

## THE NORTH CENTRAL SOCIOLOGIST

The Official Newsletter of the North Central Sociological Association

Spring 2015

### 2015 NCSA Presidential Address

The 2015 conference theme, *New Visions of Human Flourishing*, stimulated creative and original ideas about structural and cultural innovation by merging theory and practice, and unifying research and teaching. This theme was fully realized in the diverse and interdisciplinary perspective offered by the 2015 NCSA Presidential Address, delivered by Dr. Matthew Lee. Focused not only on human flourishing, but on creating a cohesive vision of the future of the discipline of sociology, he proposed attending to the multiple and complex dimensions of mindfulness, which have the potential to advance human flourishing.

#### Meta Mindfulness

Central to Dr. Lee's vision was the role that sociology can play in generating meta-mindfulness. In his own words, "Much of the language about creating a mindful society is reductionist. In other words, if we help individuals become more mindful then we will have a more mindful society. This is only partly true." The culmination of the address implored us to move beyond this individualistic vision toward a future where we can "create mindful organizations, communities, and institutions, and work on the societal level to most fully realize the ideal of the mindful society."

Notably, Lee suggested that sociology could assist secular versions of mindfulness in becoming less instrumental and commodified, more morally grounded and politically awake, and increasingly aware of the value of the broader spiritual context of mindfulness. When combined with applications at the macro level, a sociological mindfulness emerges with the potential to be transformative not only in individuals' lives, but in society and the discipline more broadly.

#### *New Visions of Human Flourishing*

*The movement toward a pure sociological mindfulness that is attentive to the present, considerate of the past, and hopeful for the future...*



The Passing of the NCSA Gavel

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# From the Desk of the President

## On Inequality, Injustice, and Intersectionalities

I am honored to serve as President of the North Central Sociological Association. The coming year promises to be one of great excitement and accomplishment for us as we work together with colleagues and friends from the Midwest Sociological Society to co-organize our annual conference next March in Chicago. In size and scope, our conference will be second only to the annual meeting of the American Sociological Association.

Our conference theme in 2016 is “Inequality, Injustice, and Intersectionalities.” Perhaps no concepts have greater contemporary significance than social inequality and injustice. Gaining a better understanding of social inequalities is what initially attracted many of us to social science in general and sociology in particular and defines us as intellectuals. Often, our understanding of the causes, content, and consequences of how inequalities and injustices intersect guides our actions in our communities, not just as social activists but also as active social scientists.

The 2016 Useem Plenary Speaker at our Chicago conference will be Professor Douglas S. Massey, Professor of Sociology at the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton University, past president of the American Sociological Association, the Population Association of America, and the American Academy of Political and Social Science.

Professor Massey is acknowledged and respected as one of the foremost scholars on the sociology of immigration. Today, almost every developed country is an immigrant-receiving society, attracting immigrants primarily from the developing world. His early work (see *Return to Aztlan*) focused on the social mechanisms promoting and sustaining emigration from Mexico to the United States. In *Worlds in Motion: Understanding International Migration at the End of the Millennium*, he developed a theoretical synthesis to account for immigration. *Beyond Smoke and Mirrors: Mexican Immigration in an Age of Economic Integration* used the same theoretical framework to analyze the history of Mexico-U.S. migration and to critique past U.S. policies, suggesting avenues for future reform. In 2010 he published the prescient *Brokered Boundaries: Creating Immigrant Identity in Anti-Immigrant Times* (co-authored with Magaly Sánchez).

Especially germane in today’s turbulent and dangerous world of divisive race-relations, inequality, injustice and urban discontent, Professor Massey is also well known for his research on urban segregation in America. African Americans are uniquely segregated in American cities, and since the publication of his prize-winning *American Apartheid* (co-authored with Nancy A. Denton), he has continued to research, publish, and speak on the consequences of segregation for African Americans and Latinos of African ancestry. Segregation figured prominently in explanations for black underachievement in his *Source of the River*, and it interacts with shifts in the U.S. income distribution to yield a rising concentration of poverty that intensifies social disorder and violence that undermines the health of African Americans, reduces their life expectancy, and impairs their cognitive development.

In Chicago we will explore related concepts such as growing and pervasive income inequalities, social injustice, economic exploitation, downward mobility, and intersecting systems of power and privilege. I invite you to join sociologists from over 20 states, Canada, and from abroad to help us organize a session, present a paper, participate in a professional workshop, facilitate a teaching workshop, present a poster, or just come to be inspired and rejuvenated by what is certain to be an exciting collaborative meeting.

~ Dr. Brendan Mullen

NCSA President, Dr. Brendan Mullan  
of Michigan State University



## NCSA Solicits Nominations for 2016 Awards

### Scholarly Achievement Award

Honoring individuals who have made significant contributions to the discipline of sociology by way of their academic work this award is divided in to two categories, book and article. Self-nominations are welcome.

### Aida Tomeh Distinguished Service Award

This honor recognizes an NCSA member who has served the association in a single truly outstanding activity, in many capacities over a long period of time, and/or throughout their professional career.

### J. Milton Yinger Lifetime Award

This award is given to an individual who is, or who has been, an active member of the NCSA and has made distinguished contributions to sociological scholarship, or applied/public sociology that improves quality of life, teaching, and learning in the region and nationally.

### John F. Schnabel Distinguished Contributions to Teaching Award

Given to an individual, a department, a program, or an institution located in the NCSA region, this award recognizes excellence in activities that enhance the teaching of sociology.

## 2015 NCSA Award Recipients

### Scholarly Achievement: Journal Article



The NCSA Scholarly Achievement Award for a journal article was given to Jason Manning of West Virginia University for his article, "Suicide as Social Control," published in *Sociological Forum* vol. 27, no. 1 (March 2012): 207-227. In the groundbreaking piece, he proposes a unique theoretical approach to understanding suicide in its various forms, advancing our insight in to a pressing social issue.

### John F. Schnabel Distinguished Contributions to Teaching Award



The John F. Schnabel Distinguished Contributions to Teaching Award was given to Leslie Elrod of the University of Cincinnati Blue Ash. As the Director of Service Learning and Civic Engagement at UC Blue Ash, she challenges her students to engage with non-profit organizations, effectively bridging the gap between academic theories and real life, and allowing her students to get their hands dirty by doing sociology.

### Aida Tomeh Distinguished Service Award



Barbara Denison of Shippensburg University was the 2015 winner of the Aida Tomeh Distinguished Service Award. Traditionally occupying a "behind the scenes" role in NCSA, Barb served diligently as the Executive Officer for the association from 1985 to 1993, as the Local Arrangements chair twice, on the Membership Committee, and most recently as Secretary. Over the years, she has presented 9 papers and participated in 7 panels and workshops at NCSA, making her a fixture in the organization.

### J. Milton Yinger Lifetime Distinguished Career Award

In 2015, no J. Milton Yinger Lifetime Distinguished Career Award was presented. Please consider nominating an NCSA member for the 2016 Yinger Award.

Please consider nominating a fellow faculty member or student for an NCSA award. These awards allow us, as scholars, to recognize the contributions of others to the discipline of sociology and to NCSA as a professional association. Please visit the awards page on the NCSA website at <http://www.ncsanet.org/awards> to see the full details.



Dr. Layli Maparyan Presenting "A Womanist Perspective on Human Flourishing"

## The 2015 Ruth and John Useem Plenary Address

This year the NCSA was honored to invite Dr. Layli Maparyan, Executive Director of the Wellesley Centers for Women, to deliver the 2015 Ruth and John Useem Plenary Address in Cleveland. Offering a fresh perspective on how to advance a womanist sociology she concentrated on the theme of human flourishing as it related to spiritual activism, discussing small ways to generate large scale changes.

### Womanist Praxis

A womanist perspective focuses on inclusion, rather than opposition, bringing together the spiritual, environmental, and humanistic in an attempt to improve the welfare of the population. Focusing on recent applications of the perspective, Dr. Maparyan demonstrated alternative ways to respond to the violence and suffering of the human condition in a way that promotes social change as an accessible feature of our environment.

## The John F. Schnabel Teaching Address

Dr. Mellissa Holtzman of Ball State University, last year's winner of the John F. Schnabel Award, delivered this year's teaching keynote address. In it, she noted the parallels between teaching and the martial arts in an entertaining and thought provoking analysis of how being a professor can be akin to being a classroom ninja. Drawing on the elements of earth, water, fire, and wind, her interactive discussion prompted audience members to consider the types of forces they harness as practitioners of a craft.



Dr. Mellissa Holtzman Presenting "Tales from a Classroom Ninja"

## Sociological Focus

Sociological Focus is the official publication of the North Central Sociological Association (NCSA). Published continuously since 1968, the quarterly journal is international in scope, covering a full range of topics of current interest to sociology and related social science disciplines. Sociological Focus is peer reviewed and committed to publishing high quality research on substantive issues of importance to the study of society. The journal's mission is broad in scope, encompassing empirical works (both quantitative and qualitative in nature), as well as manuscripts presenting up to date literature review of any field of sociology. See author and submissions guidelines at: <http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/usfo20#.VE-62fldWTM>

## Editorial Staff

- Annula Linders , Editor, University of Cincinnati
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- Gustavo Mesch, Consulting Editor, University of Haifa
- Kathleen Gish , Editorial Assistant, University of Haifa, Israel

## Student Paper Competitions and Awards

### Butler A. Jones Scholarship

In the spirit of the lifetime efforts of Butler A. Jones, the Equity and Inclusion committee of NCSA invites award applications from eligible applicants. The award comes with a \$400 prize, plus one year's membership and annual meeting registration for NCSA. The award is intended to facilitate a student's attendance and participation in the upcoming NCSA annual meeting.

#### Applicant Eligibility:

- Undergraduate or graduate with a major or work that is relevant to the award.
- Member of the African American community.
- Attendance at the 2016 NCSA annual meeting

### NCSA Student Paper Competition

Each year the NCSA holds a student paper competition to recognize the scholarly contributions of students. For both undergraduate and graduate divisions, the maximum length of the paper is 5000 words, and it should represent original research with empirical, methodological, and/or theoretical contributions.

Please see [ncsanet.org](http://ncsanet.org) for full details on the opportunities available for students.

## 2015 NCSA Student Award Winners

### Undergraduate Division Papers



**First Place:** Elizabeth Maher (University of Cincinnati Blue Ash), "You've Got Time: The Formation of Female Criminal Protagonists in Popular Television." Adviser: Todd M. Callais, University of Cincinnati-Blue Ash



**Second Place:** Allison Sheets (Saint Mary's College), "Switching the Code: The Complicity of Female Twitter Users in the Preservation of Rape Culture." Adviser: Susan Alexander, Saint Mary's College



**Third Place:** Markie Harrison (Saint Mary's College), "Putting Blacks into a Cultural Prison: An Analysis of Victims and Criminals in the Television Series Law & Order." Adviser: Susan Alexander, Saint Mary's College

### Graduate Division Papers



**First Place:** Tom VanHeuvelen (Indiana University), "Recovering the Missing Middle: Within-Group Inequality, Place Effects, and the Volatility Curve." Adviser: Arthur S. Alderson, Indiana University



**Second Place:** Emma Dolores Cohen (Indiana University) and Will R. McConnell (Indiana University), "Fear of Fraudulence in Graduate School: The Social Psychology of the Impostor Phenomenon." Adviser: Brian Powell, Indiana University



**Third Place:** Matthew Grace (Indiana University) and Jane VanHeuvelen (Indiana University), "Ties Received, Support Perceived: A Test of the Theorized Relationships among Workplace Networks, Social Support, and Mental Health in a Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU)." Advisers: Bernice Pescolido, Indiana University and Brian Powell, Indiana University



## Save the Date!

Did you know that the joint NCSA-MSS annual conference from March 23<sup>rd</sup> through the 26<sup>th</sup> will be the second largest gathering of sociologists in the nation? A joint meeting offers NCSA members an opportunity to participate and attend a wider variety of sessions, workshops, and offers additional networking opportunities. As an added benefit, the conference allows us to descend on Chicago -- an amazing city with a rich cultural and sociological history.

## The 2016 Joint MSS/NCSA Conference

The 2016 NCSA conference will be held jointly with the Midwest Sociological Society March 23<sup>rd</sup> through the 26<sup>th</sup> at the Chicago Marriott Downtown Magnificent Mile. The theme of the conference, "Inequality, Injustice, and Intersectionality," will challenge us to examine the myriad ways in which our teaching, research, and activism addresses the complexities and intersectionalities of various forms of inequality and injustice.



### Conference Details

Few concepts have greater contemporary significance or have ignited sociologists' passions more than social inequality and injustice. As researchers, we grapple with how to generate knowledge that illuminates the complexities of the various dimensions of inequality. As educators, we seek to inspire in our students a sociological imagination that will empower them to investigate, interrogate, and confront the social causes, content, and consequences of inequality and injustice. And, as activists, we endeavor to generate policy implications, interventions, and new mechanisms for addressing inequality in systematic ways.

The conference will feature close to 1,000 papers, so don't miss your chance to be part of the discussion. Organize a session, present a paper, or participate in a roundtable.

### Submissions

Because this is a joint meeting, the timeline for the conference is significantly shorter than the traditional submission timeline for NCSA. Make sure to check online and watch your inbox for emails from NCSA about the submission process. The online submission system will open on September 1<sup>st</sup> and conclude on October 31<sup>st</sup>, 2015. Hotel reservations (at the discounted conference rate) will open on December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2015.



# NCSA Welcomes...

The NCSA is honored to welcome our new council members:

- ✕ President Elect: Debra Swanson, Hope College
- ✕ Vice President Elect: Melinda Messineo, Ball State University
- ✕ Secretary: Rachel Kraus, Ball State University
- ✕ Council at Large: Michelle Bemiller, Walsh University

If you are interested in becoming more involved in NCSA and serving as an elected or appointed committee member, please contact the Past President and Nominations Chair, Matt Lee, at [mlee2@uakron.edu](mailto:mlee2@uakron.edu). We are seeking chairs for Equality and Inclusion, Community College, and other positions.

## Contact Us

Visit us on [Facebook](#) or our website at [ncsanet.org](http://ncsanet.org) for conference information.

If you have items you would like sent to the distribution list, posted to Facebook, or included in any upcoming correspondence, please send any materials to:

[danielle.lavin-loucks@valpo.edu](mailto:danielle.lavin-loucks@valpo.edu)

### 2015-2016 NCSA Council, Committee Members, and Staff

**Brendan Mullan, President**  
Michigan State University  
[mullan@msu.edu](mailto:mullan@msu.edu)

**Matthew Lee, Past President & Nominations Chair**  
University of Akron  
[mlee2@uakron.edu](mailto:mlee2@uakron.edu)

**Debra Swanson, President Elect**  
Hope College  
[swansond@hope.edu](mailto:swansond@hope.edu)

**Robert Carrothers, Vice President**  
Ohio Northern University  
[r-carrothers@onu.edu](mailto:r-carrothers@onu.edu)

**Melinda Messineo, Vice President Elect**  
Ball State University  
[mmessine@bsu.edu](mailto:mmessine@bsu.edu)

**Leslie Elrod, Treasurer**  
University of Cincinnati, Blue Ash  
[elrodl@ucmail.uc.edu](mailto:elrodl@ucmail.uc.edu)

**Rachel Kraus, Secretary (2015-2018)**  
Ball State University  
[rkraus@bsu.edu](mailto:rkraus@bsu.edu)

**Rachel Stein, Council Member-at-Large (2014-2016)**  
West Virginia University  
[Rachel.stein@mail.wvu.edu](mailto:Rachel.stein@mail.wvu.edu)

**Michelle Bemiller, Council Member-at-Large (2015-2017)**  
Walsh University  
[mbemiller@walsh.edu](mailto:mbemiller@walsh.edu)

**Sam Mindes, Interim Student Section Chair (2015-2016)**  
Michigan State University  
[mindessa@msu.edu](mailto:mindessa@msu.edu)

**Jeff Seymour, Membership Chair (2014-2016)**  
Carthage College  
[jseymour@carthage.edu](mailto:jseymour@carthage.edu)

**Danielle Lavin-Loucks, NCSA Public Relations**  
Valparaiso University  
[danielle.lavin-loucks@valpo.edu](mailto:danielle.lavin-loucks@valpo.edu)

**Chadwick Menning, Applied & Public Sociology Chair**  
Ball State University  
[clmenning@bsu.edu](mailto:clmenning@bsu.edu)

**Lisa Hickman, Finance Chair**  
Grand Valley State University  
[hickmanl@gvsu.edu](mailto:hickmanl@gvsu.edu)

**Fayyaz Hussain, Profession, Freedom & Responsibility Chair**  
Michigan State University  
[hussain3@msu.edu](mailto:hussain3@msu.edu)

**Annulla Linders, Sociological Focus Editor**  
University of Cincinnati  
[annulla.linders@uc.edu](mailto:annulla.linders@uc.edu)

**Larry Nichols, Scholarly Achievement Award Chair**  
West Virginia University  
[larry.nichols@mail.wvu.edu](mailto:larry.nichols@mail.wvu.edu)

**Kathleen Piker-King, Aida Tomeh Distinguished Service Award**  
University of Mount Union  
[kingkd@mountunion.edu](mailto:kingkd@mountunion.edu)

**Lynn Ritchey, J. Milton Yinger Distinguished Career Award**  
University of Cincinnati, Blue Ash  
[lynn.ritchey@uc.edu](mailto:lynn.ritchey@uc.edu)

**Alan McEvoy, Undergraduate Student Saturday**  
Northern Michigan University  
[amcevoy@nmu.edu](mailto:amcevoy@nmu.edu)

**Todd Callais, Student Paper Awards**  
University of Cincinnati, Blue Ash  
[callaitd@ucmail.uc.edu](mailto:callaitd@ucmail.uc.edu)

**Mellisa Holtzman, Teaching Section Chair & John F. Schnabel Distinguished Contributions to Teaching Award Chair**  
Ball State University  
[mkholtzman@bsu.edu](mailto:mkholtzman@bsu.edu)

**Joyce Lucke, Conference Coordinator**  
Paragon Meeting and Events  
[joyce@paragonme.net](mailto:joyce@paragonme.net)