Cornell University
ILR School

Cornell University ILR School
DigitalCommons@ILR

Policy & Issue Briefs

ILR Collection

7-1-2003

IWS briefing, Winter 2003 Volume 3 Issue 1

Maralyn Edid, Editor
Institute for Workplace Studies

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.ilr.cornell.edu/briefs

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the ILR Collection at DigitalCommons@ILR. It has been accepted for inclusion in Policy & Issue Briefs by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@ILR. For more information, please contact jdd10@cornell.edu.

IWS briefing, Winter 2003 Volume 3 Issue 1

Abstract
[Excerpt] A newsletter on workplace issues and research from the School of Industrial and Labor Relations at Cornell University.

Keywords
ILR, Institute for Workplace Studies, IWS, labor, market, employee, managers, C.L. Franklin, Nick Salvatore, American, society, Baptist, labor economics, MPS student, Gary Fields, Robert Smith, Harry Katz, Sarosh Kuruvilla, collective bargaining

Comments

Suggested Citation
IWS briefing (Winter 2003) [Electronic version]. New York, NY: Cornell University, School of Industrial and Labor Relations, Institute for Workplace Studies.
http://digitalcommons.ilr.cornell.edu/briefs/14/

This article is available at DigitalCommons@ILR: http://digitalcommons.ilr.cornell.edu/briefs/14

Winter 2003
Volume 3 Issue 1

IWS briefing

from the School of Industrial & Labor Relations

In This Issue

1 Pastor as Celebrity
1 IWS Lecture Series
2 Teaching MPS Students
2 Distance Learning
3 Gender Pay Gap
3 Faculty Research

C.L. Franklin: Pastor as Celebrity and Social Reformer

By the end of the 20th century, the vogue of celebrity was firmly rooted in American culture. Actors, athletes, rock musicians, even some politicians and corporate leaders, effused a charisma and grandeur coupled by outsized achievement and occasional bad behavior that appealed to a broad swath of the populace. Not surprisingly, several religious leaders also scaled these heights.

One of the earliest and perhaps most influential of celebrity ministers was C.L. Franklin, pastor of New Bethel Baptist Church in Detroit from 1946 to 1984. The life and work of Rev. Franklin was remarkable for its time — a blend of faith and political action that inspired his African-American followers to press for racial integration and full rights as citizens while remaining true to their spiritual and cultural heritage. "He was the first major religious figure who crossed between the sacred and the secular worlds," notes Nick Salvatore, professor of labor history at **ILR**, who is writing a biography of Rev. Franklin that is also a social history of the era.

Rev. Franklin's impact on American society has been significant, though underappreciated. He was a well-known radio personality whose Sunday night sermons were broadcast by a Nashville station that could be heard by 70% of the African-American population nationwide. Future community leaders, including Rev. Jesse Jackson and Rep. John Lewis (D, GA), were avid listeners. On the gospel revival tour, Rev. Franklin was the featured attraction and routinely drew upwards of 10,000 people at each stop.

The preacher's message was always grounded in biblical texts and the world as it was. Delivered in a style that resonated with powerful chant and underlying musicality, Rev. Franklin's sermons conveyed cogent socio-political analyses even as they transported listeners to another level of spiritual awareness. He drew heavily on African-American music and folktales and skillfully used this oral tradition to instill in his followers a sense of dignity and pride that was denied them by white society.

Central to his Baptist faith was the belief that African-Americans are a chosen people. While America might seem like the promised land, he would say, it was nonetheless a land where slavery was the reality. He exhorted his congregants and larger audience to engage with the present, to work for immediate change and not to wait for utopia. "By studying Rev. Franklin," Prof. Salvatore says, "we learn more about the existence of an alternative historical vision within the black community."

Remarkably, the white power structure never paid him much attention. Although Rev. Franklin opened his pulpit to African-Americans who ran for political office and was dubbed the "labor minister" for promoting workers' rights, he was not perceived as a threat to the status quo. His

continued on page 2

IWS Lecture Series Continues

Now in its third year, the ***IWS*** Workplace Colloquium Series is trying something different: Prominent **ILR** alumni are joining **ILR** faculty on the roster of featured presenters. The workplace focus remains unchanged, and each alumnus(a) is building his/her talk on his/her area of expertise as it relates to current issues.

In another development, the colloquium series is dedicated to the memory of L. Kevin Becraft (**ILR** '73) and has been named the Becraft Lecture Series. Mr. Becraft was vice president for worldwide engagement support and business development at the IBM Corp. He was deeply committed to **ILR**, and served as vice president and Cornell Fund representative for his class, financially aided construction of the new **ILR** classroom building, advocated for the creation of the ***Institute for Workplace Studies*** as an intellectual outpost for **ILR** faculty in New York City, and otherwise championed initiatives that benefited students and faculty alike.

Six Becraft lectures are scheduled. Francine Blau (**ILR** '66), a labor economics professor at **ILR**, spoke in October about the gender pay gap. In November, Ruben King-Shaw (**ILR** '83), chief operating officer of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, commented on the need for changes in the health care system as baby boomers age. The following month, Gary Bettman (**ILR** '74), commissioner of the National Hockey League, talked

continued on page 4

Institute for Workplace Studies

A newsletter on workplace issues and research from the School of Industrial and Labor Relations at Cornell University

Cornell

ilr School of Industrial and Labor Relations

Teams Teach MPS Students

Work teams are increasingly common in factories and offices. They let employees leverage their strengths, share resources, communicate quickly, and generally work more efficiently. So it should come as no surprise that several **ILR** faculty have teamed up to teach students in the school's Master of Professional Studies (MPS) program.

This academic year, two teams are each teaching one of two different courses. Professors Gary Fields and Robert Smith are just now completing the required labor economics course. Professors Harry Katz and Sarosh Kuruvilla will lead the required collective bargaining course in the spring. The team approach has two distinct advantages: it ensures the best fit between instructor and the weekly topic and, because the MPS program is offered in New York City on Saturday mornings, it allows off-campus students to study and do research with a range of faculty who reside and normally teach in Ithaca.

Course content is similar to what students in the Ithaca-based master's degree program learn — with some key differences. The MPS labor economics course ranges more widely, largely because this is the only economics course students take during the two-year program. (The MPS program requires four semesters and two summers of course work, plus a research project.) The material covered includes the basics of labor market supply and demand, how managers apply these concepts in organizational settings, and topical issues in public policy.

The collective bargaining course incorporates more case studies and in-depth discussion than the comparable class offered on the Ithaca campus. Both the MPS schedule, which involves four-hour sessions on 12 Saturdays, and the students' professional work experience, enable this pedagogical shift. Topics such as bargaining power and process, win-win bargaining, workplace restructuring, and comparative industrial relations inform the dialogue between students and professors as they grapple with theory and practice.

For details about the MPS program, contact Sara Edwards at sre2@cornell.edu or (212)340-2808 or check the Web site at www.ILR.cornell.edu/gradprograms/mpsnyc. ■

Pastor as Celebrity

continued from page 1

staunch anti-communist stance during the Cold War, Prof. Salvatore explains, deflected criticism from what might otherwise have been perceived as radical activity.

The lived experience of Rev. Franklin, who was born in Mississippi, is also a window onto the social transformation of the African-American community as it migrated from south to north in the mid-20th century. As Prof. Salvatore notes, Rev. Franklin personally underwent and eventually helped lead the community's evolution from a rural, agricultural people to an urban and increasingly assertive people with a strong public voice.

All the while, Rev. Franklin remained in tune with the wider world. A natty dresser, he was as comfortable with jazz musicians as he was with church musicians. Performers such as B.B. King, Lionel Hampton, Art Tatum, and Dinah Washington filled his home. The great gospel singer Mahalia Jackson was a close friend. Indeed, he left a mark on the secular music world as well: pop singer Aretha Franklin is his daughter.

Prof. Salvatore can be reached at nas4@cornell.edu or (607)255-2240. ■

Distance Learning: The Editor Checks It Out

True confession time. I haven't been in an undergraduate classroom since the early 1970s, when teaching class meant being physically present in the lecture room. Moreover, I am of a generation (or maybe it's my own mindset) that disdains some of the technological marvels that so entrance today's young adults.

So it was with some skepticism that I recently watched Prof. Samuel Bacharach, the ***IWS*** director, look straight at 31 students (and me) from an oversized projection screen and lead a class on organizational change. Prof. Bacharach was in New York City and we were in Ithaca. No matter. Backed by state-of-the-art distance learning technology, Prof. Bacharach deftly segued from lecture to questions to jokes as he and the students explored the subtleties of building coalitions and corporate style micro-politics.

I was sure, ex ante, that this 21st century classroom experience would feel sterile and artificial. Indeed, there is something "Big Brother"-ish about a professor's magnified image in the front of the hall and the two little cameras that beam your image back to the speaker at the other end. But somehow, this worked. The students were engaged. They interacted with Prof. Bacharach. They listened attentively. They took notes. Occasionally they fidgeted. Everyone seemed at ease with the arrangement, even when the technology momentarily failed.

"It's a myth that you can't create intimacy with distance learning," Prof. Bacharach says. "This is the most exciting thing I've ever done as a teacher. It forces me to be more disciplined and organized and more dramatic in my presentation."

Indeed, Prof. Bacharach uses several aids to help students stay on track. He speaks into the camera so that his gaze seems to lock onto each person in the lecture hall. He calls on students and addresses them by name. He posts bullet points and related graphics on a second screen hanging on the side wall. And he relies on an Ithaca-based teaching assistant to provide back up and support.

This course will continue evolving as Prof. Bacharach learns more about the nuances of distance learning. "The potential here is immense," he notes.

And me? Well, I might sit in next week to see what he's got in mind.

Gender Pay Gap Persists

GONE ARE THE DAYS when women knew, without a shadow of doubt, that pay scales and job opportunities open to men were beyond their reach. Or are they?

The answer, it seems, is mostly yes, according to Francine D. Blau (**ILR** '66), the Frances Perkins Professor of Labor Economics at **ILR**. But there is still enough of a differential, she says, to warrant continued attention to factors that explain the gap and to other factors not yet quantified. Prof. Blau recently spoke at the Workplace Colloquium Series' Becraft Lectures, which are sponsored by the ***Institute for Workplace Studies***.

Evidence gathered by Prof. Blau and **ILR** colleague Lawrence Kahn shows the pay gap diminished rapidly during the 1980s. One reason is that women's relative job qualifications improved because they remained more consistently attached to the workforce. Likewise, occupational differences narrowed as women moved into managerial and professional positions.

But available data do not fully explain the trend. Using her researcher's intuition, Prof. Blau suggests that the "unexplained" gains women registered during the 1980s could reflect a decrease in job market discrimination. "Employers may have been less inclined to judge women by the average characteristics of the group," she says.

Another explanation could be improvements in what Prof. Blau calls "unmeasured characteristics" of women, such as higher motivation, greater commitment, or choice of more lucrative educational fields. A third cause could be the disparate effects on men and women of macroeconomic forces, which saw traditionally male blue collar jobs disappear and stereotypically female service and pink collar jobs rise in number.

Compared to the prior decade, progress in the 1990s was lackluster. Although their research on this era is ongoing, professors Blau and Kahn have ruled out shifts in the education and age composition of male and female workers as factors. The working hypotheses center on several social trends, including the possibility that women narrowed the experience gap at a slower pace in the 1990s.

In addition, the growth in women's labor force participation rates has slowed. With 75% of American women aged 25 to 54 currently in the work force, further increases will be less dramatic than in earlier times.

And while anecdotal evidence suggests that younger women have been disrupting their careers for family and personal reasons, researchers do not have a fix on the type and quality of their participation compared to that of similarly situated men.

The persistence of discrimination is another likely factor. Prof. Blau notes that overt barriers have been razed but subtle and subconscious discrimination may still persist. And finally, the macro-economic shifts that favored women jobseekers in the 1980s may have played out by the 1990s. The final analysis is still to come.

Contact Prof. Blau at fdb4@cornell.edu or (607)255-4381 for more detail.

Editor's Note: To learn about increasing gender inequality in Europe and Central Asia, go to http://lnweb18.worldbank.org/eca/eca.nsf/Attachments/Gender+in+Transition/$File/GenderDraftPaper052802cFINAL.pdf *and to* http://lnweb18.worldbank.org/eca/eca.nsf/Attachments/Gender+in+Transition+Annex/$File/Annex2062102.pdf. ■

Faculty Research Ranges Widely

WHEN OFFICE DOORS ARE CLOSED or professors are simply unavailable, chances are they are preoccupied with their research. Along with teaching and service to the university or college, research is the third critical component of a professor's job description.

Here at **ILR**, tenured and tenure-track faculty generally focus their research on the workplace. Their methodologies and analyses reflect the interdisciplinary nature of the field, drawing upon industrial and labor relations, human resource management, organizational behavior, labor economics, and social statistics.

"Faculty choose their own topics," explains Martin Wells, director of research and professor of social statistics at **ILR** and chair of Cornell's Department of Biological Statistics and Computational Biology. "What the dean cares about most is that you do *excellent* research."

Some faculty projects have laser-like relevance to the world of work. For example, Rosemary Batt, associate professor of human resource studies, compares the differential effects of new information technology on the skills and worklife quality of factory workers and service company workers.

Other ILR faculty build research programs around international and comparative issues. Working with researchers from Asia, Surosh Kuruvilla, professor of collective bargaining, has found that a two-tiered workforce (one small group of permanent and relatively well-paid workers and a larger group of low-paid workers with no job security) is likely to evolve in countries with underdeveloped or marginally functioning employment relations institutions.

Faculty research sometimes is applicable to both the workplace and other settings. Edward Lawler, dean of **ILR** and professor of organizational behavior

continued on page 4

Institute for Workplace Studies
School of Industrial and Labor Relations / Cornell University
16 East 34th Street, 4th Floor
New York, NY 10016
tel: (212) 340-2886
fax: (212) 340-2893
email: iwsnyc@cornell.edu
web: www.ilr.cornell.edu/iws

Director: Samuel B. Bacharach
Editor: Maralyn Edid
Program Coordinator: Sara Edwards

CORNELL

ilr School of Industrial and Labor Relations

IWS Lecture Series

continued from page 1

about collective bargaining in professional sports.

Future presenters include Randi Weingarten (**ILR** '80), president of the United Federation of Teachers, who will tackle the topic of education reform on February 13; Jay Waks (**ILR** '68 and JD '71), a litigation partner at Kaye Scholer, LLP, who will speak about alternative dispute resolution in the workplace on March 27; and Francis Bonsignore (**ILR** '68 and MPA '71), senior vice president, executive resources and development at Marsh & McLennan Companies, Inc., who will spell out the challenges and expectations confronting the human resource function on May 22.

The evening gatherings are held at the Cornell Club, and begin with the presentation, followed by dinner and discussion. For reservations, contact Katie Briggs at (212)340-7931 or kb41@cornell.edu.

Faculty Research

continued from page 3

and sociology, studies small groups within a laboratory setting to understand how people define themselves as a group and develop an emotional attachment to it.

Occasionally, research agendas are disconnected from the world of work. Prof. Wells and colleagues at Cornell Law School have used statistics to explain when and why juries mete out death sentences in capital cases and confer a certain level of damage awards. The results have been used in arguments heard by the U.S. Supreme Court.

Check http://www.ilr.cornell.edu/ to find contact information for **ILR** faculty. ■

GO TO

www.ilr.cornell.edu/iws for updates about Institute for Workplace Studies events.

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage
P A I D
Ithaca, NY
Permit No. 177

Institute for Workplace Studies
Cornell University
School of Industrial and Labor Relations
16 East 34th Street, 4th Floor
New York, NY 10016