

Poverty, Class & Inequality Division *news*

Chair's Message

Dear Poverty, Class, and Inequality Division Members:

The meeting this past summer in New York was great. The PCI division had some terrific sessions. We also had a good turnout at the division meeting. If you were unable to make it to New York, I hope you will be able to join us in Boston this summer. We have an array of interesting sponsored and co-sponsored sessions for the 2008 meeting (see section below). Please consider submitting your own work and circulate information about these sessions widely so that we may increase the pool of submissions. You can check the SSSP website for more information on submitting (<http://www.sssp1.org/>). **The deadline for submitting is January 31st, 2008.**

I would also like to bring your attention to several important announcements and requests in this newsletter. I have enjoyed serving as division chair, getting more involved with SSSP, and working with and getting to know some wonderful people. My term ends at the 2008 meeting this summer when we will transition in a new chair. Please submit nominations for this position. We are also looking for a new newsletter editor. This is a great opportunity for a graduate student to get more involved in the organization. Finally, please circulate the call for submissions for the student paper award. (It is included below, but an official mailing will be sent out to members at a later date.) Last year we did not give an award because we did not receive enough submissions. This is a great way to recognize promising student work. Please do your part to circulate so that we can increase the pool of submissions this year.

I look forward to an exciting a productive year. Please contact me directly with any questions or concerns (brooke.kelly@uncp.edu).

Sincerely,

E. Brooke Kelly
Division Chair

Request for Nominations Division Chair

It is time to begin considering candidates for chair of the Poverty, Class, and Inequality Division. The new chair will transition in at the 2008 meetings, and serve for two years.

Serving as division chair is a great way to get more involved with SSSP and to meet and interact with some wonderful people. The workload is concentrated heavily around meeting time and meeting preparation. Please think about reliable colleagues who have been active or are interested in becoming more active in the PCI division.

You may nominate another individual or yourself. For a description of chair responsibilities, you can contact the current chair or look at the official description at <http://www.sssp1.org/index.cfm/m/21/181>.

Request for Newsletter Editor

We have been fortunate to have David Purcell serve as our newsletter editor over the past two years. He has taken a position as assistant professor in the department of sociology at Kent State University, and is ready to pass on the torch. Being the newsletter editor is a great way for a graduate student to get more involved in the division.

If you or someone you know might be interested, please contact the division chair.

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Search for SSSP Executive Officer

The Society for the Study of Social Problems (SSSP) announces an opening for the position of Executive Officer. The SSSP is an interdisciplinary and international community of scholars, activists, practitioners, and students creating greater social justice through social research. The members of the SSSP work in colleges and universities, non-profit organizations, research organizations, activist groups, and other applied settings.

A detailed description of the Executive Officer's position is posted on the SSSP web site, <http://www.sssp1.org>.

Preference will be given to those familiar with, or a commitment to, SSSP's purposes. Interested applicants may apply by submitting a letter of interest, CV, contact information for three references and a letter of support from the applicant's Department Chair and Dean to:

Gabriel Aquino,
Chair of the Permanent Organization and Strategic
Planning Committee
Department of Sociology
Westfield State College
577 Western Avenue
Westfield, MA 01086
(gaquino@wsc.ma.edu).

The letter of interest should include a statement of the applicant's vision for the future of the Society and understanding of the duties of the Executive Officer that are stated in the SSSP Bylaws and Operations Manual. The candidate should also indicate what support the host institution is willing to provide if selected for the Executive Office site. Institutional support information should be corroborated by the letters from an official with budgetary authority. **Applications received by February 15, 2008 will receive full consideration.** Compensation will include salary assistance and travel.

The Permanent Organization and Strategic Planning Committee (POSPC), working in consultation with the Board of Directors and the Treasurer, will screen the applications and will take into consideration the protection/promotion of affirmative action and cultural diversity interests, as well as the qualifications of the applicants and the resources available from the applicants' institutions, including estimated budgets for operating the Executive Office at their institutions.

Following established procedures, up to three application files will be supplied to the Board of Directors by July 1, 2008. Finalists will be interviewed by the POSPC and the Board separately at the 2008 Annual Meeting. A site visit to the selected site will be conducted not later than November 1, 2008. Final appointment will take place by March 1, 2009. The President of the Board, Chair of the POSPC, and newly appointed Executive Officer will make arrangements to have the Executive Office moved to its new location – following the 2009 Annual Meeting.

Announcement of Student Paper Award

The PCI division announces its 2008 **Student Paper Competition**. This year, the PCI division would like to reward ***student work that holds the potential for addressing and ameliorating inequalities***. Papers should be original empirical works of professional quality that have been completed during their studies as either a graduate or an undergraduate student. Papers must be student authored; they can be authored by one or more student, but may not be co-authored with a faculty member or non-student. Papers should be no more than 50 pages in length, including notes, references, and tables. Send papers and a cover letter specifying that the paper is to be considered for the Poverty, Class, and Inequality Division Student Paper Competition to:

Dr. Ira Silver
Department of Sociology
Framingham State College
100 State Street
Framingham, MA 01701
(508)626-4864
isilver@frc.mass.edu

The deadline for submissions is February 1, 2008. The winner and any runner-up will be announced in Spring 2008. The winner will receive a modest cash stipend, registration fees, and an opportunity to present her/his paper at the SSSP conference, held in August 2008 in Boston.

Suggestions for Panelists for Session on Writing for Non-Academic Audiences

At the meeting in New York, I organized an invited panel session, "Making Research Matter: Disseminating Knowledge Outside the Academy."

This was an invited session of panelists who had experience getting research outside academic circles in various ways. The panelists' experience and insights were informative and inspiring. The session was well attended and elicited a lively discussion about how we can continue and support such work. As a result of that dialogue, I am organizing another invited panel session for the 2008 meeting in Boston.

The session's topic was suggested as part of the 2007 panel discussion and will focus on ***how to write for non-academic audiences***.

I would love to hear your suggestions on appropriate panelists or how to make the panel more useful to our members. Please contact me directly with any feedback (brooke.kelly@uncp.edu).
--Brooke Kelly

Announcement of Sessions for *2008 Meeting*

Session 1: *Inequalities: Constructing and Resisting Identities* – **THEMATIC**

Co-organizer: Yvonne M. Luna
W: 928-523-6135; yvonne.luna@nau.edu
and
Co-organizer: Jennifer K. Wesely
W: 904-620-1685; jwesely@unf.edu

Session 2: *Indebtedness, Consumption, and Inequality*

Organizer: Deborah Thorne
W: 740-593-1367; thorned@ohio.edu

Session 3: *Images and Perceptions of Inequality*

Organizer: Ira Silver
W: 508-626-4864; isilver@frc.mass.edu

Co-Sponsored Sessions

Session 6: *What Are We Going to Do About It? Addressing the Structural Underpinnings of Poverty (Conflict, Social Action, & Change and Poverty, Class, and Inequality)*

Organizer: Anne Statham
W: 414-595-3341; statham@uwp.edu

Session 19: *Wrongful Convictions: Miscarriage of Justice (Crime and Juvenile Delinquency; Law and Society; and Poverty, Class, and Inequality)*

Organizer: Emily Horowitz
W: 718-489-5446; ehorowitz@stfranciscollege.edu

Session 27: *Katrina: Social Justice (Drinking and Drugs and Poverty, Class, and Inequality)*

Organizer: Bruce D. Johnson
W: 212-845-4500; bruce.johnson@ndri.org

Session 35: *Homelessness (Family and Poverty, Class, and Inequality)*

Organizer: Bart W. Miles
W: 313-577-4434; bmiles@wayne.edu

Session 45: *Food and Inequality (Health, Health Policy, and Health Services and Poverty, Class, and Inequality)*

Organizer: E. Brooke Kelly
W: 910-775-4038; brooke.kelly@uncp.edu

Session 46: *Boundaries of Race, Ethnicity, and Class: Inclusion and Exclusion in Health (Health, Health Policy, and Health Services; Poverty, Class, and Inequality; and Racial and Ethnic Minorities)*

Co-organizer: Emily S. Ihara
W: 703-993-2023; eihara@gmu.edu
and
Co-organizer: Robert L. Hawkins
W: 212-998-5939; rlh6@nyu.edu

Session 53: *The Working Poor in the Global Economy (Poverty, Class, and Inequality and Sociology and Social Welfare)*

Organizer: Sondra Fogel
W: 813-974-7347; sfogel@cas.usf.edu

THEMATIC SESSION **Crossing Your OWN Borders:** **Theorizing Across Substantive Sections of SSSP**

Organizers:
Mitch Berbrier
University of Alabama in Huntsville
mitch.berbrier@uah.edu

Michelle Corbin
University of Maryland
mcorbin@socy.umd.edu

Within our discipline, angst is almost ritually expressed about the sectioning of sociology into Divisions (in SSSP) and the dividing of sociology into Sections (in ASA). We thereby request theoretically-orientated papers that explicitly run against these trends, crossing those intellectual borders. We imagine that these papers would in creatively engage two or more theories or orientations that are ordinarily confined within substantive areas. Our hope that such cross-fertilization can yield interaction, discussion, and contestation which may in turn yield advances in social problems theory.

Funding Opportunity

Small Grant Opportunity: "Financial Risk, Assets, and Poverty"

Application deadline: February 1, 2008

The NPC's 2008 Poverty Research Grants program seeks to fund research that will broaden and/or deepen our understanding of the ways in which access to financial services, debt, asset holding, savings, and insurance shapes the lives of low-income persons. Both public and private programs can help low-income families smooth consumption and acquire savings for future investments or future emergencies.

The NPC anticipates funding up to 4 proposals, up to a maximum of \$17,500 per award. The RFA can be found on our website at:
http://www.npc.umich.edu/opportunities/research_grants/2008_poverty_grants/

Applicants for NPC grants must hold a Ph.D. or equivalent academic degree by July 1, 2008. Preference will be given to non-tenured researchers with full-time academic appointments and researchers using new approaches and innovative methods. University of Michigan faculty and postdoctoral fellows are ineligible for funding.

Member Publications

Stephen Steinberg (Queens College & Graduate Center, CUNY):

Race Relations: A Critique

Stanford University Press. September 2007.

"***The Melting Pot is NOT Broken***"; Op. Ed., San Francisco Chronicle (October 8, 2007). <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=/c/a/2007/10/09/ED0ISM957.DTL>

"***Social Capital: The Science of Obfuscation***"; New Politics (Winter 2007). <http://www.wpunj.edu/newpol/>

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Political Capitalism, Neoliberalism, and Globalization in India: Redefining Corporate Property Rights to Facilitate Foreign Ownership, 1991-2005

Shilpa Ranganathan and Harland Prechel, Research in Political Sociology, Volume 16:201-244,(2007).

This paper elaborates the theory of political capitalism to explain the implementation of market-based reforms in India. In response to the decline in the rate of capital accumulation that was manifested as a debt crisis in 1991, public policies and state structures were implemented that transformed corporate property rights. During this historical transition, the Indian economy was restructured from a mixed system characterized by family-owned business groups and state-owned enterprises to an economy characterized by a combination of domestic and foreign private ownership with substantially fewer state-owned enterprises. With support from transnational financial organizations such as the IMF, domestic elites used debt relief as political leverage to obtain market-based reforms. The new political-legal arrangements are the outcome of the dynamics that emerged among domestic and transnational capitalist class interests, political parties, and India's complex caste system and class structure.

On the Fireline: Living and Dying with Wildland Firefighters,

University of Chicago Press. Cloth \$24.00

Matthew Desmond, University of Wisconsin – Madison, Department of Sociology

ISBN: 978-0-226-14408-5 (ISBN-10: 0-226-14408-9) Fall 2007

368 p., 32 halftones, 1 line drawing. 2007 Series: (FED) Fieldwork Encounters and Discoveries

<http://www.press.uchicago.edu/cgi-bin/hfs.cgi/00/218633.ctl>

On the Fireline seeks to understand how a high-risk organization, the United States Forest Service, motivates its workers to participate in life-threatening activity. Because the distribution of professional risk takers reflects the established social order, to study risk is to study power and inequality. The sacrifices that professional risk takers endure are borne primarily by a narrow segment of society—mainly working-class men—not simply by “brave,” “heroic,” “thrill-lusting,” “action-seeking” individuals from all walks of life.

The men who fill the ranks of America's million-and-a-half-person fighting force are the sons of steelworkers, railroaders, and teamsters; men of color are overrepresented in subordinate military positions, and the educated and the rich are strikingly absent from the army's ranks. The same is true in the world of wildland firefighting, a working-class world in which approximately 80 percent of firefighting positions are filled by men. Working-class men staff most of the positions within high-risk organizations while their well-to-do counterparts watch from a safe distance. Certain bodies, deemed precious, are protected, while others, deemed expendable, protect. *On the Fireline* is my attempt to understand how organizations that demand much from their workers—indeed, sometimes their very lives—tap into and rely upon America's economic inequalities, how individuals' classed lifestyles and backgrounds influence their decision to sign up for jobs that could kill them, and how individuals' social positions, personal histories, and specific paths through life predispose them to the rigors of risky work.

Rigging the Game, How Inequality Is Reproduced in Everyday Life

Michael Schwalbe, Oxford University Press

ISBN13: 9780195333008

ISBN10: 0195333004

Paper, 368 pages

Sep 2007

\$21.95 (04)

<http://www.us.oup.com/us/catalog/general/subject/Sociology/SocialStratification/?view=usa&ci=9780195333008>

In *Rigging the Game*—a brief, accessible introduction to the study of inequality in American society—Michael Schwalbe investigates how inequality is both created and reproduced. Guided by the questions *How did the situation get this way?* and *How does it stay this way?*, Schwalbe tracks inequality from its roots to its regulation. In the final chapter, “Escaping the Inequality Trap,” he also shows how inequality can be overcome. Throughout, Schwalbe's engaging writing style draws students into the material, providing instructors with a solid foundation for discussing this challenging and provocative subject.

With its lively combination of incisive analysis and compelling fictional narratives, *Rigging the Game* is an innovative teaching tool—not only for courses on stratification, but also for social problems courses, introductory sociology courses, and any course that takes a close look at how the inequalities of race, class, and gender are perpetuated.



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Ordinary People

In and Out of Poverty in the Gilded Age

David Wagner

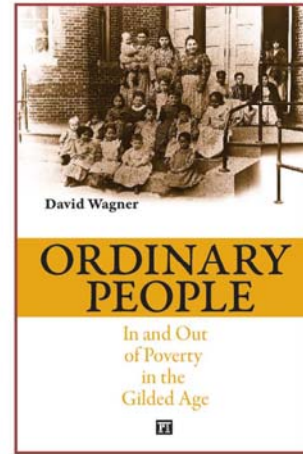
"The poor are absent from our history books. David Wagner presents them to us in vivid Dickensian portraits as human beings to whom attention must be paid. He is writing about the poor in the late nineteenth century, but inevitably we are reminded of the invisible poor in our midst today. An important contribution to the social history of our country."

—Howard Zinn

"David Wagner has written a wonderful book. By focusing close on particular lives, he gives us a uniquely intimate and specific insight into the lives of these poor and marginal people of the late nineteenth century. And he also shows us that they were more than just victims, but people who asserted themselves and often managed to build their own lives."

—Frances Fox Piven

David Wagner explores the lives of poor people during the three decades after the Civil War, using a unique treasure of biographies of people who were (at one point in time) inmates in a large almshouse, combined with genealogical and other official records to follow their later lives. *Ordinary People* develops a more fluid picture of "poverty" as people's lives change over the course of time. This book is not only an invaluable addition for students of the Gilded Age but also for readers interested in poverty, the working class, labor, and social welfare history.



David Wagner is Professor of Social Work and Sociology at the University of Southern Maine and author of five previous books including the C. Wright Mills Award-winning *Checkerboard Square: Culture and Resistance in a Homeless Community* and most recently *The Poorhouse: America's Forgotten Institution*.

288 pp., 6" x 9"

Hardcover, 978-1-59451-460-9, \$71.00, November 2007

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