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Games Throughout the Life Cycle

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Games Throughout the Life Cycle

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William A. Gamson¹

Abstract

Involvement with games has been a *leitmotif* of my life since early childhood. The fascination has its roots in my youthful discovery that the rules of games were not fixed, but malleable. A few changes here and there in the conventional or official rules could make a game more interesting. Even more important, one could make up the game from scratch. By the time I had graduated from high school, I had internalized the idea that statistics were about success indicators and that rules were about opportunities and constraints in achieving success. In my teaching at the University of Michigan and at Boston College, I sought some substitute for the lecture that would involve a less passive experience. Over the years, I developed three different teaching games for different courses: SIMSOC (Simulated Society), WHAT'S NEWS: A Game Simulation of TV News, and the GLOBAL JUSTICE GAME. In addition to these games with simulated environments, I developed various role-playing exercises for learning groups. As I reflect on the lessons that I have learned from my lifelong involvement with games, it strikes me that the personal appeal lies in blurring the distinction between work and play. Some of my professional work is “work” in the sense that I have to discipline myself to do it. “Work” on games is, for the most part, play—something that I am ready to do spontaneously in preference to most other activities.

Keywords

coalition formation, collective action, fantasy baseball, games, game theory, global justice, GLOBAL JUSTICE GAME, learning groups, media, mixed-motive games, role-play, rules, SIMSOC, social change, social movements, social psychology, sociology, WHAT'S NEWS

On several occasions, people have misspelled my name as “Gameson” which I read as “Game-Son.” I think now that they were trying to tell me something about myself. An involvement with games has been a *leitmotif* of my life since early childhood. The

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fascination has its roots in my youthful discovery that the rules of games were not fixed, but malleable. A few changes here and there in the conventional or official rules could make a game more interesting and, perhaps, even reward a different set of skills. The packaged games one bought were all flawed and subject to improvement. Even more important, one could make up the game from scratch.

Games in Childhood

The games that interested me as a child were mostly games about popular sports and keeping statistics was part of it. As a sports reporter for my high school newspaper, I invented several new baseball statistics that were forerunners of the modern Bill James inspired statistics.¹ Not only were rules malleable, but how one kept score was equally malleable. Changing the indicators of success changed how participants played the game. Although I would not have been able to articulate it, by the time I had graduated from high school, I had internalized the idea that statistics were about success indicators and rules were about opportunities and constraints in achieving success.

Graduate Student Days

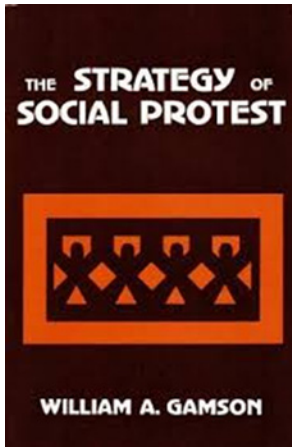
As a graduate student at the University of Michigan, I started to discover that this diversion or hobby of inventing games was apparently taken seriously and even rewarded in the real world. Lo and behold, there was a book called *Games and Decisions* by Luce and Raiffa (1957) and it was all about a newly developing field of mathematics called “Game Theory.” My interest in political sociology was leading me

to see coalition formation as a central process in gaining power and making social change and this developing field had many ideas to offer.

I decided to do my PhD dissertation on coalition formation, testing my theory with both historical data on coalition formation at presidential nominating conventions and, of course, with an experimental game. When I approached a mathematical biologist, Anatol Rapoport, and asked him to be on my committee, he agreed on condition that I would thoroughly explore the latest work on game theory, a condition that I was eager to meet. At that stage, the models of coalition formation did not take one very far in predicting which specific coalition would form, but it gave me valuable ways of thinking and ideas on which to build.



My theory was that, of the array of possible coalitions, the one that would form would be the “cheapest winning coalition”—that is, the one with the smallest margin above the minimum number needed. The reasoning rested on the assumption that



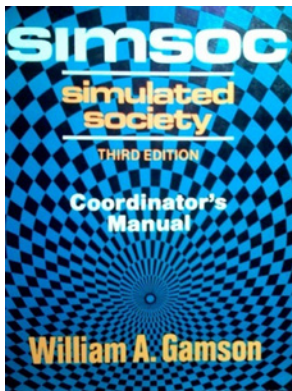
participants would expect a share of the rewards proportional to their share of votes and those beyond what was needed would require taking a smaller share for oneself.

My experimental game was a mock nominating convention in which the players controlled different numbers of delegates. I pre-tested it with both male and female undergraduates at the University of Michigan. What I found was that the young men followed the theory quite well, but the young women did not. They tended, in a spirit of collaboration, to be more inclusive, often creating coalitions well over the minimum size needed.

I am embarrassed, in retrospect, at how little I understood of what was going on or was able to use this “finding” for insight into gender dynamics and differences. Far from seeing it as a limitation on my theory of coalition formation, I simply took it as a signal to test my theory with all males groups—a strategy that led to convincing evidence in support of my theory.

The Birth of SIMSOC

My research work at the University of Michigan was based at the Center for Conflict Resolution. My interest in game theory continued to be highly relevant, especially as a source of models for situations involving many players and a complex mix of shared and conflicting interests. However, I soon discovered that games with simulated environments were even more relevant for my teaching efforts.



During the Spring semester of 1964, I was scheduled to teach a large introductory sociology course. It had previously been taught in the conventional manner, with a lecture to the whole class once a week and a division into small discussion sections staffed by graduate-student teaching-fellows. I sought some substitute for the lecture that would involve a less passive experience. I thought of substituting a lab for the lecture, but I was uncertain what form such a lab should take.

At about the same time, I had occasion to review a book by Harold Guetzkow and others describing the Inter-Nation Simulation and to discuss it with some observers and students who had participated in it (Guetzkow, Alger, Brody, Noel, & Snyder, 1963; see several articles by or about Guetzkow in *S&G*). I was impressed with the sense of engagement it produced and the greater salience of certain aspects of international relations for these students. Of course, I had no way of knowing if the game produced these animated concerns or if



games are characterized by a mixture of mutual dependence and conflict, of partnership and competition among the players.

I wanted students to confront this problem collectively and as an organizational problem. Given the advantage to the individual players of improving their relative position, how could they manage to deal with their common interest? I was looking for a game in which students would need to deal with issues of social conflict and social movements and the problems of social order and social control in a society. I wanted them to wrestle with the problem of who guards the guards and the potential for abuse of power. These were all issues central to the content of the course for which the game was to serve as a lab. I could send students out to observe public interactions of various sorts (and I subsequently did so), but it was not so easy to send them out to experience how social inequality was maintained and reproduced in a society.

Game simulations offered the opportunity to do this. Students could vicariously experience such matters by bringing the society to them instead of sending them out.



the students had had them from the beginning. The fact remained that they *believed* they had learned something new, and if this belief was an illusion, it was at least the sort of illusion a student ought to get at college.

If important aspects of the international system could be simulated, surely there were many sociological issues that would lend themselves to such treatment. Here was a possibility for an unusual and exciting lab if I could think of a game appropriate to the course material. I wanted something that would focus on a central problem of collective decision making, a problem epitomized by the “mixed-motive” or bargaining game analyzed by Thomas Schelling (1960). Such

Learning by gaming was vicarious experiential learning. They could find themselves in powerful positions that few would ever inhabit during the rest of their lives, dealing with dilemmas, challenges, and temptations.

The model underlying the simulation began as an extended prisoner’s dilemma game. Their society would confront the participants with a situation in which

all could gain modestly by cooperation, but conflicts of interest and the temptation to gain relative advantage would make it difficult. With this half-formed idea and few of the characteristic features of its mature years, SIMSOC entered the world as a once-a-week lab in an introductory sociology course in the Winter of 1964 (Gamson, 2000).

I will not bore you with home movies of those early years. For those who want to know what went wrong and how these problems were handled, you can read about it in an early issue of *Simulation & Gaming* (Gamson, 1971). Although it was barely able to walk, I was, like a good stage mother, already taking it on the road. In the Fall of 1964, the toddler was not quite ready for Hollywood, but I found a highly receptive environment slightly south in La Jolla at the Western Behavioral Sciences Institute (WBSI) where we spent the semester.

At Michigan, my interest in game simulations had made me feel quirky, albeit in a still acceptable way, but in Southern California, I was normal. I found among my colleagues and occasional visitors to WBSI—John Raser (1969), who later wrote the still



very relevant and valuable, *Simulation and Society*; Garry Shirts who was developing STARPOWER, a game emphasizing processes very similar to SIMSOC; Bob Noel and Dick Brodie, who had been involved in developing the Inter-Nation Simulation with Guetzkow; and several others who were enthusiastic about the potential of this new technique. Perhaps we were

all quirky, but that was fine if we were part of a movement within academia. In any event, WBSI provided another trial run of the newly revised, but still clumsy SIMSOC and, in such company, I received many helpful suggestions for improvement.

For the next few years, I used SIMSOC in my classes, revising after each term, and publishing the new editions privately. I discussed it with representatives for various commercial publishers looking for manuscripts, but it produced more puzzlement than interest. What market could there be for a game simulation requiring 10 or more hours to play, preferably consecutively, four different classrooms, and a major preparation effort on the part of the instructor who might use it? Most courses, I was repeatedly reminded, are set up for 50-minute lectures with occasional recitation sections, and rooms are arranged with chairs facing a podium.² The time and space demands alone, I was cautioned, made SIMSOC impractical for course use. They were interested in book manuscripts; for games, try Parker Brothers.

The decision of the Free Press to publish the first commercial edition of SIMSOC in 1969 was helped, I am convinced, by a bit of luck. In the early 1960s, I had taught a freshman seminar in a newly established program at Harvard. One of my students, Irving Naiburg, went to work as a social science editor at the Free Press



shortly after graduating. Hence, when he approached me to find out if I had any relevant manuscripts, we began with a prior relationship. I believe that this, plus perhaps his youth and lack of full socialization in the conventional wisdom, made him take the SIMSOC possibility more seriously than the many other editors who had passed on it.

The timing was also fortuitous. By this time, SIMSOC had been through about 9 or 10 revisions and, although still immature in many ways, was ready for prime time. The simulation movement in the social sciences had reached a critical mass, with centers of activity at several places, including especially Johns Hopkins and Michigan. A new journal, *Simulation & Gaming*, which will soon celebrate its 45th anniversary, had just been launched—a crucial stage in the institutionalization of a new subfield. SIMSOC caught this wave and Naiburg was able to persuade the Free Press not only to publish SIMSOC, but also to promote it, absorbing the expense of distributing large numbers of complementary copies to potential users.

I have learned that SIMSOC serves many more purposes than the ones that I originally had in mind. Various adult leadership training programs and workshops have found that it provides rich material for insight and discussion, and also helps to create a camaraderie that spills over into the rest of their program. Classroom use continues,



in spite of the formidable demands, and perhaps its greatest asset is that a high percentage of those who have used it once continue as regular users.

Fairly early in its career, SIMSOC developed regular users in other countries. I had the opportunity to watch SIMSOC in action in France, Israel, and Japan during extended visits to those countries and have been in communication

with users in many other countries as well. Although I have not visited there to observe it in action, I have been intrigued in recent years by its use in Africa, especially in Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

The initiator of the African program was a former Congressman from Michigan, the late Howard Wolpe, who had been a frequent user of SIMSOC before entering Congress. Wolpe left Congress to administer a large-scale development program in Africa and brought SIMSOC with him as one among several training tools. It presents

participants with a society without a functioning state and, hence, is much more directly relevant for the participants than for students in developed societies with well-established state authority and institutions.

I was fascinated to learn of one SIMSOC run in Burundi with a mix of Hutu and Tutsi participants. To quote from the report (Wolpe et al., 2004),

What matters in SIMSOC is not whether one is a Tutsi or Hutu (though all four regions are populated by both Tutsi and Hutu participants), but whether one is a Green or a Red. Within SIMSOC, as within Burundi, ethnic divisions and conflict are a reflection of the uneven distribution of societal resources, and are the direct consequence of poor inter-group communication and the absence of an inclusive process by which national decisions are made.

Part of my fascination with games has always been their capacity to engage participants intensely in the present moment. Those who carry the baggage of animosities about



the past and anxieties about the future suspend them as distractions. That this could be true even for the animosities generated by civil war and genocidal atrocities was, for me, an especially satisfying accomplishment of my mature SIMSOC offspring.

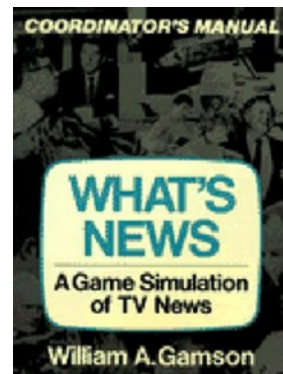
I am currently engaged in the formidable challenge of converting SIMSOC into SIMSOC Online, a virtual world in which

the time and space constraints of running SIMSOC would be greatly reduced. So much of SIMSOC seems tied up with reading body language and emotions that it remains to be seen if the Online version can capture its essential features.

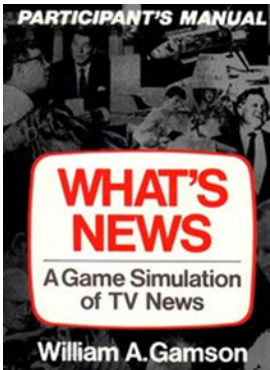
Developing WHAT'S NEWS

When I taught courses on political sociology, social conflict, and social movements, students would bring a limited amount of experiential knowledge. They may have participated in a march or rally, but most of the political events and movements are history, known to them only through their media experience or the personal stories of other people. Often their own experience of the mainstream media is a great deal richer and more textured than my own.

Given the richness of their direct experience with the subject matter, a mass media course offers an especially rich opportunity for interactive teaching methods. Hence,



I decided to design a series of exercises to provide a sense of the construction of news. The centerpiece was a game simulation, WHAT'S NEWS, which put students in the roles of news producers, reporters, and sources, requiring them to construct a series of television broadcasts from actual happenings, representing typical news days (Gamson, 1984). They were then able to compare their performance with how the (then) three major television networks in the real world handled the same happenings.



This exercise, as well as many others utilized during the course, removes students from their customary role of consumer of news and puts them in the role of producer. I was often struck by how easily students are able to make this shift. Perhaps it is because many of the participants were, in fact, aspiring journalists who had worked on school newspapers or radio stations.

A new edition of WHAT'S NEWS would require a radical revision to reflect the dramatic changes in the media world—especially the rise of electronic media—and the reduced influence of the major networks in the social construction of public events. At the moment, I have no plans for such a revision, but would encourage others to construct a game that puts students in the role of news producers in the contemporary world of old and new media in complicated combinations.

The GLOBAL JUSTICE GAME

When I became interested in issues of global justice during the 1990s, they seemed ideal for gaming. Here was an extremely complex environment, permeated by complicated market forces and complex actors such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Trade Organization. The more complicated the environment, the more the need to have participants operate in it to gain depth of understanding. Running the World Bank and having to make loan decisions and set loan policies would be a good way of learning, but this is not an option available to students in a course on globalization. Hence, the need for a game simulation.

New technologies made it much easier to develop and distribute the GLOBAL JUSTICE GAME³ than had been the case with my earlier efforts. While the game is not a computer simulation, all of the materials are online and available. It is intended as a tool for the global justice movement to use in training activists and for critical pedagogy in teaching undergraduate courses on globalization issues. Because it is designed as a



tool for a movement I support, I do not charge for its use, but users must communicate with me to get access to the passwords needed to run it. I ask in return that they post the results of their experience on the community forum section of the website and to provide me with feedback that will help in revising it.

The full game consists of seven cases, each based on a different scenario. The players are part of teams some of which are based on organizations in the real world—for example, the World Trade Organization or the Congressional Progressive Caucus. Others are invented teams, meant to simulate similar players in the real world—for example, the government of Fabrikistan or the company, Chic Duds International (CDI).

The GLOBAL JUSTICE GAME provides a template that can be adapted to many different issues. The template consists of:

- a scenario, which provides a background,
- a current situation, which requires action,
- a set of teams, each of which has a portfolio that provides them with a working frame on the issue,
- a set of action options,
- a set of success indicators that vary from team to team,
- a coordinator's manual that includes a way of scoring how the action options chosen by the various teams affect each one's success indicators, and
- a resource kit involving short and understandable elaborations of material that is selectively relevant for the different teams in planning their strategies.⁴

The task of the game is to highlight dilemmas and to provide a variety of possible actions, but not to advocate any particular answer. The participants are left with the task of figuring out what makes the most sense, given their own success indicators, and how to get other teams—whose action choices may affect these indicators even more than their own action choices—to cooperate with them in seeking a solution.

Games and Learning Groups

Games as elaborate as these are only one tool in promoting an active learning environment. A subtle difference exists between a game with a simulated environment and a role-playing exercise. Basically, participants in a game are playing themselves, acting within the constraints and opportunities provided by the rules, to achieve the goals indicated by success indicators. In a role-playing exercise, participants are imitating the way they think those in the real world would act in a similar situation.

Their ability to act realistically is contingent on their knowledge and understanding. It can, if the role is an unfamiliar one, be based on stereotypes, which do not really match the way most real-world equivalents would act in such situations. If the role is more familiar (e.g., the role of a working journalist, which many students have experienced or are familiar with from their out-of-classroom experience), then they may indeed act realistically, reflecting the constraints and opportunities provided in the real world.



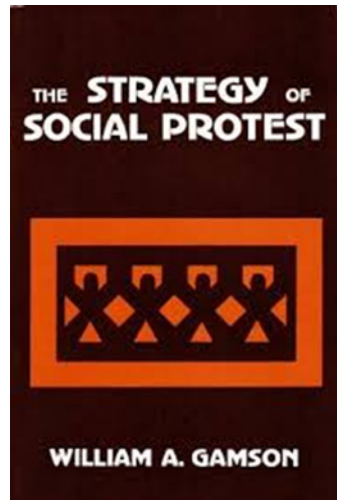
Influenced by the engagement that I witnessed when students participated in game simulations, I began many years ago to teach all of my undergraduate courses through the use of learning groups.⁵ Learning groups are created by breaking a larger class into small (5-7), student-led working groups. While the groups are given some minimal instruction on how to conduct themselves, the basic structure is provided by the task or exercise that the groups are performing. The instructor's role is to float among groups acting as a resource person and kibitzer without taking over the group's task.

In designing entire courses around learning groups, I have wrestled with the critical question of what kinds of tasks work best. One thing is obvious: The kind of broad discussion question that might challenge a student writing an essay works poorly. Without a skilled instructor to lead the group away from tangents and *cul de sacs*, the group is likely to wander off aimlessly. The best tasks involve solving a problem that can be broken into steps or stages and in some way result in a tangible product.

As indicated above, the ideal is to have people play themselves rather than imitating how they think people in this role would act. In this sense, the more game-like the exercise is, the better. To take a brief example, in teaching the concept of media frames, I ask participants to imagine that they are staff members in the news division of a major television network that is preparing a news feature on some issue—for example, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The network anchor has not decided on the frame that she wishes to use in telling the story. Each learning group is asked to prepare a straight news account with no opinions, but the facts emphasized in the story and the way they are presented should support the particular frame. The class is presented with a list of five frames and a background of facts that reflect the emphasis of one or more of these frames. Each learning group is assigned two of the five frames for their particular effort. Hence, with five groups, each frame is presented by at least two groups.

In this type of game-like exercise, participants are basically playing themselves. To the extent that an imitative component plays a role, it is through journalistic mannerisms that reflect an accurate familiarity with the way they actually sound. Indeed, I am frequently impressed at how much of this culture they have been absorbed and reflected in their own adoption of the journalistic role.



My Inadvertent Role in the Creation of Fantasy Baseball

Living in Cambridge in the early 1960s, my professional interests turned to other things, but games continued to play a significant role in my leisure time. Sam Walker (2007), in *Fantasyland*, tells the story better than I could:

It was April, 1960. It could have been a weekday or a weekend—hell, it might have been March for all the principals can remember. At the time it was just three shlumpy guys, all about twenty-six, getting together to try some half-baked contest the host had thought up. If you'd told Bill Gamson he was about to become the Thomas Edison of a worldwide sports movement, he would have assumed you were making fun of him . . .

Under the rules of Gamson's game, each player anteed up \$10, which would translate into an imaginary budget of \$100,000 to be used to bid on the services of real major leaguers. Armed with a copy of *The Sporting News*, Gamson and his friends, Dick Snyder and Marty Greenberg, ran through the rosters of each team until somebody threw a playing card on the coffee table, indicating they wanted to bid. This continued until everyone was out of money. The idea was that during the season, each of the "teams" would be measured by eight handpicked statistics, though Gamson can't remember them all. (pp. 59-60)

Over the next couple of years, I found myself surrounded by baseball fans interested in participating and the number of participants expanded to 10. We simplified the scoring categories and changed the bidding system to three rounds of mailed bids. We called the game the Baseball Seminar.

After returning to Ann Arbor in 1962, the Seminar expanded to 25 players, increasingly spread around geographically. It continues to this day and is now in its 53rd year. I was aware that Daniel Okrent⁶ had pioneered something called Rotisserie League Baseball that was basically a more complicated version of the Baseball Seminar and that this had blossomed into a substantial fantasy sports industry. It was only a few years ago that I learned there was a direct connection. As an undergraduate at the University of Michigan, Okrent had studied with historian Robert Sklar, a friend whom I had recruited into the Baseball Seminar. Sklar described the Seminar to Okrent, who acknowledges that he used it as inspiration for his more complicated version in Rotisserie League Baseball.

In a phone interview about my role in the creation of the fantasy sports industry, Walker asked me whether I had "any regrets about this grossing social movement [I had] unwittingly unleashed on the populace." As Walker reports it, "There's a silence

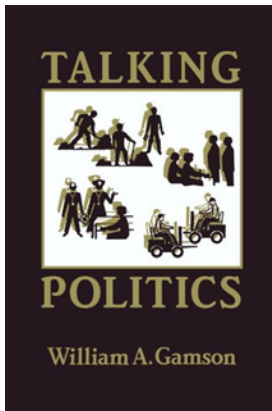


on the line. Gamson is thinking through all the angles, calculating all the probabilities. Then he starts to laugh. ‘If only I’d charged a nickel!’” (Walker, 2007, p. 77).

Conclusion

As I reflect on the lessons that I have learned from my lifelong involvement with games, it strikes me that the personal appeal lies in blurring the distinction between work and play. Some of my professional work is work in the sense that I have to discipline myself to do it. Work on games is, for the most part, play—something that I am ready to do spontaneously in preference to most other activities.

Most educators recognize the importance of combining reading and class work with experiential learning. Engagement is strongest when one is placed in a situation where knowledge and insight is useful in solving some real-world problems or, at least, successfully managing the situation. I learned this in my undergraduate days at Antioch College where I alternated 5 months of study each year with 6 months on a co-op job.



What game simulations do is open up the world to vicarious experiential learning—indeed, they are an indispensable tool for doing this. The answer to the age-old query “Knowledge for What?” is built into their structure. If you are running the World Bank and must make decisions on who should receive loans, the question “Why should I care about learning how the World Bank operates?” never arises. It surely does for many students who are asked to read about the World Bank in a conventional course on globalization issues.

We now live in an age in which the dominant use of game simulations is going to be in cyberspace in the form of online games and virtual worlds. Some of these will engage people in a compelling form of entertainment—perhaps even obsessively so. The ones that have a serious educational purpose will rest on the same unarticulated insights that I learned back in high school: Goals are measured by success indicators and rules are about the playing field of opportunities and constraints. To be a valid learning experience, these indicators and rules must accurately simulate the world they are intending to represent.

Editor’s Note

By David Crookall. Bill Gamson’s autobiography, as recounted in this article, would gain from a little more background. I suggest that you look at his nongame writing, in particular at his Presidential address, titled “Hiroshima, the Holocaust, and the Politics of Exclusion,” delivered at the American Sociological Association’s 1994 Annual Meeting in Los Angeles, and later published in the February 1995 issue of the *American Sociological Review* (*ASR*, Vol. 60, No. 1, pp. 1-20). More

recently, at the 2012 ASA meeting, Bill was awarded the W.E.B. DuBois Career of Distinguished Scholarship Award. Here is the citation:

William Gamson, Professor of Sociology and co-director of the Media Research and Action Project at Boston College, was trained as a social psychologist, with his early contributions in this area. In addition, he has made exceptional contributions to work in at least three other subfields in sociology: social movements/collective behavior, political sociology, and the sociology of culture/media studies. His influence has not been confined to sociology. In 2000 the American Political Science Association awarded him the Doris Graber Outstanding Book Award for *Talking Politics*. And his recent work on political discourse and the media has made him an influential and visible figure in communication and media studies. In 1993-1994 he was president of the ASA.

Gamson commits himself on three fronts: as a profound analyst of social processes, as a talented expositor of sociological ideas and materials, and as a passionate advocate of equality and justice.

Gamson's scholarship has been influential in shaping how social scientists theorize and research political power and social movements. His most influential book, *The Strategy of Social Protest*, broke the then-dominant collective behavior perspective on social movements. In rejecting that perspective he was as important as anyone in creating a social movement subfield within sociology. The thriving nature of that field today is testament to the staying power of Gamson's more political conception of social movements. Gamson's work has been central to the creation of the resource mobilization and political process paradigms in the study of social movements and conflict. Indeed, prior to Gamson's work, collective action was viewed as exotic, spontaneous, structureless, irrational, and fleeting. In contrast, Gamson's empirical and theoretical work demonstrated that collective action was political, rational, and embedded in social organizations. This insight is now accepted wisdom. Gamson's publications emphasized the cultural aspects of social movements and collective action. He was far ahead in bringing culture back into the study of social movements and collective action. In short, Gamson's work serves as a major foundational source of current work in social movements because of its pioneering role in linking structure and culture.

Gamson's research has also proven valuable to social change agents. Its insights resonate with the real world of political and social forces with which activists must contend. More importantly, Gamson has been an agent of social change. (<http://www.asanet.org/about/awards/duboiscareer/Gamson.cfm>)

I would also like to list some of Bills's other awards:

- Merit Award for Outstanding Contributions to the Discipline, Eastern Sociological Society, 2005.
- Distinguished Book Award, 2004, ASA Section on Collective Behavior and Social Movements for Shaping Abortion Discourse.
- Fellow, American Academy of Arts and Sciences, elected 2002.
- Doris Graber Outstanding Book Award, American Political Science Association, 2000, for *Talking Politics*.

- Distinguished Career Award, ASA Section on Peace and War, 1997.
- Distinguished Contributions to Teaching Award, American Sociological Association, 1987.
- Guggenheim Fellowship, 1978-1979.
- Sorokin Award, American Sociological Association, 1969 for *Power and Discontent*.
- American Association for the Advancement of Science, Annual Socio-Psychological Prize, 1962 (for two essays on coalition formation).
- Honorable mention, C. Wright Mills Award, Society for the Study of Social Problems (for *Strategy of Social Protest*).

Finally, Bill served for several years as a member of the Editorial Board of *S&G*, starting with the inaugural issue. Thus, Bill was a key player in the success of this journal.

Author's Note

This article draws heavily on "My Life-Long Involvement With Games" (*Sociological Forum*, Vol. 24, June 2009, pp. 437-447) although some of the earlier discussion is omitted and new material is added at several points.

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Notes

1. Bill James, an influential writer on baseball history and an inventor of new baseball statistics, coined the word *sabermetrics* to describe his approach. Michael Lewis, in his book *Moneyball*, chronicles how the general manager of the Oakland Athletics began using James's new statistics to build a strong team with a limited budget. The statistic that I invented as the sports editor of my high school paper was "Batting Average With Men on Base" (BAMB). I used it to show that one member of the baseball team, whose conventional batting average was among the lowest, was really contributing much more than appeared because his BAMB was among the highest on the team.
2. This problem has only become more acute today in the age of PowerPoint presentations.
3. For a full description and instructions on how to obtain the passwords necessary to run this game, see the website www.globaljusticegame.mrap.info.
4. For example, the two-page excerpt on the WTO includes a brief explanation of how its primary constituency is trade ministers and, hence, commercial interests; how its rules cannot be modified or new rules introduced without unanimous consent; how its deliberations are carried on behind closed doors and various other details of its operations; and relevant

- quotes from various sources with different perspectives and citations for further reading.
5. For an account of this technique and some useful examples, see “Learning Group Exercises for Political Sociology” (William A. Gamson, editor), American Sociological Association Teaching Resources Center (1989).
 6. Daniel Okrent, a writer and editor, who was the public editor or ombudsman for the *New York Times* at one time, named his version of fantasy baseball after a restaurant in New York, *La Rotisserie Française*, where he suggested the idea to some of his friends.

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