani & John Mohr, Opening Remarks

### **10:00-11:40 AM Session 1. Core Problems of Concepts & Measurement**

**Terry McDonnell** "Drawing Out Culture."  
(Commentator: **Ashley Mears**)

**Iddo Tavory** "Joking Matters: Elements for a Cultural Theory of Situations."  
(Commentator: **Omar Lizardo**)

Paper 1	10:00-10:20
Comment 1	10:20-10:30
Paper 2	10:30-10:50
Comment 2	10:50-11:00
Discussion	11:00-11:40

**11:40-12:00 Break**  
**12:00-1:00 Lunch**

### **1:00-2:40 PM Session 2. Measuring Cultural Structures**

**Steve Vaisey**, "Tools for Measuring Moral Culture."  
(Commentator: **Neil Gross**)

**Frederick Wherry**, "Assessing Culture in Markets."  
(Commentator: **Ann Mische**)

Paper 1	1:00-1:20
Comment 1	1:20-1:30
Paper 2	1:30-1:50
Comment 2	1:50-2:00
Discussion	2:00-2:40

## **Day 2 (Friday, October 5, 2012) (cont.)**

**2:40-3:00 Break**

**3:00-4:40 PM Session 3.  
Measuring Cultural Structures (cont).**

**Neil Gross**, "A Proposal for Increasing the Rationality of Methodological Disputes in the Sociology of Culture (and Beyond)."  
(Commentator: **Steve Vaisey**)

**Chris Bail**, "Finding, Mapping, and Analyzing Cultural Fields Using 'Big' Data."  
(Commentator: **Jennifer Lena**)

Paper 1	3:00-3:20
Comment 1	3:20-3:30
Paper 2	3:30-3:50
Comment 2	3:50-4:00
Discussion	4:00-4:40

**5:00 PM** End of Day 1, Shuttles Depart UBC for Sylvia Hotel

**7:00 PM** Dinner (Meet at Sylvia Hotel)

## **Day 3 (Saturday, October 6, 2012)**

**7:45 AM** Shuttle departs Sylvia Hotel (to UBC)  
**8:30-9:30 AM** Breakfast & Coffee

**9:30-11:10 AM Session 4.  
Measuring Cultural Forms**

**Ashley Mears**, "Tracking Down Culture in a Cultural Economy."  
(Commentator: **Terry McDonnell**)

**Ann Mische**, "Conceiving the Future in Environmental Activism."  
(Commentator: **Frederick Wherry**)

Paper 1	9:30-9:50
Comment 1	9:50-10:00
Paper 2	10:00-10:20
Comment 2	10:20-10:30
Discussion	10:30-11:10

## **Day 3 (Saturday, October 6, 2012) (cont.)**

**11:10-12:50 Session 5.**

**Measuring Cultural Boundaries & Cultural Holes**

**Omar Lizardo**, "Measuring Cultural Holes."

(Commentator: **Iddo Tavory**)

**Jennifer Lena**, "Boundaries, Genres and Music."

(Commentator: **Chris Bail**)

Paper 1	11:10-11:30
Comment 1	11:30-11:40
Paper 2	11:40-12:00
Comment 2	12:00-12:10
Discussion	12:10-12:50

**12:50-1:00**                      **Break**

**1:00-2:00 PM**                      **Lunch**

**2:00-3:00 PM**                      **Wrap-up & Closing Discussion**  
**Amin Ghaziani and John Mohr**

**3:30 PM**                              **End of Day: Shuttle Departs UBC for Hotel**

Dinner On your own in Vancouver

## **Day 4 (Sunday, October 7, 2012)**

Participants Depart Vancouver

Organizers:

**Amin Ghaziani** is Assistant Professor at the University of British Columbia. He received his Ph.D. in a sociology and organization behavior joint program from Northwestern University in 2006. Before joining the faculty at UBC, he was a postdoctoral fellow at the Princeton Society of Fellows (2008 – 2011). Ghaziani is a cultural sociologist with substantive interests in social movements, sexualities / LGBT studies, and cities. Ghaziani won several awards for his research, including a 2009 Lambda Literary Award Finalist for Best Book in LGBT Studies; a 2009 Charles Tilly Honorable Mention Award for Best Book from the Collective Behavior/Social Movements section of the ASA; a 2010 Sage Prize for Innovation and Excellence Finalist from the British Sociological Association; a 2012 Clifford Geertz Honorable Mention Award for Best Article from the Sociology of Culture section; and a 2012 Best Article Award from the Collective Behavior/Social Movements section.



**John Mohr**, Professor, University of California, Santa Barbara  
Mohr received his PhD from Yale University in 1992. His primary interest is in the empirical study of meaning systems. His focus has been on developing applications of formal methods of relational (network) analysis to the study of discourse in institutional systems. He has applied these concerns to the study of Progressive Era poverty institutions, affirmative action programs at the University of California, U.S. National Security Statements and to the scientific field of nanotechnology.



Participants:

**Christopher A. Bail**, is a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Scholar at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor and an Assistant Professor of Sociology at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. He studies social movement organizations, social policies, and collective identity using quantitative and qualitative methods. His research has been published by American Sociological Review, recognized by awards from the American Sociological Association, and supported by the National Science Foundation. He received his Ph.D. from Harvard University in 2011.



**Neil Gross**, Professor, University Of British Columbia. Neil taught at the University of Southern California and Harvard University before joining the UBC faculty in 2008. Trained at the University of Wisconsin-Madison (Ph.D., 2002), and holding a BA in Legal Studies from the University of California, Berkeley (1992), Gross has special interests in sociological theory, politics, the sociology of ideas and academic life, and the sociology of culture. He is the editor of [\*Sociological Theory\*](#), a quarterly journal of the American Sociological Association.



Participants (cont.):

**Jennifer Lena**, Assistant Professor, Barnard College. I am a sociologist of culture who studies classification systems, specifically the conditions that facilitate the proliferation or contraction of categories into which art works are sorted. In my work I examine the economic, aesthetic, racial, and organizational conditions for category emergence, primarily through the study of genres and sub-genres within American music.

My early research focused on a simple question: What is the relationship between aesthetic content and social context? In my second project, I asked: What are the characteristic forms that musical communities take, and how do they change over time? In my next project, I will address the question: What is the relationship between aesthetic categories and taste?



**Omar Lizardo**, Associate Professor, joined the Notre Dame faculty in fall 2006. His dissertation was entitled "Globalization, World Culture and the Sociology of Taste: Patterns of Cultural Choice in Cross-National Perspective." While at Arizona, he received outstanding graduate student paper awards in both the sociology of religion and the sociology of emotions. His work has appeared in American Sociological Review, Sociological Theory, Poetics and the Journal of World Systems Research.



**Ashley Mears**, Assistant Professor, Boston University. I study the intersections of culture and markets. After receiving my B.A. in sociology from the University of Georgia in 2002, I went on to graduate school at New York University for my Ph.D. in sociology in 2009. In my teaching and research, I explore generally how people assign value to things, and I focus on how gender, race, and class inequalities inform the production and change of culture.



**Terrence McDonnell**, Kellogg Assistant Professor, University of Notre Dame. Terry is a cultural sociologist (PhD 2009, Northwestern University) who studies the role of objects and media in everyday life. More specifically, he questions what makes particular cultural objects powerful (and others not) by following the often unanticipated pathways that culture travels once it leaves the design studio, the ad agency, and the publisher.



Participants (cont.):

**Ann Mische**, Associate Professor, Rutgers University. Ann combines interpretive and network-analytic approaches to the study of political communication in social movements and democratic politics. Her work addresses the challenges to communication, leadership and decision-making posed by the location of actors in overlapping social networks. She uses both qualitative and quantitative methodologies, including ethnography, cultural analysis, and documentary research as well as formal mathematical techniques for analyzing social networks and trajectories. She is currently beginning a new project on how individual and collective projections of future possibilities influence deliberation and decision-making. This study will compare the discursive and relational dynamics of future-oriented deliberation in local communities, social movements, and policy arenas



**Iddo Tavory**, Assistant Professor, The New School for Social Research. Iddo is interested in the ways in which interactions are patterned and how such patterns shape the way people experience themselves and the world around them. He is currently transforming an ethnography of an Orthodox Jewish neighborhood in Los Angeles into a book. He is also conducting research in Malawi, working on AIDS humor in everyday life, as well as the careers of NGO volunteers in comparative perspective. Drawing on observations in these fieldsites, he has also written about the logic of qualitative methods and more theoretical accounts of morality, flirtation, and temporality in interaction.



**Stephen Vaisey**, Associate Professor, Duke University. The main goal of my current research is to understand the varieties, origins, and consequences of different moral worldviews. I want to know where people get their ideas about what a "good life" looks like and what it means to be a "good person" and how these (usually implicit) ideas help shape their strategies of action over time. In recent months, I have also been writing about the promise and pitfalls of panel data for causal inference. In the past, I have also conducted research on 1970s communes, religion and marijuana use, educational overqualification, gene-environment interactions, and the relationship between poverty and educational aspirations.



**Frederick F. Wherry**, Associate Professor, Columbia University. I have written three books and co-edited one volume. These works show me to be at once a cultural sociologist who studies markets and an economic sociologist who studies the meanings that motivate and result from actions in (and outside of) the market place. I have undertaken my investigations in Thailand, Costa Rica, and Philadelphia (United States) to address two related market phenomena: 1) How the meanings of national and local identities affect the opportunities of local artisans in Thailand and Costa Rica to compete successfully in global markets and 2) how the meanings associated with ethnic and place-based identities affect the opportunities for neighborhood revitalization in the Philadelphia barrio.

