

25 July 2016

TO: SSSP Board of Directors  
FROM: Yvonne A. Braun, Chair  
SSSP 2016 Annual Meeting Program Committee  
RE: SSSP Program Committee Report 2016

**Theme: *Globalizing Social Problems***

It was an honor and privilege to be asked by President David A. Smith to Chair the Program Committee for the 2016 SSSP Annual Meeting. The theme of *Globalizing Social Problems* is one that is central to my own scholarly and activist priorities, and my commitment to SSSP and our shared social justice praxis made this invitation exciting. We had big shoes to fill after the 2015 meeting, as we were incredibly inspired by the intellectual excitement of last year's conference theme addressing race, class, gender, and we humbly aspired to build on this momentum with a focus on global issues and dimensions. I want to thank Bandana Purkayastha and David Embrick, 2015 Program Committee Co-Chairs, for their time and generosity in sharing their experiences and insights over lunch at the meetings in Chicago.

My recent experience as a Division Chair (Global) and as a session organizer was extremely helpful in the sense that I had some experience with the Online Session Management System previously. Even still, the learning curve was substantial, and I thank Michele Smith Koontz for her patience and support, insightful guidance, and good humor throughout the whole process. It has truly been a delight to work with Michele and the SSSP team, including Hector Delgado, Executive Officer; Sharon Shumaker, IT Specialist; Marisa Stone, Administrative Assistant; and Douglas Oeser, Graduate Research Associate and Webmaster. I remain grateful for and humbled by their generosity and professionalism in our work together over the past year.

The Program Committee deserves a special note of thanks for their contributions to the 2016 SSSP program. It is due to their individual and

collaborative efforts that President Smith's vision for the 2016 meeting has come to life. Many, many thanks to Ricardo Dello Buono (Manhattan College), David Fasenfest (Wayne State University), and Evelyn J. Patterson (Vanderbilt University).

Michele Koontz was kind enough to help me gather the necessary information for this year's SSSP program. Based on the Online Session Management System, there were originally 766 papers submitted on February 1, 2016, a day after the January 31<sup>st</sup> deadline. As of July 17, 2016, there were a total of 643 papers submitted using the online submission process and 76 papers added by session organizers for a total of 719 conference papers. At this point in mid-July, there were 899 registrants for this year's conference. There were a total of 33 program participants that were removed from the program for failing to register despite multiple reminders. There are 177 total sessions this year. Eleven sessions were cancelled; it should be noted that some of these sessions were "placeholders" while triaging the repository papers for placement into the program. In total, there were 2 plenary sessions, 47 thematic sessions, and 3 special sessions. There were 65 sessions that were co-sponsored.

Each of the Program Committee members was asked to organize or facilitate the organization of two to three thematic sessions. Some of the notable sessions organized include: "Shifting Tides of US-Cuban Relations" (Ricardo Dello Buono); "Globalization, Domination, and Popular Resistance in Latin America" (Ricardo Dello Buono), "Challenges for the Human Rights Enterprise" (John G. Dale and David Kyle, facilitated by David Fasenfest); "Global Environmental Problems: Causes and Solutions" (Andrew Jorgenson, facilitated by Yvonne A. Braun and David A. Smith), "Contextualizing the "Black Lives Matter" Movement: Race, Policing, and Social Protest in Local and Global Context" (Evelyn J. Patterson); "Refugees, Im/migration, and Belonging" (Yvonne A. Braun); "Crossing the Spatial and Disciplinary Boundaries of Mass Incarceration" (Evelyn J. Patterson); "The White, Male, Elite Backlash" (David G. Embrick and Matthew W. Hughey,

facilitated by David Fasenfest); and “Challenging Violence and Neoliberalism, Building Democracy and Decoloniality” (Yvonne A. Braun and Ricardo Dello Buono).

Other notable sessions include a special Author Meets Critics: “Capitalism in the Web of Life: Ecology and the Accumulation of Capital” by Jason W. Moore organized by President Smith; a thematic session marking the upcoming 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of William G. Domhoff’s *Who Rules America?* with a panel of scholars working in this field with attention to the global (including Bill Domhoff) in a session titled “Who Rules America? Who Rules the World?: Three Generations of Power Structure Research” (Michael C. Dreiling and Yvonne A. Braun); a series of sessions that highlight the work of Cuban scholars and discussion of US-Cuba relations, such as “Shifting Tides of US-Cuban Relations” (Ricardo Dello Buono); and a session titled “Global Climate Change: The Role of Sociology” (Yvonne A. Braun) which brings together scholars who contributed to the ASA Task Force Report on Climate Change. We also have a series of sessions focused on professionalization, including “The Academic Job Market” (Hector Delgado), “Publishing in High Impact Journals” (Pamela Anne Quiroz) “Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Graduate School and Job Prospects” (David G. Embrick and Matthew W. Hughey, facilitated by David Fasenfest), and on experiences of discrimination in the academy and on campus, including “Diversity/Inclusion and Racial Discrimination on College and University Campuses” (David G. Embrick) and “Sexual Violence and Institutions: Campus Sexual Assault” (Yvonne A. Braun). It is particularly exciting that we have a series of sessions highlighting the scholarly and activist work involving the Black Lives Matter Movement and/or issues directly related to their work, which deserves further attention below.

The Racial and Ethnic Minorities Division and the Conflict, Social Action, and Change Division successfully submitted a joint special project request to the Board of Directors and the Budget, Finance and Audit Committee to add a screening of the documentary film,

“Unapologetically Black: Movement for Black Lives Convening” to the program. In addition, the film’s producer and director, Soraya Soi Free, will participate in a discussion following the screening with a panel of SSSP scholars and activists titled “Black Lives Matter” (Michelle R. Jacobs).

These sessions are a wonderful and important contribution to the program. In addition, they paired very well with a thematic session organized by Program Committee member Evelyn Patterson titled, “Contextualizing the "Black Lives Matter" Movement: Race, Policing, and Social Protest in Local and Global Context.” We scheduled these three sessions in succession on Sunday, August 21<sup>st</sup> from 8:30-2:10 in order to facilitate continued discussion and participation across the three sessions.

I want to thank the Division sponsors of these events for their initiative and efforts in securing special project funding, with particular thanks to Michelle R. Jacobs for organizing the film screening and panel. I want to express my utmost gratitude to Soraya Soi Free for very generously sharing this important film with SSSP attendees and for participating in these extremely timely discussions after the film.

Indeed, I am very pleased that we will have three film screenings at our annual meeting. The other two films are “The Crucifixion of Colored Town: Mass Incarceration and the Continued Legacy of Racial Injustice in Black Miami” by Fernando M. Perez and “A Bold Peace: Costa Rica’s Path to Demilitarization” by Matthew P. Eddy and Michael C. Dreiling. These three filmmakers are sociologists who are also SSSP members. The topics of the films stand to make great contributions to the program. I am extremely grateful to Professors Perez, Eddy, and Dreiling for their generosity in sharing their films and for hosting their screenings with opportunities for ongoing discussion with the filmmakers.

This year there are two optional tours available, Northwest Lesbian and

Gay History Walking Tour and Seattle Labor History Tour (which is co-sponsored with ASA). There is a one-day SSSP sponsored mini-conference, “Precarious Work: Domination and Resistance in the US, China, and the World,” held on Friday, Aug 19. There is one optional workshop titled “Institutional Ethnography” on Monday, Aug 22.

A special thanks is particularly due to the Division Chairs, and Council Chair, Bhoomi Thakore, for their great enthusiasm in creating sessions that engaged thoughtfully with the theme of the conference from the very first discussion at the 2015 meeting. The session organizers carried this vision and energy to craft sessions that have cumulatively made this program exciting and successful. I am anticipating a wonderful annual meeting together.

The program work went relatively smoothly, again in great measure to Michele’s guidance and support and despite my learning curve as countless issues came up throughout the year. I do not have any pressing issues to present to the Board of Directors but I do want to add a comment to an issue raised in the past.

Last year’s Program Committee Co-Chairs, Bandana Purkayastha and David Embrick, raised the issue of providing more formal training for incoming PC Chairs. There is a lunch meeting for outgoing and incoming PC Chairs at the annual meeting, as they noted, but then it is largely left to Michele to advise new PC Chairs on the Online Session Management System, timelines and responsibilities, and the countless other issues and dilemmas that arise throughout the year. In my experience, I found the lunch very helpful in alerting me to the main issues that might arise and the general sense of the timing of tasks over the year. But it could not prepare me for the multitude of tasks and decisions needing to be done, big and small, which were to arise. While Michele was always incredibly helpful and gracious in her support, looking back over the year I also wonder if there might be ways to lessen the load of advising a new Program Chair each year. This might involve a more formal training; I can also imagine the development of a

“handbook” of sorts that might be a working resource that can orient the PC Chair throughout the year. I don’t see this resource as something that would be overly prescriptive as to diminish the vision or determination of each Program Committee Chair (or President, for that matter), nor could it/should it replace Michele’s support; but it might lessen a bit some of the burdens of advising that fall to Michele by sharing some of the “lessons learned” and re-learned each year. This is something I would be happy to discuss further, if desired.