

# SSSP Division on Racial and Ethnic Minorities Summer 2018 Newsletter



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

**Abolishing Racial Oppression  
Through Teaching, Research, Activism, and Policy**



Join Us For Our  
**68th Annual Meeting**  
at the Sheraton Philadelphia Downtown Hotel  
Philadelphia, PA

**AUGUST 10-12, 2018**

**Abolitionist Approaches  
to Social Problems**

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President Luis A. Fernandez





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## SSSP-DREM Summer '18 Newsletter

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## SSSP-DREM Summer '18 Newsletter



Current Co-Chairs: **Saher Selod** and **Omari Jackson**



### SSSP DREM Co-Chairs and Editor

#### Incoming Co-Chair

Orly Clergé (2018-2020)

#### Current Co-Chairs

Omari Jackson (2016-2018)

Saher Selod (2017-2019)

#### Past Co-Chair

Matthew W. Hughey (2014-2016)

#### Newsletter Editor

Michael L. Rosino (2017-???)



Incoming Co-Chair:  
**Orly Clergé**



Newsletter Editor:  
**Michael L. Rosino**





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## SSSP-DREM Summer '18 Newsletter

### **Our Mission**

The Racial and Ethnic Minorities Division of SSSP is a collective of scholars, activists, and concerned individuals who recognize that, while significant strides have been made toward racial equality and justice, we continue to live in a society in which racial inequality, segregation, discrimination, and systematic racism function both tacitly and overtly. Simply put, racism continues to inform our daily lives. Our Division's vision of our future society is one in which racial and ethnic (and all other types of) oppression and discrimination no longer exist. Accordingly, in a world in which the multifarious manifestations of racism are often minimized or ignored, we believe it is a moral and scholarly responsibility to remain vigilant in our quest to study, understand, and make visible the latent and hidden operations, mechanisms, and effects of racism and to speak out against it.

Our collective goals revolve around gaining higher levels of inter- and intra-racial understanding, substantive cooperation, and intimate camaraderie toward dismantling racial inequality and injustice. We utilize various sociological models to address racial and ethnic inequality and injustice at all levels, investigating governmental policies, practices of social institutions, representations through media and culture, and individual and group interactions. Our vision for the future is of a just society, in which racial and ethnic histories and cultures are not subjugated, but acknowledged and understood. Further, we implore all members of this section to understand the struggle that people of color often endure, and to join in the fight for alleviating the causes of human suffering through our scholarship, our teaching, and our service to the community and beyond.



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## SSSP-DREM Summer '18 Newsletter

### Letter from the Co-Chairs

DREM Members—

We would love to start this letter with “Hope you are enjoying your summer,” but given the current political climate we know many of you are feeling as we are, exhausted from the current onslaught of human rights abuses from this administration. In the last few weeks ICE separated migrant children from their families in detention centers and the Supreme Court upheld Trump’s third version of the travel ban that impact migrants from five Muslim majority countries. Many of us are either studying the injustices we see unfold before our eyes or working tirelessly to restore justice. Now more than ever we need scholarship combined with activism to end the structures that maintain racism in this country. We know that you will find the 2018 SSSP’s programmatic theme, Abolitionist Approaches to Social Problems, to be timely. Please take a second to look over the

program we have listed in this newsletter. The sessions cover a range of topics from racial inequality in U.S. neighborhoods, race and sports to resisting our current administration. We will also host a special screening of the film *Voices of Baltimore: Life Under Segregation*, which chronicles the lived experiences of African Americans who thrived academically in spite of Jim Crow. We also hope to see you at the Awards Ceremony on August 11<sup>th</sup> from 6:45-7:45 followed by a joint Division Sponsored reception from 7:45-8:45. Please consider attending our DREM business meeting. This will be held on Friday, August 10<sup>th</sup> from 12:30-2:10 pm. This meeting is important because it is where DREM members can suggest themes for panels at the 2019 SSSP annual meeting. We would love your input on this!

(Continued...)



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(Continued...)

Finally, we would like to acknowledge and thank Omari Jackson for co-chairing the Division last year. This is his last year as co-chair and We are deeply indebted to him for his dedication, hard work and guidance he provided me this last year. Orly Clergé, Assistant Professor of Sociology at the University of California, Davis will join Saher Selod this year to co-chair the division. We want to welcome her in this role and look forward to collaborating with her.

See you all in Philadelphia!

Saher Selod & Omari Jackson

Division on Racial and Ethnic Minorities Co-Chairs



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## SSSP-DREM Summer '18 Newsletter

### **Letter from the Incoming Co-Chair**

Hello DREM Members!

I am grateful to have been selected as your co-chair. I will take up the charge from Omari Jackson's work to energize the section, and work side by side with Saher Selod who will continue her strong commitment to the growth of the section. I am looking forward to taking on this new role, particularly during the current political climate when Black, Latinx, Muslim and Indigenous communities are under attack by white domination. My goal is to support the critically important research and policy work being done by members of this section on communities of color in

the U.S. and abroad. Here's to a productive and successful year!

Thank you,

Orly





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## **DREM SPONSORED SESSIONS AT SSSP 2018**

The listings on the following pages include all the sessions at the Society for the Study of Social Problems 2018 Annual Meeting sponsored by the Division on Racial and Ethnic Minorities.

Come support your fellow Division members and participate in these important and lively sessions while you are in Philadelphia!

## **DON'T FORGET TO ATTEND THE DIVISION BUSINESS MEETING:**

**Friday, August 10 (12:30 PM - 2:10 PM) in Liberty Ballroom A**



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## SSSP-DREM Summer '18 Newsletter

### **Session 057: Race and Inequality in City, Neighborhood and School Contexts**

Room: Freedom G

Saturday, August 11 (8:30 AM - 10:10 AM)

Sponsors: Conflict, Social Action, and Change & Racial and Ethnic Minorities

Organizer & Presider: Jennifer Darrah-Okike, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

Papers:

- "Choosing Schools, Choosing Safety: The Role of School Safety in Students' School Choices," Chantal A. Hailey, New York University
- "Back When it Was Black: Race, Residence, and Community," Shirley A. Jackson, Portland State University
- "More than 'Just Black': The Social Distancing Rhetoric of Second Generation Haitian American Parents," Vadricka Y. Etienne, The Graduate Center, CUNY
- "Threat and Punishment: Racial Context and Disparities in School Discipline," Victoria E. Sosina, Stanford University
- "Separate and Unequal: Racialized Tracking and the Perpetuation of Educational Inequality," Junia Howell and Alannah Caisey, University of Pittsburgh



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## SSSP-DREM Summer '18 Newsletter

### **Session 069: Abolishing Environmental Racism**

Room: Freedom G

Saturday, August 11 (10:30 AM - 12:10 PM)

Sponsors: Environment and Technology & Racial and Ethnic Minorities

Organizer, Jedi & Discussant: Daina Cheyenne Harvey, College of the Holy Cross

Papers:

- "Environmental Subordination: Marginalizing Gender in Environmental Justice," Tanesha A. Thomas, The Graduate Center, CUNY
- "Inmate Populations: A Labor Source in Emergencies and Disasters," J. Carlee Purdum, Louisiana State University
- "Who's Land is it Anyway?: Can Recognition Mend Fractured Political Dynamics for Native Americans?" Robin Renee Robinson, The Graduate Center, CUNY
- "Why Does the Environmental Racism Gap Persist? Theorizing the Uneven Distribution of Toxic Burdens," Ian Carrillo, University of Wisconsin-Madison





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## SSSP-DREM Summer '18 Newsletter

### **Session 078: CRITICAL DIALOGUE: Race, Space, and Culture: Urban Demography and Cultural Production**

Room: Freedom E

Saturday, August 11 (12:30 PM - 2:10 PM)

Sponsor: Racial and Ethnic Minorities

Organizer & Presider: Leslie R. Hinkson, Georgetown University

Papers:

- "'Info Tells, Stories Sell': Cultural Intermediaries, Family, History and the Construction of White Space within the Craft Beer/Wine/Spirits Industry," Erik T. Withers, University of South Florida
- "Educational Achievement Gap: How Racial/Ethnic Neighborhood Segregation Matters!," Paul Martinez, University of California, Los Angeles
- "Exploring the Enclaving Practices of Black Women on Twitter: A Network Analysis," Amber M. Hamilton, University of Minnesota Twin Cities
- "Investigating the Link between Residential Racial Segregation and Black Self-employment," Asia I. Bento, Rice University
- "Making Due with Availabilities in Protest: Left Movement Tactics, Cyberspace, and the Significance of Location," Onyekachi J. Ekeogu, Arizona State University
- "Black Burlesque in the Chocolate City: Race and Gender in Neo-Burlesque Performance," Leslie R. Hinkson and Kathleen Guidroz, Georgetown University



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## SSSP-DREM Summer '18 Newsletter

### **Session 103: CRITICAL DIALOGUE: Resisting "45" or Possibly Supporting without Self-recognition**

Room: Independence A

Sunday, August 12 (8:30 AM - 10:10 AM)

Sponsor: Racial and Ethnic Minorities

Organizer & Facilitator: Omari Jackson, Morgan State University

Papers:

- "Consequences of Consciousness: How Racial Habits Shape Grassroots Political Strategies," Michael L. Rosino, University of Connecticut
- "Post-colorblindness? Racial Ideology in the Trump Era," Woody Doane, University of Hartford
- "Shades of Nationalism: Comparing Race, Class, and Gender Identity with Christian Nationalist Attitudes in 2016 America," Hannah Evans, Baylor University
- "The Rise of MS-13 as a Result of the Trump Immigration Ban," Madeline K. Goodell, The George Washington University
- "The Women's March on Washington as a Testimony for Utopian Democracy," Mary K. Ryan, Virginia Tech
- "Towards Greater Global Justice: Collaborative Poems of Possibilities Envisioned by Immigrant Justice Leaders," Danielle Austin, Northern Arizona University



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## SSSP-DREM Summer '18 Newsletter

### **Session 114: CRITICAL DIALOGUE: Race, Colonization, and Decolonization**

Room: Independence A

Sunday, August 12 (10:30 AM - 12:10 PM)

Sponsors: Global, Institutional Ethnography, & Racial and Ethnic Minorities

Organizer & Presider: Henry Parada, Ryerson University

Papers:

- "Experience, Ontology and Sociologies of Resistance," Naomi Nichols, McGill University
- "Reckoning with Colonialism in Pursuit of Youth Homeless Prevention: Complexities and Horizons," Kaitlin Schwan, York University
- "Risky and Disposable: Canada's Murderous Tendencies and the Unfolding Failure of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls," Emily R. Gerbrandt, University of Alberta
- "The Anti-oppressive Value of Critical Race Theory and Intersectionality in Social Movement Study," Callie Watkins Liu, Stonehill College
- "When Race-based Policies and Colour-blind Meritocracy Collide: Examining Public Response to Postcolonial Singapore's Reserved Presidential Election," Alex Wei Jie Chow, University of British Columbia





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### **Session 150: Race/Ethnicity and Sport**

Room: Freedom E

Sunday, August 12 (4:30 PM - 6:10 PM)

Sponsors: Racial and Ethnic Minorities, Sport, Leisure, and the Body

Organizer, Presider & Discussant: Anima Adjepong, Simmons College

Papers:

- "Take Two Punches to Give One Punch Back: Learning 'Life Lessons' through the Sport of Boxing," Edgar J. Campos, University of Minnesota Twin Cities
- "The Race of Black Women Running White Spaces: Recreational Running and the Intersectionality of Black Women's Experiences," Tiffany Gayle Chenault, Salem State University
- "Women's Physical Activity Awareness by Race/Ethnicity," Eugena Kwon, Western University, Yujiro Sano, University of Western Ontario and Erick López, University of Nevada, Las Vegas



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### **FREE FILM SCREENING AT SSSP (about a DREM Member)**

***The Pushouts: A Film on the Crisis in Education for Marginalized Students of Color***

Presider: Anthony A. Peguero on Friday, August 10 (4:30pm-6:10pm)

Room: Philadelphia Ballroom South. Length: 56 minutes.

### **THE PUSHOUTS**

*The Pushouts* interrogates crucial questions of race, class and power in the education system. It is a one-hour-long film about the work Sociologist Victor Rios conducted with a group of youths from Watts (Los Angeles). These young people had all been kicked out of school; his research team was trying to figure out a way to help them get back into school while pushing the school system to change the way they were disciplining kids. The film attempts to create a conversation about racial inequality in education by exposing the day-to-day experiences of marginalized young people. Racial inequality in education and reform in education cannot be understood without understanding how the punitive school policies impact the day-to-day lives of young people and how these young people's voices provide key insight on how we might change this system.



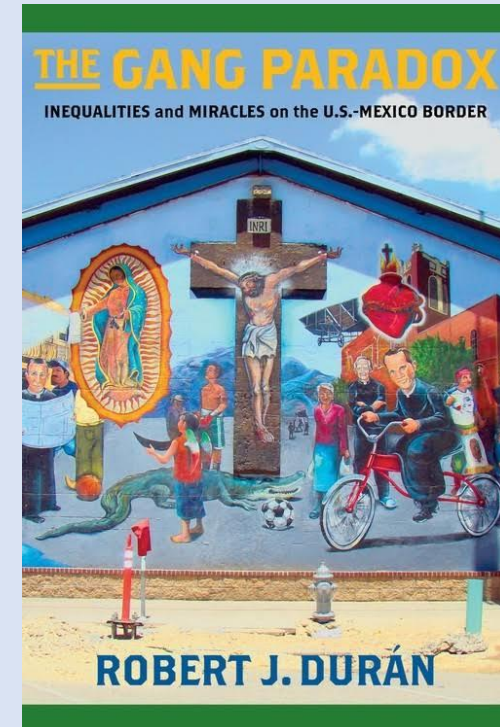
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## SSSP-DREM Summer '18 Newsletter

### **Announcements (Books from Division Members Hot off the Press!)**

**Durán, Robert J. 2018. *The Gang Paradox: Inequalities and Miracles on the U.S.-Mexico Border*. New York: Columbia University Press.**

“In *The Gang Paradox*, Durán analyzes the impact of deportation, incarceration, and racialized perceptions of criminality on Latino families and youth along the border. He draws on ethnography, archival research, official data sources, and interviews with practitioners and community members to present a compelling portrait of Latino residents’ struggles amid deep structural disadvantages. Durán, himself a former gang member, offers keen insights into youth experience with schools, juvenile probation, and law enforcement. *The Gang Paradox* is a powerful community study that sheds new light on intertwined criminalization and racialization, with policy relevance toward issues of gangs, juvenile delinquency, and the lack of resources in border regions.”







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### Announcements (Books from Division Members Hot off the Press!)

**Jackson, Shirley A. and Gordy, Laurie L. (Eds). 2018. *Caged Women: Incarceration, Representation, and Media*. New York, NY: Routledge.**



"The book brings together scholars to consider both media representations as well as the social justice issues for female inmates alluded to in the Netflix series *Orange is the New Black*. The chapters address myriad issues including cultural representations of race, class, gender, and sexuality; social justice issues for transgender inmates; racial dynamics within female prisons; gender and female prison structures/policies; treatment of women in prison; re-incarcerated and previously incarcerated women; self and identity; gender, race, and sentencing; and reproduction and parenting for female inmates."



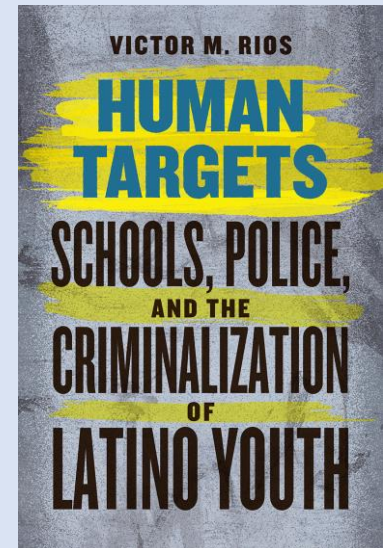
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### **Announcements (Books from Division Members Hot off the Press!)**

**Rios, Victor M. 2017. *Human Targets: Schools, Police, and the Criminalization of Latino Youth*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.**

"In *Human Targets*, Rios takes us to the streets of California, where we encounter young men who find themselves in much the same situation as fifteen-year-old Victor. We follow young gang members into schools, homes, community organizations, and detention facilities, watch them interact with police, grow up to become fathers, get jobs, get rap sheets—and in some cases get killed. What is it that sets apart young people like Rios who succeed and survive from the ones who don't? Rios makes a powerful case that the traditional good kid/bad kid, street kid/decent kid dichotomy is much too simplistic, arguing instead that authorities and institutions help create these identities—and that they can play an instrumental role in providing young people with the resources for shifting between roles. In Rios's account, to be a poor Latino youth is to be a human target—victimized and considered an enemy by others, viewed as a threat to law enforcement and schools, and burdened by stigma, disrepute, and punishment. That has to change."



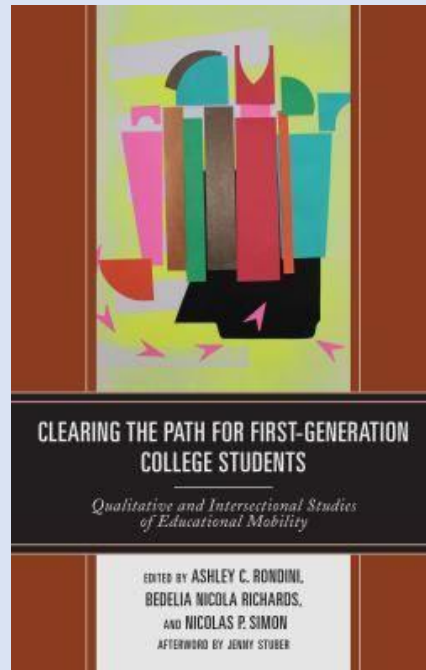


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### Announcements (Books from Division Members Hot off the Press!)

**Rondini, Ashley C., Bedelia Nicola Richards, and Nicolas Simon (Eds.). 2018. *Clearing the Path for First Generation College Students: Qualitative and Intersectional Studies of Educational Mobility*. Lanham: Lexington Books.**



"*Clearing the Path for First-Generation College Students* comprises a wide range of studies that explore the multidimensional social processes and meanings germane to the experiences of first-generation college students before and during their matriculation into institutions of higher education. The chapters offer timely, empirical examinations of the ways that these students negotiate experiences shaped by structural inequities in higher education institutions and the pathways that lead to them. This volume provides insight into the dilemmas that arise from the transformation of students' class identities in pursuit of upward mobility, as well as their quest for community and a sense of "belonging" on college campuses that have not been historically designed for them."



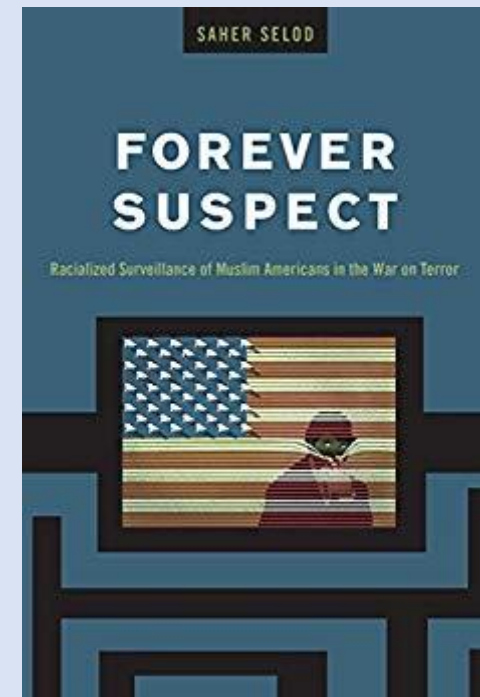
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### **Announcements (Books from Division Members Hot off the Press!)**

**Selod, Saher. 2018. *Forever Suspect: Racialized Surveillance of Muslim Americans in the War on Terror*. Rutgers, NJ: Rutgers University Press.**

"The declaration of a "War on Terror" in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks brought sweeping changes to the American criminal justice and national security systems, as well as a massive shift in the American public opinion of both individual Muslims and the Islamic religion generally. Since that time, sociologist Saher Selod argues, Muslim Americans have experienced higher levels of racism in their everyday lives. In *Forever Suspect*, Selod shows how a specific American religious identity has acquired racial meanings, resulting in the hyper surveillance of Muslim citizens. Drawing on forty-eight in-depth interviews with South Asian and Arab Muslim Americans, she investigates how Muslim Americans are subjected to racialized surveillance in both an institutional context by the state and a social context by their neighbors and co-workers."





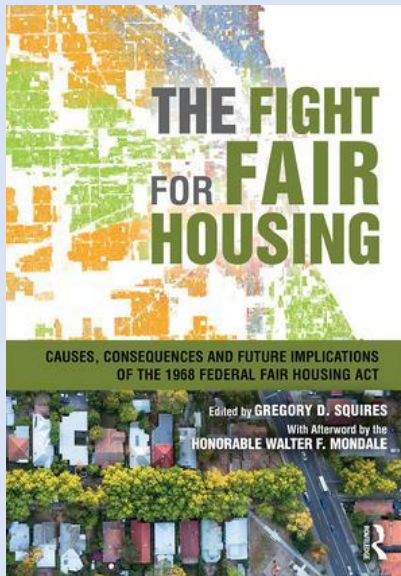


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### Announcements (Books from Division Members Hot off the Press!)

**Squires, Gregory D. (Ed.). 2017. *The Fight for Fair Housing: Causes, Consequences, and Future Implications of the 1968 Federal Fair Housing Act*. New York, NY: Taylor & Francis.**



"The federal Fair Housing Act of 1968 was passed in a time of turmoil, conflict, and often conflagration in cities across the nation. It took the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to finally secure its passage. The Kerner Commission warned in 1968 that "to continue present policies is to make permanent the division of our country into two societies; one largely Negro and poor, located in the central cities; the other, predominantly white and affluent, located in the suburbs and outlying areas". The Fair Housing Act was passed with a dual mandate: to end discrimination and to dismantle the segregated living patterns that characterized most cities. *The Fight for Fair Housing* tells us what happened, why, and what remains to be done."



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### **Announcements (Special Issues from Division Members Hot off the Press!)**

Jenny Davis, Jason A. Smith, and Barry Wellman  
(eds). 2018. "Communication, Information  
Technology, and Media Sociology as a Transfield."  
*Information, Communication, & Society*, 21(5).  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2018.1429359>



McNeely, Connie L., and K. Husbands Fealing (eds.). 2018. "The  
Science of Broadening Participation in STEM." *American Behavioral  
Scientist*, 62(5). <http://journals.sagepub.com/toc/absb/62/5>



## **Announcements (Articles & Chapters from Division Members Hot off the Press!)**

- Cuevas Afolfo G., Kasim Ortiz, Nancy Lopez, David R. Williams. 2018. "Assessing racial differences in lifetime and current smoking status & menthol consumption among Latinos in a nationally representative sample." *Ethnicity & Health* <https://doi.org/10.1080/13557858.2018.1447651>
- Garcia-Hallett, J. 2018. "Maternal Identities and Narratives of Motherhood: A Qualitative Exploration of Women's Pathways Into and Out of Offending." *Feminist Criminology*. DOI 10.1177/1557085118769741
- Garcia-Hallett, J. 2018. "Pregnancy and Postpartum Life Behind Bars: What's Present and What's Missing in Orange is the New Black." In S. Jackson and L. Gordy (Eds.), *Caged Women: Incarceration, Representation, & Media*. New York, NY: Routledge
- Ortiz, Kasim, Adolfo Cuevas, Ramzi Salloum, Nancy Lopez, and Thomas LaVeist-Ramos. Forthcoming. "Intra-Ethnic Racial Differences in Waterpipe Tobacco Smoking among Latinos?" *Substance Use & Misuse*. doi: 10.1080/10826084.2018.1480040.

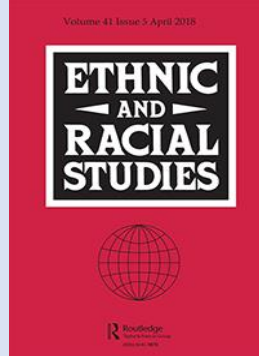
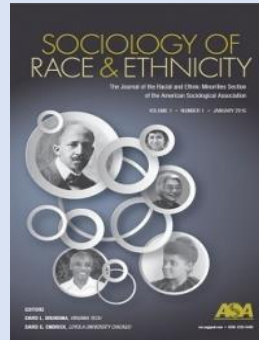




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## SSSP-DREM Summer '18 Newsletter

### Announcements (Articles & Chapters from Division Members Hot off the Press!)



- Ray, Victor, Kasim Ortiz, and Jason Nash. 2018. "Who is Policing the Community? A Comprehensive Review of Discrimination in Police Departments." *Sociology Compass* 12 (1), e12539.
- Rosino, Michael L. 2018. "'A Problem of Humanity': The Human Rights Framework and the Struggle for Racial Justice." *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity* 4(3):338-352.
- Rosino, Michael L. and Matthew W. Hughey. Forthcoming. "The War on Drugs, Racial Meanings, and Structural Racism: A Holistic and Reproductive Approach." *American Journal of Economics and Sociology*
- Jason A. Smith and Randy Abreu. Forthcoming. "MOU or an IOU? Latina/os and the Racialization of Media Policy." *Ethnic & Racial Studies*.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2018.1444187>





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## SSSP-DREM Summer '18 Newsletter

### **Announcements (Blog Posts and Media from Division Members Hot off the Press!)**

- Henderson, Wade, and Gregory M. Squires. "Five Decades after the Fair Housing Act, Segregation Continues". Op-Ed in *the Baltimore Sun* April 12, 2018.
- Jason A. Smith and Randy Abreu. 2018, March 30. "Memorandum of understandings promise nothing; media mergers require close scrutiny by the FCC for their impacts on Latinas/os." London School of Economics American Politics and Policy blog. <http://bit.ly/2pTjJ7r>



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## SSSP-DREM Summer '18 Newsletter

### **Announcements (Division Member Awards)**

- James M. Thomas (JT) - the Dr. Mike L. Edmonds New Scholar Award from the University of Mississippi College of Liberal Arts.
- Gregory Squires - 2018 Contribution to the Field of Urban Affairs Award



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### **ANNOUNCEMENTS (AVAILABLE POSITIONS)**

Purdue University Northwest (PNW) invites nominations and applications for an exceptional academic leader to serve as Chair of the Department of Behavioral Sciences. The chair will provide strategic leadership to a diverse department and will work with faculty, staff, and students to build upon the department's strengths in teaching, research, and service.

The Position: Department Head for the Behavioral Sciences Department, which consists of Sociology (with about 170 majoring in Sociology, about 50 of whom are focused on general sociology and another 120 or so focused on Criminal Justice). Additional majors in this department include, Human Development and Family Studies, Social Work (BA level), Marriage and Family Therapy (MA level) and Early Childhood Development. Focus will be given to those with a background in criminal justice.

Please direct all applications, nominations, and inquiries for the position to the search firm assisting the university at the contact information below:

Ryan Crawford, Partner | Kriston Burroughs, Associate

7500 Rialto Blvd

Building 1, Suite 250

Austin, TX 78735

(737) 207-0568

r.crawford@storbeckpimentel.com | k.burroughs@storbeckpimentel.com



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## SSSP-DREM Summer '18 Newsletter

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS (AVAILABLE POSITIONS)**

Teaching Position at Portland State University -

The PSU Department of Women, Gender, & Sexuality Studies invites applications for a full-time, non-tenure track Senior Instructor I to begin September 15, 2019. This position is a nine-month, renewable appointment with the possibility for continuous appointment and advancement in rank to Senior Instructor 2. The teaching load is 9 courses for the academic year (3 courses/quarter). The department offers two majors, in Women's Studies and in Sexuality, Gender and Queer Studies. We seek a colleague who is an experienced instructor and practitioner of feminist activism with particular attention to women of color feminisms, reproductive justice, and community-engaged learning. Teaching experience should include women of color feminist theories, contemporary feminist social justice activism, global reproductive justice, and/or introduction to women's studies, using an intersectional lens of analysis. Candidates should have experience teaching students from diverse backgrounds, including first generation students, low-income students, students of color, students with disabilities, and queer, trans, and gender non-conforming students. The department especially values candidates whose teaching, community engagement, and scholarship theorize from lived experience, and whose pedagogy is rooted in intersectional feminist praxis and epistemologies that challenge settler colonialism and white supremacy. Responsibilities will include teaching both required courses and electives. Courses may include WS101 Intro to WS, WS305 Women of Color Feminist Theories, WS307 Women, Activism & Social Change, and/or WS369U Global Reproductive Justice. This position will contribute to the long-term vision of the department, and as such there will be opportunities to develop and offer courses in the candidate's area of specialization.

Link: <https://jobs.hrc.pdx.edu/postings/26947>





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## SSSP-DREM Summer '18 Newsletter

### Piece from a Division Member

#### **Colin Kaepernick's De-mystifying Protest**

Hadi Khoshnevis

Doctoral Candidate, Department of Sociology, University of South Florida

Why does raising a fist in the air or kneeling during the US national anthem become so controversial that the leader of "the free world" publicly calls protestors names? [The irony about the claim of freedom starts right here.] Why is kneeling framed as anti-American while carrying torch by violent white nationalists is protected as a constitutional right? In this brief piece, I answer these questions by elaborating on the recent debates about the US flag and NFL players. The aim is to show why kneeling in front of the US flag and during the US national anthem, has caused a strong backlash from US nationalists, chiefly comprised of white Americans across the republican and liberal spectrums. By drawing on Roland Barthes's notion of mythology, I argue that these protests shake the foundations of the myth of US nationalism as inclusive and civic, they bring to the fore the historical and ongoing oppression of black bodies while US institutions and a vast majority of its public have tried so hard to deny its existence in the "post-racial" America.

Let's imagine the bourgeoisie's desired mythical scene. The US flag is raised high and the US national anthem is playing. Everybody in the stadium is standing. By everybody, I mean, people of all different identities, backgrounds, and politics. It is a moment of collective solidarity, pride, and

euphoria. The moment induces a feeling of unity, regardless of the differences and histories, when everybody pays respect to this great nation and its symbols. The "we" at this moment is not about the individuals and who they are, rather about what they represent. They are the representation of a glories united nation which has gone past its past and present divisions under the banner of the United States of America. In this moment of purported equality and unison, however, power and pride are not equally distributed. People who are privilege find this ritual as the natural extension, perpetuation, and expansion of their access to sources of power and national pride. Those who are not privileged, however, are devoured, on the margins, by a myth of unity and equality, a myth of "however it is, whatever it is, it is *our* country: The great United States of America."

In proportion to this unequal distribution of belonging, privilege, and pride, different people have different tasks. People who are privileged, which in the US context are the white folks, don't have much to do. They have nothing to lose but gain. In this space and moment, they simply accrue more power and recognition. This ritual is the coherent extension of their existence. People of color, however, have more responsibility. They are expected to genuinely believe in the myth of the great America and to responsibly put aside their history of enslavement, lynching and rape, segregation, mass incarceration, and institutional violence to keep the representation unblemished. This myth needs to be confirmed and upheld by them.

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## Colin Kaepernick's De-mystifying Protest

But what is myth? Myth, in Barthes's theory of semiology, is a second order semiological system. At the first level of the system which Barthes borrowing from Louis Hjelmslev calls denotation, we have the US flag and the anthem and a standing crowd. The second order of signification, called connotation, delivers another message: The message of greatness of America whose children, regardless of color and background, faithfully belong and equally pay respect to.

According to Barthes in *Myth Today*, myth does not hide or flaunt. It simply distorts. It presents a historically contingent and specific ideology as natural and eternal. It transforms meaning into a form. In this process content is removed and individuals lose their significance. What is of significance here is not individuals' origins, beliefs, or biographies but what they represent. The objects of myth are deprived of history and what is left is a signification whose origins are unknown. Myth produces a feeling of eternity. And in our case, we have the representation of a united people and an eternally great country, respected beyond and above individual or group differences. This de-historization, this deliberate erasure of certain historical elements, leaves a void which provides enough space for a fabricated history to be injected into the phenomenon in order to create a new sign. This new history, despite its political nature, needs to be de-politicized to be imagined as national and all-encompassing. And this de-politicization, according to Barthes, happens through giving an ideological historical intention a natural, universal, and eternal appearance.

Debates around the apoliticality of sports, national anthem, and the flag which arose in the aftermath of protests were attempts to maintain this depoliticized and sacralized façade of US nationalism intact. Colin Kaepernick's protest however was a counteract, a wake-up call which aimed for the very political heart of a depoliticized myth, portrayed and protected as apolitical. It brought to the surface the historical reality and tensions within and around the US nationhood. Kaepernick's fist created a crack in the picture of one of the most popular national spectacles in the US: Masculine sportsmanship. His kneeling brought up discussions which scarred decades of struggle by US institutions and politics to depoliticize decades of socio-political and legal oppression. Colin questioned the impersonalized representation of the myth of US nationalism by bringing his personhood, as a black person and as an athlete, to the fore. It was a personal demonstration of protest against a coercive and illusive collective performance of unity. It gave rise to the historical fear of white folks from consciousness and awakening which was protected in depoliticization and naturalization of patriotism and Americanness. He showed that the US flag and the anthem are not reminders of a unifying history of progress, but an evidence of collective subjugation of ethnic and racial minorities.

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### Colin Kaepernick's De-mystifying Protest

Politics, as Walter Benjamin writes, is emotional energy guided by the will to expression. This expression necessarily takes the form of collective expression. I am sure that the nationalists who are offended by the display of protest in a public arena do not stand up with their hand on their heart when the anthem is played on TV, and do not take offense when they find a ripped flag covered in dust in a closet. Offense comes from any action or ideation which obstructs or disrupts this collective emotional flow, this moment of collective performance and identification with a divinely framed cause. In this public arena politics and affect, superiority and nationalism, come together to confirm and reinforce each other. It is where the subjective assumption of being the selected victorious nation avoids its impending collapse through a fatalistic notion of heroic depersonalized fate and faith. In this collective experience of transcendence, each individual matter because the representation needs to be fascistically uniform. Each individual in this experience becomes an actant, is acted upon and turned into the terrain mythical accomplishment. This collectivity, momentarily, compensate for a historical moral defeat through a euphoric sense of political superiority and victory.

The flag and the national anthem, experienced en masse, become the image and sound of an affective abstraction of a collective which transcends and impedes, at least momentarily, the daily possibility of reflection upon lack of purpose, the harsh reality of constant politico-legal institutional betrayal, and consistent lack of meaning. The myth becomes a

sacred public property whose preservation guarantees living in the bliss of ignorance. It is an ostensibly peaceful demonstration of historical loyalty to a fragile idea of America which in the face of historical reality needs denial of reality so then it can maintain its alienated consumer. The spectacle becomes the display of a sacred ritual of a collective amnesia in which citizens of the capitalist risk society, can, for a moment, feel something meaningful, something which lives on the myth of us with a shared history and destiny versus those who are not one of us: the other. Therefore, in this fragile ritual, violence is exerted through othering and exclusion. This violence, glorified and sacralized, denied hypocritically on the surface but felt and cherished joyously inside, requires the categorical figure of other. The pleasure of holding onto an inspiring imagination, the craving for some meaning created through inclusion into a homogenous idea, turns into a desperate cling to the idea of "us" that any disruption of its aesthetics, any doubt in its sanctity, or any disharmony in its consumption warrants punishment.

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Myth is a depoliticized speech, as Barthes writes. And Colin's move brings politics back into the picture, and consequently, the political history of oppression and its continuity at the present moment. Trump, right wing politicians, and liberals who cannot go past their nationalism by claiming that sport is not and should not get political or that national anthem is and should remain beyond political disputes are struggling to fearfully employ the very same depoliticizing technique by which the myth was fabricated. This fabricated artifact is used in public gatherings to awaken the myth of inclusive America, summon emotions of unity, and silence the voice of the oppressed populations, here specifically black folks. It is an attempt to further oppress people of color by labeling them as problems, by framing them as those who by talking about race make it real, as those who do not get over it.

While Colin's origins, beliefs, and biography is supposed to serve and perpetuate the ahistorical image of inclusion and equality, his protest brings to the fore a history of oppression, lack of inclusion and unity. It highlights a history that demystifies the myth of equal access and recognition. It distorts the bourgeois picture of a desired order. It disrupts a monologue by an uninvited and unwelcome interjection. It is a speech of a different order. It questions the order, the status quo, and disturbs the white slumber of the ruling class, it brings the history to the fore to diminish the paranoid foundations of the American myth and question decades of ideological labor for its construction and preservation in the post-racial America. It inverts the pervasive ideological perversion of a history

of oppression whose tentacles firmly hold minorities down when they struggle to breathe. It is a forceful reminder of a right long denied. Kaepernick's black body, raised fist, hair, and intellect contradicts the historical construction of black bodies. His image is an image that resists appropriation and colonization. It presents a counter-affect, a counter-narrative, and a counter-act. Kaepernick's protest to the flag and the anthem disarms the ruling class, resists functioning as an agent of the myth, and disrupts the system's process of violent deception, denial, and erasure. The myth however is evasive and rooted. It is internalized and protected. To dismantle it, we need disperse but consistent, unexpected but planned attempts aimed at its deconstruction.





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## SSSP-DREM Summer '18 Newsletter

### **Letter from the Editor**

Dear DREM Members,

One of my favorite aspects of this editorship is seeing the passion and work that goes toward addressing social problems like hyperincarceration, health disparities, controlling images in the media, everyday discrimination, the punitive and dehumanizing immigration system, and all the various institutional arrangements that reproduce racial inequalities. So, as strange as it sounds, I enjoy receiving your updates and announcements. I am moved by what you all are doing.

Special thanks to our Co-Chairs, Omari Jackson and Saher Selod, for everything that they do and Orly Clergé as incoming Co-Chair. Thanks also to Hadi Khoshnevis for the thoughtful and timely featured essay.

The work that we are doing could not be more essential in this time of escalating attacks on marginalized racial groups. It can be easy to feel overwhelmed by these events and their implications. However, we are fortunately in a position to raise awareness and take action.

The heightened state of the racialized social problems that we strive to abolish through teaching, research, activism, and policy are not merely a cause for despair. Our awareness of these issues also serves as a call to redouble our efforts to share our knowledge and skills with the public and those who need them most.

Indeed, our division members have been at the forefront of speaking empowering truths about the racial oppression in our society. I look forward to seeing all of you in Philadelphia. I anticipate a series of lively, engaged, and insightful discussions at our sponsored panels (and I especially encourage you all to stop by the one listed on page 13).

In Solidarity,

Michael L. Rosino

Your Newsletter Editor & PhD Candidate in Sociology, University of Connecticut

P.S. I am considering adding more short essays in this newsletter in the future. Please contact me with any interest or feedback ([michael.rosino@uconn.edu](mailto:michael.rosino@uconn.edu)).



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### ABOLITIONIST APPROACHES TO SOCIAL PROBLEMS

BE FAITHFUL, BE VIGILANT, BE UNTIRING  
IN YOUR EFFORTS TO BREAK EVERY  
YOKE, AND LET THE OPPRESSED GO FREE.

– William Lloyd Garrison

#### 68th Annual Meeting of the Society for the Study of Social Problems (SSSP)

August 10–12, 2018  
Sheraton Philadelphia Downtown Hotel  
Philadelphia, PA

For more information,  
visit [sssp1.org](http://sssp1.org)

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