

BYLAWS
Section on Altruism, Morality, and Social Solidarity
2011, 2015, 2021, 2022, 2023

Article I. Name

The Section shall be known as the Section on Altruism, Morality, and Social solidarity.

Article II. Purpose: Mission Statement

Sociologists have long been concerned with how to build the good society. The section on Altruism, Morality, and Social Solidarity directly addresses this issue.

In the broadest sense, the subject matter of altruism and social solidarity consists of activities intended to benefit the welfare of others. These activities span the micro-macro continuum, from individual, to interpersonal, to organizational, to global. They include phenomena such as generosity, forgiveness, unlimited love, virtue, philanthropy, intergroup cooperation, and universalizing solidarity. The subject matter of morality entails distinctions between good and evil, and between right and wrong. Such distinctions are an important aspect of each person's thoughts, actions, and moral judgments. They are also a component of all cultural systems, providing meanings that define for each collective some sense of the desirable and the undesirable. Norms regarding individual and intergroup relations are a part of these cultural systems. As a result, altruism and social solidarity are inevitably related to moral culture.

This foundational subject matter includes several general areas of theoretical development and empirical research. The first area is understanding the nature and variability of these phenomena, their forms and processes, and their anticipated and unanticipated consequences, at all levels of analysis. The second area is exploring the relationships that exist between altruism, morality, and social solidarity. This includes investigating the conditions under which cultural systems of morality vary, from mandating behavior harmful to others, to restricting concern for others to particular groups, to promoting a universalizing solidarity that potentially includes all persons and groups. The third area is the relationship between altruism, morality, and social solidarity and other sociocultural phenomena, such as the unequal distribution of power/authority and resources, the characteristics of social structures and of cultural systems, and the influence of different social institutions.

One scientific, policy, and publicly relevant issue in this field is helping to construct "good societies." The subject matter of the section gives scholars a unique opportunity to contribute to understanding the conditions necessary for a broad vision of the common good that includes all individuals and collectives.

Section activities are directed towards establishing the study of altruism, morality, and social solidarity as a recognized field of theoretical development and empirical research within the discipline of sociology. These activities include: providing for regular exchanges of information through the section website, the section Newsletter, presenting papers at the Annual Meeting of the American

Sociological Association, and sharing teaching materials; formally recognizing outstanding theoretical, empirical, and applied work in the field of altruism, morality, and social solidarity through annual awards; and linking with other scientific groups working on genetic, psychological, and cultural aspects of these phenomena. In doing so, we seek to develop and augment a community of scholars motivated to gain greater knowledge and understanding of altruism, morality, and social solidarity. We emphasize the importance of the investigation of the policy implications of this knowledge, and the dissemination of information to publics regarding aspects of altruism, morality, and social solidarity that will benefit individual lives, the social organization of society, and the prevailing culture.

Article III. Council and Officers

The principal governing body of the Section shall be the Council and the Elected Officers. There shall be 9 elected Council members.

The Council will consist of six members, Offices 1 thru 6, elected by vote of the section members. All Council members will serve 2 year terms.

In the first year election of the Council following establishment of the Section, Council members in Office 1 thru 3, respectively, will each serve 3 year terms.

Council shall also include a minimum of one graduate student member. Graduate student members must be currently enrolled in a Ph. D. degree graduate program. Graduate student shall serve a 1-year term.

The elected Officers of the Section shall be a Chair, Chair-Elect, Past Chair, and Secretary-Treasurer. The Chair-Elect shall serve in that position for one year, followed by one-year terms as Chair and Past Chair. The Secretary-Treasurer shall serve a three-year term.

These elected Officers shall not serve consecutive terms. The Chair, Chair-Elect, Past Chair, and Secretary-Treasurer shall sit on the Council as ex officio voting members, with the following specific duties: the Chair shall conduct Council meetings, the Chair and Chair-Elect shall co-chair the Program Committee, and the Secretary-Treasurer shall take and circulate minutes of Council meetings while keeping and presenting official documents and financial records of the Section.

If an elected office is vacated before the term is completed, the candidate with the next highest vote count in the most recent election is invited to fill the open position for the remainder of the term.

The Council may from time to time create other positions to manage Section affairs. The Chair will appoint members to such positions in consultation with

other officers and subject to confirmation by the Council.

All regular members of the Section are eligible for election as Officers.

Article IV. Powers of the Council

The Council is vested with the power to carry out all necessary operations of the Section, acting as representatives of the members of the Section. To that end, it shall meet on the occasion of the ASA Annual Meeting and may meet at other times when more than half of the Council can be assembled, whether in person or through electronic means. The Council shall make decisions by majority rule of its assembled members. If a motion requires a majority vote, it fails when there is a tie vote.

Article V. Referenda

Any action to be brought before the Section membership for approval may originate with the Council itself (if requested by at least three Council members), by a petition of 10 percent of the Section membership, or by 25 members of the Section (whichever is less). Any resolution passed by the annual Business Meeting of the Section and not subsequently accepted by the Council shall automatically be submitted to a vote of the Section membership.

Article VI. Elections and Voting

The elections of the Section shall be carried out in concurrence with the American Sociological Association and coordinated with its schedule. A simple majority of the members voting on each candidate shall determine the outcome. . Newly elected officers and Council members shall assume office on the day following the annual Business Meeting of the Section at the American Sociological Association's Annual Meeting. Newly elected officers may attend meetings of the council as non-voting participants prior to assuming office.

Article VII. Nomination by Petition

Members of the section are nominated for elected offices by the Nominations Committee. Also, Members of the Section may be nominated for any elected office by a petition of ten percent of the members of the Section, or 25 members of the Section, whichever is less. The choices of the Nominations Committee for each office shall be made known to the membership at least 60 days prior to the deadline for receiving nominations by petition.

Article VIII. Committees

The section shall have the following five standing committees: Membership, Program, Publications, Nominations, and Awards. Other committees may be created from time to time by the Council.

Membership Committee members are appointed by the Section Chair for one-year terms. The Membership Committee shall consist of 3-5 members. They shall be responsible for concerted and organized recruitment and retention

efforts.

The Program Committee shall be Co-Chaired by the Section Chair and the Chair-Elect, and have at least three other members. Committee members shall be appointed for one year terms by the Chair and Chair-Elect. The committee shall develop sessions for the annual meeting of the ASA, in cooperation with the ASA Program Committee.

The Communications Committee shall be chaired by the Editor(s) of the Section Newsletter, who shall be appointed by the Section Chair. The Editor's term shall be three years, renewable for one or more years with the approval of the Council. The committee shall have at least three members, one of whom shall be the Editor(s) of the Section Newsletter. Committee members shall be appointed for three year terms by the committee Chair in consultation with the Section Chair. The Communications Committee shall produce the Section Newsletter to be distributed to all Section members at least two times a year through ASA Connect. It may also initiate and produce other publications, according to American Sociological Association rules and procedures, and in accordance with purposes of the Section and with the approval of Council, and it will manage the section's webpage. Content published in the AMS Newsletter is copyrighted by the ASA. It is Section policy, however, that permission to reprint will be granted to authors upon request to the Section Chair.

The Nominations Committee Chair will be appointed each year by the section Chair, in consultation with the Section Council. The Nominations Committee shall have at least three members who will be appointed each year by the Nominations Committee Chair, in consultation with the section Chair and Council. The Nominations Committee shall present at least two candidates for each office to be voted on by the members of the Section.

The Awards Committee(s) shall be appointed by the Chair, its members serving one year terms. It shall be chaired by an elected Chair Elect, and consist of 7-15 members. Awards will be given yearly, or less frequently, subject to the decision of the Awards Committee(s). Awards shall be conferred only if the Committee(s) determines that nominated works merit an award intended to represent distinguished scholarship consistent with the nature and purpose of each award. The following awards will be considered:

1. Distinguished Career Award.

Awarded to an individual who has made a number of significant contributions to the study of altruism, morality, and/or solidarity over an extended period of time. The Distinguished Career Award is intended to recognize a senior scholar's cumulative achievements.

2. Outstanding Published Book Award.

Awarded to the author(s) of a theoretical analysis, research monograph, or reader published in the last 5 years that increases knowledge and understanding of

altruism, morality, and/or solidarity.

3. Outstanding Published Article Award.

Awarded to the author(s) of a theoretical or research article published in the last 3 years that increases knowledge and understanding of altruism, morality, and/or solidarity.

4. Outstanding Graduate Student Paper Award.

Awarded to the author(s) of a theoretical or research paper that increases knowledge and understanding of altruism, morality, and/or solidarity and has been (a) presented, or accepted for presentation, at a regional, national, or international professional meeting during the two preceding calendar years, or (b) published, or submitted for publication, in a journal during the two preceding calendar years. Authors of eligible papers must be graduate students at the time of the papers submission. Multiple authored papers are eligible for the award if all authors are graduate students.

The call for award nominees shall be made in the Newsletter and on the Section's information listserv. Self-nominations are acceptable.

Article IX. Membership

Any member of the American Sociological Association, without regard to the classification of membership, may become a member of the Section.

Article X. Dues

Dues shall be in accord with minimum requirements as set by the American Sociological Association. In the event all American Sociological Association procedures and requirements for initiating a Section Journal are fulfilled, and subject to the approval of the section membership, the bylaws hereby provide for the additional dues assessed for a journal subscription without an amendment to the bylaws.

Article XI. Amendment of the By-Laws

Amendment of the Section By-Laws requires, first, discussion of proposed changes at an annual meeting of the Section; second, approval by a majority of the Council (including ex officio members); third, approval by the Committee on Sections and ASA Council; fourth, approval of a majority of those voting in a vote submitted to all Section members.