

Far from supporting the widely held view that activist campaigns are changing corporate behavior, Seidman's case studies point to the ineffectiveness of independent monitoring. Monitors do not usually have the time or resources to visit every site. Because monitors are dependent on corporate funding and need permission to access workplaces, their independence from the corporations they regulate is questionable. In the South African case, auditing relied entirely on data provided by the companies. The accountability of independent monitors is often suspect because workers themselves have few rights and cannot question monitoring standards or offer their own data regarding compliance. To complicate matters further, monitoring associations and certification standards tend to proliferate over time, leading to a fragmented system that consumers find difficult to understand.

Seidman's book convinces the reader that improvements need to be made to independent monitoring. Resource constraint, accessibility, and accountability problems cause Seidman to advocate a return to state-oriented strategies. Seidman argues that the most effective campaigns originate from state coercion. Transnational activism has given up on the state and thereby weakened traditional institutions that supported worker's rights. Seidman believes that enhancing the state's ability to regulate corporations will also strengthen local labor mobilization.

Another potential force for change that is less prominent in her conclusion is the continued mobilization of consumer activists. One of the problems with the current system is that consumers are mostly detached from the monitoring itself. While consumer activists initially create boycott campaigns and monitoring schemes, it is not clear what sort of involvement, if any, consumers have in monitoring after the boycott ends. Perhaps one reason why monitoring consistently fails to live up to the hype is because consumers have no role in shaping its implementation. Seidman hints at this solution in her conclusion, arguing that more trust needs to develop between transnational and local activists. Rather than decoupling local labor organizing from global activists' efforts to build monitoring and compliance schemes, the two should work together more closely. Monitoring would not be the end, but rather should be seen as an

essential target that both kinds of activists can rally around in their continued efforts to enhance workers' rights.

Seidman's book is highly informative and a welcome contribution to the study of activism and corporate change. *Beyond the Boycott* should find a receptive audience among scholars of labor, social movements, and organizational change.

Culture and Demography in Organizations, by **J. Richard Harrison** and **Glenn R. Carroll**. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005. 296pp. \$32.95 paper. ISBN: 9780691124827.

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Harrison and Carroll have put together a remarkable exploration of how computational models can be used to articulate theory, generate and explore hypotheses (my term, not theirs), and engage in the rich intellectual endeavor of "model mining." The book's title should perhaps be augmented with the qualifier, "Modeling Culture with Simulation" as that is their method of choice (and, in fact, the title of chapter 2). Every experiment in this book is based on a computational model, directly or indirectly. To some, this is scary; to me, this is interesting. And, they do this quite well.

Let me note that these chapters are derived (and updated) from prior work (mostly), but they are not loose assemblages of computational *Gedanken* experiments that have no roots in either theory or practice. Rather, they are carefully thought-out forms that reflect gaps in either theory or presumptions. Each one is either preceded by, or followed with, careful analytical examinations of assumptions and effect. Each one tells part of a story and most lead toward a more coherent understanding of their view and the consequences within other theoretical stances and observations. Now, what is their view?

Their view is concerned with understanding components of *cultural stability*—why culture persists (and does not persist) in organizations. Now, persistence is an interesting phenomenon which has a temporal element. Over time, many things that may impact cul-

ture happen in and to an organization—organizations alter in their size and composition, organizational environments change, top management teams change, and things generally are rather dynamic within the social context of organizational membership, such as influence or reward. They argue that to effectively understand cultural stability, research needs to focus both on the (dominant) *content* approach to studying culture—defining the substance of a culture as indicated by “the actual set of ideas, beliefs, values, behaviors, symbols, rituals, and the like” (p. xv), as well as the (less encountered) *distributive* approach—which views content (and its interpretation) as “varying across individuals, locations in the social structure, and time” (p. xvi). The latter approach, of course, is less pronounced, in part, because of the difficulties of observing and collecting such complex data over sufficient time frames, and across diverse populations. The content component is realized as a single construct variable that subsumes the complexities and differences across types and forms, and its distribution and inertia are under the substantial influence of the demographic activity of the firm. Furthermore, not an insignificant amount of firm demographics (and desired form of the cultural content) are under the control of management. This brings us to the core model of the book—cultural transmission.

Their model of cultural transmission is comprised of three processes that function as the essential mechanisms for cultural transmission (and thus persistence) over time: hiring practices, socialization processes, and departure processes. Each of these processes is articulated in specific mathematical forms that reflect behaviors indicated by research, or reasonable assumptions on the part of the modelers. In either case, unnecessary complexity is minimized and assumptions are often extensively tested for sensitivity. The authors nicely stick to two key dependent variables in their primary experiments, which facilitates interpretation across experimental contexts: *enculturation* (the extent to which the current culture matches the management’s ideal—a fitness metric), and *cultural heterogeneity* (the standard deviation of the enculturation score—a distribution metric). The experiments in the book are based on this core model, and selectively and systematically examine various constructs, such as stylized

organizational types (chapter 5), growth and decline (chapter 6), tenure heterogeneity (chapter 7), influence networks (chapter 8), terrorist networks (chapter 9), mergers/acquisitions (chapter 10), and organizational aging and failure (chapter 10). Each chapter yields interesting, and sometimes counterintuitive, findings. For example, their model of disrupting terrorist cells reveals that the most effective solution is a combination of individual removal (vs. entire cell removal) and disruption of the replacement process. For another, they refine Stinchcombe’s “liability of newness” concept and show that a simple age-based relationship to organizational failure might be better explained by a complex relationship between culture, growth, and size. Every experiment is well-defined and explicitly presents the parameters, underlying mathematical form, and experimental procedures. The latter are realized by computational modeling.

Computational modeling is a specific way of doing science, and is used extensively in physical science and is growing in social science. Despite the early innovative and influential work of researchers such as Cyert and March (1973), the computational method of doing social science did not effloresce as in other disciplines. The importance and legitimacy is clearly and effectively argued by Harrison and Carroll in chapter 2, and this should be a “must-read” by those examining (or criticizing) this approach. More to the point, this book presents an excellent example of how this approach can be done with clarity and rigor, and how a trajectory of such models can generate cumulative science. An important attribute of this book is that it demonstrates how a simple model can be examined in depth across conditions to generate plausible explanations for previously observed (or presumed) behaviors, at multiple levels of abstraction.

In summary, this is a focused and well-written monograph that demonstrates the value of computational modeling in, as Jim March may put it, exploring and exploiting the landscape of culture and demography in organizations.

References

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Market Dreams: Gender, Class and Capitalism in the Czech Republic, by **Elaine Weiner**. Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 2007. 155pp. \$22.95 paper ISBN: 9780472069880.

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Between September 1999 and October 2000, Elaine Weiner interviewed seventy-four Czech women all born between 1944 and 1965—twenty-six of them were managers, the others were manual workers in manufacturing industries. The book offers a fascinating account of how these women experienced the transition from socialism to market capitalism. These women were asked to comment on a decade of difficult times: in this small country about 600,000 jobs (20 percent of all jobs before the collapse of socialism) were lost. Women were hit particularly hard. Female employment shrank from 2.5 million in 1985 to 2.3 million in 1999 (p. 34). Wages of workers stagnated or declined while incomes of managers skyrocketed. The traditionally egalitarian Czech society had to learn how to live with increasing inequalities and with the insecurity of the market (pp. 36–37, p. 105). The puzzle this research poses is why society, women, and workers in particular were so passive during this epoch (p. 17).

The received wisdom among Western commentators was that women were the “losers” of transition in all post-communist societies. Weiner challenges both the simple dichotomy between “losers” and “winners” and she shows that one needs to look at the intersection of class and gender to evaluate meaningfully who benefited from the transition and who paid the main costs of the collapse of socialism. The book focuses on the lived experiences of the women Weiner interviewed rather than the changes in their “objective conditions.” For women in managerial positions, the transition was overwhelmingly a positive experience, while with female manual workers the experiences with post-communism were mainly negative. For instance, one of her female respondents

described feeling like “an idiot, a beggar and a swine running around [welfare] offices” (p. 103).

Nevertheless, even after a decade of post-communism, workers and managers share basically the same “market dreams.” In 1999–2000 the hegemony of neoliberal ideology remained unbroken among women living in the Czech Republic. Managers and workers expected markets to secure them a better life (though they increasingly thought it might take quite some time before everyone would enjoy the benefits of the market) and believed that in the new society people had to take responsibility for their own lives. Those who failed should blame either socialism for socializing them in the wrong, paternalistic way or blame themselves for not working hard enough. One of the main obstacles on the road to freedom is that people who lived under the falsely paternalistic socialist state while yearning for freedom are unwilling to accept the responsibilities for their own life (p. 61). The reelection of Klaus as President in February 2008, even though it was only by a narrow margin, demonstrates the persistency of this ideological hegemony, which arguably is primarily responsible for the absence of collective action by the “losers,” workers, and especially working class women.

Other researchers have claimed that not all women were on the losing side in the transition and it was also shown that post-communist transition coincided with demobilization of popular masses. Weiner’s book offers support for these hypotheses, but complements them with two new, intriguing findings.

The female managers she interviewed insisted there was no gender discrimination in the Czech Republic, though this is starkly contradicted by statistical fact: while 8 percent of all Czech men occupy managerial positions, only 3.5 percent of Czech women are managers; and “female managers earned an average of 54 percent as much as their male counterparts” (p. 81). According to Weiner, it is the ideological hegemony of neoliberalism, the “liberatory tale” (p. 93), which prevents Czech female managers from seeing the realities of gender discrimination.

Furthermore, Weiner shows that working-class women resolve the contradictions between the realities of their impoverishment and the promises of the market dream by projecting the benefits of the market into the