



Department of Sociology

June 15, 2023

Dear SSSP Board of Directors:

It was my honor and privilege to serve as *Chair* of the 2022 C. Wright Mills Book Award Committee. We closed the nominations portal with 118 online nominations on 12/15/2022 at 11:59pm ET. After eliminating books with multiple nominations and those ineligible due to copyright year outside of the eligibility window, we reviewed 99 books for the award this year. The number of reviewed books this year (99) was substantially higher than last year when the committee reviewed 76 books.

The names and addresses of committee members were confirmed in Fall 2022 with the extraordinary assistance of Michele Koontz, Kelsey Whitaker, and staff and were as follows:

Georgiann Davis, *Chair*, University of New Mexico
Waverly Duck, *Chair-Elect*, University of California, Santa Barbara
Charles Bell, Illinois State University
Emmie Cochran-Jackson, Middle Georgia State University
Kevin Escudero, Brown University
Amy Lubitow, Portland State University
Howard Lune, Hunter College, CUNY

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, 2022
- First-round books assigned to committee members for reading: January 19, 2023
- *Chair* submission of finalists to SSSP office: May 1, 2023
- *Chair* notification of the award winner: no later than July 1, 2023

Committee members received hard copies of the nominated books at their preferred mailing address. This year, we also accepted PDF submissions of nominated books noting on the nomination submission page that: *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.* Of the 99 books reviewed, 15 were submitted



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electronically although a few of these electronic submissions were emailed as a “backup” as the author and/or nominator also had their press send a hard copy of the book.

Once all books have been received and the nomination portal was closed (12/15/22), 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:

1. The first round of reviews was completed on March 22, 2023. This includes a one-week extension I granted all committee members.

- a. Each book was read by 3 committee members in the first round.
- b. 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.
- c. Each committee member read 42 or 43 books during this first round.
- d. 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:
 - 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
 - Explicitly or implicitly contains implications for courses of action
- e. Each member submitted a list of the books read with the numerical ranking to the committee *Chair* by March 22, 2023.

2. The second round of reviews was completed on April 24, 2023.

- a. The *Chair* tabulated all of the rankings and determined which books would advance to the second round of review.

- b. The second round of review ended up including thirteen books from round 1 rather than ten as planned given a number of books were numerically tied with their ranking score.
 - c. All seven committee members, including the *Chair*, were to review all 13 books that advanced to round 2. However, one committee member recused themselves from one book in round 2 due to a conflict of interest. It should be noted that this committee member also recused themselves from reviewing this book in round 1 and thus this book was reassigned to a different reviewer.
 - d. The *Chair* received all round 2 rankings on or around April 24, 2023. Given one book was missing a reviewer score given the recusal noted in 2c, the *Chair* imputed an average score from all other reviewers for this missing value for which all committee members approved.
 - e. On April 26, 2023, after the *Chair* had tabulated the rankings from round 2, they notified the entire committee that five finalists emerged as well as one clear winner. The *Chair* asked all committee members to favor or oppose the results, and if they opposed to state why so that we could proceed with a discussion. The committee members unanimously approved the results.
3. **On May 1, 2023, the *Chair* notified Michele Koontz and Kelsey Whitaker that our committee had reached a decision.**
- a. **The five finalists, in alphabetical order by last name, are as follows:**
 - **Benjamin, Ruha**, *Viral Justice: How We Grow the World We Want*, Princeton University Press
 - **Lewis, Jovan Scott**, *Violent Utopia: Dispossession and Black Restoration in Tulsa*, Duke University Press
 - **Pérez, Raúl**, *The Souls of White Jokes: How Racist Humor Fuels White Supremacy*, Stanford University Press
 - **Roberts, Dorothy**, *Torn Apart: How the Child Welfare System Destroys Black Families--and How Abolition Can Build a Safer World*, Basic Books
 - **Walker, Michael L.**, *Indefinite: Doing Time in Jail*, Oxford University Press
 - b. **The winner of the 2022 C. Wright Mills Award is:**
 - **Walker, Michael L.**, *Indefinite: Doing Time in Jail*, Oxford University Press



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Recommendations

I really enjoyed chairing this committee. It was my honor to work alongside colleagues to ensure that every nomination was carefully read, reviewed, and ranked in a timely fashion. Below I list a few recommendations to improve the C. Wright Mills Award process.

1. I encourage the continual commitment of maximizing committee diversity in all of its complexities from demographics, affiliations, and geography in order to maintain the high-quality and equitable selection process.
2. I encourage the committee to continue to accept PDF copies of nominated books, with a note that while hard copies are preferred, the committee will accept a PDF copy. This will continue to reduce nomination barriers given not all authors and/or their presses are able (or willing) to send complimentary copies.
3. Our committee was initially made up of eight members, including the *Chair*. However, in August 2022, one committee member not named in this report, needed to step down before the committee's work officially started. A replacement was not appointed. Thus, we were left with only seven committee members down from eight committee members from the previous year despite having 23 more books to review (99 books this year compared to 76 last year). I encourage SSSP to ensure that this committee consists of at least eight committee members due to the number of nominations that need to be reviewed and likely conflicts of interest that might emerge.

While chairing this committee's work was an incredible time commitment, it was also one of the most rewarding service tasks I've done in my career thus far. The SSSP C. Wright Mills Award is one of the most prestigious awards in our discipline, and I'm truly honored to have the opportunity to oversee the selection of its 2022 winner.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Georgiann Davis".

Georgiann Davis, PhD
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University of New Mexico

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