

Labor and Labor Movements Section Business meeting

Monday, August 18, 2014, San Francisco, CA

Original minutes by Paul Almeida (Secretary/Treasurer)

I. Statements by Shannon Gleeson (Incoming Chair)

- A. New Council members and Chair-Elect introduced
 - a. Jeff Sallaz (incoming Council Member)
 - b. Shannon Ikebe (incoming Graduate Student Council Member)
 - c. Nancy Plankey-Videla (Chair-Elect)
- B. Thanks outgoing Chair McKay for his work

II. Statements by Steve McKay (Outgoing Chair)

- A. Need to Prepare Chair Report.
- B. Discusses China-U.S. Labor Exchange Initiative
- C. Membership needs to grow to over 400 members
 - a. Focus recruitment on graduate students
- D. Open submissions for section panels relatively successful
- E. Ruth Milkman incoming ASA President
 - a. LLM section should make connections with incoming President for special panels and other initiatives

III. Treasurer Report (Paul Almeida, Secretary/Treasurer)

- A. After coming off an expensive year with the Labor Mini-Conference in New York in 2013, we are now moving to an ordinary budget period.
- B. With the ASA meetings and website maintenance related expenditures our current LLM Section Balance is an estimated \$721. If we sustain current section

membership levels, we will receive an additional \$1800 from ASA in January 2015, bringing us near our original balance of May 2014 and prepared to support the 2015 section related expenses.

IV. Chris Tilly on International Sociological Association (ISA)

- A. RC 44 is the Labor Movement Section of ISA
- B. There is much interest in informal and precarious labor within RC 44
- C. At the ISA in Japan there was increase in panels involving labor activists.
- D. Next ISA Conference will occur in 4 years.
- E. The Global Labour Journal is published in association with RC 44 (an open access journal)

V. Chris Tilly on U.S./China labor exchange

- A. Deadline for application to join next delegation is August 29.
- B. The exchange program is funded by a Ford Foundation grant.
- C. First U.S. delegation visits China in 2012
- D. Chinese delegation visits ASA in New York in 2013
- E. Criteria for application to be selected on delegation is commitment to support the institutional links between Chinese and US labor scholars.
- F. Dates for 2014 delegation, December 26 to January 1.
- G. Ad hoc committee will review the delegation applicants.

VI. Mentoring Committee (Incoming Chair Shannon Gleeson)

- A. Circulate a signup sheet for: 1) mentors and 2) those seeking mentors
- B. Re-establish mentor committee
- C. LLM section member suggests reaching out to other sections such as Comparative and Historical Sociology and Global and Transnational Sociology to collaborate in a mentoring workshop
- D. Some sections hold a mentoring lunch
- E. LLM section member states that some labor foundations may assist in funding a mentor program

VII. Format of Regular Session Proposals (Incoming Chair Shannon Gleeson)

- A. What type of panel submission format should we have (open, agenda, hybrid)?
- B. Outgoing Chair McKay views open submission format as successful.
- C. LLM section member states that at times the open submission format makes finding unifying themes difficult in which to group panels
- D. More submissions may result in ASA allocating an additional panel
- E. Open submission format permits opportunities for certain topics that may be overlooked with other formats

VIII. Section Awards (add statements from Award Committee chairs here)

- A. Best Book Award (Chair: Nancy Plankey-Videla)

Jamie K. McCallum, *Global Unions, Local Power: The New Spirit of Transnational Labor Organizing*. Cornell University Press, 2013.

Jamie McCallum's central argument, in *Global Unions, Local Power: The New Spirit of Transnational Labor Organizing*, is that "workers of the world can in fact unite, if not around common demands then around common employers" (17). McCallum examines the SEIU-led campaign against global property security services company, G4S, demonstrating that top-down global union federations and global framework agreements can, paradoxically, provide meaningful opportunities for grassroots organizing by disciplining large transnational corporations to play by union rules and thus impact the entire industry. This book, however, is not a Pollyannaish look at transnational unionism but a nuanced case study of SEIU's transnational campaign with an in depth look at how local institutional and organizational context in the US, South Africa, and India, shape movement collaboration, conflict, and outcomes.

Best Book Award Honorable Mention:

Rina Agarwala, *Informal Labor, Formal Politics, and the Dignified Discontent in India*. Cambridge University Press, 2013.

In this meticulously researched work, *Informal Labor, Formal Politics, and the Dignified Discontent in India*, Rina Agarwala examines how informal workers have been able to successfully organize under a neoliberal regime that has decimated unions and employment security. Drawing on over 300 interviews with informal workers, non-governmental organizations, union leaders, and government officials, Agarwala compares two major groups of informal workers, bidi rollers and construction workers, and their movement organizations under very different political and institutional contexts of three cities/states. She finds that informal workers are most successful in states that have competitive elections and free market policies where workers can use their votes to demand social welfare benefits. That is, were

informal workers have found innovative ways to organize as citizens at the neighborhood rather than as workers in the almost non-existent shop floor.

B. Best Article Award (Chair: Belinda Lum)

Winner of the Best Article Award

Masi De Casanova, Erynn. 2013. "Embodied Inequality, The Experience of Domestic Work in Urban Ecuador." *Gender and Society* 27(4): 561-585.

Drawing on the experiences of women domestic workers in urban Ecuador, this article explores the “embodied dimensions domestic work and shows how unequal relations between workers and employers manifest in and on the body –specifically through interactions around health, food, and clothing.” Dr. Masi De Casanova argues that, “paid domestic workers bodies are simultaneously resources that can be used (up) for work, and symbols interpreted according to local hierarchies of gender and class. The committee was particularly impressed with the theoretical and empirical dimensions of this work. The methods were strong and rigorous, and the subject matter was innovative –particularly as it relates to the topic of labor. While sociological research has recently turned its focus to body studies –labor remains an important social action that has only been minimally incorporated into this literature. Dr. Masi De Casanova’s ability to connect the ways in which gender and class are lived and connected to the ‘body as symbol’ was particularly compelling and continues to elucidate the continuing importance of gender and work.

Honorable Mention:

Bhatt, Wasudha. 2013. “The Little Brown Woman: Gender Discrimination in American Medicine.” *Gender and Society* 27 (5): 659-680.

Utilizing data from 121 in-depth interviews of first and second generation Indian origin physicians, this article examines the incidence and nature of gender-based discrimination in American Medicine. Dr. Bhatt’s work highlights the impact that gender and race have in shaping and influencing the trajectories of Indian women physicians. Her empirical work highlights the experiences of skilled migrant labor and the ways in which race, gender and power relations occur in U.S. workplaces. Members of the committee felt that this article provided an important analysis of ‘gendered racism’ that is often missing from labor literature that focuses heavily on class. This article also provides important interventions into literature on immigrant

workers by focuses on the experiences of highly skilled immigrant workers. Bhatt's analysis shows that education does not decrease experiences of discrimination.

C. LLM and Critical Sociology Graduate Student Paper Award (Chair: Marcos Lopez)

Winner of the Best Graduate Student Paper Award and \$500 from Critical Sociology and LLM:

Julia Chuang, "Urbanization through Dispossession: Survival and Stratification in China's New Townships."

Drawing on ethnographic research carried out among labor brokers and construction workers in Central China, Dr. Chuang examines the ill-effects of dispossession because of urbanization following the New Socialist Countryside Campaign (NSCC) in 2006. Building on David Harvey, she argues that the implementation of rural urbanization enables a dual accumulation arrangement, "One occurring through the continuing subsidization of labor reproduction costs deep in the hinterland, and another occurring through the expropriation of land in peri-urban areas." Construction firms choose to employ landed workers from the hinterlands, where subsistence agriculture provides workers a social safety net and allows them to depend less on consistent wages. In turn, she points out that landless proletarianized workers in one of China's emerging townships drown in debt because of rising costs associated with city living. The committee was impressed with Dr. Chuang's analysis that shows how China's rural urbanization projects produce stratification due to the uneven consequences of accumulation by dispossession. Her ability to ground Marxist political economy with ethnographic detail provides new avenues for assessing what structurally at times seem as antagonistic elements. In her case, she explains how the use of a landed, not landless, workforce helps cushion accumulation.

IX. Final Announcements (Shannon Gleeson, Incoming Chair)

- A. New issue of Working USA journal has been published
- B. Do not forget section reception tonight at Local Unite at 6:30pm
- C. Mark Sherry needs more newsletter material, please send submissions
- D. Tuesday night Chris Rhomberg has a book presentation event