

July 19, 2022

Dear SSSP Board of Directors,

Thank you for this amazing honor to serve as chair of the C. Wright Mills Book Award Committee. We closed the nominations portal with 86 submissions in December 2021. After eliminating duplicate submissions, the total number of books to consider was reduced to 76. In total, we reviewed 76 books for the award this year.

The names and addresses of committee members were confirmed in Fall 2021 with the extraordinary assistance of Michele Koontz, Kelsey Whitaker, and staff and were as follows:

Tsedale M. Melaku, *Chair*, Baruch College, City University of New York
Georgiann Davis, *Chair-Elect*, University of New Mexico
Kathleen Asbury, Community College of Philadelphia,
Angie Beeman, Marx School of Public and International Affairs Baruch College
Luis Fernandez, Northern Arizona University
Candice C. Robinson, University of North Carolina Wilmington
Laurie Schaffner, University of Illinois at Chicago
Paul D. Steele, University of New Mexico

The committee members, representing an array of specialties, institutions, and ranks, were responsive to all deadlines, managed potential conflicts of interest, and worked amicably throughout the process. None of this would have happened without the amazing efficiency of Michele Koontz and the staff at SSSP, for which I am grateful.

In collaboration with Michele Koontz and the staff at SSSP, we provided each committee member with the guidelines and key dates/outcomes to ensure a seamless and efficient selection process. These were the Key Dates/Outcomes for our process:

- Deadline for submissions of nominated books: December 15, 2021
- First-round books assigned to committee members for reading: January 19, 2022
- *Chair* submission of finalists to SSSP office: May 9, 2022
- *Chair* notification of the award winner: June 29, 2022

Committee members received copies of the nominated books. Once all books have been received and the nomination portal was closed (12/15/21), the *Chair* organized a list of all the books, which also contained pdfs of nomination letters, with the help of Michele Koontz's staff, and sent it to each committee member. The *Chair* then assigned readings to each committee member at random where each of us ended up reading (close to) the same number of books. This process is outlined in further detail below:

- A. **The first round of reviews was completed on April 3, 2021**
 - I. . Each book was read by 3 committee members in the first round.

- a. The *Chair* used an Excel spreadsheet to randomly assign the readings to each committee member and then corrected them for recusals due to conflicts of interest.
 - b. Each committee member read 33 or 34 books during this first round.
- II. Consistent with the process from previous years, the *Chair* instructed all committee members to read and rank each book on a 1-5 scale (5 = excellent candidate; 4 = strong candidate; 3 = good candidate; 2 = marginal candidate; 1 = unlikely candidate) according to how it fits the 6 criteria for the award:
1. **Critically addresses an issue of contemporary public importance**
 2. **Brings to the topic a fresh, imaginative perspective,**
 3. **Advances solid scientific understanding of the topic,**
 4. **Displays a theoretically informed view and empirical orientation,**
 5. **Evinces quality in style of writing,**
 6. **Explicitly or implicitly contains implications for courses of action.**
- III. Each member submitted a list of the books read with the numerical ranking to the committee *Chair* by April 3, 2022.
- B. The second round of reviews was completed on May 6, 2022**
- IV. The *Chair* then compiled a list of the rankings in hierarchical order from highest to lowest ranked and submitted them for a new evaluation on April 14, 2022.
- a. The top thirteen (13) (due to several ties) ranked books moved to the next round.
 - b. The *Chair* calculated the top six (6) list (including two ties) on May 8, 2022. We identified those as our six finalists (with two ties).
 1. **Ewoodzie Jr., Joseph C.,** *Getting Something to Eat in Jackson: Race, Class, and Food in the American South*, Princeton University Press.
 2. **Fernández, Jesica Siham,** *Growing Up Latinx: Coming of Age in a Time of Contested Citizenship*, New York University Press
 3. **Hondagneu-Sotelo, Pierrette and Manuel Pastor,** *South Central Dreams: Finding Home and Building Community in South L.A.*, New York University Press
 4. **Bell, Charles,** *Suspended: Punishment, Violence, and the Failure of School Safety*, Johns Hopkins University Press
 5. **Hamilton, Laura and Kelly Nielsen,** *BROKE: The Racial Consequences of Underfunding Public Universities*, University of Chicago Press
 6. **Cashin, Sheryll,** *White Space, Black Hood: Opportunity Hoarding and Segregation in the Age of Inequality*, Beacon Press
- C. The final Tally and Results were completed on May 9, 2022**
- V. After the *Chair* calculated the second-round review rankings, a clear winner emerged. Therefore, a third-round review was not necessary. The finalist was chosen from the list of six finalists, with the winner having the highest ranking. The winner of the 2021 C. Wright Mills Award is:

Winner: Ewoodzie Jr., Joseph C., *Getting Something to Eat in Jackson: Race, Class, and Food in the American South*, Princeton University Press.

D. Notification to SSSP

VI. The *Chair* notified Michele Koontz and the SSSP staff of the winner and five (5) finalists on May 9, 2022.

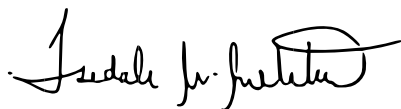
Recommendations

It was truly an honor working with so many committed SSSP members ensuring that all the books submitted were read, reviewed, and ranked with care and in a timely fashion. Below are a few suggestions to consider in order to improve the C. Wright Mills Award process.

1. Looking forward, I would suggest keeping the committee diverse in all its complexities (demographics, affiliations, geography) to maintain the high-quality and equitable selection process.
2. I also suggest sending a reminder to nominating entities (authors/publishers) to have all books sent to committee members prior to the submission deadline (mid-December, usually by 12/15). This will ensure that the members have ample time to read and rank books.
3. Finally, it is incredibly important to ensure that the submission process is inclusive and accessible by minimizing barriers to submission. This year I received several inquiries regarding electronic book submissions. All the inquiries emphasized the high cost of hard copies and the cost/timing of distribution to the committee (particularly for international submissions). In consultation with the 2021 committee, we recommend that future committees allow for PDF/electronic book submissions when hard copies are not available/feasible. We ask that the Board review its policy on hard copy book submissions. The language we propose for consideration in the submission process is:
“While hard copies of the nominated book are preferred, if such is cost prohibitive, we will accept a confidential/not for circulation PDF of the book instead. This will be in consultation with the *Chair*.”

This is one of the most prestigious book awards in our discipline and serving on this committee gives each of us an opportunity to have our hands on the pulse of cutting edge, critical scholarship that helps to shape the world we live. I am incredibly grateful to the board and SSSP leadership for giving me this opportunity to serve. I look forward to working with you again.

Respectfully,



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