Greetings, section members! From the editorial board of Accounts, we hope your spring terms are off to a productive start. We are excited to present in this issue of Accounts a number of interesting submissions in which scholars detail some of their collaborative work. We’ll hear from established research centers embedded in sociology departments and business schools as well as from more informal collaborations between motivated researchers. We hope that this information gives all section members a better sense of cutting-edge work being done in the sub-discipline. All of the submissions are accompanied by hyperlinks, so when you read about ongoing work that interests you, it’s just a click away (isn’t the electronic format resourceful!). Naturally, this issue cannot account for all the collaborative work in progress in economic sociology, but we hope this is a good start for keeping section members better informed about what their peers are up to.

You can expect the next issue of Accounts in mid-July, just in time for the ASA’s annual conference. Since this year’s conference is in Montréal, we’re going to focus the third issue on international work; that is, work that doesn’t primarily focus on the United States. Even though it normally gets less emphasis, there is some very interesting research being done by international as well as U.S.-based scholars on non-U.S. centered research questions, and we’re looking forward to highlighting some of it. We’ll also include a schedule for economic sociology meetings, paper sessions and roundtables at the Montreal conference in the next issue.

Please see the Call for Submissions for the next issue on page 7 for more details.
The Penn Economic Sociology and Organizational Studies Program (PESOS)

In 1998, a group of economic sociologists at Penn—led by Randy Collins, Paula England (now at Stanford), Mauro Guillén, and Marshall Meyer—set up the Penn Economic Sociology and Organizational Studies (PESOS) program, a totally informal group of scholars. Our goal was to articulate an intellectual community across schools of the university with an interest in economic sociology, broadly defined. We currently have a dozen Penn faculty involved in this effort.

As a group, we have launched and supported an economic sociology track within the PhD program in Sociology at Penn, attempted to coordinate course offerings, and organized scholarly conferences. In December 1998 and March 2000, respectively, we organized the First and Second Annual Conferences on Economic and Organizational Sociology at Penn. We brought together a group of scholars from around the country interested in pursuing the study of economic phenomena from a sociological perspective. Selected papers presented at the conferences were included in the volume, *The New Economic Sociology: Developments in an Emerging Field*, published by the Russell Sage Foundation in 2002.

Our faculty is engaged in a number of research projects ranging from theory development to empirical research. Some of us use comparative-historical methods, while others do extensive fieldwork of a qualitative or quantitative kind. The common thread is our interest in applying sociological theory to understand how production, consumption, resource & reward allocation, and exchange work, especially in the context of a market economy.

While we do not have an official statement of our vision for the field, our approach to economic sociology seeks to integrate the study of social stratification, social networks, culture, organizations, and economic development. We are not interested in contributing to the consolidation of a narrow sub-specialty, but in fostering dialogue among scholars interested in economic phenomena whose interests extend beyond formal economic theory.

We view economic sociology as the study of the social organization of economic phenomena—including those having to do with production, trade, leisure, and consumption—whether mediated by monetary payments or not, and at various levels of analysis, namely, the individual, the group, the household, the organization, the network, the market, the industry, the country, and the world-system. We consider the demarcation between the social and the economic realms as artificial and fallacious. No economic phenomenon can be understood without the shared understandings (culture), institutional structures, symbols, and networks of inter-actor relationships that concretize it and give it form. We believe, for example, that the market is a social and cultural product, and market exchange is facilitated by social and cultural processes that provide market participants with shared understandings in the forms of values, norms, and symbols that help them make sense of what goes on and how they should act. Far from interfering with the smooth functioning of the market economy, social and cultural institutions make production, exchange, and consumption possible.

We also see economic sociology as an effort to understand preferences, which should never be assumed exogenous. We believe that anthropological, ethnographic, social-psychological, psychoanalytic, linguistic, and sociological research can offer a nuanced view of both preferences and action as driven by cognitive biases, limited powers of reasoning, non-conscious and ambivalent feelings, role expectations, norms, and cultural frames, schemas, classifications, and myths.

Finally, another important common thread in our research has to do with the idea that individual-level behavior does not simply aggregate into higher-order systems like groups, organizations or markets. Rather, as economic sociologists seeking to integrate the study of economic phenomena with the rest of sociology, we find it useful to incorporate insights from research on social classes, social movements, social networks, power dynamics, and cultural blueprints. We tend to use concepts such as ideology, consciousness, collective action, neighborhood effects, trust, unintended consequences, decoupling, latent functions, and interaction rituals to bridge the gap between the micro and the macro. Needless to say, in our research we often refer to social class, gender and race as important determinants of economic processes and outcomes.

Looking forward, our group hopes to continue generating enthusiasm among undergraduate and graduate students for economic sociology. We are planning future events and conferences, and hoping to continue building our course offerings and research programs across the various schools of Penn in which we are situated: Arts & Sciences, Social Policy, Education, Communication, and the Wharton School. For more information on our members’ research and teaching, visit [http://pesos.wharton.upenn.edu/](http://pesos.wharton.upenn.edu/)

Gary Gereffi
Duke University

Globalization has become the buzzword of the 21st century, but economic sociology has not been very prominent in research on this topic. A new Center on Globalization, Governance and Competitiveness (CGGC) at Duke University, directed by Professor Gary Gereffi (Sociology Department), hopes to counter this trend. The Center, which is part of the Social Science Research Institute at Duke, is dedicated to carrying out innovative and interdisciplinary research that has an impact on corporations, social institutions, and public policy. CGGC is currently working on numerous collaborative projects, including: Global Value Chains; North Carolina and the Global Economy; Engineering Outsourcing; and Nanotechnology in Society.

Each of CGGC’s three main substantive dimensions is motivated by sociological concerns. The Globalization area emphasizes the organization of the global economy, anchored by research on global value chains. Duke University has recently assumed the management of the Web site for the Global Value Chains Initiative, which is a collaborative network of 40-50 international researchers that has been supported by the Rockefeller Foundation since 2000. The network, which is co-directed by Gary Gereffi, John Humphrey (Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, UK), and Timothy Sturgeon (Massachusetts Institute of Technology), has produced numerous empirical studies on global value chains in a wide range of extractive, agricultural, manufacturing, and service industries. During the Spring 2006, one of the main projects of the Center will be to update and expand the Global Value Chains Web site http://www.globalvaluechains.org/, which will catalogue publications, conferences, training workshops, and other activities related to this perspective.

Another major theme at CGGC is the off-shoring of jobs in the global economy, and the implications of this phenomenon for industrial development and the nature of work in advanced and developing economies. The International Labor Organization invited Professor Gereffi to deliver its 7th Nobel Peace Prize Social Policy Lectures in Jamaica in December, 2005 on “The new off-shoring of jobs and global development,” and the ILO is planning to carry out a coordinated international research venture on this topic. The off-shoring of jobs is affecting knowledge workers as well as factory workers. CGGC has collaborated with the Pratt School of Engineering at Duke to produce a report on “Framing the engineering outsourcing debate” that tries to clarify the actual number of engineers being produced in the United States, India and China. This topic has generated a great deal of controversy in the United States and abroad. Many countries are taking a close look at their national innovation policies, and science and engineering education is receiving considerable attention as a barometer of national preparedness.

In a similar vein, CGGC is collaborating with the newly formed Center for Nanotechnology in Society at the University of California, Santa Barbara, which is funded by the National Science Foundation, to explore the diffusion of nanotechnology to China, South Korea, and Taiwan, as well as to better understand nanotechnology innovations in the United States. Richard Appelbaum (Sociology Department, UCSB) is one of the principal investigators in the Center for Nanotechnology in Society.

Governance is a critical but poorly understood concept in economic life. There are various forms of market governance that are relevant to the global economy. Corporate governance deals with issues of the accountability of firms to shareholders and stakeholders. Industrial governance relates to the management of supply chains and inter-firm relationships. International economic governance refers to the rules of the game for the global economy, and the mechanisms for enforcing these rules, set by key international entities like the World Trade Organization and the International Monetary Fund. Governance systems may be public, but they are not the same thing as government. While public governance includes government policy, it also deals with supranational coordination in quasi-governmental arenas like the European Union and the United Nations. Private governance is a relatively novel but significant research area in economic sociology. It involves the interplay of corporate, labor and civil society institutions that determine acceptable market behavior, professional standards and codes of conduct, and collective bargaining agreements that define the obligations of firms towards workers.

In the current era of neo-liberalism, many have decried the shrinking role of the state in managing national economic life. However, the fact that industrial policy is no longer being carried out by the central government in many countries doesn’t mean it has disappeared altogether. One of the most intriguing areas of governance research is the strengthening of economic policies at the sub-national level in many countries. Provinces and states within both industrialized and developing economies have been a locus for intense policy making that shape the interplay between...
global and local actors and the de facto development agenda in many countries.

Competitiveness is a good way to capture the impact of globalization on local economic actors and regions. An anchor project for CGGC at Duke involves its ongoing work on North Carolina in the Global Economy [http://www.soc.duke.edu/NC_GlobalEconomy/]. Growing out of a couple of classes at Duke dealing with globalization and its local impact, seven major industries are being analyzed in terms of employment outcomes, North Carolina’s competitive niche, the role of community colleges and universities in fostering economic growth and adjustment, and key challenges for corporate strategies and public policy. Because of its mix of agricultural and resource-based industries (e.g., tobacco and hog farming), traditional manufacturing (e.g., textiles/apparel and furniture), and knowledge-intensive industries (e.g., biotechnology, information technology, and banking), North Carolina is in many respects a microcosm of the U.S. economy. When we add the importance of growing numbers of both low-wage and highly skilled immigrant workers into the state, North Carolina is an exciting research laboratory to better understand how local economies are affected by and can respond to globalization.

We encourage you to explore more of the Center’s projects — from Wal-Mart to corporate codes of conduct to Kazakhstan — at [http://www.cggc.duke.edu/].

First, is the creation of a number of Visiting Professorships with researchers in other European and North American Universities. These appointments afford faculty a chance to spend anywhere from 2-4 weeks at the Center for a few years consecutively in order to give seminars, read, write, and participate in the local intellectual environment. Hopefully, such repeated visits will lead to collaborative projects with various members of the Center. So far, scholars from Dartmouth, Columbia, the University of Wisconsin, McGill, Northwestern, Warwick, Johns Hopkins, Berkeley, and Bates College have joined the Center as visitors. Likewise, scholars from other universities in the United States, Singapore, France, Australia, and throughout Scandinavia have visited the Center in other capacities. Of course, shorter and longer stays, such as sabbaticals, are also possible.

Second, the Center has established formal collaborations with several universities and research organizations around the world. For example, scholars from Dartmouth College and the Center have organized a research project examining the effects that country size and cultural homogeneity or diversity have on political economic performance among the OECD countries. This is, in part, an effort to reintroduce the literatures and theories of small states, on the one hand, and nationalism, on the other hand, to comparative political economy.

Another group of scholars from McGill University, the University of Montreal, the Center, and other Scandinavian universities are organizing a collaborative dialogue to explore how different types of advanced capitalist welfare states (liberal, social democratic, continental, Latin) are responding to increased economic globalization, demographics, and other contemporary pressures. Among other things, they are paying attention to the responses of these welfare regimes to the crisis of aging and health care.

The Center has also organized a series of joint seminars with researchers at Warwick University and the London School of Economics. The topic of these seminars corresponds to the research agendas of the participants. But, generally speaking, they are focusing on institutional analysis, comparative political economy, and comparative business systems.

Discussions with colleagues at the Center and the Max Planck Institute in Cologne, Germany, have resulted in a conference at the Center in June 2006 on institutional development, change, and stability. This is intended to stimulate discussion and debate, particularly among scholars working within the varieties of capitalism and economic sociology traditions, about how institutions change in ways that affect political economic and/or organizational performance.

Additionally, other activities are underway. The Center is developing a research program for young scholars and Ph.D. students. Nine research courses have been announced for 2006 on topics within comparative political
economy, methods, theories and themes. Courses are open for students from around the world. Furthermore, in collaboration with Cambridge University the Center has launched an educational program for high-level ministers from China that will run until 2009. And in 2007 the Center will host the annual meeting of the Society for the Advancement of Socioeconomics (SASE).

It is worth mentioning that while the Center’s primary mission is to encourage scholarly research, it has also started to develop a think tank profile. So far it has focused on two broad policy issues: European integration and Danish competitiveness. The think tank units are headed by former foreign and financial ministers from Denmark and are attracting top representatives from political parties, business, financial institutions, interest organizations, and the media in Denmark as well as from some European capitals. The Center’s research staff have consulted with and provided reports to the Danish Prime Minister’s office as well as other government bodies, various labor organizations, business associations, and the European Union. The Center’s staff appears frequently in the Danish and European media.

For further information on the Center’s activities, contact Ove K. Pedersen, The Center Director (op.cbp@cbs.dk), or John L. Campbell (John.L.Campbell@Dartmouth.Edu). An English language web site is also available: http://uk.cbs.dk/forskning_viden/fakulteter_institutter_oekonomi/cbp

**Fast-forward to Montréal! 🇨🇦**

Many thanks to all section members who submitted their papers for the regular economic sociology sessions at the forthcoming ASA Meetings in Montreal this summer. I had the pleasure of considering about 80 papers in total, which attests to the great vitality of our field. The ASA organizers recognized that by awarding us the maximum of six regular session slots.

You are invited to come listen to papers on 1) New Perspectives in Economic Sociology, 2) States, Transnational Organizations and the Economy, 3) Culture and Markets, 4) The Role of Technologies and Standards in the Economy, 5) Institutions and Institutional Analyses of Economic Processes, and 6) The Origins, Operation and Consequences of Social Networks in the Economy. More details will follow in the new Accounts issue……

Nina Bandelj, University of California, Irvine

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**The Consumer Research Network**

**AT**

**Institute of Communications Research**

Daniel Thomas Cook
University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign

The Consumer Studies Research Network (formerly Consumers, Commodities and Consumption) has been in existence since 1998. The Network is composed of scholars, graduate students and others who seek to foster dialogue and debate among those interested in and concerned about the place of goods and commodities in social life. Membership is open and some of the nearly 350 members have academic affiliations in departments other than sociology. There is a website (which will be revamped in the coming months), a bi-annual newsletter, and a listserv.

Not officially affiliated with the ASA, CSRN members nevertheless have been active in the Association. Members often populate many of the Consumers and Consumption Regular Sessions offered each year at the conference, although each year papers are presented on consumption research in these sessions by those unaware of the Network, demonstrating the reach of this steadily emerging field and research arena. Members have also organized Special and Thematic sessions on topics like environmental issues and consumption and the corporatization of the University, among others. We co-sponsored a session with Economic Sociology on “Bridging Consumption and Production” in 2004 and have organized an Open Roundtable as a research network within the Culture section for 2006. In 2002, the ASA published a syllabi set on the sociology of consumption and a second edition should be published in time for the 2006 meeting in Montreal.

Individuals affiliated with Consumer Studies Research Network desire to bring to the fore, in their own ways, the depths to which goods, commodities and a market logic have come to inform, in a variety of ways, virtually all aspects of social life and social interaction. Contemporary scholars of consumption and consumer culture in the main have transcended the dichotomies and simplistic notions of earlier scholarship. Few, if any, today subscribe to or invoke the “over socialized” view of the actor as a “cultural dupe” who blindly follows the dictates of marketers, advertisers and culture industries. Nor is it the case that many sociologists who research consumption and markets seek simply to examine the micro decisions of individual actors, merely renaming them “consumers.” Rather, the new, emerging sociological work on consumers, commodi-
ties and consumption in the last decade-and-a-half has been securing its own footing on ground not completely occupied by any one field or perspective, either contemporary or "classic."

The new sociological studies of consumption arise from the premise and understanding that "consumption" extends beyond the isolated act of purchasing and thus cannot be fruitfully understood as simply the final link in a chain that begins with "production." Consumption, in the broad view, encompasses life activity—even a mode of life—rather than particular moments of living. Consumption involves reflection, contemplation, consideration and planning. It is interwoven with everyday socializing, with personal display and with social and cultural identity.

One cannot understand gender, social class, sexuality, race and ethnicity without attending to consumption practices and displays. Childhood, youth, adulthood and old age are increasingly marked, defined and redefined by consumption practices (e.g., discussions about how Baby Boomers are remaking the later stages of life). Marketers and producers endlessly consult research on consumers and their expressed desires, lifestyles, practices and the meanings they attach to goods and entertainment. The character of cities and neighborhoods, of city planning and community activism, engage with issues of consumption in the form of tourism, shopping centers, streetscapes and the like. Global consumer markets and media are centrally involved in the tensions of culture clash, relocations of industry, exploitation of workers and environmental damage.

The range, scope and variety of research projects by CSRN members testifies to diverse vitality of the field. Only a few can be mentioned here. Among the work being conducted are: studies of ecotourism in the Caribbean context focusing on the conversion of a working landscape into a site of consumption; research on China's emerging service sector and consumer culture and implications regarding the structures of inequality; consumption as a measure of neighborhood homogeneity using grocery store scanner data; a study of the "how" and "why" of poverty fads and fashions across popular culture today that make stylish, recreational, and often expensive 'fun' of symbols of lower class statuses; the formation of Taiwanese consumer culture; the household lifecycle and the role of credit/debt as it influences cognitive and behavioral consumption outcomes in the US and abroad; the impact of material aspirations on the timing of marriage with a focus on home ownership.

Consumers, consumption and commodities blend with these trends and practices, are inseparable from them and thus in no way can be conceptualized as either derivative aspects of social life or as sidelines to it. Thus, the study of consumption, CSRN members maintain, represents a field of scholarly inquiry in and of itself, not reducible to others, yet not independent of them either.

See the CSRN website (https://netfiles.uiuc.edu/dtcook/www/CCC/) for other research projects and recent, digital newsletters (https://netfiles.uiuc.edu/dtcook/www/CCCnewsletter/7-1/index.htm; https://netfiles.uiuc.edu/dtcook/www/CCCnewsletter/6-2/index.html; https://netfiles.uiuc.edu/dtcook/www/CCCnewsletter/6-1/index.html). Feel free to contact me (dtcook@uiuc.edu) should you have an comments or queries.

**Center for Migration and Development**

Alejandro Portes
Princeton University

Established in 1998 with a founding grant from the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, the Center for Migration and Development (CMD) is part of the Department of Sociology at Princeton University from which it promotes scholarship, original research, and intellectual exchange among faculty and students with an interest in international migration and national development. Of particular interest to CMD research is the relationship between immigrant communities in the developed world and the growth and development prospects of the sending nations.

Current CMD sponsored research initiatives include:

**Immigrant Organizations and Political Incorporation:** With support from the Russel Sage Foundation, the Center launched in 2005 a study of all organizations – domestic and transnational, created by Colombian, Dominican, and Mexican immigrants in the principal U.S. cities where they concentrate and the effects that such organizations have had in the political incorporations of immigrants to American society. Effects being examined include U.S. citizenship acquisition, voting, and participation in local affairs and national political parties.

**Institutions and Development: A Comparative Study:** With support from the Princeton Institute for International and Regional Studies, the Center is conducting a systematic study of state institutions in Latin America as they exist in reality. This study should help overcome the current confusion about what the concept of institution means, delimiting the scope according to extant sociological theory. Results will inform current theory in econo-
ics and sociology concerning comparative development outcomes and the role of actually existing institutions in it.

The Comparative Immigrant Entrepreneurship Project (CIEP): The first quantitative survey on the topic of immigrant transnational activities, has been successfully completed with a set of articles published in the American Sociological Review (Portes, Haller, and Guarnizo, April 2002): American Journal of Sociology (Guarnizo, Portes, and Haller, May 2003): International Migration Review (Itzigsohn and Saucedo, Winter 2002; Portes, and de Wind 2003); and Global Networks (Landolt, July 2001). The project also conducted seminars in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic and San Salvador, El Salvador to disseminate results of the study among academics and policymakers from the sending countries. The full CIEP data set has been placed in the public domain and are available through CMD data archives at: http://cmd.princeton.edu/data.shtml

Transnational Organizations and Community Development: The Center is conducting an 18-month-long study of transnational immigrant organizations created by Colombian, Dominican, and Mexican immigrants in East Coast cities. An inventory of all transnational organizations created by each immigrant group has been developed and a small sample of representative associations have been selected for intensive study, including visits to the respective home countries. Data analysis and writing of the research results is currently ongoing. The study is supported by a grant from the MacArthur Foundation. A special issue of the International Migration Review (Winter, 2003) dedicated to Immigrant Transnationalism was partially supported by CMD as part of this project.

Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study (CILS): CILS is a longitudinal study designed to study the adaptation process of the immigrant second generation which is defined broadly as U.S.-born children with at least one foreign-born parent of children born abroad but brought at an early age to the United States. The original survey was conducted with large samples of second-generation children attending the 8th and 9th grades in public and private schools in the metropolitan areas of Miami/Ft. Lauderdale in Florida and San Diego, California. A second survey was conducted by the time of high school graduation in 1995-96 and a third by the time respondents averaged 24 years of age in 2002-03. Results of this longitudinal study have appeared in a number of publications, including Legacies: The Story of the Immigrant Second Generation, winner of the Distinguished Publication Award of the American Sociological Association in 2002 and its companion volume, Ethnicities: Children of Immigrants in America (University of California Press 2001). A special issue is planned for 2005 bearing results from the last survey from the study. Preliminary findings were presented by Center Director, Alejandro Portes, as the 2003 Pitirim Sorokin lecture, sponsored by the American Sociological Association. Data from the first two surveys have been placed in the public domain and are available in CMD’s Data Archives at: http://cmd.princeton.edu/data.shtml

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS FOR THE NEXT ISSUE: INTERNATIONAL TOPICS!

With the upcoming ASA Annual Conference being held in a city with as much international flavor as Montréal, we think now is the right time to take a step back from U.S.-focused research and learn more about what’s being done in and about other parts of the world. While Accounts will always be open to submissions of any kind, for the next issue we are particularly interested in hearing from international scholars about their work in progress and domestic scholars’ work in other countries. If you are working on research that concerns Africa, Asia, Latin America or any other typically under-emphasized locale (there are people in Antarctica, you know), we want to hear from you! Submissions are asked not to exceed approximately 700 words, and please include relevant contact information and hyperlinks so others interested in similar research can contact you.

In addition, we encourage the submission of book reviews of works published outside the U.S. If you have read interesting work published outside the U.S., please contact us and let us know that you would like to provide a review. We ask that you notify us in advance of writing the review so we can avoid receiving multiple reviews of the same work.

Graduate students working on international dissertations are also particularly encouraged to send a summary of your work. It’s never too early to publicize your original work!

We want the next issue of Accounts to be a horizon broadening experience for economic sociology. Please help us fulfill that goal by submitting your international work.
The Center for Culture, Organizations, and Politics (CCOP) is located at the Institute for Industrial Relations at the University of California. It is directed by Professor Neil Fligstein. The Center brings together scholars and graduate students who are working to explore issues related to the construction of social institutions. The Center focuses on scholars and students who share similar theoretical interests, but are frequently working in very different empirical settings.

For the past 20 years, there is a renewal of interest across the social sciences in how social institutions (defined as rules to guide interaction) are formed. This has been fueled by attempts to understand important changes in politics and economics, such as the emergence of identity politics of all kinds, the crises of production, the transformation of work, the globalization of production, and the problems of economic development presented by both Third World and formerly socialist societies.

Institutions are produced by people who are trying to stabilize their interactions with one another. The formal and informal rules that comprise institutions and define who is powerful and who is not are part of what we mean by culture. Culture also is used to define the ways we perceive ourselves and the system of power in which we are embedded. Together, institutions and cognition both enable and constrain people in their actions.

The main activity of the Center is a seminar that meets every two weeks. The seminar is composed of graduate students and faculty from Sociology, Political Science, and the Law School. The seminar discusses individual scholars’ work in progress. Papers are distributed beforehand, and the session will involve no formal presentations by the papers’ authors but will instead involve free flowing and open discussion.

There are other important activities of the Center as well. The Center has organized a speakers’ series in cooperation with the Institute for Government Studies on "Institutional Analysis in the Social Sciences." Funds from the Center have provided small grants to support the research of graduate students from different departments who are involved in the seminar. The Center has sponsored several conferences including an Economic Sociology Conference that brought together many leading scholars and a conference on media that brought together French and American scholars.

In recognition of the excellence of economic sociology at Cornell University, the Center for the Study of Economy and Society (CSES) was established in 2001, with funding from Provost Biddy Martin. Named after Max Weber’s Economy and Society, the Center’s mission is to update the comparative institutional analysis pioneered by Weber. To develop a new institutional approach in economic sociology, the challenge is to integrate advances in understanding networks and rationality with comparative institutional analysis. The appeal of a new institutional economic sociology is that it allows for a more powerful explanatory scope for extending sociological analysis to understand economic action. For an overview of this approach, I’ll refer you to my chapter on new institutionalism in the 2nd Edition of Smelser and Swedberg’s The Handbook of Economic Sociology.

As founding Director of CSES, I have worked closely with Richard Swedberg, who joined the Cornell sociology faculty in 2002 from the University of Stockholm, to conceive the Center’s intellectual events and with Douglas Heckathorn in developing the Center’s extramural research grants. This has been a very productive institutional collaboration. A quick glance at our website’s Events Archive – www.economyandsociety.org (accessible from the “Events” page) – shows just how busy we have been in advancing the cause of economic sociology at Cornell.

Our first jointly organized conference has led to the publication of The Economic Sociology of Capitalism (Princeton 2005). A second Center publication, entitled The Spirit of Global Capitalism, grew out of a CSES conference inspired by the 100th anniversary of Weber’s seminal The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism. CSES has sponsored a rich and lively series of cross-disciplinary conferences, workshops, symposia, and a seminar series focusing on themes including the economic sociology of technology, the future of the social sciences, wealth and inequality, hope in the economy, comparing China and India’s economic miracle, a critical anatomy of the new American Empire, on culture and economy, game theory/agent based modeling, and a multi-year seminar series on institutions, markets and the firm. As the website documents, CSES provides graduate student and faculty affiliates an exceptionally rich intellectual environment in which to develop their work.

Not surprisingly, my own research has benefited from the stimulating intellectual environment provided by the Center for advancing economic sociology. I am the principal investigator of a large scale multi-year project on the
rise of a private enterprise economy in China, funded by the John Templeton Foundation. The project has just completed its first year of exploratory field research in which I interviewed Chinese entrepreneurs in the epicenter of Chinese capitalism, the Yangzi Delta region near Hangzhou and west of Shanghai. The critical focus of the research is to understand why and how Chinese entrepreneurs were successful in building a dynamic private enterprise economy given the absence of what economists assume to be necessary preconditions. The field research suggests that Chinese entrepreneurs succeeded in overcoming barriers to entry and discriminatory state policies towards private enterprise through reliance on informal institutions. Entrepreneurs relied on their personal networks to secure credit capital to finance the start-up firms, and for securing often verbal contracts with suppliers and distributors. Only after the private sector had achieved a certain critical mass—as an engine of economic growth, providing employment and revenue—did local governments begin to put in place an institutional framework more aligned with the needs of the private enterprise sector. We are now making preparations to conduct a large-scale regional firm survey in the Yangzi Delta region; this will likely be followed by a national survey of firms.

In a related project, I am also working on a book project (with Sonja Opper of Lund University) on the institutional causes of the development of financial markets. The book takes on the economics literature emphasizing the salience of legal institutions that safeguard the property rights of minority shareholders. Our findings show that the “legal origin” hypothesis is not support empirically. Instead we find that the quality and performance of state bureaucracy explains the development of financial markets and corporations. I am fortunate to have very capable Cornell economic sociology graduate students working with me on these projects—Ningxi Zhang, Chris Yankey, Zun Tang, Min-Dong Paul Lee, Li Ma, and Wubiao Zhou. Through both research projects, my aim is to make a big push in both the theoretical and empirical domains to deepen an ongoing research program advancing comparative institutional analysis in economic sociology.

**Upcoming events at CSES**

March 17 - **Glenn Firebaugh**, Pennsylvania State U.  
“Globalization and Trends in Global Inequality”

April 7 - **Xueguang Zhou**, Duke University  
“Evolving Corporatist Bases of Governance in Rural China: Observations and Reflections from Villages”

April 13 - **Roberto Fernandez**, MIT Sloan School  
“Race, Spatial Mismatch, and Job Accessibility: Evidence from a Plant Relocation”

April 14 - **Oliver Hart**, Harvard University  
“Partial Contracts”

April 20 - **Greta Krippner**, UCLA  

**Student Perspectives**

**How We Became Intimate with Economic Sociology**

Louis Esparza, Alwyn Lim, and David Roelfs  
*State University of New York, Stony Brook*

A funny thing happened on the way to our economic sociology seminar. When we first enrolled in an economic sociology seminar with Michael Schwartz, we were merely a group of disparate individuals with an interest in ‘economy’ and ‘society’. Without knowing it at the time, an experimental collaboration was about to begin. With our weekly staple of bagels and caffeine, we began in earnest, eager to discourse on the tomes before us and to trade the almost requisite verbal broadsides that are part and parcel of graduate seminars.

Before long, we were tearing through such major figures in the sub-discipline as Harrison White (yes Michael, we know, he’s great) and Mark Granovetter (who graced our halls when he wrote that classic article). When it came to Viviana Zelizer, Professor Schwartz was enthusiastic about her most recent book but regretted not having the time to include it in our syllabus. He promised he would inquire if Zelizer had an article-length summary so he could load us with more reading.

One week later, Professor Schwartz did something we thought was unprecedented for senior professors. If the graduate students agreed, he broached, he would be willing to forgo having us read part of his work just so we could discuss Zelizer’s new book, *The Purchase of Intimacy*. Professor Schwartz was clearly excited about the possibility of reading a fresh piece of literature in the area. To be honest, the three of us were initially hesitant. Intimate relationships? We expected embeddedness, interlocking directorates, and Kondratiev cycles! The more enlightened among us, however, knew from the get go that it was the right move. Infected with Professor Schwartz’s enthusiasm, we were won over.

A few weeks later, Michael’s infection became a pandemic. We decided to propose an author-meets-critics session for the Eastern Sociological Society annual meeting, for which we would write responses to Zelizer’s new book. With that unhealthy mix of excitement, disbelief, and fear about what we had just proposed, the class decided collectively to take on the task. Professor Schwartz agreed to sponsor the proposal and Viviana Zelizer herself agreed to participate. Our fears were soon realized; the proposal was accepted and we were committed to doing the work. What had been a single item on the syllabus mushroomed into
weeks of discussing intimate relationships and economic affairs.

But there was a problem. How could we involve ten graduate students in a session that can hold, at most, three or four presentations? Co-authorship was the obvious solution, but this produced another quandary: How exactly would we distill our disparate ideas about the text into three or four coherent arguments? The answer once again was collaboration.

Through the structure of the seminar, each individual's critique of Zelizer's book was itself examined and critiqued. What soon emerged was an iterative cycle of idea formation bouncing from individual to collective and back. This process produced a set of viable critiques, none of which closely resembled the initial ideas each of us brought to the table. Shortly afterward, the entire group met to identify parallels between ideas and agreed upon three intellectual parallels between ideas and agreed upon three intellectual

Over time, we worked together to overcome these obstacles and will continue to do so. Of course, individual effort has also played an important part. Professor Schwartz has provided ongoing support, devoting perhaps more time to this than has any one of us. But in our ongoing work, the group dynamic remains the integral element for the development of each of the three papers. Periodically, each group submits drafts for the others to examine. We push each other to get the work done. We coordinate to avoid duplication of effort.

The process has been tremendously rewarding. We have gotten to know each other much better than we had before. We've become intimate. We've learned first-hand just how powerful the group dynamic can be, generating ideas and insights that we may have never considered otherwise. Developing such a collegial atmosphere has been mutually beneficial to everyone involved.

We encourage graduate students and faculty elsewhere to use their graduate seminars as platforms from which to launch collaborative work. While collaboration between graduate students and faculty is relatively frequent, co-authorship among peers does not usually emerge before dissertation work is well under way. And yet, the graduate students in our seminar are no further advanced than their third year of graduate school. Serious collaboration does not need to wait until the final stages of a graduate career. We hope that our experimental effort helps point this out.

Announcing a new quarterly format for Research in Social Stratification and Mobility from Spring 2006

This year marks a transition for Research in Social Stratification and Mobility (RSSM) as it seeks to expand its focus and readership by moving from an annual serial to a quarterly journal format under the sponsorship of Elsevier. This transition is the culmination of several years of work by former editors of the journal and board members of the RC28, the Research Committee on Social Stratification and Mobility of the International Sociological Association. Please join us by reading and contributing to this exciting endeavour.

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