



# Racial and Ethnic Minority Division News

SOCIETY FOR THE STUDY OF SOCIAL PROBLEMS

July 2007

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## SSSP

57th

Annual Meeting

Aug. 10-12, 2007

The Roosevelt Hotel  
Madison Ave at 45th  
New York, NY

Visit [www.sssp1.org](http://www.sssp1.org)  
for more information  
or to register!

## Message From Our Chair

It is hard to believe that the annual meeting is just a few weeks away. The Racial and Ethnic Minorities Division will be well represented. The division is the sponsor and co-sponsor for a variety of sessions. I do hope you find the time to stop by the presentations and join in the discussions.

Given the success of last year's reception, the divisions have decided to hold a joint reception again at the annual meeting. It presents an opportunity to discuss ideas from a wide range of perspectives and make some interesting connections. Who knows what research project ideas will

emerge or what collaborations will be born at the joint reception on Friday, August 10 from 6:30pm - 7:30pm in the Vanderbilt Suite, Roosevelt Hotel. We hope you will join us.

Please take a few minutes to read this newsletter. Many of our division members have submitted recognitions and new books for your consideration.

Also, please plan to attend the division business meeting on Saturday 12:30-2:10pm in the Sutton Suite. It is critical that we have strong attendance because we have a fair amount of division business to attend to including: planning

the 2008 conference sessions, voting on any proposals put before the division, recognizing the winner of the graduate student paper competition and more. I looking forward to seeing you all in August.



Division Chair  
Melinda Messineo  
Dept. of Sociology  
Ball State University  
Muncie, Indiana

## 57th Annual SSSP Meeting

### Division's Sponsored & Co-Sponsored Sessions:

#27 Fri., 8/10, 12:30-2:10pm Inter-sexions: Race, Class and Sexuality, Room: Park Suite

#51 Sat., 8/11, 8-9am, New Immigrant Communities, Room: Lexington Suite

#75 Sat., 8/11, 2:30-4:10pm, Race, Ethnicity, and Gender in International Contexts, Room: Lexington Suite

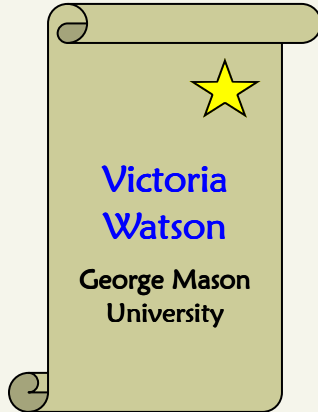
#86 Sat., 8/11, 4:30-6:10pm, Globalization, Immigration and the Changing Nature of Work, Room: Lexington Suite

#95 Sun., 8/12, 8:30am-10:10am, The National Identity and Racial Identity: Implications of Research for Organizing and Action, Room: Riverside Suite

#123 Sun., 8/12, 12:30-2:10pm, Recent Research on Immigration, Room Fashion Suite

#141 Sun., 8/12, 4:30-6:10pm, Creating Knowledge for Racial Justice in Health, Room: Riverside Suite

## 2007 Graduate Competition Paper Winner Announced



The Racial and Ethnic Minorities Division invited students to submit their work for consideration for the 2006-2007 graduate paper competition. The committee received a number of fine examples of student research. We are pleased to announce that the winner was **Victoria Watson** from George Mason University for her work titled "White Privilege as an Agent Utilized to Perpetuate Racism in the United States."

The winner will receive a \$100 stipend and a ticket to the awards banquet.

The Program Committee is sponsoring two Student Award Winning Papers

sessions this year, one on Saturday, August 11 from 2:30pm - 4:10pm and another on Sunday, August 12 from 8:30am - 10:10am.

Congratulations to all of the participants on their fine work. We wish each of you success in your future pursuits.



Victoria Watson

### Questions & Answers with Victoria Watson

**Where did you receive your undergraduate and graduate degree?**

I received my undergraduate and will receive my graduate degree from George Mason University. During my undergraduate years, I majored in Psychology and minored in Sociology. I will be completing my Masters in Sociology in May 2008.

**What is your main focus in Sociology?**

My focuses in graduate school are social inequality, as it pertains to race, class, gender, sexuality, and ability, as well as HIV/AIDS stigma.

**Why did you choose this as your focus?**

I chose to focus in these areas, because I am passionate about working towards

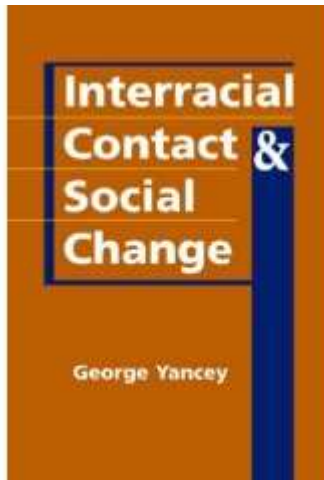
social justice. Social inequality is what keeps hierarchical and structural forms of oppression intact, and I wish to contribute in a meaningful way to the deconstruction and rebuilding of such systems. Further, I chose a focus on HIV/AIDS stigma, because though there is a great deal more information and knowledge available to the public regarding HIV/AIDS, stigma continues to prevent people from getting tested, and inhibits communities from providing the social, emotional, and medical support people with HIV/AIDS need.

**Why did you focus on this topic in your paper?**

I decided to focus my paper on white privilege, because it is a modern-day,

invisible system of racial domination that is used to keep oppressed peoples in a deprived state of being. Being a Caucasian woman of French and Scottish heritage, I am given opportunities that are denied to my counterparts of color. Though I was born into this system of racial privilege, I do not have to accept such a system, and I can work to dismantle it. This paper was meant to help start a dialogue about this difficult issue. White privilege hurts both those it privileges and those it disadvantages, and it needs to be exposed if further strides are to be made to eradicate racism in the United States.

## New Releases



George Yancey  
HC \$49.95; 2007; 181 Pages  
1978-1-58826-508-1

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"Yancey masterfully details the promises and pitfalls of interracial contact in the 21st century. Tight, solid, gutsy ... an outstanding contribution to understanding our collective human future." - David Brunsma, University of Missouri-Columbia

### DOCUMENTARY:

#### Latino Stories of World War II

"Latino Stories of World War II" film by Mario Barrera is based on oral history interviews with four Latino veterans of World War II—three Mexican Americans and one Cuban American. In the film the veterans tell their own stories in their own words, supplemented by archival film footage, historical photos, and music. This film has generated some interest because the forthcoming PBS series on World War II by Ken Burns totally omitted any mention of the role of Latinos in that war. As of now, two PBS stations have agreed to show my film in conjunction with the Burns series, which starts in September. Anyone interested in ordering a DVD copy may contact Mario Barrera at [mbarrera8@yahoo.com](mailto:mbarrera8@yahoo.com).

In this thought-provoking analysis, George Yancey reevaluates the controversial "contact hypothesis" as he explores if and when interracial contact can combat the racial animosity and inequality permeating US society.

Yancey draws on quantitative and qualitative investigations of interracial religious congregations, families, and friendships to demonstrate that extensive interactions with people of color can alter the racial attitudes of whites. In the process, he challenges the assumption that contact necessarily results in people of color assimilating white values and culture: it may strengthen their socioeconomic positions, but it does not subvert their racial identity. Contact, Yancey concludes, is not a panacea for society's racial ills—but it is a vital supplement to the structural changes that must occur.

George Yancey is associate professor of sociology at the University of North Texas.

He is author of *Who is White?: Latinos, Asians, and the New Black/Nonblack Divide*.

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- c. Where is Interracial Contact the Most Powerful?
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- e. Pathways to Change.
- f. Interracial Contact and People of Color.
- g. Conclusion: Supporting Change.

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Boulder, CO 80301.

### Book Releases:

Chamberlin, Ann. *A History of Women's Seclusion in the Middle East: The Veil in the Looking Glass*. Haworth Press, 2006.

Hattery, Angela J. and Earl Smith. *African American Families*. Sage, 2007.

Kubrin, Charis E., Gregory D. Squires, and Eric A. Stewart. "Neighborhoods, Race and Recidivism: The Community Reoffending Nexus and Its Implications for African Americans." *Sage Race Relations Abstracts* 32:7-37, 2007.

Hondagneu-Sotelo, Pierrette, editor. *Religion and Social Justice for Immigrants*. Rutgers University Press, 2007.

Smith, Earl. *Race, Sport and the American Dream*. Carolina Academic Press, 2007.

# It's Much More Than Imus! The Industrial, Textual, and Cultural Facets of Media Racism

by Matthew W. Hughey, 2007

Ph.D. Candidate, *University of Virginia*

(For the longer version of this article please write to:

[matthewhughey@gmail.com](mailto:matthewhughey@gmail.com); <http://people.virginia.edu/~mwh5h/>)

I recently attended a comedy routine by television star Jon Stewart. Most know Stewart from his left-leaning, over-the-top, political/comedy show *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* on Comedy Central. Upon walking on stage and waving to the crowd, Stewart's very first words to the audience were: "Well, we got rid of Imus ... sure am glad racism is gone. Whew! That was a close one." Stewart's lampooning comments were meant to illuminate something central to our post-civil rights logic concerning racism: we have an incredibly low tolerance for racism in overt form and have little to no way of identifying racism unless it slaps us in our face. And radio shock-jock Don Imus did just that. The slap came on 4 April 2007 when Imus went on his CBS and MSNBC affiliated *Imus in the Morning* radio show and called the Rutgers Women's basketball team a bunch of "nappy-headed hos" (Associated Press, 12 April 2007).

As sociologist Eduardo Bonilla-Silva proclaims in his book *Racism Without Racists* (2003), it is evident that most people do not know how to conceive of racism unless it is wearing a swastika, donning a hood, or calling people offensive terms under certain conditions. When racism does manifest itself in these forms, we fittingly decry such immorality and engage in our politically correct damage control. However, we have few ways of understanding how racism functions in other, less obvious, forms. This kind of hidden, hegemonic, "color-blind racism" as Bonilla-Silva calls it, may be the more insidious and destructive kind, as it does its work in the name of liberal capitalism, cultural meritocracy, naturalized traditions, and common sense. While

racism exists in the hearts and minds of people like Imus, concentrating *solely* on the criminalization of Imus misses the point. Rather, we must interrogate the industrial, textual, and cultural facets of our media landscape in order to illuminate how modern racism, to borrow from Stuart Hall, "commits its labor."

## **Industrial Analysis**

Through an examination of the dynamics of institutional politics, we can gain access to a particular view of the Imus incident. Through this lens, we can immediately recognize that folks like Al Sharpton and Jesse Jackson could have complained forever, but not until the corporate sponsors like Coca-Cola and Procter and Gamble threatened to leave (or did leave) did CBS and MSNBC decide that there was in fact "a problem" with what Imus said.

After all, let's get one thing straight: Media industries do not care about sexism and racism unless it hurts their bottom line. This is where CBS most recently used racial tensions to promote their ratings-struggling *Survivor* reality TV show through the organization of their teams by racial group. We collectively support a TV entertainment industry that ritualistically demeans women, a recording industry that makes billions making cartoon-caricatures of reified "black culture," and a radio and film comedy industry that lives almost exclusively off lowbrow racial stereotyping. Simply put: racism and sexism carries purchase. We love sexism and racism...as long as no one calls it sexism and racism.

## **Textual Analysis**

The textual perspective suggests that the manner in which a statement is expressed may be more important than its propositional content. Thus, a textual approach to Imus rests on unpacking three facets of the incident: (1) intent, (2) the text in both form and content, and (3) the history of reception and response to that text.

First, many rallied to both defend and attack Imus. Both claims they knew his true intent. Second, Imus as a "text" is part of a "shock jock" radio genre in which his racist and sexist comments are well known. The problem here is not that Imus went off kilter; it is that he did his job all too well in the wrong context. His white-boy, bootstraps mentality did not fair well with the words "nappy-headed hos," whereas if proffered by Chris Rock or Dave Chappell, the same words might have been accepted with little to no controversy or fanfare. Third, there is an already established narrative that clearly delineates how the Imus comments would play out. We all know this story. That is, when events of an overtly racist nature get played out in popular culture, we have a narrative that defines our role: search for the "racist," "throw the rascal out," then put "guards" in place so that it won't happen again.

## **Cultural Analysis**

Cultural analysis seeks to understand any event as an organized system of meaning that is internalized in people and externalized in institutions. Such a standpoint can highlight three important cultural dynamics which gave the Imus incident distinctive meanings and which continue to enable and constrain our responses to it: (1) race as a set of ideological representations, (2) the particular intersections of race with gender and class, and (3) the centrality of a culture of hyper-apology.

First, from the perspective of cultural analysis, race is an ideological system of representations that orders "the proper place" of people. Through cultural analysis, we can understand how Imus' words are ideological weapons that (re)produce how race (and gender) are seen and understood via the media. One must consider that the act of representing the Rutgers

**Continue on page 5...**

# It's Much More Than Imus! The Industrial, Textual, and Cultural Facets of Media Racism, continue...

Women's Basketball team as "nappy headed hos" constituted those women's identities as such. Second, in regard to race and gender, we must realize that black women are, on a whole, devalued in comparison to a majority of the world's population. Don Imus' vile statements (and his subsequent support via websites like SupportImus.org) reveals that many do not believe Black women belong in the United States (unless it is under the auspices

of sex objects, baby factories, welfare queens, and drug addicts—all violently stereotypical images). Could it be that these successful, college-attending, student-athletes did not fit the mold of who we normally consider to be "nappy-headed hos"? Third and finally, we live in a moment of *mea maxima culpa*. The question remains, what do we think of this constant pattern of racist diatribes followed by the evocation of "I didn't *really* mean it"?

All three of these perspectives (institutional, textual, and cultural) demonstrate that its not so much about Imus as it is the external social forces, whether institutional, textual, or cultural, that influenced both how this media event occurred and how we made sense of it.

## Interview with Dr. Juanita Diaz-Cotto on Chicana Lives and Criminal Justice

By Vik Chaubey\*

(Dr. Juanita Díaz-Cotto is an associate professor of Sociology, Women's Studies, and Latin American and Caribbean Area Studies at the State University of New York at Binghamton. She has published two other groundbreaking books, "Gender, Ethnicity, and the State: Latina and Latino Prison Politics," and *COMPÑERAS: Latina Lesbians, Lesbianas Latinoamericanas* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed, 2004, published under the pseudonym of Juanita Ramos). For more about Dr. Díaz-Cotto's work see: [www.juanitadiazcotto.com](http://www.juanitadiazcotto.com).)

**Can you tell us about your most recent book *Chicana Lives and Criminal Justice: Voices from El Barrio*?**

*Chicana Lives and Criminal Justice* is based on oral histories I conducted with 24 Chicanas, 23 of them heroin-addicted for long periods of time. Throughout the book the women speak about their lives and their experiences with the California criminal justice system at the same time that they are documenting the impact of the war on drugs on them and their barrios. All 24 women had been imprisoned in California jails and most had also served time in state penitentiaries.

**What are some of the major themes covered in the book?**

One of the major themes covered in the book

is the various forms of violence that Chicanas interviewed were subjected to throughout their lives. The women also discussed some of the ways in which they perpetrated violence on themselves as well as others in an attempt to protect themselves, survive on the streets, and/or inside institutions. A second theme was the types of family and pseudo-family networks Chicanas sought support from. These included their biological families, partners, homeboys and homegirls, drug using buddies, peer support networks in juvenile and adult institutions, and recovery groups of various sorts. Additional themes explored were the manner in which Chicanas were routinely subjected to racism, sexism, and heterosexism throughout their lives. Equally important were the means by which Chicanas sought to exert their agency, that is, act on their own behalf to empower themselves, even when the actions they took, such as alcohol and other drug use, helped to disempower them in the long run.

**This book is considered groundbreaking because it is the first comprehensive study of the Chicana/Latina experience with the U.S. criminal justice system. Could you speak about that?**

A few researchers have written about Chicana juveniles, their involvement in gangs, and how Chicanas and their barrios have been targeted by criminal justice policies and agencies, particularly the police, as a result of racism and

the war on drugs. In 1981, Joan Moore and Alberto Mata also wrote a significant report on Chicanas and heroin addiction. What is different about *Chicana Lives* is that while it acknowledges these contributions, it discusses the life cycle of Chicana pintas holistically incorporating family histories as well as involvement with gangs, experiences with the juvenile and adult criminal justice systems, addiction to alcohol and other drugs, and attempts to recover from addiction. Most importantly the book provides the bulk of this information from the perspective of Chicanas themselves. In the end, *Chicana Lives* provides an alternative to the perspectives offered by state elites, the mass media, some victims rights advocates, and social scientists identified with punitive criminal justice policies that justify the imprisonment of poor and working-class white and people of color for low-level, non-violent, economic, and drug-related crimes.

**Does the book discuss Chicanas' prison experience?**

*Chicana Lives* provides the first documentation of the 34 year history of Sybil Brand Institute which was the former Los Angeles County Jail for women. However, due to space limitations I was not able to include the experiences of Chicanas in state penitentiaries although I did obtain a significant amount of information on such experiences which I hope to make accessible in the future. **Continue on page 6...**

# Interview with Dr. Juanita Diaz-Cotto on Chicana Lives and Criminal Justice, continue...

## **What motivated you to do this book?**

Actually when I went to California I was hoping to do a comparative study on Chicana and Chicano prisoners much like I had done in my earlier book *Gender, Ethnicity, and the State: Latina and Latino Prison Politics*, in which I had compared the experiences of Latina and Latino prisoners in a male and female state penitentiary in New York State and the responses of state elites and third parties to their calls for support and reforms. However, and those interested can read more about my process in the Preface to *Chicana Lives*, when I arrived in California it was initially much easier to connect with Chicana former prisoners than with Chicanos. By the time I had access to a significant number of Chicanos I could interview, I was already deeply committed to interviewing Chicana pintas about their lives. While I did not set out to specifically interview women imprisoned for drug related crimes, it just so happens that it is such women that are the most likely to come in contact with local, state, and federal criminal justice agencies as a result of the war on drugs. I felt it was time for these voices to be heard within multiple academic and non-academic settings.

## **Can you tell us how you compiled the material?**

I conducted 60 plus interviews with Chicana and non-Chicana former prisoners, some male former prisoners, a host of prisoner's

rights activists, and penal personnel. The interviews took me to Milwaukee, Wisconsin and 29 cities in California. It was out of those interviews from which I selected the 24 oral histories that were included in the book. I interviewed the women wherever was most convenient for them: homes, places of employment, public parks, conference rooms, and even in my car.

## **Chicana Lives and Criminal Justice recently received two book awards, can you comment on them?**

The book received an Honorable Mention-History Books Category from the Latino Brook Awards and a Silver Award-Women's Issues Category from *Foreword Journal*. Both awards mean a lot to me. The first because it recognizes that the book makes a significant contribution to the Latina/o community. The second because the recognition came from a combination of booksellers, librarians and readers who jointly come across thousands of books a year and who felt that *Chicana Lives* was among the best books published in 2006. As a political science Ph.D. who teaches in a sociology department, receiving awards within the categories of history and women's issues also means to me that I am successfully carrying out my goals of conducting scholarly interdisciplinary research and publishing.

## **What plans do you have in mind for the future?**

On the academic front, over the last couple of years I have been comparing the impact of criminal justice policies, particularly war on drug policies, on Chicanas(os)/ Latinas(os) in the U.S., Latin America, and Europe. I plan to expand such comparisons to include a greater number of Latin American and European countries and non-Latina(o) populations as well. I am updating an article I published in 2001 on Latin American lesbian activism and I also have a large number of video taped interviews I hope to find time to edit in documentary form within the next few years. In addition, I am editing an issue on "Latin America Lesbians" for *Sinister Wisdom*, one of the oldest lesbian journals in the U.S. As a scholar-activist one of my main goals is to continue working with grassroots movements whose aim is to eliminate all forms of oppression everywhere. I definitely am not lacking work!

\*Vik Chaubey is a Ph.D. student in the Philosophy Department at SUNY-Binghamton.

## **Book Awards**

*Chicana Lives and Criminal Justice: Voices from El Barrio* by Juanita Díaz-Cotto (University of Press, 2006) was recently awarded two book awards. The book received an Honorable Mention-History Books Category from the Latino Brook Awards and a Silver Award-Women's Issues Category from *Foreword Journal*. The book is based on oral histories conducted with 24 Chicana pintas (prisoners/former prisoners), 23 of them heroin-addicted for long periods of time. Throughout the book the women speak about their lives and their experiences with the California criminal justice system at the same time that they are documenting the impact of the war on drugs on them and their barrios. For more information on the book see: [www.juanitadiazcotto.com](http://www.juanitadiazcotto.com)

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## Renew Your Membership

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## Len Gordon Named Dean at Arizona State University

Len Gordon, former SSSP Treasurer, '89-'95, and currently professor emeritus of sociology at Arizona State University has been named dean of the ASU Emeritus College. Len recently published a tribute to his wife, Rena Gordon, in her role as founding editor of the research journal *Complementary Health Practice Review*, which addressed issues of health care for low income groups and for varying racial and ethnic groups.

## Agenda 2008 Submission

All SSSP members are encouraged to submit proposals for the *Agenda 2008* publication (even though the official deadline, May 30, is past). Please see the Winter 2007 Newsletter, p. 37 for details and/or contact: Dr. Bob Perrucci, Justice 21 Chair, [perruccr@purdue.edu](mailto:perruccr@purdue.edu).

## Special Note

Dear Division Chairpersons:

I am currently in the process of assembling the resolutions from the Special Problems Divisions for the upcoming conference. In the winter issue of *SSSP Problems Forum: The SSSP Newsletter* (page 17), I asked the membership to propose resolutions for consideration of the SSSP to a division chairperson.

This note is essentially a reminder for you to please send me any proposed resolutions at the earliest possible time. Each SSSP Special Problems Division should attempt to present at least one (but no more than five) resolutions for consideration at the 2007 Annual Meeting in New York City. This will

help us in preparing our media strategy as we would like to make our resolutions available to the press in an expedient manner this year.

In addition, I would like to remind you to make plans to participate in the special session dedicated to the discussion of the resolutions. This session will take place on the first day of the conference, conveniently scheduled in tandem with the SSSP Division Chairs meeting (Friday, August 10 from 12:30pm - 2:10pm). All Division Chairs should plan to participate in this session or designate a proxy from their division if unable to attend. It is important that somebody be present who can speak to the substance of any resolutions being placed up for discussion, so please notify any division members involved with the submission of a resolution and encourage them to attend the session.

Please send all resolutions (or address any questions you may have) to me, [kilty.1@osu.edu](mailto:kilty.1@osu.edu). I look forward to receiving resolutions from your division at your earliest convenience. Thank you for your consideration and your service to the Society.

Most sincerely,

Keith M. Kilty, SSSP Vice-President 2006-2007