



Society for the Study of Social Problems

In Pursuit of Social Justice

Law & Society Division Newsletter

Fall/Winter 2023

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Division Awards

2023 Alfred R. Lindesmith Graduate Student Paper Awards

We are excited to announce the winner of the **Alfred R. Lindesmith Graduate Student Paper Award**. This award is presented every year for the best paper authored by a graduate student. This year's winner is Chiara Packard, for her paper "Prosecution for Services: How Access to Services through the Criminal Legal System Shapes Prosecutors' Decisions." The awards committee praised her paper as elegant, timely, riveting, and engaging. They found it methodologically impressive and were struck by Chiara's writing style and evocative storytelling. The abstract for her paper is included below. Please join us in congratulating Chiara!

Abstract:

Scholarship at the intersection of punishment and welfare describes how the penal and welfare systems have become increasingly intertwined. However, less is known about how this entangling of coercion and support shapes the decisions of actors working within the criminal legal system. This study uses the case of the prosecutor, an actor with enormous discretion, to reveal how the presence of social services within the criminal legal system and a lack of treatment and welfare alternatives outside the system fosters criminalization. Data are drawn from a study on prosecutorial discretion involving twelve months of ethnographic observations in two mid-sized midwestern District Attorney's offices, and 80 interviews with prosecutors, defense attorneys, judges, and pretrial agency staff. One key finding is that prosecutor decisions about whether to charge an individual with a crime or offer a probation recommendation are sometimes based on the belief that the accused needs supportive services, a phenomenon I call *prosecution for services*. These prosecutors either think of the criminal legal system as one of the only avenues for people to receive these services or believe a defendant must be coerced into using services. This study reveals the on-the-ground consequences of a retrenchment of the welfare state and expansion of the penal state, where access to social support for the poor becomes contingent on criminal justice involvement.

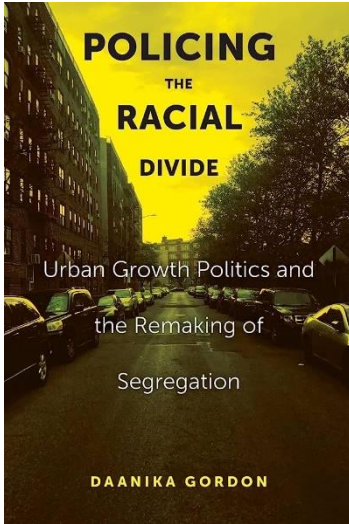
Honorable Mention

We are also excited to announce that Blanca A. Ramirez has received an Honorable Mention for the **Alfred R. Lindesmith Paper Award**. Blanca received this recognition for her paper "Deportation Defense Funds: Innovative or Continuing Inequalities?". The abstract for her paper is included below. Please join us in congratulating Blanca!

Abstract:

Local governments are increasingly turning towards deportation defense funds, public funds aimed at increasing legal representation in immigration court, usually via funding non-profit organizations to address the expansive federal immigration enforcement system. Though migration scholarship has generally accepted that progressive localized immigration policies aimed at reducing legal status stratification can at the same time reproduce inequalities based on racialized illegality, little is known if these funds follow the same pattern. Drawing on archival data as well as interviews with advocates of deportation defense funds (immigration attorneys, staff members at non-profit organizations, and executive directors of non-profits), I demonstrate that these interventions are not universally beneficially to all immigrants. Contrary to government officials and key stakeholders who touted these interventions as protecting immigrants, these interventions reinforce racialized illegality and elevate the profession of immigration attorneys as a solution to the immigration enforcement system. Ultimately, I argue that deportation defense funds are a type of carceral distraction that draw attention to a limited intervention and away from the harms of the immigration enforcement system.

2023 Edwin H. Sutherland Book Award Competition



We are excited to announce the winner of the **Edwin H. Sutherland Book Award Competition**. This award is given periodically in recognition of the best contribution to law and society literature.

This year's winner is Dr. Daanika Gordon, for her book *Policing the Racial Divide: Urban Growth Politics and the Remaking of Segregation*. The awards committee praised her book as engaging, insightful, and artfully written.

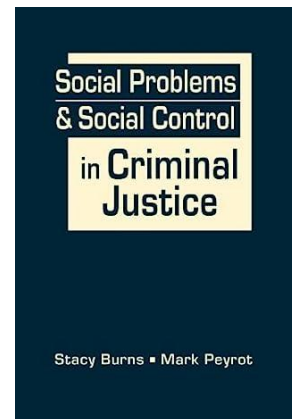
Dr. Gordon's book focuses on how police in a Midwestern city rearticulate the character and boundaries of racial segregation by aligning their organizational strategies with the priorities of the city's urban growth coalition. Drawing on hundreds of hours of ethnographic observation of police work, Dr. Gordon highlights how organizational priorities within the police department amplify inequalities in service and social control across the city. Please join us in congratulating Dr. Gordon!

Honorable Mention

We are also excited to announce that Dr. Stacy Burns and Dr. Mark Peyrot have received an Honorable Mention for the **Edwin H. Sutherland Book Award Competition**. This recognition was given to Dr. Burns and Dr. Peyrot for their book *Social Problems and Social Control in Criminal Justice*.

Exploring government efforts to address social problems in the context of the criminal justice system, their book adopts an institutionalist perspective to highlight how social control efforts have adapted and changed over time – and how some efforts have inadvertently contributed to the problems they are trying to alleviate.

Please join us in congratulating Dr. Burns and Dr. Peyrot!



Awards Committees

The Law and Society Division is deeply grateful to Dr. Lloyd Klein and Dr. Annulla Linders for serving as judges on the Alfred R. Lindesmith Graduate Student Paper Competition.

We would also like to thank Dr. Valerie Jenness and Kemi Pratt for serving with the Chair and Vice-Chair on the Edwin H. Sutherland Book Award Competition.

Our division is only possible because of the hard work of our members! If you are interested in serving on an awards committee for the upcoming year, please be sure to reach out to either Catherine Hastings, Jacinta Gau, or Michael Branch.

Division Announcements

Division Chair and Chair-Elect Election

Dr. Michael Branch has won the election for Chair (2024-2026) and Chair-elect (2023-2024) of the SSSP Law & Society Division. As the incoming chair, Dr. Branch's 2-year term of service as Chair will begin at the 2024 meeting. However, he will begin serving as the Chair-elect at the 2023 meeting in Philadelphia this August so that he has an opportunity to work with the current chair, Dr. Hastings.

Dr. Branch is an Assistant Professor of Sociology and Criminal Justice in the Department of Sociology, Criminal Justice, and Human Services at Hartwick College. As a cultural sociologist with an interdisciplinary background, his research primarily focuses on the cultural production and politics of meanings associated with and attached to rurality, whiteness, and policing. His work aims to offer a critical investigation of the ways in which policing and contemporary media intertwine and structure the experience of everyday life.

Dr. Branch will take the place of the outgoing Chair, Dr. Catherine Hastings, and will serve in this role from 2024-2026. Thank you to all our members who submitted nominations and voted in this election. Please join us in thanking Dr. Hastings for her time, labor, and contributions to the division and please join us in welcoming Dr. Branch!



Division Vice-Chair Election



Dr. Jacinta Gau has won the election for Vice-Chair (2023-2025) of the SSSP Law & Society Division. As the incoming Vice-Chair, Dr. Gau's 2-year term of service as Vice-Chair will begin at the 2023 meeting in Philadelphia this August.

Dr. Gau is a Professor in the Department of Criminal Justice at the University of Central Florida. Her research interests include police-community relations, procedural justice and police legitimacy, and race and policing. She is currently the editor-in-chief of [*Race and Ethnicity*](#).

Dr. Gau will take the place of the outgoing Vice-Chair, Dr. Michael Branch, and will serve in this role from 2023-2025. Please join us in welcoming Dr. Gau!

Division Newsletter Editor and Social Media Coordinator

Looking to build your C.V.? The SSSP Law & Society Division is seeking a newsletter editor and a social media manager! The newsletter editor will assist the Chair and Vice-Chair with regularly organizing and distributing newsletters in the winter, spring, and fall. The newsletter editor will receive a stipend of \$100 upon completion and dissemination of 2 newsletters. The social media coordinator will assist in occasionally updating the division's Facebook page and managing our social media presence. The coordinator will receive a stipend of \$50. Please contact either Catherine Hastings at catherine.hastings@mq.edu.au or Michael Branch at branchm@hartwick.edu if interested. Graduate students are encouraged to apply!

2024 Lindesmith Graduate Student Paper Competition

The Law and Society Division announces its 2024 Lindesmith Graduate Student Paper Competition. Papers may be empirical or theoretical, and they may be on any aspect of law and society. To be eligible, a paper must have been written during 2023. At the time of submission for the Award, the paper may not be published or accepted for publication. However, it may be submitted to a journal and/or under review. Papers presented at a professional meeting or accepted for presentation at a professional meeting are eligible. Papers must be student-authored; they can be single-authored or co-authored by students but may not be co-authored by a faculty member or other non-student. Papers may be submitted to only ONE division of SSSP per year. Submissions made to multiple divisions will be disqualified. Previous winners are not eligible.

Please submit in MS Word. There is a 25-page limit, including all notes, references, and tables. Submissions should use 12-point font, one-inch margins, and double spacing throughout. Please send papers and a cover letter specifying that the paper is to be considered in the SSSP Law and Society Division Lindesmith Graduate Student Paper Competition electronically to both Jacinta Gau Jacinta.Gau@ucf.edu and Dr. Michael Branch, branchm@hartwick.edu. In addition, authors are required to submit their papers through the annual meeting Call for Papers online system. The winner will be announced in Spring 2024. The winner will receive a \$100 stipend, a plaque of recognition, and is eligible to present the paper at the 2024 Annual Meeting in Montreal with SSSP membership and conference registration paid by SSSP. Additionally, the winner of the 2023 paper award will be invited to sit on the adjudicating panel for the 2024 paper submissions.

Edwin H. Sutherland Book Award

The Law and Society Division announces the 2024 Edwin H. Sutherland Book Award. The primary purpose of this award is to focus on excellence in scholarship within the study of law and society. Eligible books must have been published in 2022 or 2023. Authors may nominate their work and multiple-authored books are acceptable. All nominees must be members of SSSP. Please e-mail either Dr. Catherine Hastings at catherine.hastings@mq.edu.au, or Dr. Michael Branch, branchm@hartwick.edu, to arrange for shipment of three copies of the nominated book (or e-book versions) and submission of a letter of nomination. The winner will be announced in Spring 2024, receive a \$100 award, and be recognized at the 2024 SSSP Annual Meeting in Montreal.

Notes from the Chair-Elect

Greetings from upstate New York!

I hope that the academic semester has come to a comforting conclusion and that you are looking forward to the coming holidays and winter months. As we look toward our Annual conference in Montreal this upcoming summer, I wanted to say a few words about our division and what we might have in store going forward.

First, however, I wanted to express my gratitude and say thank you, members of the Division, for electing me Chair. I am delighted to have the opportunity to continue working with you all over the next few years. I am deeply appreciative of the time and effort that the current Chair, Dr. Catherine Hastings, has put into this division and I'm looking forward to working with her and our incoming Vice-Chair over the next year. I'm hopeful that between the three of us, we'll be able to build momentum and see our division grow.

For the last two years, I have served as the Vice-Chair of the division. In my time as Vice-Chair, I have worked closely with two different Chairs on divisional newsletters, member outreach and support, recognizing scholarship and accomplishments by our members, and more. Since her appointment as Chair in 2022, Catherine and I have spent considerable time discussing the current state of the division, what our members are looking for, and how to move toward better supporting a wide range of scholars, academics, and practitioners.

Catherine, Jacinta, and I are eager to develop events and activities that serve the current membership and help to grow the vibrancy of the Division. We'd like to call on our members to help us with this by submitting abstracts for paper sessions for the 2024 Annual meeting. We'd also like to encourage you to attend our division's business meeting as this will be a great opportunity to get to know each other a bit more, brainstorm some ideas about upcoming sessions, collaborate on potential divisional workshops, and build a thriving community. Our meeting business meeting will be held virtually this year, so we'll share more information about it as we get closer to the annual meeting. If you're unable to come to the meeting but would still like to share your thoughts and ideas, please be sure to reach out to us. Otherwise, I can't wait to see you all in Montreal this summer!

Warmly,
Michael Branch



Riku, my 5-year-old Shiba Inu offers his support for the division and wishes you all well!

2024 Annual Meeting Panels

SSSP 74th Annual Meeting
August 9-11, 2024
Montral, Canada

Law and Society Panels for 2024

The Division Chairs look forward to seeing you all in Montral at the 2024 annual meeting next summer! Please be sure to join us at one of our sponsored sessions – and be sure to attend our division’s business meeting so that we can start planning for the next meeting, brainstorm workshop ideas, and share thoughts about what you’d like to see from the division!

ALL PAPERS MUST BE SUBMITTED BY 11:59 PM EST ON JANUARY 31, 2024

The [Call for Papers](#) is available online. Please keep in mind that only an abstract is required. You do not need to have a full paper ready to submit for consideration.

View the [Student Paper Competition and Outstanding Scholarship Awards](#) announcement to submit a paper or nominate a book, article, or scholar.

Division sponsored sessions:

Experiencing the Law

- Organized by Chiara Packard (cpackard@wisc.edu) and Catherine Hastings (catherine.hastings@mq.edu.au)

Imagining, Building and Sustaining Alternative Forms of Justice - THEMATIC

- Organized by Catherine Hastings (catherine.hastings@mq.edu.au)

PAPERS IN THE ROUND: Law and Media

- Organized by Michael Branch (branchm@hartwick.edu)

Co-sponsored sessions:

Criminalizing Immigration – THEMATIC

- Co-sponsored by Crime and Juvenile Delinquency; Family; Global; Poverty, Class and Inequality
- Organizers: Rafia Mallick (rmallick1@student.gsu.edu)

Criminalizing Vulnerable Populations – THEMATIC

- Co-sponsored by Crime and Juvenile Delinquency; Environment and Technology; Poverty, Class and Inequality
- Organizers: Marko Salvaggio (msalvaggio@tulane.edu) and Miltonette Craig (moc006@shsu.edu)

Structural Determinants of Health and Legal Needs

- Co-sponsored by Health, Health Policy, and Health Services; Sociology and Social Welfare
- Organizers: William Cabin (wcabin@umich.edu)

Violating Norms: Unlawful Bodies in Public Spaces

- Co-sponsored by Sport, Leisure, and the Body
- Organizers: Jinsun Yang (jinsuny@uoregon.edu)

Youth and Their Interactions with Legal Systems – THEMATIC

- Co-sponsored by Crime and Juvenile Delinquency
- Organizers: Stephani Williams (stephani.williams@gmail.com)

CRITICAL DIALOGUE: Critical Perspectives on Law and Violence – THEMATIC

- Co-sponsored by Social Problems Theory
- Organizers: Keith Johnson (keithjohnson101@gmail.com) and Michael Branch (branchm@hartwick.edu)

CRITICAL DIALOGUE: Institutional Ethnographies of Law, Crime, and Justice

- Co-sponsored by Institutional Ethnography
- Organizers: Catherine Hastings (catherine.hastings@mq.edu.au) and Colin Hastings (c2hastings@uwaterloo.ca)

Member Publications and Announcements

Member Publications

Galli, Chiara. 2023. *Precarious Protections: Unaccompanied Minors Seeking Asylum in the US*. Oakland: University of California Press.

Ramirez, Blanca. 2023. "Anchoring work: How Latinx mixed-status families respond to interior immigration enforcement." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*. doi: [10.1080/1369183X.2023.2199137](https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2023.2199137).

Member Public Media Appearances

Blanca Ramirez co-authored a report for the Orange County Justice Fund in May 2023, [The State of Immigration Enforcement and Legal Resources in Orange County](#). The Orange County Justice Fund and the details of this report have been featured on [OC Register](#), [ABC7](#), and the [USC ERI Blog](#).

Member Announcements

Blanca Ramirez has recently been appointed as the Chancellor's Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of California, Los Angeles. Additionally, Blanca is a forthcoming Assistant Professor at the University of Austin, Texas.

Michael Branch was awarded the 2023 Sociology Department All-University Prize from Syracuse University for his doctoral dissertation, "Dividing the Blue Line: The Cultural Work of Rural Policing in Upstate New York." Michael has also received a faculty research grant from Hartwick College for his new research project, "Aaahh!!! Rural Monsters!: Video Games and the Construction of Rural Imaginaries through Contemporary Horror."

Research Spotlight



The Legal Needs Project: Unravelling the Ball of String

Catherine Hastings, Research Fellow

Law School, Macquarie University, Australia

The legal assistance sector in Australia is funded by governments to “meet the legal need of disadvantaged and marginalised populations”. That is, the legal needs of those who are least able to afford to pay for legal advice and representation. Often legal need is understood as synonymous with ‘legal problem type’ or defined by the legal service delivery employed to ‘meet’ the need.

A major legal need survey in Australia has shown that higher numbers of legal problems are associated with, for example, Indigenous status, low income, living with disabilities, being a single parent, unemployed, dependent on government income support or living in a regional area. Also, there are associations between these characteristics and more complex and particular types of legal problems. But why should this be so?

My project aims to develop a more sociological understanding and explanation by delivering a new approach to conceptualising legal need across its social, political, legal and health dimensions, a causal explanation of why some people develop legal needs and others do not, and a list of priority actions for the legal assistance sector. Within a critical realist framework, I am eager to unpack the role of structural inequalities, government and legal systems, and the law in creating legal needs for those with the fewest resources and least power. The research aims to increase the evidence available to sector workers as they seek to ‘unravel the ball of string’ that represents the legal and non-legal problems facing their clients and advocate for law reform.

If any of this resonates with your work and interests, please [get in touch](#). I welcome conversations and opportunities for collaboration. Also, I will be in Montreal at the 2024 Meeting if you want to make contact.