

Labor and Labor Movements Section Business meeting

Saturday, August 20, 2016, Seattle, WA

Original minutes by Jeff Rothstein (incoming Secretary/Treasurer)

- I. Statements by Nancy Plankey Videla (Outgoing Chair)
 - A. Congratulations to organizers of successful mini-conference
 - B. Turnover Chair to Chris Rhomberg

- II. Statements by Chris Rhomberg (Chair)
 - A. Thanks outgoing Chair Nancy Plankey Videla for her dedicated work to the section
 - B. Recognizes Exiting Council Members
 1. Shannon Gleason; Shannon Ikebe
 - C. Recognizes incoming council members
 1. Sarah Swider (Chair-Elect)
 2. Jeff Rothstein (Secretary/Treasurer)
 3. Penny Lewis (Council Member)

- III. Treasurer's Report (Jeff Rothstein in place of Paul Almeida)
 - A. \$22,768 balance at end of last quarter
 1. Additional funds raised and spent on mini-conference
 - B. Estimated current balance of \$750 after all mini-conference bills paid

- IV. Membership Report (Chris Rhomberg)
 - A. We have 370 current members
 - B. 2 people joined at mini-conference
 - C. We need 400 by Sept 30 for 3 panels at 2017 ASA
 - D. We get \$1000 plus \$2 per member from ASA on Jan.1
 - E. Recruitment
 1. Gift memberships are \$5 for students; URL on ASA member portal

- V. Committees

Sign up sheets passed for volunteers. The chairs and members are:

 - A. Nominations: Nancy Plankey Videla
 - B. Mentoring: Chris Rhomberg, Luke Elliott-Negri
 - C. Membership: Nancy Plankey Videla, Jeff Rothstein (ex-officio)
 - D. Program: Chris Rhomberg, Sarah Swider (ex-officio)
 1. Chris Rhomberg offered his ideas for 2017 sessions:
 - a. Themed panel on Canadian labor
 - b. Themed panel on global/comparative labor
 - c. Open session
 2. Other ideas offered by the membership:

- a. Race & labor
- b. Transnational labor cooperation
- c. Global labor solidarity
- d. Include trade unionists on panels
- e. Joint sessions w/ other sections
 - a. Panel on fair trade with Consumption Section

E. Distinguished Scholarly Book Award: Jeff Sallaz, Vanesa Ribas (2016 recipient)

F. Distinguished Scholarly Article Award: Joshua Bloom, Daniel Schneider and/or Adam Reich (2016 recipients)

G. Distinguished Student Article Award: Penny Lewis, Katherine Maich and/or Brian Halpin (2016 recipients)

VI. Discussion of Web Presence & Social Media

A. Report from Matt Vidal on “Work in Progress” public sociology blog

B. Discussion of presence (facebook; web page; newsletter; announcements)

1. Web page needs to be up to date
2. Web page needs to maintain baseline functions
3. Perhaps include links to member web pages
4. Do we need a web committee?
5. Need newsletter editor

VII. Section Awards

A. Distinguished Scholarly Book Award:

Vanesa Ribas, *Organizing On the Line: Slaughterhouse Lives and the Making of the New South*. University of California Press, 2016.

Vanesa Ribas’s central argument, in *On the Line: Slaughter House Lives and the Making of the New South*, is that “work – as a setting, structure, and process – remains singularly important for understanding the incorporation experience of working-class Latina/o migrants, who are, after all labor migrants” (9). In carrying out a spectacular ethnography at Swine, a large hog processing plant in North Carolina, Ribas’s book provides a rich and nuanced understanding of how Latina/o workers experience immigrant incorporation in a labor setting historically dominated by African-American workers. During her 18 months at Swine, Ribas found that Latinas/os’ use of language and action reinforced intergroup position and produced racialized boundaries between them and African Americans. In the end, Ribas’ book provides fresh insights for thinking about how immigrant life inside the factory walls and in the community cannot be neatly severed.

Honorable Mention:

Sarah Swider, *Building China: Informal Work and the New Precariat*. Cornell University Press, 2015.

With great attention to detail, in *Building China: Informal Work and the New Precariat*, Sarah Swider breaks down the category of informal labor in China’s construction industry, and identifies three employment configurations. What she terms as mediated, embedded, and

individualized employment configurations, she points out, are associated with a particular pathway into employment, mechanisms of regulation, living arrangements and forms of protest. Swider's ethnography provides an intimate portrait of the everyday life, work, and struggles of male migrant construction workers, that in larger light, brings into question the mechanisms used to reproduce the growing number of informal workers in the global economy.

B. Distinguished Scholarly Article Award:

Daniel Schneider and Adam Reich. 2014. "Marrying Ain't Hard When You Got a Union Card? Labor Union Membership and First Marriage." *Social Problems* 61(4): 625-643

The Labor and Labor Movements Section of the ASA is pleased to give its outstanding article award to Daniel Schneider and Adam Reich, for their article "Marrying Ain't Hard When You Got a Union Card? Labor Union Membership and First Marriage" (published in 2014 in *Social Problems*). In the committee's opinion, this article breaks new ground by discovering a hitherto unacknowledged outcome of union decline in the United States: a decline in marriage. Drawing upon longitudinal data, the authors attribute their findings to increased economic insecurity, lower incomes, and lessened benefits for young male workers. The result is a powerful argument for labor unions' importance for building solid families and communities. This is a fine article and a deserving winner.

C. Distinguished Student Article Award Co-Winners:

Katherine Maich "Collective [Dis] Empowerment: Gendered Divisions and the Organization of Worker Centers"

Katherine E. Maich's paper titled "Collective [Dis] Empowerment: Gendered Divisions and the Organization of Worker Centers" represents an important and innovative contribution to the sociological literature on worker centers, which are playing an increasing role within the labor movement, especially for immigrant workers and their communities. Drawing on ethnographic research on a worker center dominated by Latino immigrants in the San Francisco Bay Area, Maich's paper departs from previous scholarly work on the topic by focusing specifically on the center's internal structure and its implications for worker power both within and outside the organization. In the case examined by Maich, the most salient organizational feature is the division of the worker center into separate collectives for men and for women, with each collective having different responsibilities and conditions for seeking work. When these internal gender distinctions articulate with gender divisions outside the center, most notably differences in the housing status of most male immigrants compared to that of females and the gendered character of the type of work members of each collective obtain, differential outcomes ensue. Specifically, Maich finds that while male immigrants are relatively empowered within the worker center and experience disempowerment outside of it, female immigrants experience the opposite outcomes. Overall, Maich's well-documented and argued paper has distinctive merit for the study of labor and labor movements, not only for being an excellent case study in itself but for leading the way toward a new and important line of research in the sociology of worker centers.

Brian Halpin “Subject to Change Without Notice: Mock Schedules and Flexible Employment in the United States” in *Social Problems* (2015)

How do firms provide dependable, high-quality services to affluent clients while offering only temporary and precarious employment to their workers? Halpin addresses this question in an ethnographic case study of a high-end catering firm that interweaves description of flexible employment structures with insights into workers’ subjective experience. The author shows how various manipulations of the work schedule constitute a “mock calendar” that preserves staffing flexibility while sustaining worker commitment through an illusory promise of stable employment. The daily manipulations of the work schedule, combined with a limited tolerance of shop floor autonomy and expressions of worker resentment, create a paternalistic employment relationship and enable management to elicit worker consent to flexible production. The committee was impressed by the way the paper contributes both to the literature on workplace control and to our understanding of the experience of many undocumented workers.

VIII. Announcements

A. Kim Scipes has a new edited volume Building Global Labor Solidarity in a Time of Accelerating Globalization

Meeting Adjourned