

Organizations, Occupations, and Work

Spring 1996

From the Chair of the Membership Committee

Rikki Abzug • New York University

Our numbers are strong and growing! I'd like to introduce myself and the membership committee and let you know what plans are afoot to make OOW an even more invigorating and intellectually stimulating place. I am Rikki Abzug, an assistant professor of management at NYU's Stern School of Business and my very able membership committee includes Mark Chaves (Sociology - Notre Dame), Vicki Smith (Sociology - UC Davis), and Vincent Roscigno (Sociology - Ohio State).

We have been very busy this Fall and Winter. With the idea that bringing new members (especially graduate students) into the fold will heighten our relevance, increase our scholarly resources, and afford us a greater presence at the annual meetings, we have established a rigorous recruiting goal of 1,000 members. Most of you have heard about this as we have encouraged you all to enroll students and colleagues.

To aid and abet your efforts we're trying to reach ASA members with organizational interests who are not currently OOW members, as well as non-ASA members with substantial interests in organizations from a sociological perspective. We created a recruiting (marketing) letter to distribute to our different mailing lists. We sent over 300 letters to ASA non-OOW members before the holidays and before ASA membership renewals were due. We also flooded electronic listserves and professional conferences of like-minded, but non-sociology scholars, with appeals to join up with the smart (fun) crowd.

Finally, we are

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A Message From the Section Chair

Paul DiMaggio • Princeton University

As the academic year moves towards the home stretch, the state of the Section appears healthy, perhaps even robustly so. Last August, chair-elect Dan Cornfield and I set a two-year goal to bring section membership to 1000 by the conclusion of Dan's term in August 1997. Early returns on 1996 Section membership provide reason to believe that we may be on track. The January figures (which are the ones available at this writing) represent only a fraction of the renewals that ASA will eventually receive, so absolute numbers are meaningless and one must draw inferences with care. But I am cheered by the fact that we are holding our own in comparison with other sections (whose figures are also listed in the material that ASA distributes) and perhaps even doing a bit better.

How optimistic these early results make one depends on one's willingness to make two heroic assumptions. The first is that the sections to which I am comparing Organizations, Occupations, and Work (OOW) are doing no worse than they have in past years. (Otherwise, our relative performance may be stronger because they're shrinking, not because we are growing.) The second is that people who join OOW do so on the same annual timetable as people who join other sections. (This is not obviously true. Perhaps we bureaucratically sophisticated students of organizations, occupations, and work get ourselves organized faster than, say, insouciant cultural sociologists or absent-minded sociologists of science? The answer, in turn, rides on the extent to which people become – or at least take on the institutional style of – what they study. This issue is of course related to the question of whether people come to resemble their pets, but that is a matter for another column.) In any case, I'm pleased to report that we are certainly holding our own, and, I believe although I cannot prove, on track towards our target of 1000 members by 1997.

Sections survive, prosper and grow because 1) they provide valued services to their members and 2) have energetic membership commit-

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Conservatives in the "Liberal" Arts

Joan E. Manley • Louisiana State University

The Federal Department of Education recently granted accrediting authority to a new organization--the American Academy for Liberal Education (AALA). The group's goals include encouraging schools to return liberal-arts curricula away from "faddish courses and back to solid surveys in literature, history, and philosophy that were typical core courses 30 years ago" (Honan, 1995). Such formal authority provides the AALA legitimate power to judge and accredit liberal-arts colleges and certify institutions as qualified to receive Federal financing, including student loans and research money. Rather than replace regional accrediting groups, such as the Middle States agency, the AALA offers an alternative or additional avenue to legitimacy. Colleges and universities may elect to be certified by regional agencies, the newly formed Academy, or both. Schools eager for new accreditation are already lining up to receive this newest seal of approval.

Many of higher education's critics support the AALA's mission. Many agree with the conservative professors who founded AALA that requiring more courses in the traditional liberal arts (e.g., arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, music, grammar, rhetoric, and logic) would be beneficial. But what would the academy of 30 years ago look like today and how might such a retreat affect faculty, students, business, government, and other publics served by higher education? What did our course offerings look like 30 years ago; which courses counted toward the liberal arts core?

The emergence of reactionary strategies, such as those proposed by the AALA, results from pressure to measure the performance of professionals in the academy and elsewhere in society. The adoption of strategic planning and quality improvement plans signals similar efforts at colleges, universities, and other organizations where many professionals work. Eliminating courses introduced during the

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A Dean and Sociology

Charles W. Smith • Dean of Faculty for the Social Sciences and Professor of Sociology • Queen's College

I have been asked to respond to two questions: 1) How would you grade yourself on your administrative abilities or accomplishments? and 2) To what extent is your grade attributable to your sociological training?

With a complete lack of due humility, I would judge myself as an exceptionally efficient and imaginative administrator who, despite dramatically reduced resources, has accomplished a great deal. To answer the second question, I would attribute much of my success to my training in sociology, more specifically and perhaps surprisingly, to my knowledge of social theory.

In an attempt to justify these claims I will note what I consider to be some of my major accomplishments. I will next briefly discuss my administrative style which I believe contributed to these successes. Finally I will attempt to relate this style to my "sociological imagination."

During my tenure as dean, despite dramatically reduced resources approaching 75% in some cases, the overall productivity of my division in terms of students serviced, scholarly productivity of the faculty, institutional activities, grants awarded, and curricula and organization innovations have increased. More specifically, I have, in cooperation with a large number of people, managed to develop and institute a new interdisciplinary Masters Program, obtain two major institutional as well as numerous individual grants, successfully conduct a number of important

faculty searches, and encourage a range of curriculum initiatives. While overall university resources have been reduced each year, my division has managed to acquire a greater percentage of total resources each year based not only on its own productivity but a renegotiation of allocation criteria which have historically short changed the social sciences. I am perhaps most pleased, however, by that despite draconian cuts and questionable public support or higher education, divisional morale and cooperation remain remarkably high.

How have I contributed to these successes? The secret of my success, I believe, rests primarily on my ability to manage my resources efficiently and innovatively. This requires not only being able to allocate financial resources efficiently (I have found that requiring matching contributions to be the best strategy in nearly all cases), but more importantly, being able to solicit the energy and cooperation of the faculty since they constitute the major and most important resource that any education administrator has. This, in turn, requires establishing an atmosphere of trust since proper management requires knowing both the resources and liabilities lurking about which no administrator on his or her own can hope to identify. It furthermore requires a sensibility of the interests and needs of the faculty and students in order to suggest programs and policies around which faculty and students can generate their own sense of ownership. A good administrator needs to encourage activ-

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tees to spread the word about those services. I'm

DiMaggio: Section Chair, from page one

delighted to report that we have

both. In this newsletter, membership Chair Rikki Abzug describes what her committee has done to market the Section. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Rikki, and committee members Mark Chavez, Vinnie Roscigno, and Vicki Smith, who have done a spectacular job and deserve all of our support. In particular, I hope that we will all take to heart Rikki's request that we consider section memberships as appropriate gifts for graduate students and others who might benefit from membership. To facilitate this, we will be placing (or more likely by now will have placed) two forms – one for ASA members and one for folks who are not yet ASA members – on the Section's Web Site: <http://www.princeton.edu/~orgocwkw/>. Many of you have called or e-mailed me to praise Chip Clarke's inaugural issue as editor of the OOW newsletter. You should also know about Rick Phillips, a graduate student in Sociology at Rutgers, who is entirely responsible for the

newsletter's appearance. I have also received much positive feedback on the Section's Web Site, for which Julian Dierkes, a doctoral student in Sociology at Princeton and our department's resident Web Wizard, is fully responsible. Judith Blau reported to me that an informal survey of graduate-student Web use at UNC revealed that familiarity with the web is

OOW World Wide Web Site:
<http://www.princeton.edu/~orgocwkw/>

high among graduate students, and proficiency is growing, but that the Web is still more of a leisure time sink than part of the everyday toolbox that people use in their work. My guess is that this situation is typical. Yet this is beginning to change, and as more and more people begin using the Web for business as well as pleasure, the advantages of having established a

firm beachhead will become increasingly tangible. Indeed, new uses for the web site become apparent almost weekly, as you will see below.

One use is for section elections. It turns out that the section by-law changes that were circulated in the newsletter last spring and approved by Council in August need to be voted on by all of us this spring. (The change of name from OO to OOW was approved separately on last spring's ballot. The changes that will be voted on this season simply clarify ambiguities in the by-laws, adjust theory to practice, and otherwise rationalize the document, without entailing significant change in mission, activities, or direction.) Rather than appearing yet again in the newsletter, the by-laws will be available for your perusal on our web site. (If you have access to neither the Web nor the spring 1995 issue of the section newsletter, you can e-mail me for a hard copy. Note that you can use the File/Print command to print directly off the Web.) Names and affiliations of candidates will also appear on the site (and if candidates wish to place statements on their own home pages, the section web page can

"I'd Like You to Serve as Dean for a Year or so" — Applied Organizational Theory?

Richard H. Hall • Department of Sociology • SUNY Albany

When then-President H. Patrick Swygert (then, because he is now President of Howard University) asked me to serve as Interim Dean of the former College of Social and Behavioral Sciences (former, because it has been combined into a larger College of Arts and Sciences), I said, "Sure, why not." I had had previous administrative experiences as an Acting Vice President for Research and Dean of Graduate Studies and this had done no permanent damage.

The question now becomes — did organizational theory play any role in my two year stint as Dean? The answer is a qualified, yes. I was aware of the limits on pure rationality in decision making. For example, we had an interdisciplinary "diversity" program which had excellent faculty members from around the university. Unfortunately, it used up resources at an alarming rate. I urged that the program be dropped or scaled back, but was told that this had been a major recommendation of a blue-ribbon committee whose members were still very powerful on campus. I also was aware of the importance of resource acquisition, particularly in the face of declining resources. Thus, those faculty members who acquired resources also acquired power and that additional powerful internal resource — space. I was aware, from institutional theory, that it was important to know what was happening at other similar institutions in our "field" of research universities — I regularly read the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, which I did not do beforehand and have not since. The *Chronicle*

is very interesting. It is full of news about university administration issues. One could probably use the *Chronicle* for research on higher education organizations. The fate of our broader field of sociology is sometimes debated in the *Chronicle*, but it is not my professional reading of choice any more. In short, my own sensitivities and insights were strengthened on the basis of my knowledge and appreciation of organizational theory.

The next question is — did my background make me a better Dean? I truly think that it did, but the question is the wrong question. I believe that the real question is, what makes a good Dean? Here, organizational theory has to stand aside. My observations lead me to conclude that the key factor in becoming a good dean, vice-president, or president, is the willingness to change careers. The excellent academic administrators that I have known have had successful academic careers—it does not matter what the disciplinary base might have been. These people, for whatever reason, elect to move into academic administration on a full time basis. They may make occasional cameo appearances at professional meetings and even hold offices, but they are no longer doing disciplinary work. I am not implying, by the way, that the administrative path is morally or intellectually inferior to the disciplinary path, just that it is a different path.

There is a final question to which my answer is an emphatic yes. The question is, has administrative experience helped your use and development of *continued on page 8*

link readers to tem.)

Creating engaging annual-meeting programs that represent the intellectual progress of a field is a major function of any Section. I'm delighted to report that the 1996 Program Committee has created a most attractive series of sessions that will address the interests of section members and of many other sociologists as well. You will hear more about these (and, yes, they will appear on the Web Site, too), so for now a summary must suffice. Kathleen Carley has organized a section on "New Information Technologies: Implications for Work and Organizations," with papers on topics as varied as the respective uses of e-mail and face-to-face interaction (Caroline Haythornthwaite and Barry Wellman), the impact on cooperative work of "wearable computer systems" (David Kaplan), the influence of new information technology on police work (Albert Jay Meehan), and the organization of work in India's "Silicon Plateau" (Monica Prasad). Linking the program to the interests of many economic sociologists, Heather Haveman has organized a section on "Social Networks and Business Organizations," with papers on law firms

(Tony Tam), network effects on reputation (Ron Burt and Marc Knez), managers' careers and inter-firm competition (Jesper Sorenen), and political embeddedness and corporate volatility (Ilan Talmud and Gustavo Mesch). A third session, co-sponsored with the ASA Gender Section and organized by Christine Williams, addresses the lively interest in gender issues

... The state of the section appears healthy, perhaps even robustly so.

among students of OO&W, to ask "Are Organizations and Occupations Gendered?" Papers address such issues as the gendering of occupations (Pat Roos and Patricia McDaniel), irregular work-hour requirements in the service sector (Peggy Kahn and Linda Blum), gender relations in multinational firms (Winifred Poster), gender in fire-fighting organizations (Eva Sku-

ratowicz), and gender in computing-related occupations (Rosemary Wright). I'm very grateful to all three organizers for putting together spectacular sessions that make one (almost) yearn for mid-August in Manhattan.

I'm also excited about a fourth session, which took form in December, on "The Future of the Firm." Although it emerged out of OOW, due to the affinity of the topic to her annual program theme, ASA President Maureen Hallinan agreed to co-sponsor it with the Section as a special Thematic Session, which will provide special visibility and reach. The somewhat unusual format involves presentations by Walter Powell (on the western firm) and David Stark (on the emerging socialist enterprise), with comments by Reinier Kraakman of Harvard Law School (on the influence of a changing legal environment), Charles Tilly (on the influence of the changing state system), and Eleanor Westney (on the East Asian case), and concluding comments from an evolutionary perspective by Jitendra Singh.

And that is not all. By the time you receive this, we will know about two addi- *continued on page 6*

Book Sampler: A Non-Random, Non-Systematic Collection

Diane Vaughan, *The Challenger Launch Decision: Risky Technology, Culture, and Deviance at NASA*, Univ of Chicago Press.

The last thing we shall ever need on the Challenger fiasco. Vaughan got the interviews and the memos so we see into the dark soul of shiny NASA. Her historical ethnography circumvents retrospective speculation and shows the "native" view. We learn how the slow accretion of history, ideas, and interactions created a system in which it was completely normal to put people in great danger. Not evil but banality explains the decision. Terrific, and terrifying, book. "My God, do you want me to wait until next April to launch?"

Arthur L. Stinchcombe, *Sugar Island Slavery in the Age of Enlightenment: The Political Economy of the Caribbean World*, Princeton Univ. Press.

Deep analysis by interesting thinker of sugar, repression, and political economy. Plantations created slave societies and racism persisted long after its economic utility.

Karl E. Weick, *Sensemaking in Organizations*, Sage.

Back of the book says Weick "highlights how the 'sensemaking' process – the creation of reality as an ongoing accomplishment that take form when people make retrospective sense of the situations in which they find themselves – shapes organizational structure and behavior."

Chris Tilly, *Half A Job: Bad and Good Part-time Jobs in a Changing Labor Market*, Temple Univ Press.

In-depth analysis of how U.S. businesses use part-time employment. Uses interviews with employers in retail and insurance industries, as well as statistics, for understanding ways to provide flexibility without insecurity.

Charles Tilly, *Popular Contention in Great Britain, 1758-1834*, Harvard Univ. Press.

Vivid picture of British population between 1750 and 1840, when ordinary Brits stopped sacking buildings and attacking people as forms of social protest in favor of sanctioned routines of social movements.

Tsutomu Shimomura, with John Markoff, *Takedown: The Pursuit and Capture of Kevin Mitnick, America's Most Wanted Computer Outlaw – By the Man Who Did It*, NY: Hyperion.

Takedown is a computer security expert's account of his capture of the most wanted hacker in history who stole millions of dollars worth of information from corporate and government computer systems. When his computer is broken into, Shimomura sets out on a manhunt. The pursuit of his quarry through cyberspace would finally prove to be a battle for privacy and security in a brave new networked world. Capone with a cell phone and a laptop.

Ivar Berg and Arne Kalleberg have a series at Plenum called Work and Industry. Some new titles:

Lawrence Pinfield, *The Operation of Internal Labor Markets*.

William Form, *Segmented Labor, Fractured Politics*.

Joseph Pierce, *Negro Business and Negro Education* (orig. 1947).

John C. Oliga, *Power, Ideology, and Control*.

Roger V. Gould, *Insurgent Identities: Class, Community, and Protest in Paris from 1848 to the Commune*, Univ of Chicago Press.

Tilly says: "A taut, lucid, original comparison of Parisian workers' involvement in the revolution of 1848 and the Commune of 1871, complemented by a valuable analysis of working-class organization and action during the years immediately preceding the Commune."

W. Marvin Dulaney, *Black Police in America*, Indiana University Press.

Tells the story of the black experience in American police departments from the post-Civil War period to the present; shows how African Americans progressed from being second-class police officers to become some of the top police officers in the nation.

Peter W. Bardaglio, *Reconstructing the Household: Families, Sex, and the Law in the Nineteenth-Century South*, Univ of North Carolina Press.

"A compelling study...It enriches our understanding of the distinctiveness of southern legal experiences and the centrality of the household in those experiences," said Michael Grossberg.

Adam Raphael, *Ultimate Risk: The Inside Story of the Lloyd's Catastrophe*, NY: Four Walls Eight Windows.

Elizabeth Lussenhop, *Risky Business: An Insider's Account of the Disaster at Lloyd's of London*, NY: Scribner.

Two insiders tell all about the causes and consequences of organizational self-immolation.

Charles A. Reich, *Opposing the System*, NY: Crown.

Large corporations are the real government, says Mr. Greening himself. Francis Fukuyama hated the book, so it must be good.

Annie Phizacklea and Carol Wolkowitz, *Homeworking Women: Gender, Racism, and Class at Work*, Sage.

Overview of homebased work. Blurb says "the authors argue that homeworking replicates wider divisions in the labor force and its potential for promoting women's employment opportunities is therefore limited."

David Rowe, *Popular Cultures: Rock Music, Sport, and the Politics of Pleasure*, Sage.

Uses punk rock for a case study, analyzing it in terms of production, practical consciousness, and symbolic expression.

Ralf Dahrendorf, LSE: *A History of the London School of Economics and Political Science, 1895-1995*, Oxford University Press.

First history of LSE. Dahrendorf directed the School for a while. The story of the individuals who played a role in the LSE's history is interwoven with the development of the social sciences in the twentieth century and an assessment of the LSE's worldwide links and influence.

Rhona Joella Berenstein, *Attack of The Leading Ladies: Gender, Sexuality, and Spectatorship in Classic Horror Cinema*, Columbia Univ. Press.

Challenges established views of classical horror cinema, contending that the genre is marked by malleable gender roles, not by entrenched conventional personas. Author addresses the complex spectatorship issues posed by a genre so concerned with disguises, offering a new model of spectatorship-as-drag where the observer adopts the gender attributes of the central figure.

Brenda Moore, *To Serve My Country, To Serve My Race: The Story of the Only African-American WACS Stationed Overseas During World War II*, New York Univ. Press.

Says Charles Moskos, "A fascinating account of black women in the armed forces in World War II. Moore gives power new insights for African American studies, gender studies, and military history."

Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, *"Feminism is Not The Story of My Life": How Today's Feminist Elite Has Lost Touch with The Real Concerns of Women*, NY: Nan A. Talese/Doubleday.

Mary Gordon says Fox-Genovese has "had a conversion experience. Or a couple of them. She used to be a Marxist too. But now she's for church, home and family." Starts with women's overburden in the home, interpreted in a mood of inevitability, ending with the naturalness of part-time and lower paid work. Another attempt to dress legitimation as innovation.

Karl Sabbagh, *21st Century Jet: The Making and Marketing of the Boeing 777*, NY: Scribner.

On the making and selling of the first big plane designed entirely on the computer. Used to be engineers weren't sure if all the pieces would fit; usually they didn't, requiring lots of money and creativity to get the thing right. Story of technology designing technology, changing the organization of work. Two engines over the Atlantic. They wouldn't let it fly if weren't safe, right?

Richard R. John, *Spreading the News: The American postal System from Franklin to Morse*, Harvard Univ. Press.

The story of the great postal revolution, from 1755 to 1844, and what it meant for American business, politics, and culture.

Charlotte G. Borst, *Catching Babies: The Professionalization of Childbirth, 1870-1920*, Harvard University Press.

About the move to physician-attended birth in a community, showing how traditional skills came to be devalued, displaced by professional skill and control.

William C. Green and Ernest J. Yanarella, eds., *North American Auto Unions in Crisis: Lead Production as Contested Terrain*, SUNY Press. Part of series in Sociology of Work that Richard Hall edits.

Cross national study of labor relations in Japanese North American auto plants, Japanese joint ventures with Big Three auto makers, and Japanese style auto plants.

Mark Wigley, *White Walls, Designer Dresses: The Fashioning of Modern Architecture*, MIT Press.

Modern buildings are not naked. White wall is a form of clothing. Modern architects designed dresses and their arguments for a modern architecture arose from the logic of clothing reform.

Barbara Gutek, *The Dynamics of Service: Reflections on the changing Nature of Customer/ Provider Interactions*, Jossey-Bass.

Details how fast-food mentality invites all forms of service. Gutek examines the impact of this trend on customers, providers, and the organizations and shows how it changes the quality of jobs and lives.

Peter Evans, *Embedded Autonomy: States and Industrial Transformation*, Princeton Univ. Press.

Takes us through all sorts of interesting theory to answer, "what kinds of state structure facilitate industrial transformation?"

Thomas S. Moore, *The Disposable Work Force: Worker Displacement and Employment Instability in America*, Aldine de Gruyter.

Uses a case study and national statistics to show that displacement bring productivity slowdown, increased inequalities, and higher average unemployment. Assesses job loss nationwide and has ideas on how to fix the problem.

David Burnham, *Above the Law: Secret Deals, Political Fixes, and Other Misadventures of the US Department of Justice*, Scribner.

In Justice are the FBI, DEA, INS, and Bureau of Prisons. Burnham has evidence that good guys aren't.

William H. McNeill, *Keeping Together in Time: Dance and Drill in Human His-* continued on page 8

past 30 years (which may or may not be the actual intent of members of the AALA) silences many voices and seems to respond to a wish to return to the 'good ole days'. The concerns

Manley: *Conservatives*, from page one

of women, minorities, and other formerly excluded groups might have a tough time being heard in traditional survey classes of 30 years ago. Rather

than discrimination, misogynism, or political pandering, the AALA's stance signals an attempt to reinstate the liberal arts core as a social fact, as evidence of higher education valuable in and of itself. Such evaluations become symbols, especially useful in evaluating professional work where the product is difficult to identify or quantify. By reestablishing and certifying appropriate core curricula, the AALA offers higher education's customers methods of measurement and symbols of organizational legitimacy and value. Whether certified core curricula – or quality improvement programs, or strategic planning – work to improve education is arguable and beside the point.

Institutional accreditation established common standards among colleges and universities, and among hospitals as well, to protect and identify the presumed better institutions from those that were improperly competitive (Seldin, 1960). Accreditation identifies institutions with acceptable or superior credentials for prospective students and for the investment of public and private funds. Colleges and universities also invoke accreditation as a marketing tool. In my own work on quality improvement programs in hospitals, colleges, and universities, I found accreditation an important part of hospital advertising efforts, particularly when the organization achieves a superior rating. In the academic arena, the popularity of US News and World Report's annual college issue demonstrates an existing market for such rating systems. In fact, one reason the newly formed AALA offers its imprimatur is precisely so potential students and their parents will know about a school's strong core curriculum. Accreditation represents a valuable marketing tool even though the criteria on which such rankings are based may be meaningless to those evaluating an organization's worth.

But consider a larger question: "Do accrediting bodies formed by professionals offer more control opportunities to orga-

nizations, the professionals within organizations, neither, or both?" Regulation serves the professions and professional organizations as well as satisfies the need of states or the Federal government to oversee groups serving the public good. Professionals and organizations, however, are regulated by criteria originally developed (and usually monitored) by professionals themselves. The history of the JCAHO offers an interesting example. The Joint Commission for Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations evolved from the Academy of Surgeons, a group originally formed to improve hospital standards and provide measurement mechanisms through which substandard physicians might be identified. To the extent federal funds support hospitals (and universities), such accrediting bodies direct the activities of institutions and professionals in ways the founders may not have intended. A group of conservative university professors founded the American Academy for Liberal Arts ostensibly to improve college and university standards. But such organizations tend to assume a life of their own, and accreditation ultimately affects finances, organizational structure, and work.

Finally, the AALA's purpose bears a striking similarity to the actions presently underway in many other institutions. The conservative retreat to the past suggests an underlying belief that diversity leads not to enrichment but to dilution. The AALA's new accrediting power has the potential to force colleges and universities to offer a traditional liberal arts core defined by the tradition of others. As the case of the JCAHO demonstrates, the AALA may evolve to a point where it no longer solely represents the concerns or original intent of the professional founders or those institutions eager for further accreditation. Rather than improving colleges, such a move very possibly will result in further hierarchical stratification of faculty and slowdown of technological advancements. It seems the newly empowered American Academy for Liberal Education is concerned very little with liberal education.

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DiMaggio: *Section Chair*, from page six

tional program elements (which, for functional

reasons, are resolved after our press deadline): The round-table presentations, which are in the capable hands of Donald Tomaskovic-Devey and Catherine Zimmer; and a one-hour author-meets-critic session (paired with the section business meeting) featuring the winner of the Max Weber award for the best recently published book in the areas of OO&W. (No, I don't know who it is yet, either.)

Before signing off, I'd like to describe a project that will be initiated this spring and solicit your ideas on how to maximize

its utility. Within our broad goal of increasing service to all section members is a specific objective of making the Section more appealing and more useful to its graduate student members and potential members. Graduate students in the OOW fields, like those in other areas, are concerned about the job market. Compared to other fields, however, information about job opportunities – which are more plentiful in professional schools and private and public organizations for many of our members than for their peers in many other areas of sociology – is less rationally organized. Professional schools have no consolidated job listing comparable to the ASA Employment Bulletin, and only some positions outside of sociology find their

way into the ASA listings. With the encouragement of Section Council, I plan to appoint a committee to explore the way in which the Section can best help to prepare its graduate-student members for the job market. Ideas have included listing job opportunities on a page tied to the Section's home page; creating a bulletin board on which students can exchange information about the market (and perhaps commiserate with one another, as well); and offering workshops for students who will be entering the job market. These are just a few of the ideas that have been informally circulated. I'll be grateful for any thoughts that any of you have on how we can make this new initiative valuable.

plotting long term strategy for making the section more attractive and relevant to current and potential members. We want to reach out to other subdisciplines and across disciplinary boundaries.

Abzug, Membership Committee, from page

Indeed, you all have a management professor as your membership chair for a reason. We'd like to promote our view that the study of organizations, occupations, and work cuts across subject matter and occupational lines.

By expanding our boundaries past sociology departments we can

increase both intellectual and professional opportunities for folks who study what we study. The membership committee would like to emphasize this benefit of our field of study as well as develop ways to accommodate members with such interests.

In our endeavor to keep this section vital and important, we also ask for your support and your help. We are keen to entertain any and all suggestions and we count on all of you to spread the good word. Thanks for all of your efforts thus far, and here's to a highly productive and fun year!

ity and to be able to articulate institutional needs, but at the same time to avoid attempting to micro manage or impose a personal vision or agenda.

Smith, Dean, from page two

So much for the first question. How has sociology, or more specifically social theory contributed to my ability to function in such a manner?

If I have learned anything from my sociological training, it was a keen awareness of the importance and interplay of agency and social structure. As an administrator, I consequently have seen my primary task to be that of enabling my faculty. There is no way in which a Dean or any other administrator can do all the things that needs to be done in a large academic unit. It is important to realize, however, that agency does not flourish in a vacuum. It depends upon structural factors which continually change. There is a complex interplay of individual personalities, power relations as well as material conditions and resources that need to be constantly monitored. A successful administrator, unless he/she has unlimited resources, is much better advised to support strengths within his/her faculty rather than attempting to project on to them his/her own vision. While some might consider this to be merely common sense, I believe that my own grasp of these issues has been due in large measure to my training in social theory.

It, of course, also helps to know the difference between a bureaucratic rulebook objection and a "free market" power play. There is also the knowledge of such things as the difference between formal and informal structures, correct strategies for picking the appropriate bureaucratic level at which to intercede to effect change, differences in types of resources which can be used in different settings, issues of organizational legitimacy, etc. While individuals clearly differ in their natural sensitivities to such issues, I personally have found my formal training to have been of major importance on more than one occasion.

There have been other benefits from my sociological training which other similarly trained individuals may not have embraced in the same way I have. I will give one example which relates back to the issue of agency noted earlier. I had always suspected that a good deal of what many if not most administrators do was not really required by the tasks of their position. Having been a dean for five years, I now know this to be the case. More specifically, a good deal of the time of most administrators is spent insulating themselves from their decisions. This is commonly the case when hard decisions need to be made. It wasn't their choice that so and so had to be let go or that this or that cut had to be made. Rather, they claim, it was the rules, the formula, the system, the organization that forced the decision. They manage to pull this off commonly by pointing to some complex of rules, policies, etc. which seem to have generated the decisions. What they tend to omit, of

course, is that it is they that normally generated these rules, policies, etc. specifically because they served to recommend the actions that the administrator favored.

Here I need to stress that I am not against administrators taking particular stands on issues. Most administrators I have come to know tend to act with the best interests of their institution in mind. What is troubling is the hesitancy to take responsibility for decisions. Even this isn't so irritating as is the fact that in order to insulate themselves from their decisions they need to collect lots of information and examine all sorts of scenarios in order to come up with the one they want. In short, not only do they waste a lot of their own time, they tend to cause others to waste a lot of time generating the "information" they need. In this particular instance as in many other situations, my training in sociology has helped me

From the Editor

We have received a heap of compliments on the last newsletter and on the ever-improving web page (<http://www.princeton.edu/~orgocccwk>). Rick Phillips (rphill@eden.rutgers.edu) is responsible for the layout of the newsletter; Julian Dierkes (jdierkes@pucc.princeton.edu) is responsible for the form and content of the web page.

The web page has a lot of useful stuff on it. You can refer people to it so they can find out how to join OOW. You can discover the addresses and phone numbers of people who run the section (we're still working on a page devoted to their personal habits). We put up tidbits from the Newsletter, which you don't need since you have *this*, but which we hope are enticing other folks to pay attention to us. Calls for papers are posted there, as well. And Julian Dierkes created and maintains a section called "Hyperlinks of Interest to Section Members," which is *really* titled "Netlinks for the Organized, Occupied, and the Working." It's a wonderful collection of links that are interesting and fun and useful.

About OOW

OOW is the newsletter of the Organizations, Occupations, and Work section of the American Sociological Association (home page: <http://www.princeton.edu/~orgocccwk>). Editor: Lee Clarke, Department of Sociology, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ 08903. Office: 908/445-5741. Fax: 908/445-0974. Email: lclarke@rci.rutgers.edu. I invite you to send news, articles, or other item that might be relevant to OOW members. Articles should be 1,000 to 2,000 words, other items considerably shorter. I will edit what you send. You can send things via email, but if they're long please send a uuencoded file (ask a nerd if you don't know what that is or how to send it) of any major word processor or send it on a non-Mac disk. Please note that I have no scanner or secretary so items not in electronic form stand no chance of appearing in OOW.

Announcements and Calls

1996 Braverman Award – Call for Submissions

The Labor Studies Division of the Society for the Study of Social Problems invites graduate students to submit papers for the 1996 Braverman Award. The deadline for submissions is March 29, 1996. Papers will be judged on the following criteria: originality, quality of writing and analysis, and relevance to the spirit of the late Harry Braverman. This year's committee is chaired by Professor Amy Wharton. Send THREE copies of the paper to: Amy S. Wharton, Department of Sociology, Washington State University, Pullman, WA 99164-4020; 509.335.6860 E-mail: wharton@wsu.edu.

International Symposium on Work, June 15-17, 1996

NB: I couldn't find the deadline for submission for this one.

"Work Quo Vadis" (http://www.hks.se/seminar/Quo_Vadis/) is the third international symposium on work to be held in Karlstad. The aim of the symposium is to bring together and effect current empirical trends and theoretical discussions in work research. The symposium is organized in four successive sessions – there are no parallel sessions. A fifth theme is "Work and gender". Session structure: Four scientists are invited to contribute papers on some aspect of the theme to be considered and a discussant is asked to comment on the papers. When the authors and the discussant have completed their discussions, comments and questions are invited from the floor. The sessions are led by a chairperson. The language of the symposium is English, no interpretation is pro-

vided. Call:

Lena Hansson (phone: 46 54 - 83 85 03; Lena.Hansson@hks.se) or Madelene Falk (phone: 46 54 - 83 85 44; Madelene.Falk@hks.se), Department of Working Life Science, University of Karlstad, S-651 88 Karlstad; 46 54 - 83 84 48 (fax)

Agenda for the 21st Century Labor Force: Implications of Changing Family Structure, Diversity and Jobs.

November 15-17, 1996, Westin Hotel, Cincinnati, OH. Interdisciplinary Deadline: March 31, 1996. Send paper and one page abstract to: Dana Vannoy, Work & Family Conference, Kunz Center for the Study of Work and Family, Univ of Cincinnati, PO 210378, Cincinnati, OH 45221 (dana.vannoy@uc.edu). Some money may be available for presenters. A refereed collection of papers will be published. Special foci: changes in family structure, increasing age, gender and ethnic diversity, shift to service and information work, global economy, new technologies.

AFL-CIO/Cornell ILR

March 31-April 2. Conference on union organizing. Maritime Institute, Seminar and Conference Center, Linthicum Heights, Maryland (close to BWI and Amtrak). Goal is to bring together trade unionists with academics who support labor unions and want to do research on them. For info contact Kate Bronfenbrenner at Cornell, 607.255.7581 klb23@postoffice3.mail.cornell.edu or Sheldon Friedman at AFLCIO, 202.637.5310; 71112.675@compuser.com. Registration fee is \$325.

organizational theory? There are two points that are important in regard to this question. First, serving as Dean forced me to "have a picture of the whole," in Simmel's terms. It is amazing that the view from the top is very different than it is from coming into an organization as a researcher or from working as a student or faculty member. Issues such as power and leadership take on a very different meaning when viewed and interpreted from this level.

*Half: Serving as Dean,
from page three*

The second point is that decision making is seen from a very different perspective at the top of the organization than it is from lower levels. Both decision making issues and participants are quite different than when decision making at lower levels are analyzed.

I believe that these lessons from administrative days make a difference. They certainly do for my teaching at both the graduate and undergraduate levels. I believe that my scholarship has also clearly benefited from these experiences. Quite obviously, whether these conclusions are correct or not will have to be judged by others.

tory, Harvard University Press.

Distinguished historian says moving in time creates community and such communities get a competitive advantage. Probably explains Microsoft.

Books from page five

Anthony Sampson, *Company Man: The Rise and Fall of Corporate Life*, NY: Times Books/Random House.

"Jargon free," said J.K. Galbraith, survey of corporate forms and the people who inhabit them.

Alfred E. Eckes, Jr., *Opening America's Market: U.S. Foreign*

This space for rent