

# ACCOUNTS

VOLUME 14, ISSUE 3

SUMMER 2015

## INTERVIEW WITH ALYA GUSEVA, INCOMING CHAIR

*This fall Alya Guseva, Associate Professor of Sociology at Boston University, takes over as chair of ASA's economic sociology section. She recently sat down with the newsletter's incoming editors, a group of Boston-area graduate students, to talk about the history and future of economic sociology, her own research, what she hopes to accomplish as section chair, and much more.*

**Emily Philipp, Boston University:**  
**How would you describe the state of the field in economic sociology? Where do you see things headed?**

Alya Guseva: Economic sociology took off as a subfield based on the idea of embeddedness, but since its institutionalization as a section in 2001, it has been actively looking for the next big idea or substantive direction. New horizons have certainly emerged, both theoretically (performativity, culture/morality of markets, relational work) and substantively (finance, valuation, cultural industries, intimacy, etc.). But the conversations about the state of the field and its direction, while carried out at annual meetings, smaller conferences, and in print, have not yet managed to become transformative. We do not lack in creativity and good work, but for the most part we shy away from making broad field-defining statements. Consider this: the excitement that followed the creation of the Section in

2001 led to the publication of several such "state of the field" volumes, including Richard Swedberg's *Principles of Economic Sociology* and *Economic Sociology: A Systematic Inquiry* by Alejandro Portes as well as several collections edited by Frank Dobbin, Mark Granovetter, Victor Nee, Neil Smelser and Richard Swedberg. The most recent one, the third edition of the *Sociology of Economic Life* by Swedberg and Granovetter came out in 2011. But the stream of such agenda-setting publications, at least of a visible kind, has stalled since then. Is it time to regroup and attempt another inventory of our ideas and approaches?

I recently came across some interesting figures on the ASA website about the number of sections and their membership counts over time. The number of ASA members has hardly changed since 1970, but the number of ASA sections has gone up from 8 to 52. The average ASA member now belongs to 2.5 sec-

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tions. I already belong to five, and could easily pick up at least three more memberships, even though, realistically, I can only meaningfully participate in one or two. What does this mean? Sociology as a discipline is becoming increasingly compartmentalized, and there is a danger that the subfields will become more insulated and more inward-looking. We could lose a sense of a bigger picture. So, if broader agenda-setting conversations are due, and I believe they are, then they should be carried out with this broader picture in mind, in dialog with colleagues in other sections, subfields and even neighboring disciplines. As an incoming chair, I would like to encourage and facilitate such cross-boundary conversations.

**EP: What are you most looking forward to about being chair, and what do you hope to accomplish?**

AG: I am looking forward to reaching out to other sections, and to scholars outside of the U.S. The economic sociology section has already made a few moves in these directions. For instance, I am particularly heartened to see that three of the section sessions at the annual meeting will make explicit connections with other sections, one with sociology of development, another one with family and consumption, and the third with race, gender and sexuality.

I also look forward to producing *Accounts* with a wonderful Boston-metro team of graduate students who hail from three campuses: Boston University, Harvard and Boston College. I hope another positive outcome of this endeavor will be establishing closer ties between the campuses.

**Rebecca Farber, Boston University: What advice do you have for scholars new to economic sociology who are interested in incorporating its theories or methods in their**

**research? Where is a good place to start?**

AG: I'd say there are two places to start. One is right here, as a member of the section, a reader of *Accounts* and a participant of section events at the annual meeting. I belong to a couple of sections which are fairly new fields for me, and I am learning a great deal about key debates or recently published work from reading section newsletters and attending sessions at the annual meeting. If you are interested in learning more about the field, get to know the people. Attend the section business meeting, come to the section reception, take note of the work that receives section awards. Particularly if you are a young scholar, come to the sessions, listen, ask questions, talk to the presenters afterwards and introduce yourself.

The second place to start is at the bookshelf. There are a couple of economic sociology textbooks and several edited volumes and handbooks that were published in the past ten years (check the section webpage for some suggestions). They give you a taste of different topics, theories and debates, and provide a starter bibliography.

**Barbara Kiviat, Harvard University: How would you explain the value of economic sociology to people outside of the academy?**

AG: The most persuasive way, I think, is to point to the cultural or historically specific foundations of markets and economic activities. Whenever I try to get undergraduates interested in taking economic sociology, or have to quickly explain what I do to someone I just met, I usually use the example of credit. From credit cards and mortgages to car loans and student debt, borrowing is commonplace, ubiquitous and in many cases unavoidable for the average American. Without a plastic card, one cannot reserve a hotel in advance or purchase a plane ticket online. When people talk about homeownership, the first topic is often the interest rate on the mortgage.

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Americans by all measures are “overspent,” most living in some form of long-term debt, but borrowing and indebtedness for the most part do not carry negative connotations. In many other national contexts, personal debt is frowned upon, while frugality and thrift are heralded as virtues. Consider that the German word for debt – *Schuld* – also means guilt. Where such cultural values are widespread, they serve as barriers to consumer lending. Therefore, for something as widespread and seemingly natural as consumer credit to take root, a set of very specific cultural beliefs is required. Prior to the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Americans, too, valued thrift, and believed that responsible people refrained from borrowing. Now, on the contrary, borrowing and successfully repaying debts makes you a responsible person because they help you build your credit history, which is essential in a society like ours.

**BK: What role do you see economic sociology playing in public policy debates, and how would you like that role to be different?**

AG: Most if not all economic sociologists would agree that economic sociology is not a big player at the public policy table. Economic sociology is often strong on description and criticism but short on policy advice. A large part of this has to do with our perception that we are competing with economics, which, of course, has enormous reach into the public policy arena.

The conversation about how to make economic sociology more publicly visible and relevant is not new. Many turn to social media, using their voice as experts to blog or tweet about current events and their work. Others use the platforms of *The New York Times* Op-Ed page, Huffington Post or Slate to disseminate their research to a wider audience. And yet others feel that the place they can make the biggest, most far-reaching impact is the classroom. Personally, I have been on the fence regarding this issue, but

I see great value in exploring this question in *Accounts* next year.

**Kim Pernell-Gallagher, Harvard University: Your past research explores how personal credit markets operate differently across different national contexts. Do you see the content or emphasis of economic sociology as varying across countries as well? How might American economic sociology benefit from adopting a more global perspective?**

AG: As much as sociology often differs across national borders, so does economic sociology. The differences have to do with concrete social problems confronting different societies, historical traditions and academic affinities of the discipline. For instance, in the former Soviet Union, many sociology departments were founded on the basis of departments of philosophy. Germany, France and Britain have their distinct tradition of economic sociology, and, by the way, in these countries, sociology plays a bigger role in policy debates. But we find excellent work in economic sociology in other countries as well (take Israel, Russia, Hungary, or Chile).

I am very interested in reaching out to economic sociologists from other countries and regions, and in building ties with economic sociology communities from outside the U.S. Specifically, I would like to profile non-American traditions of economic sociology research and teaching. Making those connections can be a source of theoretical and empirical enrichment, but can also have practical value for academics looking for international collaborations, new publication outlets, sabbatical placements, or PhD students and postdocs. Stay tuned for upcoming issues of *Accounts*.

**KP: What are you working on right now? Tell us about your active research projects.**

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AG: As a follow-up to *Plastic Money: Constructing Markets for Credit Cards in Eight Postcommunist Countries*, I am continuing to collaborate with Akos Rona-Tas on markets for electronic payments. For example, we are exploring the role of nation-states and regional governing bodies (such as the European Union) in setting limits on the globalization of plastic card standards and brands. In the course of writing our book, we uncovered surprising cross-national variation in the role that multinational card brands (Visa, MasterCard, etc.) play in domestic payment systems. In some countries, multinational brands are the only ones available. In others, most notably, China, Denmark and Belarus, it is domestic brands that are playing the leading role and continuing to successfully defy globalizing pressures. There are also those countries and regions (Russia and the E.U., most notably) that are trying to work out schemes to ward off Visa and MasterCard hegemony in favor of a local or regional brand they can better control.

I am also working on a couple of newer projects. One is a collaborative project with a colleague at Higher School of Economics in Moscow on how Russian spouses manage household money. Do they pool their money, or keep it separate? Do they earmark? Who decides and who is in charge? We are interested in what these practices say about gender relations and power in the family in the context of rapidly changing gender norms in a society undergoing a post-communist transformation. Our analysis uses both survey data and a large sample of qualitative interviews. This project is part of my growing interest in highlighting the household as an important site of production, consumption and distribution of resources that until now has not received adequate attention from economic sociologists who, for the most part, have been focusing on profit-making, the firm and the market. This is where economic sociologists can learn a great deal from neighboring social science disciplines like anthro-

pology, feminist and development economics.

The second project is on the global market for commercial surrogacy, which takes up my long-standing interest in markets and market construction, in particular when it comes to markets for biomedical goods and services (contested commodities or “risky exchanges” as they were called by Viviana Zelizer). Despite being severely limited or even criminalized in most of continental Europe, Japan, Canada, Australia and many American states, global surrogacy emerged as a multi-billion global industry with well-known hotspots in California, India, Thailand and Ukraine, as well as smaller or more locally services in Israel, Mexico and Romania. I am interested in mapping out the engines behind surrogacy markets in several national contexts, whether it is family lawyers, reproductive doctors, global diaspora patients (as it is the case in India), or pro-natal states (the only example of this is Israel), and connect surrogacy to other (global) markets, such as medical tourism and adoption. I would also like to explore the moral and legal challenges to surrogacy in a handful of surrogacy-friendly jurisdictions (the state of California, Israel, India, Ukraine, Russia and Belarus). While previous work detailed the moral frames employed in the U.S. debates about surrogacy, these frames and references are deeply embedded in the specifics of the American history (including slavery, the feminist movement and, more specifically, *Roe v. Wade*), and cannot be expected to play out in other national contexts. I also expect this project to heavily draw on the work done in other social science fields, specifically by anthropologists, gender and legal scholars.

**Carly Knight, Harvard University: Some questions in economic sociology are classic (e.g., what is the relationship between the market and the state, or the market and society). Others are a product of current events and societal changes. What do you see as the biggest questions that current events pose for**

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### **today's economic sociologists?**

AG: I see two big issues in current public debates to which economic sociology has already contributed understanding, but can contribute further. The first is inequality, distributive justice and poverty. Economic sociologists are well-positioned to study how institutionalized patterns of resource allocation interplay with race, gender and sexuality, and drive further income and wealth gaps.

The second issue is connected to global risks and security, particularly around new digital forms of payment and financial information flows. What I referred to above as attempts of nation-states and regional governing bodies to set limits to globalization by developing their own domestic or regional payment networks is driven precisely by the imperative to control information and limit exposure to global risks and pressures.

**Will Attwood-Charles, Boston College: In your work, you have examined the process of market creation in post-communist nations. In what sense, if any, do you see markets needing to be continuously recreated? How do you see this relating to contemporary U.S. markets?**

AG: Yes, markets rarely stand still (maybe only in economics textbooks). And even when they are not built up from scratch (the topic of *Plastic Money*), they are most of the time in flux. The sources of market dynamism vary, and may include technological changes, legal changes or changes in cultural and moral meanings, the effect of new entrants into the market, competition with markets for related products, globally or for other customer demographics. All of these changes create new sources of uncertainty for market participants, and markets have to adjust and devise new ways of managing uncertainty in order to reestablish an acceptable degree of predictability and social order. It is probably true that some

markets are more dynamic than others just as some industries are more dynamic than others. Just compare information technology to coal mining. But what also needs to be mentioned is that real profits in markets stem precisely from change and resulting uncertainty, because this is where real possibilities for arbitrage or innovation open up.

The American credit card market is currently experiencing all kinds of changes and challenges. Have your credit card companies recently replaced your regular magnetic stripe cards with new ones that feature both magnetic stripe and the chip? This is both an attempt to improve payment security, following several high-profile cases of data breaches at various American retailers, and the desire to make American cards accepted in Europe and Canada, which have already largely switched to chip. And while the credit card issuers are figuring out the standards, cards are being nudged aside by mobile payments. In some developing countries like Kenya, where mobile phones are much more common than bank accounts, the plastic card stage may be skipped altogether.

Economic sociologists have a set of unique tools in their disposal: they can situate in-depth studies of concrete local markets in global comparative and historical dynamics. And since real-life markets never stay still, there is always a market for economic sociology.

ORGANIZATIONS AND  
INEQUALITY:  
A CONVERSATION WITH ELLEN  
BERREY AND LAUREN RIVERA

*Ellen Berrey is Assistant Professor of Sociology at the University of Denver. Her book, The Enigma of Diversity: The Language of Race and the Limits of Racial Justice (2015) examines the rise of “diversity” as a buzzword and organizational practice in three contexts: affirmative action in admissions at the University of Michigan, housing politics in Chicago’s Rogers Park neighborhood, and diversity management at a Fortune 500 company.*

*Lauren Rivera is Associate Professor of Management & Organizations at Northwestern University. Her book, Pedigree: How Elite Students Get Elite Jobs (2015) explores hiring practices at elite professional service firms (law, consulting, and investment banking), and shows how criteria of “fit” favor the hiring of students from elite backgrounds.*

*The conversation was conducted by Dan Hirschman, a PhD Candidate at the University of Michigan.*

**DH:** Thanks so much for agreeing to speak with *Accounts*. In what I assume to be a happy coincidence, your two books were published within a few weeks of each other and provide compelling accounts of very different aspects of a similar problem: the organizational basis of contemporary inequality. Racial and gender inequality remain depressingly high, especially in the “1%”, as humorously documented by findings like “Fewer Women Run Big Companies Than Men Named John” and more detailed work showing that African Americans make up just .5% of the top 1% by wealth (Keister & Lee 2014). At the core of both *Pedigree* and *The Enigma of Diversity* are the questions of who gets membership into America’s upper echelons, and how we struggle

over questions of representation and difference in allocating prized positions. For example, *Enigma* shows how fights over affirmative action in college admissions are at once debates about the educational value of diverse learning environments, and also about maintaining access to a scarce resource necessary for entrance into elite professions to historically disadvantaged groups. And yet, as *Pedigree* shows, access to an elite university education is a necessary but insufficient condition for accessing elite jobs, especially for those coming from less elite origins.

**DH:** To me, one of the most exciting discussions in economic sociology right now sits at the intersection of cultural sociology and organizational sociology, and aims to understand how processes of evaluation produce and reproduce inequality (e.g. Lamont et al. 2014). How do you see your work fitting into this literature? What would you like scholars working on evaluation and inequality to take away from your book?

**LR:** I am very excited by the great research that is—and has been—going on in this area. I see my work as contributing to this scholarship by adding important behavioral components. Much of the work on evaluation to date has been quite cognitively focused, focusing on how people think about the relative worth of others in the abstract. I see my research, in the book and otherwise, as exploring boundary work in action: how gatekeepers deploy different evaluative scripts and practices when distributing valued economic and social resources that have real and meaningful consequences for individuals. In *Pedigree*, I focus on how some of the nation’s highest-paying employers define merit and select new hires. I show how culture combines with status characteristics, networks, and material resources to systematically tilt the playing field for elite jobs toward students from the most privileged backgrounds. In terms of takeaways, I would like scholars working in this area to come way from

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the book understanding the fundamentally interpersonal nature of evaluation—that it is not only the identities of the evaluated but also those of evaluators that matter for shaping social outcomes and inequalities.

**EB:** The early work in this vein has focused on how people and organizations assign worth as they make decisions to distribute coveted resources—whom to hire, whom to admit, whom to fund, whom to applaud. *The Enigma of Diversity* adds to this conversation by foregrounding the organizational sense-making that necessarily accompany evaluation. In any organizational setting, there's frequently a great deal of activity that gets done *around* the mechanics of pragmatic decisions in order to interpret and explain that decision-making. Think of it as the social performance of assigning value. Diversity serves, for many organizational and political participants, to be a useful cultural schema for just that. My book highlights leaders' mobilization of diversity in inter-organizational and political contestation and in their attempts to legitimate their activity.

So then, what is the cultural value of diversity? Diversity's meaning is at once ambiguous, racialized (often, code for African Americans), and aspirational. And yet it emerged, and has become, *sine qua non* in public discourse on integration, specifically on the incorporation of people of color into predominantly white settings. Diversity discourse assigns worth to racial minorities. It does so with colorful rhetoric, imagery, and messaging—that tolerance is the norm, that integration is not a zero-sum game in favor of black people but rather a win-win for everyone involved.

In a society where the default is to stigmatize and exploit minorities, this is a significant cultural ac-

complishment. But the rub, for addressing nuts-and-bolts problems of inequality, is that the worth put on people of color is so often superficial and condescending, and it routinely fails to translate into material gains. So, a take-away is that our analyses of evaluation can fruitfully telescope out from moments of evaluation to organization's symbolic and social legitimation of assigning worth, to better understand meso-level cultural processes in organizational contexts and their connection to macro-level inequality.

**DH:** Another line of research in economic and organizational sociology focuses on how organizations implement legal mandates, with a special focus on equal opportunity employment law, and the role of HR departments in enacting those mandates (e.g. Edelman et al. 2011, Dobbin 2009). *Enigma* shows how diversity gets institutionalized inside a large corporation, but also how the institutions built around diversity remain relatively powerless to alter hiring decisions, especially at the upper echelons. If anything, the story is even worse in *Pedigree*, where HR officials have virtually no influence on hiring decisions at elite professional service firms. How do your findings update or modify the stories sociologists have been telling about law, organizations, and HR?

**EB:** Here, my ethnographic case study of Starr Corporation (a pseudonym) is most relevant. My contributions to this important line of neo-institutionalist research are two-fold. First, my single case study provides a contextualized explanation of the implementation of diversity management. It shows how industry-wide notions and practices of diversity are incorporated into everyday organizational activity, in relation to the on-the-ground power plays of managerial authority and the workplace pressures of neoliberal capitalism. The analysis is in step with the current revival of organizational ethnographies that investigate how participants make meaning and construct appropriate

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lines of action as they negotiate the official rules, normative concerns, and pragmatic demands that govern their actions. One key insight gained from this ethnographic approach is the class bias of diversity management. The push for diversity at Starr reinforces the class-stratified division of labor. Diversity personnel draw on ideas of diversity in an effort to support people of color and women—but only those at the top of the class hierarchy.

A second contribution follows from my book's analysis of discourse and power. That body of neo-institutionalist work treats discourse as an instrumental tool for rational justification, whereas my own research foregrounds discourse as symbolic politics—as the exercise of power through ideas. By treating discourse as constitutive of power, and not just as instrumental, we see boilerplate diversity rhetoric as part of the practice of organizational life. From this perspective, it becomes evident that mid-level diversity managers are hamstrung by the anemic, means-end business case for diversity—the claim that inclusion boosts profits and productivity. That rhetoric very poorly represents their concerns about corporate America's inadequate support for employees of color and white female employees.

**LR:** *Pedigree* shows how, like many other types of diversity management practices, diversity recruitment efforts oftentimes serve more as public relations tools rather than vehicles for enacting real change. But my research adds an important nuance to this story: part of the problem with diversity programs, which are often housed in HR departments, is the relatively low status of HR within many professional organizations. When modeling hiring, promotion, and compensation outcomes and inequalities, we as sociologists often assume that HR has the real decision-making power. But in many organizations, this simply isn't the case. In the organizations I

studied, for example, HR had a distinctly administrative function. We as HR reps were there to make sure that the front stage of hiring ran smoothly, the backstage hiccups were well hidden from candidates, and that the necessary paperwork was filed on time. Instead, bankers, consultants, and lawyers were charged with making hiring decisions (although I focus on hiring in the book, they are likewise charged with the bulk of promotion and compensation decisions). In fact, when it came time to make hiring decisions, the designated diversity manager at the firm where I conducted my ethnographic research was asked to leave the room. Why this matters is that in order to truly understand why efforts to diversify succeed or fail, we have to have an accurate picture of who is actually making personnel decisions in the first place. To take an example closer to home, if we assumed that centralized HR managers at the university level were solely responsible for reviewing vitas, assessing job talks, and selecting new assistant professors rather than faculty hiring committees and professors within a given department, we would miss much of the story of how hiring in our world works and how inequalities are reproduced. So, when thinking about law, organizations, and HR, it's important to understand the real power that HR does—and does not have—in shaping personnel decisions and workforce diversity in different contexts. And that makes things tricky because the identities of those who wield true decision-making authority are not always publicly available.

**DH:** Despite treating similar topics, and drawing on similar sorts of ethnographic and interview data, the two books take very different analytical approaches. Ellen, you focus on the intersection of “diversity” (as discourse and practice) and broader political fights - explicitly, in the housing politics of Rogers Park or the *Gratz* and *Grutter* Supreme Court cases, or implicitly in the sense of legitimating the



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corporation to a broader field. Lauren, in contrast, you place most of your emphasis on the hiring interactions themselves: recruitment sessions, interviews, and the nitty gritty evaluation of applicants. I'd love to hear about why you chose the levels of analysis you did. Put differently, what would you have gained or lost if you (Ellen) had spent more time on individual hiring decisions and if you (Lauren) had spent more time on the broader political context and legitimacy struggles that elite professional service firms face?

**EB:** That's a fun thought experiment. I did get a peak into some undergraduate admissions decision-making at the University of Michigan, but nothing systematic. If I had focused my data collection on decision-making—admissions officers' selections, investors' choices about putting their money into real estate, homeowners' decisions about where to buy, HR personnel's employment decisions—that would have been an altogether different project. I would have been able to see the actual criteria of evaluation that decision-makers used, rather than their well-rehearsed public proclamations, which are so often motivated by public relations. In that alternative universe, my book could have shed light on variation in the implications of the push for diversity—specifically, when and in what ways a value of diversity generates greater equality. I also would have seen the perspectives of those being chosen or rejected, to understand how they navigate hegemonic discourses, institutional logics, or organizational politics of diversity.

**LR:** I focused more on the interpersonal and relational dynamics that produce hiring inequalities because I think this is a level of analysis that has largely been missing in the sociological literature on labor markets. I let the theoretical question drive the types of interviews I conducted and the particular settings I observed. There are definitely interesting political

and macro-historical stories about these firms to be told; I just would need different types of data than I currently have to address them systematically.

**DH:** Both your books address issues of stratification - who gets access to which opportunities. But I think that both books also have implications for another question, about the overall structure of opportunities. The past 30 years have witnessed a massive increase in inequality, including dramatic rises in the compensation of top lawyers, bankers, consultants and CEOs along with stagnant or falling wages in the middle and bottom of the distribution. What might your work offer to help understand the overall structure of inequality? What role do colorblind notions of diversity on the one hand, and incredibly homogenous, highly pedigreed elite service firms on the other, play in the production and legitimation of contemporary inequality?

**EB:** We can get purchase on this question by looking at how organizations address, or try to address, inequality. To do something about inequality, people need to be able to articulate what it is and why it is a problem. They need to be able to imagine alternatives. Prevailing notions of diversity provide inadequate language for talking about inequality. I'm not the first to say this, but it bears repeating.

Over the past fifty years, there have been a number of political and organizational interventions to tackle race-class inequities. The push for diversity is one of those change efforts. We need such interventions and, as sociologists, we also need to be skeptical of them. One point in my book is that the diversity movement is largely about being selectively inclusive. Cultural value is placed on those so-called diverse people who are most easily incorporated into majority-dominated settings and who enhance deci-

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sion-makers' institutional objectives such as prestige, distinction, or profit making (i.e. affluent or upwardly mobile people of color and women). When resources get redistributed, it is toward these groups. In this paradigm, "progress" is biased toward that which abets success in markets. But when diversity is confined to a small proportion of those who attend elite universities, own their homes, or work in the upper echelons of business, it lessens the risks of radical, race-class transformation that social justice requires.

Lessening inequality is an important objective in its own right, and economic sociologists could do much more to understand how organizations can proactively contribute to that goal and what stands in the way.

**LR:** I think my findings speak to the changing nature of social inequality in three main ways. First, given the unprecedented scale of economic inequality (and rewards accrued by those at the top), it's important to develop a robust understanding of pathways into (and out of) elite jobs. While elites seeking to secure advantages for other elites is not new, my book illuminates how the processes through which they do so have become very subtle in nature. Entry into the types of firms I study—which not only offer some of the highest starting salaries in the country but also serve as training and selection grounds for even more elite positions in corporations, government, and nonprofits (one of my participants referred to these jobs as elite "finishing school")—has become a more open and formalized competition in which all are welcome to apply and applicants are screened based on supposedly universalistic metrics of merit. But the book suggests that, although in theory competition is now open to all, in practice, entry to these lucrative and coveted organizations is still restricted to a small group of individuals who display

high-status signals associated with privileged social origins. New members are disproportionately drawn from the nation's most prestigious universities. While Ivy League schools have served as the primary recruitment ground for America's elite ranks for generations, in the past this relationship was informal. Now, through the use of school "lists" and quotas, membership is formally reserved for graduates of a handful of prestigious schools dominated by the nation's most affluent families. Within this already-select group, applicants are further screened by definitions of "merit" and "talent" that are highly correlated with parental socioeconomic status and further skew competition toward children from privileged families. While screening candidates based on gender, race, religion, and (in some states) sexual orientation is now illegal, elite organizations have developed newer, subtler, seemingly more legitimate screens to ensure a socially and culturally homogeneous workforce, such as intensive filtering on high-status extracurricular activities and the introduction of cultural fit as a formal hiring criterion. In the aggregate, these newer mechanisms of elite reproduction are dangerous because they are extremely subtle and are easy for both managers and the public to conflate with ability. In addition, although contemporary elites hail from a wider array of ethnic and religious backgrounds, they seem to be coming from an increasingly narrow slice of the American population in terms of social class and culture. And discrimination by social class is still legal.

Second, the book calls attention to just how connected systems of stratification in higher education and employment have become. Most studies of stratification treat formal schooling and labor markets as separate institutions that are governed by different logics. The book, however, calls attention to the growing links between elite universities and

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elite employers in their selection procedures, their reliance on one another for acquiring the human and symbolic capital necessary to thrive in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and the reproduction of socioeconomic inequalities in our society. You'll have to read the book to find out precisely how.

Finally, you raised the issue of colorblind notions of diversity. We know from psychological research that espousing colorblind ideologies can actually encourage racial discrimination. In the book, I show just how taken-for-granted such ideas have become in certain types of corporations. Although in theory, the organizations I studied wanted more racial diversity and many had adopted targeted diversity initiatives, many of the decision-makers I interviewed and observed were adamant that even considering racial diversity in candidate evaluation meant "lowering the bar." This not only allowed racial stereotypes to go unchecked in callback and offer decisions but also provided firms (and individual evaluators) with a justification for why racial diversity in their firms was low. Interestingly, for the most part, they did not feel this way about gender, which they felt was a legitimate consideration when making final hiring decisions. I think that these types of processes point to different ways in which racial and gender hierarchies are maintained and how diversity programs that lump together all forms of "diversity" may not be universally effective, partially because employers perceive (and act on) different status characteristics in different ways.

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## ECONOMIC SOCIOLOGY AND THE BLOGOSPHERE: REFLECTIONS ON NINE YEARS OF BLOGGING AT ORGTHEORY

*Fabio Rojas, Indiana University*

About nine years ago, I found [orgtheory.net](http://orgtheory.net). Started by Brayden King and Teppo Felin, the blog was meant to be a place where scholars in management and sociology could discuss ideas and current research. I wrote one or two comments on the blog and, remarkably, Brayden and Teppo asked me to be a guest blogger. Suddenly, I found myself immersed in the orgtheory community. It was fun and exciting. When Brayden and Teppo asked me to stay, I gladly agreed. Over the years, orgtheory has become a popular place for people who want to read about management research and sociology in a casual blog format.

## *ECONOMIC SOCIOLOGY AND THE BLOGOSPHERE*

The world of sociology blogging has changed dramatically since the beginning. Orgtheory got started when blogging was achieving popularity. It was a new way to communicate and it radically democratized the media. Academics no longer needed the patronage of a newspaper editor to be part of the conversation. A well written blog could influence the conversation that was normally reserved for professional journalists and government policy makers. Now, the world of blogging is different. It is no longer novel. There is no cache in saying that one has a blog. There are now lots of places where people can form online communities – Twitter, Facebook, Reddit, Quora, and more. Blogs have to compete with other formats for attention.

We can see this change in the world of sociological blogging. Few of the blogs that were active in the mid-2000s are still with us. Most of the survivors are infrequently updated. Many authors quickly found out that blogging is not an instant path to fame. Blogging is similar to traditional journalism in that it requires constant effort and attention. Others simply migrated to new formats. Jenn Lena, a Columbia University sociologist, quit blogging and moved completely to Twitter. Her last post was simply titled “blogs are dead.” She remains very active on Twitter, as do many scholars.

At the same time, blogs have remained vital. Nearly every major news organization has blogs. Major academics have blogs. What I have to come to appreciate is that blogs remain extremely important because they are one of the few formats that support long form discussion of curated ideas. There is a market for extended discussions. It also important for these discussions to have a voice. They should be held together by consistent themes. The blog, so far, is the only format that has combined these two qualities in an online format. Since blogs are open to all, the

world of blogs remains exciting with new entrants every day.

In the world of economic sociology, there remain a number of active bloggers who deserve mention. Kieran Healey maintains his own blog and occasionally writes for orgtheory. Dan Hirschman writes a very erudite blog reflecting on varying themes in economic sociology. A few blogs remain dedicated specifically to the topic of economic sociology. Socializing Finance, headed by Daniel Beunza, continues to have quality discussions in this area. Aileen O’Carroll focuses on the study of work. There are also management bloggers who write on topics that most economic sociologists would find interesting. Stanford’s Bob Sutton is one example. Peter Klein and Nicolai Foss’ blog, Organizations and Markets, is another.

Sadly, there has been little cross-over between economic sociology blogs and the world of economics blogs. The major blogs written by economists ignore sociology for the most part. Likewise, most sociology bloggers do not discuss economist bloggers, with the exception of Paul Krugman. This is likely due to a number of factors. There is a long standing hostility between the two fields. There is also a status differential. Economists tend to have more influence in government and the private sector, so they are less likely to look outside their field for discussion. One honorable exception is Econlog’s Bryan Caplan. His blog posts frequently address sociology since he is in the process of writing a book on education and has read a great deal of sociology of education and the family. He has encouraged more discussion between sociology and economics.

I’ll conclude these thoughts with a brief discussion

## *ECONOMIC SOCIOLOGY AND THE BLOGOSPHERE*

of how blogging has changed my own life. First, it has put me in contact with outstanding sociologists like Brayden King, Teppo Felin, Katherine Chen, Omar Lizardo, and others. Without the blog, I simply would not know these people. They have taught me a great deal. Second, a well written blog that is frequently updated does attract attention. I have made many important professional contacts through the blog. Third, readers of the blog have helped me develop ideas and resolve technical issues in my research. Fourth, the discussions on the blog have truly deepened my understanding of various topics in sociology. In Fall 2014, there was a lengthy discussion of genomic research and the sociology of race. Earlier in the blog's history, there were in depth-discussions of performativity theory, the sociology of finance, and social network analysis. Fifth, the blog has been helpful in disseminating ideas. Having a consistent audience can be helpful for promoting ideas.

Some people have said blogging is dead. That's not right. The hype around blogging is dead. Blogging is now an established niche in the marketplace of online ideas. It can be rewarding if done well. For now, I'll continue to do it. I hope that more economic sociologists enter the arena.

### BOOK REVIEW

*The Employee: A Political History.* By Jean-Christian Vinel. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013.

*Barry Eidlin, Rutgers University*

Several decades ago, Adam Przeworski (1977:371) noted that class struggle "is a struggle *about* class before it is a struggle *among* classes." By this he meant that questions of who belongs to a particular class,

how different classes refer to each other, how they are arrayed against each other, what issues they fight about, and more, are not given. Rather, answers to these questions are the "outcome of continuous struggles." These struggles can and do play out amidst the tumult of strikes and the day-to-day of workplace interactions. They also play out in the arcana of legal decisions and administrative rulemaking.

In *The Employee: A Political History*, Jean-Christian Vinel offers a vivid and detailed exploration of how those struggles about class have unfolded in the United States over the past 150 years. He does so by examining what might at first glance seem to be the most innocuous of categories, that of the "employee." While most laypersons and scholars alike use the term without giving it much thought, Vinel shows that it is not only of fairly recent vintage, but has been the focal point of a great deal of conflict over the course of its existence.

His narrative begins in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, just as the U.S. was adopting a free labor system with the arrival of the Industrial Revolution. In this changed world of production, "employer" and "employé" (borrowed from the French) replaced the feudal terms "master" and "servant." The new language signified at once the freely-contracted nature of the relationship between the two parties, as well as the lack of reciprocal obligations to one another. Vinel notes that the term tapped into American ideas about equal rights and meritocracy. In this it was a "political construction" (p. 22) that discursively erased class antagonism, expressing "the idea of harmony between labor and capital that attended the rise of economic liberalism in the United States" (p. 23).

*BOOK REVIEW: THE EMPLOYEE*

But who exactly was an employee? Despite the term's generic, expansive character, it was not without limits. And, through careful analysis of court cases, correspondence, contemporary news accounts, and more, Vinel shows that debates over who qualified as an employee tapped into more fundamental debates about power in the workplace. Excluding some from the "employee" category by categorizing them as "contractors" or "supervisors" allowed employers to evade certain obligations or increase their control of the shop floor.

At the same time, progressives concerned with socially integrating a restive and alienated working class—what was once called "the labor problem"—sought to build a new vision of economic citizenship around the idea of the employee. Led by John R. Commons, founder of the "Wisconsin school" of industrial relations, they articulated a world devoid of lasting class divisions, where employers and employees resolved specific disputes through institutionalized negotiation and collaboration. The goal was to restore social harmony and interdependence, which had been disrupted by industrial strife (pp. 69-73). Their ideas found an audience in the architects of the 1935 National Labor Relations Act (NLRA, or Wagner Act). Their hope was that the Act would create an infrastructure for achieving that goal.

But in formalizing the set of rights afforded to employees, the NLRA threw into sharper relief the question of who would be classified as an employee entitled to those rights. It would be foremen, particularly those in the auto industry, who would test the boundaries of the employee category. The combination of Fordist production models and mass unionization created a situation where front line supervisors were increasingly deprived of decision-making autonomy, while watching the workers they supervised negotiate increasingly generous wage and ben-

efit packages that were closing the material gap separating workers and foremen.

As a result, some foremen sought to organize their own unions. Key to this effort was their claim that they were employees covered by the NLRA, not part of management. While the Act implied an equivalence between "employee" and blue-collar worker, the foremen argued for a more expansive definition of employee that included a third group between labor and management: that of "supervision." This was consistent with the Wisconsin school's vision of a class-free "industrial pluralism": foremen did not identify as part of a "working class," but rather as a separate group with particular grievances that could be resolved via the NLRA's system of institutionalized dispute resolution.

Although this implied a conservative vision of a particularistic "business unionism," the prospect of foremen unionizing was a bridge too far for management. They considered it an unacceptable encroachment on their "right to manage." For them, foremen were the "hand of management" on the shop floor, and foremen joining unions brought their loyalty into question, as "a man can't serve two masters" (p. 121). Employers fought tooth and nail to deny foremen the status of employees entitled to protection under the NLRA. While the courts vacillated over the course of the 1940s, ultimately employers were successful in excluding foremen from union protections with the passage of the Taft-Hartley Act in 1947.

Further complicating the foremen's efforts was an ambivalent attitude from their would-be union allies, particularly the United Auto Workers (UAW). Some were loath to welcome into their ranks those who represented the face of management discipline

### BOOK REVIEW: *THE EMPLOYEE*

on the shop floor. Those who saw the benefit in supporting the foremen were stymied by factional opponents within the union, who did not want to trade away negotiated wage and benefit increases for the sake of the foremen (p. 155). Caught between management intransigence and union vacillation, the foremen's campaign faltered.

The fight over foremen's unions had lasting consequences for workers' rights and employer power in the postwar period. With the rise of service and knowledge work, unions found themselves trapped by a narrow definition of "employee" that made it difficult to organize these new groups of workers. Meanwhile, employers found that they could evade union challenges to their managerial authority by classifying ever-larger groups of workers as "supervisors" ineligible for unionization. The focal point of this classification struggle became the health care industry, where hospital growth and reorganization pushed larger groups of nurses to seek union protection. Making explicit analogies with the status of foremen, hospital management claimed that nurses were part of management, not employees, and were thus prohibited from unionizing. Although many health care professionals have been able to claim status as employees and join unions, Vinel shows that the question of who is an employee remains contentious. The supervisory exclusion continues to weaken unions and stymie workers' efforts at establishing greater democracy in the workplace.

Vinel's book is a major achievement. In unearthing the hidden conflict surrounding the origins of the term "employee," and subsequent struggles over the question of who counts as an employee, he offers important insights into the "exceptional" character of U.S. class formation and the sources of U.S. labor's weakness. While much of the book focuses on legal cases and obscure points of administrative interpre-

tation, Vinel never loses sight of the fact that these discursive disputes are happening within a broader context of social struggle. Those arguing and interpreting the law are always weighing how the laws might affect the shape of workplace conflict, and some show willingness to revise their interpretations to adapt to changing workplace realities. Even refusing to acknowledge the broader social context surrounding legal interpretation is part of the context of social struggle. As Vinel shows in chapter 7, the move towards "textualist" interpretations of labor law statutes in the 1970s and 80s was part of a campaign to expand employer power and restrict that of employees.

If *The Employee* has a weakness, it is its organization. Although the narrative is structured chronologically, the chapters can seem disjointed from one another. While they do ultimately fit together, Vinel demands a lot from the reader in terms of drawing the connections. Also, those less versed in the history of U.S. labor law and industrial relations scholarship may find themselves getting lost in the details at times. But for those interested in what classification struggles look like in real life, as well as those who want a better understanding of the origins of America's constrained class discourse and labor's organizational weakness, *The Employee* is well worth a read.

#### **References**

Przeworski, Adam. 1977. "Proletariat Into a Class: the Process of Class Formation From Karl Kautsky's the Class Struggle to Recent Controversies." *Politics and Society* 7(4):343-401.

## AWARDS

### Zelizer Award (Best Book)

Winner:

Martin Ruef, *Between Slavery and Capitalism: The Legacy of Emancipation in the American South* (Princeton University Press, 2014).

This year's Zelizer Prize is awarded to Martin Ruef for *Between Slavery and Capitalism: The Legacy of Emancipation in the American South* (Princeton University Press, 2014). This book draws from a remarkable range of sources – from surveys and census data to memoirs and historical interviews – to trace the transformation of Southern labor after the Civil War. With clarity and rigor, Ruef details a set of interconnected changes in labor contracts, land tenure, and credit distribution, which together evolved into a new system of capitalist institutions that existed in an uneasy tension with the lingering institutional structures of slavery. Noting that this was a transition fraught with uncertainty, Ruef shows how institutions allow people to cope not just with risk and classical uncertainty, but also with categorical uncertainty, or an inability to reliably classify various social practices and objects. In all, the Committee found the book to be an outstanding contribution to our understanding of labor markets and institutional change, one that shines new light on how institutions come to stabilize the systems of classification and categorization that underscore social and economic life.

Honorable Mention:

Dan Lanier-Vos, *Sinews of the Nation: Constructing Irish and Zionist Bonds in the United States* (Polity, 2013).

The Committee also wishes recognize Dan Lanier-Vos's book *Sinews of the Nation: Constructing Irish and Zionist Bonds in the United States* (Polity, 2013), with an Honorable Mention. Reconstructing Irish and

Zionist fundraising attempts abroad, Lanier-Vos brings insights from the study of morality and markets to bear on the study of group formation and national attachments. This carefully researched book offers a fine-grained look into how social forces are reflected in, and constituted through, monetary transactions forged within particular organizational contexts. Committee members noted that "[t]his book is a beautifully constructed comparison that generates insights on the link between exchange and nation building. It is well written, deeply researched, and very original."

Committee: Sarah Quinn (Chair), Lyn Spillman, Ofer Sharone, Cristobal Young

### Granovetter Award (Best Article)

Winner:

András Tilcsik. 2014. "Imprint-environment fit and performance: How organizational munificence at the time of hire affects subsequent job performance." *Administrative Science Quarterly* 59(4): 639-668.

This year's Granovetter prize is awarded to András Tilcsik for "Imprint-environment fit and performance: How organizational munificence at the time of hire affects subsequent job performance." Tilcsik's study examines how socialization into firms affects subsequent employee performance. In particular, he emphasizes that employees' early learning of how to do their jobs "imprints" them with a particular set of habits and practices. Because the conditions within firms change over time, employees who are hired in unusual periods are likely to be imprinted with a maladaptive set of work habits, relative to those hired in more typical periods. Tilcsik explores this in the context of two IT service firms, where employees who are onboarded during particularly flush periods learn a gruff, transactional style of client interaction, while employees who join in lean periods learn to develop thick interactions with clients. In both of these cases, senior



## AWARDS

managers whom Tilcsik interviewed saw these extreme behaviors as less efficient and productive in regular operations.

In recent years, the sociology of work and careers has increasingly focused on how events that are beyond the individual's control, such as recessions, plant closures, or acquisitions, place lasting constraints on the individual's career prospects. What is so fruitful about such work is that it does not rule out or dismiss the influence of factors like human or social capital on individual success. Instead it limits the opportunity structure in which such factors can operate, and in so doing gives us a more realistic picture of when and where we might want to intervene in labor markets to reduce such distortions. A great advantage of such work, from the perspective of the economic sociologist, is that it takes such social constraints on economic behavior for granted, and goes beyond demonstrating them to discussing how sociologists and economists might think about either trying to lift them or reforming other practices to take them into account. It goes without saying that Tilcsik's study is carefully documented and artfully written; but it is ultimately the usefulness of such findings, from the perspective of those who want both to understand and to change organizations, that makes it a stand-out piece of work.

### Honorable Mention:

Marion Fourcade and Kieran Healy. 2013. "Classification Situations: Life-chances in the Neoliberal Era." *Accounting, Organizations, and Society* 38: 559-572.

Marion Fourcade and Kieran Healy's "Classification Situations: Life Chances in the Neoliberal Era" receives an honorable mention. Using the US credit market as an empirical example, their article offers an important analysis of the type of classification regimes that are central to modern market institutions.

Anchored on a Weberian understanding of class situations as reflecting the life-chances of individuals with respect to various markets, Fourcade and Healy's proposal emphasizes studying the pragmatics of classification (that is, how people are slotted into specific market categories rather than how these classed categories are made apparent in struggles and contests within broader social fields) to discern their enduring effects on individuals and the social environments they inhabit. Through their focus on how classifications configure and bridge different scales of social life—from the identities and life-experiences afforded to individuals by their availability of credit or lack thereof, for instance, to mechanical forms of statistical classification that reproduce traditional socioeconomic cleavages built around gender and race—Fourcade and Healy's work invites economic sociologists to think in greater empirical and theoretical detail about the specific mechanisms that, linked across numerous institutional domains through money, credit and valuation practices, configure the type of inequalities that are so characteristic of contemporary market societies.

Committee: Marc Ventresca (Chair), Juan Pablo Pardo-Guerra, Lawrence King, John-Paul Ferguson

### **Burt Award (Best Graduate Student Paper)**

#### Winner:

Daniel J. DellaPosta, "Bridging the Parochial Divide: Closure and Brokerage in Mafia Families."

This year's Burt Prize is awarded to Daniel DellaPosta, for his paper titled "Bridging the Parochial Divide: Closure and Brokerage in Mafia Families." DellaPosta's paper breaks new theoretical and empirical ground: the dynamic relationship between brokerage and closure now constitutes the frontier of social network research, and this paper presents a very original, new take on who can span structural holes through the creative use of data on 24 mid-century Italian-American mafia families. Theorizing

## AWARDS

the tension between in-group solidarity and the necessary network diversity of the boundary-spanner is a useful contribution to our understanding of how social groups gain power and access to valued resources while maintaining control over their identity and the loyalty of their members.

## Honorable Mention:

Roi Livne. 2014. "Economies of Dying The Moralization of Economic Scarcity in U.S. Hospice Care." *American Sociological Review* 79(5):888–911.

The committee is also giving honorable mention to Roi Livne, for his paper titled "Economies of Dying: The Moralization of Economic Scarcity in U.S. Hospice Care." Livne's paper makes an original contribution to several literatures: the sociology of morality, the sociology of commensuration, and the sociology of markets for intimate goods among others. Using mixed methods, he shows how in U.S. hospices, there is a historical convergence between the moral motivations of the practitioners and those of the policymakers and of the insurers, a convergence based on a focus on scarcity. Unexpectedly scarcity, in spite of being couched in economic terms, is a moral issue these various parties use as a way to make ethical sense of difficult decisions. By focusing on quantity rather than quality as morally significant, Livne significantly expands the scope of economic sociology.

Committee: Simone Polillo (Chair), Laura Doering, Tod Van Gunten

## 2015 ASA ECONOMIC SOCIOLOGY PROGRAM

Sat, August 22, 8:30 to 10:10am

**Regular Session. Economic Sociology. Moral Values and Economic Life**

Session Organizer: Richard Swedberg, Cornell University

Presider: Jens Beckert, Max Planck Institute for the Study of Societies

Papers:

- *The Price of Legitimacy: Regulation, Risk, and Uncertainty in Legal Marijuana Markets* - Cyrus Dioun, University of California-Berkeley; Heather A. Haveman, University of California-Berkeley
- *The Resurgence of the Locavore: The Growth of Local Food Markets in the United States* - Ion Bogdan Vasi, University of Iowa
- *The Science of Value: Economic Expertise and the Pricing of Human Life in Federal Regulatory Agencies* - Katherine Hood, University of California-Berkeley
- *Who's Going to be Liable for Your Claims? The Rise of Private Halal-Certification Organizations* - Aisalkyn Botoeva, Brown University

Sat, August 22, 10:30am to 12:10pm, TBA

**Regular Session. Economic Sociology. Law and Regulation in Economic Life**

Session Organizer: Richard Swedberg, Cornell University

Presider: Bruce G. Carruthers, Northwestern University

Papers:

- *Be Careful What You Regulate: Sarbanes-Oxley and Banks' Growing Appetite for Risky Derivatives* - Kim Pernell-Gallagher, Harvard University; Jiwook

## 2015 ASA ECONOMIC SOCIOLOGY PROGRAM

Jung, National University-Singapore; Frank Dobbin, Harvard University

- *Cultivating Industrial Society: A New England Case Study* - Laura Ford, State University of New York-Buffalo
- *Long-term Accounting and the Persistence of Delhi's Informal Scrap Economy* - Dana Kornberg, University of Michigan
- *Recursivity in Production of Market Rules: A Case of Regulation NMS* - Bo Hee Min, University of Wisconsin-Madison
- *Trojan Horses in Linked Fields: Economists, Lawyers and the Transformation of U.S. Antitrust Policy* - Elizabeth Popp Berman, State University of New York-Albany

Sat, August 22, 2:30 to 4:10pm

### **Regular Session. Economic Sociology. Gender in the Economy**

Session Organizer: Richard Swedberg, Cornell University

Presider: Frederick F. Wherry, Yale University

Papers:

- *Market Transformation and the Opportunity Structure for Gender Inequality: A Cohort Analysis using Matched Slovenian Data* - Joseph Michael King, University of California-Irvine; Andrew Penner, University of California-Irvine; Aleksandra Kanjuo-Mrcela, University of Ljubljana
- *The Dual Nature of the Gift: 'Getting By' in South Africa's Transactional Sexual Economy* - Claire Laurier Decoteau, University of Illinois-Chicago
- *When Do Married Couples Become Coentrepreneurs: The Effects of Family and Workplaces* - Tiantian Yang, Duke University; Karl Wennberg, Stockholm School of Economics
- *Who Is in Charge: Economic Resources and Power in Contemporary Russian Households* - Alya Guseva, Boston University; Dilyara Ibragimova, National Research University-Higher School of Econom-

ics

- *Naming your daughter Jack: The effect of gender in the evaluation process within a competitive market* - Tristan L. Botelho, Massachusetts Institute of Technology; Mabel Abraham, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Sun, August 23, 8:30 to 10:10am

### **Regular Session. Economic Sociology. Creativity in Economic Life**

Session Organizer: Richard Swedberg, Cornell University

Presider: Lyn Spillman, University of Notre Dame

Papers:

- *Are Financial Economists Creative?* - Simone Polillo, University of Virginia
- *Dancing with Names: The Dynamics of Perceptual Creativity in Diversification* - Sorah Seong, INSEAD; Frederic Clement Godart, INSEAD
- *Freedom From and Through Markets: Autonomy in American Literary and Visual Arts Practice* - Alison Gerber, Yale University; Clayton Childress, University of Toronto
- *Inventing while you Work: Production, Learning and Innovation* - John P. Walsh, Georgia Institute of Technology; You-Na Lee, Georgia Institute of Technology
- *Necessity is the Mother of Isomorphism: Poverty and Market Creativity in Panama* - Laura Doering, University of Toronto

Sun, August 23, 10:30am to 12:10pm

### **Regular Session. Economic Sociology. Analytical Approaches to the Economy**

Session Organizer: Richard Swedberg, Cornell University

Presider: Mabel Berezin, Cornell University

Papers:

- *Revisiting the Academic Caste System: Disentangling*

## 2015 ASA ECONOMIC SOCIOLOGY PROGRAM

*Academic Rank, Department Rank, and Gender* - Neha Gondal, The Ohio State University

- *Status Across Distance: Local and Nonlocal Venture Capitalists in New York City, 1993-2012* - Michael Charles Siemon, Cornell University
- *Structural Hole and Risk Taking* - Gru Han, Harvard University
- *Toward an Economic Sociology of Online Hacker Social Communities* - Meltem Odabas, University of Arizona; Ronald L. Breiger, University of Arizona; Thomas J. Holt, Michigan State University

Sun, August 23, 12:30 to 2:10pm

### **Regular Session. Economic Sociology. Debit and Credit**

Session Organizer: Richard Swedberg, Cornell University

Presider: Alya Guseva, Boston University

Papers:

- *Borrowing History: How Employers Use Credit Reports in Hiring* - Barbara Kiviat, Harvard University
- *Calculating Financialization: The Calculative Practices of Credit Rating Agencies as Drivers of Social Change* - Natalia Besedovsky, University of Bremen
- *Credit and the Promise of Frictionless Federalism* - Sarah Quinn, University of Washington
- *Who is in Debt? A Class Based Analysis of Consumption on Credit* - Zaibu Nissa Tufail, University of California-Irvine

Sun, August 23, 2:30 to 4:10pm

### **Regular Session. Economic Sociology. Financial Globalization**

Session Organizer: Richard Swedberg, Cornell University

Presider: Fred Block, University of California-Davis

Papers:

- *Changing Economic Policy by Seizing Economic Op-*

*portunity: The Case of Closing the Gold Window, 1971* - Nina Bandelj, University of California-Irvine; Christoffer Zoeller, University of California-Irvine

- *In Search of Sovereign Ontologies: State Agency and the Marketization of Sovereign Debts* - Roi Livne, University of California- Berkeley; Benjamin Noel Lemoine, Universite Paris - Dauphine
- *Riding the Bubble: Financial Market Crises in 22 OECD-Countries* - Paul H. Windolf, University Trier
- *Unpacking the Financial Community's Influence Over Central Bank Policy in South Africa and Turkey* - Ayca Zayim, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Mon, August 24, 10:30am to 12:10pm

### **Section on Economic Sociology Paper Session. Social Economies of Households**

Session Organizer: Alya Guseva, Boston University

Presider: Juliet B. Schor, Boston College

Papers:

- *Keeping up with the Joneses: Inequality, Indebtedness, and the Middle Class Struggle to Maintain Their Lifestyle* - Neil Fligstein, University of California; Orestes 'Pat' Hastings, University of California-Berkeley; Adam Goldstein, Harvard University
- *Financialization of Everyday Life or Domestication of Finance? Mortgages in Borrowers' Temporalities, Relationships and Rationalities* - Lena Pellandini-Simanyi, ELTE; Zsuzsanna Vargha, University of Leicester; Ferenc Hammer, Eötvös Loránd University
- *Home Is Where the Risk Is? Household Responses to Foreclosure* - Elyse Kovalsky, Northwestern University
- *Women's Earnings and Spending on Household Services, 1980-2010* - Sabino Kornrich, Emory University
- *Who Pays for Education? How Poor Egyptian Mothers*

## 2015 ASA ECONOMIC SOCIOLOGY PROGRAM

*Finance Their Children's Education* - Hebatalla Gowayed, Princeton University

Mon, August 24, 2:30 to 4:10pm

### Section on Economic Sociology Paper Session. Economic Inequality in Wealth, Assets, and Credit

Session Organizer: Leslie McCall, Northwestern University

Presider: Fabian T. Pfeffer, University of Michigan  
Papers:

- *Bad Timing: Social Stratification in a Mass-Participatory Asset Bubble* - Adam Goldstein, Harvard University
- *Sharing or Limiting Wealth? The Relationship Between Family Structure and Net Worth in Two Countries* - Michelle Lee Maroto, University of Alberta; Laura Aylsworth, University of Alberta
- *State Interventions in Fringe Lending to the Poor: Assessing the Effects of the Military Lending Act* - Roman V. Galperin, Johns Hopkins University; Kaili Mauricio, Federal Reserve Bank of Boston
- *Wealth Inequality among Young Adults during the Great Recession of 2008* - Radha Modi, University of Pennsylvania; Abigail A. Sewell, Emory University

Discussants:

Fabian T. Pfeffer, University of Michigan

Richard Benton, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Mon, August 24, 4:30 to 6:10pm

### Section on Economic Sociology Invited Session. Political Economy, Rebooted

Session Organizer and Presider: Marion Fourcade, University of California-Berkeley

Papers:

- *Imagining the Future. Expectations and Capitalist Dynamics* - Jens Beckert, Max Planck Institute for

the Study of Societies

- *Global Moral Struggles and the Rise of Green Capitalism* - Herbert Rizal Villalon Docena, University of California-Berkeley
- *Financial Subjecthoods and the Ethics of Order Protection: A Comparative Study, c.1990-2014* - Juan Pablo Pardo-Guerra, London School of Economics and Political Science
- *The Third Science: Digital Automation is Political Economy* - Martha Poon, Data and Society Research Institute

Tue, August 25, 8:30 to 10:10am

### Section on Economic Sociology Paper Session. The Economic Sociology of Development

Session Organizer: Andrew Schrank, Brown University

Papers:

- *Colonial Institutions and Trade Patterns* - Emily Anne Erikson, Yale University; Sampsa Samila, NUS Business School
- *Death & Taxes: Ethnicity and State Capacities in Health and Revenue* - Erin Metz McDonnell, University of Notre Dame; Megan J. Austin, University of Notre Dame
- *Network and Learning: Constructing Cross-cutting Ties in Taiwan's Decentralized Production System* - Michelle Fei-yu Hsieh, Academia Sinica
- *On Postsocialist Development: Embedded Economies, Moralized Markets, and Informal Networks* - Nina Bandelj, University of California-Irvine
- *The Financialization Of Everyday Life: Mobile Money And (In)Formal Activity In A Developing Context* - Laura Doering, University of Toronto; Christopher B. Yenkey, University of Chicago; Pete Aceves, University of Chicago

## 2015 ASA ECONOMIC SOCIOLOGY PROGRAM

Tue, August 25, 10:30am to 12:10pm

### Section on Economic Sociology Invited Session. Economies of Difference

Session Organizer:

Sarah Quinn, University of Washington

Papers:

- *Monetary Sanctions and Monetary Profit: State Designed Criminal Punishment and Capital Privilege* - Alexes Harris, University of Washington
- *Concealable Stigma and Occupational Segregation: Toward a Theory of Gay and Lesbian Occupations* - Andras Tilcsik, University of Toronto; Michel Anteby, Harvard University; Carly Knight, Harvard University
- *Sexing the Man in the Market* - Leslie Salzinger, University of California Berkeley
- *Dealing in Desire: Asian Ascendancy, Western Decline, and the Hidden Currencies of Global Sex Work* - Kimberly Hoang, University of Chicago

Tue, August 25, 12:30-1:30pm

### Section on Economic Sociology Roundtables

Session Organizer: Ryan Calder, The Johns Hopkins University

Tables:

- 1) Categories and Categorization
- 2) The Construction and Consequences of Identities and Labels
- 3) The Construction and History of Markets
- 4) The Embeddedness of Exchange
- 5) Households and Financialization
- 6) Informal Economies and the Circulation of Workers, Goods, Money, and Ideas
- 7) Institutions and Fields in the Business World
- 8) Networks among Firms and Economic Partners
- 9) The Political Economy of Liberalization and Development
- 10) Social Networks in Job Searching and Career

Trajectories

- 11) Social Networks, Firms, and Investment
- 12) Social Studies of Finance
- 13) Theories of Economic Action and Comprehension

Tue, August 25, 2:30 to 4:10pm

### Section on Economic Sociology Paper Session. Open Topic

Session Organizer: Jennifer L. Bair, University of Colorado

Presider: Jason Jackson, University of Pennsylvania

Papers:

- *Conflicted Calculations: Climate Change and the Mapping and Pricing of Flood Risk in New York City* - Rebecca Elliott, University of California-Berkeley
- *Financial Education is about Everybody's Self-Regulation: Financial Literacy as a Moralizing Project* - Daniel Maman, Ben Gurion University-Negev; Zeev Rosenhek, Open University-Israel
- *The Personification of the American Corporation in the Press, 1870-1920* - Carly Knight, Harvard University

Discussant: Daniel Hirschman, University of Michigan

## MEMBER PUBLICATIONS

### Recent Books

Hoang, Kimberly Kay. 2015. *Dealing in Desire: Asian Ascendancy, Western Decline, and the Hidden Currencies of Global Sex Work*. Oakland, CA: University of California Press.

This captivating ethnography explores Vietnam's sex industry as the country ascends the global and regional stage. Over the course of five years, author Kimberly Kay Hoang worked at four exclusive Sai-

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gon hostess bars catering to diverse clientele: wealthy local Vietnamese and Asian businessmen, Viet Kieus (ethnic Vietnamese living abroad), Western businessmen, and Western budget-tourists. *Dealing in Desire* takes an in-depth and often personal look at both the sex workers and their clients to show how Vietnamese high finance and benevolent giving are connected to the intimate spheres of the informal economy. For the domestic super-elite who use the levers of political power to channel foreign capital into real estate and manufacturing projects, conspicuous consumption is a means of projecting an image of Asian ascendancy to potential investors. For Viet Kieus and Westerners who bring remittances into the local economy, personal relationships with local sex workers reinforce their ideas of Asia's rise and Western decline, while simultaneously bolstering their diminished masculinity. *Dealing in Desire* illuminates Ho Chi Minh City's sex industry as not just a microcosm of the global economy, but a critical space where dreams and deals are traded. For more information, see <http://www.ucpress.edu/book.php?isbn=9780520275577>.

Leschziner, Vanina. 2015. *At the Chef's Table: Culinary Creativity in Elite Restaurants*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

This book is about the creative work of chefs at top restaurants in New York and San Francisco. Based on interviews with chefs and observation in restaurant kitchens, the book explores the question of how and why chefs make choices about the dishes they put on their menus. It answers this question by examining a whole range of areas, including chefs' careers, restaurant ratings and reviews, social networks, how chefs think about food and go about creating new dishes, and how status influences their work and careers. Chefs at top restaurants face competing pressures to deliver complex and creative dishes, and navigate market forces to run a profitable

business in an industry with exceptionally high costs and low profit margins. Creating a distinctive and original culinary style allows them to stand out in the market, but making the familiar food that many customers want ensures that they can stay in business. Chefs must make choices between these competing pressures. In explaining how they do so, this book uses the case study of high cuisine to analyze, more generally, how people in creative occupations navigate a context that is rife with uncertainty, high pressures, and contradicting forces. For more information, see <http://www.sup.org/books/title/?id=23351>.

Pugh, Allison. 2015. *The Tumbleweed Society: Working and Caring in an Age of Insecurity*. Oxford University Press.

The *Tumbleweed Society* analyzes the broader impacts of job precariousness upon our approach to work, our notions of what counts as honorable behavior, and our relations with the people we love. Based on in-depth interviews with 80 people who vary in their exposure to insecurity as well as their relative class advantage, *The Tumbleweed Society* investigates how job disruptions extend beyond the workplace, to affect workers' relationships with partners, children and communities. The book argues that when insecurity is widely viewed as inevitable, workers abide by a "one-way-honor system," in which they attest to their own loyalty and dedication at work as a sign of personal character, while expecting very little of their employers, whom they view as responding to the unavoidable demands of globalization and heightened competition. Yet as scholars have shown, insecurity is not inevitable, but is in part the result of deliberate choices made by the state and employers that have contributed to widening inequality. In response, many workers place nearly all of their expectations for fulfilling connections on their intimate relationships. But this

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trend often has the effect of making their intimate lives even more fraught, reproducing the very insecurity they seek to check. For more information, see <http://allisonpugh.weebly.com/the-tumbleweed-society.html>.

**Recent Articles**

Bandelj, Nina, Lyn Spillman and Frederick F. Wherry (eds.) "Economic Culture in the Public Sphere." *European Journal of Sociology* 56(1) 2015.

Duina, Francesco. 2015. "Making Sense of the Legal and Judicial Architectures of Regional Trade Agreements Worldwide," *Regulation & Governance*.

Fridman, Daniel. 2014. "Resisting the Lure of the Paycheck: Freedom and Dependence in Financial Self-Help." *Foucault Studies* (18):90–112. <http://ej.lib.cbs.dk/index.php/foucault-studies/article/view/4653>

Vidal, Matt, Paul Adler and Rick Delbridge. 2015. "When Organization Studies Turns to Societal Problems: The Contribution of Marxist Grand Theory." *Organization Studies* 26,4: 405-422.

Vidal, Matt. In press. "Industrialization, Fordism and the Golden Age of Atlantic Capitalism: The UK, USA and Germany from 1800-1973," in Stephen Edgell, Heidi Gottfried and Edward Granter (eds.) *Handbook of the Sociology of Work and Employment*, Sage.

## RECENT AND UPCOMING CONFERENCES

**Pricing Practices, Ranking Practices  
Evaluation in Economic Life  
Ecole Normale Supérieure  
Paris, June 29-30, 2015**

How do people determine "what counts"? What is the relationship between economic, moral, and aesthetic understandings of value? What are the effects of numbers and quantitative calculations on economic life and social interactions? Twenty years ago, in *The Social Meaning of Money* (1994, French translation 2005), Viviana Zelizer proposed a seminal analysis of the social and cultural features of money. Since then, many researchers in economic and cultural sociology have examined the interplay between economic evaluation and more qualitative definitions of value. The international conference "Pricing Practices, Ranking Practices: Evaluation in Economic Life" takes advantage of the anniversary of Zelizer's book to explore a variety of subjects related to the question of evaluation, from compensation practices to cultural algorithms. By putting in dialogue American, European and French scholars working on evaluation, what can we learn about the construction, implementation, and consequences of pricing and ranking practices in the modern world?

**2015 AOM Professional Development Workshop (PDW)  
Trust Between Individuals and Organizations  
Offsite in UBC Robson Square- Room C180  
Saturday, Aug 8 2015 8:00AM-10:00AM**

- Organizer: Bart de Jong; VU U. Amsterdam;
- Organizer: Oliver Schilke; U. of Arizona;
- Speaker: Mike Baer; Arizona State U.;



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- Facilitator: Cecily D Cooper; U. of Miami;
- Speaker: Rekha Krishnan; Simon Fraser U.;
- Facilitator: Dora C. Lau; Chinese U. of Hong Kong;
- Facilitator: Scott W Lester; U. of Wisconsin, Eau Claire;
- Speaker: Roy J. Lewicki; The Ohio State U.;
- Speaker: Niels G. Noorderhaven; Tilburg U.;
- Facilitator: Fabrice Lumineau; Purdue U.;
- Speaker: Sandra Robinson; U. of British Columbia;
- Facilitator: Ed Tomlinson; West Virginia U.;
- Facilitator: Bart Vanneste; UCL;

Trust is a fundamental characteristic of work relationships and one of the most frequently studied concepts in organizational research today. This PDW is aimed at advancing research on trust by serving as a platform for scholars to discuss fundamental issues, engage in dialogue, and help further research-in-progress.

The workshop consists of three segments:

1) The first segment starts off with a panel discussion, in which leading scholars share their thought-provoking ideas on the important topic of "the limits and liabilities of trust";

2) For the second segment, attendees break into groups that discuss questions previously submitted by workshop participants. Submitting a discussion question on trust is a requirement for registration. These questions may include (but are not limited to):

- trust dynamics over time
- trust at and across levels of analysis
- interorganizational trust
- trust and control
- trust asymmetries
- trust versus distrust

- the role of emotions;

3) The third segment consists of a paper development workshop, in which the facilitators provide in-depth feedback on work-in-progress trust research previously submitted by workshop participants. These papers should be in an advanced developmental stage, targeted at a scholarly management journal, and no more than 40 double-spaced pages in length.

Registration requirements: to register only for the first and second segment (panel discussion and round tables), email one discussion question on trust. To register for all three segments (i.e., including paper development), e-mail a discussion question and working paper on trust. E-mails should be sent to [trustpdw@gmail.com](mailto:trustpdw@gmail.com) no later than **July 25, 2015**. You will then receive a code that will allow you to register for the PDW.

**SASE/Porto Alegre Regional Meeting  
State, Society and Market: Ibero-America in  
the 21st Century  
UFRGS: Federal University of Rio Grande do  
Sul, Porto Alegre, Brazil  
November 19-21, 2015**

*Call for papers:*

The global financial crisis of 2007-2008 and the ensuing Great Recession have discredited the market fundamentalist dogma that had assumed pride of place in social and development policymaking over the previous three decades. Policymakers have re-evaluated their commitment to a neoliberal model that delivered neither growth nor equity, and academics have not only voiced their own doubts about laissez-faire but have begun to explore heterodox and multidisciplinary alternatives. While the Ibero-American countries have been particularly hostile to

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neoliberalism, and have animated some of the best-known alternatives, they are still beset by a number of profound challenges. In the last three years, for example, Latin American growth rates have become anaemic, and progress on the social front has stagnated. And Spain and Portugal have not only been particularly hard hit by the financial crisis of 2007-2008 but have paid an enormous price for the budgetary austerity that followed. The Ibero-American countries thus face a key moment in which the incipient alternatives that emerged in the wake of the crisis confront a number of threats, including the very real possibility of a conservative counter-reaction. In this context, the 2nd Ibero-American Meeting of Socio-Economics, a SASE Regional Conference, will explore the prospects for these countries, with a particular focus on the state's role in a post-neoliberal world. More specifically, we will examine the state's capacity to promote a viable development agenda in the context of globalization by acting autonomously to implement industrial policies, defend countercyclical fiscal and monetary policies, build physical and institutional infrastructures, improve the competitiveness of the manufacturing sector, and enhance the quality of social policies. We will also acknowledge and examine the roles of various forms of capitalism, with different institutional combinations, highlighting the importance of the state in coordinating policies that promote growth and competitiveness.

The socio-economic demands, particularly in Latin American countries, put the issues into perspective for discussion on strategies and obstacles to sustainable development in the long term, and it should be analyzed from a multidisciplinary perspective. Accordingly, the 2nd Ibero-American Meeting on Socio-Economics will discuss the following issues: the state of the art in Socio-Economy Studies; development and varieties of Capitalism; democracy, citizenship and social movements; macroeconomics, financial systems and prudential regulation; culture,

development and creative economy; employment, well-being, inequality and social policies; sustainable development, territory and environment; industry and international trade; globalization, international relations and regional integration.

Please send your abstract proposal to **[2rise.ufrgs.portoalegre@gmail.com](mailto:2rise.ufrgs.portoalegre@gmail.com)** by September 30, 2015

