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Mathematical Sociologist

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FALL/WINTER 2012-2013

Greeting from the Chair...Jane Sell

Dear Mathematical Sociology Section Members, I am happy to report that our section is vibrant and strong. I would like to thank our past Chair, Noah Friedkin for his leadership in the past year. The August ASA meetings were truly exciting and well attended. We will be hearing from Noah again this year, in part because our section's bylaws place the past chair as the chair of the nominations committee.



Based on discussions during last year's ASA, we decided to make both of our available sessions as open sessions. Our two sessions are organized around **Theoretical Developments in Mathematical Sociology: Group Processes and Dynamics** (organized by Brent Simpson) and **Theoretical Developments in Mathematical Sociology: Population Structures and Dynamics** (organized by Mark Fossett). Please think about encouraging folks to submit to these two sessions and submitting your own work.

The third session will be our business meeting and then a special address by John Skvoretz, the Coleman Award winner from 2012. I would like to see "The Coleman Address" to become a regular part of our section. It provides an important venue to highlight our section, and to honor the award winner. I am looking forward to hearing John's address and am anticipating some surprises.

In this edition of the newsletter, you will find the announcement of our awards and the chairs of the committees. Please nominate your colleagues and your students for these awards.

I want to especially thank the council members who have all been incredibly responsive and have often volunteered to help out the section.

Special thanks to our newsletter editors, Pamela Emanuelson and Donna Lancianese, for their energy and skill in putting together our newsletter.

I want to draw attention to our website which is a truly wonderful source of information. I would also like to encourage all to include data on the website.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Greetings from the Chair	1-2
Call for Award Nominations	2
Section Awards 2012-2013	3
Graduate Student Highlights	4-5
Section Annual Report	6-7
Annual Treasurer Report	8-9
Professional Workshops	10
Conference Announcements and Publications	12

Such data sharing will enable different analyses of course, but additionally, having the data and enough information about the data (and its collection) will help develop replications. Replication is a continuing concern in all scientific endeavors. However, recently the issues involved in replication, especially in psychological social psychology, has garnered special attention. Parts of these recent controversies relate to actual falsification of data, but there are many other issues in replication other than solving blatant falsity. In a recent open letter, Daniel Kahneman provides a specific challenge for replication

(<http://www.nature.com/news/nobel-laureate-challenges-psychologists-to-clean-up-their-act-1.11535>). And, connected to the issue of replication as it relates to “undisclosed flexibility in data collection and analysis,” Simmons, Nelson and Simonsohn in *Psychological Science*, 2011, argue that common (and accepted) practices in experimental research lead to false positive findings. (<http://pss.sagepub.com/content/22/11/1359>) While the article specifically concerns experimental research, many of the suggested “Requirements for Authors” relate to all kinds of methodology.

A Call For Nominations....

Mathematical Sociology

Awards for 2014

Graduate Student Paper Award This award is presented for the best paper written by a graduate student that makes a significant contribution to mathematical sociology. Papers can be published or unpublished. The submission can consist of a dissertation chapter, but not the entire dissertation. The submission must have been written or published during the three years prior to the award year. The author/first author must be a graduate student at the time of submission, and all authors must be graduate students when the paper was written. Nominations and self-nominations are welcome. Please send a copy of the paper and a nomination letter by **February 1, 2014** to:

Arnout Van de Rijt Department of Sociology, State University of New York at Stony Brook, Stony Brook, New York 11794-4356
arnout.vanderijt@stonybrook.edu

Outstanding Article Publication Award This award honors an article that has made an outstanding contribution to mathematical sociology. Eligible articles must have been published during the three years prior to the award year. Please send a copy of the article and a nomination letter by **February 1, 2014** to:

Delia Baldassarri, 295 Lafayette Street, 4th Floor, New York, NY 10012 New York University, delia.b@nyu.edu

Mathematical Sociology Outstanding Dissertation in Progress Award

This award provides a grant of \$1,500 to meet some of the scholarly expenses of a student whose dissertation employs mathematics in an interesting, imaginative or ingenious way to advance sociological knowledge. The applicant should submit a copy of his or her approved dissertation proposal, with a list of any requirements added by the graduate committee. The packet should also include a letter of support from the student's sponsor, which describes the student's qualifications for the completed task and the potential importance of the project. The requirements include membership in the ASA and the mathematical sociology section during the period to be covered by the grant. Please send a copy of the dissertation proposal and a nomination letter by **February 1, 2014** to:

Matthew Brashears 366 Uris Hall, Cornell University Ithaca, New York 14853-7601,
meb299@cornell.edu

James S. Coleman Distinguished Career Award: The Distinguished Career Award recognizes a lifetime of contributions to the field of Mathematical Sociology. A letter of nomination should outline the candidate's activities of lasting significance in mathematical sociology, conducted over the course of her or his career. The nomination also should include a copy of the candidate's curriculum vitae, and an assurance that the candidate has given permission to be nominated for the award. Nominations must come from American Sociological Association members. Please send materials by February 1, 2014 to:

John Skvoretz, Department of Sociology, University of South Florida, Tampa, FL 33630, jskvoretz@usf.edu

Outstanding Publication Award

Lincoln Quillian

Segregation and Poverty Concentration: The Role of Three Segregations

American Sociological Review, 77: 354-379

Harrison White Outstanding Book Award

Noah Friedkin and Eugene Johnsen

Social Influence Network Theory: A Sociological Examination of Small Group Dynamics

Cambridge University Press, 2011

Outstanding Graduate Student Paper Award

Charles Seguin

Cultural Superstardom from Multiple Mechanisms:

Two Mathematical Models of Cultural Object Popularity

Outstanding Dissertation in Progress

Zack Almquist

Vertex Processes in Social Networks

Akshay Patil

Analyzing Dynamics in Online Social Networks

Emma Smith
University of California,
Irvine



HIGHLIGHTS

GRADUATE STUDENTS IN MATHEMATICAL SOCIOLOGY

Emma Smith is a mathematical sociologist whose primary research interests are in social network analysis, mathematical modeling of social systems, and computational statistics. Her background involves training in both classical sociology and applied math, which has led to her current graduate research focused on social network analysis and, more specifically, cohesion in subgroups within large-scale interpersonal networks, estimation of network structures in sampled data, and using formal statistical network models to infer characteristics about networks over time. As she pursues her Ph.D., she plans to continue and expand these lines of research, ultimately building the foundation for her career in the mathematical social sciences. Her educational and research background to date has provided her with the tools to accomplish this goal.

She entered college with a strong aptitude for mathematics, an open mind, and a desire to explore many fields of study and discover what moves her intellectually. While pursuing her degree in Mathematics, she discovered a subject during her sophomore year that radically changed her course of study: sociology. Never had a subject moved her so intellectually, challenged her preconceived notions of human behavior, and made her so genuinely excited. Her experience at the Mathematical and Theoretical Biology Institute (MTBI) during the summer of 2011 helped her discover that she could use her skills in mathematics to analyze social phenomena. This highly selective research program involving undergraduates, graduate students, and faculty from around the world consisted of four weeks of coursework followed by four weeks of work on a student-driven group research project. At MTBI she learned that mathematical modeling can be a powerful tool to study systems of people and make predictions about social processes in unique and innovative ways. It was at this point that she decided to apply to Ph.D. programs in sociology, with a focus on social networks and mathematical methods, as she believes she has something unique to contribute to this field.

Since the beginning of summer 2012, she has been working as a Research Assistant for her UCI graduate advisor, Carter T. Butts, at the Networks, Computation, and Social Dynamics Lab. She has been working

primarily with data from the American Social Fabric Project (ASFP), led by Professor Butts. This project consists of spatially-stratified samples of the adult non-institutionalized population at both the Southern California regional level and the Western United States level, as well as a population oversample of persons from the city of Los Angeles, California. The survey asks a variety of questions related to demographics, neighborhood processes, and social networks. Her key research focus over the last year has been to understand the multiplexity of job lead ties of Los Angeles residents. She used various statistical techniques, such as a latent class analysis, to understand how ties in an ego's job search network overlaps with other kinds of network relationships. She used this research for her second year paper requirement in her department (which she completed in her first year). Furthermore, she presented this work at the 33rd Sunbelt Social Networks Conference in Hamburg, Germany in May 2013 and at the American Sociological Association Annual Meeting in New York City in August 2013. She is currently preparing to submit the manuscript for publication in *Social Networks*.

Outside of the ASFP, she is currently involved in a project dealing with dynamic sexual contact networks. The main goal of this project is to understand the implications of retrospective life history designs for inferring information about networks over time. For two different sample designs, last-k partner and time sampled variant, she and her colleagues want to know: as they look "back in time" from the point at which the data was taken, how does information about the full network degrade? Using STERGM (separable temporal exponential family random graph) models, she is working on creating a simulated sexual contact network based on empirical data that will be used as a "ground truth" to understand how information about the full network degrades as we peer further into the past.

Finally, she has also been involved with work on estimating clique composition and size distributions from sampled network data (e.g. arising from random walk or other link-trace designs). Working with Minas Gjoka and Professor Butts, she has helped prepare a manuscript describing their new methods and applying them to large-scale network data from Facebook (where they employed these techniques to probe the structure of gender segregation in clique structure within the online environment). Their manuscript is now under review at IEEE Infocom. As an extension of this piece, they are currently working on methods to understand other kinds of network motifs, such as k-stars, in large egocentric network samples.

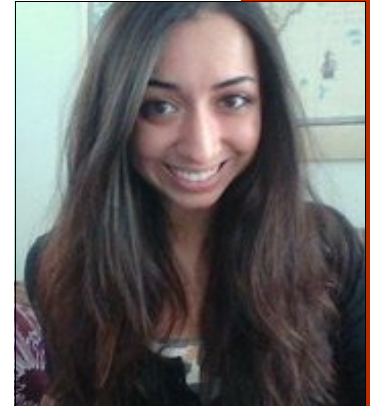
Amber Fox is a PhD candidate in the Department of Sociology at Texas A&M University. She earned her MS in Sociology from Texas A&M University in 2010 and her BA in Sociology with a minor in Mathematics from Texas A&M University – Commerce in 2008. Her areas of interest are demography, racial inequality, and quantitative methods. She is the PI on a 3-year project at the Texas Census Research Data Center which uses restricted-access data from the decennial census and the American Community Survey. Her dissertation work is part of this larger project and focuses primarily on the measurement and modeling of the residential outcomes of Latinos in the U.S, applying new methods to connect micro-level processes of residential attainments to macro-level patterns of residential segregation. In the past, these two levels of analysis have run on separate tracks, with one body of literature focusing on individual residential attainments and the other body of literature focusing on aggregate segregation. The two have not been able to connect despite the fact that aggregate level residential segregation patterns are a direct result of individual level residential attainment outcomes. In her dissertation, she uses new versions of common measures of residential segregation that can be disaggregated back to individual residential outcomes. They are formulated to show how popular segregation measures such as the Dissimilarity Index can be conceptualized as a difference of means between two groups, with these means being calculated based off of individuals. Using these new formulations of segregation indices opens the door to a wide range of options for analysis.

By conceptualizing segregation measures as a difference of means, one can measure and model micro-level residential attainments to assess the relationship between individual social characteristics and their residential outcomes, and then take the means on those residential outcomes by group to produce an aggregate level measure of segregation. The difference of means formulation also allows for standardization and decomposition analysis, where individual level regression models can be run that predict aggregate segregation scores, making it possible to decompose those scores and assess the separate contributions that means and rates of return on social characteristics such as income and nativity make to segregation outcomes. The common practice in the residential segregation literature is to control for segregation outcomes using aggregate measures of social characteristics such as mean income difference, even though these are actually the result of individual level social processes. Being able to produce segregation scores from individual-based regression models allows for the ability to appropriately control factors such as income differences at the individual level using standardization techniques.

Her previous work has used these methods to study the residential attainments and segregation of Latinos in the Los Angeles Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Area, which is the most viable option when using public census microdata due to the limited geographical information that is available publicly. She found that several socioeconomic and acculturation measures at the individual level contribute to overall segregation of Latinos from Whites in Los Angeles. Furthermore, using standardization and decomposition techniques, she was able to draw further conclusions by finding that segregation of Latinos is predominately due to disparities on rates of return of individual social characteristics between Whites and Latinos, rather than disparities on the characteristics themselves. When the means on the independent variables for Latinos were standardized on the White means, there was little change in the predicted segregation score. However, when the rates of return for Latinos were standardized on the rates of return for Whites, the amount of segregation between Latinos and Whites was nearly diminished. What this shows is that even when Latinos experience social mobility in other ways such as increased income or education, the rate at which they can convert those gains into more residential contact with Whites is not enough to reduce segregation. This finding is even more poignant when looking at the segregation from Whites of more marginalized groups such as Black individuals. The next step in her work is to extend this analysis in the Texas Census Research Data Center, where she can access restricted census microdata with finer levels of geography such as the block group. Her dissertation will involve more case studies like Los Angeles, as well as a national level study that includes all metro areas which will be conducted using multilevel modeling.

With her co-author Mark Fossett, she has also investigated the attractive statistical properties of using fractional logit regression to model residential segregation outcomes. Fractional logit regression was popularized in the econometrics literature, and has proven to be the most appropriate method for residential segregation analysis because it can handle bounded proportions without excluding the endpoints of 0 and 1, which are realistic values in most measures of segregation such as the Dissimilarity Index. She has presented this work at the meetings of the American Sociological Association and continues to highlight how this regression technique improves upon previous analyses of residential segregation. This method will also be featured in her dissertation.

Amber Fox
Texas A & M University



MATHEMATICAL SOCIOLOGY SECTION AMERICAN SOCIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION ANNUAL REPORT, 2012-2013

Prepared by Noah E. Friedkin, Past Chair of the Section.

Section Governance

A bylaw change was submitted and approved by the ASA. A nomination committee was formed, which resulted in a new chair-elect and new council members to replace those whose terms were expiring. Two regular paper sessions were organized for the annual meeting. Our award committees, each chaired and composed of our council members, reached decisions on the four awards. A joint reception (Rationality and Society; Mathematical Sociology; Evolution, Biology and Society) was organized by me.

Business Meeting

The agenda: statement of appreciation for the outgoing chair and council members; announcement of the approved bylaw change; report from the treasurer; report from the newsletter editor; report from the webmaster; and presentation of four awards. The attendance was 44 persons. No minutes are available. No decisions were made at this meeting.

Section Council Meeting

Ten council members were in attendance. The agenda: announcement of the approved bylaw change; report from the treasurer; report from the newsletter editor; report from the webmaster. Discussion topics: whether edited volumes should be eligible for book awards; whether the section requires some form of adaptation to the influx of investigators into our field from the natural and engineering sciences. No minutes are available. No decisions were made.

State of the Section Budget

Our section operated within its budget. See attached report from John Skvoretz, our Secretary Treasurer. Our section's finances remain in a healthy state with its Math. Soc. Dissertation Award Fund (Fund=73, Section=37) that is now over \$161,000.

An operating budget for the coming year approved by the Section Council.

The Previous Year

The section's activities during my term as Section Chair involved routine administration and no troublesome issues. A slightly annoying issue was the set-up for joint reception: high hotel charges and fees drastically limited our options.

Overview

We had two regular sessions that were well-attended. We had more attractive papers submitted than could be accommodated, but not enough such papers to justify a request for additional space in the ASA Program. The section's members and council remain outstandingly cordial. I have raised an issue to the council that, in my opinion, is an important issue for the field: how should the section adapt (if at all) to the influx of investigators into the field from the natural and engineering sciences?

Recruiting and Retention Efforts

No special efforts were pursued to attract new members and recruit new members. Our membership counts remain stable: 216-220 for past two years.

Communications Strategy

We communicate by email.

Our two websites are: <http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/soc/groups/mathsoc/>

and <http://www.asanet.org/sections/mathematical.cfm>.

The Coming Year

Elections and Nominations

Per our bylaws, we have a Committee on Nominations of at least five members, chaired by the Past-Chair, with the remaining members appointed each year by

the Section Council. All members of this Committee must be members of the Section. This committee is charged with soliciting suggestions for nominations from Section members; it names at least two candidates who are Section members for each office to

be filled.

Plans for the Coming Year

Via the Current Chair, Jane Sell, our section's plans for next year are as follows. We will have 2 open sessions. One is organized by Mark Fossett on Theoretical advancements in Mathematical Sociology: Population and dynamics of populations. The other is organized by Brent Simpson on Theoretical Advancements in Mathematical Sociology: Group Processes and Interaction. A third session also is planned in which John Skvoretz, our Coleman Award winner for 2012, will make an address and then introduce the 2014 winner. Jane is consulting with Phil Bonacich (Editor of the Journal of Mathematical Sociology, and our Chair-Elect) on whether this address might be published in the journal.

MATHEMATICAL SOCIOLOGY SECTION AMERICAN SOCIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION REPORT, ON SECTION ACCOUNTS, 2012-2013

Prepared by John Skvoretz, Section Treasurer

The only activity in the Dissertation Award Fund was the accumulation of interest credited to the account and direct contributions. Activity in the Section Account included income from section allocations plus a small un-attributed sum and expenditures for annual meeting reception and awards (a total of \$1,382) and for the 5th Joint Japan-North America Mathematical Sociology Conference (a net of \$174).

Math. Soc. Dissertation Award (Fund=73, Section=37)	
ENDING FUND BALANCE 12.31.11	\$135,205.55
Interest Income	\$13,735.88
Contributions	\$2,000.00
ENDING FUND BALANCE 12.31.12	\$150,941.43
Interest Income 1.1.13-5.31.13	\$10,959.66
ENDING FUND BALANCE 5.31.13	\$161,901.09

Math. Soc. Section Account (Section=37)	
ENDING FUND BALANCE 12.31.11	\$2,141.00
Section Allocation	\$1,117.00
AM Reception	-\$704.00
Award Expenses	-\$678.00
AM Other Expenses	-\$174.00
PreConf Charges	-\$2,124.00
PreConf Registrations	\$1,950.00
ENDING FUND BALANCE 12.31.12	\$1,702.00
Section Allocation	\$1,040.00
Other Income	\$245.00
ENDING FUND BALANCE 5.31.13	\$2,987.00

Operating budget for the Coming Year

Approved by the Section Council of the Mathematical Sociology Section,

Submitted by J. Skvoretz, Treasurer, 31 July 2013

Section Account

*Anticipated 3rd Quarter expenses estimated to be \$1,000 include award plaques, council breakfast, and joint reception with Rationality

<i>INCOME AND EXPENSES</i>		<i>NET ASSETS</i>	
<i>Income:</i>			
Section Budget Allocations	\$1,040	Beginning Balance	\$1,702
Other Income	\$ 245	Increase/(Decrease) in Net Assets	\$ 867
Total Income	\$1,285	Current Balance	\$2,569
Expenses*	418		
Increase/(Decrease) in Net Assets	867		

and Society.

Dissertation Award Fund

<i>INCOME AND EXPENSES</i>		<i>NET ASSETS</i>	
<i>Income:</i>			
Interest	\$12,338.8	Beginning Balance	\$150,941.
Contributions	4	Increase/(Decrease) in Net Assets	43
Expenses*		Current Balance	\$
Increase/(Decrease) in Net Assets			12,338.84
	\$12,338.8		
	4		\$163,280.
			27

Budget 2013-2014

<i>Section Account (37)</i>		<i>NET ASSETS</i>	
<i>Income:</i>			
Projected Section Budget Allocations*	\$1,200	Beginning Balance	\$2,569
Total Income	0	Increase/(Decrease) in Net Assets	(\$ 600)
Expenses**	\$1,200	Projected Balance	\$ 1,969
Increase/(Decrease) in Net Assets	\$1,800		
	(\$ 600)		
<i>Dissertation Award Fund (73)</i>			
<i>Income:</i>			
Interest		<i>NET ASSETS</i>	
Contributions	\$11,000	Beginning Balance	\$163,280.
Expenses**	0	Increase/(Decrease) in Net Assets	27
Increase/(Decrease) in Net Assets	\$5,000	Current Balance	\$
	\$6,000		6,000.00
			\$169,280.

*Projected allocation in 2014 and interest earned in 2014. **Expenses incurred in 2013 (see above) plus projected meeting expenses for 2014 and projected expenses for dissertation award in 2014.

WORKSHOPS

Recent Developments and Future Directions in Agent-Based Modelling in Population Studies A Call for Submissions

University of Leuven (KU Leuven), Belgium, September 18-19, 2014

Since the publication of the ground-breaking volume edited by Francesco Billari and Alexia Fürnkranz-Prskawetz in 2003 (*Agent-Based Computational Demography*, Physica Verlag), an increasing number of scholars have been advocating the use of agent-based modelling (ABM) in population studies. The premise is that ABM offers a number of benefits for the field, such as

- (1) enhanced theory formation by better linking the micro-level with the macro-level,
- (2) the ability to represent populations more adequately as complex systems,
- (3) providing laboratories in which rare events and the implications of alternative mechanisms can be studied.

The increasing number of ABM studies published in the main scholarly journals in population studies shows that the merits of the approach have received increasing recognition in the field. Yet, at the same time new debates and questions have arisen that still have to be resolved. Examples include things such as

- (1) how multi-actor networks can be integrated in demographic models
- (2) the usefulness of ABM for forecasting
- (3) how ABM can be injected with empirical data to achieve a better match between model and reality
- (4) how geographic information can be fruitfully used in ABM, and
- (5) how ABM results can effectively and correctly be reported in a concise way.

The goal of this workshop is to see how we have proceeded in applications of ABM in population studies over the last decade and to discuss fruitful directions for the future. To this end, we invite conceptual and applied research addressing topics such as (but not limited to):

Conceptual

- The use of ABM for explanation and forecasting
- Injecting models with empirical population data
- The use of geographic information
- Combining ABM with micro- and macro-simulation
- Model verification and validation
- The representation of social networks
- Reporting of model details and results

Applied

- Mate selection and union formation
- Fertility
- Mortality
- Ageing society
- (International) Migration

We would like to keep the workshop small-scale in order to stimulate an informal and lively exchange of ideas, so we will limit the number of papers. We are aiming to publish accepted contributions in a peer reviewed volume or special journal issue. Participation will be free of charge, but participants need to cover their own travel and housing expenses.

Potential participants are asked to send an extended abstract (500 - 1000 words) or a full paper with a short abstract to abm.workshop@soc.kuleuven.be before January 31, 2014.

Notifications about paper acceptance will be send out before March 31, 2014.

Confirmed speakers are:

- ◆ Alexia Fürnkranz-Prskawetz (Vienna Institute of Demography at the Austrian Academy of Sciences/Institute for Mathematical Methods in Economics at the Vienna University of Technology) http://www.oeaw.ac.at/vid/staff/staff_alexia_fuernkranz.shtml
- ◆ Francesco Billari (Department of Sociology at Nuffield College, University of Oxford) <http://www.sociology.ox.ac.uk/index.php/staff-profiles/francesco-billari.html>

IMPORTANT DATES

Workshop: September 18-19, 2014

Deadline for submission: January 31, 2014

Authors' notification: March 31, 2014

SUBMISSION

Extended abstract (500 - 1000 words) or (preferably) full paper with a short abstract to abm.workshop@soc.kuleuven.be

SCIENTIFIC ORGANIZATION

André Grow (Centre for Sociological Research, KU Leuven, Belgium), Jan Van Bavel (Centre for Sociological Research, KU Leuven, Belgium)

CONFERENCES

Information About the Mathematical Sociology Section Sessions at the ASA

Looking forward to the 2013 American Sociological Association Annual Meeting in San Francisco from August 16th to the 19th, we have two section sessions open for paper submissions. Both sections build on the theme, Theoretical Developments in Mathematical Sociology. Organized by Brent Simpson, one section highlights research on Group Processes and Dynamics

while the section organized by Mark Fossett highlights research on Population Structures and Dynamics.

The online submission system opened on December 6, 2013 and be found at http://www.asanet.org/meetings/call_for_papers.cfm. The deadline for submission is

**January 8, 2014
3:00pm EST**



PUBLICATIONS OF INTEREST

Erikson, Emily. 2013. "Formalist and Relationalist Theory in Social Network Analysis"

***Sociological Theory* 31 (3): 219-242.**

Gondal, Neha and Paul D. McLean. 2013. "What makes a network go round? Exploring the structure of a strong component with exponential random graph models."

***Social Networks*, Volume 35, Issue 4, 499-513.**



Thank you for your timely contributions to the Fall/Winter Issue of the *Mathematical Sociologist*. Please continue to send us your announcements, articles, book reviews, conference announcements, etc. The more you are involved with the newsletter, the better it will be.

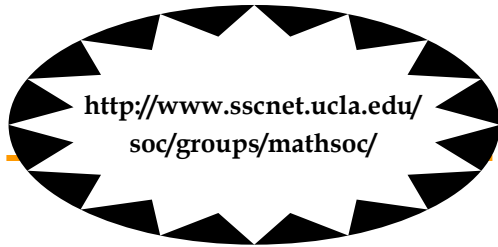
Please feel free to send us your comments, concerns, corrections, or any ideas you have for the newsletter.

Have a great winter and watch your email for future newsletter

Newsletter Co-Editors

E-mail: Pamela.emmanuelson@ndsu.edu (left)

E-mail: donna-lancianese@uiowa.edu (right)



Mission Statement of the Mathematical Sociology Section

The purpose of the Mathematical Sociology Section of the American Sociological Association is to encourage, enhance and foster research, teaching and other professional activities in mathematical sociology, for the development of sociology and the benefit of society, through organized meetings, conferences, newsletters, publications, awards and other means deemed appropriate by the Section Council. The Section seeks to promote communi-



Site for the 2014 Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association,

San Francisco

cation, collaboration and consultation among scholars in sociology in general, mathematical sociology and allied scientific disciplines.

Archimedes Quoted in D MacHale

There are things which seem incredible to most men who have not studied mathematics.