

Reports to the Committee on Sections, American Sociological Association

Section on Economic Sociology

September 26, 2011

The section started the year following the meetings in Atlanta with a strong recruitment drive led by Council members Nina Bandelj (U.C. – Irvine) and Alya Gusseva (Boston University). This drive succeeded in increasing membership to over 800 by the deadline of September 30 thus giving the Section an extra session in the 2011 meetings. In total, the Section program for these meetings included six sessions (one invited and five open) plus twelve roundtables. (The list of sessions and roundtables is presented in the Section's attached newsletter for the Spring, 2011). All sessions were well attended in Las Vegas. The twelve roundtables afforded an opportunity to accommodate the heavy surplus of papers submitted to the open sessions.

A collective of graduate students at Princeton (Rourke O'Brien, David Pedulla, and Victoria Reyes) was entrusted with editing the Section's newsletter, *Accounts*. They did a splendid job putting out three issues – Fall, Spring, and Summer – in a timely manner. Each issue included a message from the Chair, interviews with economic sociologists, book reviews, and Section announcements. Copies are attached.

The main innovation during the year was the addition of a new prize, the Mark Granovetter Award for best article in the field. The existing Viviana Zelizer Award alternated between a book competition and an article competition in successive years. Given the growing volume and quality of work in economic sociology, Council deemed appropriate to create this new award, reserving the Zelizer Prize for books. Both awards, as well as the Ronald Burt Prize for best student paper, are given every year during the ASA meetings.

By the time of the Las Vegas meetings, Section membership exceeded 800, significantly above the comparable figure in 2010, and was well on its way to reach 1000 members. This has become the goal of the new recruitment drive, led again by Alya Gusseva. The 2010 Nominations Committee, chaired by Council member Greta Krippner, produced an excellent slate by the December deadline. As a result, Vicki Smith, was elected as the incoming Section chair; Tim Bartley, Yuval Millo, and Jens Beckert as new Council members, and Daniel Hirschman as student representative. All of them, with the exception of Millo, attended the Council meeting held in the morning of August 23, 2011.

Council Meeting

All Council members were present at the meeting with the exception of Damon Phillips who could not attend for personal reasons. The council welcomed its newly-elected members and thanked departing members Nina Bandelj, Robert Freeland, and Damon Phillips. The Council ratified the establishment of the Mark Granovetter Award and the 2011 prizes. The Viviana Zelizer Award committee, chaired by Council member Martin Ruef, selected as winner the article "Structural Folds: Generative Disruption in Overlapping Groups" (*American Journal of Sociology* 2010) by Balazs Vedre and David Stark. Honorable mention went to Cheris Chan for "Invigorating the Content of Social Embeddedness: An Ethnography of Life Insurance Transactions in China" (*American Journal of Sociology* 2009).

The Ronald Burt Award committee, chaired by Council member Monica Prasad, selected the paper by Cornell graduate student, Christopher Yenkey, "Building Markets from Ethnically Fractionalized Networks" as the winner. Honorable mention went to Pablo Gaston, University of California-Berkeley, for "The Industrial Determinants of Organizing".

Council recognized Eric Cheney for his services as Section webmaster. There was some discussion as to where to post new book announcements. The consensus was to reserve the List Serv for Section business and job announcements. Book announcements would be appropriate for the webpage.

There was also some discussion as to where to hold the Section's reception. In 2011, the reception was held off-site at Trevi Restaurant in the Caesar's Palace complex. The reception was well attended and successful, although noise and the lack of a PA system created some problems during the announcement of Section awards. Nonetheless, the general sentiment was to continue holding receptions offsite because of lower costs and better quality of refreshments.

Incoming chair, Walter Powell, mentioned the interest of Taylor and Frances to publish a new journal in economic sociology in conjunction with the Section. There was discussion of the pros and cons of this initiative, including the possibility that it would require a significant increase in dues and its possible overlap with the existing journal, *Socio-economic Review*. In that regard, Nina Bandelj mentioned that she was now editor of *SER* and made an appeal to members to submit papers. Discussion about the new journal ended inconclusively.

Business Meeting

The meeting was attended by 29 persons. The chair reported about the growth of the membership and the new goal of 1,000 members by September 30th. Meeting this goal will add a new session at the 2012 meetings. He also thanked outgoing Council members and welcomed the newly-elected ones. At that point, the meeting was turned over to incoming chair, Walter Powell.

There was renewed discussion about a possible new journal. There was a meeting to that effect organized by Alex Preda and attended by Bruce Carruthers, Karin Knorr Cetina, and Frank Dobbin. Apparently, the ASA is interested, but someone suggested talking to several publishers in addition to Taylor and Frances. There were cautionary warnings about the need for a new journal, given existing ones. Again, the discussion ended without clear consensus.

Several announcements were made: --Alya Gusseva will continue as head of the Membership Committee. Newly-elected Council members Jens Beckert and Yural Millo will help with the recruitment drive in Europe.

--A new conference on economic sociology will be held in Moscow in October, 2012.

--Bandelj, as editor of *SER*, invited new contributions by members to this journal.

--Craig Tutterow, University of Chicago, will take over as Section webmaster.

There was renewed discussion about the location of the reception next year. The general sentiment was to keep it offsite, but not too far from the headquarters hotel. Provisions should also be made for a PA system, especially if Section awards are to be announced at the event.

Without further business, the chair brought the meeting to an end.

Respectfully submitted,

Alejandro Portes
Chair, 2010-11