

Social Problems

Annual Report

July 16, 2021



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The Official Journal of the Society for the Study of Social Problems



Social Problems

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Annulla Linders, Co-Editor

Earl Wright II, Co-Editor

Derrick Brooms, Co-Editor

July 16, 2021

To: SSSP Board of Directors, Publications Committee, Associate Editors, Editorial Board

From: Annulla Linders, Earl Wright II, and Derrick Brooms, Co-Editors

Re: *Social Problems* Annual Report, 2021

First things first: our work, including this report, would not have been possible without help from a number of people, including especially our graduate assistants, Managing Editor Shaonta Allen, Assistant Editors Marcus Brooks and Anthony Stone, and incoming Managing Editor Kyle Shupe.

At SSSP, we continuously rely on the expertise (and memory!) of Michele Koontz and Hector Delgado. At OUP, this year we have relied on and been supported by Mireille Yanow (for everything) and her team. And a special thanks to Trenton Haltom, outgoing Chair of the Social Media Committee, Mi'Chael Wright, incoming chair of the Social Media Committee, and to Cindy Carlton-Ford, our long-time Production Editor and English-language magician who is now part of the OUP copy-editing team. We also take this opportunity to express our deep appreciation for the work done by our Associate Editors, Advisory Board members, and Student Board members during our first term as editors. We could not have done this without you!

The Report

This report provides details of submissions, decisions, and the review process. We continue the practice we began last year of placing our work in a historical perspective (going back about 10 years when feasible). Appendix 1 includes more details about the global regions from which we receive papers, the methodological approach (quantitative and qualitative) of submissions, and general topic areas of submissions.

The Team

Even though Earl and Anna continue as co-editors, a new term means a new team. Most importantly, Derrick Brooms has joined us as a co-editor. We are also in the process of assembling a new group of Associate Editors and a new Advisory Board, both with a few continuing members (see Appendix 2). Two of our fantastic graduate assistants—Shaonta Allen and Marcus Brooks—are leaving their positions (Shay for a job at Dartmouth and Marcus for a dissertation fellowship). We are forever grateful for all the work they have done for us. We now rely on equally fantastic Anthony Stone, who joined the team last year, to train Kierra Toney, who will take Marcus's position. And we are very happy to welcome Kyle Shupe back as the incoming Managing Editor. Our long-time Social Media editor, Trenton Haltom, is also leaving his position, with a PhD in hand a job awaiting in Houston. He has trained his replacement, Mi'Chael Wright, University of Minnesota, who we welcome with open arms. Finally, we say goodbye to our Production Editor, Cindy Carlton-Ford, whose position was eliminated in the last contract between SSSP and OUP. But we are happy to learn that she has joined OUP's team of copyeditors and will continue working on Social Problems papers.

Work During the Year

Everyone on our team is well-versed in the online submission system and our editorial routines, which means that the day-to-day running of the journal goes very smoothly.

We have continued working on the specific goals we identified last year. First, increasing the number of submissions; second, shortening the time from submission to decision; and third, increasing the attention given to the journal (part of this work is done by the Social Media Committee led by Trenton Haltom - you receive a separate report from him; another part is done by Oxford University Press (OUP), which is part of the OUP report).

We have prepared two Author-Attic videos this year and published two virtual issues. The special issue on work inspired by W. E. B Du Bois and co-edited by Earl Wright II and Aldon Morris was published in May of 2021. We have also set in motion another special issue (guest-edited by Derrick Brooms and Marcelle Medford) on the lives of Black children.

We have secured a larger page-budget from OUP, which will allow us to publish about 5 more papers per issue.

Submissions

As is evident from [Table 1](#), submissions of new manuscripts dipped below 300 in 2017 and 2018 for the first time since 2011. But submissions increased in 2019 and again in Covid-ravaged 2020. The submission pace in 2021 has been strong so far.

Table 1: Total Submissions by Year, 2010-2021¹

	New Submissions	Revised Submissions¹	Total Submissions
2010	287	70	357
2011	262	58	320
2012	329	113	442
2013	327	101	428
2014	323	63	386
2015	375	114	489
2016	335	155	490
2017	295	43	338
2018	289	58	349
2019	344	142	516
2020	354	112	466
2021²	197	59	256

¹ Papers submitted to special issues are excluded from the table.

² Revised submissions include revised manuscripts (.R1s) and conditional accepts (.R2s)

³ Data for 2021 captures the period from January 1st to June 30th

Decisions

[Table 2](#) provides an overview of the distribution of decisions on manuscripts submitted since 2010. Overall, the table shows that the acceptance rate, while fluctuating from year-to-year, is still fairly stable over time (ranging from 5% to 15%, with an average of about 10%). Both the deflection and rejection rates vary a bit over time and probably capture variations in editorial preferences rather than the quality of papers submitted.

Table 2: Final Decisions on Original Manuscripts by Year First Submitted, 2010-2021¹

	MS without Decisions²	Deflect	Reject	Accept	Total
2010	10	53 (53%)	102 (36%)	22 (7.7%)	287
2011	3	101 (38%)	125 (48%)	33 (12.6%)	262
2012	1	88 (27%)	211 (64%)	29 (8.8%)	329
2013	3	105 (32%)	203 (62%)	17 (5.2%)	327
2014	7	93 (29%)	180 (56%)	43 (13.3%)	323
2015	8	80 (21%)	232 (62%)	55 (15%)	375
2016	2	120 (36%)	197 (59%)	18 (5%)	335
2017	0	120 (41%)	150 (51%)	25 (8%)	295

2018	1	110 (38%)	109 (38%)	69 (24%) ³	289
2019	4	111 (32%)	169 (50%)	60 (18%)	344
2020	27	123 (35%)	158 (45%)	46 (13%)	354 ⁵
2021⁴	30	54 (43%)	39 (26%)	2 (.02%)	125 ⁵

¹ Counts all MS decisions by year they were originally submitted, regardless of the year a final decision was made on the manuscript. Papers submitted to special issues are not included.

² Manuscripts without a decision include MS that are still under review, received Revise & Resubmit decisions but were never resubmitted, were unsubmitted and never resubmitted, or did not complete the review process for another reason.

³ The spike in the number of accepted manuscripts in 2018 is linked in various ways to the transition of editors.

⁴ 2021 includes MS submitted between January 1, 2021 through June 30, 2021.

⁵ Data for these years are preliminary as a number of manuscripts are still in process or under review.

Looking at the final disposition of revised manuscripts, [Table 3](#) shows fairly extensive variation regarding the final decision, with both reject and accept ranging from about 30% to 70% (we have no theory for why that is). But on average about half of all resubmitted manuscripts have ended up getting accepted over the past decade.

Table 3: Final Decisions on R&R MS by Year Originally Submitted, 2009-2021				
	MS without Decisions¹	Reject	Accept	Total²
2010	0	15 (42%)	21 (58%)	36
2011	0	51 (61%)	32 (39%)	83
2012	0	54 (65%)	29 (35%)	83
2013	1	17 (49%)	17 (49%)	35
2014	0	25 (37%)	43 (63%)	68
2015	1	71 (56%)	55 (43%)	127
2016	0	29 (62%)	18 (38%)	47
2017	1	10 (28%)	25 (69%)	36
2018	1	10 (13%)	69 (86%)	80
2019	2	9 (12%)	65 (86%)	76
2020	21	3 (4%)	46 (66%)	70
2021	6	0	0	6

¹ Manuscripts without decision primarily indicate papers that are still under review.

² Revised (.R1s) and conditionally accepted (.R2s) manuscripts are only included once, so manuscripts are not double counted.

Additional submission data are available in Appendix 1, including manuscript topic areas, methods of submitted papers, and countries of submitting authors.

Time from Submission to Decision

One of our main goals is to keep shortening the time from submission to decision for manuscripts we send out for review. The initial sharp drop in the time from submission to decision was accomplished by simplifying the involvement of the student board in the process. Since we eliminated the student board in 2020, we have developed a new system that, we hope, will reduce the time further (we had Covid-related delays in the review process in the latter half of 2020 and early 2021). [Table 4](#) shows that we have reduced the average time by more than 2 months.

Table 4: Average Time from Original Submission to First Decision (in Days), 2015-2021¹

	Deflect	Reject	Revise & Resubmit
2015	29 days	164 days	168 days
2016	43 days	160 days	164 days
2017	51 days	185 days	183 days
2018	36 days	137 days	141 days
2019	28 days	122 days	127 days
2020	20 days	113 days	119 days
2021²	20 days	99 days	93 days

¹ Almost no manuscripts are accepted after the first round of reviews (except the Presidential Address), so accept decisions are not included here. Papers submitted to special issues are not included.

² Data for 2021 covers the period from January 1st to June 30th.

We find a similar pattern for time from submission to decision of revised papers (see [Table 5](#)).

Table 5: Average Time from R&R Submission to Final Decision (in Days), 2015-2021¹

	Reject	Conditional Accept	Accept
2015	142 days	159 days	113 days
2016	139 days	137 days	99 days
2017	140 days	190 days	122 days
2018	105 days	104 days	57 days
2019	88 days	84 days	44 days
2020	98 days	73 days	49 days
2021²	---	---	---

¹ As different editors have used the second Revise & Resubmit decision (.R2s) in different ways, we only include data for the years during which editors have used it as a conditional accept decision.

² As of June 30th, all currently submitted revised manuscripts are under external review.

Our aim is to reduce the average time from submission to decision to about 3 months. Given the review delays caused by the pandemic conditions (several reviewers invoked COVID-related reasons for delays) we are not yet able to determine if the changes we implemented during the past year will result in a reduction of the time from submission to decision. But we hope so. To determine where, if anywhere, there is time to cut, we

have calculated the time papers spend in internal processing and in external review. [Table 6](#) shows that we have cut the time in both respects by about 1 month each.

	Average Time (in Days) in Internal Processing¹	Average Time (in Days) in External Review²
2015	69 days	96 days
2016	81 days	79 days
2017	95 days	89 days
2018	46 days	75 days
2019	43 days	63 days
2020	44 days	61 days
2021	29 days	54 days

¹ Time in internal processing captures the amount of time from submission to the first reviewer invitation and final review submission to decision on manuscript. Papers submitted to special issues are not included in this table.

² Time in external review captures the time from when the first reviewer is invited to when the last review is submitted. This includes both original and revised (.R1) submissions.

The reduction in time papers spend in external review is the result of a few different strategies. First, we shortened the requested review time by one week, from 6 to 5 (see [Table 7](#)). Second, we have tried to reduce the number of asks required to secure 3 reviews (see [Table 8](#)). We anticipate that our decision to no longer rely on the student board for reviewer recommendations will result in fewer asks, which will shorten the time papers are in review.

	Days
2010	43
2011	42
2012	41
2013	40
2014	40
2015	38
2016	38
2017	40
2018	43
2019	34
2020	32
2021	31

	Average	Median
2010	8.3	8
2011	7.8	7
2012	7	6
2013	7	6
2014	8.2	7
2015	7.8	7
2016	8.2	7
2017	9.1	9
2018	7	6
2019	6	7
2020	6	6
2021	7	7

Special Issues

The special issue on contemporary uses of the Sociology of W. E. B. Du Bois, co-edited by Earl Wright II and incoming ASA President Aldon Morris, was published in May of 2021 (68:2). It is a fantastic set of articles.

A special issue on the Lives (and Futures) of Black Children and Youth, co-edited by Derrick Brooms and Marcelle Medford, is well under way.

We have also accepted a proposal by Victor Ray and Rory Kramer to guest-edit a special issue on the January 6th insurrection and 'racism by omission'.

Content Attention and Marketing

Our goal is to continue the wonderful work that the student-run Social Media Committee is doing. Thanks to the work done by outgoing media committee chair Trenton Haltom, in collaboration with OUP, the quality and utility of the **Author Attic** interviews have greatly improved. The Social Media Committee and OUP will have more to say about this, but check out the latest interviews with Maryann Erigha on [Racial Valuation: Cultural Gatekeepers, Race, Risk, and Institutional Expectations of Success and Failure](#) and Sandra Barnes on [Becoming a Man: A Duboisian Examination of the Experiences of Black Men Who Have Sex with Men](#).

We also keep working with OUP on assembling **Virtual Issues** (curated collections of papers previously published in the journal). This past year we have published three. The first, on [Gun Research](#), is curated and introduced by Shawn Ratcliff and Tara D. Warner. The second, on [Children's Rights and Voices 30 Years after the UNCRC](#), is curated and introduced by Loretta E. Bass. The final one, on [White Nationalism](#), is curated and introduced by James M. Thomas. The OUP report will contain more information about this.

Other Issues of Note

Overall, work on the journal is very smooth. The most extraordinary thing that has happened this year is, of course, COVID-19 and all the ways it has affected the life and work of everyone involved in the journal (authors, reviewers, staff, editors, administrators, publishers, etc.). While it has not impacted the editorial end of things very much, we know from both authors and reviewers that it has indeed ravaged many lives.

Thinking About the Future

Given how well the journal is doing – with submissions, attention, citations – we have no plans to overhaul it. Rather, we want to continue the work we started three years ago to make *Social Problems* the go-to journal for important work with social justice implications.

Appendix 1: Additional Information About Manuscripts and Authors

Table 9: MS Submissions by Author's Region and Country, 2015-2021¹

Region/Country	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Africa	1	1	2	2	0	2	1
Egypt	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Ethiopia	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Ghana	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Nigeria	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
South Africa	0	1	2	0	0	0	1
Tunisia	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Asia	20	18	17	18	30	16	13
Azerbaijan	0	1	0	0	2	0	0
China	2	0	2	2	2	2	0
Hong Kong	2	1	2	4	2	2	1
India	0	2	0	0	1	1	1
Indonesia	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Iran	1	0	0	1	1	0	0
Israel	10	8	8	7	12	2	5
Japan	2	1	0	0	3	0	2
Jordan	0	1	1	0	0	0	1
Kuwait	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
Pakistan	0	0	2	0	1	0	0
Russia	0	0	0	1	1	0	0
Saudi Arabia	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Singapore	0	1	2	2	2	0	0
South Korea	2	2	0	1	2	3	0
Taiwan	1	1	0	0	0	1	1
Turkey	0	0	0	0	0	2	1
Australia & Oceania	5	9	8	9	2	5	6
Australia	4	8	6	9	2	4	6
Fiji	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
New Zealand	1	1	1	0	0	1	0
Europe	36	44	24	33	25	41	18
Austria	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Belgium	2	1	2	0	2	1	0

Croatia	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Czech Republic	1	0	0	1	0	1	0
Denmark	3	4	0	2	1	1	1
Estonia	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Finland	2	1	0	0	0	2	1
France	2	1	2	1	3	1	0
Germany	4	4	5	6	1	4	3
Hungary	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Iceland	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ireland	0	0	1	1	1	0	1
Italy	1	2	1	0	0	1	2
Luxembourg	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Netherlands	5	7	2	4	3	1	1
Norway	0	3	0	1	4	3	0
Poland	1	0	0	0	1	2	1
Portugal	0	2	0	0	0	2	0
Romania	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Servia	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Slovenia	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
Spain	1	1	1	3	3	8	3
Sweden	1	2	1	4	0	6	2
Switzerland	1	2	1	0	2	1	1
United Kingdom	7	13	8	7	4	7	0
North America	309	258	242	225	309	290	180
Canada	15	15	8	10	12	15	9
Mexico	1	0	0	2	1	0	0
United States of America	293	243	234	213	296	275	171
South America	0	2	1	1	1	2	1
Brazil	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Chile	0	2	0	1	0	0	0
Columbia	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
Ecuador	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Uruguay	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Unknown Country	4	3	1	0	0	0	0

¹ Author's country refers to the submitting author's listed country of residence on Manuscript Central.

Table 10: Original MS Submissions by Topic Area, 2016-2020¹

MS Topic Area	2016	2017	2018 ²	2019	2020	2021 ³
Children & Youth	6 (2%)	8 (3%)	4 (2%)	6 (2%)	4 (1%)	13 (6%)
Crime & Juvenile Delinquency	25 (7%)	24 (8%)	13 (7%)	24 (7%)	16 (4%)	10 (5%)
Deviance	2 (1%)	6 (2%)	0	0	0	0
Disabilities	1 (.3%)	0	0	0	0	0
Education	19 (6%)	17 (6%)	16 (8%)	24 (7%)	25 (7%)	17 (8%)
Environment & Technology	15 (6%)	8 (3%)	6 (3%)	14 (4%)	14 (4%)	11 (5%)
Family	9 (3%)	6 (2%)	8 (4%)	16 (5%)	5 (1%)	5 (2%)
Gender	7 (2%)	16 (5%)	14 (7%)	21 (6%)	19 (5%)	20 (9%)
Global Issues	4 (1%)	5 (2%)	0	0	0	0
Health	17 (5%)	17 (6%)	12 (6%)	17 (5%)	21 (7%)	11 (5%)
Identity	6 (2%)	0	3 (2%)	6 (2%)	3 (1%)	3 (1%)
Immigration	16 (5%)	18 (6%)	8 (4%)	6 (2%)	24 (7%)	12 (5%)
Law & Society	10 (3%)	18 (6%)	2 (1%)	19 (6%)	12 (3%)	5 (2%)
Life Course	3 (1%)	3 (1%)	2 (11%)	5 (1%)	6 (1%)	0
Media	7 (2%)	5 (2%)	3 (2%)	5 (1%)	5 (1%)	5 (2%)
Methods	2 (1%)	0	0	0	0	0
Politics	22 (7%)	12 (4%)	6 (3%)	7 (2%)	13 (4%)	7 (3%)
Poverty, Class, & Inequality	22 (7%)	15 (5%)	16 (8%)	27 (8%)	37 (10%)	6 (3%)
Race & Ethnicity	24 (7%)	31 (11%)	28 (15%)	36 (10%)	63 (18%)	41 (18%)
Religion	10 (3%)	7 (2%)	3 (2%)	3 (1%)	3 (1%)	5 (2%)
Sexuality	12 (4%)	7 (2%)	2 (1%)	13 (4%)	7 (2%)	3 (1%)
Social Movements	11 (3%)	16 (5%)	12 (6%)	17 (5%)	12 (3%)	9 (4%)
Social Welfare Policy	1 (.3%)	0	3 (2%)	6 (2%)	9 (3%)	6 (3%)
Social Problems Theory	20 (6%)	6 (2%)	0	0	0	0
Work & Economy	20 (6%)	18 (6%)	12 (6%)	22 (6%)	25 (7%)	14 (6%)
Other	31 (9%)	21 (7%)	16 (8%)	47 (14%)	34 (10%)	19 (9%)
Not Coded	12 (4%)	1 (.3%)	0	0	0	0
Total	334	294	189	341	357	222

¹ Special issue submissions are not included.

² Includes data only for the period from May 1st to December 30th

³ Includes data for the period from January 1st to June 30th.

Table 11: New MS Submissions by Method, 2016-2020

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Qualitative	52%	48%	43%	50%	51%	48%
Quantitative/Mixed/Other	48%	52%	57%	50%	49%	52%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Appendix 2: *Social Problems* Advisory Board, 2021-2022, still in progress

Co-Editors

Annulla Linders, University of Cincinnati
Earl Wright II, Rhodes College
Derrick Brooms, University of Cincinnati

Managing Editor:

Outgoing: Shaonta Allen, University of Cincinnati
Incoming: Kyle Shupe, University of Cincinnati

Assistant Editors:

Outgoing: Marcus Brooks, University of Cincinnati
Continuing: Anthony Stone, University of Cincinnati
Incoming: Kierra Toney, University of Cincinnati

Associate Editors

Littisha Bates, University of Cincinnati
Japonica Brown-Saracino, Boston University
Shantel Buggs, Florida State University
Tomeka Davis, Georgia State University
Meredith Dye, Middle Tennessee State University
John Eason, University of Wisconsin
Kalasia Ojeh, University of Louisville
LaShawnDa Pittman, University of Washington
Jeffrey Timberlake, University of Cincinnati

Editorial Advisory Board

Shaontá Allen, Dartmouth College
Rachel Allison, Mississippi State University
Felicia Arriaga, Appalachian State University
Loretta Bass, University of Oklahoma
Monica Bell, Yale University
Latricia Best, University of Louisville
Carla Brailey, University of Houston
Natalie Byfield, St. John's University
Jessica Calarco, Indiana University
Koji Chavez, Indiana University
Fae Chubin, Bradley University
Jelisa Clark, Fayetteville State University

Barbara Combs, Clark Atlanta University
Catherine Corrigan-Brown, University of British Columbia
Jose Miguel Cruz, Florida International University
Ebonie Cunningham-Stringer, Penn State Berks
Christopher Dum, Kent State University
Robert Durán, Texas A&M University
Marlese Durr, Wright State University
Linsey Edwards, New York University
Sean Elias, Ashland University
Deborwah Faulk, James Madison University
Luis Fernandez, Northern Arizona University
Crystal Fleming, Stonybrook University
Kelley Fong, Georgia Tech
Jason Ford, University of Central Florida
Chiara Galli, Cornell University
Jacinta Gau, University of Central Florida
Alyssa Goldman, Boston College
Vanessa Gonlin, University of Georgia
Jessica Goodkind, University of New Mexico
Daanika Gordon, Tufts University
Devon Goss, Emory University
Saida Grundy, Boston University
Susila Gurusami, University of Illinois Chicago
Carmen Gutierrez, University of North Carolina
Melissa Guzman-Garcia, San Francisco State University
Margaret Hagerman, Mississippi State University
Chantal Hailey, University of Texas Austin
Laura Hamilton, University of California Merced
Yossi Harpaz, Tel Aviv University
Cameron Herman, Buffalo State University
Brooklyn Hitchens, University of Maryland
Melissa Hodges, Villanova University
Lori Holyfield, University of Arkansas
Jason Houle, Dartmouth College
Linsey Huff-Corzine, University of Central Florida
Elaina Johns-Wolfe, University of Missouri St. Louis
Young-An Kim, Florida State University
Hadi Khoshnevis, Rhodes College
Jack Jin Gary Lee, American Bar Association
Sarah Mayorga, Brandeis University
Julia McQuillan, University of Nebraska
Marcelle Medford, Bates College
Ellis Monk, Harvard University

Dawn Mouzon, Rutgers University
Thomas Mowen, Bowling Green State University
Timothy O'Brien, University of Wisconsin Milwaukee
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Anthony Peguero, Virginia Tech
Carol Rambo, University of Memphis
Victor Ray, University of Iowa
Candice Robinson, University of North Carolina Wilmington
Zawadi Rucks-Ahidiana, University at Albany
Ariela Schachter, Washington University St Louis
Louise Seamster, University of Iowa
Ahoon Tabatabai, Columbia College
Andrew Tatch, Troy University
Megan Underhill, University of North Carolina Asheville
Xia Wang, Arizona State University
Simon Weffer, Northern Illinois University
Hajar Yazdiha, University of Southern California Dornsife

Social Media Committee

Mi'Chael Wright, University of Minnesota