



Society for the Study
of Social Problems
In Pursuit of Social Justice

Labor Studies Division Fall 2020 Newsletter

Jacqueline Zalewski, Chair
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A WORD FROM THE CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

Hello, fellow labor studies scholars and activists! We hope this fall newsletter finds you safe and healthy, along with your families and students. The COVID-19 pandemic continues. The number of cases reported each day is increasing, as are hospitalizations and deaths. We hope for your continued health and economic safe keeping during this difficult period of history. In addition to the pandemic, it has also been a challenging year for other reasons, including the heavy job losses in industries that rely on in-person interactions, the continued harm and death of people of color at the hands of law enforcement, and the challenges for faculty, students, and institutions of higher education that are posed by remote learning. However, despite these challenges, we find hope in the efforts of workers and communities rising to confront these challenges through organizing, joining

social movements, and participating in the democratic process.

In contrast to our fall newsletters in previous years, this year's newsletter does not come on the heels of the in-person annual SSSP conference. In lieu of an in-person meeting, SSSP leadership held a half-day virtual conference in August. Division chairs and co-chairs (including Jackie and Todd) also attended two business meetings for division leadership in August and October. At the business meetings, we learned that SSSP membership is down overall by 27%, which in addition to the cancellation of the annual meeting has created economic challenges for the Society. **Please remember to renew your SSSP membership for 2021 now!** As an incentive to recruit and retain members during this challenging time, SSSP leadership is offering a "buy one, get one

free” division membership! See the promotion announcement immediately following this note.

The 2021 SSSP Conference theme is: “Revolutionary Sociology: Truth, Healing, Reparations, and Restructuring.” We would like to thank Corey Dolgon, Rueben Roth, Tracy Dietz, Kyla Doughty, Emily Yen, Mel Borstad, and Eli Wilson for attending our July Labor Studies business meeting to help us work out conference session proposals. Please see the session descriptions below for both SSSP solo- and co-sponsored Labor Studies Division sessions. **The deadline to submit to a Labor Studies or another SSSP conference session is January 15, 2021.**

Please note, this is two weeks earlier than in past years. Please also note that, given SSSP leadership’s decision to make the 2021 annual meeting a virtual conference, all sessions will be migrated to a virtual format. We invite you to read the calls for papers for our Labor Studies Division sessions at the 2020 SSSP conference and consider submitting a paper proposal to one of them by the January 15, 2021 deadline.

The Labor Studies Division will continue the annual tradition of honoring the life and work of Harry Braverman with our annual student paper award. In 2021, Tracy Vargas is chairing the Braverman Award Committee and is joined by Labor Studies members Eli Wilson and Anthony Huaqui. **The deadline to submit a graduate student paper for consideration of the Braverman Award is also January 15, 2021.** We include the full announcement for the 2021

Braverman Graduate Student Paper Award later in this newsletter.

We also want to remind members that the Labor Studies Division will be having an election for the positions of chair and vice chair. Todd Vachon and Tracy Dietz are running for Labor Studies chair, and Melanie Borstad and Emily Yen are running for Labor Studies vice chair. The winners of the election will attend the council of chairs meetings at the SSSP annual meeting in 2021, where they will be oriented to their new roles and begin planning for the 2022 conference.

Lastly, although definitely not least, we want to extend a very warm welcome to our new Labor Studies Division members! Welcome Erin Carman, Maggie Davis, Camille Lehr, Veronica Miranda, and Zakariah Rittenhouse!

If you haven’t already, please take a moment and like the Labor Studies Division Facebook group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/sssplaborstudies>.

Send your news and other announcements to Jackie, Todd, or our social media administrator Camille Lehr (cam.norris1223@gmail.com), and we will ensure the timely posting of your important news on our Facebook page. We wish everyone a relaxing and healthy winter break and holiday.

In Solidarity,

Jacqueline M. Zalewski and Todd E. Vachon

“Buy One, Get One Free” Promotion for Divisional Memberships

There’s never been a better time to renew your SSSP membership and to add a new Division. The Board of Directors approved a **“Buy One, Get One Free”** Promotion for Divisional Membership for “early birds” who join or renew their membership between October 1 and December 31, 2020 for the 2021 calendar year.

For a list and explanations of the 23 SSSP Divisions, visit
<https://www.sssp1.org/index.cfm/m/21/Divisions/>.

To add a division, login at
https://www.sssp1.org/index.cfm/m/410/locationSectionId/0/Member_Login.

The “Purchase a Division” link is under the “Divisions” section,
<https://www.sssp1.org/index.cfm/m/253/Membership/#Divisions>.

RECENT LABOR STUDIES MEMBERS’ PUBLICATIONS

- Carolyn Cummings Perrucci, Mangala Subramaniam, and Robert Perrucci, “Gender and Publication in Two Longstanding Sociology Journals, 1960-2010,” *International Journal of Contemporary Sociology*, April 2020, 57 (1): 25-47.
- Wilson, Eli Revelle Yano. (To be released) December 29, 2020. *Front of the House, Back of the House: Race and Inequality in the Lives of Restaurant Workers*. New York: New York University Press.
- Zalewski, Jacqueline, Miguel Ceballos, Susan Brudvig, and Camille Norris. November 2020. “The Sociology Majors Project.” Class activity published in *Teaching Resources and Innovations Library for Sociology (TRAILS)* <https://trails.asanet.org/Pages/Resource.aspx?ResourceID=13858>.
- Vachon, Todd E. and Debra Coyle-McFadden. 2020. “Who Needs Unions, Anyway? We All Do.” *Star-Ledger*, September 7. <https://www.nj.com/opinion/2020/09/who-needs-unions-anyway-we-all-do-opinion.html?fbclid=IwAR3DT-2JqwZl0j3Jj-mojPHGfKebdQIEWRphTst6funkdhmx5NRDLIUusis>

LABOR STUDIES MEMBERS' ANNOUNCEMENTS

Jacqueline Zalewski's 2019 book *Working Lives and in-House Outsourcing: Chewed Up By Two Masters* was recently reviewed in *Contemporary Sociology* (November 2020) by Joseph P. Broschak.

Tracy Vargas' article, "Consumer Redlining and the Reproduction of Inequality at Dollar General," has been accepted for publication in *Qualitative Sociology*.

Tracy Vargas was interviewed via phone for a CNN Business article this past summer, where her research was cited: <https://www.cnn.com/2020/06/26/business/dollar-general-robberies/index.html>

Art Shostak, Emeritus Professor of Sociology, Drexel University, provided a short ZOOM "paper" to the October 2020, week-long ZOOM Annual Conference of the Association for Applied and Clinical Sociology. Drawing on his 25 years of teaching at the AFL-CIO Meany

Center (1975-2000) and on numerous Labor consulting posts before and after, he urged sociologists to seek consulting roles with local, state, and national Labor Organizations. He noted unions are often unaware of transferable innovations pioneered elsewhere in the Labor world (here and abroad), and he suggested sociologists could encourage nuanced adaptations. His 1991 book, *Robust Unionism: Innovations in the Labor Movement*, with its profile of 100+ reforms, could serve as a guide in implementing this rewarding process.

Art also contributed in October to a forthcoming documentary film about the 1981 PATCO Strike and firing of 12,000 air traffic controllers. He served as the union's Survey Researcher and co-wrote the first book about it. Facebook has a site that explains why the film is timely and how it might now help aid the revival of Organized Labor.

Emily Yen started a new position as a Visiting Faculty Scholar at the Institute of the Humanities & Global Cultures at the University of Virginia.

BRAVERMAN AWARD – STUDENT PAPER COMPETITION

Deadline: 1/15/21

One of the most important activities of the [Labor Studies Division](#) is to recognize and support the work of graduate students. As part of that commitment the division annually awards a prize to the best student paper of the year. The Award consists of a \$250 cash prize, a plaque, membership dues, and conference registration. The award will be conferred in Chicago at the annual SSSP meeting in August 2021.

As in the past, we are soliciting graduate student papers that build on the legacy of the late Harry Braverman. Braverman's work on labor processes, his concern with the growth of large corporations, and how machinery would transform and alter work and the role of workers is as relevant today as it was when he was writing.

The Braverman tradition includes work in a variety of areas, including (but not limited to): labor process studies, critical organization studies, research on the intersections of gender, race, and class at work, technical and organizational change and its impact on work culture, labor movements and resistance in the workplace, critical perspectives on labor markets and occupational transformation. *Papers co-authored with faculty members will not be accepted.* Single authored papers by graduate students and papers co-authored by graduate students are welcome.

All papers will be evaluated by three Labor Studies Division scholars who serve on the awards committee. E-mail your paper and a short letter of submission identifying your graduate program to Tracy Vargas, Tracy.Vargas@uncp.edu by the January 15th deadline. In addition, authors are required to submit their papers through the annual meeting [Call for Papers](#) online system. ***Please note that students may only submit to one division paper competition.***

2021 ANNUAL CONFERENCE LABOR STUDIES DIVISION-SPONSORED SESSIONS Remote

Thanks to the organizers for their work developing their call for proposals.
Session titles and their organizers included:

Labor Unions and The Movement for Black Lives (Regular Session)

Organizer: Janelle M. Pham (jpham@oglethorpe.edu)

This paper session invites work focused on the intersections of economic and racial precarity, broadly defined. Racial injustice is inextricably linked to issues of economic injustice and labor

disparities. While these are certainly not new social issues, COVID-19, the shooting death of George Floyd and the Black Lives Matter movement in 2020 present a magnified moment in which to examine the history of labor and racial injustice, and its current manifestations in an ever-more precarious labor market. Papers examining the labor movement and race at any level of analysis, and within any context (US or global), are welcome.

Precarity (Regular Session)

Organizer: Jacqueline M. Zalewski (jjzalewski@wcupa.edu)

Academics describe the structural factors contributing to the expanding precarity in work and many jobs. Factors for the expanding reach of precarious work include neoliberalist political and economic policies, digital technologies, and globalization. In their editorial introduction to *Precarious Work* (2018), Kalleberg and Vallas discuss several gaps in our scholarly understanding of work and job precarity. These areas are especially suited for new scholarly insights involving current empirical research and theory and would be highlights in the Labor Studies conference session on “Precarity.” Definitional issues, including new and reliable ways of measuring precarious work in its various forms and its characteristic effects, represents one gap. The material and social effects of precarious work on specific populations, the experience, and meaning of precarity represents a second area in need of new research and theory. And how people, groups, and society respond to the spread of precarity in work and jobs is a third area of social justice-oriented research and theory in need of scholarly attention. If you are engaged in scholarship that addresses these areas, or others of special importance to understanding it, consider submitting a paper to this session addressing work and job “Precarity.”

Gender And Work (Regular Session)

Co-sponsored with the Gender Division

Organizer: Tracy L. Vargas (tracy.vargas@uncp.edu)

This regular paper session is dedicated to the debate and analysis of gender relations, the organization of gender, and the gendering of organizations within the broad context of work. We welcome theory-driven and empirical extended abstract or paper submissions that go beyond mere description, using data as a means of advancing, or reflecting upon theory. Submissions may cover a wide range of topics that explore and examine the relationship between gender and work. Preference will be given to topics that engage in the advancement of examining gendered power relations and identities in the study of work and organization. Examples include, but are certainly not limited to, the gender pay gap, flexible work, career patterns, women’s access to leadership positions, unpaid labor, feminist labor practice, gender diversity and intersectionality at work, transnational feminisms, embodiment, organizing, power, resistance, and labor activism at a local and/or global scale. Submissions should be original in content and style and not under review, accepted, or published elsewhere.

Labor and the Global Economy (Critical Dialogue Session)

Co-sponsored with the Global Division

Organizer: Melanie Borstad (Melanie.borstad@gmail.com)

Global networks of raw materials acquisition, manufacturing, and distribution create the landscape for competitive markets in modernity. Shifts in political and economic world power affect workers participation and autonomy in global supply chain. Limited supply of product and increased demand during a time of global pandemic have moved firms towards finding alternative practices. Recent tensions in free trade agreements contribute to this precarious employment throughout core, semi-periphery, and periphery nations amongst periods of decreased trade volumes. How have changes in consumer and corporate demands shaped a new international division of labor? How has economic growth in semi-periphery nations produced new markets in periphery nations? Have there been improvements or declines in transnational corporations' labor practices? What are ways in which organizations or nations are either upholding better standards or combating unjust labor practices? Papers in this session should aim to approach the topic of global supply chains from the perspective of the laborer and/or the impact macro-level decision-making has upon labor market outcomes. A broad investigation of global economic relations and employment conditions both domestic and international are also welcome in this paper session. Research conducted in the interaction of labor and globalization is multi-faceted and complex, allowing a rich discussion to generate from the inclusion of a wide array of levels of analysis and theoretical frameworks.

COVID-19, Structural Inequality, and Unemployment (Critical Dialogue Session)

Co-sponsored with Poverty, Class, and Inequality

Organizer: Eli Wilson (erwilson18@unm.edu)

In addition to being a global health pandemic, COVID-19 has caused major disruption to the economic well-being of millions of workers in the form of unemployment, lost or reduced wages, and profound job uncertainty due to periodic business shutdowns mandated by the government. The impacts of these disruptions have also been unequal: they have hit many structurally-disadvantaged workers in the labor market the hardest, such as women, people of color, and the less educated. For this panel, which is co-sponsored with the Poverty, Class, and Inequality section, we seek scholarship that illuminates the unequal labor experiences of workers during the pandemic, particularly those that pertain to the less privileged. Our hope is that by generating dialogue on these issues, we can gain clarity on the forces that are contributing to the struggles and barriers that workers are facing during, and due to, COVID-19.

Labor, Environment, and the Green New Deal (Critical Dialogue Session)

Co-sponsored with Environment and Technology Division

Organizers: Todd Vachon (todd.vachon@rutgers.edu) and Alexis Econie (econie@wisc.edu)

In the time since it was unveiled, the Green New Deal (GND) has reinvigorated discussions about climate change and inequality in America and has inspired a wave of energetic organizing activity by youth groups, progressive labor organizations, and environmentalists alike. By uniting a broad set of social and economic concerns with efforts to address climate change, the GND marks a sharp deviation away from previous neoliberal, market-oriented approaches to the climate crisis. It also corresponds with a resurgence of grand visioning and sweeping proposals for large-scale transformational change by the American left in recent years. How might big ideas such as the Green New Deal inspire real change and help to solve the dual crises of climate change and inequality? Can it reinvigorate democracy and civic participation by a largely apathetic citizenry? What strategies are climate activists pursuing to make the GND a reality? What are the political dynamics within labor organizations and environmental justice organizations concerning the GND? What might concrete GND policies look like? What historical lessons can be learned from the original New Deal? These are the types of questions that will be considered in the panel “Labor, Environment, and the Green New Deal” at the SSSP Annual Meeting in Chicago, August 2021.

If you are a researcher investigating questions related to the Green New Deal, climate change, inequality, or transformational change more broadly, then this is the panel for you!

Reflections and Lessons from the 10th Anniversary of the Wisconsin Uprising (Regular Session)

Organizer: Emily Yen (emilyhelenyen@gmail.com)

The Wisconsin Uprising of 2011 was one of the most massive sustained collective actions to have taken place in the United States. After the 2010 midterm elections, Republican Governor Scott Walker launched an attack on Wisconsin’s public sector employees by introducing the 2011 Wisconsin Act 10 that would rescind most collective bargaining rights, impose sharp increases in health care contributions, end automatic union dues deductions, and place onerous annual recertification requirements on public sector unions. A spontaneous wave of large-scale protests erupted across the state and peaked with over 100,000 people protesting at the state’s capitol. While these protests ultimately failed to block the bill, the Wisconsin uprising was extraordinarily impactful and shaped the Occupy Movement. In commemoration of the 10th Anniversary of the Wisconsin Uprising, we invite submissions that reflect on this historic event and its impact on the labor movement over the past decade. Research can address but is not limited to tactical innovation, the role of formal organizations in collective actions, and ongoing struggles in the labor movement.

Chicago Workers Struggle (Critical Dialogue Session, Invited Session)

Organizer: TBD

Labor Studies Division is also co-sponsoring the following sessions:

Labor in Sport: Exploitation and Risk Among Athletes

(with Sport, Leisure, and the Body Division)

Telework and Family Balance

(with Family Division)

Disability and the Future of Work in the Post-Pandemic Economy

(with Disability Division)

PLEASE SEND US YOUR UPDATES FOR THE NEXT NEWSLETTER. WE LOVE RECOGNIZING OUR MEMBERS' ACHIEVEMENTS!!
