



Seminar

GARY ALAN FINE

John Evans Professor of Sociology, Northwestern University, Evanston, IL

*Group Pleasures:
Collaborative Commitments, Narrative
Gratification, and the Sociology of Fun*

Wednesday, 4 May, 2:15 p.m.

In the Thunberg Lecture Hall
SCAS, Linneanum, Thunbergsvägen 2, Uppsala
www.swedishcollegium.se

The seminar will be followed by a reception. Prior registration is required.
Please contact rsvp@swedishcollegium.se no later than 2 May to sign up.

The event is co-organized by the *Swedish Collegium for Advanced Study* and the *Department of Sociology, Uppsala University*.

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ABOUT GARY ALAN FINE

Gary Alan Fine received his Ph.D. in Social Psychology from Harvard University. Among other things, he has received fellowships from the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, the Russell Sage Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences, and the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton. In the spring of 2003, he was a Fellow in residence at the Swedish Collegium in Uppsala.

Fine's current research has four distinct streams. He is interested in understanding difficult reputations and problematic collective memories of figures such as Joseph McCarthy, Charles Lindbergh, George Wallace, and Benedict Arnold. This research was most recently published in *Sticky Reputations: The Politics of Collective Memory in Midcentury America* (2012). His current research involves the role of alliances and ruptures in political relations.

As an ethnographer he has recently completed a book on the worlds of competitive chess (*Players and Pawns: How Chess Creates Community and Culture*; 2015), examining the development of status systems and reputation markets. He is currently completing a book on the training of contemporary artists in university settings, example how aesthetic theory is linked to artistic production. His third stream of research involves the interpretation of rumor and contemporary legend, particularly political and economic rumor. Fine is the author of *The Global Grapevine: Why Rumors of Terrorism, Immigration and Trade Matter* (2010). Finally he writes on microsociological theory, focusing on small group culture and its role in civil society, and has recently published *Tiny Publics: A Theory of Group Culture and Action* (2012).

ABSTRACT

As a consequence of their size and fragility, small groups depend on cohesion. Central to the continuation of groups are occasions of hedonic pleasure that recognize attachment. These times are popularly labeled “fun.” While groupness can be seen as the cause of fun, we emphasize the effects of fun on group life, while recognizing that on occasion group leaders strategically generate fun. Shared pleasure, located in temporal and spatial structures, creates the conditions for communal identification. Such moments serve as commitment devices building affiliation, modeling positive relations, and moderating interpersonal tension. Further, they encourage retrospective narration, providing an appealing past, an assumed future, and boundaries between the group and those outside. The rhetoric of fun produces interactional smoothness in the face of potential ruptures. Building on the authors' field observations and on other ethnographies of group activity, we argue that the experience and recall of fun bolsters group formation, maintenance, and reproduction.

(from “Group Pleasures: Collaborative Commitments, Narrative Gratification, and the Sociology of Fun” by Gary Alan Fine and Ugo Corte. The paper has been submitted for publication.)