

FALL 2021

FORUM

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE MID-SOUTH
SOCIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION, INC.



Mid-South Sociological Association, Inc.

Organizational Statement

The Mid-South Sociological Association, Inc. (MSSA, Inc.), founded in 1975, is a 501-C(3) non-profit organization providing both professional support to, and a forum for sociologists who teach, conduct research and reside in the Mid-South region of the US. Through its publications, annual conference, academic support and collegial networks, MSSA, Inc. promotes the advancement of sociological research, the diffusion of knowledge, innovative service and teaching. From its inception, MSSA, Inc. has been and continues to be committed to mentoring and enabling the growth of the next generation of sociologists in the value of high-quality research and engagement, and ethical, professional service.



MSSA, Inc. Inclusion Statement

The Mid-South Sociological Association Inc. embraces diversity and promotes inclusion by recruiting, including, and valuing people of all races, genders and gender identities, sexualities, ethnicities, religions, economic and employment statuses, abilities, and other dimensions. The MSSA celebrates all expressions of diversity and identity and strives to provide an environment conducive to free expression of ideas without fear of judgment in any way. Moreover, the MSSA does not tolerate any action from any member or conference participant that encourages or promotes hatred and/or intolerance in any form. Further, to the extent that the Board determines that it is not detrimental to the best interests (financial and otherwise) of the association, the MSSA will use the economic power of the annual conferences and other activities to select locations and enter into agreements with businesses that have policies and practices that reflect the values of the MSSA.

An introduction to this edition, thank yous, and my conference wrap up

Written by: Andrew Tatch

Welcome to the Fall 2021 edition of Forum, the official bi-annual newsletter of the Mid-South Sociological Association, Inc! I like to try and write this introduction for the Forum as soon as I can after I return from our conference, when I am on that post-conference 'high'. With the Mid-South Sociological Association, Inc. working together to pull off our first ever hybrid conference, held both virtually and in beautiful Charlotte, North Carolina, I left yet again feeling re-energized and rejuvenated after reconnecting with the familiar faces I have missed over the last few pandemic years. In addition to those familiar faces I had missed so much, I also met some new folks attending Mid-South for the first time-- and I definitely got the sense that they will be back. What I appreciate most about our conference is the culture we have cultivated, one where everyone is welcomed in with open arms and encouraged to become active within the organization. It's a joy to work with and learn from such selfless scholars who continue to push forward and do impressive work despite some trying times. I am excited to use this space to recap our Charlotte adventure, highlight a few of our newer members who joined us, share an interesting teaching activity from Dr. Matthew Schneider, give a spotlight to some MSSA, Inc. member wins, and most importantly, go ahead and extend an early invitation to our conference next year in Nashville, Tennessee!

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From the Desk of the President

SHELLY MCGRATH, PHD

I am pleased to be writing to you as MSSA President. I am particularly pleased given the extraordinary commitment of those who made our first ever hybrid meeting such a success! It was an amazing opportunity for those of us who could, to meet in person and reconnect while also allowing for those who could not attend in-person to participate in the conference. The 2021 meeting was definitely an experience. I cannot express just how important each and every one of you were and are to making MSSA successful. The technology committee spent an endless amount of time preparing for the new hybrid and did an excellent job given they were headed into the unknown. Everyone who organized a session, presided over a session, participated in a session, or just showed up for sessions, thank you, this conference would not have been successful without your participation. I would like to personally thank Past President Tina Deshotels for actively recruiting participants and learning the new online submission portal with me. There was a steep learning curve but by the end, we figured it out (for the most part). I would also like to thank Past President Ruth Chananie, who is also the head of our tech committee for spending countless hours figuring out what equipment we would need to pull off a hybrid conference and for setting up all the conference rooms well into the night. I do have to call out at least a few folks. I would like to say the conference went smoothly, but given some of the hiccups prior to and during the conference, I will instead say that we did the best we could with the situation we were presented with and no life ending events occurred. We have definitely learned many things, which shall help us in planning and implementing the conference next year.



The 48th Annual MSSA 2022 will be held in Nashville, TN on October 11 – 15, 2022. Dr. Meredith Dye, President-Elect and Program Chair is hard at work finalizing the theme and organizing another amazing conference. As usual, the meetings will include paper and panel sessions, roundtables, a plenary address, receptions, a banquet and business meeting where we will hand out awards to all the outstanding winners of our various competitions. While we are still uncertain of what the next year is to bring, I would love to see everyone next year at the conference.

From the desk of the President, continued

The format for next year's conference has not been decided on at this time. I would like to encourage everyone who can make the conference in person, to come. This not only helps the organization meet the contract with the hotel, but also to reconnect in a way that being virtual just cannot. We are contractually obligated for 250 hotel room nights, if we do not, the organization will have to pay for those that are not filled. We are in the process of thinking about how to move forward with meetings since COVID has changed the world as we know it.

I would like to welcome our new board members. First, as mentioned earlier, Dr. Meredith Dye is our president-elect. I'm sure we will all show her the wonderful enthusiasm you shared with me in helping to make 48th meeting a huge success! Dr. Melencia Johnson joins us as vice-president elect, Lauren Norman as Nominations Chair, Dr. Kristie Perry as the Chair of the Committee on Racial and Ethnic Minorities, and Dr. Justin Martin as the Chair on the Committee for Membership. I look forward to working with each and everyone of them and know that as a team we can make this coming year for the organization a successful one.

Your appreciative President,

Shelly A. McGrath



Congratulations to newly elected officers and committee chairs!



President Elect:
Meredith Dye,
Middle Tennessee
State University



Vice President-Elect:
Melencia Johnson,
University of South
Carolina Aiken



Committee on
Membership: Justin
Martin, University of
Tennessee at Martin



Committee on Racial
and Ethnic Minorities:
Kristie Perry, Southern
University and A&M
College



Committee on
Nominations: Lauren
Norman, University of
North Carolina at
Pembroke

The most sincere thank you...

OUR RECENT HYBRID CONFERENCE SIMPLY WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE WITHOUT THE FOLLOWING INDIVIDUALS, WHICH WE WISH TO AGAIN RECOGNIZE!

2021 Technology Committee

- Ruth Chananie, University of Tampa (Chair)
- Tina Deshotels, Jacksonville State University
- Shelly McGrath, University of Alabama Birmingham
- Marcus Brooks, University of Cincinnati
- Sarah Donley, Jacksonville State University
- Melencia Johnson, University of South Carolina Aiken
- Andrew Tatch, Troy University



MSSA, INC. 2021 AWARD WINNERS

AS ANNOUNCED DURING THE 2021 HYBRID
CONFERENCE



Stanford Lyman Distinguished Book Award

- Thomas M. Kersen: Where Misfits Fit: Counterculture and Influence in the Ozarks

Sociological Spectrum Award

- Alana J. Peck, Dana Berkowitz and Justine Tinkler: Left, Right, Black, and White: How White College Students Talk about Their Inter- and Intra- Racial Swiping Preferences on Tinder

Graduate paper competition

- Alana Anton: Dumb Hillbillies? Media Representations and Appalachian Identity

Stanford Lyman Memorial Scholarship Dissertation Award

- Marcus Brooks: You Can't Talk About That in the #CancelCulture: Technological Impacts on Racial Discourse

Undergraduate paper competition

- 1st place: Hayley Johnson; Violence of Gender Norms on Etsy

2021 MID-SOUTH SOCIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION PLENARY ADDRESS

STATE OF THE DISCIPLINE: CHALLENGES
AND OPPORTUNITIES

TINA H. DESHOTELS, JACKSONVILLE
STATE UNIVERSITY

PRESIDENT, MID-SOUTH SOCIOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION 2021



The state of the discipline I will argue is in disarray and yet holds great promise for a bright future. Sociology has not kept pace with the changes in society. We are experiencing cultural lag. We study the issues of changes in the labor market, education, growing inequality, and political unrest, but we do not respond to them.

More and more the university is being measured as successful when it produces employable students. Students and parents are, and rightly so, concerned with growing student loan debt, degree inflation, and falling wages. Universities, and departments within universities, are measured, and measure success by focusing on student employment. Departments rise or fall based on the number of majors, rate of graduation, and job placement. In this climate faculty are no longer expected to just focus on teaching, researching, and service, but are now expected to market their degree by focusing on employability. Many see this as the university becoming little more than trade schools. Indeed, we see disciplines resemble trade schools teaching skills that will be obsolete in 5-10 years booming while those that focus on traditional liberal arts skills such as critical thinking, communication, and analysis fading.

I, and many others, argue that sociology and other disciplines grounded in the tradition of liberal arts can both provide the traditional liberal arts skills and produce students who are not only employable but have the critical thinking and other skills that are timeless and universal and absolutely necessary to navigate the changing world around them. I argue that we must breakout of the traditional approaches presented in most introduction to sociology textbooks that focus on outdated and esoteric supposed theoretical paradigms in sociology, specifically: functionalism, conflict theory, and symbolic interactionism. I argue that the presentation of sociology through these three paradigms are not only not useful but detrimental to understanding social phenomena and sociology.

First, functionalism and conflict theory as framed in most textbooks allows students to 'choose' which perspective most aligns with the obvious politicization of social phenomena. It also presents these two as distinct and competing options with no overlap or integration. Second the presentation of conflict and functionalism as macro and symbolic interactionism as micro reinforces the historical 'problem' of sociology, that is to explain the relationship between macro social structures and micro interactions. The options are presented as again competing explanations rather than as in relation. The second challenge sociology, and I would argue society in general faces is apathy. Current texts do a great job of expanding students' ideas to include a focus on social contexts. While important, this often leaves students with a sense of hopelessness. A frequent question that emerges from courses is: If the problems are beyond the individual, what can individuals do? Relatedly, more researchers, policy makers, and the general public are interested in concrete actions to promote social change and alleviate the problems we study as well as the disheartening feeling that complex longstanding problems engender.

In addition, there has been a change in pedagogy to focus more on applied and service learning. However, instructors are left on their own to either answer these questions with more information or provide a most often seen as unsatisfactory response that "understanding problems is the first step to proposing solutions." I argue we must present an integrative theoretical approach that demonstrates the usefulness of sociology for creating a fair and just society by returning to the social justice roots of early sociologists such as W.E.B. Dubois, Jane Addams, Anna Julia Cooper, Ida Wells-Barnett, and others. I also argue that doing so will not only meet the challenges of giving students the tools they need to be successful in the job market but ones that are timeless and necessary for a changing global landscape. In the remainder of my presentation, I first review the ASA recommendations for the undergraduate degree that calls for an integrative theoretical perspective by including micro, meso, and macro levels of analysis as well as focusing on stratification and systems of power and privilege.

The American Sociological Association's 2017 Task Force on Liberal Learning and the Sociology Major (Pike et al.) recommends five essential concepts of a sociological literacy framework. The taskforce recommendations include five essential concepts that "illustrate how sociologists view the social world and how sociology contributes to our understanding of the human experience" (Pike et al. 2017:86) that should be a part of undergraduate student learning outcomes. The first is the 'sociological eye', understanding how social forces impact and are created by individuals. The second is 'social structure,' understanding how structural forces impact human action and social life at the micro, meso, and macro levels of society and "how hierarchy, power, and authority operate across these structural contexts" (Pike et al. 2017:57). The third is to understand how the self is socially constructed and maintained at multiple levels of society. The fourth is stratification, to "identify structural patterns of social inequalityand explain the intersections of race, social class, gender, and other social factors at the micro, meso, and macro-levels of society" (Pike et al. 2017:58). The fifth is to understand social change and reproduction. Notice that nowhere in these recommended student learning outcomes or in any of the recommendations of the taskforce is understanding functionalism, conflict theory, or symbolic interactionism. However, understanding social phenomena at the micro, meso, and macro levels of analysis is mentioned in three of the five essential concepts. Yet, with a few notable exceptions, most sociology textbooks, from introduction to upper-level textbooks, are framed through these three supposed sociological paradigms. As we have seen, a micro focus examines how we in interaction create and construct the world around us. Often those who focus on the micro level favor agency and individual choices in their analysis of the topic.

Not only is this not useful in understanding social life, but it is also an inaccurate representation of how sociologists examine social phenomena. Sociologists do not identify as conflict or functionalists as presented in the texts, nor do they conduct research within these paradigms. And, while there are many who identify and conduct research in symbolic interactionism and social psychology, they very much include a focus on macro cultural and institutional forces. In addition, like the ASA, sociologists and other social scientists are calling for and using integrative theoretical approaches that focus on multiple levels of analysis.

These researchers take the position that it is important we examine social phenomena at multiple levels to understand how individuals are both enabled and inhibited by social structures (Habermas 1984, 1987; Ritzer 1990; Ritzer and Bell 1981; Wiley 1988), in particular by including a middle, or meso level, that serves as a conduit between larger macro forces and micro interactions (Fine 2012; Ibáñez 1997; Pyyhtinen 2017; Risman 1998; Risman and Davis 2013; Sell 2016; Serpa and Ferriera 2019; Wiley 1988). Sell (2016) for example argues that the meso is an intermediate level that articulates between the two extremes of individual and social structure. Fine (2012) argues that the meso level enriches both micro and macro levels as this is where shared meanings are developed. He goes further and gives primacy to the meso level, contending that it is critical to understanding social life and that “sociology without groups is an incomplete discipline” (Fine 2012:172). This perspective has garnered much support and interest and has considerable flexibility in understanding a variety of social phenomena. For example, Barbara Risman’s (1998) individual, interactional and institutional level analysis of gender structure has been applied to gender and housework (Legerski and Cornwall 2010), sexual assault on college campuses (Armstrong, Hamilton, and Sweeney 2006) and in implementing multi-level interventions to prevent violence against women and girls (Jewkes, Flood, and Lang 2015).

Adding a middle or meso-level helps us examine how these ephemeral social structures are passed on to individuals through their interactions within organizations. While there is a fair amount of agreement that this is an important level, there is also a good deal of variability in how it is defined, a lack of conceptual clarity. Groups can be families (e.g., Legerski and Cornwall 2010; Risman 1998), hospitals (Serpa 2016;), and schools, colleges, and universities (Armstrong et al. 2006; Serpa 2018). There is not only a lack of clarity in defining meso, but also considerable disagreement on defining micro and macro. Risman (1998) for example defines micro as identity, meso as interaction, and macro as institutional, formal organizational schemas and ideological discourses. She examines how these ideological discourses are learned and displayed in interaction and internalized at the micro level to create our identities.

While not offering the answer, I am arguing that we, as sociologists work towards conceptual clarity, one that would be flexible enough to address the wide range of topics sociologists study but also allow for replication and comparisons as we move towards greater analytical rigor. The state of the discipline depends on moving towards a more uniform yet still flexible theoretical paradigm that has at least the outlines of definitions for what is micro, meso, and macro.

My colleagues at JSU and I have started this conversation. We are attempting to provide the basis for agreement that encompasses what is most often examined in our teaching, research, and service. My point is not to give the definitive definition. It's likely that the particular topics we address will guide the definitions. I do argue though that we should be clear about our definitions and that it would be useful to at least begin a discussion about what we mean by micro, meso, and macro. Here is what "The Jacksonville School" is thinking.

At the macro level, in the tradition of Parsons (1951), we examine social institutions as patterned regularities designed to meet the needs of society. Institutions coordinate interaction between actors to meet these needs. For example, the economy coordinates the actions of actors to produce and distribute food, clothing, and shelter, fulfilling the necessary function of adaptability. Religion provides a system of shared beliefs and values filling the need of integration, or a sense of common purpose. Education teaches people necessary roles. The state contributes to setting and realizing societal goals. The family both teaches and supports its members so they can serve their roles. Institutions work together like an organism to support the other institutions and all work together to maintain the system. We add an element of critical theory to these supposed truisms and rather than a statement of theoretical fact we turn it into a research question. Do the institutions meet the needs of society? Do they meet the needs of everyone in society? Do they meet the needs of some people in society at the expense of others? This is a critical functionalism if you will.

Next, we examine organizations as coordinated, purposeful action of people to construct a common product (tangible or intangible). Institutions pattern how organizations work. The economy patterns the way the workplaces operate, health

care system patterns the way hospitals work, the educational system patterns the way schools work, the state patterns the way police, courts, and prisons work, and so on.

Finally, integrating symbolic interactionism and social psychology, we examine roles, expected behavior based on the social position a person occupies at the micro level. Individuals occupy roles within organizations. For example, individuals occupy the role of student or teacher in schools, Dr. or patient in hospitals, etc. See Table 1.1 below. (see footnote)

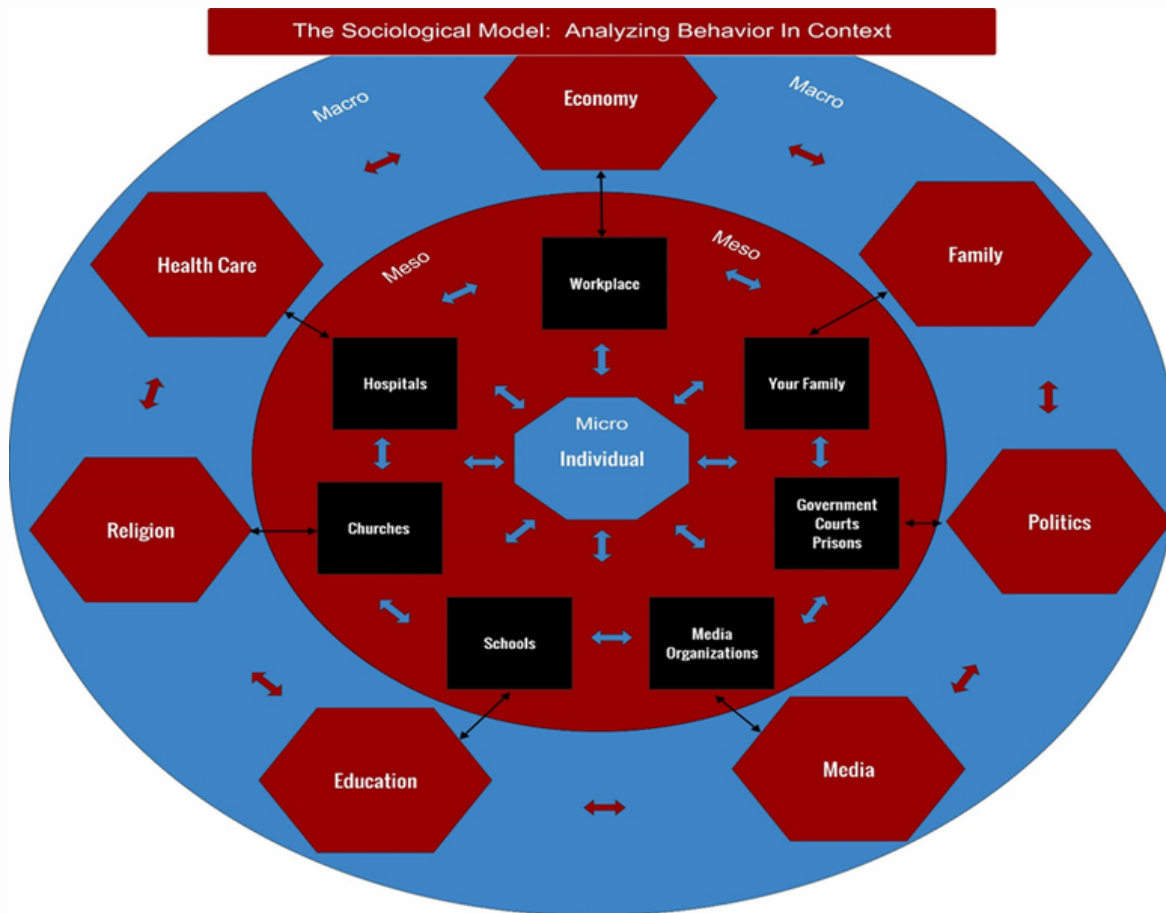
Table 1.1: Social Systems		
Macro: Institution ↔	Meso: Organizations ↔	Micro: Roles
Economy	Workplace	Employee/Employer
State	Police/Courts/Prisons	Police/Citizen
Education	Schools	Student/Teacher
Family	Your Family	Parent/Child
Religion	Church/Mosque/etc.	Leader/Follower

Each level has structure, patterns of behavior, and culture. Culture can be examined at the institutional level in the institutional logics. For example, a focus on competition under capitalism is part of the institutional logic of the economy and impacts how organizations operate. At the meso level we examine organizational culture, and at the micro level, the cultural expectations assigned to the roles we occupy.

Figure 1.1 shows institutions not only pattern organizations which impacts social roles but also that institutions impact each other and other organizations.

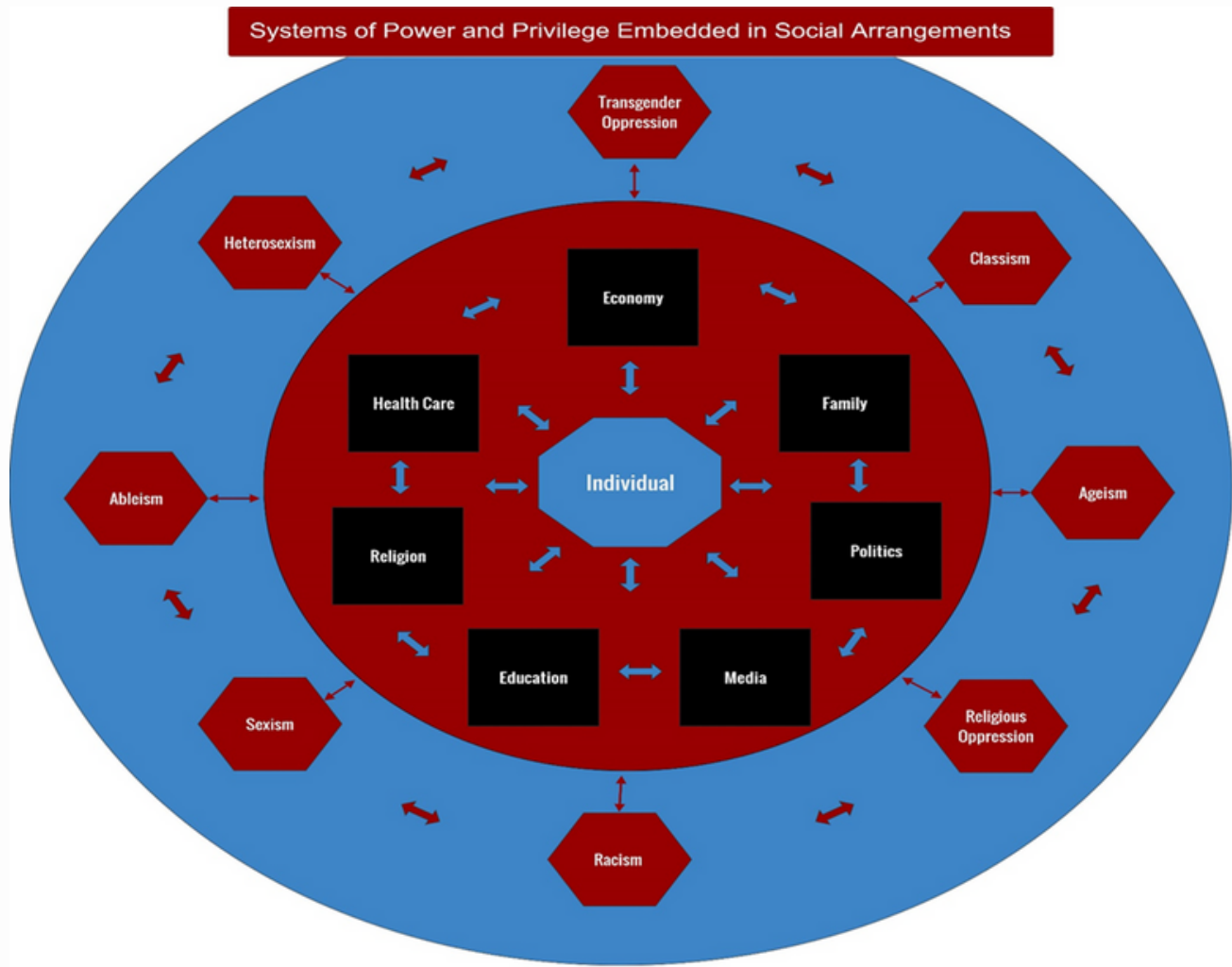
Footnote: These are examples. Other social institutions could be Science, Sports, etc. Other organizations of the state could be the legislature, the military etc. Depending on the topic you might examine other roles with organizations.

Figure 1.1 The Sociological Model: Analyzing Behavior in Context



In addition, we integrate critical theory by examining how systems of power and privilege are embedded at each level. Figure 1.2 shows how systems of power and privilege are embedded in social institutions, which pattern organizations, and impact the roles we occupy.

Figure 1.2 Systems of Power and Privilege Embedded in Social Arrangements



For example, in our research on exotic dance (Deshotels and Forsyth 2021) we examine how the macro level, cultural images of gender, beauty, and sexuality promulgated by the media influence the kinds of women exotic dance clubs employ. Women who are closest to the dominant definitions, work in the upper tier clubs with names like gold club make more money and have a competitive organizational culture compared to a neighborhood club where there is less competition. Men and women in interaction recreate dominant definitions of gender, beauty, and sexuality and reinforce class distinctions.

Our research on CDD Christian Domestic Discipline (CDD) (Deshotels et al. 2019) advocates wifely submission and male dominance through religiously justified physical punishment, most often spanking. We find that hegemonic masculinity and emphasized femininity as a cultural ideal is embedded in institutions, in this case religion, promulgated by CDD organizations and churches and used as a resource in interaction in the formation of an identity as Christian that centers on the idea that men are in power and have control over women.

Each level reinforces the other. Each is always operating at the same time. We focus on one in order to understand that one, but none works without the other. Like when dissecting a heart to understand how it works but knowing it doesn't work with the other organs in the body.

I am encouraging sociologists to think about generalizing a process of understanding that can lead to direct action to address the issues covered. My goal is to outline an integrative theory that addresses how macro institutional practices, cultural ideas, organizational practices, constrain, and make possible the ability of individual humans to create our social realities. This process of analysis is beneficial to challenging the supposed divide between the micro (interactional), meso (organizational) and (macro institutional) levels of analysis.

In sum, the guiding ideas behind this endeavor are twofold. First that all social phenomena are best understood at micro, meso, and macro levels of analysis. In addition, if social phenomena occur at three levels of analysis, solutions, to be effective, must also address each level. I believe this addresses the problem of a complex framework with little if any applicability by providing an easy to understand cohesive integrated focus on individuals, organizations, and social systems. This addresses the problem of lack of applicability beyond the topics studied by providing a generalizable framework that can be used to apply to any social phenomena. This is important because no textbook can cover every aspect. The generalizable framework gives students the skills to understand and address topics not directly covered.

To not just survive but thrive sociology must present an integrative theoretical approach that demonstrates its usefulness in understanding social phenomena and guiding concrete actions to solve problems. Doing so will give students the tools they need to be successful in the job market to understand and improve the roles they play, the organizations they work in and the structure and culture of our societies as well as enable them to meet the challenges of an ever-changing global landscape.

In closing, it is up to us as a discipline, an association, sociologists, and concerned citizens to evolve to meet the challenges of the ever changing political, social, economic, and educational landscape. We are given a great challenge. Not only does our discipline but perhaps civil society depends on our ability to rise to the occasion.

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COMMITTEE ON RACIAL AND ETHNIC MINORITIES SCHOLARSHIP

THIS YEARS WINNER IS.... BEE BEN
KHALLOUQ



Bee (she/her/hers) was born and raised in California and now calls Florida home. She is a first-generation college graduate and the first in her family to seek a doctoral degree. Her parents immigrated to the United States in the 1970s from Mexico. Bee is committed to building community while conducting her research and doing research that can be shared with the public to improve the living conditions of folks. This commitment guides her scholarly activities. Bee is currently a third-year doctoral student at the University of Central Florida. In her free time, she enjoys nature, biking, reading and photography. She believes that recognizing who we are and how we got here helps us understand and shape our work. Her research focuses on health, health access and social inequalities in health and the medical profession. More specifically, her research agenda is focused on race, class, gender, and gender identity and how these intersect and impact the way that we do medicine. Bee's dissertation explores ritualized heterosexist practices in medicine, from the perspectives of medical trainees.

Innovative Teaching: Rethinking Racism: Using the Audit Study as a Classroom Tool

WRITTEN BY MATT SCHNEIDER,
PHD

The audit study has been an important tool for social scientists to understand the ways in which gatekeepers, regardless of their intent, protect opportunities, institutional resources, and institutional membership on the basis of race (e.g., Bertrand and Mullainathan 2004; Pager 2003; Thornhill 2019). One common form of audit study is to send out applications or resumés to employers. These applications will be the same or similar in important ways, but also vary in key areas, including the name of the applicant. Some applications will be assigned names meant to communicate that the applicant is Black while other applications will have a name perceived to be Latinx, white, etc., thereby isolating the effect of a single variable (in this case, race). As one might guess, Black applicants generally “earn” fewer opportunities despite having the same qualifications.

After reading Ted Thornhill’s (2019) “We want black students, just not you” in the Fall of 2018 (the article was “online first” at the time), I found myself wondering what would happen if I ran a classroom activity that mimicked an audit study. Would students actively learning about racism in my 200-level “Race and Ethnicity” sociology course produce a similar pattern? I decided to run the activity on a day in which we were already scheduled to talk about employment discrimination. I was unsure what sort of



“results” I would get, but at the very least, I thought it would allow us to think abstractly about the process of employment discrimination. It would also be a nice opportunity to expose them to a common method used in social science research. Instead, this activity has become central to my courses on racial inequalities. I have found that bringing the audit study into the classroom allows students to make concrete connections to their own lives and actions, and it prompts them to reframe their understandings of race and racism.

In the activity, students were paired to evaluate the resumé of someone applying for a position as an entry level software engineer. They were provided with a resumé and a job advertisement, and they were free to use any internet resources they desired. Specifically, students were asked to rate the applicant on their perceived ability to do the job on a scale of 1-10, to strongly recommend, recommend, discourage recommendation, or strongly discourage recommendation, and to suggest a starting salary. Students were told that other groups were evaluating resumés with “key differences.” In reality, the only difference was the name at the top of the resumé: Gregory Schuman versus Jamal Williams. (1) I used Google Forms to collect their evaluations and presented the freshly collected data in an excel file on the classroom projector.

Innovative teaching, continued

Matt Schneider, PhD

After averaging the columns in front of them, students were shocked to realize that even they, students enrolled in a sociology course on race and ethnicity, had expressed a preference for Gregory. They perceived both candidates to be qualified, but on average they rated Gregory to be more qualified, recommended him more highly, and suggested a higher starting salary. The remainder of the class was devoted to a lively discussion about how the nature of employment discrimination has changed since the publication of Kirschenman and Neckerman's (1991) study of employment discrimination (which they had read in advance of class), concluding that while the language of race(ism) has changed in the era of color-blindness, employers still make use of racialized symbols, even if implicitly.

I've run this activity four times, now: three times with a 200-level Race and Ethnicity class at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and once with a 300-level Social Inequalities class at the University of North Carolina at Pembroke. Gregory has gotten the job three times (Twice at Illinois, once at UNC-Pembroke). The point of running this "study" certainly isn't to make a novel contribution to the field. I'm working with small numbers, I don't keep detailed statistics on the racial composition of résumé evaluators, and I've found that many undergraduate students have no idea what the going rate is for a software engineer. The point is also not to shame students for being complicit in racist systems. Instead, it helps students rethink and reframe racism. It helps them understand how individuals help reproduce persistent inequalities from the ground up.

Racism is a normal and ordinary part of everyday life, even as color-blind ideologies mask the importance of all but the most severe and obvious forms of discrimination and prejudice (Bonilla-Silva 2010; Burke 2012; Delgado and Stefancic 2012). Racism is also to the material, social, economic, political, and psychic benefit of the United States' largest racial group (whites), and thus there is incentive to maintain persistent racial inequality unless it further benefits the dominant group (Blumer 1958; Delgado and Stefancic 2012; Doane 1997; Omi and Winant 1994; Wellman 1993). To racism scholars, this is nothing new.

I have found that to students, on the other hand, these positions are not only new, but hard to accept. In their understanding, race and racism are separable. So, although students seem to quickly accept that race is a social construction, rooted in a history of discrimination and exclusion (Delgado and Stefancic 2012; Omi and Winant 1994), many of those same students find it difficult to think of racism as anything more than malicious prejudice or an individual trait. It is difficult for them to accept that race organizes and informs our everyday lives, beliefs, and actions, and instead try to dwell on questions like "Is Donald Trump [or Joe Biden or some other prominent person] racist?"

Innovative teaching, continued...

Matt Schneider, PHD

This activity has been useful in moving them beyond this framing of racism. After seeing that their own thoughts, opinions, and decisions about Gregory and Jamal had been informed by culturally engrained assumptions about race, students come to understand racism in a new light. Of course, an individual can be racist, but in many ways, this is beside the point. Instead, they begin to see how limiting it is to fixate on a false racist-nonracist binary. We have all been complicit in racist social and cultural systems, and thus, they begin a more productive conversation: how do I/we limit our participation in these systems? How do we undermine the conditions that produce unequal outcomes?

1. Names listed on resumés were inspired by Bertrand and Mullainathan's (2004) audit study, "Are Emily and Greg more employable than Lakisha and Jamal?"

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New MSSA attendees (2021)

This year, we had several first time attendees join us in Charlotte, and I asked them to share a bit about their experiences at the conference. I am a bit biased since two of these students came with me, but I was so impressed with how these first time attendees contributed strong presentations and feedback for other presenters.

Chelsee Allen; Jacksonville State University

My name is Chelsee Allen, and I am a senior sociology major at Jacksonville State University! Attending the MSSA 2021 conference was a very valuable experience for me. It was my very first conference, and it really helped me start thinking about research I may want to conduct in the future, and with all of the different areas that were featured, allowed me to expand my interests within the field. My ultimate goal is to achieve a PhD in sociology, and teach at a university, as well as conduct research. This experience reminded me of everything I am working towards in my undergraduate studies. I was so inspired by all of the presenters, and excited to be able to share my feedback on some of the

research they conducted-- as well as provide ideas on research in progress. It was so exciting to be able to make connections with established sociologists, and getting to hear about current research being conducted. I was able to get advice on applying and searching for graduate programs, and I learned how broad this field really stretches. The opportunities and careers available are relatively endless. The food was amazing, the fellowship was great, and I got to experience a new city! All in all, the entire experience was surreal, I had so much fun and I can't wait to attend more conferences in the future.



New MSSA attendees (2021)

Ryan Howard; Troy University

My name is Ryan Howard. I am a junior sociology major at Troy University in Troy, AL. I was fortunate to have the opportunity to attend the Mid-South Sociological Association 2021 conference. This was a fulfilling experience for me, as I got the chance to attend the presentations of talented individuals, explore new fields of sociology, discuss the state of the discipline, and present my own research. As a student, I found it very insightful to learn more about the research process, methodological approaches, and career opportunities within the broad field of sociology. I am grateful for the association for making this such a welcoming conference for students.

Justin McPherson; Troy University

My name is Justin McPherson. I attend Troy University, a university located in Troy, Alabama. I am pursuing a degree in 6-12th Social Science Education. Attending MSSA 2021 was a tremendous opportunity. Being my first academic conference, I was unsure what to expect. I was a little intimidated by the concept of presenting the work my colleague and I had done. In reality, the reception I received as an undergraduate student was more than welcoming. The feedback we received was priceless. Moving forward with this and other research, that advice and direction will be present in my mind. It was also beneficial to be able to see the research being conducted in the many fields represented. Listening to experts discuss their current research as well as where that research is headed provided a new appreciation for the discipline. I would advise undergraduate students to attend conferences like this when possible. The MSSA community specifically answered my questions and provided me with encouragement for the future. Many people discuss the importance of these events for the networking. It is never too early to start that networking. My education goals, like many others, do include attending graduate school. The conference was a great opportunity to meet the people who are involved in graduate programs in the mid-south area. After the MSSA 2021 conference, I have already begun to prepare for next year. I am sure the experience will be just as enjoyable!



2022 MSSA Nomination Form

We are excited to announce these upcoming vacancies on the MSSA Executive Board! We encourage you to nominate strong candidates for these positions, even if that means a self-nomination! Please email these nominations to Lauren Norman, Chair of the Committee on Nominations, at lauren.norman@uncp.edu.

Please write in your nominees for the following open positions. You are welcome to self-nominate. If you know the email address and/or affiliation, please include that also. Nominees will be on the ballot in 2022, to take office at the conclusion of the 2022 MSSA Annual Meeting.

- High-level graduate students are welcome to the nominations, although they should be cognizant of the duties involved, as finishing schooling should be the priority.
- Past Chairs and Officers may run again.
- All Officers and Chairs are expected to fulfill their duties throughout the year, and be present at the Fall Council meetings for the year(s) they are serving.

President-Elect: _____

This individual is responsible, with the help of the Council and Program Committee, of organizing the annual MSSA Conference the year after they are elected. It is one of the most crucial, and labor-intensive, positions in the MSSA, and should preferably be filled by a tenured, tenure-track, full-time, or established adjunct professor. Commitment is for three years – President-Elect and Program Chair the first year, President the second year, and Past-President the third. Excellent organizational and communication skills are essential.

Vice President-Elect: _____

This individual is responsible for organizing the Undergraduate Paper Competition, assembling a committee of judges, soliciting submissions, chairing one or two sessions at the Annual meeting, and presenting the award at the annual banquet. It is a two-year commitment. In the second year, the VP Elect becomes the Vice President, and organizes the Graduate Student Paper Award, plus is responsible for organizing and leading the annual banquet awards & meeting schedule.

2022 MSSA Nomination Form, continued...

Chair of Nominations: _____

This individual is responsible for soliciting nominations for the year following their election. It is a one-year commitment. The Chair assembles a nominations committee, ensures all nominees meet eligibility requirements, and oversees the balloting and notifications process.

Chair of Professions: _____

The principal goal of the Committee is to contribute to the enhancement of the profession and professionalism through identification of issues and interests of concern to the MSSA membership. The Chair in consultation with Committee members, is to select an agenda of activities for the year. This is a two-year commitment.

Chair of Women, Gender & Sexualities: _____

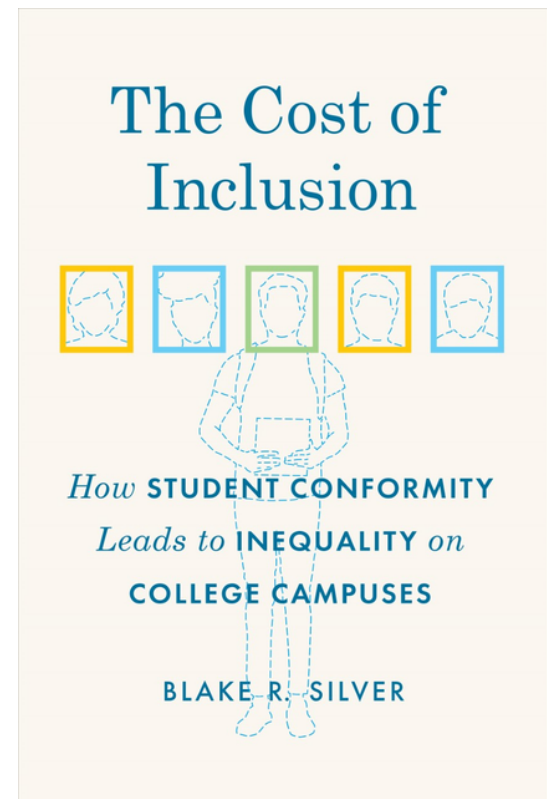
This individual convenes a Caucus luncheon each year at the annual meetings, and presides over it. Among their responsibilities are to solicit ideas from the membership as to special sessions, possible nominees for office, and ensuring that the MSSA remains a friendly and inclusive space for all individuals, regardless of gender or sexual identity. It is a two-year commitment.

Chair of Small & Community Colleges: _____

The goal of this position is to focus on the inclusion and participation of faculty and students from small and community colleges and universities. In addition to convening and presiding over the annual caucus breakfast, the chair organizes special sessions of interest, and solicits ideas from the membership as to how the MSSA can remain inclusive and welcoming. It is a two-year commitment.

Mid-South Sociological Association wins

Blake Silver, at George Mason, recently had his book The Cost of Inclusion: How Student Conformity Leads to Inequality on College Campuses recognized as one of the winners of the American Educational Studies Association 2021 Critics' Choice Book Award!



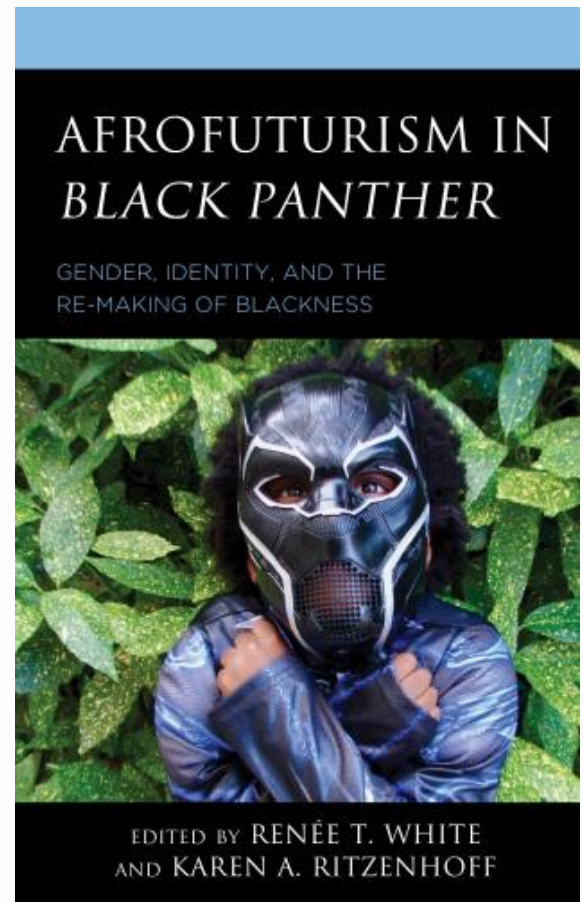
Dr. Kinko Ito, Professor of Sociology at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, had an article published in *Japan Studies Review*!

- Ito, Kinko and Paul A. Crutcher. 2021. "Swallowtail Butler Cafe: Cosplay, Otakus, and Cool Japan in Contemporary Japan." *Japan Studies Review*. Vol 25: pp.113 - 130.

MSSA, Inc wins, continued...

Dr. Giselle Greenidge, Assistant Professor at Northwest Missouri State University, co-authored a book chapter in a recently released book!

- Strong, M. T., Chaplin, K. S., & Greenidge, G. (2021). The Dore Milaje in Real Life: A Continuing Legacy of African Warriors. In R. T. White & K. A. Ritzenhoff (Eds.), *Afrofuturism in Black Panther: Gender, Identity, and the Re-Making of Blackness* (pp. 203-213). Lexington Books.
- <https://rowman.com/ISBN/9781793623577/Afrofuturism-in-Black-Panther-Gender-Identity-and-the-Re-Making-of-Blackness>

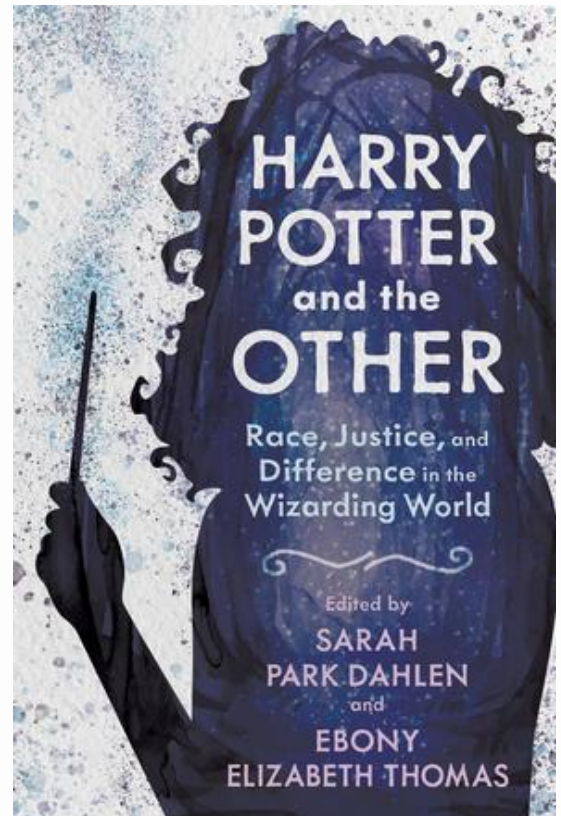


Andrew Tatch, Assistant Professor of Sociology at Troy University, had a manuscript land recently!

- Tatch, A. (2021). I Did It, But...: Exploring DUI Offender Deviance Rationalization in the Digital Age. *Deviant Behavior*, 1-16.

MSSA, Inc. wins, continued...

Dr. Jennifer Patrice Sims, Assistant Professor of Sociology at The University of Alabama in Huntsville gave two talks on her mixed-race research at the University of North Alabama and at Mississippi State University. Additionally, she published a book chapter titled "When the Subaltern Speak Parseltongue: Orientalism, racial re-presentation, and Claudia Kim as Nagini" in *Harry Potter and the Other: Race, Justice, and Difference in the Wizarding World*, edited by Sarah Park and Ebony Thomas (The University of Mississippi Press).



Marcus Brooks at the University of Cincinnati, won the Stanford Lyman Memorial Scholarship Dissertation Award!

Continued MSSA, Inc. wins

Dr. Komanduri S. Murty at Fort Valley State University deserves recognition for multiple wins!

- Komanduri S. Murty and Tamara B. Payne, "Pandemics of COVID-19 and Racism: How HBCUs are Coping." *AIMS Public Health* 8(2):333-351, 2021. doi: 10.3934/publichealth.2021026
- Lazarous Mbulo, Komanduri S. Murty, Luhua Zhao, and Krishna Palipudi, "Tobacco Use and Secondhand Smoke Exposure among Older Adults in India," *Journal of Aging and Health*, March 2021, <https://doi.org/10.1177/08982643211000489>.
- Julius Trimble and Komanduri S. Murty, "Chapter 6: Police Militarization and Domestic Terrorism." Pp.89-100. In: Ashraf Esmail, Lisa Eargle, and Brandon Hamann (eds.) *Terrorism Inside America's Borders*. Lanham, MD: Hamilton Books, 2021.
- Komanduri S. Murty, "Chapter 7: History and Trends in Terrorism Affecting the U.S." Pp. 101-127. In: Ashraf Esmail and Lisa Eargle, and Brandon Hamann (eds.) *Terrorism Inside America's Borders*. Lanham, MD: Hamilton Books, 2021.
- Bridget Holyfield-Moss and Komanduri S. Murty, "Mental Health Counselors' Experiences with Intrafamilial Childhood Sexual Abuse (ICSA) Victims: An Application of Transcendental Phenomenology Reduction Model" *Acta Scientific Women's Health* 3(8):16-26, 2021.

In addition, Dr. Murty was appointed as Dr. Alma Jones Endowment Professor of Social Justice on April 14, 2021. The endowed professorship is the first in the school's history.

The wins just keep coming!

Kevin Breault, Professor of Sociology at Middle Tennessee State University, had multiple manuscripts published in 2021:

- "Disability Status, Unemployment, and Alcohol-Related Liver Disease (ALD) Mortality: A Large Sample Individual Level Longitudinal Study," (with A. Kposowa), Substance Abuse and Rehabilitation, 2021: 12, 81-88.
- "Resilience and Depression in Military Service: Evidence from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent to Adult Health (Add Health)," (with U. Orak, A. Kayaalp & M. Walker), Military Medicine, 2021.
- "Diabetes Mellitus and Marital Status: Evidence from the National Longitudinal Mortality Study on the Effect of Marital Dissolution and the Death of a Spouse," (with A. Kposowa & D. Ezzat), International Journal of General Medicine, 2021: 14, 1881-1888.
- "European Demographic Risks, Immigration, Aging, and Social Recession," (with A. Kposowa), in R. Verdugo (ed.), The Demographic Crisis in Europe, Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.



WE MADE IT (to the end of the semester)!!

As we near the end of another pandemic semester, I hope your semester wraps up smoothly! May you have a relaxing and rejuvenating break, spent with those you love! I look forward to seeing you all in Nashville next October!

Andrew