



GREAT CITIES INSTITUTE

July 28, 2025

Board of Directors, Society for the Study of Social Problems:

As someone who has appreciated the work of C. Wright Mills since I first read “Situated Actions and the Vocabulary of Motive” when I was an undergraduate, it was an honor to serve as Chair of the 2024 C. Wright Mills Book Award Committee. Included here is a report on the work of the Committee to select the 2024 finalists and winner.

The work of the Committee is divided among staff, the Chair, and committee members.

The work of SSSP Staff is essential to the functioning of the Committee. Staff responsibilities include:

- Ensure that information is placed on the website regarding the award and its criteria, the committee, and the nomination deadline and process.
- Ensure that information is available on the SSSP website on how to submit nominations.
- Ensure that portals are available for submission of nominations.
- Collect and track nominations.
- Make themselves available to answer questions from prospective authors and/or nominators.
- Provide information and direction to the Chair as needed.
- Check for eligibility of nominations, e.g. years published, single authored, etc.
- Compile, and give to the Chair, a list (via excel spreadsheet) of nominations including the nominator, publisher, title of book, and author.
- Work with the Chair to ensure that committee members have received the books (or PDFs) of all nominations.
- Provide links to PDFs to committee members of nominations submitted as PDFs.
- Work with Chair to determine if there are any recusals necessary from a committee member for any given book.
- Be available to Chair for questions as the selection process ensues.

The responsibilities of the Chair include:

- Receive communications from staff and respond accordingly.
- Answer questions received from authors and/or nominators during the nomination process, and potentially make judgement calls on requests.

- Communicate with Committee members on steps of the process and deadlines. (This likely includes several emails with details of each step, expectations, criteria for selection, etc.)
- Work with Staff to ensure that committee members have received the books (or PDFs) of all nominations.
- Work with Staff to determine if there are any recusals necessary from a committee member for any given book.
- Randomly assign books to Committee members for the first round of reviews so that each committee member receives approximately the same number of books to review. (Ideally, the Chair provides book assignments to the committee as soon as initial spreadsheet is given to the Chair after the nomination deadline.)
- Establish a deadline to submit scores for the first round of review, allowing ample time for review between the assignment of books and the due date for scores to be submitted.
- Compile scores and provide the results to committee members.
- Facilitate committee members in a process to select semi-finalists
- Guide the process to move from semi-finalists to finalists.
- Facilitate committee members in a process to select the winner.
- Provide the name of the winner to SSSP staff.
- Present award to winner at the SSSP Annual Conference Award Ceremony.

The responsibilities of the committee members include:

- Receive communications from Committee Chair and respond accordingly.
- Respond to staff and Chair inquiries regarding books received.
- Identify potential conflicts of interest as directed by staff.
- Review books randomly assigned by Chair.
- Submit scores of assigned books by designated deadline for each round, including the selection of semi-finalists, finalists and award winner.
- Respond to Chair requests to schedule meetings to select semifinalists, finalists, and award winner.
- Participate in committee meetings at each stage of selection process.

The Committee included:

- **Teresa Córdova**, *Chair*, Great Cities Institute, University of Illinois Chicago
- **Michael L. Walker**, *Chair-Elect*, University of Minnesota-Twin Cities
- **Felicia Arriaga**, Baruch College, CUNY
- **Olivia Y. Hu**, University of Pennsylvania
- **Jerome Krase**, Brooklyn College, CUNY
- **Ranita Ray**, The University of New Mexico
- **Assata Zeraï**, The University of New Mexico

SSSP Staff assistance was provided by Michele Smith Koontz, Administrative Officer & Meeting Manager and Kelsey Whitaker, Assistant to the Administrative Officer.

SSSP acknowledges that “serving on this committee is among the most labor-intensive roles within SSSP.” Seven Sociologists comprised the Committee and collectively reviewed 115 books. There were six **criteria used to evaluate the submissions**:

1. Critically addresses an issue of contemporary public importance,
2. Brings to the topic a fresh, imaginative perspective,
3. Advances social 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

Each book was given a score of 1-5. (5 = excellent candidate; 4 = strong candidate; 3 = good candidate; 2 = marginal candidate; 1 = unlikely candidate).

Each book was reviewed by three committee members. Thus, each committee member reviewed and rated nearly 50 books. A first round of reviews led to a list of semi-finalists, from which the Committee selected 5 finalists, and then a winner.

Through the Chair’s leadership, the Committee proceeded with the following **timetable**:

- December 15, 2024, Deadline for submissions of nominated books
- December 16, 2024, Staff provided Chair a spreadsheet with submissions.
- December 17, 2024, Chair sent excel spread to Committee with book assignments for each member; set date for first round of reviews of March 1, thus providing committee members 2.5 months to review 47-49 books each.
- December – January, Committee members received copies of books.
- January, Staff worked with the Committee to identify missing books.
- January, Staff worked with the Committee to identify conflicts of interest.
- March 1, 2025, Deadline for committee members to submit their scores for Round 1 of their assigned books.
- March 4, 2025, Committee met via zoom to review the rankings and selected the list of semi-finalists.
- April 7, 2025, Deadline to submit scores of semi-finalists
- April 10, 2025, Committee met to select finalists.
- June 13, 2025, Committee deadline to provide scores for finalists
- June 15, 2025, Award winner selected.
- June 19, 2025, Chair provided staff the name of the book award winner.

Below is the **list of finalists** for the 2024 C. Wright Mills Book Award:



- **Canizales, Stephanie L.**, *Sin Padres, Ni Papeles: Unaccompanied Migrant Youth Coming of Age in the United States*, University of California Press
- **Contreras, Randol**, *The Marvelous Ones: Drugs, Gang Violence, and Resistance in East Los Angeles*, University of California Press
- **Fullwiley, Duana**, *Tabula Raza: Mapping Race and Human Diversity in American Genome Science*, University of California Press
- **Gross, Nora**, *Brothers in Grief: The Hidden Toll of Gun Violence on Black Boys and Their Schools*, The University of Chicago Press
- **Teeger, Chana**, *Distancing the Past: Racism as History in South African Schools*, Columbia University Press

The winner of the 2024 C. Wright Mills Award is:

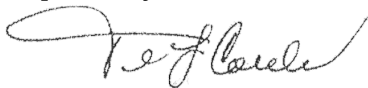
- **Fullwiley, Duana**, *Tabula Raza: Mapping Race and Human Diversity in American Genome Science*, University of California Press

Recommendations

Below are suggestions to consider for improving the C. Wright Mills Award process.

- Committee members should represent a range of subject area expertise. Limited subject matter experts will result in a limited range of subjects among selected finalists and winner.
- Once the deadline for nominations closed, staff provided the Chair an excel spreadsheet the following day. The Chair, in turn, provided book assignments to each of the committee members the following day. This enabled the committee to have two and a half months to conduct their first-round reviews. This practice of timely book assignments should continue. As the books arrive to the committee members, it is helpful for committee members to know what books they are going to have to read.
- When individuals are invited to serve on the Committee, they should be aware of the scope of work involved in serving.

Respectfully,



Teresa Córdova, Ph.D.
Director, Great Cities Institute
Professor, Urban Planning and Policy