

To: SSSP Board of Directors

From: Shirley A. Jackson, Chair, 2014 C. Wright Mills Award Committee

Re: Final Report of the Mills Committee

Date: July 2, 2015

This year's C. Wright Mills Award committee members are Kum-Kum-Bhavnani, Sandra Lee Browning, Jeralynn (Lynne) Crossman, Louis Esparza, and Victor Rios. It was a pleasure working with the committee in selecting this year's award recipient. There were 63 eligible books nominated for the award. It was an honor to read so many worthy books. I find this committee to be a lot of work but extremely rewarding.

With the excellent assistance of Michele Koontz and her staff at the SSSP office, the names and addresses of committee members were confirmed and all agreed to participate on this year's committee. A seventh person had been a member of the committee, yet, because of this individual's difficulty in meeting the deadlines (even when extended), the committee chair asked the individual to step down so that the committee could continue its work in a timely fashion. Thus, the committee had six members at the end of the process.

The committee chair followed the procedure set by SSSP. These dates were:

- Deadline for submissions of nominated books: December 15, 2014
- Books assigned to committee members for reading: January 15, 2015
- The Chair must submit a list of finalists to SSSP office by: May 1, 2015
- The Chair must notify SSSP of the award winner by: July 1, 2015

In addition, the committee used a three-round process adopted by the chair of last year's committee. The process worked well as a format for ranking books and set completion date deadlines were in place:

- First wave of reviews March 15, 2015
- Second wave of reviews April 25, 2015
- Third wave of reviews June 15, 2015

The three-round process aided the committee in reading and ranking books by the assigned deadlines. Delays in meeting deadlines for one other member of the committee ensued but these were not extremely lengthy and the committee was able to move forward without significant interruptions in the process.

Using the criteria set for the award by SSSP, the committee reviewed and evaluated books based on the degree to which they met the following:

- critically addresses an issue of contemporary public importance;
- brings to the topic a fresh, imaginative perspective;
- advances social scientific understanding of the topic;
- displays a theoretically informed view and empirical orientation,
- evinces quality in style of writing; and

- explicitly or implicitly contains implications for courses of action.

Consistent with last year’s process, the books were rated on a Likert scale of 1-5 where 5 = most likely and 1 = least likely.

The committee settled on six finalists for the award:

Leisy J. Abrego, *Sacrificing Families: Navigating Laws, Labor, and Love Across Borders*, Stanford University Press

Karl Alexander, Doris Entwisle, and Linda Olson, *The Long Shadow: Family Background, Disadvantaged Urban Youth, and the Transition to Adulthood*, Russell Sage Foundation

Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo, *Paradise Transplanted: Migration and the Making of California Gardens*, University of California Press

Laurence Ralph, *Renegade Dreams: Living through Injury in Gangland Chicago*, University of Chicago Press

Janet K. Shim, *Heart-Sick: The Politics of Risk, Inequality, and Heart Disease*, New York University Press

David Dante Troutt, *The Price of Paradise: The Costs of Inequality and a Vision for a More Equitable America*, New York University Press

Four books scored highest among the six. The committee reviewed these books and ranked them. In the last round of scores where the winning book for 2014 was selected, the book receiving the highest number of 1 and 2 scores was **Laurence Ralph’s *Renegade Dreams: Living through Injury in Gangland Chicago***.

While there was an attempt to meet via conference call to discuss the book and any questions or concerns about the process on June 29, only two members were able to be on the call (one out of the country, two cancelled that morning, and one had technical difficulties). As a result, I requested by email that each committee members respond to the above via email.

Last year’s committee was concerned about the increase in the number of books (up 16.6% from the previous year) but his year’s number of nominated books show a decrease.

Year	Number of Nominations
2012	66
2013	77
2014	63

The number would have been higher but some books were ineligible as they were edited works or not published in the year under consideration. This committee tends to do a great deal of service to the organization by reading so many book in the timeframe allotted. While it is possible, a few people who are unable to do so can slow down the process significantly.