



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

## Labor Studies Division Spring 2018 Newsletter

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### Note from the Chair

*Word from the Chair.* Preparing this Spring newsletter, I at first thought that it fairly naturally divided into two parts: one, the State of the Division focuses on where we are now; two, Opportunities lists possibilities for you to be agentic in SSSP, in your scholarship, in your teaching, and in multiplying the effects of your own activism. Under the *State of the Division*, we present the 2018 Labor Studies Program for the Annual Meeting in Philadelphia August 10-12, the work of the Harry Braverman Award Committee, the winning of a Special Project Award from SSSP to promote the much-hailed labor history concert-lecture, and achievements by Division members. In the *Opportunities* section, we preview events at the 2018 Annual Meeting, look ahead to 2019, and consider the long-term health of the Division.

But as I have been filling in these two “natural” categories, I have also seen a third—“offerings” or “duties.” For all these things to happen people have to step forward and make an offering of their time and talent. It is not just a contribution to the Labor Studies Division but to SSSP and the vision of social science that it represents. The Division needs your work—and I am supremely grateful to all the people who volunteered to run sessions and serve on the Braverman Committee; it also needs your ideas and we all owe a debt of thanks to the people who suggested topics for our paper sessions at the 2018 Annual Meeting—**please be one of those people for 2019**; the Special Projects Award is due to Corey’s volunteering the idea of using his successful concert and lecture program.

But after a year as chair, I am convinced that the first duty we have is not to let the Labor Studies Division become a version of “bowling alone”—which is what our Division Meeting almost turned into last year in Montreal. Only the happy attendance of new member Tracy Vargas prevented it from being me, the new Chair, and six empty seats at a roundtable. Tracy’s attendance turned into a real gold mine as it produced a session for 2018 on The Working Poor

(the broad subject of the truly fascinating dissertation she is writing under the directorship of SSSP member Gretchen Purser at Syracuse University). Basically, it seems to me members have stepped up to the plate when there has been a clear at-bat situation. The annual meeting this year needs to be seen as such a situation: we need to talk about ways to guarantee that the Division is serving not only its members but the cause of working people in the United States; we need to consider if some structural changes—like a vice-chair or co-chair—might improve the flow of ideas.

**Please try to reserve Saturday August 11, 2018 10:30-12:10 Liberty Ballroom A for the Division Meeting—bowling alone can only take us so far.** (Please strike a hopeful note by rsvping that you will try to make this [meeting—niebran@attglobal.net](mailto:meeting-niebran@attglobal.net) ).

Yours in solidarity,  
Gillian “Jill” Niebrugge-Brantley  
Sociology Department, The George Washington University  
SEIU Vice President for Adjunct Faculty at GWU  
June 3, 2018

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## State of the Division

The Labor Studies Division as of May 22, 2018 has 124 members. For the 2018 Annual Meeting In the past year, the Division has prepared **a full slate of ten sessions** (SSSP awards each Division three autonomous paper sessions and up to seven paper sessions co-sponsored with other Divisions). The diligent work of people who proposed sessions—like **Melanie Bush, Cassandra Engeman, Sam Friedman** (who gave us our Thematic Session), **George Gonos, Tracy Vargas**, and people who volunteered to administer sessions, frequently going the extra mile to find papers to complete panels or to create additional sections of a session to accommodate papers—people like **Junior Hopwood, Jackie Krasas, Nick Pagnucco, Noreen Sugrue**—make all this possible. As a point of interest, you might note that our most successful session in terms of number of papers submitted was George Gonos’s proposal for “Varieties of Precarity” which gave us **two program slots**.

The Harry Braverman Award Committee—**Melanie Bush (chair), Tracy Dietz and Manjusha Nair**—reviewed five papers: “The Devil’s in the Emails: A Sociological Examination of Organizational Failure” by **William Howard Burr**, Loyola University Chicago; “Managing from The Floor or The Office: Gender Differences in Managerial Control” by **Alexandra C. Feldberg**, Harvard University; “When Expectations and Reality Collide—Can Women Identify Family-Friendly Jobs in the Sex-Segregated Labor Market” by **Kaitlin Johnson**, Indiana University—Bloomington; “Welfare Capitalism and the Corporate Construction of the Precarious Worker” by **Amanda McMillian Lequieu**, University of Wisconsin—Madison; “A Big Win in Smalltown—

Demanding Dignity in an Era of Neoliberal Austerity” by **Todd Vachon**, University of Connecticut—Storrs. The winning entry was Amanda Lequieu, who will be presenting her paper at the Annual Meeting in Session 050 (Friday August 10, 4:30-6:10 p.m.): **When the Company Leaves the Company Town: Research from Rustbelt Communities and Beyond** sponsored by Labor Studies and Community Research and Development and organized by **Junior R. Hopwood**, from our Division and **Meghan Ashlin Rich**.

The Division won a \$2000 **Special Project Award** from SSSP by developing a proposal by long-time Labor Studies Division member **Corey Dolgon: *In Search of One Big Union: Folksongs and the US Labor Movement—A Singing Lecture by Corey Dolgon, Folksinger and Sociologist***. This proposal calls for the sponsorship of four presentations by Corey of this singing lecture which presents a history of the of the US Labor Movement. (Corey has performed this program some 30 times to very positive receptions at schools in the United States, Australia and Austria, tailoring his program to the audience—from large groups of undergraduates to smaller groups of graduate students to open evenings in which schools invite local citizens and labor leaders—and to local labor conditions—songs about mining or immigrants or farm labor, etc.—and current headlines. **For more about the benefits of the program and how you could be eligible to access it for your campus, see “Opportunities” below.**

## **Life Changes and Achievements**

Individuals had life changes and achievements—among those reported to us by press time were **Valerie Adrian’s** completion of her dissertation, “Parental Support of Millennials and the Post-Graduate Job Search.” She is working full-time in community justice research for Multnomah County, Oregon. Furthermore, she is channeling her post-doctoral energy into her blog, [www.kitchentablesociology.com](http://www.kitchentablesociology.com). The blog has two main foci: 1. The personal journey from poor student mom to middle class, union represented government researcher. 2. Gender representations in preschool television shows, especially looking for female adult role models for girls who are watching.

**Noreen Sugrue**, former Labor Studies Division Chair, has left her faculty position at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She is now doing research for the Latino Policy Forum in Chicago. She is Research Fellow at the Forum and is looking forward to a long tenure with them. The Latino Policy Forum is a policy organization that conducts analysis to inform, influence, and lead. Its goals are to improve education outcomes, advocate for affordable housing, promote just immigration policies, and engage diverse sectors of the community, with an understanding that advancing Latinos advances a shared future.

**Jen Schradie** had three publications<sup>i</sup>--one in the SSSP flagship publication *Social Problems* on “The Digital Activism Gap: How Class and Costs Shape Online Collective Action”; “Moral Monday is More than a Hashtag: The Strong Ties of Social Movement Emergence in the Digital Era,” in *Social Media + Society*; and “Big Data is Too Small: Research Implications of Class Inequality for Online Data Collection,” *Media and Class*, Edited by June Deery and Andrea Press. **Abstracts of each of these are reprinted at the end of the newsletter.**

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## Opportunities

As always, the Annual Meeting offers a range of possibilities for agency to Division members.

**First, please seize the opportunity to be part of shaping the Division's immediate and longer term future by attending the Division Meeting Saturday August 11, 2018 10:30-12:10 Liberty Ballroom A.**

**Second, do yourself, your students, your campus a favor and check out Corey Dolgon's preview performance of the Division's award-winning Special Project proposal . . .**

***Date: Saturday, August 11 Time: 12:30 PM - 2:10 PM***

***Session 086: In Search of One Big Union: Folksongs and the U.S. Labor Movement-A Singing Lecture by Corey Dolgon, Folksinger and Sociologist***

Room: Horizons Rooftop Ballroom

*Sponsor:* Labor Studies

*Organizers & Presiders:*

Gillian Niebrugge-Brantley, The George Washington University  
Corey Dolgon, Stonehill College

*Description:* This session is a preview of a lecture and song program available to all SSSP members for their classes next year, presented by Professor Corey Dolgon, Folksinger and Sociologist. Sponsored by the Labor Studies Division and SSSP, the program gives a history of the struggle of working men and women to achieve quality of life in an increasingly capitalist society. The use of labor folksongs captures the emotional as well as the material costs of living as a worker in the United States. Contact [cdolgon@stonehill.edu](mailto:cdolgon@stonehill.edu) or [niebran@attglobal.net](mailto:niebran@attglobal.net) for more information about bringing this program to your class or group.

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## Check out our TEN program sessions

**Date:** Friday, August 10

**Time:** 2:30 PM - 4:10 PM

**Session 040: Invisible Work as Part of the Job**

Room: Salon 3 & 4

*Sponsors:*

- Institutional Ethnography
- Labor Studies

*Organizers:*

Alison Fisher, York University

Noreen M. Sugrue, Latino Policy Forum

*Presider:* Alison Fisher, York University

*Discussant:* Noreen M. Sugrue, Latino Policy Forum

*Papers:*

“Invisible Work: Emotional and Mental Labor Black Female Lawyers Expend Navigating Corporate Law Firms,” Tsedale M. Melaku, The Graduate Center, CUNY

“The Hidden Work of Cross-state Move Plans and Pursuits for Medicaid Users with Physical Disabilities,” Brian R. Grossman and Courtney Mullin, University of Illinois at Chicago

“Thinking on the Emotional Work Behind Social ‘Innovation’ and Impact,” Jayne Malenfant and Naomi Nichols, McGill University and Kaitlin Schwan, York University

“What Work Counts? An Institutional Ethnographic Exploration of Competing Forms of Accountability in a Community-based Non-profit Setting,” Shivaani A. Selvaraj, Penn State University

**Date: Friday, August 10**  
**Time: 12:30 PM - 2:10 PM**

**THEMATIC**

**Session 029: The Politics of Getting Labor to Support an Abolition of Capitalism**

Room: Salon 3 & 4

*Sponsor:* Labor Studies

*Organizer, Facilitator & Discussant:* Samuel R. Friedman, National Development and Research Institutes, Inc.

*Description:* This session contains a number of papers about capitalism, the problems it creates for workers and their organizations, and the relationships of workers' struggles to other struggles such as those to prevent environmental devastation. The discussion in this session will build from these papers to consider HOW a working class movement can come to abolish capitalism.

*Papers:*

"Abolishing 21st Century Enslavement: Capitalism's Intentional and Perpetual Low-wages, Underemployment and Inadequate Social Safety Net," R.K. Piper and Minshuai Ding, University of Nebraska Omaha

"Abolishing Work: Negative Politics and the Value-Form," Sean Doody, George Mason University

"Capitalism as a Social Problem: An Abolitionist Approach," Berch Berberoglu, University of Nevada, Reno

"Defensive Environmentalism and Radical Social Change," Cade A. Jameson, Independent Scholar, Ryan Wishart, Creighton University and Chris Hardnack, California State University

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“The Hidden Work of Cross-state Move Plans and Pursuits for Medicaid Users with Physical Disabilities,” Brian R. Grossman and Courtney Mullin, University of Illinois at Chicago

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**Date: Friday, August 10**  
**Time: 4:30 PM - 6:10 PM**

**Session 050: When the Company Leaves the Company Town: Research from Rustbelt Communities and Beyond**

Room: Salon 3 & 4

*Sponsors:*

- Community Research and Development
- Labor Studies

*Organizers:*

Meghan Ashlin Rich, University of Scranton  
Junior R. Hopwood, Bethel University

*Presider:* Meghan Ashlin Rich, University of Scranton  
*Discussant:* Junior R. Hopwood, Bethel University

*Papers:*

“Informal Economic Activities and Survival Strategies: A Gendered Analysis of Inequality in an Urban Context,” Jenny L. Lendrum, Wayne State University

“Prisoner Reentry as a Pathway to the Deskilled Service Work among Men with Working Class Human Capital,” Francis B. Prior, Assumption College

“Men Fleeing Work or Work Fleeing Men? A Qualitative Exploration of Chronic Labor Force Nonparticipation among Rural, Working-class Men,” Robert Francis, Johns Hopkins University

“Welfare Capitalism and the Corporate Construction of the Precarious Worker,”  
Amanda McMillan Lequieu, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Winner of the Labor Studies Division’s Student Paper Competition

**Date: Saturday, August 11**

**Time: 8:30 AM - 10:10 AM**

**Session 060: The Varieties of Precarity I**

Room: Salon 5 & 6

*Sponsor:* Labor Studies

*Organizers:*

George Gonos, Florida International University

Jackie Krasas, Lehigh University

*Presider & Discussant:* George Gonos, Florida International University

*Papers:*

“‘Square Builders’ and ‘High Road Operators’: Successfully Organizing against Worker Misclassification in the Construction and Port Trucking Industries,” Michael R. Slone, Timothy Black and Alicia Smith-Tran, Case Western Reserve University

“Business as Usual: State-corporate Crime in the Rana Plaza Collapse,” Jaclyn T. San Antonio, University of Toronto, Natali Downer Rodriques and Harris Ali, York University

“Precarious Work Structures and ‘Fight Backs’ in Chicago,” Jessica Dianne Cook, DePaul University Labor Education Center

“Refugees as Precarious Workers,” Secil Ertorer, Canisius College

**Date: Saturday, August 11**

**Time: 2:30 PM - 4:10 PM**

**Session 097: Precarity and Contingency in the Academy and Beyond**

Room: Salon 10

*Sponsors:*

- Labor Studies
- Social Problems Theory

*Organizers:*

Nicholas Pagnucco, St. Mary's University College

Gina Petonito, Miami University

*Presider:* Gina Petonito, Miami University

*Discussant:* Nicholas Pagnucco, St. Mary's University College

*Papers:*

“The Passion Principle: An Overlooked Source of Professional Precarity,” Lindsay J. DePalma, University of California, San Diego

“Problems and Prospects for Academic Governance,” Michael DeCesare, Merrimack College

“‘Just Trying to Keep My Customers Satisfied’?: Time Struggle and the Managerial Role of Customers in Adjunct Academic and Platform Delivery Work,” Kathleen Griesbach, Columbia University

“The Problem with Treating Adjunct Faculty as a Social Problem,” Gillian Niebrugge-Brantley and Patricia Lengermann, The George Washington University

**Date: Sunday, August 12**  
**Time: 8:30 AM - 10:10 AM**

**Session 108: The Hostile Work Environment**

Room: Freedom F

*Sponsors:*

- Labor Studies
- Society and Mental Health

*Organizer, Presider & Discussant:* Keith R. Johnson, Independent Scholar

*Description:* Workplace tensions tend to be distributed down to the front-line workers. Four papers explore variations on these negative work environments with a focus on brief presentations of their findings, with time for discussion and questions.

*Papers:*

“A Big Win in Smalltown: Demanding Dignity in an Era of Neoliberal Austerity,” Todd E. Vachon, University of Connecticut

“Navigating Mental Health Court: Identifying Different Types of Engagement in a Hybrid Criminal Justice and Social Welfare Organization,” Cheyney Dobson, University of Michigan

“Racialized Workplaces, Contemporary Racial Attitudes, and Stereotype Endorsement: A Recipe for Race-based Restaurant Service,” Zachary W. Brewster and Gerald Roman Nowak III, Wayne State University

“The Customer is Always Right: Tension within the Dollar Store Service Triangle,” Tracy Lynn Vargas, Syracuse University

**Date: Sunday, August 12**  
**Time: 12:30 PM - 2:10 PM**

**Session 125: CRITICAL DIALOGUE: Alternatives to Capitalist Economic Formations—or Not?**  
Room: Independence A

*Sponsor:* Labor Studies

*Organizer & Presider:* Melanie E. L. Bush, Adelphi University

*Papers:*

“Reducing Default Rates, the Wealth Gap, and Inequality in Access to Housing by Lending Pension Funds,” Sebastián G. Guzmán, West Chester University

“The Capitalist Conundrum: The Deconstruction of Race Via the Abolishment of the United States Economic System of Free Market Capitalism,” Virgil Clark, Northern Arizona University

“Media and the Political Economy of the Minimum Wage: New York Times Coverage 2013-2016,” Ted Brimeyer and James Crean, Georgia Southern University

“Returning to the Basics: Demanding an Unconditional Income and Taking it by Blockade,” Brian W. Marbury, Northern Arizona University

“Investigating Black Brazilian Feminism: A Study about Lélia Gonzalez and Beatriz Nascimento,” Juliana Morais de Góes, UMass Amherst

“Emotional Engagement in the Making of the Nicaraguan Revolution: A Content Analysis of Testimonial Accounts,” Jean-Pierre Reed, Southern Illinois University

**Date: Sunday, August 12**

**Time: 2:30 PM - 4:10 PM**

**Session 144: Supporting Work-Life Balance—‘The Impossible Dream’?**

Room: Freedom H

*Sponsors:*

- Family
- Labor Studies

*Organizer:* Cassandra Engeman, Stockholm University

*Presider & Discussant:* Jenny L. Lendrum, Wayne State University

*Description:* This session addresses the causes and consequences of statutory and employer-based family policies. Research on the effects of family-friendly provisions, such as state-subsidized or on-site childcare and maternity, parental, and family leave policies, show wide-ranging benefits for maternal and infant health, family economic well-being, and decreased workforce turnover. Yet, employers have been slow to voluntarily adopt such policies, and many governments have expanded family policies only recently. Notably, the U.S. remains an exception among affluent democracies for offering no paid leave for new parents under federal law. Session papers will explore questions, such as: What are the intended and unintended consequences of family-friendly workplace policies? How does family policy – or lack of policy – shape women’s career choices and advancement? When do governments or employers adopt policies that help workers balance responsibilities at and outside work?

*Papers:*

“When Expectations and Reality Collide: Can Women Identify Family Friendly Jobs in the Sex-segregated Labor Market?” Kaitlin L. Johnson, Indiana University

“Family, Work and Gender: Women Administrators in Four-year Institutions,”  
Eboni N. Turnbow, Wayne State University

“Impacts of Neoliberalism on Social Work Practice and Careers,” Chris Wellin, Illinois State University

“American Family Values? U.S. Family Policy in Comparative Context,” Cassandra Engeman, Stockholm University

**Date: Sunday, August 12**

**Time: 4:30 PM - 6:10 PM**

**Session 147: CRITICAL DIALOGUE: The Working Poor**

Room: Independence A

*Sponsors:*

- Labor Studies
- Poverty, Class, and Inequality

*Organizer & Presider:* Tracy Lynn Vargas, Syracuse University

*Description:* For an increasing number within the U.S. and across the globe, working hard is simply not enough. This critical dialogue will shine a spotlight on today's working poor and highlight new substantive insights, concepts, and findings. We invite papers that investigate the experiences and politics of those working for poverty wages and look forward to an insightful dialogue formed around groundbreaking research.

*Papers:*

"Action Research as a Means of Learning about and Addressing the Needs of the Working Poor: The Case of Utica, New York's 'Empire State Poverty Reduction Initiative' (ESPRI)," Richard B. Duque, Polytechnic Institute, SUNY

"Capitalism, Patriarchy and Women's Oppression in Globalised World with Special Reference to Informal Sector in India," Shahida Murtaza, Maulana Azad National Urdu University

"Fragmented and Bargained Citizenship: Chinese Labor NGOs Fulfill Workers' Social Rights through Collective Bargaining," Changling Cai, Binghamton University

"How Women Explain Poverty in Turkey," Fatime Günes, Anadolu University, Turkey

"Labor Market Discrimination and Welfare-to-work Participation," Kasey Ray, Kent State University at Geauga and Jacob S. Church, Kent State University

"Low-income Entrepreneurs in Los Angeles: A Movement to Legalize Street Vending," Sara Bruene, Victoria L. Loy and Moshoula Capous-Desyllas, California State University, Northridge

"Reducing Poverty One Skill at a Time," Jessica Ober, The George Washington University

"The Contested Immigrant City: Navigating Violence, Family and Work," Maria G. Rendon, University of California, Irvine

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**AND REMEMBER THE DIVISION MEETING—YOU WILL BE GETTING DETAILS ABOUT THIS AS SOON AS SSSP RELEASES THE FINAL PROGRAM.**

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Hotel Reservation Information  
**Sheraton Philadelphia Downtown Hotel**  
201 N. 17th Street  
Philadelphia PA 19103

**Room Rates:**

**Single/Double Occupancy:** \$187 per night plus 15.5% taxes\*

**Triple Occupancy:** \$207 per night plus 15.5% taxes\*

**Quad Occupancy:** \$227 per night plus 15.5% taxes\*

**Reservations:**

To make reservations, click here:

<https://www.starwoodmeeting.com/events/start.action?id=1710127864&key=2E5B4B24>

You may also call toll free number 1-800-325-3535 and ask for the group rate for “2018 SSSP Annual Meeting.” The cut-off date for the SSSP group rate is July 23, 2018. Please make your reservations by this date in order to guarantee the group rate. Reservations made after July 23rd or after the room block is filled are subject to availability or increased rates.

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

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<https://www.facebook.com/groups/ssslaborstudies/>

And on Twitter

[@SSSPLaborStudie](https://twitter.com/SSSPLaborStudie)

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<sup>i</sup> [Schradie, Jen. 2018. "The Digital Activism Gap: How Class and Costs Shape Online Collective Action," \*Social Problems\* 65\(1\):51-74.](#)

What is the relationship between social class and online participation in social movements? Scholars suggest that low costs to digital activism broaden participation and challenge conventional collective action theories, but given the digital divide, little is known about cost variation across social movement organizations from different social classes. A focus on high levels of digital engagement and extraordinary events leaves scant information about the effect of social class on digital mobilization patterns and everyday practices within and across organizations. This study takes a field-level approach to incorporate all groups involved in one statewide labor issue (collective bargaining rights for public employees), thereby including organizations with different social class compositions, from Tea Parties to labor unions. Data collection spans online and off-line digital activism practices. With an index to measure digital engagement from an original data set of over 90,000 online posts, findings show deep digital activism inequalities between working-class and middle/upper-class groups. In-depth interviews and ethnographic observations reveal that the mechanisms of this digital activism gap are organizational resources, along with individual disparities in access, skills, empowerment and time. These factors create high costs of online participation for working-class groups. Rather than reduced costs equalizing online participation, substantial costs contribute to digital activism inequality.

[Schradie, Jen. 2018. "Moral Monday is More than a Hashtag: The Strong Ties of Social Movement Emergence in the Digital Era," \*Social Media + Society\*, January-March: 1-13.](#)

This article explains the origin puzzle of the 2013 Moral Monday protests in North Carolina. Social media were marginal to the emergence of this civil disobedience movement, yet a common view is that digital technology's weak ties are an integral part of large-scale collective action in the digital era. Instead, strong offline ties with structured organizations were critical to its emergence. Qualitative data show that a network of structured organizations, like labor unions and workers centers, as well as grassroots organizing, traditional media, and an ideological response to an economic and political crisis worked together to propel this large-scale movement. In effect, both structural and cultural factors shaped the activism in this case, not individual or digital explanations. Consequently, this article also traces the historic phases of social movement theory, situating a *digital* emphasis as part of an evolving focus on social movement origin mechanisms. Emergence scholarship on digital activism would benefit from expanding the entry point of protest earlier and broader than a hashtag's debut, as digital explanations may not be as distinct of a theoretical construct as previous research suggests.

Schradie, Jen. 2017. "Big Data is Too Small: Research Implications of Class Inequality for Online Data Collection," *Media and Class*, Edited by June Deery and Andrea Press. Abingdon, UK: Taylor & Francis.

With a growing interest in data science and online analytics, researchers are increasingly using data derived from the Internet. Whether for qualitative or quantitative analysis, online data, including "Big Data," can often exclude marginalized populations, especially those from the poor and working class, as the digital divide remains a persistent problem. This methodological commentary on the current state of digital data and methods disentangles the hype from the reality of digitally produced data for sociological research. In the process, it offers strategies to address the weaknesses of data that is derived from the Internet in order to represent marginalized populations.