Academia and Artillery: Sociology during the U.S. Invasion of Iraq

Message from the Chairperson, Stephen Pfohl

What is it like to do sociology during times of “preemptive” warfare and the spread of military-backed corporate power the globe over? During the 2002-2003 Academic Year we have all had a chance to find out. Indeed, just as the previous year was enveloped with questions stemming from the terrorist attacks of September 2001 and the US-led invasion of Afghanistan, this year the shadows of the US-led invasion of Iraq loomed large over our classrooms and workplace. The result was a sustained opportunity to make connections between sociological lessons about power, social institutions, the culture in which we are situated, and the troubling state of world historical events. Members of the Boston College Sociology Department took advantage of this opportunity by addressing questions raised by the invasion and occupation of Iraq in our classrooms and by sponsoring and participating in several university-wide forums on this issue.

In Fall Semester several Sociology Department faculty members were among the featured speakers at a well-attended symposium organized by BC's Global Justice Project. The objective of the symposium was to air informed viewpoints and debate the upcoming attack on Iraq. In Spring Semester the Sociology Department took the lead in organizing a major forum aimed at educating the university community about facts and perspectives pertaining to the war in Iraq that were ignored or downplayed by the dominant media. This event, “Behind the Headlines: War in Iraq,” was organized in collaboration with the Graduate Student Peace Initiative and the campus group, Faculty and Staff for Social Justice. “Behind the Headlines” involved presentations by faculty members from the departments of Theology, History, and Philosophy, as well as Sociology. This event also included small in-depth discussion groups, led by a variety of faculty and graduate teaching fellows from across the university, and concluded with a moving meditative vigil for peace. Faculty and students from the Sociology Department were also faithful participants in the weekly vigils and marches for peace that took place on campus during the course of the war.

With the attack on Iraq looming in the background, Academic Year 2002-03 was also enormously exciting for the Sociology Department in a number of other ways. In addition to the continuing high level of scholarly production and engaged teaching on the part of our faculty and graduate students, of particular significance this year was the hiring of two new assistant professors—Sarah Babb and Leslie Salzinger. The past academic year was also the third year of the department’s highly successful Visiting Distinguished Scholars Series. The theme for the series in Spring 2003 was “Class and Social Inequality in the Early Twenty-First Century.” Also noteworthy was the completion of two major collective publishing projects involving the BC Sociology Department, prestigious awards, honors, and fellowships bestowed on members of the department, and the reception of new grants providing external funding for research. Since each of these things is described in
greater depth elsewhere in this newsletter, I will simply highlight their significance in my own remarks.

The hiring of two outstanding new faculty members was perhaps the most single important development in the department last year. Following an in-depth search involving over 230 applicants for an advertised position in the area of "Global Sociology," offers were made and accepted by Sarah Babb and Leslie Salzinger. Sarah was awarded the Ph.D. by Northwestern University in 1998 and joins the BC faculty after five years of full-time teaching as an assistant professor at University of Massachusetts, Amherst. A celebrated comparative historical sociologist, whose publications include the critically acclaimed book, Managing Mexico (Princeton University Press, 2001), Sarah will come to BC with an established reputation for teaching excellence and will offer graduate and undergraduate courses in the areas of global sociology, economic sociology, sociology of revolution, social movements, complex organization, and comparative historical methods.

Leslie Salzinger, our second new hire, completed her Ph.D. at University of California, Berkeley in 1998 and has been teaching as an assistant professor at University of Chicago since that time. An accomplished ethnographer, feminist social theorist, and recent Book Review Editor for the American Journal of Sociology, Leslie's published work includes the new book, Genders Under Production (University of California Press) and, with Michael Burawoy and other co-editors, the highly influential volume Ethnography Unbound (University of California Press, 1991). When she arrives at Boston College in fall of 2004, Leslie will also bring with her a well-earned reputation as an exceptionally strong graduate and undergraduate-level instructor. At BC, Leslie is likely to teach a wide range of courses, including global sociology, self, culture and society, ethnographic methods, feminist theory, sociology of gender, and economic sociology. Together with Sarah Babb, the Sociology Department is very enthusiastic about having Leslie Salzinger join our faculty.

In addition to grappling with the problems of preemptive war and the complexities of hiring, the past academic year also marked the third year of the Sociology Department's annual Visiting Distinguished Scholars Series. This series brings leading scholars in our field to the Boston College campus for several days during the Spring Semester. While at BC, each scholar delivers a major public lecture, conducts a series of faculty-graduate student seminars, and meets informally with members of the department and university community. During the first two years of the series, visiting scholars included Paul Gilroy, Aldon Morris, M. Jacqui Alexander, Patricia Hill Collins, Sandra Harding, and Dorothy Smith. Last spring the series involved the renowned cultural critic bell hooks, as well as Mary Waters (Harvard University) and Michael Burawoy (University of California, Berkeley). Each addressed aspects of the theme, "Class and Social Inequality in the Early Twentieth-First Century."

In her standing room only public lecture, bell hooks made timely analytic links between social class in a global context of war and militarism, while discussing the social location of black women in the American class system in her seminar. Mary Waters’ lecture and seminars centered on class-based inequalities in relation to racialized streams of global immigration, while Michael Burawoy’s public lecture spoke to theoretical and practical dilemmas faced by Marxism following the collapse of Soviet communism. Burawoy’s seminars proved equally provocative, examining the respective theoretical legacies of Antonio Gramsci and Michael Polanyi for the project of critical sociological thought. In addition, Burawoy delivered a second lecture on the prospects for a renewal of public sociologies in anticipation of the address he will make to the American Sociological Association as President in the summer of 2004. While each distinguished scholar raised issues of great relevance for discerning the complex ways in which class and social inequality materially impact the lives of people the globe over, as in past years, the cumulative effect of all three scholars’ visits was enormously energizing. This is evidence of the importance of the Visiting Distinguished Scholars Series to our department and university. The series represents a unique opportunity for our own faculty and students to engage in sustained dialogue with leading figures in our field, while exposing all of us to cutting-edge thought in sociology on an annual basis.

One outgrowth of Michael Burawoy’s visit to Boston College last spring was his invitation to six BC sociology faculty members to contribute articles for a special section of the journal, Social Problems, on the challenge of public sociology. This invitation grew out of conversations that Michael
had with a number of us about the possibilities of communicating a sociological imagination to diverse publics beyond the profession of sociology itself. When it struck Michael that, to a significant extent, varieties of public sociology were already taking place at BC, Burawoy quickly made arrangements to edit a special section of Social Problems on “public sociology at Boston College” for an issue scheduled for publication in the months before next year’s American Sociological Association meetings. As such, a special issue of the journal will now include invited articles by William Gamson, Charlotte Ryan, Charles Derber, Diane Vaughan, Juliet Schor, and myself addressing the opportunities and dilemmas faced by sociologists who endeavor to engage intellectually and politically with the wider public. Burawoy has written both an introductory “manifesto” and critical commentary about our essays on this topic.

While the Social Problems’ symposium on public sociology will undoubtedly inform the field of sociology about exciting developments taking place at BC, the recent completion of a special issue of the journal Critical Sociology, by an Editorial Collective of Boston College faculty and graduate students promises to do the same. The special issue, due out at approximately the same time as the special issue of Social Problems, is organized around the theme, “Culture, Power, and History” and will include a diverse array of engaging work by current BC graduate students and faculty, as well as recent graduate alumni. Together, the special issues of Critical Sociology and Social Problems promise to communicate to the sociological community-at-large what people around our university already know — that a great deal of exciting, sophisticated, and justice-oriented sociological scholarship is taking place in our department.

Another measure of the high quality of sociological life at Boston College is the regular bestowal of awards and honors upon our faculty and students. This past year was no exception. William Gamson was inducted into the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Diane Vaughan, whose recent contributions to the Columbia shuttle explosion investigation have made her a regular presence in the mass media, was awarded a prestigious Guggenheim Fellowship to assist with her research on the sociology of air flight control practices. Diane was also recently elected to serve on the Executive Council of the American Sociological Association. (For more about Diane Vaughan’s work, see the David Karp’s interview with Diane on p. 16.) Paul Schervish, whose research with John Havens on matters pertaining to wealth distribution and philanthropy also makes him a regular sociological face in the media, was for the second year in a row named to the Non-Profit Times’ “Power and Influence Top 50.” Jeanne Guillemin, who is currently completing a study of the politics of bioterrorism, was appointed as a Dibner Fellow in Security Studies at MIT and was also the recipient of a research award from the MacArthur Foundation. Eva Garroutte, whose book entitled Real Indians was just published by University of California Press, was also the recipient of a large multi-year research grant from the National Institute of Health to facilitate her studies of the health problems and health services for aging Native American populations. Lisa Dodson also received substantive funding from the Ford Foundation to support her continuing research on the situation facing poor urban women following drastic alterations to the welfare system. Robert Kunovich both co-edited a special issue of the International Journal of Sociology and was named a 2003 recipient of a highly competitive BC Research Incentive Grant to support his work on “Attaining Justice in Post-Conflict Societies,” with a focus on Bosnia, Northern Ireland, and South Africa.

BC sociology graduate students were also recipients of important awards and honors. Tay MacNamara was the 2002 recipient of the Outstanding Graduate Student Paper Award by the Massachusetts Gerontological Association. Tay was also winner of the Helen and Donald J. White Award for Outstanding Boston College Dissertation in the Social Sciences for her thesis, The Role of Social Context in the Relationship between Health and Retirement. Four separate graduate teaching fellows — Abigail Brooks, Sandra O’Neill, John Shandra, and William Wood — were named 2003 recipients of the Donald White Award for Teaching Excellence. Charles Sarno was selected as recipient of the First Annual Severyn Bruyn Award for Outstanding Graduate Paper in Sociology for his paper, “On the Place of Allegory in the Methodological Conventions of a Critical Sociology: A Case Study of Max Weber’s Protestant Ethic.” Aimee Van Wagenen was elected as Graduate Student Representative to the Board of Directors of the Society for the Study of Social Problems. In addition, Abigail Brooks was selected as 2003-4 recipient of the Benedict Alper Graduate Fellowship,
while William Wood, Anders Hayden, Chiwen Bao, Adria Goodsen and Delario Lindsey each received highly competitive graduate fellowships. Patricia Arend, Eiten Alimi, and Sandra O'Neill each also won prestigious Boston College Dissertation Fellowships.

Enveloped by war, while committed to justice-oriented research and teaching, the past academic year was undoubtedly a challenging one for the Boston College Sociology Department. To learn more about the way our department has responded creatively to many of the challenges that confront our discipline, our university and our society, I invite you to read this edition of Sociology Speaks. I also invite you to contribute to future issues of our newsletter by sending us your own thoughts and reflections about the mission of sociology in a global context marked by complexities of war, dramatic social inequalities, and ongoing struggles for the realization of a more just society.

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In the Spring 2003 term, the Sociology Department hosted the third year of our Distinguished Visiting Scholars Series. The series was highly successful, drawing standing-room only crowds across campus. Below, our graduate students reflect on the public lectures and private seminars given by bell hooks, Mary Waters, and Michael Burawoy.
bell hooks
Where We Stand: Class Matters
by Aimee Van Wagenen

Bell hooks, one of three exciting and dynamic 2003 Sociology Department Visiting Scholars, came to Boston College on March 12, 2003, to give both a public lecture and an intimate seminar with faculty and graduate students. Hooks is an internationally renowned scholar whose 1981 book, Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism, was named by Publisher’s Weekly as one of the “twenty most influential women’s books of the last twenty years.”

In this work and in much of her writing in the 22 years since, hooks demands that feminist theory reckon with its historical elision of race and class. Her writing is groundbreaking in its analysis of the complex interrelations of race, class, and gender. One of hooks’ most profound analytical contributions is her attention to both the structural and the personal levels; she can speak simultaneously of systemic workings of “white supremacist capitalist patriarchy” and of very intimate imaginaries, biographies, and cultural representations.

Hooks’ work traverses varied ground; she has written books in and of feminist theory, a trilogy of books on love, a number of books on masculinity, a number of books on cultural criticism, books on teaching, and on writing. She also writes in a number of different forms— theoretical essays, popular books, cultural reviews, children’s books, and memoirs. Hooks is one of America’s few true public intellectuals, speaking to a diversity of academic disciplinary audiences and non-academic audiences as well.

She has taught at Yale University, Oberlin College, and City College in the City University of New York. Hooks now writes as an independent scholar in New York City and speaks and teaches special seminars at universities and colleges across the country.

Research and thinking from hooks’ 2000 book, Where We Stand: Class Matters, informed much of the dialogue and her lecture at Boston College. In this book and in her visit with us, hooks began her thinking and analysis with the issue of class. This is a bit of a change of pace for her; in Class Matters, hooks writes, “It has been useful to begin with class and work from there. In much of my other work, I have chosen gender or race as a starting point. I choose class now because I believe class warfare will be our nation’s fate if we do not collectively challenge classism, if we do not attend to the widening gap between rich and poor, the haves and have-nots” (8-9). But for hooks, class is not a clear, demarcated, and bounded issue. On the contrary, hooks begins with class and works from there. Her analysis points us to the ways that class is deeply intertwined with other social structures, social institutions, and culture representations and imaginaries.

In her standing room only public lecture, hooks read from parts of Class Matters and from unpublished reflections on war, militarism, and violence. Her lecture in March came at a time when large scale U.S. war in Iraq appeared to be imminent. Intensified no-fly zone patrols, bombings, and raids at this point seemed to signal it was a matter of days before the U.S. would begin a high intensity war, even amidst what many described as the strongest international protests in history. And indeed, the “shock and awe” campaign began just a week after hooks’ lecture. Hooks highlighted class issues as she talked and weaved in analysis through political issues of education, of war and militarism, and the lessons to be learned from feminism.

Hooks began by linking President Bush’s recent announced support of the roll back of affirmative action with the president’s fervent drive towards war. Provocatively, hooks suggested that Bush’s positions here tell poor black men to forget about going to school and to prepare themselves for going to war. Even further, hooks connected the political discourse of black masculinity embedded in the Moynihan Report with the political discourse of masculinity in militarism. She suggested that the Moynihan Report blames black women for the emasculation of black men who, now stripped of opportunities afforded to them by affirmative action, can regain their masculinity only through engagement in militarism and violence.

She turned her focus to politics of educa-
tion and emphasized her long held, passionate support for literacy. Literacy, for hooks, is required to be able to think critically and to see a more holistic picture. Yet in hooks’ estimation, public education in America offers not literacy, but holding pens providing society with surveillance of the poor. Education of the poor, hooks noted, takes place only through television.

Hooks skillfully wove issues together in this cultural critique of the politics of education and war. But hooks also called for cultural transformation that learns from the example of the non-violent revolutionary successes of the feminist movement.

She called for a feminism that learned from working class men and women — those who inevitably bear the brunt of war and of white supremacist capitalist patriarchy. Hooks suggested we can learn from the ways that lower class women can conceptualize empowerment when their cultural aspirations are not for money and material things, but for esteem and love. Hooks called on her audience to rethink the standards by which they valued the material in their own lives to make sharing resources possible.

Hooks’ seminar with faculty and graduate students centered around a discussion of standards of living and the politics of living simply. Hooks argued that we need to reconceptualize class so that we can talk about quality of life. For hooks, too often we equate material wealth with the quality of life. Women across class and race difference, she argued, can work in solidarity and share resources if they work through a shared vision that redefines the good and meaningful life. Hooks encouraged and facilitated a lively discussion in the seminar, favoring a conversational and dialogical format for our gathering.

Perhaps following hooks’ own analytical style, our conversation traversed a variety of subjects, many of which seminar participants pulled from their readings of Class Matters. We talked about religion and class, school choice, rich white women and their guilt, self help books, the need for left wing male intellectuals to reckon with feminism, and some of the many issues feminism still needs to reckon with.

Mary Waters
Immigration and American Inequality
by Leah Schmalzbauer

On March 24-26, the Boston College Sociology Department hosted preeminent demographer and immigration scholar Mary Waters. Professor Waters gave a public lecture entitled Immigration and American Inequality, followed by two days of student/faculty seminars and lunch meetings with graduate students. In these exciting two days, she shared her new work on immigrant identity, inequality, and political-economic incorporation, sparking critical discussion and debate, and inspiring students and faculty to delve deeper into the race, class, and gender dimensions of global sociology.

Professor Mary Waters was born and raised in Brooklyn, New York. She received her B.A. from Johns Hopkins University in 1978, her M.A. in Sociology in 1981, her M.A. in demography in 1983, and her Ph.D. in Sociology in 1986 from the University of California-Berkeley. She is currently Professor and Chair of the Sociology Department at Harvard University.

Professor Waters has published numerous important articles and books. Most recently she is the co-editor of the books The New Race Question: How the Census Counts Multi-racial Individuals and The Changing Face of Home: The Transnational Lives of the Second Generation.

Her 1999 book, Black Identities: West Indian Immigrant Dreams and American Realities, received tremendous critical acclaim including the Mirra Komorovsky Award of the Eastern Sociological Society for the best book published in 1999-2000; the 2001 Otis Dudley Duncan Award of the Population Section of the American Sociological Association; the 2001 Thomas and Znaniecki Award of the International Migration Section of the American Sociological Association; the 1999 Best Book Award of the Section on Race, Ethnicity and Politics of the American Political Science Association; and the 1999-2000 Distinguished Book Award of the Center for the Study of Inequality at Cornell University.

In addition to her many and prestigious academic publications and teaching commitments, Professor Waters is co-director of the New York Second Generation Project. This project, which is funded by the National Institute of Health and the Russell Sage, Ford, Mellon, Rockefeller and MacArthur Foundations, examines the lives of second generation-young adults whose parents were immigrants to the United States and compares their cases with the equivalent of native born whites, blacks, and Puerto Ricans.

Professor Waters’ cross-disciplinary research is in the areas of race and ethnicity, identity, immigration, and demography. Her work places matters of race, inequality, and racial identity under a global, historical lens. To read Professor Waters’ work is to at once see the intimate relationship between colonial legacies and the complex expressions of race and inequality in 21st century America.

Professor Waters’ work responds directly to the unprecedented level of inequality in America, an inequality that is marked often by race and increasingly fed by the growing number of poor immigrants who journey to the United States in search of work and better opportunities for themselves and their children. According to the latest census, one out of five Americans is foreign born or is a child of the foreign born.

Among the foreign born, Professor Waters asserts, are both rich and poor, the well educated and the illiterate. This bimodal characterization challenges sociologists to deconstruct the influence of race and nation on the American immigrant experience. Why is it, for example, that Latinos have the lowest education performance of all immigrants (only 11% of Latinos are college grads), while the Russians and Chinese have the highest? Why is it that when asked about their aspirations, Dominicans respond by saying their number one goal is to “avoid trouble,” while the Chinese cite education as their top aspiration, followed closely by occupation? And why is it that immigrants who maintain their immigrant identities experience greater economic mobility than immigrants who assimilate into native minority groups? Waters draws her answers from a mix of assimilation and identity theories.

Professor Waters’ work suggests that measures of immigrant success and mobility depend on the means by which different immigrant groups are incorporated into American society. The contemporary immigrant story does not follow the mythology of the American Dream. Hard work and the “right” values are no longer enough to push immigrants up the socio-economic ladder. Waters’s work explain how the changes that have taken place in America since the great waves of European immigration in the late 19th and early 20th centuries restrict the mobility opportunities for poor immigrants who arrive in the United States with little or no education and few skills. The current economy does not have the strong manufacturing base in which former immigrants found stable work. Unionization has declined and returns to education have increased, making it much more difficult for immigrants with low levels of human capital to lift up themselves and their families. As Professor Waters said in her public lecture, poor and uneducated immigrants who come to America find “an economic ladder without rungs.”

The current political-economic reality demands that sociologists and policy makers alike use a global-historical framework to analyze contemporary immigrant experiences. Indeed, to grasp why certain immigrants remain poor in America, one must confront the colonial past from which they’ve emerged (Waters 1999), a past that continues to haunt most of the Third World with poverty and accompanying despair. When immigrants arrive in America they arrive with their histories in tow. And too, America has not shaken its own history of racism and xenophobia, which intensifies the barriers that immigrants of color specifically have to overcome.

Professor Waters introduced immigrant assimilation, the topic of her first seminar, by talking about the healthy discomfort the concept inspires among many academics and policy makers. This discomfort is prompted by thoughts of melting pot theories that present “them,” the “other,”
becoming like “us” - translated as white Americans. Waters’ work encourages us to push beyond this association and to grapple instead with the concept of assimilation as a result of “unintended consequences” (Alba & Nee 1999), in which by engaging in the means necessary to make it in America, immigrants become unintentionally entangled with the language, cultures, and peoples of the United States. This is not to say that all immigrants assimilate into white middle class America. Indeed, a critical question Waters posed in her seminar is, assimilation into what?

Waters spoke in-depth about the model of segmented assimilation, which posits three principle assimilation paths on which contemporary immigrants embark. The first assimilation path leads into the white mainstream. The second leads into native minority groups, which inspires oppositional identities among immigrants. The third assimilation path is that of limited assimilation, in which parents and children become slowly ensconced while maintaining a strong sense of their home culture and identity. In the first and third instances, immigrants tend to experience some measure of upward mobility, while in the second instance, downward mobility is usually the result (Zhou 1999). West Indians, for example, who assimilate into African American group identity, do much worse in terms of job and education than those who maintain their West Indian identity (Waters 1999).

As the segmented assimilation model suggests, identity, the subject of Waters’ second seminar, is a critical indicator of immigrant experience (Waters, 2002). The process by which immigrants self-identify and by which the host society identifies immigrants is dynamic and continuous, as both groups and the transnational context in which they are embedded are changed by the encounters with each other (Waters 1999). Indeed, immigrant identity formation is complex and fluid. Identity is at the crux of how immigrants and host societies respond to global dynamics as they are played out in local contexts.

Every year approximately 850,000 documented and 225,000 undocumented immigrants enter the United States (Kasinitz et al 2002). We are undeniably a nation of immigrants, and so we are a nation that cannot ignore the pressing issues of inequality, immigrant incorporation, and identity that accompany immigration. During her two days with us, Professor Waters challenged us to think deeply and complexly about these issues, and to reach beyond simplistic human capital approaches to immigration which suggest that both immigrant poverty and success are direct correlates of skills and labor participation (Borjas, 1999).

As Professor Waters’ research illustrates in multiple ways, the story is much more complicated. Contemporary immigrant stories are ones of personal struggle and personal triumph alike. Yet they are all, whether of triumph or struggle, stories of the race, class, and gender inequalities that persist in America and throughout the world in general. Professor Waters’ work reminds us that it is only in the deconstruction of these inequalities that the seductive mythology touting the inevitable flow between immigration and the American Dream can become a realistic tale.

Citations


Michael Burawoy

Rethinking Labor in the 21st Century
by William Wood

In April of 2003, as part of the Distinguished Visiting Scholars Series, the Boston College Department of Sociology hosted noted ethnographer and sociologist, Michael Burawoy. Under the theme of “Class and Inequality in the Early 21st Century,” the Department of Sociology continued its tradition of inviting respected academicians and intellectuals for a series of public lectures, seminars, and workshops. Drawing from his experiences in Europe, Russia, and the United States, Professor Burawoy invited those around him to join in his investigations of how the global changes of the last twenty years have affected labor, and how academia can best address the growing global disparity of wealth and poverty.

Well known for his work on critical labor studies, ethnography, and globalization, Professor Burawoy has spent much of his life investigating the changing face of labor relations, both under capitalism and communism. Exemplified in his now classic work, Manufacturing Consent: Changes in the Labor Process Under Monopoly Capitalism, Burawoy helped pioneer an extended case study approach to understanding the dynamics of how corporations produce and control the consent of labor under monopoly capitalism. Burawoy later extended this case study approach to his work in Eastern Europe where, during his time at the infamous Lenin Steel Works in Budapest, he documented how the labor forces under communism eventually came to reject the very system created in their name. The creation of a class consciousness explicitly opposed to the brusque exploitation under communism, including the wide berth between labor, state planners, and intellectuals was, according to Burawoy, at least partially responsible for the fall of the Soviet Union.

The creation of a class consciousness explicitly opposed to the brusque exploitation under communism, including the wide berth between labor, state planners, and intellectuals was, according to Burawoy, at least partially responsible for the fall of the Soviet Union.

Burawoy’s work suggests more than an explanation for the fall of Soviet communism. It suggests the possibility that Marxism can and must be reexamined both in light of the failure of communism to meet the needs and expectations of workers, and the apparent success of capitalism in marginalizing labor through the development of hegemonic discipline and control, both inside and outside the workplace. In his first of two lectures at Boston College, Burawoy argued that, contrary to rumors of its demise, Marxism has much to tell us in its ability both to inform and critique not merely the market forces of capitalism, but also culture and society. Drawing from the writings of Antonio Gramsci and Karl Polanyi, Burawoy suggests that within Gramsci’s notion of “civil society” and Polanyi’s “active society” exists the possibility of understanding the historical circumstances in which the state (Gramsci) and the market (Polanyi) come together under advanced capitalism, “transversed by capillary powers, often bifurcated or segmented into racial or ethnic sectors, and fragmented into gendered dominations.” For
Burawoy, the efficacy of capitalism in the 21st century stems not only from its ability to subdue labor, but also from its apparent contradictory ability to stabilize crises through an increasing logic of racial, ethnic, and gendered coercion and violence.

Drawing from his first lecture, Burawoy invited both the graduate students and faculty at Boston College to spend two afternoons discussing the work of Gramsci and Polanyi. In the first of the seminars, Burawoy elaborated on the work of Gramsci, suggesting that Gramsci’s work on civil society provides a rejoinder to Marx’s failure to address “society” in capitalistic, and not only communistic, economies. This is, for Burawoy, essential to understanding how civil society, in relation to the state, manufactures consent and stabilizes class struggle. In his second seminar, Burawoy extended his discussion to Polanyi, inquiring into how the formation of the market society has been, since the nineteenth century, interpolated by an “active society.” Such an active society represents, for Polanyi, a historical tension which resists the tendency of the market to overwhelm society under capitalism. Burawoy argued that the work of both thinkers, when taken together, suggest the possibility of a sociological Marxism tenable to the peculiarities of global capitalism in the 21st century. The seminars were followed by extended discussion and questions.

Burawoy ended his time at Boston College with his closing lecture, a rehearsal of his speech to the American Sociological Association. Burawoy is the 2002-2003 president of the ASA, and his speech, entitled “Public Sociologies,” addressed the problems and possibilities facing contemporary sociology as it seeks to mend its internal fissures, as well as recognize and connect with sociologies outside of the discipline and the Academy. He sees the possibility of a “public sociology” in the tension and interplay between what he calls “professional,” “organic,” and “policy” sociologies. In response to his final lecture, several Boston College faculty were invited to respond to Burawoy’s address, including William Gamson, Charlotte Ryan, Stephen Pfohl, Diane Vaughan, Charles Derber, and Juliet Schor. Burawoy’s address, as well as the responses, will appear in the February 2004 volume of Social Problems.

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**Grads Speak! Papers, Presentations, Publications**

**Patricia Arend**


**Anders Hayden**


**Mary Kovacs**


**Denise Leckenby**


***continued on following page***


Tay McNamara


David Nnyanzi


John Shandra


Aimee Van Wagenen


Rebekah Zincavage

**Alumni Notes**


**Danielle Egan** - A 2000 Ph.D. alumnus and currently an Assistant Professor of Sociology at St. Lawrence University, Danielle has been appointed Co-Chair of the Program for the 2004 Meetings of the Society for the Study of Social Problems in San Francisco. The theme of the meetings will be “The Culture of Social Problems: Power, People and History.”

**Lawrence Nichols** - A 1985 Ph.D. alumnus and Associate Professor and Chairperson of the Sociology Department at University of West Virginia, Lawrence is currently the editor of the journal, The American Sociologist.

**Andrew Herman** - A 1994 Ph.D. alumnus, Andrew is now a Visiting Professor at York University in Toronto. He is also a Fellow in Digital Communications and Cultural Policy, Joint Graduate Program in Communication and Culture.

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### Where Are They Now?

Below is a list of recent Ph.D. and Graduate Student placements:

**Julie Childers (ABD):** Visiting Instructor, Babson College.

**Teresita Del Rosario, Ph.D., 2002:** Tenure-track Assistant Professor of Sociology, Ateneo de Manila, The Phillipines.

**Alan Fairfax (ABD):** Visiting Instructor, Sociology Department, College of the Holy Cross.

**Anikki Paratore Galibois, Ph.D., 2003:** Director, Batterer Intervention Program Services, Massachusetts Department of Public Health.

**Patricia Leavy, Ph.D., 2002:** Tenure-track Assistant Professor of Sociology, Stonehill College.

**Karen McCormack, Ph.D., 2002:** Visiting Assistant Professor of Sociology, Wellesley College.

**Calvin Moore, Ph.D., 2002:** Visiting Assistant Professor, Colgate University.

**Charles Sarno (ABD):** Instructor, Holy Names College, Oakland, CA.

**Jonathan White, Ph.D., 2002:** Tenure-track Assistant Professor, Colby College.

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*If you are an alumnus or alumna of the Boston College Sociology Department and wish to share information about your current work, feel free to e-mail us at sociology@bc.edu.*
An Interview with Dr. Roseanna Means
by Lindsey Baker, Christine Crofts, Venu Keesari, Lisa Phelps, Archana Prakash, Cheryl Stults, Matthew Williams, and Dr. Eva Garroutte.

A small wound. A child’s earache. Even trivial medical concerns can be serious for poor and homeless women. In the spring of 2003, the students in “Inequalities in Health Care” (SC578) studied disparities in health access and health outcomes, and their relationship to race, class, and gender. In March, these students had an unusual opportunity to learn how even one person can intervene in stubborn social problems, making a life-affirming difference for individuals, while simultaneously recognizing and encouraging structural social changes. As a team, we interviewed Dr. Roseanna Means, a physician whose organization, “Women of Means,” provides free medical care out of Rosie’s Place, a women’s shelter/sanctuary in downtown Boston.

Dr. Means operates a private practice in Wellesley to which she devotes 20 to 30 hours a week. She spends another 50 to 60 hours a week—without payment for her clinical time—with the poor and homeless women of Boston. She provides care, distributes over-the-counter medicines, performs limited diagnostic tests, and makes personal referrals to other facilities as required. She has also recruited a network of 15 physicians who volunteer in a similar capacity at nine locations.

The class worked together to record and condense some of the questions that Dr. Means addressed during our interview. What follows is our summary of the ideas, experiences, and opinions she shared with us.

Who receives services from Women of Means?
Some of the women are homeless. Others are “marginally housed.” They are typically living on about $500 per month. Even if they can find subsidized housing, this means that the government will pay only one-third of their rent and they have little or nothing to spend on food, clothes, and medical care. There are an increasing number of women in this situation.

Do homeless and poor women really have different needs than men in similar circumstances?
Yes. Some women avoid using free and low-cost health care facilities that serve everyone because they fear encountering men who have assaulted them. I have known women who went to a free clinic and found a previous attacker sitting in the waiting room. Also, some women are being stalked by an ex-partner and so are reluctant to provide the identification, such as a social security number, that hospitals and physicians’ offices require—because this might allow their batterers to track them down. Women of Means provides services only to women and children, and it does not require anyone to present identification.

Do homeless people confront special problems when they try to get health care?
Street people don’t carry a watch or a calendar, so keeping a medical appointment can be difficult. Then they have problems getting transportation. And they have to line up to receive a bed in a shelter by 3 p.m. each day. If they’re not there by that time, they will sleep on the street. If a medical appointment is late in the day, or if it runs over time, a woman can be in real trouble.

What are some of the factors that contribute to women’s homelessness?
The women that I work with tell me that the major reasons for homelessness can be quite different for themselves and for men. They believe that it is more likely that men are homeless because of problems with substance abuse or mental illness or because they have been in jail. Women are more likely to be homeless for financial reasons. Some can’t get a job or full-time day care; some are widowed or divorced. Some have suffered a medical catastrophe. The factors that contribute to their homelessness can affect women’s willingness to use free health care. After the horrific experiences they have often suffered, going to a homeless clinic to receive medical care can be a last, humiliating blow that women cannot endure. They would rather go without care.

What are some of the cultural differences between you and the women you serve?
A really big issue for homeless women is safety. They have to be afraid a lot, so we have to work to build up trust. Here is an example: We see a lot of diabetic patients and diabetic patients need their toenails cut often. Now when you take someone’s blood pressure, say, you have to get right up close and kind of in their face. It can be threatening. But when you cut their toenails, you are farther away and lower down. So we offer to do that for them. And it’s an opportunity to build trust. It sounds kind of gross, but it works!

Aside from Women of Means, where can poor people get health care?
Medicaid provides public health insurance for the
poor, but you must qualify for it, and the guidelines are strict. If they don’t have Medicaid, people can use the “free care pool” that hospitals must maintain. A hospital’s free care pool gets varying amounts of public funding and no emergency room can turn anyone away. Hospitals pay for services to the poor out of the free care pool, and after this money is gone they must pay out of their own budget. Hospitals are asking insurance companies to share the burden of free care by raising premiums on the insured, but this is going to mean that some people won’t be able to pay the higher premiums and there will be more uninsured people.

Women of Means provides more than 2,400 clinical encounters per year. Women can come to us instead of using the emergency room for primary care. Given the high cost of emergency room visits—approximately $1,000 per patient—we probably save the medical system hundreds of thousands of dollars per year.

Do you take stress home from your work at Women of Means?
It helps that I live in a nice house, in a nice neighborhood. That’s how I grew up, and I’m not embarrassed. It’s my culture. I go back there to “recharge my batteries.” And I’m a Christian, and I go to church and get my batteries recharged there, too.

Why does medical care cost so much?
One reason is that we allow so much choice in care. The American public demands the best and most current treatments—brain imaging, transplants—and these are terribly expensive. Also, we are hostages of the pharmaceutical industry, which is one of the most powerful lobbies in the country. It is true that this industry spends billions of dollars on research and development; for every miracle drug invented, many others are tested but never pan out. At the same time, these companies often have not invested their own money in R & D, but have received government funding. Thus, the cost is not as high for the companies as we are told.

What is the biggest barrier to universal health care in the US?
Universal health care would imply that all health care providers would be paid equally. Many doctors—especially surgeons—do not want this to happen. Surgeons can mount serious opposition because they are the highest on the hospital food chain. Our society places a high value on their skills and their procedures provide a large portion of a hospital’s income. By contrast, primary care doctors like me are the invertebrates. We are less likely to oppose universal health care because it is less likely to mean an income reduction: even in my private practice, I get paid less per hour than a plumber does! I believe that our country should provide universal health care but also allow a private system of care. This would make sure that people who can afford a higher standard of care can receive it, but no one would be denied basic care.

Can American health care be fixed?
How?
I think American health care is so broken because we have politicized it. No one wants to touch it because it is under the influence of so many powerful interest groups, but what has happened is that we are now making triage decisions that erode people’s basic human rights. The World Health Organization needs to be used as an international resource to help create models of care that can reach all the world’s hardest-to-reach populations. America should look to that organization as a potential guide for how to fix American health care. We’re in an era where we need neutral parties to define moral imperatives for health care.

What can we do to support Women of Means?
Some people sponsor sock drives: campaigns to collect new socks that we can pass on to our women and children. We are always in need of donations of alcohol-free and sugar-free cough syrup. Also, on April 1, 2003, spending for Mass Health Basic, a category of public health insurance, will be reduced. You can call your legislator and ask that this funding be restored.

Do you have any other advice for people who want to live in our society responsibly?
Listen to that inner voice. This is important in choosing your profession. You have to give of yourself. Often doctors don’t see themselves as agents of change. But we—and you—do have the power to change the world. I want to inspire people to work toward change. What are you going to do?

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The students in “Inequalities in Health Care” are grateful for the time Dr. Means spent discussing the way that health policy, gender inequality, and other structural factors play out in the lives of individuals—and the way that individuals can seek change on both the social structural and individual levels. She reflects the passion for social justice that motivated many of us to study at Boston College, and to find our own answer to the question she left us with: “What are you going to do?”
David Karp Interviews Diane Vaughan
Discussions of the Challenger and Columbia

Diane Vaughan is a Boston College Sociology professor whose book on the Challenger tragedy (The Challenger Launch Decision: Risky Technology, Culture, and Deviance at NASA) led to her involvement with the Columbia Accident Investigation Board. She wrote chapter 8 of their final report, entitled "History as Cause: Columbia and Challenger." David Karp, interviewing her, is also a professor in the BC Sociology department. His most recent work is The Burden of Sympathy: How Families Cope with Mental Illness, and he is currently working on a book that explores the sociological implications of antidepressant usage. The full text of their conversation can be read on the departmental website, at http://www.bc.edu/schools/cas/sociology.

DK: I think the focus of our conversation really ought to be the Challenger. I’m greatly interested in how you made decisions to do that work and how the work was done, what’s happened since the work and how it was received. But no piece of work appears, I think, spontaneously on the scene. Every piece of writing has a history and a lineage and a kind of evolution to it. So maybe you could just go back a little bit. Even back to your graduate student days...

DV: ...I’d have to say the origin of the Challenger book really happened when I was reworking my dissertation. My dissertation was about a case study of corporate misconduct. I had gotten very interested in the organizations literature in graduate school, as well as deviance and social control. So from that, I began thinking in a different way about deviance and crime than people who had previously published on the topic. They were thinking in terms of individuals as white collar offenders, and so my organizational focus was different...And I had an epiphany, when I was working one night revising the dissertation...I had been working on three chapters that were basically literature review chapters and they weren’t very good. As I was working on one of them, suddenly, there was something about what I was writing that brought Merton’s anomie theory to mind. I got very excited about the match between that theory, which was developed to explain rates of individual deviance, and how it seemed to connect with both my research and the existing literature on corporate misconduct. So with great excitement I dove into all of Merton’s original writings, and I got more and more excited because it seemed like, in fact, it did a better job at explaining the crimes of organizations than it did of individuals...Using Merton’s scheme, I reorganized these three chapters into an integrated theory of what I then called organizational misconduct...In December 1985, a month before Challenger, I was intending to write a book in which I had three short chapters comparing these different cases of misconduct in organizations – corporate crime, police misconduct, and domestic violence – and proposing a general theory. In January 1986, Challenger exploded. And I had actually been thinking of having another chapter in that book which was an example of a large, complex organization that was not a corporate profit seeker.

DK: So you were actually kind of looking around for something.

DV: I was actually looking for it. And, disastrously, NASA supplied me with a case, because what began to appear in the papers as the Presidential Commission’s investigation unfolded were all the
characteristics of misconduct, as I knew them from my previous research and the corporate crime literature...NASA had had this dramatic midnight hour teleconference in which engineers had protested against the launch because of the unprecedented cold weather the next day. But NASA managers had gone ahead with the launch. The reasons for that, according to the Commission, were production pressures, and they revealed other actions such as rule violations, suppression of information, and cover-up at NASA...all the kinds of things that are associated with organizational misconduct. So on that basis, I chose it as a case, thinking that it would be a fourth chapter in this book.

D K: One slim chapter.

D V: A slender chapter. And so I began clipping things from the papers that covered the Commission’s investigation, but when volume 1 of the Commission’s official Report came out, I started working from that...However, a year into the research it was clear that this was not going be a chapter, it was going to be a book, a slender volume. What happened was that I kept finding contradictions to my starting hypothesis that propelled me from the first volume of the Commission’s Report into the other volumes and the archival data base at the National Archives in Washington D.C..

D K: You mean data that didn’t fit with the misconduct notion.

D V: Exactly. The key turning point came in February 1987, at which point I discovered that what I had been tracking as rule violations, which were key to it being misconduct, as I was defining it, turned out not to be a violation of the rules at all but actions conforming to NASA rules. And it became clear to me that the Commission had made some mistakes interpreting NASA actions. So I threw out my hypothesis and started over on what turned out to be not a slender volume but a 500 page book that was published ten years later.

D K: When I talk about your book with other people, there are a couple of things that always come to my mind...The first is that it seems to me it’s truly an example of honest inductive inquiry, where you have to be ready to let go of ideas that you have in the face of anomalous data. It’s something I think that we preach, and most of us try honestly to do that. But the degree to which you did that, and were willing to let go of a perspective that you’d been cultivating, at least in this case, for so long, I think is really admirable...

D V: Well, I changed course so many times, because the experience I had had was that I made a mistake. And this experience continued. I kept running into data that contradicted my hypothesis. And the explanation kept changing form as the book got longer and longer, because I couldn’t figure it out – if it wasn’t misconduct, then what was it?

D K: If I had to draw a picture of what analytic induction looked like, it would be a continual refinement of one’s theoretical ideas in order to make sense of data that your thinking doesn’t work with. It seems to me the book was one of continual refinement of your ideas so that the fit between the data and what you ultimately wrote is tight.

D V: It was. But I had written a revisionist account. My book, both in fact and explanation, contradicted what everyone else had ever written about the accident. Most of the literature about the accident was published in the first two years, and it was based on the first volume of the Commission’s Report. The Report’s findings became the conventional wisdom. It contained quite a lot of information that led to the idea that this was an organizational failure that was a form of misconduct; that evil managers responded to production pressures by disregarding their own engineers’ opinions. And that is what happened, but there was nothing evil about it, and in fact, everybody concerned at the time believed they had done the right thing, and all of their actions were in keeping with NASA rules. It was only after the accident that people looked back and reanalyzed what they had done and saw that it was a mistake. My conclusion, by the way, was that it was not misconduct, but it was a mistake. And how the mistake happened, then, was what I needed to explain...

I want to go back to your point about the connection between this and my dissertation because the Challenger case was part of an experi-

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ment, begun then, with analogical theorizing. When I had that dissertation epiphany, I realized that I had come up with an explanation. From description I had gone to explanation, and the way that I had done that was by taking a theory – a societal level theory meant to explain individual behavior – and applied it to organizations. I had shifted units of analysis. And the reason I was able to do that was because I saw analogies between my data and the theory. So, this contradicted what we were taught in graduate school, which was that to build theory, you compare similar units of analysis; you do all hospitals, you do all education systems, but you don’t compare apples with oranges, which is what I did. I got engaged in the idea of analogy and analogical theorizing, which was then played out with the Columbia disaster, as well. So, the idea at that point was that I could take the framework from misconduct theory and apply it across different kinds of organizations…that would be police, it would be domestic violence - with the family being the unit of analysis - and a government agency. So that was part of the reason that I stuck with the project. I persisted because it was not just a case study; it was more than that for me, it was a part of my continuing experiment in analogical theorizing. For that reason I wanted to finish it. Also, I stuck it out because it was a mystery that I had to solve in its own right. I was years into the project and I still didn’t know why - even the year before I submitted the final book manuscript I still didn’t know why they’d launched Challenger.

D K: We were joking the other day about how, sometimes, sociologists are like dogs with bones, you just won’t let it go.

D V: True - this experience of uncertainty in writing the project was nothing I had ever known before in research. It was very anxiety producing. It came at a time when my parents were failing and my work, which is normally a source of stability, was not providing it. Part of my need to continue working on it was just the professional quest for an answer, which as elusive and uncertain as it was, still was a sort of stability.

D K: I’m really glad you’re saying this because…there’s no discussion in research methods textbooks about what it’s like to be a researcher grappling with uncertainty…I tell my students all the time, that if you have no tolerance for ambiguity, this is not the world you ought to be in, the research world. Particularly trying to understand social issues, which are muddy and typically pretty unclear. That emotional component is important and we ought to continue to communicate that to our students.

D V: Truth in advertising.

D K: Yeah…So what was the original reception of the book, both by sociologists and by NASA?

D V: Initially, honestly, if I had published it…when I expected to, I think it would have gotten no attention at all. But the fact that it had grown to be a longer and more complex analysis had me rushing to finish it by the tenth anniversary of the Challenger accident, which turned out to bring it a surprising amount of attention. From the time the page proofs were sent out in November, my phone started ringing because the bound pages reminded journalists that the tenth anniversary was coming up and they began preparing then…so it got an enormous amount of publicity. On Sunday, the 28th of January, 1996, which was the publication date and the date of the accident’s tenth anniversary, it was reviewed in over 40 Sunday papers nationally and internationally…and for that entire semester, I could not keep up with all of the requests that were coming to me…I was busy for about three years. And in that time, NASA was the only place that didn’t contact me that I had thought really would…

D K: Were you prepared for all of this exposure?

D V: Absolutely not. I thought, based on what the press was doing, that there would be a week or two…

D K: Well, of course, historical events have yet again made the book so relevant…Describe, if you can, you know, briefly, the evolution of your credibility at NASA.

D V: ...When NASA’s space shuttle Columbia disintegrated at reentry on February 1, 2003, the Challenger book made me an expert that the press con-
tacted early and often. The Columbia Accident Investigation Board had public hearings that were televised, and they called people to testify. I was called to testify in April...And while I was there, the Board invited me to become a part of their investigation, which I did...

I consulted with them, analyzing the data on decision making and working on the Board’s Report, integrating and editing the social cause chapters as well as writing Chapter 8, “History as Cause: Columbia and Challenger” for the Report...Throughout the period from the February 1, 2003 accident, through the board’s issuing the Report, NASA saw me as an adversary because I was constantly being quoted in the newspapers and talking about the parallels between Challenger and Columbia...When the Report came out, in a press conference held by the top NASA administrator, the first question that a reporter asked was “Have you read Diane Vaughan’s book yet?” He said “Yes, we are all reading it and people from here are contacting her.” So the next Monday I was invited to come to NASA headquarters to a dinner. They had 15 top people from headquarters there. All very exciting. It was an open conversation and I saw this as a teaching opportunity...

The Report identified the organization and its culture as a cause of the accident. I knew that NASA did not understand how to change culture because the Report had not been clear about it, so I gave examples of how they could change culture...I was surprised that people there brought copies of my book and had me sign it. I asked, what’s wrong with this picture, an astronaut is having me sign a copy of his book! Next I was invited to...a conference that they called their Forty Top Leaders Conference in Maryland for two days where they were brainstorming about how to make change. I realized that, to some extent, NASA was using me for symbolic purposes. They were forced into it by the press. But nonetheless, this was a teaching opportunity, so I went and again, people were very responsive...one of the people there had been at a three day retreat at Marshall Space Flight Center where everyone had read my book and talked about it. Everyone was learning sociology.

D K: It’s almost as though once it gets into a network, people start talking about it.

D V: It was amazing. In my presentation, I pointed out the analogies between Challenger and Columbia and then talked about how to make cultural change. They were so caught by the sociology of it - you know this happens with your writing as well - that people see their personal problems connected to larger structures and how those larger structures need to be changed to solve problems. They had many good ideas and want me to continue working with them. I’m now trying to come to grips with how to go on with my other research and deal with NASA.

D K: ...Do you think it’s going to last? Do you think they’re going to remember the lesson? Have they been good students, passing their exam momentarily?

D V: ...I think that the Columbia Accident Investigation Board and the Report are going to change the course of future investigations. The Report itself as a document is path breaking because they made the social causes equal with the technical causes. As for NASA, I can’t say. Their ability to make change is limited by the resources they get and the political environment in which the agency exists. NASA top leaders are responsible for not only the agency itself, but also meshing with this political environment. The people that I have met are eager and willing to make change. They need help to do it. They can’t do it by themselves. They need social scientists to help them. One of the things I recommended is that they don’t wait until an accident to find out how their organization is working, but they bring in anthropologists and sociologists - ethnographers - on a regular basis, funding fellowships and having them around all the time to give feedback on how they’re doing...

D K: ...The sociological habit of thinking is not easy for people to get to.

D V: Exactly. It takes a lot of teaching and that’s why taking the time to do public sociology and translate our concepts and theories into a lay language is important.

D K: Well, you’ve been one heck of a teacher.

D V: Well, thank you.
**Focus on Undergraduate Alumni**

**Jenna Nobles** graduated with a B.A. in Sociology from Boston College in 2002. She is now working toward a Ph.D. in Sociology at the University of California, Los Angeles. Jenna is currently studying the effects of the 1998 Southeast Asian economic crisis on health care access in Indonesia with Dr. Elizabeth Frankenberg (Sociology, UCLA). The study uses the ’97, ’98, and ’00 waves of the Indonesia Family Life Survey, for which Frankenberg was a principal investigator.

This year, Jenna won a Graduate Research Fellowship from the National Science Foundation. The three-year grant will fund her proposal to study immigrant access to health care, post-1996 Welfare Reform Acts, in California. She hopes to begin this project in the next few months. Jenna also will present work with John Shandra (Sociology, Boston College) on democracy, dependency, and infant mortality at the Annual Meetings of the American Sociological Association in Atlanta, GA.

**Alexander Cheney** graduated from the Sociology Honors Program in May of 2002. His four years at Boston College and his involvement in the department were marked by a strong commitment to social justice issues and international politics.

As a member of the Global Justice Project, Alex devoted his extracurricular time to educating and organizing other students about important social and political issues and worked closely with Professor Charles Derber doing research on issues of globalization and international development.

During his senior year Alex accepted a position as the co-Executive Director of Boston Mobilization, a 25-year old non-profit organization dedicated to educating and training college and high school students to be activists for peace and justice. He accepted the position along with his good friend and fellow activist Deepinder Mayell (Political Science ’02), and the two worked to connect many BC students, including members of the sociology department, to activists at other Boston universities.

As the war in Afghanistan was quickly becoming a war in Iraq, Alex coordinated the organization’s “No War, No Way!” campaign to build a movement against the impending invasion. He organized several small and large events during the months preceding the war, including a march through Boston featuring a talk by Howard Zinn, a humanitarian aid drive for Iraqi citizens, and the first National Student Day of Action against the war with over 40 campuses participating. He also led several workshops on Iraq in communities in the Boston area and at several universities including Boston College. On the eve of the invasion, Alex was arrested with 30 other Boston residents and members of Boston Mobilization during an act of peaceful civil disobedience against the war.

In June of 2003, Alex left Boston and Boston Mobilization and moved back to where he grew up, the San Francisco Bay area. His activities during the 15 months he spent with the organization were covered widely in The Boston Globe, The New York Times, The Christian Science Monitor, and USA Today; he even appeared as a guest on the Montel Williams show to debate the war. He is currently applying to graduate school and is planning to pursue a Ph.D. in the Social Sciences, focusing on international economic relations and development in Asia.
**Undergraduate Achievements**

**The William A. Gamson Award**
This award was established during the 2001-02 academic year by the Sociology Department in honor of Professor William Gamson. It is given each year to a graduating senior for outstanding academic achievement in sociology.

The 2003 recipient of this award was **Stephanie Howling**. Following her graduation from Boston College, she will accept a Graduate Fellowship to pursue Ph.D. studies in Sociology at Harvard University.

**Sociology Majors, Sophomore and Junior Dean’s Scholars**

**Dean’s Scholars (Class of 2004):** Miho Yamaguchi

**Sophomore Scholars (Class of 2005):** Michael Ahern, Emily Chambliss, Blair Kanis, and Stephanie Maniscalco

**Sociology Undergraduate Honors Program**
Coordinated by Professor David Karp, the Sociology Department Honors Program is composed of a junior-year seminar, SC 550 “Important Readings in Sociology” and a two-semester Senior Thesis seminar, SC 555 and SC 556. In the 2002-2003 academic year the following students participated in our Honors Program:

**Senior Majors:** David Buckley, Robert Cristiano, Rachel Cummings, Melissa Farrell, Anne V. Happel, Stephanie Howling, Kelly Iwanaga, Catherine Kholmann, Marion Redding, Sara Rosen, Holly Unger, Albert Wang

**Junior Majors:** Henry Hail, Bryce McManus, Brian Moynihan, Kristen Nazar, Kevin Vetiac

**Alpha Kappa Delta**
This year, thirteen undergraduate Sociology majors have been selected for membership in Alpha Kappa Delta, the sociology honor society. They are:

Amy E. Barber, David John Buckley, Robert M. Cristiano, Luke Patrick Elliott, Henry Chiu Hail, Megan Beth Ivankovich, Bryce McManus, Margaret Emily Meador, Jessica Lee Tarro, Margot Thomas, Leigh Anne Tuccio, Aislynn Elizabeth Rodeghiero, Miho Yamaguchi

**NAWCHE Update**

The National Association for Women in Catholic Higher Education welcomed its newest Administrative Coordinator, Rebekah Zincavage, in the 2002-2003 academic year. Her work helped to kick off NAWCHE’s first Steering Committee meeting in January 2003, in Weston, Massachusetts. This meeting brought together NAWCHE leaders from around the country to discuss, formulate, and implement structural changes and membership initiatives.

NAWCHE’s next endeavor led them to New Orleans in June 2003 at the National Women’s Studies Association’s annual conference, entitled “Southern Discomfort.” Denise Leckenby and Rebekah Zincavage participated in NAWCHE’s sponsored panel, led by Linda Garber, Associate Professor of English and the Program for Study of Women and Gender at Santa Clara University. Dr. Garber’s talk, entitled “Higher Catholic Education and LGBTQ Studies: Opportunities and Challenges,” addressed important issues, confronting such questions as: How do faculty at Catholic institutions incorporate research in lesbian/gay studies and queer theory into their classrooms? What obstacles and possibilities do their particular institutional locations present?

Her presentation discussed the landscape for LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning) studies and for faculty at Catholic institutions across the United States. NAWCHE will continue examining these and other important issues surrounding women in Catholic higher education at its upcoming conference, Making Connections VII: Creating Circles of Conversations - Women of the Academy and the Church. NAWCHE’s seventh biennial conference will be held spring/summer of 2004.

For more information please contact NAWCHE at nawche@bc.edu.
Justice for Janitors
Three Department Professors Arrested in Support of Strike

by Matthew Williams

On October 10, 2002, three of Boston College’s Sociology professors - Charlie Derber, Stephen Pfohl, and Juliet Schor - were arrested while committing civil disobedience in support of a city-wide janitors strike. The strike was part of the Service Employees International Union’s (SEIU) nation-wide Justice for Janitors campaign, an effort to move away from business unionism to social justice unionism.

In Boston, the strikers were simply calling for more full-time jobs, a living wage, and health benefits. The three professors were arrested along with 11 other community leaders in a show of solidarity with the striking janitors. Thanks to these and other such actions, the cleaning companies - most of which had been quite recalcitrant - finally reached an agreement with the SEIU.

Most of Boston’s janitors are immigrants from Latin America, who came to the U.S. seeking a better life for themselves and their families. Conditions in the city seemed designed to frustrate their aspirations. Most companies in Boston contract their janitorial services out to cleaning companies. Many of these companies were paying the janitors as little as $39 a day, forcing them to work multiple jobs to support their families, producing work weeks of well over 40 hours. In addition, only 25% of Boston janitors had healthcare coverage, leaving them and their families vulnerable to illness and accidents.

Derber said that one of his motivations for committing civil disobedience was that “the issues around this were so painful to hear about. I felt strongly about the issue and felt it had significance beyond the strike, but I was also very compelled by the individual stories I was hearing.”

After a long campaign to pressure the cleaning companies, the SEIU launched a strike on September 30, 2002, refusing to clean an ever greater number of downtown office buildings. Other unionized workers, such as UPS drivers, honored the janitors' picket lines. The pressure was sufficient to cause many of Boston’s major businesses and the state government to come out in support of the strike. By the time October 10 came around, six smaller cleaning companies had come to an agreement with the SEIU, but most of the cleaning companies - including the two largest, UNICCO and Janitronics - were still holding out. Schor was approached by a former student of hers, now working with the SEIU, about recruiting people for an act of civil disobedience by community leaders; Schor, Pfohl, and Derber agreed.

Schor said that she had a long history of involvement in such issues. “Even when I was in high school my major political activity was working for the United Farm Workers union. More immediately, just before I came to Boston College, in the spring of 2001, I was very involved at Harvard with the living wage campaign and the occupation of the president’s office for a living wage at Harvard. One of the major employee groups that were affected here were janitors, and the union that was involved at Harvard is the same union, SEIU, that was involved in the janitors’ strike in the downtown office buildings.”

Derber noted that it was a chance to put what he teaches in the classroom and writes about in books into practice. “When you’re an academic you always wonder how authentic your politics are and you like to walk the walk a little bit and not just talk the talk. I felt that this was an occasion to test my own willingness to walk the walk and not just be a talker of the talk.”

The civil disobedience action itself was proceeded by a rally of 350 janitors and 150 college students, the latter organized by the Student Labor Action Project, SLAP, at 6 p.m. at 100 State Street. At 6:30, they proceeded to march through the streets of Boston. The police redirected traf-
fic, letting the marchers have the streets. Spanish chants, drums, and whistles filled the air as they passed by Boston’s major office buildings and ritzy hotels. Other groups of janitors joined the march as it proceeded. At Post Office Square the marchers stopped and gathered in a circle in the middle of the road. In the center of the circle, the three BC professors and 11 other community leaders sat down in the street. The police made no attempt to get the crowd off the street. They simply cleared a path through them and gently arrested the 14 notables, taking them away and putting them into police wagons. Everyone else was allowed to remain in the road. After the police wagons pulled away, the march continued on to Government Center.

Schor connected her and her colleagues’ act with the social justice mission of BC’s Sociology department. “My experience is that people here are not only teaching critical ideas and social justice in their classrooms, but they’re actually involved in their own lives, and I think that’s something that’s really important and something that has not always been true of academics who write and research on issues of social justice. After the movements of the ’60s and early ’70s, some academics tended to get a more personal distance from the problems that they were writing about. To me it was an indication of the ways in which this department really is genuine in its commitments. I feel the university as a whole is supportive of personal activism as well as academic critique.”

Pfohl also noted the connection between the civil disobedience and the department’s and the university’s mission. “One of the things that really moved me to want to participate, in addition to my own interest in justice and our department saying social-economic justice is a major thing, was listening to the Cardinal in Boston and thinking, ‘Well, Boston College is allegedly an institution concerned with social justice and the Cardinal certainly stood behind the strike,’ so I thought that being a faculty member at a Catholic institution whose graduate program is committed to justice, whose alleged Catholic spirit is committed to social equality and justice; this motivated me to really in some sense be a participant in drawing attention to the strike.”

The three professors and other community leaders were released on bail, as arranged by the union, at 11 p.m. that evening. At the arraignment hearing, there was some initial concern at the surprising severity of the charges, which included items from Boston’s Riot Act, in an apparent effort by the city government to keep the strike from causing too much disruption in the city. The police records apparently included references to violent instruments held by the protesters - these instruments, as it turned out, were the signs held by the janitors and students. Derber, Pfohl, and Schor all pleaded not guilty. At their preliminary hearing, they accepted what essentially was a plea bargain, agreeing to a period of probation. They saw no reason to fight the matter in court, the strike having been settled by then.

After the professors’ arrests, the strike continued to escalate. With SLAP threatening to bus in students from across the East Coast to create a “Day of Chaos” in the financial district by holding non-permitted marches and committing mass civil disobedience on October 24, the remaining cleaning companies came to an agreement with SEIU on October 23. The five-year contract included extending health care coverage to 1,000 additional janitors (out of 10,000), wage increases of 30% over three years, ESL and job training classes, and two sick days per year. While some supporters of the strike found this agreement disappointing, it was still an improvement over previous conditions and probably did a great deal to boost the morale of the janitors, as well as encouraging them to struggle for greater justice in the future.
New Hires: Sarah Babb and Leslie Salzinger

After a lengthy and complex job search involving over 230 applicants for an advertised position in the area of “Global Sociology,” offers were made and accepted by Sarah Babb and Leslie Salzinger to join the faculty of the Boston College Sociology Department. Sarah Babb was awarded the Ph.D. by Northwestern University in 1998 and joins the BC faculty after five years of full-time teaching as an assistant professor at University of Massachusetts, Amherst. Babb’s scholarship and teaching are situated at the analytic crossroads of two important sub-fields of sociological inquiry—economic sociology and political sociology. In addition, her major published work to date, Managing Mexico: Economists from Nationalism to Neoliberalism (Princeton University Press, 2001) makes innovative theoretical and empirical contributions to both the sociology of professions and to interdisciplinary studies of Latin American society.

Leslie Salzinger, our second new hire, completed her Ph.D. at University of California, Berkeley in 1998 and has been teaching as an assistant professor at University of Chicago since that time. A talented ethnographer, feminist theorist, and recent Book Review Editor for the American Journal of Sociology, Salzinger is also the author of a number of significant publications. These include the 2003 book, Genders Under Production (University of California Press), a comparative ethnography of women’s labor and gendered identities in four factories in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico.

Babb’s book, Managing Mexico, employs a variety of innovative sociological methods to tell a carefully crafted historical sociological story of the organization and transformation of the economics profession in Mexico over the course of the twentieth-century. Babb’s work explores the fateful “Americanization” of Mexican economic thinking, as well as the paradigmatic shift within the economics profession in Mexico from the dominance of a Marxist developmentalist model to neoliberal ways of envisioning the economy. In addressing these concerns, her methods include the coding and analytic interpretation of 287 undergraduate economic theses from Mexico’s two most important economics programs. Other aspects of Babb’s methods include the examination of archival materials and published documents, and the interviewing of over 50 Mexican economists and public officials.

Babb’s compelling analysis examines how internal state and external global institutional networks impact upon and shape the direction of social science expertise. Beginning with a comparative perspective on the institutional sponsorship of professional forms of “expert knowledge,” the opening chapters of Managing Mexico analyze the early years of economics in Mexico as a state-centered profession in the continental mold. During the 1930s and most of the 1940s, the membership of this new profession was primarily drawn from the legal sector of society. Most early Mexican economists were also government employees committed to left-leaning interventionist approaches to national economic development.

Later sections of Managing Mexico analyze, in detail, an institutional break within professional Mexican economics with the 1946 founding of the Mexican Technological Institute (ITM) by a group of leading businessmen. ITM was intended as an alternative to the perceived leftist stance of the economics program at the public Autonomous National University of Mexico (UNAM), the leading training center for economists in Mexico at the time. While intended as a political counterweight to the ideological influence of UNAM, the creation of the ITM soon resulted in a major split between public-sector and private-sector versions of the economics profession. As Babb demonstrates, this resulted in a complex institutional and network-based struggle for dominance. In examining this struggle with analytic acumen and great attention to empirical detail, Babb underscores the “mimetic isomorphism” that takes place when aspiring Mexican scholars find themselves attracted by the prestige and privileged resources of U.S. academic economics departments, particularly those at University of Chicago and Harvard. In this way, Babb’s work describes how Mexican economists come to share the dominant language and theoretical assumptions that today govern the central institutions of global finance. The adoption of neoliberal thinking simultaneously makes Mexican economists less susceptible to local domestic influence. Babb concludes her path-breaking book with a discerning assessment of how well neoliberalism serves and/or fails to serve the population of Mexico as a whole.
Managing Mexico is a highly original and important study. In this sense, it should be no surprise that Managing Mexico has already been translated into Spanish by the Mexican publishing house, Fonda de Cultura Económica. Babb is also the author, with Bruce Carruthers, of the influential book, Economy/Society: Markets, Meanings, and Social Structure (Pine Forge Press, 1999). At the core of this book is the argument that economic markets are never fully explainable on economic terms alone. Rather, market dynamics are embedded and partially shaped by other nonmarket social relations. Carruthers and Babb demonstrate this by showing how each of four key institutional foundations of market societies—property, buyers and sellers, money, and information—are in turn structurally mediated by processes pertaining to cultural meanings, networks, and specific organizational vectors of power. The global reach of free market economic practices is also carefully examined by Carruthers and Babb. The two make discerning connections between free market economics and questions pertaining to economic inequality and development. The concluding chapters on the origins and fate of contemporary economic “globalization” are particularly noteworthy. Here readers are provided with an in-depth but highly readable introduction to such complex matters as the rise of the international monetary system, new technologies of global communication, and the high-speed transportation of everything from manufactured goods and corporate cultural icons to tourists, immigrants, and sociological research.

Babb is also the author of several other major publications, including key articles in the American Sociological Review and American Journal of Sociology. Her work to date has also resulted in several important scholarly awards. In 1994, her paper, “A True American System of Finance,” was named co-winner of the Best Graduate Student Paper Award for 1993-94 by the American Sociological Association’s Section on Comparative Historical Sociology. This work was subsequently published as an article in the American Journal of Sociology. In 1999, Babb’s dissertation, The Evolution of Economic Expertise in a Developing Country: Mexican Economists, 1929-1998, was honored by the American Sociological Association as Best Dissertation of the Year. In 2001, she was awarded a highly competitive Radcliffe Fellowship by the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Studies at Harvard University to support the development of her current research on organizational factors affecting decision-making and shifts in institutional mission on the part of the International Monetary Fund. In addition, Babb also comes to Boston College with an established reputation for teaching excellence and will offer graduate and undergraduate courses in the areas of global sociology, economic sociology, sociology of revolution, social movements, complex organization, and comparative historical methods.

Leslie Salzinger’s new book, Genders Under Production (University of California Press, 2003) is the result of 18 months of fieldwork in four factories in Ciudad Juárez. Her ground-breaking work examines the relationship between corporate labor control strategies and the situated production of differently styled gender relations in the four transnational Mexican factories in which she worked as a participant observer. Drawing upon both critical sociological perspectives on economic activity and the feminist standpoint epistemology, Salzinger’s beautifully written ethnography illuminates the concrete and often subtle social dynamics by which economic and gendered modalities of power impact reciprocally upon each other.

With Michael Burawoy and other collaborators, Salzinger is also the editor of the highly influential volume, Ethnography Unbound (University of California Press, 1991). She is also the author of a variety of refereed articles and book chapters concerning the intersections of gender and labor, several of which have already been republished. The recipient of a prestigious research fellowship from the Russell Sage Foundation and an appointment at Princeton University’s Center for Advanced Study, Salzinger is currently at work on a new comparative ethnography of financial traders in Mexico City and New York City.

When she arrives at Boston College in Fall of 2004, Salzinger will also bring with her a well-earned reputation as an exceptionally strong graduate and undergraduate-level instructor. At Boston College, she is likely to teach a wide range of courses, including global sociology, self, culture and society, ethnographic methods, feminist theory, sociology of gender, and economic sociology. Together with Babb, Salzinger’s presence in our faculty will deepen our department and university’s commitment to sustained explorations of issues relating to social justice at a global level. As such, it is with great enthusiasm that the Sociology Department welcomes Sarah Babb to our faculty in Fall of 2003 and Leslie Salzinger in Fall of 2004.
The man in the next seat had been eyeing her furtively for a while, so Asst. Prof. Kerry Ann Rockquemore (Sociology) figured it was only a matter of time before the question came.

“What are you?”

There was neither malice nor menace in her fellow airplane passenger’s voice, but Rockquemore - recalling the event in a recent interview - knew what he was asking: He wanted to know her racial and ethnic background.

The daughter of a black father and white mother, Rockquemore was no stranger to questions and misperceptions about her appearance. That very day, one person had spoken Spanish to her, apparently thinking she was Latina, and a casual remark by the attendant at her flight check-in indicated that he took her for Italian.

“What are you?”

Trying to be polite, Rockquemore replied, “Why don’t you guess?”

The man thought for a minute, mused aloud about her green eyes, black hair and freckles, then announced, “You must be Irish!” Rockquemore laughs at the memory of that exchange, yet the question that prompted it is the essence of her work as a scholar, and a possessor, of biracial identity.

Through her research, including her co-authored 2002 book Beyond Black: Biracial Identity in America, Rockquemore seeks to shed light on the social and personal experiences of America’s growing biracial population. The rise of interracial marriages in the United States during the past three decades, Rockquemore says, and the visibility of celebrities such as golfer Tiger Woods and movie stars Vin Diesel and Halle Barry have helped to create more acceptance of biracial people.

But race is still a troubling subject for America, as evidenced by recent controversies over affirmative action policies and Trent Lott’s remarks on segregation. The perspective of multiracial people, she says, is an important component of dialogue on race - and on the whole nature of identity itself.

“As a society, we’re at an awkward place,” she said. “Our old ideas about race and racial categorization are unraveling, and being replaced by new ideas that have a more scientific basis. We are no longer so bound by the ‘one-drop rule,’ which classified mixed-race children according to the racial group of the lower-status parent - in other words, you could never be considered ‘pure’ white, no matter your appearance. Racial identity is something far more fluid than it used to be.

“But there is still a social reality for race that we have yet to come to grips with. If you have a racial identity that does not neatly fit into this reality, how do you experience the world? How do others see you? How do you see yourself? ‘What are you?’”

Pondering questions about biracial identity is not merely an academic or rhetorical exercise, according to Rockquemore: The matter of whether a person identifies him or herself as having a biracial identity can have sociopolitical ramifications.

A proposal to add a multiracial category to the 2000 federal census, she points out, set off a contentious debate before it was rejected. Supporters of the new category said its addition would help to accurately represent shifting demographic trends while also providing a true reflection of biracial people’s understanding of their identity. Opponents argued that a multiracial category would ultimately make it more difficult to monitor racial discrimination and enforce civil rights legislation.

The census controversy might be seen as an indication of the growing self-advocacy among biracial people, especially those in their 20s or younger. Susan Lambe, co-leader of the Boston chapter of SWIRL, a social and educational support group for families, couples and individuals of mixed race, says that unlike in the past, “passing for white” is less of a concern for biracial persons.

“You have more of a choice now as to how you identify yourself,” said Lambe, whose parents are white and Asian. “Because of that, those of us who are mixed or biracial want to create our own community, rather than being forced into a category.”

The choice to which Lambe refers, and the factors that influence it, are explored by Rockquemore and University of Alabama-Huntsville Assistant Professor of Sociology David Brunsma in Beyond Black. Their project focuses on...
the offspring of black white unions. She explains, “because blacks and whites continue to be the two groups with the greatest social distance, the most spatial separation and the strongest taboos against interracial marriage.”

Rockquemore and Brunsma’s research used survey data and in-depth interviews with biracial undergraduates attending Detroit-area colleges. Those conversations give voice to the complexities of biracial identity, and how it can be influenced by physical appearance, friends and acquaintances, surroundings, situation and other factors.

Chris, for example, described herself as “biracial, but I experience the world as a black woman,” largely because of her appearance. Kathy, more light-skinned and with features most likely to identify her as white, talked of being stigmatized by many black students who interpret her biracial self-identification as trying to establish herself as “better than” or “beyond” black.

“It is one thing for someone to consider himself or herself as biracial, or black, or white,” said Rockquemore. “How that identity is validated - if it is - by family, friends, acquaintances or in certain situations, is another matter.”

Some respondents, however, said being biracial meant they would alter their behaviors or mannerisms to suit the situation. One student Rockquemore interviewed in a cafeteria spoke to her using black vernacular and body language, but when joined by white friends, she recalled, “he stiffened his back and used more standard English.”

Yet there was nothing affected or false about the young man’s actions, Rockquemore adds. “It felt completely natural to him. For biracial people like him, their self-understanding is based on this fluidity of identity. They see it as a gift, a way to move more comfortably through the world.”

Based on the surveys and interviews, Rockquemore and Brunsma found four major variations on biracial identity. The “border” identity, which fit Kathy, encompasses both socially accepted racial categorizations of black and white yet includes an additional element from its combination. The “protean,” as demonstrated by the young man in the cafeteria, involves multiple identities and personas that can be called up in appropriate contexts.

A small number of respondents asserted a “singular” identity as either black or white, rather than biracial. But some chose what the researchers termed a “transcendent” identity, consciously denying having any racial identity at all.

“This option proved to be more complex than we thought,” said Rockquemore. “We assumed beforehand that these students were white in appearance, with no real experience of racial stratification, and perhaps filled with youthful idealism. But those whom we interviewed were not exclusively white in appearance, and some had known discrimination. They intellectualized those situations as part of broad societal problem, one in which they were deeply imbedded.”

One such respondent, Rob, was adamant that race was a false categorization of humanity, and said he wished to be understood by others as a unique individual with particular gifts and talents: a musician, a thinker, a kind-hearted individual, Catholic and a hard-working student with dreams and ambitions.

Rockquemore readily acknowledges the limits, and risks, of terminology in discussions pertaining to race. “It is not something we as a society talk about with a great deal of comfort,” she said. “One might argue with the terms and phrases we use in this study. Our hope is to take as much of the emotion and volatility out of the mix, to establish at least a starting point for conversations about racial identity.”

Rockquemore has by no means been isolated from the difficulties of having a biracial identity, although for her these issues did not surface until young adulthood.

“In my family we rarely talked about race, and if you’re a kid and you don’t get direction you will find your own way. So, growing up, I always considered myself black, and this was how I was perceived by those around me. But when I went to college, suddenly, there were people who did not see me as ‘a black girl,’ and that could be awkward at times.”

As a child, Rockquemore had a white friend who regularly invited her to sleep over. But her friend’s parents would not allow their daughter to stay at Rockquemore’s house.
“It was just an arrangement that was accepted, and no one really talked about it,” she said. “When we were in college my friend finally affirmed what I had come to figure out for myself: Her parents didn’t let her sleep over because my father was black.”

In her next book, Raising the Biracial Child: From Theory to Practice, Rockquemore said she hopes to provide a means for parents of biracial children to confront the personal and social challenges she has experienced and chronicled. She also envisions the book as being helpful for educators, who will be dealing with greater numbers of biracial children.

“There was a previous thinking in some quarters that a kid who was biracial needed to develop ‘a black identity,’ and because this was considered the only healthy endpoint a child who didn’t would be pathologized. Now we’re beginning to understand, however; there doesn’t need to be just one endpoint; there are many possibilities.

“As academics, we can write all this stuff, but if we don’t put it in the hands of people who need to use it, how much good are we doing? If the effect of my work is that it opens up parents to new ideas about their biracial kids - or that teachers and school counselors understand they don’t have to squeeze a kid into a category - then perhaps it’s worth doing.”

This article originally appeared in the February 13, 2003, issue of the Boston College Chronicle.

Graduate Student Awards 2002-2003


Benedict Alper Graduate Fellowship: Patricia Arend (2002-03), Abigail Brooks (2003-04)

Donald J. White Award for Teaching Excellence: Abigail Brooks, Sandra George O’Neil, John Shandra, Willam Wood


Boston College Graduate Minority Fellowship: Adria Goodsen

Helen and Donald J. White Award for Outstanding Boston College Dissertation in Social Sciences: Tay McNamara


Elected Graduate Student Representative, Board of Directors, Society for the Study of Social Problems, 2003-06: Aimee Van Wagenen


Ph.D. degrees awarded

Five students were awarded the Ph.D. in Sociology during Academic Year 2002-03. These include, with dissertation titles and advisors:

Theresita Del Rosario
Scripted Clashes: A Dramaturgical Approach to Three Uprisings in the Philippines.
Paul Gray, Advisor

Annikki Paratore Galibois
The Body in Domestic Violence: A Corporeal Feminist Analysis of Batterers’ and Battered Women’s Embodied Experiences of Domestic Violence.
Stephen Pfohl, Advisor

Patricia Leavy
Representational Events: Titanic and Other Events as Case Studies in Collective Memory.
Stephen Pfohl, Advisor

Aimee Elise Marlow
Jeanne Guillemin, Advisor

Tay K. McNamara
The Role of Social Context in the Relationship between Health and Retirement.
John B. Williamson, Advisor

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M.A. degrees awarded

Three graduate students were awarded the M.A. in Sociology during Academic Year 2002-2003. These include, with M.A. thesis/paper titles:

Amanda Berger
Masculinity and Dance: Shifting Social Constructions of Gender.

Abigail Brooks
Confusion, Frustration, and “Not a Whole Lot Going On”: A Analysis of Contemporary Courtship Behavior Among Young Heterosexual Women and Men.

Agatha Venetis
“Women, Marriage and Social Class.”
Behind the Headlines: Teach-In on the War in Iraq

by Patricia Arend

In order to provide access for the wider Boston College community to information not included in mainstream U.S. media accounts of the invasion of Iraq, as well as to engender reflective discussion and debate, the Sociology Department, together with the assistance of the Graduate Student Peace Initiative and Faculty and Staff for Social Justice, organized a symposium on the war on April 14, 2003. It involved presentations by BC faculty members Prasannan Parthasarathi (History), Lawrence Daka (Philosophy), Juliet Schor (Sociology), Charles Derber (Sociology), and John McDargh (Theology) and was moderated by Stephen Pfohl. Pizza, salad, and beverages were provided for all participants.

Stephen Pfohl opened by discussing points of agreement and disagreement between activists for and against the war. He stated that both sides agreed that Saddam Hussein led a brutal dictatorship. Both sides also support United States troops, and believe in freedom of speech and democracy. However, anti-war activists point out that the U.S. government supported the Hussein dictatorship until 1991, which raises questions about the U.S.’s culpability in Hussein’s claims to power. Those against the war also argue that supporting U.S. troops means “bringing them home,” as heard frequently in protest chants. Pfohl reflected on the media attention to the loss of U.S. soldiers, but not to the innocent Iraqi civilians and Iraqi soldiers killed in the conflict. Anti-war activists have also been accused of being “anti-patriotic,” though they argue that living in a democracy demands that ethical, political, and intellectual discussions take place on the war, and the college campus is no exception.

Following Pfohl’s introductory remarks, Prasannan Parthasarathi provided information on the history of Iraq to help students make sense of claims made by critics of the war that oil was the U.S.’s primary motivation and not terrorism or weapons of mass destruction. Such claims make sense when the war is examined in relation to past conflicts over oil in the region.

Parthasarathi discussed previous British and American invasions, beginning with the 1914 incursion into the then territories of the Ottoman Empire, Mosul, Baghdad, and Basra through British use of chemical warfare against Iraq in the 1930s, the regime change invasion of 1941, and the U.S. led coup in 1963. Imperialism and the desire for oil are historical continuities that connect the previous wars to the current war.

Next Lawrence Daka spoke about preemptive politics and the future of the United Nations. He argued that waging war on Iraq was divisive, ruining unity forged in the United Nations after September 11th. Rather than making the world safer, the war threatens stability, peace, and the United Nations’ ability to have an impact on either. Daka argued that preemption was a failure to invest in weapons inspections, and a failure of reason, faith, and morality. He documented the change in the Bush administration’s justification for going to war from “weapons of mass destruction” to “regime change” between September 11th and the start of the war March 19, 2003, indicating that the decision to go to war was not dependent on either of these issues.

Juliet Schor provided provocative commentary on the then current news images of the U.S. as the “joyous liberators” of Iraq and raised key questions. She asked whether or not the U.S. government could make a credible argument for being a liberator. She answered with a definitive “no,” given the United States’ history of creating and supporting dictatorial regimes all over the globe and employing many of our so-called enemies, including the Taliban, Osama bin Laden (a former CIA operative), and Saddam Hussein. Schor argued that despite the legitimate desire to remove Hussein from power in Iraq, that end did not justify the means of war. Lack of clean water and disease dramatically increase the risk that thousands of Iraqi citizens will die following the war. Law is our only hope for ending dictatorial regimes with humane treatment.

Charlie Derber then reflected on the implications of the war in Iraq for the future. He focused on three central points. First, he considered the invasion of Iraq as a model for a new world order where the United States is seen as an
occupying force. Second, he discussed the potential for Iraq’s future government to tend toward Balkanization. Third, he reflected on the future of the international economy and the role of the IMF and World Bank, where profits made from the war by U.S. companies, such as Halliburton, are grossly outweighed by the cost of reparations and reconstruction in Iraq.

Professor John McDargh concluded the formal presentations. He compared the war in Iraq to his own memories of the U.S. invasion of Cambodia in 1970, reflecting on the barriers broken down between teachers and students as some prepared for war. McDargh provided a powerful meditation on the inherent loss for all involved with war, through a retelling of the Jews’ escape from Egypt through the eyes of a God that cried while the Egyptians drowned and the Jews were set free.

These powerful and informative presentations were followed by group discussions led by a variety of BC faculty members and graduate students. Groups discussed how to talk about the war with their families and friends with differing political opinions, how to show support for the soldiers if they were against the war, the historical and political information presented in the short lectures, and other related topics. The event closed with a short period for prayerful reflections.

Book Opening: Charles Derber

by Patricia Arend

On February 13, 2003, Boston College Magazine and the Boston College Book Store sponsored a book opening to celebrate the December 2002 publication of Sociology Professor Charlie Derber’s People Before Profit: The New Globalization in an Age of Terror, Big Money, and Economic Crisis. This event was part of the series, “Writers Among Us,” which spotlights new and notable books and their authors from the BC community. Anna Marie Murphy, deputy editor of Boston College Magazine, introduced Professor Derber.

Rather than reading from his book, Derber began by detailing increases in the gross inequities between rich and poor countries around the world in the last few decades due to the acceleration of globalization. Popular misconceptions, what Derber terms the “globalization mystique,” present globalization as new, inevitable, self-propelling, and win-win for rich and poor countries alike. By challenging each of these beliefs, Derber revealed a dynamic system that is constantly being invented and re-invented by actors and institutions.

In order to explain the crisis of globalization, Derber compared it to the crisis in the Catholic Church, specifically the disempowerment of the laity relative to the Church hierarchy. Both the Catholic Church and the three main institutions of globalization - the global corporation, the U.S. government, and the collective of global governing institutions such as the World Trade Organization, International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank - are non-democratic and non-accountable to the people they are supposed to serve.

After providing a brief history of each institution relative to globalization, Professor Derber raised the question of how to empower the “laity.” He detailed the rise of anti-globalization movements around the world, an ever-growing distrust of powerful multinational corporations, and increasing international views of the U.S. as the greatest threat to global security. He closed his remarks by calling for a return of the original ideals and practices that put these institutions in motion, such as the power-wary construction of the corporation in the Jeffersonian era, the U.S. Declaration of Independence, and the social democratic concepts put into play briefly at Bretton Woods in 1944.

Professor Derber’s opening can be viewed on the Web via BC’s “Front Row” program at http://www.bc.edu/frontrow/programs/, which provides internet access through streaming media to tapes of cultural and scholarly events at Boston College.
“Boston College is the most politically active campus in the Boston area.” What? Boston College? These words were uttered more than once by several Boston area grassroots leaders as the campus exploded last academic year with teach-in’s, vigils, and protests against a U.S. invasion of Iraq.

In an unprecedented outcry against a war that had not yet begun, over eight million people around the globe marched in the streets in protest against a U.S.-led war against Iraq, and Boston College faculty and students were among them. In cooperation with the Global Justice Project and local peace and social justice grassroots organizations, several Sociology faculty members participated in a number of educational events addressing a myriad of topics including the history of U.S. relations with Iraq and the Middle East; the economic, political and social consequences of war; and the vital role social activism must play in holding our government accountable for its imperialist actions around the globe.

The Global Justice Project formed in the spring of 1999 under the guidance of Sociology professor Charlie Derber. It is an ever expanding collaboration between community members, labor and social justice activists, Boston College professors, and both undergraduate and graduate students working to educate and encourage activism for global social and economic justice. Its goal is to promote dialogue at Boston College and in the community at large that will lead to organized social action towards the development of a new global policy — one that will advance justice in the global economy. Although the project is facilitated by Derber, its agenda is student driven and leadership roles are rotated frequently.

This past fall, the Global Justice Project hit the ground running and hosted a series of teach-in’s, culminating in an anti-war rally on the Dustbowl on the National Day of Student Action on October 7th. Faculty and students across disciplines joined together to engage in dialogue around the controversial issues of sanctions, regime change, civil liberties, and the U.S. drive for empire. Sociology faculty provided a framework for understanding the historical and structural nature of capitalism, the geopolitical system, and the U.S. role within it in order to critique U.S. foreign policy. Students from the Global Justice Project debated with students from the Boston College Republicans. Community members from Newton Peace Dialogues called for support in their local protesting efforts. Cell phones dialed senators and congressmen. Impromptu conversations emerged among the crowd. This was just the beginning of an academic year filled with activism against an impending war.

As Fall semester progressed, faculty and students from the Global Justice Project continued to join with community activists and participated in a Boston Walk for Peace, traveled to New York City and protested with students from over 100 campuses involved in the Campus Anti-War Network, wrote letters to their senators and congressmen, and held weekly peace vigils on the Boston College campus.

And, if all this wasn’t enough, several of our faculty members joined with students from the Global Justice Project in October and supported the Boston Justice for Janitors campaign by participating in civil disobedience and getting arrested during a rally on Strike Day. Over 10,000 Latino immigrant janitors in Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 615 called for better health care, decent wages, and full-time job opportunities.

The spring semester was also full of action, education, and concern for our world. Prior to the beginnings of war, members of the Global Justice Project attended peace demonstrations in Washington, D.C. and joined with over ten million people worldwide at the February 15 demonstration in New York City. After the war began, members remained actively involved in peace demonstrations and arranged for Noam Chomsky to speak on campus. As described by several major media, Chomsky is one of the century’s most important political figures and has published over 70 books and over a thousand articles. Chomsky spoke to a full house in the Power Gym in Conte Forum.
where he offered a strong critique of U.S. involvement in Iraq and called for an end to U.S. imperialism. Although several students were opposed to Chomsky’s message and demonstrated outside the event, Chomsky’s lecture sparked dialogue and debate on campus regarding issues of war and peace and the United States’ role in the world.

In April, the Graduate Student Peace Initiative was born. The Global Justice Project joined with the Sociology Department and the Faculty and Staff for Social Justice and presented a forum entitled “Behind the Headlines: War in Iraq.” Faculty and graduate students participated in dialogue with students across the university in small discussions addressing the history and context of the U.S.-Iraq conflict as well as the implications of a new U.S. doctrine of pre-emptive war.

Although college campuses have historically played a vital role in political activism, Boston College students have often been depicted as apathetic in their political expression. This academic year certainly proved that Boston College students have broken through that proverbial bubble as they filled The Heights with heated commentary both for and against the war in Iraq, critically engaged the various discourses on war and peace in student run teach-in’s and debates, participated in city-wide protests, and demanded that the university provide more intellectually stimulating educational forums! As teachers and sociologists, what more could we ask for?

Practicing sociology is an avenue for making the world a better place, but many of us can attest to how difficult it is to continue to ‘do activism’ as we drown in our course work, teaching responsibilities, research, not to mention our lives outside the hallowed halls of Boston College. It is sometimes ironic that we can make the time to pontificate about what’s wrong with the world, but can’t possibly find the time to do something about it. The faculty and students who participated in this academic year’s events demonstrated that we can and must make the time for activism. As sociologists, we have the responsibility to not only examine the critical issues, but to also do something about them. As teachers and mentors, we must passionately express our views, but at the same time provide a safe environment for critical debate and encourage students to freely develop and express their own opinions. Most importantly, as people we must put our words into actions. We must act in order to effect change.

We encourage you to visit the Global Justice Project’s Web site (www.bc.edu/globaljustice) or contact Professor Charlie Derber (derber@bc.edu) and learn more about how you can become active.

Critical Sociology
by Patricia Arend

In 2002-2003 the Critical Sociology editorial collective at Boston College continued its work guest editing a special issue centered around the theme “Culture, Power, and History.” David Fasenfest, the editor of the refereed journal Critical Sociology, previously The Insurgent Sociologist, offered BC this opportunity after being impressed by the work of many of our graduate students and alumni who participated in a series of conference sessions on the “future of critical sociology,” organized by the journal during the annual meetings of the Society for the Study of Social Problems.

The issue highlights the work of our recent graduate students and faculty and their commitment to critical scholarship and social and economic justice. The editorial collective chose articles for this issue through a labor-intensive screening process where both smaller editorial groups and the collective as a whole read and responded to each submission with substantial written feedback. The collective also was committed to developing the writing of student sociologists and to introducing graduate students to the world of professional refereed journal editing.

The issue, comprised of a series of high quality manuscripts, was completed at the end of the academic year and will be published in the spring of 2004. The editorial collective working on the issue in 2002-2003 includes Professors Juliet Schor and Stephen Pfohl, as well as Ph.D. students Patricia Arend, Abigail Brooks, Denise Leckenby, Aimee Van Wagenen, and William Wood. They have been invited by the publisher of Critical Sociology, Brill, to expand the issue into a book for publication.
This past academic year was one of transition for the Media Research and Action Project as we phased out the community outreach aspect of our activities. The core of MRAP is and remains the weekly Wednesday morning breakfast seminar, our incubator for projects on using the mass media for social change. As usual, we devoted several sessions to discussion of graduate student projects, usually dissertation proposals, in development. In addition, we also had one or more sessions devoted to the following:

- Multiple sessions on chapters of Charlotte Ryan’s manuscript on the highly productive, seven year long collaborative relationship with the Rhode Island Coalition Against Domestic Violence. This has included the joint development of a manual for journalists on best practices for covering cases of domestic violence as well as the development of various media systems in the organization that can be replicated in other organizations.

- Multiple sessions with the Workmen’s Circle, Visions of Peace with Justice, Brit Tzedek v’Shalom, and other American Jewish groups committed to ending the Israeli occupation and establishing a peace based on a secure Israel living in peace with a viable Palestinian state in the occupied territories. These groups are attempting to challenge the pressure being applied by CAMERA (Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America) and other supporters of the Sharon government, which are charging PBS and local stations such as WBUR with bias against Israel. Our objective is to promote the Dual Liberation frame of two national liberation movements in conflict over the same land — that is, two rights in conflict rather than a fight between right and wrong.

- Multiple sessions on Bill Gamson’s early drafts of a game simulation of global justice issues, patterned after his SIMSOC (Simulated Society, developed in the 1960s and is now in its fifth edition with the Free Press).

- Multiple sessions on the Iraqi horror picture show, both before and after the war, and on media strategies for opponents of Pax Americana policies.

- Multiple sessions on Charlotte Ryan’s development of the MRAP theoretical model that distinguishes a social movement approach to media strategy from media advocacy and marketing approaches.

- A session with Mark Morrow, Special Projects editor for the Boston Globe, on the criteria that the Globe uses in selecting projects to pursue and the constraints involved in pursuing those that are selected.

- A post-mortem strategy session with Tom Louie, a leader in the movement to preserve bilingual education, examining the unsuccessful campaign to defeat the English-only referendum in the November 2002, Massachusetts election.

We look forward to a variety of sessions in 2003-04 — some with professional journalists, some with activists, some on continuing projects of MRAP participants.

New graduate students are invited to join us on Wednesday mornings if they are interested in issues of symbolic politics and using the media for social change.
Severyn Bruyn

Severyn Bruyn has begun an alternative newspaper that is published on the Internet twice a month with a few Newtonites. It is called Alternative Views. It can be seen at www.Alternative-Views.org.

Jeanne Guillemim

Jeanne Guillemim consults regularly on biological weapons and security issues for ABC News and National Public Radio and recently addressed the National Governors Association in New Orleans on homeland security and the problem of secrecy.

Catherine Riessman

Catherine Riessman was named British Academy Visiting Professor at the Centre for Narrative Research, University of East London, U.K.

Paul Schervish

Paul Schervish was appointed National Research Fellow at the Indiana University Center on Philanthropy, as of September 1, 2003. He was also involved in the following research projects:

The Material and Spiritual Dynamics of Wealth: Dilemmas and Decisions Surrounding the Accumulation and Distribution of Financial Resources (Director).
Sponsor: The T. B. Murphy Foundation Charitable Trust
January 1, 2000 – December 2003

Millionaires and the Millennium: The Emerging Material and Spiritual Determinants of Charitable Giving by Wealth Holders (Director).
Sponsor: The Lilly Endowment


Diane Vaughan

Diane Vaughan was awarded a John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship for 2003-2004. She was elected Council-Member-at Large for a 3 year term by the American Sociological Association; was named Harry Lyman Hooker Distinguished Lecturer by McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada; and was a Researcher on the Columbia Accident Investigation Board.

Because of her background investigating the Challenger tragedy, Diane has been extensively interviewed and quoted by the press ever since the Columbia accident on February 1, 2003. Newspaper articles that reference her include but are not limited to the following: Newsday (Feb. 2, Apr. 24), Boston Globe (Feb. 4), Reuters (Feb. 5), Christian Science Monitor (Feb. 7, Apr. 25), Denver Post (Feb. 9), Washington Post (Feb. 9, 10; Mar. 1; Apr. 24, 26), Houston Chronicle (Mar. 3; Apr. 15, 24), Aviation Week and Space Technology (4/ 7), and the New York Times (4/ 15, 5/ 15, 8/ 23, 8/ 27).
Publications and Talks

Severyn Bruyn


Patricia M. Y. Chang


Charles Derber


Lisa Dodson


Bill Gamson


Eva Garroutte


“Health Research in American Indian Populations.” Native American Program Graduate Student Fellows Seminar, Harvard University. 2002.


Paul Gray


Jeanne Guillemin


Shirah W. Hecht


Sharlene Hesse-Biber


Lynda Lytle Holmstrom


David A. Karp


Bob Kunovich


Mike Malec


Stephen Pfohl


Catherine Riessman


“Looking Back on Emotions in Field Notes: Locating the Outsider Within.” University Lecture, Centre for Narrative Research, School of Social Sciences, University of East London, UK. Nov. 2002.


Kerry Ann Rockquemore


“Mental Health Issues Among the Multiracial Population.” Interrace Colloquium Series, University of Notre Dame, South Bend, IN. 2002.


“Promiscuity vs. Chastity: Sex, Birth Control, and Denial at Boston College.” CLX faculty affiliate program, Boston College, Chestnut Hill, MA. 2003.


Paul Schervish


Juliet B. Schor


Diane Vaughan


John Williamson


