Sociology Speaks
The Newsletter of the Sociology Department at Boston College

Message from Chairperson Juliet Schor

As the 05-06 academic year draws to a close I look back with a mixture of pleasure and pride. The department has remained committed to, and productive in its mission of sociology in the service of social justice. After five years here, I continue to be impressed with this very unique place, and grateful for the community I have found here.

The department had a very busy year. We welcomed new members; inaugurated a departmental seminar; celebrated awards, publications, graduations, and the granting of tenure to Zine Magubane; hosted another successful Visiting Scholars' series; and took a leading role in campus activism. We continue to produce important and innovative research and writing that addresses many of the most pressing issues of our times—from globalization and global warming to HIV/AIDS and the invisibility of marginalized populations in standard research methods. Our graduate program is growing, and students are producing amazing work. You will find more detail on many of these activities and accomplishments in the pages of this newsletter. Here I will merely note some highlights.

The department welcomed three new faculty members this year. Associate Professor Zine Magubane came to us from the University of Illinois. Zine specializes in historical and cultural analysis and is currently at work on two book projects—one on motherhood in popular culture and in particular on its unrecognized racial construction, the other on globalization and localization in the hip hop and rap music industry in South Africa. Assistant Professor Natalia Sarkisian came from the University of Massachusetts, and she specializes in advanced quantitative methods. Natalia has been using those skills to collect and analyze large data sets that address issues of labor and monetary flows among people, and the role of marital status, gender, race, and kinship networks on access to resources. This year, Natalia and co-author Naomi Gerstel were awarded the 2005 Rosabeth Moss Kanter International Award for Research Excellence in Families and Work, for writing the most outstanding article (among hundreds) in this field. C. Shawn McHugh also joined us from the University of Massachusetts, where he earned his doctorate last August for a path-breaking study of the re-affirmation of gender norms after childhood sexual abuse. This research has earned Shawn the 2006 Sally Hacker Award of the Sex and Gender Section of the American Sociological Association for a recent Gender and Society article.

Our newest faculty members are not the only ones garnering recognition from the profession. I would also like to congratulate Bill Gamson and Severyn Bruyn for awards recognizing outstanding career contributions. Bill was awarded the 2005 Recipient of Merit Award from the Eastern Sociological Society and Severyn received the 2005 William Foote Whyte Distinguished Career award from the ASA Section on Sociological Practice. Other notable achievements this year include Sarah Babb holding the prestigious Woodrow Wilson Fellowship; Presidential Fellow Michelle Gawerc being named a Graduate Student Fellow of the Peace, War and Social Conflict Section of the American Sociological Association; and first year PhD student Chris Kelly receiving the highly competitive U.S. Department of State Critical Language Scholarship to study Arabic in the summer of 2006.

Faculty members published a number of books, as is customary. Charles Derber’s Hidden Power: What You Need to Know to Save our Democracy (Berrett-Koehler) was named a top finalist for the Independent Publisher Book Awards and the second edition of Sharlene Hesse-Biber’s co-authored Working Women in America: Split Dreams was published by Oxford University Press. Severyn Bruyn published A Civil Republic, a follow up to his 2001 A Civil Economy. And most recently, David Karp’s Is It Me or My Meds: Living with Anti-Depressants was released by Harvard University Press. A departmental symposium was held on September 22, from 12-2, in the fifth floor lounge of McGuinn to celebrate this important new book. These and other accomplishments and activities are outlined in the pages of this newsletter.

I want to mention a few other departmental activities before closing. One of my major objectives as chair was to institute a regular departmental seminar for faculty and graduate students, to provide a place for all of us to share
our work, teach graduate students about research and enhance our sense of community. We began bi-weekly meetings in September and will be continuing this coming year. It has been a resounding success, with outstanding presentations, good attendance, and lively discussions. We meet on alternate Tuesdays at lunch in McGuinn, and welcome all alumni and interested friends and colleagues to join us. Each semester’s schedule is posted on the departmental website, at http://www.bc.edu/schools/cas/sociology/research/seminar/

Finally, those of you who follow Boston College in the news may have read or heard about the controversy surrounding the University’s granting an honorary degree to Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice at the June Commencement. While the University lauded her personal achievements, many faculty and students in the university felt that her actions as a major architect of the Iraq war and the Administration’s foreign policy are unworthy of being honored and urged the university not to award the Doctor of Laws degree. I mention it here because sociology department faculty and graduate students took a leadership role in the debate, speaking out on campus and in the national media. We heard from students, parents, alumni/ae, administrators, and faculty colleagues, and hundreds of passionate and well-informed conversations about the controversy took place. In the parlance of the day, it was a shining example of a “teachable moment,” representing the kind of engaged critical thinking that is at the core of a true university, and that our brand of engaged sociology is devoted to.

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Distinguished Visiting Scholars Series 2006

Nancy Naples
Sexual Citizenship, LGBT Activism, and International Politics

Francesca Polletta
Is Telling Stories Good for Democracy?

Frances Fox Piven
Challenging Authority: How Ordinary People Change America

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS
People Making History in the 21st Century
On March 22, Professor Nancy Naples opened the 2006 Distinguished Visiting Scholar series, “Social Movements: People Making History in the 21st Century.” Her public lecture, “Sexual Citizenship, LGBT Activism, and International Politics,” as well as two highly engaging seminars elaborating certain themes from the talk, were an informative and engaging opening to this year’s series.

President-Elect of the Society for the Study of Social Problems, and former President of Sociologists for Women in Society, Doctor Naples is a Professor of Sociology and Women’s Studies at the University of Connecticut-Storrs. Her book, _Grassroots Warriors: Activist Mothering, Community Work, and the War on Poverty_, was a finalist for the C. Wright Mills Award from the Society for the Study of Social Problems and was awarded Honorable Mention in the American Sociological Association Section on Race, Class and Gender’s Distinguished Contribution to Scholarship Book Award. In addition to _Grassroots Warriors_, Doctor Naples published, in 2003, _Feminism and Method: Ethnography, Discourse Analysis, and Activist Research_. She has also edited several books including, most recently, _Women’s Activism and Globalization: Linking Local Struggles and Transnational Politics_, (with Manisha Desai) and _Teaching Feminist Activism: Strategies from the Field_ (with Karen Bojar). Her current work includes the aforementioned _ Restructuring the Heartland: Radicalization and the Social Regulation of Citizenship_, which “investigates the link between global economic change, social policy, and community-based social restructuring in the rural United States” 1 and editing, with Salvador Vidal-Ortiz, her late colleague Lionel Cantú’s _Border Crossings: Mexican Men and the Sexuality of Migration_. Professor Naples is also the series editor for the Routledge Dissertation Book Series, “New Approaches in Sociology: Studies in Social Inequality, Social Change, and Social Justice.”

Probably best known for her work on women’s grassroots organizing, the turn to queer theory and sexual citizenship may, at first, seem to be a radical transformation in Professor Naples’s work. As she explains it, however, the central themes that have driven her work in the past remain present in this turn: “the dilemmas of claims-making/framing for social movements, the contradictory role of the state in both broadening and narrowing political and social citizenship, and the relationship between local organizing efforts and transnational/global activism. And feminist theory still drives much of my thinking on all these interrelated themes.”2

In the public lecture, Professor Naples provided an intersectional approach, drawing on political economy, racial formation, materialist feminist, and queer theoretical positions to investigate the utility of “Sexual Citizenship” as a broad-based organizing frame. Drawn to queer theory because of a frustration with the heteronormative assumptions of feminist approaches to the state, queer work on this concept has highlighted the ways that state regulation is related to sexual identity and practice.

In order to illustrate these connections, Professor Naples began by looking back at conflicts over “community control” in New York City. While originally intended as an opportunity to give citizens control over their children’s education, that frame became narrowed by interaction with the state, and also became an excuse for the failure of New York’s public schools to improve educational opportunities for its poorer communities (primarily of color). While local communities may have been granted some decision-making ability, state regulation was not significantly altered and the control communities were able to exert over their children’s education remained limited.

Professor Naples extended this discussion to look at her own work with teen welfare mothers in New York. While such young women may no longer be subject to removal from school once they become pregnant, they still find their own actions limited, for instance, by a welfare system that requires them to be living at home if under 18 or actively searching for employment in order to retain eligibility for benefits. In particular, she asked the audience to consider whether “sexual citizenship” might be a useful mobilizing frame for dealing with state regulation of sexual and family life.
This state regulation comes to the fore in discussions of LGBT activism and family rights. Over the past couple decades, there has arisen a multi-national (if not international) movement for family rights for same-sex couples, in particular in the areas of reproductive rights, relationship recognition rights, and immigration rights. Several nations have expanded marriage-like relationship forms to same-sex couples while restricting parenting opportunities (via adoption or reproductive technologies.) Professor Naples also noted that while it has only been since the 1990s that gay and lesbian people were allowed to immigrate to the United States, people with HIV are still barred from entry—unless they are married to a citizen (the retention of a de facto ban on HIV+ queers).

Professor Naples both closed her public lecture and opened her first seminar with a quote from Shawn Phalen’s work: “Queering sexual citizenship, then, must be more than citizenship for queers.” In that seminar, Professor Naples introduced the discussion a reiteration of her central question: How might notions of sexual citizenship contribute not only to expanded definitions of citizenship but also to a potentially useful mobilizing frame. In her introduction, she noted how third world feminists, feminists of color and lesbian feminists had all taken Second Wave feminism to task for its universalization of middle-class white women’s experiences under the category woman. This questioning of universal categories was also brought into the conversation through queer theory, which has attempted not only to de-essentialize identity categories of “male” and “female,” but also to trouble such categories as “gay” and “lesbian.” In looking at these destabilizing moves, Professor Naples asked those in attendance to additionally consider how these categories “travel” internationally, and how such identities are and might be deployed politically in order to meet the challenge of creating non-essentialist coalition movements.

Drawing on the work of Mary Bernstein, Naples discussed the empowerment, educational, and strategic uses of identity in movement mobilization. However, she also noted one of the central insights of Queer Theory that these categories always set up insider/outsider relationships which may end up excluding people from both political participation and from inclusion in the claims made by movements.

How might the insights of queer movements and theories address these issues? Participants were asked to consider how we might move beyond identity categories to bring political economic issues back into such things as how the state uses family life as a means of redistribution and social organization. The issue of movement claims making was central to this discussions. Not only did Professor Naples turn the attendants’ attention to issues of insider/outside status, but also to questions of political economy. Questioning Nancy Fraser’s by now (in)famous distinction between the politics of recognition and the politics of redistribution she noted that the enactment of political claims, even those for recognition, very often also involve a redistribution of resources. In particular, the conversation turned, at this point, around issues of marriage equality for same-sex couples and the need to engage in more critical discussions that continue to question universals, like “family” and “marriage,” and also to confronting in a non-exclusionary way the strangeness within our communities, movements and selves.

This was extended into a discussion of citizenship itself. Troubling that category, Naples asked seminar participants to think beyond a bundle of rights attached to a particular relationship to the state and to consider citizenship as action, as being involved in and with our communities. Hers was a call for citizenship as something people do, not something they are.

In the second seminar, Professor Naples shifted the attention to feminist critiques of the field of Social Movement Studies (SMS). She began by noting how not only SMS but sociology more generally works to discipline our subjects of study, stating that, “as a sub-field, boundaries get created and certain kinds of ways of thinking about activism don’t really permeate those boundaries.” In discussing this, she brought forward two particular ways in which this is accomplished: the development of disciplinary boundaries between sub-fields, and specific conceptualizations within them. Dealing with the latter issue first, Professor Naples asked participants to consider how feminist work has the potential to challenge certain masculinist assumptions about what counts as political, activism, and success. These assumptions can be seen, for instance, in the SMS focus on “public sphere” political work dealing particularly with formal organizations. While such foci may be important, they also overlook much that occurs. For instance, a focus on the work of formal organization may miss the informal work, which is very often highly gendered, make that public activism possible. (She also noted, importantly, how much “invisible” labor occurs at the University level, such as that undertaken by custodial, food service and administrative support staff—also often highly gendered—which makes academic knowledge production possible.) Feminist insights into the gendered division of such things as labor or geographical space have the potential to open up new understandings of how social movements operate, about what kinds of work are considered political or activist.

Telling the story of a group of Nigerian women who successfully challenged the practices of a local oil refinery by using the threat of stripping naked, a traditional form of shaming in
the local culture, Professor Naples also introduced the notion of the body as a site of (gendered) resistance, a point which was echoed by Professor Eva Garrouste’s insights into traditional notions of the power of women’s bodies in Cherokee tradition. An understanding of different cultural forms of resistance, and particularly the gendering of such forms of resistance, Naples argued, has the potential to open new and important insights into the processes of political challenge. Additionally, while the Nigerian women were successful according to a traditional SMS definitions, feminist approaches to community organizing also lead to questions as to what constitutes success. While many challenges to the state may fail in realizing policy goals, they may succeed in such areas as building community.

Finally (at least within this particular topic), Professor Naples noted the lack of support for activist scholarship within the field of Social Movement Studies. The academic disciplining of knowledge often requires that we attempt to remain dispassionate about, indeed remove ourselves from, analyses of activity in which we’ve played a part and about which we are quite passionate. However, as she noted, such a disciplining of knowledge production works to hide the political aspects of knowledge production. Power is always involved.

Returning to the former problem of academic disciplining of our subjects, Professor Naples asked us to question the distinction between the sub-fields of sociology itself. In part, this is a question of how well we speak to each other across literatures (or, more often, don’t speak to each other), but it is also a question of how we treat such issues as collaborative research. These are also political questions, deserving of critical inquiry. While these may seem secondary in terms of the knowledge we produce, in terms of the practices that produce that knowledge they are primary. Are we as scholars rewarded for working collaboratively? Are we penalized for community work? Such questions may not relate directly to our theoretical orientations, but they do relate directly to our ability to make careers developing knowledge; knowledge which will—at least most of us who work in the movement sub-discipline hope it will—be useful to movement activists.

When I first mentioned to a colleague that Professor Naples would be speaking as a part of this series, they were perplexed because her previous work seemed to deal more with community organizing than with political activism. It is exactly this distinction that Professor Naples asked the seminar participants to question. It was a fitting, and stimulating, opening to the annual Visiting Distinguished Scholars Series.

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**Francesca Polletta**

**Is Telling Stories Good for Democracy? and Meaning in Movements**

by Matt Williams

On April 26-27, 2006, BC’s Sociology Department hosted Francesca Polletta as part of our 2006 Distinguished Visiting Scholar Series, which has the theme “Social Movements: People Making History in the 21st Century.” Polletta graduated from Brown University in 1984, received her Masters in sociology from Yale in 1988 and her PhD from the same school in 1994. After completing her degree, she taught for a year at Williams College, then moved on to Columbia University, where she is now an associate professor. She is also currently affiliated with the University of California, Irvine. Polletta is among a number of leading scholars of social movements who, beginning in the 1990s, began to re-introduce the study of culture and emotions to a field that had long focused primarily on social structures, giving short shrift to cultural issues. With Jeff Goodwin and James Jasper, Polletta co-edited *Passionate Politics: Emotions in Social Movements* (2001), a critical work in re-introducing the study of emotions to social movements.

Her first solely authored book, *Freedom is an Endless Meeting: Democracy in American Social Movements* (2002), looks at how mainstream cultural norms on forming relationships created problems for activists seeking to organize their movements based on principles of participatory democracy. Polletta’s work covers a broad sweep of American social movement history, analyzing the early twentieth century labor movement, the mid-century pacifist movement, the civil rights movement, the student New Left, the women’s movement, and the contemporary community organizing and global justice movements. In each of these groups, Polletta examined, she found such familiar models of relationships which are already part of our cultural repertoires, namely religious fellowship, the teacher-students relationship, and friendship circles. In the movements Polletta examined, she found such familiar models of relationships might work well for a while, but eventually they broke down. For instance, both Students for a Democratic Society and many of the collectives in the women’s movement used friendship circles as the basic form for participatory democracy. This worked well when these groups actually consisted of tightly knit circles of friends, but as they expanded to include new people, these newcomers were effectively (and usually unintentionally) excluded from meaningful participation in these groups, be-
cause they were not included in the give-and-take dynamics that happen in decision-making between friends. This was one of the factors that lead to the self-destruction of SDS and many women’s groups. Polletta’s insights are thus not simply of academic interest, but also of practical relevance, showing the need for members of social movements to develop new models of relationships within the movement and not focus solely on the big picture outside the movement.

Freedom is an Endless Meeting has been recognized as an important piece of work in a number of circles, being named an Outstanding Academic Title by Choice Magazine, coming in as a finalist for the Society for the Study of Social Problems’ C. Wright Mills Award, receiving honorable mention for the American Sociological Association’s Political Sociology section award, and winning the Distinguished Scholarly Book Award from the ASA’s Social Movements section. Her most recent book, It Was Like a Fever: Storytelling in Protest and Politics (2006) continues her innovative work looking at culture in social movements, while extending it to other arenas of politics, such as the floor of Congress. She built on this analysis of narrative in her April 26 lecture to the BC community, “Is Telling Stories Good for Democracy?” Like her work in Freedom is an Endless Meeting, this work was both intellectually stimulating and of great practical relevance. Despite the lecture and question and answer period running somewhat over the allotted two hours, as Department Chair Juliet Schor observed afterward, the only people in the substantial audience who left early were the camera men—something virtually unheard of. People were clearly captivated by her lecture and the issues she was raising.

Polletta opened her lecture by noting that there has recently been an increased interest in story-telling, not only among academics, but people involved in politics as well. For instance, one of the things the leadership of the Democratic Party concluded from their electoral defeat in 2004 is that they did not have a good story. While the Republicans produced a resonant narrative with heroes and villains, the Democrats merely produced a litany of social ills and proposed solutions. The Democratic Party leadership is trying to develop a story of their own about the state of the country, to counter the Republican one. While Polletta considers this a step forward, she is concerned that the Democrats—and many other people—misunderstand what makes a good story. According to popular wisdom, a good story is 1) personal, highlighting a particular individual’s experiences; 2) immediate, bringing the audience into the narrator’s experiences; and 3) simple and straightforward, with a clear-cut moral. Polletta thinks that the opposite is actually true. Powerful stories are those that are 1) canonical, building on a recognizable plotline the audience can connect to, even as they learn of the novel experiences of the narrator; 2) create distance between the narrator and the events, with the narrator serving as a mediator between the audience and the events, rather than dragging the audience into the thick of the events; and 3) ambiguous, forcing the audience to interpret the meaning of the story for themselves and standing open to multiple meanings. Such ambiguity can be particularly important in building coalitions, allowing different members of the coalition to give different readings which they are comfortable with to the common narrative that binds them together.

Polletta explored the potential power of stories that create distance and are ambiguous in light of the experiences in court of women who have killed their abusive husbands and boyfriends—and the possibilities for such distancing and ambiguous stories to effectively subvert canonical plotlines that reinforce the status quo. Although legally women who kill their abusers should be able to claim self-defense, they seldom are successful in making such arguments in court. As a subordinate group, their experiences do not fit into the dominate legal narrative of self-defense, which is based on masculine assumptions of an invader in one’s home—not a member of one’s own household as the main source of threat. In conventional narratives, battered women often appear as passive, irrational victims incapable of exercising agency, making them difficult to sympathize with. When such women do assert their agency, this raises the question in conventional narratives of why they simply didn’t leave the relationship earlier, before it got to the point where she needed to kill her abuser. What leads women to stay in abusive relationships and then finally kill their abusers is incomprehensible in terms of mainstream narratives, based on male experiences. Battered women’s advocates thus face the challenge of getting judges, juries, policy-makers and the general public of understanding the experiences and actions of a group not included in canonical plotlines, of crafting a narrative of their own that undermines patriarchal stereotypes. A narrative that is too personal and immediate is likely to leave the audience feeling lost, unable to identify with a person who is both
victim and agent. When a battered woman, however, uses narrative strategies that distance her current self from that of her past self, by assuming the persona not of an emotional story-teller, but of someone coolly analyzing her past, this can make it easier for the audience to identify with her, to see her as a rational agent—and yet someone who was trapped. Narratives that also capture the ambiguity of abusive relationships, that emphasize the simultaneous presence of abuse and love, can jar audiences out of their conventional ways of thinking and make them grapple with an unfamiliar situation. Battered women’s stories are also effective when the climax of the story involves the woman’s discovery of her own agency—how she moved from feeling trapped, to affirming her desire to live and then doing something about it. Again such discordant juxtapositions can jar audiences out of conventional thinking. While crafting such stories that challenge canonical narratives has to involve conscious choices about narrative strategies, this is not the same as being manipulative—such stories also need to be heartfelt.

Polletta closed by noting that not only are such stories that challenge the canon difficult to craft effectively, the left may face other challenges in creating effective narratives, namely that some narrators are more credible than others. Simply put, people on the left—which, as it is popularly defined today, effectively includes the leadership of the Democratic Party, among others—probably face a higher credibility bar than Republicans in telling stories. As a society, we tend to have ambiguous feelings about stories—we see them as emotionally powerful, but politically unserious; as universal, but highly idiosyncratic; and as authentic, but potentially deceptive. Somehow or other, Republicans have managed to associate themselves with the authentic pole of this, while Democrats—who are popularly seen as more intellectual and less folksy—are often regarded more suspiciously when using stories. Thus using stories could potentially backfire on Democrats and progressives, making them look like they are trying to manipulate people or as though they are not taking complex, technical issues seriously. Polletta did not leave the audience with any easy answers. While it seems clear that developing good stories is essential for the left, the way to proceed is not clear cut and we must be strategic and thoughtful in crafting complex, resonant, counter-canonical narratives.

During her April 27 seminar “Meaning in Movements” Polletta delved into more theoretical territory that she is currently exploring, focusing on how to best understand culture and the ways in which the study of social movements can shed light on the sociology of culture. Polletta suggested that the best way to think about culture is not as abstract systems of ideas and symbols which define our values, but as the schemas we have for action and the accompanying concrete practices we engage in that are infused with meaning and emotion. This approach looks at culture not as values defining a set of goals—the ends of action—but culture as the means of action. She furthered defined institutions are routinized sets of practices, with rewards and punishments for adhering to or deviating from established schemas. Structures, on the other hand, are patterns of durable relationships; as she explored in Freedom is an Endless Meeting, such relationships are formed through cultural schemas.

Polletta argued that, while sociologists of culture have not paid much attention to social movements in the past, many of their questions about the nature of culture might be best illuminated by studying social movements, since movements are one of the main places that new cultural practices and forms—such as new identities and new definitions of what constitutes people’s interests—are developed. By looking at social movements, we may be able to better understand under what conditions new ideas emerge and the ways in which culture and structure are related—what structural conditions foster the emergence of new ideas, under what conditions structure is primary and under what conditions culture is primary. The study of social movements can also help us understand the ways in which culture is both constraining and creates opportunities. Social movements often challenge conventional wisdom through cultural innovations—but at other times, they may choose not to challenge conventional wisdom, but to accommodate themselves to it, because they fear such innovations would backfire, rather than helping them produce the desired changes. Finally, the study of social movements may help us understand processes of institutional change—the conditions under which old schemas are discredited and replaced by new ones, which may be the product of innovations by social movements.
This semester the Sociology department had the privilege of hosting Dr. Frances Fox Piven on September 13th and 14th to culminate the 2006 Distinguished Visiting Scholar Series—“Social Movements: People Making History in the 21st Century.” Her public lecture “Challenging Authority: How Ordinary People Change America” and her seminar, “Theoretical Perspectives on Power from Below” explored the unrealized power of ordinary citizens in their “interdependent relationship with electoral institutions.” Understanding this interdependent relationship, the role and potential of disruptive protest, and the power that ordinary citizens hold in changing society were the major themes raised in Piven’s public forum and faculty/graduate student seminar.

Dr. Piven earned her Ph.D. from the University of Chicago and currently serves as a distinguished professor of political science and sociology at City University in New York (CUNY). Before CUNY, she taught at Boston University, Columbia University, New York University Law School, the Institute of Advanced Studies in Vienna, the University of Amsterdam, and the University of Bologna. In 1985, Piven was awarded an Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters at Adelphi University, and in 1973, a Guggenheim Fellowship. She is president-elect of the American Sociological Association, past vice president of the American Political Science Association, has served as program co-chair of the annual political science meetings, and is a past president of the Society for the Study of Social Problems. She is the recipient of numerous prestigious awards, most notably the 2000 American Sociological Association’s career award for the practice of sociology as well as their award for the public understanding of sociology; the C. Wright Mills Award for her work Regulating the Poor (1993, 1972); and the 1986 Eugene V. Debs Foundation Prize for “published work which evidences social vision and commitment to social justice.”

Her Regulating the Poor (1993, 1972), co-authored with Richard Cloward, is a landmark historical and theoretical analysis of the role of welfare policy in the economic and political control of the poor and working classes. She also co-authored with Cloward Poor People’s Movements (1977) that analyzes the political dynamics through which insurgent social movements sometimes compel significant policy reforms. Both texts are widely acknowledged as social science classics. Among her other writings dealing with the development of the welfare state, political movements, urban political, and electoral politics are: The New Class War (1982); Why Americans Don’t Vote (1988); The Mean Season (1987); Labor Parties In Postindustrial Societies (1992); The Breaking of The American Social Compact (1997); Why Americans Still Don’t Vote (2000); The War at Home (2004); and Challenging Authority: How Ordinary People Change America (2006).

Dr. Piven also has a long career as an activist in the welfare rights movement. In the 1960s, she collaborated with George Wiley, the leader of the welfare rights movement in the United States, and developed a strategy that contributed to the liberalization of welfare. In 1983, Piven founded Human SERVE, an organization that supported voting rights by allowing citizens to register to vote when they applied for government aid or drivers licenses. SERVE’s approach was incorporated into the National Voter Registration Act of 1993.

In her public lecture at Boston College, Dr. Piven drew on her most recently published work, Challenging authority: How ordinary people change America, to challenge us to consider the power we hold in altering what she calls our current state of “post-democracy.” If ordinary citizens realize and exercise the power they have in their “interdependent relationship with electoral institutions,” Piven stated, then there is hope in creating a more egalitarian society.

Dr. Piven opened the lecture by providing a candid account of the bleak state of America—declining living standards, stagnant incomes, a growing population living at or near the poverty line, environmental degradation, and of course a war that is not only taking lives, but draining our spirits and the economy. While the global economy certainly has contributed to the complexity of the world’s social ills, Piven argued that we cannot forget the role that national electoral institutions play in shaping our lives—these institutions affect public policies like taxes, the work...
environment, our wages, and services like education and healthcare. It is a strategic and tactical error, Piven argued, for social movements to ignore the prominence of these institutions in shaping our existence, the interdependent relationships we hold with them, and the power we have to change them.

American ideology professes that Americans control their own destinies. Citizens have the right to vote and this right to vote has become analogous with freedom and democracy. Yet, American democracy continues to erode. In the world of an idealistic democracy, politicians are ordinary people, elected by and accountable to the population they serve. However, as Piven pointed out, our system doesn’t work that way. Electoral power is gained through wealth, media distortion, voting manipulations, and instilling fear to sway public opinion. “American democracy doesn’t work well in the absence of disruptive threats of social movements,” Piven pointedly contended.

In a world where people are feeling powerless to affect change in a globalizing economy, Piven’s remarkable historical recount of just how ordinary people have challenged authority and affected social change offers hope. Piven drew on the many instances where in the face of political and social oppression, ordinary people have triumphed and exhibited extraordinary courage and power in bringing about social change. Drawing on the historical periods of the American Revolution, the Abolitionist movement, the Civil War, the New Deal and the Great Society, Piven illustrated how social movements have disrupted the status quo, reshaped American politics and ushered in periods of egalitarian reform in American history. For instance, in an era of depression and faced with massive unemployment, the working class rallied and demanded economic and social reforms. Threatened by an erosion of its support base, the Democratic Party was forced to support progressive policies like the Wagner Act, social security initiatives, and the creation of the National Labor Relations Act. And, in the 1960s and 1970s, the women’s movement, the civil rights movement and the mobilizations against the Vietnam war also revealed the potential of an ordinary citizen’s power.

Power is also about social non-cooperation. By refusing—underground resistance, survival tactics that run against capital, but we can also think of power as acts of operation.” This spurred a lively discussion on the definition and potential of an ordinary citizen’s power.

We can think of power being exercised as labor against capital, but we can also think of power as acts of refusal—underground resistance, survival tactics that run against the mainstream. For instance, poor working women refashioning their relations to the economic market which in turn force institutions to interact in differing ways. Power is also about social non-cooperation. By withdrawing participation in society and crafting alternative lifestyles, power can affect both political and cultural change. However, Piven emphasized that simply individually withdrawing cooperation is not enough. Efforts must be mass mobilized and connected to reforming institutions in order to affect structural change. Moreover, Piven acknowledged that withdrawing cooperation of this nature (e.g. impact of strikes on the working poor) involves great risks. Whether we can withstand these risks is certainly a major tactical consideration.
Dr. Piven’s remarks as well as the fruitful dialogue her talks inspired offered insight into the challenges and opportunities facing contemporary mobilizations, but it also provoked many important questions. Is there a role for progressive religious groups in the political struggle for equality? What can the Left learn from the successes of movements such as the Christian Right? How can the Left draw on cultural resources such as film and music to mobilize people and what is the role of symbolic disruption in altering the political landscape? How can the Left move beyond exclusionary practices and build innovative, cooperative alliances? What can be learned from seemingly ‘spontaneous’ actions such as the recent immigrant protests; and the diversity and network structure of global justice movements? How can individual acts of resistance and rebellion be mobilized into political mass movements?

As an activist and student of social movements, I am most interested in collective action processes that facilitate collaboration across differences and address both individual and structural change. What I gained most from this dialogue with Dr. Piven was an understanding of the importance of linking locally based social action with a broader political agenda. Many individuals have resorted to taking individual acts of ‘activism’ as an alternative to joining with others in political struggle due to the growing multiple pressures placed upon working families. Moreover, faced with an increasing culture of oppression, others have focused their efforts in changing local, community-based issues as they feel powerless in their ability to affect broader change. While individual and community-based resistance is certainly important and contributory to social change (and in many ways provides the base of support for sustaining mass movements), the Left also needs to find innovative ways to connect these struggles in an effort to, as Piven stated, “disrupt the stability of the system” and demand that “electoral institutions are accountable to the masses.” At the same time, the Left also needs to recognize that there are people living on the margins who cannot afford to take the major risks that are involved with disruptive social action. In her talk, Dr. Piven referred to the resources those of us working in universities can offer those in popular struggle. Many of us have time, social networks, access to funds, and the ability to take greater economic and social risks. Through our research, we can work to shift the vulnerability of those living under surveillance and oppression and bring alternative lives and views into public policy discourse. Through collaborative efforts, we can work to find ways to link individual and community-based acts of resistance to a broader agenda for social change and assist in nurturing alliances across movements, issues, and differences. As it is not the job of those with privilege, Piven reminded us, to lead others but rather to validate and support those striving for social justice.
Michael Agliardo


Michael Anastario


Patricia Arend


Chiwen Bao


Brad Bauerly


Abigail Brooks


Esteban Calvo Bralic

Esteban Calvo Bralic, continued


Autumn Green


Anders Hayden


Chris Kelly


Denise Leckenby


Delario Lindsey


Aimee van Wagenen


Grads Speak!

William Wood


Power, Culture, and History: Studies in Critical Sociology


The collection of articles and essays was originally conceived during a session of “The Future of Critical Sociology” at the annual meeting of the Society for the Study of Social Problems. David Fasenfest, the editor of Critical Sociology, was impressed by the BC faculty and grad student contributions, and invited them to develop a special issue of the journal. The project was completed in March of 2004 and published in Volume 30, Number 2 of Critical Sociology. This book brings together revised and expanded versions of articles from that special issue with several new essays. As the Introduction states, each “addresses important sociological topics and provides an inviting angle of inquiry into justice-oriented concerns with the relations between culture, power, and history.”

The BC editorial collective thanks editor David Fasenfest for his invitation and for his ongoing support of this project.
Graduate Student Awards 2005-2006

Boston College Dissertation Fellowship: The Graduate School awards several Dissertation Fellowships to advanced doctoral students in order to enable the most motivated candidates to dedicate themselves full-time to dissertation work. This year’s recipient is **Jeffrey Langstraat**, whose dissertation in progress is entitled “A Boston Marriage: Narrative, Normalization and the Politics of Same-Sex Marriage.”

Benedict Alper Graduate Fellowship, funded by a generous endowment from former faculty member Ben Alper, is given annually to one of our PhD students demonstrating engaged critical scholarship and use of critical thinking toward social justice issues. The student must also demonstrate both academic achievement and financial need. This year’s winner is **Dana Cervenakova**, whose research focuses on health care for the disabled.

**Donald J. White Award for Teaching Excellence:** Patricia Arend and Chiwen Bao won this award after receiving exemplary ratings from their students in Arend’s Gender and Society and Mass Media courses, and Bao’s courses on Race Relations, and Race, Representation, and the Myth of Color Blindness, the latter of which she developed in her first year of teaching.

**Boston College Presidential Fellowships** are awarded to particularly promising new students for a period of five years. During 2005-06, Chiwen Bao, Michelle Gawerc, and Anders Hayden received presidential fellowships.

**Severyn T. Bruyn Award for Outstanding Scholarship in Social Economy and Social Justice:** **Anders Hayden** won this award, inspired by former faculty member Sev Bruyn, for his paper “France’s 35-Hour Week: Attack on Business? Win-Win Reform? Or Betrayal of Disadvantaged Workers?”

**Elected Graduate Student Representative, board of Directors, Society for the Study of Social Problems, 2003-2006:** **Aimee van Wagenen**

**Michelle Gawerc** has been selected as a 2006 Graduate Student Fellow of the Peace, War and Social Conflict Section of the American Sociological Association, an award created to commemorate those UN officials who have lost their lives in the effort to reduce violence. According to the PW&SC newsletter, Michelle and co-winner Ryan Burgess “have demonstrated that they exemplify the goals not only of the PW&SC Section, but more importantly, those of the people for whom this award was established.”

Michelle completed a Master’s of Social Work at BC while completing three years of Sociology coursework and a Sociology Master’s theses entitled “Peace Building through People-to-People Activities: Theoretical and Concrete Perspectives.” Her area exams, both of which she passed with distinction, were entitled “Peace Building in Identity Conflicts: Theoretical” and “Medical Sociology with a focus on Mental Health.” These achievements, along with the first course she’s taught as a Teaching Fellow (Social Conflict) and her involvement in MRAP (see page 29), all reflect the focus and calibre of her scholarship and the depth of her social commitment. In particular, she is dedicated to reconciling the tensions between structural and social-psychological approaches, as well as the contradictions between conflict resolution and social justice.

Gawerc writes that her dissertation will focus on “peace-building during times of acute violence utilizing longitudinal field research data and surveys of Palestinian-Israeli people-to-people initiatives.” More specifically, she will study “how initiatives adapt to radically changing environments, the challenges they face, and their effectiveness internally as organizations and externally for the larger political and cultural reality.” Ultimately she hopes “to be able to offer recommendations to strengthen and/or clarify the symbolic, cultural, and political value and impact of peace-building even during more dismal times.”
From Baghdad to Boston

Darcy Schnack (M.A. 2006) came to the Sociology graduate program at Boston College almost directly from Baghdad, where she was responsible for planning and supervising convoy operations in the First Cavalry Division. Her husband had served in Iraq earlier, near the beginning of the war, so she got an unusually personal perspective on the evolution of that conflict. “It was a lot easier [for him] to interact with the Iraqi people off base,” she said. “The insurgency had not become as technically or as tactically savvy as they are now… He was very free to interact with the Iraqi people, maybe stop in an Iraqi restaurant with his interpreter or pick up some food or something like that. And by the time I got there we couldn’t go off base without armor on our doors, like in a full-ready stance, because we were getting attacked all the time.”

On the other hand, troops sent later in the war were better trained in cultural sensitivity, “not exposing the bottoms of your feet, not eating with your left hand, things like that.” Consequently Iraqi contractors, hired both to augment the army’s transportation and to improve the economy of the region, were told in advance that they would be reporting to a woman in an authority position. “It took laying a little groundwork so they knew what to expect,” Darcy said. “It may be that I was working with very progressive people, I don’t know. But everything seemed to work very well.”

In fact, she formed close relationships with some Iraqi men, including a friend named Abdullah who was kidnapped and killed by terrorists after Darcy returned to the States. Abdullah once told her, “You know, Darcy, you’re not that different than me.” She was puzzled by it at first. “He’s got two wives, you know, he’s looking for a third, he’s got kids…” They were sitting in an army vehicle, Darcy fully armed and wearing a Kevlar vest, and Abdullah dressed in dishdasha, as they discussed the similarity of their monotheistic religions, the possibility that they may worship the same entity. She said, “That was the thing that really motivated me to write something that conveyed the true voice of the Iraqi people,” who are often misrepresented by the media and even vilified by Americans who blame Iraq or Islam in general for 9/11.

Her Master’s thesis, “A Case for the Separation of Hearts and Minds: An Analysis of Iraqi Attitudes and Perceptions in Baghdad,” attempts to clarify Iraqi opinions on a range of subjects. Darcy’s analysis splits attitudes that are generally considered in tandem: support for democracy (which she classifies in this analogy as part of the “mind”), and tolerance for coalition forces (considered here as part of the “heart”). “It seems to me that the media often suggests that if you want democracy, you don’t support attacks against coalition forces, that the people who support attacks are antidemocratic, fundamentalist insurgent groups. But you have roughly 87% – 90% of the people who want a democratic government, and nearly 48% of the people who support attacks. There’s quite a bit of overlap there.”

The data suggest that citizens who felt safe, had benefited economically from the occupation, or had confidence in the government were all less likely to support attacks against coalition forces. More surprisingly, the restoration/installation of services like electricity were less likely to be associated with a decrease in support for attacks. Darcy acknowledged that such findings could be used to guide policy, that resources devoted to the propagation of democracy, for instance, which is already highly valued in Iraq, could be redirected to stemming sectarian violence as well as violence against coalition forces. But her primary aim was to give voice to a population that is often discussed but seldom heard. Darcy favors a continued American presence in Iraq for two reasons. “Whether we should have gone there or not is a moot point,” she says. “Certainly we should have gone there differently, with a different strategy… But at this point, if we don’t stick this out, we may have created too much upheaval, and our invasion will have caused more harm to the Iraqi people than if we hadn’t gone in at all.” She also talks about the meaning of sacrifices already made: “I just remember experiencing so much rage and frustration when I heard that Abdullah was killed because I thought, here’s a man who wouldn’t have had any sort of target on his back if we hadn’t gone in there… And certainly I can say that some of my friends who have been killed in Iraq – the ones in the service – they wouldn’t be dead either… It seems to me for all of this to be valuable and for a reason, we’re duty bound to the Iraqi people to see this through to the safest possible result for them.”

After receiving her M.A. from Boston College, Darcy has returned to West Point (where she received her Bachelor’s degree) to teach cadets in the social sciences. (Junior instructors at West Point typically have M.A.’s rather than Doctorates because the school aims to provide fresh operational experience in addition to academics in the classroom.) Darcy, who’s currently a major, expects to teach at West Point for two or three years before returning to an operational assignment.
I was originally motivated to go to Jordan because, earlier in the year, I had traveled to Palestine and visited several cities, learning about the Israeli occupation. I developed a considerable sympathy with the Palestinian people and their struggles, along with an appreciation for their culture and way of life. My newfound interest manifested itself in many ways, including a commitment to activism and a desire to do research in Palestine. So when I heard about a program that would pay for me to travel to the Middle East in order to learn Arabic (the Critical Language Scholarships through The U.S. Department of State and the Council of American Overseas Research Centers), I knew I wanted to do that.

After getting into the program and preparing to spend two months in Jordan, I flew down to Washington, DC for the program’s orientation, from which we all flew to Amman, Jordan together. Once we were in Jordan, we started our program, which mainly involved taking classes and going on cultural field trips (e.g., Petra and Wadi Rum). In our free time, we also spent time with one another and exploring Amman. The idea was that this variety of activities would help us to become more accustomed to the country, both linguistically and culturally, and enhance our language skills.

One of the biggest challenges for me was studying and using the Arabic language. I was certainly no stranger to foreign languages, having studied Spanish and German in the past, nor was I unfamiliar with other writing systems, having studied a little Japanese, as well. However, Arabic was different. First, the writing is nearly all consonants, with small markings to indicate vowel sounds; even if you recognize the letters, you cannot pronounce a word unless you already know that word and its surrounding context. Second, formal Arabic and its local colloquial forms differ sharply, so the Arabic you learn in the classroom may be of minimal use elsewhere; in fact, formal Arabic and colloquial are sometimes like different languages entirely. Finally, the language has various grammatical idiosyncrasies, such as special forms for indicating two people. Needless to say, studying Arabic posed some new challenges for me, and I was lucky to have opportunities to practice in an Arabic-speaking environment.

Another was the cultural differences. Again, I expected few problems because of my commitment to multicultural politics. To an extent, this was the case; for example, I take much pride in my many positive encounters—whether I was ordering in a restaurant or letting a complete stranger lead me into the back alleys of Amman (yes, this actually happened). On the other hand, I grew impatient with certain aspects of life there, such as the absence of crosswalks (making it very dangerous to cross the road) and the feeling that people were sometimes too pushy (especially vendors); I had to ask myself, sometimes, is there something of the “ugly American” within me, after all? Ultimately, it was a test of my ability to shift, at least partly, into the social rhythm, in which I had to trade some familiar benefits for some unfamiliar ones.

Finally, there were the personal challenges, like thinking about my politics more seriously and questioning what it means to be both white and American—how my personal decisions affect Middle Eastern lives and what special responsibilities are incumbent upon me. For the second time in my life, I was surrounded by those who are affected by the (usually bad) decisions of my country’s leadership. This was particularly relevant because Israel attacked Lebanon during my stay: What do these people think when they see me, and do they know that I am on their side? Also, being surrounded by Islam made me think about the cosmos. Are spiritual questions reducible to a dichotomy between Christianity and atheism? Though I already “knew,” I started to understand the reality of these alternative visions—for instance, when I visited a mosque during the main prayer and listened to the sermon: different from what I am used to but still a recognizable as human spiritual striving. I saw myself differently in terms of my relation to the outside world, and embraced a more global, far-reaching view of self and society.

The funny thing is, near the end, I could not wait to return to this country, and now, I already want to go back—and for a longer span of time. My experiences really highlight the value of spending time in another country and another culture. It is not about having some kind of ideal experience, and the other culture is not a utopia of any kind; on the contrary, they will probably have their own problems as well, enough to make you nostalgic for your home country. However, you can get something even better out of the experience—a broader and more comprehensive view of human beings and their various ways, one that is not geared towards either idealization or demonization but towards seeing as much of the truth as possible.
Allan Fairfax, PhD

*Challenging the Rules: The Merrimack Valley Project and the Construction of Public Space*

The Merrimack Valley Project (MVP) is a regional organization of congruencies, labor unions, and other community groups that began to come together in 1989 to address issues of common concern across the historic industrial district along the Merrimack River in northeastern Massachusetts. The MVP is a modern Alinsky-style organization (ASO). This means that it is a grassroots coalition working on multiple issues with a diverse set of participants and connected to an evolving community organizing tradition rooted in the work of Saul Alinsky and the Industrial Areas Foundation. This case study of the MVP provides an analysis of an exemplary ASO from the framework of participatory democracy. The particular question addressed is whether or not groups such as the MVP are able to find ways to institutionalize participatory democratic practices in the local/regional polity. As well as simply telling the story of the Merrimack Valley Project, the study also presents a conceptual framework for understanding the political “rule patterns” that dominate a local/regional polity and how the MVP organizes/constructs public spaces through its organizing work. These public spaces are the ground from which new rule patterns are practiced and linkages built with various power structures in the polity. In short, the study looks at how the MVP organizing practices challenge the dominant rule patterns and examines the internal organizational practices that allow those challenges to be sustained over the long run.

Adria Goodson, PhD

*Bridging Institutions and Social Policy: Philanthropic Foundations and the Development of Federal Funding for After school Programs*

Between 1997 and 2002, federal funding for the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program, an initiative that funds after school programs for school-age children, jumped from $1 million to $1 billion. This increase made this small federal program one of the fastest growing federal social provisions over the past half-century. This dissertation utilizes Skocpol and Amenta’s polity-centered approach of federal policy development and social movement theory to explain the process by which organizational actors worked over twenty years to transform the federal government’s relationship to after school programs. It demonstrates the opportunities for institutions and individuals to influence the development and structure of social provisions. The historical institutional model undertheorized the importance of philanthropic foundations due to a lack of focus on the pre-figurative processes that bring a particular social provision to the federal level in the first place. In this case, philanthropic organizations played a critical role as a bridging organization. This role is similar to and yet quite different from the role that voluntary organizations played in the early 20th century. Using in-depth interviews and historical evidence from federal legislative documents, philanthropic foundations and grassroots organizations, I document the process by which philanthropic foundations, and individuals within these organizations, collaborated with grassroots organizations, national advocates, and federal agencies to build national support for increased federal funding for after school programs, ultimately resulting in a significant increase in federal dollars for the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program. In this case, philanthropic foundations are identified as one of the keys to political leverage in the development of United States federal policy. Finally, this case demonstrates that philanthropic foundations and state agencies are potential allies for grassroots advocacy organizations and social movement actors, not simply adversaries.
Aimee van Wagenen, PhD

Doing Outreach, Doing Sexual Citizenship: Meanings of HIV Prevention Outreach to Men Who Have Sex with Men

This dissertation explores the meanings of HIV prevention outreach to gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men. I begin the investigation of the meanings of outreach from the perspectives of outreach workers, but also expand my angle of vision to include an examination of the broader institutional discourses of public health and the state in which outreach is situated. In this, I conceive of outreach as an interpretive practice in which outreachers actively construct the meaning of the work but not wholly on their own terms; the meanings of outreach are constrained by discursive structures. The research combines ethnographic methods and includes participant observation as an outreacher in a state-funded, largely volunteer outreach program and in the audience at several HIV prevention conferences, in-depth interviewing with outreachers and outreach program managers, and analysis of public health documents guiding HIV prevention.

Meanings of outreach cohere around differential understandings of the effectiveness of outreach and its measurement, around the tension between fixity and destabilization of sexual identity, and around the tensions between sexual liberation and regulation in understanding outreach. In the dissertation, I devote a chapter to each of these themes and also review the history of HIV prevention in the context of the history of the AIDS movement. Throughout the dissertation, I conceive of doing outreach as doing sexual citizenship. As volunteers, outreachers actively engage in civic participation in the realm of the sexual. They model a different kind of good sexual citizenship that rejects the compromises of mainstream sexual citizenship including the essentialization of sexual identity, the privatization of sexuality and the marginalization of gender dissonance and sexual deviance.

John Bell, M.A.

The Social and Economic Causes of Child Labor: A Crossnational Quantitative Analysis

Michelle Gawerc, M.A.

Peace Building through People-to-People Activities: Theoretical and Concrete Perspectives

Christian Gilde, M.A.

Ranking Corporate Money: College Basketball Ranking and Corporate Giving

Rachel Kenney, M.A.

She’s a Level One Kind of Kid: A Statistical Analysis of Point and Level System Performance

Susan Legere, M.A.

Change in the Church, Change in the Classroom: Institutionalizing Holocaust

Jessica Littenberg, M.A.

The History of Apartheid, the Anti-Apartheid Movements, Labor Unions, and COSATU

Darcy Schnack, M.A.

A Case for the Separation of Hearts and Minds: An Analysis of Iraqi Attitudes and Perceptions in Baghdad
Karen Bettez Halnon (Ph.D. 1995), Associate Professor at Pennsylvania State University Abington. Her 2005 article, "Alienation Incorporated: 'F*** the Mainstream Music' in the Mainstream" in *Current Sociology*, was ranked #25 of "The 50 Most Frequently-Read Articles" at *Current Sociology*, and #32 of "The Most Frequently Cited Articles" at *Current Sociology* as of July 2006. More recently she's published

- "From the So-Called War on Terrorism to the Crusade for So-called Academic Freedom" in the *Newsletter of the Marxist Section of the ASA*.
- "Heavy Metal Carnival and Disalienation: The Politics of Grotesque Realism” in the Special Issue on Popular Music in Everyday Life of *Symbolic Interaction*.
- “Muscles, Motorcycles, and Tattoos: Gentrification in a New Frontier,” with Saundra Cohen, in *Journal of Consumer Culture*. This second article was ranked #1 of “The Most Frequently Read Articles” at *Journal of Consumer Culture* as of March 2006.

In the past couple of years she's also been interviewed and quoted in the media extensively. She was featured on the "Pennsylvania Inside Out" and "To the Best of My Knowledge" television shows, and interviewed on several radio programs including NPR's "All Things Considered." She's been quoted in newspapers and websites all over the country (and outside of it as well): in the *Washington Post*, the *Pennsylvania Standard-Speaker*, the Houston Chronicle, AZCentral.com, Tennessean.com, NewJersey.com, the *Providence Journal*, the *Indianapolis Star*, Svenska Dagbladet (Sweden), the *Honolulu Advertiser*, on both The Age and ABC News in Australia, and many others. Many of the quotes have to do with her 2002 article on "Poor Chic: The Rational Consumption of Poverty" in *Current Sociology*.

Ulrike Boehmer (Ph.D. 1997), Assistant Professor at Boston University School of Public Health. She's co-written and published several articles in 2005, including "A pilot study to determine support during the pre-treatment phase of early prostate cancer" in *Psycho-Oncology* (written with R.K. Babyan), "Sexual minority women's coping and psychological adjustment after a diagnosis of breast cancer" in *Journal of Women's Health* (with R. Linde and K. Freund), and "Support providers of sexual minority women with breast cancer: who they are and how they impact the breast cancer experience" in *Journal of Psychosomatic Research* (with R. Linde and K. Freund).

Anthony F Buono (Ph.D. 1981), Professor of Management at Bentley Business University. In 2005 he published several articles:

- “Consulting to Integrate Mergers and Acquisitions,” in *Handbook of Management Consulting: The Contemporary Consultant — Insights from World Experts* (Southwestern/Thomson, Cincinnati)
- “Beyond the MBA Ethics Course: Institutionalizing a Commitment to Ethics and Social Responsibility” in *MBA Innovation*
- “Panel: Successful Programs for Teaching Business Ethics” (with B. Burton, P. Cunningham, L. Ferrell, and J. Fraedrich) in *Journal of Business Ethics Education*
- “Service-Learning and Management Education: The Bentley Experience” (with F.P. Salimbene, V.V. LaFarge and A.J. Nurick) in *Academy of Management Learning & Education*
- “Rethinking Organizational Change: Reframing the Challenge of Change Management” (with K.W. Kerber) in *Organization Development Journal*.

Danielle Egan (Ph.D. 2000), Associate Professor, St. Lawrence University. In 2006, Egan won the Louis and Frances Maslow Award, a university wide teaching award that goes "to the faculty member who has shown the most interest in and understanding of the education and welfare of the student body as a whole." She has also been named the Frank P. Piskor Faculty Lecturer for 2007. The prestigious Piskor Faculty Lectureship was established in 1979 to encourage original and continued research among St. Lawrence faculty members, to recognize and honor distinguished scholarship and to afford the opportunity for faculty to share their learning with the academic community.
Alumni Updates, continued

In 2006, Egan wrote *Dancing for Dollars and Paying for Love: The Relationships between Exotic Dancers and Their Regulars* (published by Palgrave Macmillan) and has co-edited with Katherine Frank and Merri Lisa Johnson *Flesh for Fantasy: Producing and Consuming Exotic Dance* (Thunder's Mouth Press).

She also published two articles: "Emotional Consumption: Mapping Love and Masochism in an Exotic Dance Club" in *Body and Society* and, with S. Papson, "Commodified Conversion and The Dr. Phil Show" in *Sightings.*

**Patricia Fanning** (Ph.D. 1995) is now Associate Professor and Chairperson of Sociology at Bridgewater State College in Bridgewater, MA.

**Steven Farough** (Ph.D. 2001), Assistant Professor of Sociology, Assumption College. In 2005, Farough published the following articles:

- “Believing is Seeing: Vision & White Masculinities” in *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*
- “Believing is Seeing: The Matrix of Vision & White Masculinities” in *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography.*


**Patricia Leavy** (Ph.D. 2002), Assistant Professor of Sociology / Director of Gender Studies, Stonehill College. Leavy has co-authored two books with Professor Sharlene Hesse-Biber: *The Practice of Qualitative Research* and *A Feminist Research Primer.* Leavy and Hesse-Biber have also co-edited *Emergent Methods in Social Research* (all books published by Sage Publications).

**Leah Schmalzbauer** (Ph.D. 2004), Assistant Professor of Sociology and Anthropology, Montana State University. Her article, "Searching for Wages and Mothering from Afar: The Case of Honduran Transnational Families" in the *Journal of Marriage and Family* won the Sussman Award for Outstanding Publication from the Groves Conference on Marriage and Family. Her dissertation, *Striving and Surviving: A Daily Life Analysis of Honduran Transnational Families,* has been published as a book in the New Approaches in Sociology series (Routledge).


**A. Javier Trevino** (Ph.D. 1990), Chair and Associate Professor, Wheaton College. In 2006, Trevino edited *George C. Homans: History, Theory, and Method* (Paradigm Publishers). He also wrote "Functional imperatives/prerequisites (AGIL)," published in *International Encyclopedia of Economic Sociology* (Routledge). During the spring term of 2006 he was a Research Fellow at the University of Sussex (England), where he gave a series of talks on American sociological theory.
A new movimiento for immigrants rights in the United States exploded onto the scene in Spring of 2006. Rallies, marches and a boycott-the May 1 day without immigrants-brought thousands of immigrants and supporters to the streets in cities across the nation. The mainstream media have portrayed the new movimiento as a sudden mobilization of heretofore apolitical Latinos by Spanish-language radio DJs angered by the criminalization provisions contained in the Sensenbrenner immigration bill. (The bill establishes a guest worker program, thereby allowing for legal work opportunities for immigrants without green cards, but also criminalizes the undocumented.) But the movimiento has been long in the making, drawing from decades of immigrants rights organizing and more recent networked grassroots organizing across the country around issues of housing and worker’s rights (Lovato 2006).

At root, the movimiento is the product of globalization and transnational flows of labor. Ph.D. graduate Leah Schmalzbauer, in research conducted for her dissertation, studied the experiences of families engaged in transnational space in and between Honduras and the U.S. Her work illuminates an important part of the story of immigrant’s struggles in the U.S. Schmalzbauer studied families who transnationalize in response to financial hardship and limited opportunities in Honduras and as a means to find work paying a living wage. She followed families whose members were split in residence-some in the U.S. and others in Honduras. These families used the difference in living costs in Honduras to their advantage, as U.S. wages were leveraged to support family members living in Honduras. Her work explores transmigrant experiences, particularly aspirations and consumption practices, the negotiation of financial and emotional caretaking and the relationship to the ideology of the American Dream (Schmalzbauer 2005a, 2005b, 2004).

Schmalzbauer’s research brings us to the daily lives of some of the people who make up the new movimiento and provides a window on immigrant struggles and means of surviving. Attuned to the forces "from above" of globalization including global capital, media and international economic institutions, Schmalzbauer’s research gets us to understanding the lives of these families through a study of transnationalism "from below"-from the local daily practices of people living in transnational spaces. Employing a variety of ethnographic research methods, Schmalzbauer’s work explores the texture of daily life. Schmalzbauer got to know many Honduran transmigrants through fieldwork in a Chelsea, Massachusetts Honduran community organization. She recruited thirty-four Honduran transmigrants for participation in in-depth interviews and time diaries-week long accounts of all of the activities of daily life. She further interviewed 12 Hondurans residing in Honduras who were the recipients of remittances from her transmigrant subjects. The Honduran transmigrants tell stories of families separated by miles, surviving through economic and emotional strain. Transmigrants in her sample sent a large portion of their wages home to their families.
of their wages, an average of $242 every month, to sustain their families in Honduras. For many, these remittances were the only source of income for the family living in Honduras. The stories are stories of hardship and poverty and, in the U.S., of unstable, stressful, chaotic and lonely lives, made all the more so by an increasing lack of structural supports for immigrants in the U.S. like working papers, housing assistance, student loans, food assistance and medical care for young children (Schmalzbauer 2005a). From this study of the local, Schmalzbauer’s research points to an important global phenomenon, integral to understanding immigration in the U.S. (and elsewhere): "Out of necessity, millions of families are living in a permanent transnational limbo. They represent a new family form born out of the inequality in the global economy and reproduced by means of dependence on a transnational division of labor" (Schmalzbauer 2004: 1329).

Several of Schmalzbauer’s key findings cluster around a discussion of a new family form-the transnational family-that is negotiated and constructed by Honduran transnational migrants (see especially Schmalzbauer 2004). For survival, these transnational families require not just the economic remittances from transmigrant family members in the U.S., but also the care-taking work of other-mothers in Honduras—the women who care for the children in the absence of their parents. Only through the work of these other-mothers is migration to the U.S. possible. Schmalzbauer finds that while this care-taking arrangement works and the other-mothers and children in Honduras feel themselves lucky to have access to dollars sent through remittances, the blood parents in the U.S. experience great emotional distress and struggle in living so far from their children. Transmigrant parents with young children have the most difficulty as their children sometimes do not understand why their parents left and often do not remember the parents well.

Schmalzbauer’s findings also highlight the acceptance and circulation of the ideology of the American Dream amongst Honduran transnationals (see especially Schmalzbauer 2005b). Despite structural limitations and everyday realities of poverty, crowded housing, unstable jobs and low wages, most transmigrants continue to believe in the American Dream and the possibility of achieving it. They are what Schmalzbauer calls “transmigrant dreamers,” whose aspirations of home ownership and an education for their children, modest as they are, are likely beyond reach. Families in Honduras tended to have bigger dreams, especially of participation in consumerism. Transmigrant dreamers reproduce the ideology of the American Dream transnationally by communicating (sometimes false) messages of success and opportunity to family in Honduras.

Schmalzbauer ultimately concludes that several structural, policy-level changes could address the practical and strategic needs of transmigrants and their families. She argues for full legalization and residency for immigrants, but endorses temporary guest worker programs as a step in the right direction towards protections and freedoms not currently provided. She also argues for increased union organization of immigrant workers, following the AFL-CIO’s lead, liberalization of the U.S. requirements for legal family reunification, and reforms to World Bank and IMF loans and development policy.


Is it me or my meds? Living with Antidepressents
Charles Derber Interviews David Karp

CD: We’re here to talk about your most recent book, *Is It Me Or My Meds?*, but this is actually the third, the culmination of a trilogy on mental illness. Could you talk a little bit about how you see the connection between these three books?

DK: Yes, that’s the third in a series, although trilogy may be too strong a word. But let me just give you a little bit of history about how these things began because I think that they’re in some ways raising very similar questions.

In about 1990 I got interested in writing about depression because of my personal experience with it. I plugged the words “clinical depression” into a bunch of databases at O’Neil library and you will not be surprised that the computer spit back at me literally hundreds of things that had been written. And I discovered really quickly that almost all of them were statistical in nature – good pieces of work, but work that was limited to trying to link the incidences of depression to almost every factor you could imagine. And the omission that struck me as odd was that here were people who were writing about a feeling disorder, and nowhere in all of this was I reading about the feelings of the people who had the disorder. As a person who’s always done qualitative stuff – in depth interviewing – it just seemed to me that there was a big gap to fill. That’s how *Speaking of Sadness* came about. It was concerned with not so much questions about cause and cure of depression but with how people go about the business – the eminently social business, I would say – of trying to impose order and coherence and meaning and intelligibility onto a life circumstance which, when you're in the middle of it, hardly feels coherent and orderly.

After the publication of *Speaking of Sadness*, I came to feel that it had told only half of an important story, and the other half was the stories of caregivers, of the parents and spouses and children and siblings dealing with the ill person. That’s how the *Burden of Sympathy* came about. As with all my books, I hope that there is a larger issue that I’m addressing than just the immediate substantive issue. In the case of the *Burden of Sympathy*, it’s certainly about care giving, but it’s really a book about obligations.

I thought that I had had my say about mental illness after writing the *Burden of Sympathy* and that I would get on to other things in my life, find something else to write about. And then in the summer of 2001, I decided to try to get off antidepressant medications that I’d been taking for years. I’m an ethnographer, I kept notes, I tried to be analytical as well as descriptive in those notes, and it turned out to be, as the prologue of *Is It Me Or My Meds?* tells, a failed journey. It just re-awakened my interest in writing about medications. My puzzlement about even my own motives for wanting to stop intrigued me. In some ways, the more messy things are, in terms of the confusion for human beings, the more I’m drawn to them. As you know, every time you take on a new project you don’t do it unless you are feeling really strongly about the issue, so I made the decision to jump into this.

Let me just add one last thing about the link in the most global sense between these three books. They’re all about meaning, they’re about how people go about the business of giving meaning to their worlds – and, as I say, especially giving meaning to your world when it’s a messy, complicated, difficult, confusing world. I’ve always been interested in how people do that. But, in an even more global sense, I would say this: I really have come to see my work in recent years in very simple terms. I am a person who collects stories, I like listening to people, I like doing in depth interviews, I like to think of them as artful conversations. And, maybe I’m oversimplifying this, but what I’m really trying to do is to do justice to those stories, to listen well to what people have to say, to render those stories as faithfully as I possibly can, within of course my understanding of things as a social scientist. I mean, I’m looking for patterns and themes; I’m looking to see it in a larger theoretical framework. The second thing, which is very much related to that, is that I think that one of the most important mandates of our discipline of sociology is to give voice. I think it’s always been part of what we do, to provide a forum for people to be heard whose voices ordinarily get marginalized or shunted off to the side, or simply not heard. And typically that’s the case for people who are powerless, dispossessed, or people who occupy stigmatized statuses, and so, really, the forefront, center stage, so to speak, in these productions, are the voices of the people that I interview. I go them to interview not because I feel that I’m an expert on the issue of mental illness. I go to them because I think they are the experts, and I’m there to learn from them, and I’ve learned a great deal from them.

CD: In this work, are you arguing that psychiatric meds are somehow unique, in terms of the identity puzzles they pose?

DK: I think that everything requires interpretation in terms of its consequences for identity. But, in the case of medications, I would hold to the view that every medication that a person takes has consequences for their identity, it doesn’t matter whether it’s an aspirin or blood pressure medication... There is a huge literature, of course, in medicine on compliance, and one of the reasons that people don’t comply is that they don’t feel the way they think they ought to feel on these medications. What particularly interests me
about psychiatric drugs, apart from the fact that I take them, is that psychotropic medication, unlike other medications, have as their goal to change people’s moods, to change their feelings, to change indeed even their consciousness, and to the extent that these drugs have that as their goal, I think that these medications have a uniquely strong connection with questions of identity, I would argue more so than other pills, or at least pills that I can think about.

CD: Are medications intended to change your mood identity or to restore it?

DK: This cuts to the very center of the question of self and identity. This is Peter Kramer’s argument in *Listening to Prozac*. Kramer was arguing this idea that these drugs make you “better than well,” they introduce you to your real self. In fact, I started think about the question of self many years before I wrote this book, when I first read Kramer’s book, which in a way introduced Prozac to the world. It’s a pivotal book, and the stories that he tells in that book are both miraculous and disturbing. He tells a story of a woman who’s so hobbled by agoraphobia that she can’t leave her house, and she starts taking some Prozac, changing around little blips of serotonin in her brain, and next thing you know she’s out at bars meeting men and so on. It raises very, very profound questions about who we really are, if you can change yourself so dramatically by changing around a little bit of this bio-chemical neurotransmitter in your brain.

CD: And what was your initial reaction when you read that?

DK: My initial take was just sort of wonderment about the question of the self. Look, I’m an interactionist, who comes at the idea of self in a kind of Mead/Cooley way, that our selves are a product of how we see ourselves in the eyes of other people, the looking glass self and all that sort of thing, and here’s a person coming along and saying “Forget all that, just change the little neurotransmitter in your brain and that’s what your self is.” There’s something de-humanizing about that, it sort of robs us, in a way, of our humanity. So, Kramer’s assuming that the medication brings people to a self that they were really meant to be and indeed, some of the people with whom I spoke have said that. I have some “Kramerites” in my sample, but they’re in the minority. For most people, even when the accounts are positive – the medication has good effect – they don’t always feel that they’ve become the person they really are or that they were really meant to be. Despite what Kramer argues, there persists confusion about who one really is.

CD: Do you think that if they develop a generation of drugs that make people feel better, in that a great majority of the people become Kramerites and say they’re better, that one would have to throw out sociological theory about interactional constructional identity and so forth?

DK: No, I don’t think so. No matter what the drug does to you, there are still people around you…The Kramer model is you and the pill in front of a mirror, you and your feelings in front of a mirror. That model is a very non-sociological model because in fact, even though you might take the pill in private, pill taking is a social act in the sense that there is always a chorus of voices in your head about the pills, about whether you should be taking the pills, whether you’re sick enough to be taking the pills, whether it’s making you into a different person in the eyes of other people you are close to. Even if the drugs work to completely relieve symptoms, there still persists in people’s heads this question about whether it’s really valid or not. In fact, in some ways, an influence for this book was a writer by the name of Lauren Slater, who wrote a book called *Prozac Diary*. It’s a memoir, it’s her story of being liberated from terrible obsessive compulsive disorder and depression. Liberated from these things, and yet she calls up her doctor and says “I don’t feel like myself.” The whole book is about her struggle about whether to stay on the pills. Because what she finds is that she feels great, but she’s taking long baths and redecorating her house, and the urge, the anxiety driven urge to write, which had always been her life’s blood, was muted. A very fundamental identity about who she was as a writer was all of a sudden in jeopardy, and she has to choose whether to stay on this drug that has liberated her from terrible symptoms or choose the pain that she saw as integral to who she really was as a person and a writer. This paradox of how you can feel better symptomatically and feel worse about yourself is a very core question throughout this book.
Derber Interviews Karp, continued

CD: Is it imaginable that one could have, from a neurologi-
cal point of view, a society, 100 years from now, where
everybody would be on drugs and it would be a legitimated
identity and society and people could have decent human
relations?

DK: Yes. I can imagine that if the currency of medication
becomes so interwoven into the culture that everybody is
swallowing the pills, that people will buy into new norma-
tive structures about who they’re supposed to be. On some
level that is happening with things like plastic surgery. It
does raise the question of authenticity. One of my con-
cerns is that, as with plastic surgery, as these medications
become more refined you are creating a kind of normative
structure about what people should feel. Kramer talks about
“cosmetic psychopharmacology” – that’s the phrase he
used. He thought that at some point, the drugs would be-
come so refined that we’d be able to choose our personal-
alties like clothes off a department store rack. What I’m
saying is this, every time you narrow the band of what
people can legitimately feel or think or look like, it’s a pre-
scription for difficulty, it’s a prescription for illness. I think
that women’s bodies have become homogenized and it’s
created problems for women. Where does anorexia come
from? It comes partly, I think, from a homogenization of
the norms that surround what kind of body you can legiti-
mately have, a kind of a body identity, if you will…

CD: You’re sort of illuminating, it seems to me, something
that’s even beyond drugs. You’re illuminating a dimension
of identity, which is always in some sense a response.

DK: Yes, and I think one of the dilemmas that we face in
the modern world. One of the most revolutionary things
that’s happened in the last 20 or 30 years is the triumph of
what some people call biological psychiatry. It has extraor-
dinary ramifications for how we think about ourselves in-
dividually, how we think about ourselves as a culture. I
think it’s a situational cultural variable that’s reshaping how
we think about human pain and what we’re supposed to
do about human pain. I mean, the question has always
existed.

CD: At what point is pain pathological? How do you sepa-
rate the normal pain of living from pathological pain?

DK: I think sociologists would say that that the decision is
surely as much a product of politics and culture as it is a
product of science. And yet, what’s happening now is that
there’s been a kind of coup, there’s been kind of a takeover by medi-
cine, an increasing medicalization of the world, where more and more and more and more be-
haviors in the DSM [Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of
Mental Disorders] are being described as pathological. I
was listening to the radio the other day and there was a
psychiatrist on there who was seriously talking about how
people who are racist have EBD, extreme bias disorder,
and this guy was saying that we ought to get extreme bias
disorder into the DSM…In 1953, when the first DSM was
published, there were around 60 or so diagnostic categories
and they were categories that were conditions, disorders of
the mind. The first time it was revised it went up to 120.
Around 1980, the language changed from disorders of the
mind to diseases of the brain. That is a revolutionary de-
velopment. Now, as of 1994, you’ve got something like 350
diagnostic categories. That’s a 480% increase since the 1953
manual was first published. You can’t chalk that up to sci-
entific advance. There’s something happening here. Medi-
cine increasingly dictates the kind of identities that are prob-
lematic identities that need to be changed, and people are
increasingly buying into it…We are living in a world where
this kind of model, I think, has dangerous implications. It
privatizes problems, it sees the problem as a purely biologi-
cal event and doesn’t at all question the extent to which
human pain is a normal response to a pathological society.
It deflects attention away from exactly the things sociolo-
gists would want to look at, the way in which human pain is
being produced by the structures of the society in which we
live. It, on some level, diminishes human responsibility by
telling people they have diseases over which they have no
control, and it sort of legitimizes almost everything, from
spending too much on your credit card to sexual addiction.
And, as I said before, I think another implication of this kind
of cultural revolution in medicine is that it increasingly nar-
rows the band of what human beings legitimately can feel…I
think it creates, in the end, potentially more illness, and it
diminishes us as a society because it diminishes the band of
diversity that makes human society.

CD: Is this medicine that’s the force here or is it the under-
lying capitalist consumer culture that is sort of saying we
want a certain kind of personality, a certain kind of worker
and therefore the medicine can meet our desires?

DK: You can’t separate the two. You’ve got pharmaceuti-
cal companies that make huge amounts of money off of
this. It’s a perfect system. How do you understand this sort
of revolution in biology? I think partly happens because psy-
chiatrists are often at the bottom of the hierarchy in medici-
ne. They want to feel like “real” doctors. I know that
sounds nasty. They want to feel like surgeons, right? They
want to be able to believe that people need their “stuff”
every bit as much as a person with a broken leg needs an
orthopedic surgeon. The more they can persuade themselves and other people that there are all these illnesses out there of the brain, that they can treat, the more they like they’re part of the medical community. Of course, pharmaceutical companies are perfectly happy to have this happen because they need more and more illnesses in order to sell more and more pills. So it’s a perfect system that’s feeding on itself, and incidentally has the effect of narrowing what kinds of identities people can have. It strikes me as a dangerous thing.

CD: You have a chapter in this book on teenagers which is very provocative. Why did you do that chapter?

DK: I’m glad I wrote that chapter, I really am. It was originally not my idea to write a chapter on teenagers. This idea came about shortly after I signed the contract to write this book with Harvard University Press. I have to give a certain amount of credit to my editor at Harvard, Elizabeth Knoll. She said that given all the increasing number of kids that are part of the medicalization process that we talked about earlier – the numbers are staggering, you know – it’d be a really good idea to find out what kids are thinking about this. In a way, the idea fits very well with what I said at the very beginning of this interview, which is that part of my concern is with giving voice. If adults with mental illness hardly ever, as a marginalized stigmatized group, get to speak, it’s much more true of children. We don’t let kids speak very much in society. And so I think it’s very much in the spirit of this book.

CD: What’s the main story?

DK: The main story is that of social psychology, which is that you’ve got to understand the experience from within the lived worlds of the people who are having that experience. In the case of adolescents, teenagers, that means understanding their taking pills, being labeled as psychiatrically ill and so forth, within the context of the institution that is the most meaningful to them and the one that just absolutely envelops their lives, namely school. And once you begin to talk with them you learn about the realities that they’re facing in the context of school, where there is an enormously elaborated hierarchy of status. Where they stand in that hierarchy means everything to them. And we learn, after a very short period of time talking to them, that if you are at all different in that context, your life can truly be made miserable... In those circumstances, it is not at all surprising that many of the choices adolescents make to not take pills, to be resistant to pills, to not want to see psycho-therapists and so on and so forth, makes perfect sense in terms of saving their lives within the context of that institution.

Let me just make one other remark about this if I can, Charlie, because it has to do with being honest with kids and letting them in on what’s happening to them. One of the more poignant stories I heard was from a young woman who got put on the pills, I think Zoloft, at age 12 – a increasingly common practice, by the way – and as she was moving through early adolescence, her young friends, girlfriends, were talking about their feelings about boys. She was feeling nothing of this and began to feel really odd, to question her own sexuality, and to think maybe she was gay. It wasn’t until age 16 that she walked into a therapist’s office and learned for the first time – nobody had bothered to tell her – that one of the side effects of SSRIs like Zoloft is that they blunt the libido, and for the first time she had an explanation for something that bothered her for four or five years. She felt that she lost a whole period of her development as a result of this. That’s a very powerful thing not only about the drugs, but about what we tell kids, what we don’t tell them, what it means to have power over people. Information is power and it’s often not being shared in these instances, and it can be very problematic, if not tragic.

CD: I read some of the reviews of the book, which are very favorable in the sense that they feel you’re giving a very balanced perspective and that you’re really letting people speak and hearing their voices, which is what you do so well. But, how do you characterize yourself in the end, around this large question about the shift of the culture toward biological psychiatry?

DK: First, I’m glad that the reviewers see the book as even handed and that I don’t come across as an anti-pill guy. I have tried to be true to the data, to tell both positive and negative stories. At the very end of this book I say that I hope I do not come across (nor do I feel myself) to be anti-pills. There are moments in people’s lives when you have to go with the best tools that you can. I mean, if somebody is on the cusp of suicide, you’ve got to intervene. These pills do remarkable things for lots of people, but they also create lots of problems. It’s a very mixed bag... My quarrel is not with pills, not with research, not with trying to understand better how the brain is working. My quarrel is that these things are not being used conservatively. And I worry about the reframing of what is normal pain, and about increasingly large numbers of people being on very powerful medications when we don’t really know their long term effects. There are people, pharmacologists, who argue that we won’t know the full story about these medications for 20, 30, 40 years. We’re only now learning about the connection between suicide and adolescence with respect to these things. Life is filled with anxiety, it’s filled with difficulties, it’s filled with pain, and I just think that there is a real danger in jumping immediately to medicalization of these things.
As a thriving organization that works to promote social justice in the academy, NAWCHE, the National Association for Women in Catholic Higher Education, is embarking upon its 15th year since its grassroots commencement, under the leadership of Sharlene Hesse-Biber, Professor of Sociology and Director of Women’s Studies. This year, new MA students Emily Barko and Erin Balleine take over the reigns from last year’s recent MA graduates Rachael Kenney and Christian Gilde to assist Hesse-Biber in managing and promoting NAWCHE’s mission.

While the goals of our organization began with, and still include, support for women in Catholic higher education, creation and distribution of work for justice in the academy, and facilitation of an ongoing forum for women to have a voice on issues that are unique to women in Catholic higher education, we have been both expanding yet simultaneously refining our mission to further underscore social equality for all people in the academy, with an increased focus on support for issues surrounding race, class, gender, age, and sexual preference, and with a greater appreciation for principles and applications of feminisms (plural) as grounding and directing our organization in general. As such, we are reaching out to undergraduate and graduate students, alongside faculty, administrators, and staff, to join our work for social justice, and help us enhance our mission both within the BC community and nationally.

Our most recent conference, held last June at Georgetown University in Washington, DC, typified the more encompassing and diverse direction that NAWCHE has begun to take. Entitled Making Connections VIII: Enacting Social Justice: The Status of Women in Catholic Higher Education, the conference served as a venue to showcase research, as well as to open and extend dialogues amid widespread representatives and supporters of Jesuit values, varying from undergraduate and graduate students, to volunteers and interns, to a national representation of college and university faculty and administrators, to college presidents, and finally, to religious leaders and political luminaries. Examples of selected topics include “Human Trafficking: Making it Real for College Students,” “Advancing LGBTQ Needs within a Catholic University,” “Challenges and Opportunities Facing Lay Presidents of Catholic Colleges,” “Fostering Access to Education for the Under-Served,” “Breast Lifts and Beauty Pageants: The Relationship Between Reality Television and Body Image,” “Representations of Contested Existence in Abortion Poetry,” “Globalization and the Problem of Justice,” and “The Church of the 21st Century: Why Women Choose to Stay.”

Currently we are working on our NAWCHE Speakers Series, which most recently brought to BC sociologist Sarah Willie, author of Acting Black: College, Identity, and the Performance of Race, and journalist Liza Featherstone, author of Selling Women Short: The Landmark Battle of Workers Rights at Walmart. We are pleased to announce that gender expert Susan Shapiro Barash will be our next featured speaker in the series. On the evening of November 2nd, Barash presented her latest and ninth book: Tripping the Prom Queen: The Truth about Women and Rivalry. Here, Barash calls attention to the socio-political cultures, institutions, and relationships that often entice women (of varied races, classes, and ages) to sabotage other women who they deem more powerful and thus threatening to their life chances in a patriarchal culture where resources are gendered and limited in accord.

We always welcome feedback, and encourage anyone who might be interested in joining our organization to contact us by email at nawche@bc.edu or by phone at 617-552-4198. For more information about NAWCHE, please visit our webpage at www.bc.edu/nawche or stop by our office at 519A McGuinn Hall.
Completing its second decade as a Sociology Department institution, the weekly Wednesday morning MRAP seminar continues to thrive, providing support and feedback for its regular members and visitors. To accommodate some folks who can’t make the morning meeting, we now substitute an early evening session with a pot-luck supper once a month.

Highlights of the past academic year included:

- Dissertation defense by Adria Goodson and MRAP web-master Jesse Kirdahy-Scalia’s acceptance into the Ph.D. program at the University of California San Diego.

- The publication of *Rhyming Hope and History: Bridging Social Movement Activism and Scholarship*. David Croteau, William Hoynes, and Charlotte Ryan, (eds) (University of Minnesota Press, 2005). This book grows out of the 2002 conference which the department and Dean Joe Quinn supported wholeheartedly. The volume highlights the work of present and former MRAP participants, many of them graduates of the Sociology Department.

- The further testing (especially in a course on globalization taught by BC grad student and MRAP regular, Matt Williams), final revisions, and posting on-line of Gamson’s Global Justice Game. For the curious, you can check out the details at globaljusticegame.mrap.info.

- As part of our ongoing public sociology involvement, we developed and ran workshops for and with several groups including the Planned Parenthood League of Massachusetts, the Hunt Alternatives Fund, Brit Tzedek v’Shalom (the Jewish Alliance for Peace and Justice) and 12 state domestic violence coalitions. We continued to provide support to community partners, Mass Law Reform Institute and the Rhode Island Coalition against Domestic Violence.

- Building on our previous work in Grove Hall, Roxbury, we have begun a five year experiment applying the participatory communication model in the predominantly Latino city of Lawrence. We are also collaborating with CON-NECT, an organization dedicated to bridging the digital divide in the rust-belt Merrimack River Valley.

- The development and articulation of the “participatory communication model” that underlies the work of the seminar. Charlotte Ryan and Bill Gamson described the model in an article in the Sociology magazine, *Contexts* (“The Art of Reframing Political Debates,” January, 2006, pp. 13-18) using the MRAP experience with the Rhode Island Coalition Against Domestic Violence (RICADV). Another version, aimed more at an activist audience, “Thinking about Elephants: Toward a Dialogue with George Lakoff,” appeared in *The Public Eye* (Fall, 2005, pp. 1, 13-16). More elaborated versions of the model are in progress. Finally, in keeping with MRAP’s ongoing participation in public sociology, we are collaborating with Richard Healey and Sandra Hinson of the Grassroots Policy Project in the preparation of a popular pamphlet detailing specific participatory communication practices which can be used by grassroots organizations.

The weekly seminar continues to serve as a combination of an incubator for its members ideas and publications and – on occasion – as a place to brainstorm with activists on the strategic problems they face, or to meet with journalists. During the past academic year, we discussed dissertations and papers in progress by several regular participants including Kevin Carragee (Presentation Foundation and Suffolk University), Michelle Gawerc, Jesse Kirdahy-Scalia, Jeff Langstraat, Vered Malka, Noa Milman, Colleen Nugent, Seil Oh, Johanna Pabst, Charles Pinderhughes, and Matt Williams.

Visiting scholars (or regulars at other universities in the area) Heidi Swarts (from Syracuse), JoAnn Carmin (MIT), Sarah Sobieraj (Tufts), Heide Solbrig (Bentley), and Darcy Leach (Michigan) participated in multiple sessions.
MRAP Plans for 2006-2007:

We have proposed a workshop, “Bridging the Academic-Activist Divide,” for the conference on “Movement Cultures, Strategies, and Outcomes,” sponsored by the ASA section on Collective Behavior and Social Movement, to be held at Hofstra University in the summer of 2007, right before the ASA meetings in New York. If our proposal is accepted, we plan to use several sessions of the MRAP seminar in the Fall to develop the workshop.

The Global Justice Game has so far been used almost exclusively in college classrooms. We hope to extend its usage to various grassroots groups as part of their training for their members interested in a better understanding of complicated globalization issues. To this end, we have begun discussions with faith-based coalitions and other global justice activists.

We hope to move along to publication the various efforts to articulate the participatory communication model described above. We have developed a participatory communication manuscript with our partners that now is in the editorial review process.

We hope to develop a useable, on-line set of media workshops, covering the use of media to further one’s preferred framing and for gaining media standing. The intended user of these workshops will be activist groups who wish to adopt a participatory communication model in their efforts at social change.

We hope to develop our website to further collaborative research efforts among geographically dispersed MRAP alumni and associates who can’t come regularly to the weekly seminar. We anticipate working groups focused on such specific issues as Israeli-Palestinian conflict, social class and labor activism, environmental justice, and other areas of primary interest to clusters of MRAP regulars and associates.

We hope to maintain the weekly seminar as a safe-space in which we can think collectively about problems of common interest and further the collaborative efforts of MRAP members to bridge activism and scholarship.

by Chris Kelly

We marched down the right side of Massachusetts Avenue in a seemingly endless procession, from Harvard Yard towards Boston Common, shouting various slogans and call-and-response chants. (For example, Whose streets?/Our streets? and What do we want?/Justice!/When do we want it/?Now!) In addition, we made noise in many other ways, such as banging on drums and shaking rock-filled bottles. Instead of lobbing bombs like the USA administration, we were lobbing demands for social justice. This was all part of a larger effort by Boston-area activists to support the rights of immigrants and to oppose the Congressional bill HR4437. (Also known as the “Border Protection, Antiterrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act of 2005,” it would criminalize both undocumented immigrants and even people who assist them.) This coalition included a variety of Boston-area activist groups, one of which was the Boston College Global Justice Project (GJP).

The Global Justice Project (GJP), formed in 1999 and advised by sociology professor Charles Derber, is composed of both students and faculty who address a variety of social justice issues, both on- and off-campus, through education and political activism. These issues include everything from large and distant ones like the Iraq War to local topics like the well-being of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered (GLBT) students at Boston College (BC). Although individual member ideologies vary extensively, one may safely refer to GJP as a leftist, or even radical, organization for its political positions and its powerful critiques of racism, sexism, classism, heterosexism, militarism, consumerism, and anything else damaging to life, both human and non-human, on Earth. In tandem with these values is GJP’s actual practice, including participatory democracy and free discussion; because these practices and others are so highly valued, formal structure and discipline are minimal.

GJP has addressed a wide range of issues during the 2005-
Global Justice Project, continued

06 school year—most notably, the war in Iraq, the Israel-Palestine conflict, academic freedom, and the rights of Latin American garment workers. As a force for social justice both at BC and elsewhere, GJP makes numerous contributions to politics in its broadest sense—both by the whole group and by individual members.

Most prominently, GJP is a continuous and potent source of visible political activism, and it can boast several achievements from the past academic year. The summer before, member Nic Albert traveled with a group of Boston-area activist to the West Bank of Israel to learn more about the conflict and do volunteer work. Near the beginning of the 2005-06 school year, GJP planned a protest at the BC Career Fair against the Raytheon company, a major weapons manufacturer. Although they had gotten a permit, the permit was later revoked shortly before the event; the BC administration claimed that it was “deceived” as to the nature of the protest, but many regard the claim as a mere excuse for censorship. Also, GJP has kept the issue of the Iraq War alive through its weekly vigils, in which members display pictures of both Iraqi and American war casualties and speak about abuses by United States administrators; even more visible was the “die-in” during spring semester, in which both GJP members and outside supporters gathered near central campus sidewalks to “play dead,” representing war casualties. In addition to these group-initiated actions, GJP has contributed to larger efforts, such as supporting GLBT and pro-choice students, opposing a dangerous biological laboratory in the Boston area, and immigrant rights. It was also a major force in efforts to oppose the BC administration’s decision to invite Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice as a graduation speaker.

Along with the signs and megaphones associated with activism and protest, GJP has also provided information, occasions, and spaces for education and discussion about social and political issues. Because of the thwarted Raytheon protest, GJP has since become, along with GLBT and pro-choice student groups, a prominent voice in debates about academic freedom at BC. Also, the group has taken the initiative in educating students about various Middle Eastern issues such as the Iraq War and the Israel conflict; one major accomplishment was sponsoring a talk by Aaron Glantz, author of How America Lost Iraq, who offered a well-argued and devastating critique of the United States administration’s actions in Iraq. We also sponsored a panel of four Latin American garment workers who have organized against exploitation by large clothing manufacturers. Furthermore, GJP has used art to educate people about social justice, and several members were actively involved in a spring campaign to promote social justice through art. Finally, GJP has gone to great efforts to disseminate alternative viewpoints and information; it publishes a yearly booklet, the Freshman Disorientation, which is sharply critical of certain persons and groups at Boston College, and GJP members were adept at disseminating information for the broader actions over Condoleezza Rice. It also functions as a rallying point for progressive and liberal activists all over campus, and members of other groups often publicize their own events via the GJP mailing list, so the group helps to keep interested individuals aware of political issues on and off campus.

Lastly, there is a kind of personal benefit to being in the GJP community. Members are not only fellow activists but also friends, and members find personal acceptance and affirmation in addition to kindred political spirits. This is especially important at a place like Boston College, whose administration can be very strict and conservative at times. Groups like the Global Justice Project help to maintain promises and keep dreams alive.
Undergraduate Achievements

The William A. Gamson Award

This award was established during AY 2001-02 by the Sociology Department in honor of William Gamson. It is given each year to a graduating senior for outstanding academic achievement in sociology. The 2006 Recipient of this award was Katharine Schulte.

The John D. Donovan Award

This award is in honor of Professor Emeritus John D. Donovan. It is ordinarily presented each year to an undergraduate student who submits the best paper written for a course in sociology. This year, the Donovan Award was awarded to Canyon Cody, for his paper entitled “One World, Many Musics.”

Dean's Scholars (Class of 2007)
Alexandria Bradshaw, Katrina King.

Sophomore Scholars (Class of 2008)
Clairesse Brogoitti, Patrick Denice
Danika Sharek

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-seminar Senior Thesis seminar, SC 555 and SC 556. In AY 2005-2006 the following students participated in our Honors Program:

Class of 2006
Lisa Andre, Sarah Burns, Melissa Cox, Faith Kirkpatrick, Katherine Schulte, Jessica Swenson; Danielle Woods

Class of 2007
Katherine Adam; Kate Ceredona, Margaret Ford, Christopher Laws, Stacey Livingstone, Molly McCary, Valerie Mitchell, Melissa Waite

Scholar of the College

The Scholar of the College is an A&S award conferred at Commencement on seniors who have successfully completed particularly creative, scholarly, and ambitious independent research projects while maintaining an overall cumulative grade point average of A- or better.

In 2006, Sociology major Melissa Cox was recognized as a Scholar of the College for her research project “Low-Income Adolescent Mothers and Teen Pregnancy Programs: Do the Services Provide What Young Mothers Seek?”

Melissa’s advisor, Sociology Research Professor Lisa Dodson, said, “Melissa has an essential quality when researching the lives of other people: She pushes aside stereotypes—in the case of her research project, about teen moms—and seeks an understanding of how they know the world. This is critical knowledge if we want to support their chances and those of their children. Melissa thoroughly committed herself to hearing the voices of those who are usually left out of a society increasingly unbalanced by inequality and poverty. It was not only her excellent work but the passion for social justice that made Melissa’s project outstanding.”

Melissa will pursue graduate studies in reproductive and women’s health at the University of Michigan School of Public Health, in Ann Arbor.
During the winter break, a group of eleven Boston College undergraduate students, one graduate student leader, and one faculty leader set out for Uganda. The trip began as the dream of Mike Frank (A&S 07). Inspired by some friends who had traveled to Kenya, Mike wanted Boston College students to make a similar trip to Uganda. After quite a number of obstacles, the trip took official form in the spring of 2005 when the Office of AHANA Student Programs and the Volunteer Service and Learning Center agreed to sponsor it. A team of eleven undergraduate students and two leaders were selected, and with another sponsorship boost from the school of Arts and Sciences, the dream of going to Uganda became a reality.

The trip had a focus on HIV/AIDS awareness. Uganda is one of the most progressive African nations with regards to their attempts to slow the spread of HIV. While most nations in sub-Saharan Africa have experienced an increased number of AIDS cases, Uganda, through a broad support system personally backed by its president Yoweri Museveni, has been able to greatly diminish the numbers of citizens infected with the disease, while providing services to patients and their families. In Uganda we visited a number of non-profit organizations involved with these efforts, the largest being The AIDS Support Organization (TASO). TASO provides free antiretroviral treatment, counseling, in-home services, and a number of other free services to any individual who is HIV positive.

The majority of the trip was spent in a home and school for children who had been orphaned either by HIV or the northern war in Uganda. The organization which sponsors these children is called Uganda Children’s Charity Foundation (UCCF). UCCF has three schools which also serve as homes. There are over 700 children in the UCCF system. While we were there, the children were on their school holiday. During holidays most of the children are sent to either friends or relatives’ homes, but there were about 40 children who did not have anywhere to go. They were all sent to the Sabina Primary Boarding School, one of the three UCCF homes, in the Rakai district in the southernmost region of Uganda, where we were going to meet them.

We organized structured activities for the kids to engage in throughout the day. Our days began with some sort of physical activity such as capture the flag or soccer (football as they call it) followed by casual free time until lunch. Following lunch, we had educational and craft activities planned for indoors. But we also talked, and once we all got past the initial euphoria of our encounter, the children began to share some of their stories. They talked about their past, their families, and the complexities of being an orphan.

I knew I would see unimaginable sights and beautiful landscapes in Uganda, encounter intriguing people vastly different from myself, and be driven straight out of my comfort zone. But I didn’t realize what a profound emotional impact the experience would have on me, and how much I would admire the people I met there. We hope to share this experience with other students by sending another trip in January 2008, sponsored once again by the Office of AHANA Student Programs, Arts and Sciences, and the Volunteer Service and Learning Center. We are looking to return to UCCF to reconnect with our hosts and the children as well as hopefully expand the trip to embody a more comprehensive view of life in Eastern Africa.

If you are interested in getting involved with Uganda Children’s Charity Foundation, please go to their website UCCF.org. They take donations and offer child sponsorship and volunteer programs.
Stephen Pfohl Wins Two Awards for Teaching Excellence

Stephen Pfohl won two prestigious university awards for teaching excellence in the past year. The first, awarded by the office of the Academic Vice President, is a Distinguished Teaching Award. Stephen also won the first annual Graduate School of Arts and Sciences award for teaching excellence.

The Boston College Chronicle describes the reasons Pfohl received the Distinguished Teaching Award, which was presented during the annual Faculty Day event:

“Pfohl teaches a wide array of courses, including social theory, deviance and social control, women’s studies, cultural studies, postmodernism, psychoanalysis, criminology and the sociology of art. He has also had an extensive range of experiences outside the University, including as a founding member of Sit-Com International, a Boston-based collective of artists, social theorists and activists.

“A group of students and fellow faculty members heartily endorsed his candidacy for the award: ‘He is a brilliant scholar, a tireless mentor and a vital contributor to students’ intellectual development and subsequent career and life paths,’ they wrote. ‘One of the reasons Stephen is such a successful teacher is that he remains a student. This is something all of us in this business know is important.’”

Juliet Schor Awarded Lientof Prize

The Global Development and Environment Institute at Tufts University has awarded Sociology Professor and Chair Juliet Schor the 2006 Leontief Prize for Expanding the Frontiers of Economic Thought, a distinguished prize designed to recognize outstanding contributions to economic theory that address contemporary realities and support just and sustainable societies. Samuel Bowles of the University of Massachusetts will also receive the award. GDAE co-director Neva Goodwin said of the recipients, “We are proud to recognize two individuals who address today’s realities through their creative combinations of empirical and conceptual work. Sam Bowles has inspired generations of economists – including an impressive array of his own students – to expand the frontiers of research and teaching in economics. Juliet Schor’s scholarly and popular writings have changed perceptions of American society, and especially the costs of its high-consumption lifestyle.” The award ceremony took place at Tufts University.

Natasha Sarkisian Awarded Rosabeth Moss Kanter International Award

Natasha Sarkisian and fellow author Naomi Gerstel were awarded the 2005 Rosabeth Moss Kanter International Award for Research Excellence in Families and Work. According to Center for Families website, the award “raises awareness of high quality work-family research among the scholar, consultant and practitioner communities. It fosters debate about what the standards of quality for work-family research should be, and ultimately will raise those standards. And it identifies the “best of the best” on which to base future research.” Natasha and Naomi won for their paper “Explaining the Gender Gap in Help to Parents: The Importance of Employment,” published in the May 2004 issue of Journal of Marriage and Family.
Shawn McGuffey Wins Sally Hacker Award

Shawn McGuffey won the Sally Hacker award given by the Sex & Gender section of the ASA for his article, "Engendering Trauma: Race, Class and Gender Reaffirmation after Child Sexual Abuse." The article appeared in Gender & Society in 2005, and is from his dissertation research.

Charles Derber

Charlie Derber’s Hidden Power, highlighted in last year’s Sociology Speaks, was selected as a top finalist for the 2006 Independent Publisher Book Awards in the category of “Current Events.” Well over 1,000 publishers participate in these awards, submitting titles that come from all 50 states in the U.S. and Washington D.C. as well as nine Canadian provinces and 12 foreign countries.

Lisa Dodson

Lisa Dodson received a $50,000 award through the Service Employees International Union to conduct ethnographic research on the lives of low-wage careworkers.

Eva Garroutte

Eva Garroutte received a Mentored Research Scientist Development Award from the National Institute on Aging worth $454,400 to research “Health Communication with American Indian Elders.”

She was selected to serve on the editorial board for a new journal, the Journal of Native Aging and Health, and on the Planning Committee for the Handbook of North American Indians, Vol. 2, also an editorial board position. The Handbook, a Smithsonian publication, is forthcoming in 2008.

Eva and Natasha Sarkisian published a study on disparities in health perceptions between Indian patients and their doctors, which an editorial in the Journal of General Internal Medicine called “a significant advance” that “should serve as a model for future research.”

Sharlene Hesse-Biber

Sharlene Hesse-Biber was named Director of Women’s Studies at Boston College.

Sharlene was also awarded both a Research Incentive Grant and a Teaching, Advising, Mentoring Expense Grant through the university. She’s used the RIG funds to examine acculturation, body dissatisfaction and dieting among African-American college students who attend predominantly white colleges. Work on the TAM concerned the integration of computer-assisted instruction into the qualitative methods classroom. The TAM resulted in two conference presentations - a teaching sociology paper session at the ASA and a paper session at the International Conference of Qualitative Methods - as well as a paper submission to Teaching Sociology: “Alternative Perspectives on Integrating Methods and Technology in Qualitative Methods Instruction.” The paper was co-authored with graduate students Jeannette Belcher-Schepis and Xiaoxia Chen.

Hesse-Biber’s co-authored Working Women in America: Split Dreams was selected as one of Academia’s YPB core 1000, a list of major academic titles “that will stand the test of time and be expected to be contained within good collections,” according to Academia’s website.
Zine Magubane

Zine Magubane was awarded tenure.

Paul Schervish

Paul Schervish and The Center on Wealth and Philanthropy were awarded a total of $235,000 in new grants, including a $100,000 grant from the T.B. Murphy Foundation and a $105,000 grant from the Boston Foundation. His recent articles, details of his several projects, and extensive citations in the media can be found on the CWP website (http://www.bc.edu/research/swri).