

# Work in Progress

Late Fall 2007

Newsletter of the American Sociological Association's  
Section on Organizations, Occupations, and Work  
Webpage: [www.northpark.edu/sociology/oow/](http://www.northpark.edu/sociology/oow/)

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## Message from OOW's Chair Jennifer Glass

Everywhere you turn, news about globalization and its impact on American work, workers, and their future is in sight. While the actions of large corporate organizations lie at the forefront of these changes, produced by the rapid movement of capital around the world, the changes themselves are experienced in all workplaces, large or small.

The incorporation of women, sometimes children, and immigrants into workplaces is occurring around the globe, with state actors having varying degrees of influence over the process. The movements of people accompany the movements of capital, and scholarly understanding of these grand transformations in labor processes has just begun. There is certainly much more work to do, and I hope our OOW members contribute their fair share!

I have decided to use my space in the newsletter to recommend sources of information and provocative readings on these processes. For this fall, I am focusing on two: Gay Seidman's *Beyond the Boycott* (2007) and Ruth Milkman's *L.A. Story* (2006). Seidman and Milkman's books have been my bedside reading for the past few months (yes, I am a slow reader), although I am sure there are many other wonderful books out there as well.

Seidman looks at attempts to regulate exploitive labor practices through non-governmental means, the most popular of which is the consumer boycott of products made from exploited labor. Milkman covers the surprising successes and sometime failures of efforts to unionize or otherwise organize immigrant

workers, many of whom are illegally in the country and especially vulnerable to exploitation.

Both books bust the stereotypes we sometimes hold about work and labor processes – illegal immigrants are impossible to organize, state actors are useless against multinational corporations, etc. In the spring, I will share my favorite current work on low-wage labor, especially new understandings of when and why companies strategically use low wage workers and how those strategies help us understand growing inequality, persistent work-family challenges, and “the time divide.”

Before you head off to start reading, please be sure to check out our call for nominations for our three section awards, and our call for papers for the 2008 ASA meetings. And next time you see a section committee member, thank them for their time and service to the section. My job would be impossible to do without them.



*Jennifer Glass, OOW Section Chair*  
Professor of Sociology  
University of Iowa

## **OOW COMMITTEES 2007-08**

Most of OOW section’s business is realized by voluntary effort on five basic committees. We describe these below, including members and deadlines for the 2007-08 academic year.

**Program Committee:** These people will organize OOW’s sessions at the 2008 annual meeting in Boston. Five of our section’s six sessions are open topic and open submissions. They will be organized by:

Leslie McCall, Northwestern University  
Kevin Leicht, University of Iowa

The sixth session is sponsored jointly by OOW and the ASA Family Section with the theme “Work-Family Policies and Practices.” It will be organized by:

Joya Misra, University of Massachusetts

Creative accounting invents a seventh session, which OOW assigns to roundtables. (Council meets outside of the regular ASA meeting hours, thereby opening their assigned meeting slot.) The roundtable organizers are:

Scott Fitzgerald, U. North Carolina-Charlotte  
Tabi White, Indiana University

### **James D. Thompson Award Committee:**

Members of this committee select the best graduate student paper in the preceding three years. The winner receives \$1,000 for travel to a professional meeting and, if still a student, serves as a Council representative the next year. To nominate a paper, send each committee member no later than March 31, 2008: (1) the paper as a PDF file or a functioning URL, (2) a letter justifying the nomination (PDF, Word, or ascii), and (3) the nominee’s contact information (including email). Hard copy nominations of all three items also will be accepted. Authors may self nominate.

Patricia McManus (chair), Indiana University,  
[pmcmanus@indiana.edu](mailto:pmcmanus@indiana.edu)  
Matthew Desmond, U. Wisconsin-Madison,  
[mdesmond@ssc.wisc.edu](mailto:mdesmond@ssc.wisc.edu)  
Pamela Stone, Hunter College, CUNY,  
[pstone@hunter.cuny.edu](mailto:pstone@hunter.cuny.edu)

**Weber Award for Distinguished Scholarship Committee:**

Each year this committee selects the most outstanding book contribution to scholarship in organizations, occupations, and work published in the preceding three years. To nominate a book, send to each committee member (below) no later than March 31, 2008 (1) a copy of the book, (2) a brief justifying letter, and (3) the nominee's contact information (including email). Authors may self nominate.

Mark Chaves (chair), Dep't of Sociology, Duke University, Durham, NC 27708-0088

Howard Lune, Dep't of Sociology, William Paterson University, 300 Pompton Road, Wayne, NJ 07470

Nicole Raeburn, Department of Sociology, University of San Francisco, 2130 Fulton Street, San Francisco, CA 94117-1080

**W. Richard Scott Award for Distinguished Scholarship Committee:**

This committee selects the most outstanding article published in the last three years contributing to the discipline. To nominate an article, send each committee member no later than March 31, 2008: (1) the paper as a PDF file or a functioning URL, (2) a letter justifying the nomination (PDF, Word, or ascii), and (3) the nominee's contact information (including email). Hard copy nominations of all three items to all three committee members also will be accepted. Authors may self nominate.

Irene Brown (chair), Emory University, [ibrown@emory.edu](mailto:ibrown@emory.edu)

David Obstfeld, UC Irvine, [dobstfel@uci.edu](mailto:dobstfel@uci.edu)

Pamela Popielarz, U of Illinois-Chicago, [pamela@uic.edu](mailto:pamela@uic.edu)

**Nominations Committee:** Members of this committee eye the future, soliciting (or arm twisting) candidates to run for OOW's elected offices: Chair, Council, and Secretary-Treasurer. Once identified, the committee submits victims' names to the ASA for printing on the ballot.

Matt Huffman (chair), UC Irvine

Shelley Correll, Cornell

Tom Beamish, UC Davis

**DISSERTATION ABSTRACTS*****Flexible Work Arrangements, Work Processes & Job Design: Implications for Work-Family Studies.***

Lisa Fisher, University of Cincinnati, [fisherls@uc.edu](mailto:fisherls@uc.edu)

Little is known about how flexible work policies affect the processes of work itself, yet many organizations resist flexible work arrangements due to operational concerns. My dissertation examines how flexible work policy is designed and implemented, how work processes and job responsibilities are affected, and how workplace culture and structure shape these activities.

I use a qualitative, grounded theory approach to conduct a case study of a large workplace with a diverse hierarchy of jobs. Data are gathered via spatial analysis and semi-structured face-to-face interviews with both managers and non-managers in corporate and hourly positions.

Analyzing the data for key themes and concepts, I focus on the language and tools of policy implementation and work process change. A focus on language allows me to consider how policy and work process changes are discussed and understood. A focus on tools allows me to consider mechanisms by which flexible work policy and work process changes are implemented via such things as job descriptions, managerial communiqués, and training modules.

This research is important because (1) scholars continue to call for changes in the structure of workplaces to allow more flexibility and reduce work-family conflict, which necessitates a better understanding of work processes; (2) little is known about how work processes are affected by the onset of flexible work policy or how workplaces are affected by process changes; and (3) longitudinal analysis by Galinsky et al. (2004) suggests that workers are increasingly seeking flexibility in their working arrangements.

**DISSERTATION ABSTRACTS (CONTINUED)*****Technology-Mediated Tertiary Labour: Discourses of Deconstruction and Reconstruction.***

Don Winiiecki. School of Psychology and Sociology, Central Queensland University, Rockhampton, Queensland, Australia.

Tertiary labour is the fastest growing form of paid work in the West. Prevalence of technology-mediation of labour with computer and telecom networks is increasing. However, few inspect subjectivity in technology-mediated tertiary labour (TMTL). Using Foucaultian theory, I analyse how a constellation of forces in TMTL influences production of knowledge and how this affects power and subjectivity.

Ethnographic methods are used to discover and clarify the creation of knowledge, disciplinary, and governmental power, and how programs, technologies and strategies relate to workers' action.

Disciplinary power is activated in architecture, technologies and systems that watch, inscribe and make "scientific" evaluations of productivity and quality. Workers are inculcated in organisational values and link themselves to organisational goals through governmental power. When these are combined, workers "see" and "govern" themselves in a rationality of productivity and quality, a recursive production and activation of knowledge and power appropriating them as willing subjects.

This constellation of knowledge and power forwards a particular "truth" about subjects that appears both "objective" and "natural," though it is as much an artifact of the organisation's apparatus as it is of the subjects' actions in it.

This occurs through strategies and tactics in which subjects participate in practices of observing, inscribing and evaluating one's self, and are made responsible for the outcome. However, there are "spaces left free" where subjects exercise autonomous action, resistance and adjustments. Workers influence the

objectified view of themselves, modifying knowledge and power in which they are produced as subjects.

This occurs as "shadowboxing with data," affecting what is seen and inscribed. Even in the highly regulated context of TMTL, workers are not just subjects of the organisation but participants in a production of their own selves.

***The Effects of Organizational Democracy on Organizational Social Capital.*** Robert Levine, Boston College

It has been established that employee-owned companies which involve employees in decision making have higher levels of productivity than traditionally owned companies or non-participatory employee owned ones. However, the mechanisms behind these differences have not been examined in detail.

Using multilevel modeling, this dissertation examines the effects of the organizational democratic structures (employee ownership and participation in decision making) on organizational social capital that may serve as such a mechanism. Non-managerial level employees (n=520) were surveyed in five traditionally owned companies matched to five employee owned ones.

The results show that participation has a positive and linear main effect on the strength of ties among co-workers and trust towards co-workers within both types of companies.

Employee ownership has a positive main effect on organizational identity, organizational commitment and reciprocity towards co-workers. Significant interactions between ownership and participation for organizational identity, organizational commitment, trust towards managers, reciprocity towards one's company, and reciprocity towards one's managers suggests that ownership moderates the effects of participation.

In traditionally owned companies, participation has no significant effects on

**DISSERTATION ABSTRACTS (CONTINUED)**

organizational identification and reciprocity towards one's company, but in employee owned companies, these effects are positive and linear. In traditionally owned companies, participation has a curvilinear relationship with organizational commitment, trust in managers, and reciprocity towards managers. Higher levels of participation are initially associated with increased levels of these outcomes, but at some point the relationship reverses, and further increases in participation become associated with lower levels of these outcomes. However, within employee owned companies the effects of participation are linear and positive with respect to organizational commitment and trust in managers.

In terms of reciprocity towards managers, the relationship is curvilinear in both types of companies, but the decrease in reciprocity begins at higher levels of participation within the employee owned companies than within traditionally owned companies. Thus, in addition to higher levels of organizational social capital associated with organizational democracy, employee owned companies are in a better position to take advantage of the positive effects of participation in decision making.

**BOOK REVIEWS**

*Falling Behind: How Rising Inequality Harms the Middle Class.* By Robert H. Frank. 2007. Berkeley: University of California Press. ISBN-13: 9780520252523. 160 pp.

Reviewer: Brandon Olszewski, University of Oregon, [bolszews@uoregon.edu](mailto:bolszews@uoregon.edu)

A refreshingly relevant economic essay, Robert Frank's *Falling Behind* effectively argues that rising income inequality and luxury spending are significantly harming the quality of life for everyone who cannot brag about being in the top one percent of income earners.

Because valuation of many goods is based on context (i.e. my house is big or small chiefly in comparison to others in my neighborhood) and because recent shifts in taxation and income distribution dramatically favor the wealthy (only the very top earners have experienced significant income gains in the past twenty years), the pressure to spend a higher proportion of our income on cars, homes, and luxury goods deleteriously affects the quality of life for nearly all American families, particularly in regards to collective social goods and services (such as public education, roads and bridges, etc.).

This feeling of having to keep up is not rooted in brash envy, but grounded in the pragmatic reality that, to procure good public schooling for one's children, one has to live in a nice neighborhood, larger house, and with a heftier mortgage burden; to lower your chance of death in an auto collision, one has to purchase a larger, more expensive SUV in lieu of the trusty "economy" cars such as the Civic or Corolla.

This feeling of falling behind more than keeping up is accompanied by longer working hours, less savings, increased debt and personal bankruptcy, and less sleep for working American families.

Should we spend money on expensive wristwatches or on better teachers? On elaborate \$20,000 grills, or national security?

**BOOK REVIEWS (CONTINUED)**

This is a political issue, not one based on “individual choice,” and – libertarians beware – it’s about taxes.

This spending “arms race,” Frank argues, is “smart for one but dumb for all.” He paraphrases the Tragedy of the Commons: if I buy a bigger SUV for protection, my large vehicle makes others want to buy larger vehicles, and in three years when more people have larger vehicles, the relative advantage my SUV conferred to me is no longer valid.

The book’s main argument rests upon the distinction between positional goods, or those dependent upon context for valuation (such as a house, car, or wristwatch), and non-positional goods, or those not as dependent upon context (such as savings, length of commute, hours of sleep and free time). Because of the vast and growing difference in buying power between the very rich and everyone else, Americans are forced to spend more lavishly and with fewer resources on positional goods in order to maintain our quality of life – and that is a difficult place to be.

What makes *Falling Behind* so refreshing is Frank’s willingness to include this contextual element of valuation (probably to Milton Friedman’s devotees’ dismay) and Darwinian insight in economic analysis. While such a *mélange* may be downright offensive to traditional, conservative economists, its honesty and insight cannot be whitewashed, nor its relevancy understated for working, and over-spending, Americans.

***Chutes and Ladders: Navigating the Low-Wage Labor Market.*** By Katherine S. Newman. Russell Sage Foundation Books Series, Harvard University Press. 2006. 432 pp. ISBN-13: 9780674023369.

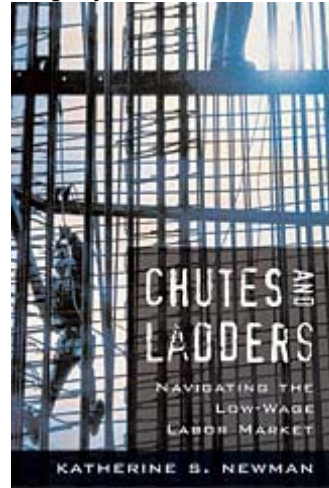
Reviewer: Timothy J. Haney, University of Oregon, [thaney@uoregon.edu](mailto:thaney@uoregon.edu)

In an ambitious follow-up to her widely-cited *No Shame in My Game* (1999), Katherine Newman’s

*Chutes and Ladders* serves as a testament to persistent fieldwork, but falls short in theoretical depth.

Newman revisits the fast food workers she studied in 1993-94, adding two waves of data from 1997 and 2002. Initially, nearly all these workers struggled to make ends meet, often negotiating one hardship after another. Later, she finds, a sizeable minority (22%) have found stable, living-wage jobs. She dubs this group the “high flyers.” Others are “up, but not out,” but a third group – the “low riders” – continue in dead-end jobs or with chronic bouts of unemployment.

What characteristics separate the “high flyers” from the “low riders”? The strength of Newman’s approach is the ease with which she gets her interviewees to discuss the many factors presumably blocking their access to employment. The author engagingly recounts each individual’s story at substantial length. But this detail comes at the cost of identifying patterns across cases or pointing out emerging themes in their employment barriers.



Readers are left wondering if the high flyers succeeded in the labor market because they lived in better neighborhoods, found suitable childcare arrangements, maintained richer social networks, located jobs with benefits, suffered

fewer health problems, or encountered less turbulence (and violence) in their relationships. Although the author mentions each of these factors, her thick reporting of individuals’ details obscures the relative importance of each in overcoming employment barriers.

Newman instead singles out cultural characteristics (“soft skills”) as the vital distinction between high flyers and low riders.

**BOOK REVIEWS (CONTINUED)**

High flyers, she contends, know how to figure out “the underlying rules of the game without being told” (p. 11). They know how to signal employers that they are “special, ... a notch above everyone else who is clamoring for a job” (p. 177).

But how do they accumulate such knowledge? What social milieus contribute to workers developing knowledge of the implicit rules of labor markets? *Chutes and Ladders* implies that some potential employees innately possess the motivation and cultural capital necessary for advancement, while others do not. Such a conclusion does little to inform policymakers seeking to aid low riders’ transition to stable, living-wage jobs.

Newman admits to several methodological issues in her research. For example, the initial sample mainly comprised persons with applications in a Burger Barn filing cabinet. Could this selection process somehow identify mainly the most motivated workers, thus overstating high flyers’ prevalence? Newman also notes that high flyers might be easier to follow over time and thus more likely to be included in subsequent waves. Lastly, asking interviewees to recall their wages and working conditions over a roughly five-year span invites measurement error unless respondents’ reports are corroborated somehow.

*Chutes and Ladders* may serve as a useful introduction to low-wage workers’ labor market activity, but readers cannot overlook the historical context, that Newman’s findings are drawn from a period of unprecedented economic expansion. Newman admits that the United States experienced 120 consecutive months of economic growth during the 1990s, coupled with falling poverty and unemployment rates. This burgeoning economy may have accentuated differences between workers who, in a more typical or even recessionary economic climate, would constitute a relatively homogenous group. Readers are left wondering how this group might fare when the demand for low-skill workers dries up.

**FILM REVIEW**

O’Connell, Michael. 2007. *Mountaintop Removal*. Haw River Films. DVD. 60 minutes.

Reviewer: W. Ryan Wishart, University of Oregon, [wwishart@uoregon.edu](mailto:wwishart@uoregon.edu)

Coal mining has not only dominated West Virginia industry for over 100 years, it has been a way of life for hundreds of rural Appalachian communities. *Mountaintop Removal* documents how recent changes in mining methods have dramatically transformed both landscapes and lives.

The film provides political, economic, and social context by interweaving historical and contemporary footage with interviews conducted with industry executives, residents, and others.

The narrative focuses on community organizations working with environmental coalitions to slow mountaintop removal mining (MTR) and cope with its side effects. MTR is a form of surface mining that utilizes explosives and enormous machines (draglines) that, in the words of one local resident “takes four men to operate and takes away 350 deep miners’ jobs.” The film reports that mining jobs decreased steadily from about 120,000 in 1950 to less than 20,000 today, while coal production steadily increased.

Not only does MTR result in local economic decline, it creates “lakes” of byproduct waste (estimated to total 140 billion gallons), which pollute streams, contaminate groundwater, and sometimes break open and flood local areas. The film’s aerial photography conveys MTR’s enormity in ways unmatched by text or photos. Poor communities face deep internal divisions between residents desperate for the few remaining mining jobs and residents opposing MTR’s environmental and health risks.

*Mountaintop Removal* is a captivating way to introduce students to various themes related to organizations, work, and industry. It is also a powerful illustration of *environmental justice*, as impoverished and frightened residents mobilize to confront an industry that cares nothing about them and to demand action from unresponsive state and local governments.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

Recent and Forthcoming Books 

*On the Fireline: Living and Dying with Wildland Firefighters.* By Matthew Desmond. 2007. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

“Drawing on intimate ethnographic research of a wildland firefighting crew as well as content analyses of official documents from the U.S.

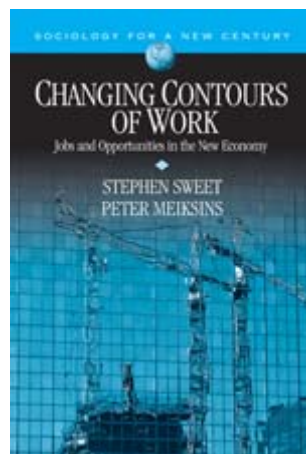


Forest Service and similar agencies, *On the Fireline* investigates how a high-risk organization motivates its workers to participate in life-threatening activity. It analyzes how organizations that demand much from their workers—indeed, sometimes their very

lives—tap into and rely upon America’s economic inequalities, how individuals’ classed lifestyles and backgrounds influence their decision to sign up for jobs that could kill them, and how individuals’ specific paths through life predispose them to the rigors of risky work.”

*Changing Contours of Work: Jobs and Opportunities in the New Economy.* By Stephen Sweet and Peter Meiksins. 2008. Pine Forge Press, Sociology for a New Century Series.

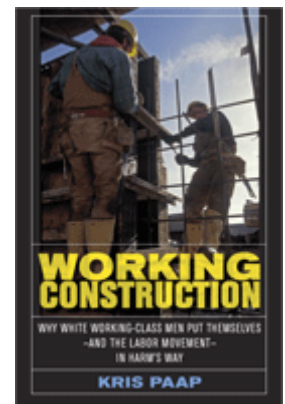
Congratulations to section members Peter Meiksins and Stephen Sweet on their new book which analyzes the challenges



confronting contemporary workers, as they seek to locate jobs that pay adequately, secure equitable treatment on the job, manage family responsibilities and jobs, and plan careers in an economy increasingly built on individual risk. By placing these challenges in a comparative framework, including how these concerns have been addressed in Western European countries and how they intersect with emerging patterns of work and employment in the developing world, *Changing Contours of Work* provides a rich analysis of the American workplace in the larger context of an integrated global economy. This book will be especially useful in undergraduate courses in work and inequality, as it reveals divided opportunities, shaped by class, gender, race, and institutionalized practices of allocating risk and reward through work, as well as practical guidance on how to close these gaps.

*Working Construction: Why White Working-Class Men Put Themselves—and the Labor Movement—in Harm’s Way.* Kris Paap. 2006. Cornell University Press/ILR.

Kris Paap worked for nearly three years as a carpenter’s apprentice on a variety of jobsites, closely observing her colleagues’ habits, expressions, and attitudes. As a woman in an overwhelmingly male—and stereotypically “macho”—profession, Paap uses her experiences to reveal the ways that gender, class, and race interact in the construction industry. She shows how the stereotypes of construction workers and their overt displays of sexism, racism, physical strength, and homophobia are not “just how they are,” but rather culturally and structurally mandated enactments of what it means to be a man—and a worker—in America.



## ANNOUNCEMENTS (CONTINUED)

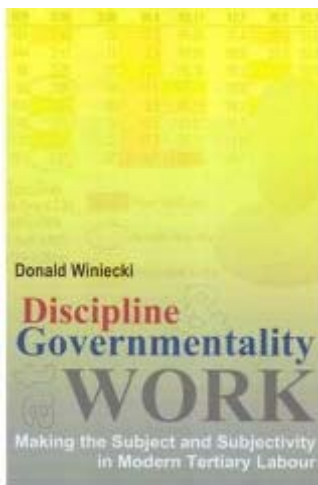
Recent and Forthcoming Books 

The significance of these worker performances is particularly clear in relation to occupational safety: when the pressures for demonstrating physical masculinity are combined with a lack of protection from firing, workers are forced to ignore safety procedures in order to prove—whether male or female—that they are “man enough” to do the job. Thus these mandated performances have real, and sometimes deadly, consequences for individuals, the entire working class, and the strength of the union movement.

Paap concludes that machismo separates the white male construction workers from their natural political allies, increases their risks on the job, plays to management’s interests, lowers their overall social status, and undercuts the effectiveness of their union.

***Discipline and Governmentality at Work: Making the Subject and Subjectivity in Modern Tertiary Labour.*** By Don Winiecki. 2006. London: Free Association Books.

How we know ourselves, how we are known by the institutions in which we work, and how we



are known by our co-workers and families is increasingly affected in a constantly changing network of technologies and strategies. In the early 21st century, these include computers and telecommunications, management, ‘psy’ fields, and accounting.

In the workplace, these technological forms are lashed together into systems reflecting a form of rationality allowing norms for seeing, representing and knowing work

and workers to arise. These norms and forms produce distinctive forms of subjectivity, ‘truth’ and power and make workers into subjects. Tertiary (service) labour is the fastest growing form of paid work in the economic catchment of the West and mediation of labour through computer and telecommunications systems is increasing at a remarkable rate. Nonetheless, there are few analyses of subjectivity in technology-mediated tertiary labour.

Drawn from ethnographic research and using post-structural analytics, this book describes how a collection of technologies is taken up in a common form of tertiary labour “call centres” to produce ‘truth’, knowledge, power and modern forms of subjectivity and social subjects. It also challenges assumptions of Marxian and management theory by demonstrating that workers are neither dominated nor liberated, rather how they are made responsible for and caught up in the apparatus that renders them as subjects.

This book provides a detailed look at the ‘genealogy of subjectivity’ at work. It shows ‘how we are now’ as a population whose selves and subjectivity are produced face-to-face with technology mediated systems.

Perrucci, Robert and Carolyn Cummings Perrucci (eds.). 2007. *The Transformation of Work in the New Economy*. Oxford University Press.

Perrucci, Robert and Earl Wysong. 2008. *The New Class Society: Goodbye American Dream?* (3<sup>rd</sup> edition). Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.

Agassi, Judith Buber. 2007. *The Jewish Women Prisoners of Ravensbrück: Who Were They?* Oxford : Oneworld.

*Recognize your colleagues*

by nominating them for an OOW award in 2008. All deadlines are March 31, 2008. For details see pp. 2-3.

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**ANNOUNCEMENTS (CONTINUED)**

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**Recent and Forthcoming Articles** 

- Hoffmann, Elizabeth A. 2006. "Dispute Resolution in Cooperative and Hierarchical Worksites." *Advances in Industrial and Labor Relations* 16:145-69.  
This study compares workers' dispute resolution strategies in hierarchical, conventional businesses and in worker cooperatives in the coal mining, taxicab driving, and food distribution industries. It finds some support for predictions that cooperatives' flattened structure and egalitarian ideology affects workers' grievance resolution. The data demonstrate that cooperative members possess more dispute resolution strategies than their conventionally employed counterparts.
- Hogan, Rich and Carolyn C. Perrucci. 2007. "Black Women: Truly Disadvantaged in the Transition from Employment to Retirement Income." *Social Science Research* 36: 1184-99.
- Perrucci, Robert and Shelley MacDermid. 2007. "Time and Control in a 24/7 Environment: Clock Time, Work Time, Family Time." Pp. 343-68. In *Workplace Temporalities*, edited by Beth Rubin. Elsevier.
- Wallace, Michael. 2007. "After Taft-Hartley: The Legal-Institutional Context of U.S. Strike Activity, 1948-1980." *The Sociological Quarterly* 48:769-99.
- Wysong, Earl and Robert Perrucci. 2007. "Organizations, Resources, and Class Analysis." *Critical Sociology* 33: 211-46.

**Call for Papers** 

*Research in the Sociology of Work* is accepting manuscripts for Volume 19, focusing on the "Economic Sociology of Work." The expected publication is March 2009.

We invite manuscripts addressing work issues broadly defined, e.g., paid and non-paid activities in business and non-profit organizations, in formal and informal economies, labor markets, entrepreneurship, income inequality, and social organization of work in cross-national and global contexts.

In particular, we welcome articles from sociologists, organizational scholars, and economists that analyze these substantive topics by employing conceptual tools of economic sociology and that highlight the network, institutional, political and cultural embeddedness of economic activity.

The deadline for submission of manuscripts is May 1, 2008. Early submission is strongly encouraged. Submit manuscripts/inquiries to:

Nina Bandelj (Editor, Volume 19)  
University of California, Irvine  
Department of Sociology  
3151 Social Science Plaza  
Irvine, CA 92697

Email: [nbandelj@uci.edu](mailto:nbandelj@uci.edu)

**Electronic submissions preferred.**

For more information on *Research in Sociology of Work* (Lisa Keister, Series Editor) see:  
<http://www.soc.duke.edu/~lkeister/RSW/>

For the Spring 2008 issue of *Work in Progress*, share a blurb about your new project or grant, tell others where your graduate students are getting jobs, and continue sharing your favorite teaching textbooks by emailing materials to [oow@uoregon.edu](mailto:oow@uoregon.edu). Also, feel free to offer suggestions for interviews and other special features.

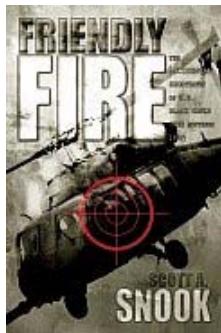
**FEATURE: FAVORITE TEACHING TEXTS**

Feature by Ann Shirley Leymon

An occasional feature of OOW’s newsletter “Work in Progress” is to ask members about their favorite or most influential books, articles, and the like. For this fall issue, we asked members to send in brief reviews of their favorite textbooks to use in courses relating to organizations, occupations, or work. Thanks to everyone who sent suggestions. Below please find members’ initial replies.

If you have used any of these textbooks and would like to add a comment, or if you have an additional texts you would like to add, please submit forward them to [ooow@uoregon.edu](mailto:ooow@uoregon.edu).

**Friendly Fire: The Accidental Shootdown of U.S. Black Hawks over Northern Iraq.** By Scott Snook.



2000. Princeton University Press.

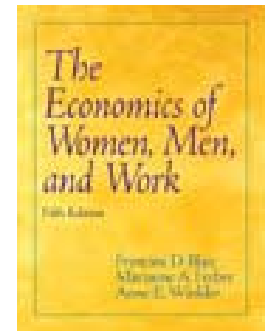
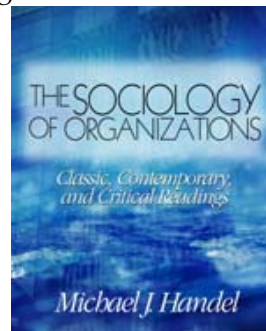
“I used Snook’s *Friendly Fire* in my Organizational Communication class for our undergraduate evening degree program for majors. It was quite a hit. In his account of why two Black Hawk

helicopters were shot down over northern Iraq, Snook builds his case very carefully using terminology that is strange to anyone outside of the military. I find that the uniqueness of this situation slows students down so that they pay just a little more attention to all the details in the book. By the end, they are able to point out the ways to apply much more broadly the lessons

from a seemingly unique situation of miscommunication.”

Handel, Michael J, ed. 2003. *The Sociology of Organizations: Classic, Contemporary, and Critical Readings*. Sage Publications.

“This book has a wide selection of classic and widely-cited primary readings in the sociology of organizations. Section introductions by the editor provide subject overviews and explain key terms and concepts in clear and accessible prose. The book covers the full range of theoretical perspectives and substantive topics suitable for a one-semester survey course in the sociology of organizations.”

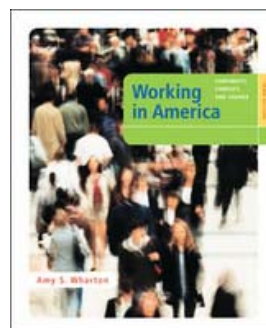


*The Economics of Women, Men, and Work* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). By Blau, Francine D., Marianne A. Ferber, and Anne E. Winkler. 1998. Prentice Hall.

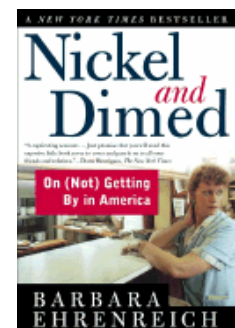
“Despite the title, the book is pretty sociological / interdisciplinary. It is thorough but accessible -- no prior economics training required. Good job discussing both work and family. It does a good job placing the topics it covers in context. For example, it includes a basic discussion of gender to set the stage for later material.”

OOWers also recommended these two texts for courses related to organizations, occupations, and work:

*Working in America: Continuity, Conflict, and Change.* By Amy Wharton. 2005. McGraw-Hill.



*Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America.* By Barbara Ehrenreich. 2002. Holt.



# OOW @ ASA 2007

AMERICAN SOCIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

Article by Matthew Eddy, University of Oregon  
Photos by Ann Leymon and Matthew Eddy, University of Oregon

Sunday, August 12<sup>th</sup> at the ASA annual meeting started with a bang for the OOW section with the 8:30 a.m. roundtable session. Delegates gathered around 27 tables, most with four or five presenters each, where they discussed their papers and received feedback from presiders and each other.

At 9:30 a.m., the OOW business meeting began with about 50 people attending. Outgoing Chair, Heather Haveman (Columbia University and UC Berkeley), expressed appreciation to OOW section officers, committees, and members, then officially passed over the Chair duties to Jennifer Glass (University of Iowa). Plans for finalizing an OOW handbook (a resource including syllabi for courses in the work and occupations), as well as details regarding next year's ASA annual meeting were discussed.



New OOW chair, Jennifer Glass, addresses the business meeting



Heather Haveman applauds from the [former] Chair's chair

Although it coincided with the OOW business meeting upstairs, the 9:30 a.m. OOW session "Institutions and Networks" was probably the best-attended, with over 80 people present. The crowd perked up when Mikolaj Jan Piskorski (Harvard University) got up to present his paper entitled "I'm Not on the Market, I'm Here with Friends:

Finding Jobs or Spouses On-Line." Piskorski argued that job searching and dating differ from pre-web days.



Mikolaj Jan Piskorski wowed a captive audience with a dynamic twofer: on-line job search and dating advice

For example, many professionals are placing their entire *c.v.*'s on-line, and "it's a fairly global phenomenon." With on-line networks, "your friends provide a cover for you, as if you're not on the job market, but it allows you to display your *c.v.*" Some Silicon Valley companies have asked employees to take their profiles off the web, and the employees responded by saying, "O.K., but you'll need to pay me more." The possible business benefits are weighed against the risk of losing an employee. Piskorski's research suggests that "displaying your network, not just your personal information, is good for finding a job, but bad for finding a mate."

A lively discussion followed, including comments from Mark Mizruchi (University of Michigan), who set a high standard for discussants, presenting his reflections in his own thoughtful and accessible Powerpoint slideshow.



OOW Section Reception

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**OOW @ ASA 2007 (CONTINUED)**


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**OOW Section Award Winners**

Article by Matthew Eddy, University of Oregon  
 Photos by Ann Leymon, University of Oregon

**The 2007 Max Weber Award**

**Nicole C. Raeburn** (University of San Francisco), *Changing Corporate America from Inside Out: Lesbian and Gay Workplace Rights*.

**Max Weber Award Committee:** Cathy Zimmer (University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, chair), Jerome Karabel (University of California, Berkeley), Jeff Sallaz (University of Arizona)

The winner of the 2007 Max Weber Award was Nicole C. Raeburn (University of San Francisco), for her book, *Changing Corporate America from Inside Out: Lesbian and Gay Workplace Rights*. It was published in 2004 by the University of Minnesota Press, as Volume 20 of the Social Movements, Protest and Contention Series.

The committee had no trouble choosing Raeburn's book as the winner. It is filled with important theoretical and empirical contributions to the fields of organizations and social movements, yet it is written in an accessible style, so it clearly can appeal to a much broader audience, including gay and lesbian activities, human resource professionals, corporate managers and those interested in diversity issues in or outside organizations.

Raeburn asks the question of how the rights of various groups are negotiated and secured in the workplace, given the frequent conflicts between employees and profit-making employers. Specifically, she notes the lack of progress toward gay and lesbian rights at all levels of government, yet quite spectacular change in the corporate world. In 1990, just three corporations provided family and bereavement leave for gay employees, and none provided health insurance coverage for domestic partners. Today over half of the Fortune 500 offer these benefits.

Raeburn's book provides a multi-method approach to explain how this amazing change has come about. She synthesizes political process

theory and new institutional organizational theory to focus on activism within organizations, not solely targeted at the state and to focus not just on external pressures for change, but on pressures from groups within corporations.

The institutional opportunity framework she develops explains why some employers adopt gay-inclusive policies, while others do not. The contribution that makes this book worthy of the Max Weber Award is that this framework can be applied to mobilization inside all kinds of organizations, from universities to religious congregations.

**The 2007 W. Richard Scott Award**

**David Obstfeld** (University of California, Irvine). "Social networks, the *tertius lungens* orientation, and involvement in innovation." *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 50 (2000): 100-130.

**W. Richard Scott Award Committee:** Brian Uzzi, Chair (Northwestern University), Matt Huffman (University of California, Irvine), Kate Stovel (University of Washington)

David Obstfeld won this year's W. Richard Scott Award for his outstanding article, entitled "Social Networks, The Tertius Lungens Orientation, and Involvement in Innovation," published by *Administrative Science Quarterly* in 2005 (volume 50, page 100-130). In it, he employs both quantitative and ethnographic analysis to examine how the process of making new connections among collaborators boosts or stifles invention within firms.



*A surprised and happy Obstfeld goes to accept the Scott Award*

## OOW @ ASA 2007 (CONTINUED)

In his study, Obstfeld builds on previous work, particularly by Granovetter and Burt, which has shown that being a connector between disconnected actors boost one's innovative potential. David then examined new territory in two respects. (1) He found that successful brokers do two things well. They bridge the disconnected, and they reinforce and rekindle bonds between the already connected. (2) He found that bridging and bonding effects were contingent on the wider structure of the networks. Brokers that bond the already connected through initiating new forms of coordination were more involved in innovation in dense networks.

Seen in this new way, the benefits of brokerage for the innovation process involve both bridging the disconnected in sparse networks and bonding the already connected in densely embedded networks. The paper suggests that we consider brokerage as involving both connecting the unconnected and reconnecting those who already have ties to one another depending on the larger social structure within which collaboration and innovation take place.

David's research was based on his dissertation, which was done at the University of Michigan where he worked with Wayne Baker (Chair), Michael Cohen, Kathleen Sutcliffe, Karl Weick, and Mark Mizruchi. He is currently following up on his dissertation work with a \$322,000 NSF grant from the Sociology, Innovation and Organizational Change, and Law and Social Science divisions.

### The 2007 James D. Thompson Award

**Matthew S. Desmond** (University of Wisconsin Madison). *Making Workers Deployable*.

**James D. Thompson Award Committee:** Mauro Guillén (University of Pennsylvania, chair), Jake Rosenfield (Princeton University), Elizabeth Popp-Berman (University of California, Berkeley)

Matthew Desmond, University of Wisconsin-Madison, won the winner 2007 James D. Thompson Award for Best Student Paper. In "Making Workers Deployable," Matt asks the question of how do

high-risk organizations persuade their workers to engage in life-threatening activities. The paper is based on an extensive participant-observation and ethnographic study of a wildfire firefighting crew in Arizona as well as on official documents of the U.S. Forest Service. The key insight is that one must frame firefighters' attitudes towards risk in the context of the organizations socialization efforts as opposed to as a masculine quest for recognition and honor, as previous sociological research inspired in the work of Erving Goffman and a large number of social-psychological studies have claimed.

Matt uses colorful but accurate prose to walk the reader through the Forest Services' systematic effort to depict firefighters as being in control of the situation and capable of managing risk. Perhaps the most tantalizing passages in the paper are those describing how the organization and the employees cope with the death of a firefighter in a way that preserves the integrity of the organizational ideology of risk, namely, by framing the tragedy as an act of deviance from established organizational procedures and practices. Due to its theoretical and

empirical sophistication, this paper adds a new dimension to the analyses of risk in an organizational context by Lee Clarke, Carol Heimer, Charles Perrow, Dianne Vaughn, and Karl Weick.



*A stunned and happy Desmond goes to receive award*

Matt has revised and resubmitted "Making Workers Deployable" to *American Journal of Sociology*.