

The Illinois Sociological Association prides itself on fostering community among and providing support to researchers, teachers, and practitioners of sociology in the state and region. We are excited to continue our tradition of hosting an annual conference in support of this mission and we hope to see you at this year's conference in November. In this newsletter, we are pleased to announce the theme for this year's conference: *The Sociological Imagination: From Idea to Practice*. You can read more about our selection of this theme and get more detailed information about this year's conference in this newsletter and on our website.

While our annual conference focuses on bringing local scholars and practitioners together, we value the global interests and activities of our members. In this newsletter we are excited to shine a spotlight on the global reach of our members' research in a section titled "Local Scholars, Global Insights." From Turkey, to Japan, to Puerto Rico, to Kenya, the globally diverse interests of our members are well reflected in these member spotlights. Moreover, with research in the areas of religion, family, race, gender, social institutions, social interaction, identity, and culture, these spotlights reflect the diverse topical interests of our members and of the discipline.

We are pleased to feature some of the important work and diverse interests of our members in this newsletter. We hope you will join us for the 2023 ISA Conference in November to share the important work you are doing and to learn more about the important research of our members. We hope to see you there.

ISA Conference

*The Sociological
Imagination:
From Idea
to Practice*

**Eastern Illinois
University
(Charleston, IL)**

November 3, 2023

**Now Accepting
Submissions**

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Member Spotlights: Local Scholars, Global Insights



Asena Karipek, M.A.

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Comparative Research on Islamophobia in Western and Non-Western Contexts

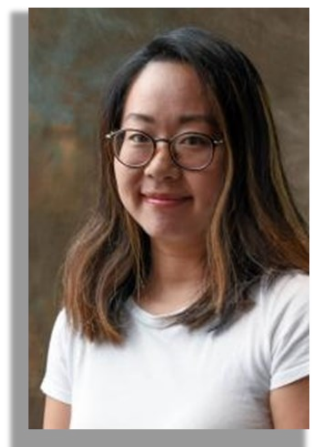
I am a third-year PhD student in sociology at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. My research interests revolve around Islamophobia and its many faces and facets as well as the influence of religion in society. During my time as an undergraduate student and then later as a Master's student, I was interested in Islamophobia in America. In fact, my M.A. thesis, titled "Christian Zionism and Doctrinal Islamophobia: Expediting the End Times," explores how Christian Zionists racialize Arabs as Muslim and how that racialization fuels their Islamophobic rhetoric. My B.A. thesis explores the history and reasons for Islamophobia in America as well as then-recent Islamophobic acts by Islamophobia individuals and groups. I am now interested in comparing Islamophobia in Western and non-Western contexts. I explore this phenomenon at both the political (state) level and the individual level (daily lives of Muslims). I am mainly interested in the secularization thesis and the subsequent desecularization thesis, the former of which has been used to argue that Islam cannot coexist with modernism and secularism, and the latter of which has been used to argue that Islam (and religion in general) not only does coexist with modernism and secularism but has gained more prevalence because of modernism and secularism. My recent works include research on COVID-19's perpetuation of Islamophobia worldwide, the influence of religion in modern-day Turkish society and domestic politics, and the religious and ethnic marginalization of Meskhetian Turks in Georgia, Uzbekistan, and Russia.

Mari Kita, Ph.D.

Eastern Illinois University

Offender Care and Support by Families in Contemporary Japan

My research examines the repercussions of crime and punishment on families in Japan. I conducted a 20-month-long ethnography of mothers, fathers, wives, and sisters of various offenders, inquiring about their experiences throughout their loved ones' criminal justice process. The study found that offender's kin is deeply embedded in the criminal justice system and are expected to aid the efforts to arrest, prosecute, monitor, and rehabilitate offenders. Moreover, a feminist analysis of offenders' families finds that women shoulder a disproportionate amount of offender caregiving responsibilities due to the gendered notion of caring and patriarchal gender relations in Japan. On top of providing all-inclusive care for offenders, the societal expectation to bear the consequences of the offense renders families ambivalent toward the criminal justice system and the offenders. Finally, this study demonstrates the families' experiences of shame and stigma. It points to the possibility that Japan's heavy reliance on informal sanctions may render the country less reintegrative than previously thought. By examining the lived experiences of offenders' families in Japan, this book tries to discern not only the consequences of criminal justice contact on offenders' kin but also how the family—particularly women—are regarded as an integral part of crime control mechanisms in Japan.





Maya A. Rodríguez-Reyes

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

“Girl, you mixed with black?”: Racial Conceptualizations for Puerto Ricans in Crises

As a first-year Puerto Rican grad student at Illinois an Uber driver looked back at me and asked: “Girl, you mixed with black?”. Latinxs constitute a nationally diverse population with a shared history of colonization and differences in cultures, politics, and racial compositions. Our race is complex and highlights the need for questions on racial mixture, nationality, and ethnicity. The contemporary Puerto Rican colonial context also demands to consider the influence of colonial status. Although historically Puerto Ricans have identified as a primarily white population, something changed in the 2020 Census: 79.9% identified with white alone and 3.3% with two or more races in 2010, then in 2020 17.4% self-identified as white, 49.8% racially mixed (two or more races), and 25.5% with some other race. What changed?

The implementation of “la Junta” (Fiscal Control Board) and the United States’ disaster response to hurricane María are demonstrations of colonial violence which may have reinforced racial differences of Puerto Ricans in relation to the US, and racial and class differences within Puerto Rico. The complexity of the Puerto Rican racial classification, the colonial state, and the dramatic change in the recent 2020 Census evidence the relation between colonialism, law, race, the US Census, infrastructure, and class in Puerto Rico. In my research I seek to understand the contextual influences on racial identification in a colonial territory. With the integration of quantitative and qualitative research methods in a multi-level project, I aim to answer: how is race conceptualized for Puerto Ricans?

Melon Tanui

Illinois State University

Female Genital Cutting in Elgeyo-Marakwet County, Kenya:

A Qualitative Interview Study

This research seeks to understand Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C) through the lens of nine women (18 and older) from Elgeyo/Marakwet county, Kenya who underwent this procedure, exploring through in-depth interviews its impact on the women’s marriage, educational decisions, and reproductive health. I traveled to Kenya in December 2022, and conducted the interviews. Currently, I am transcribing and analyzing the interview recordings to write up the results for my thesis.



Referred by the Western world as female genital “mutilation” (FGM), this procedure “involves the partial or total removal of the external female genitalia” or inflicting any other damaging injury on “the female genital organs for non-medical reasons” (WHO 2022: para. 1). Residents of this county are Kalenjin speakers of Keiyo and Marakwet sub-dialects. County residents refer to FGM as Yatitaet, loosely translating to “circumcision.” The process, which lasts from days to a month, is called Tumdop Tibiik: the initiation of girls. During initiation, cultural values are passed down to young girls to prepare them for adulthood.

My researcher’s position is of a Kenyan insider who has become a critical outsider through education, i.e., I hold the Western view of (FGM/C) as a human rights violation as condemned by the World Health Organization (WHO 2022), while recognizing the deeply rooted patriarchal belief behind the practice.

Findings of my research will contribute to an understanding of this phenomenon. Implications of this research can be far-reaching, elevating the voices of these women to be heard given their respect for and understanding of their tradition.

2023 Conference

The Sociological Imagination: From Idea to Practice

Twenty-five years ago—at the 1998 World Congress of Sociology—a group of international scholars sought to identify some of the most influential books of the twentieth century for sociologists and for the discipline. Near the top of the list—a list that includes prominent works such as Max Weber’s *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Robert K. Merton’s *Social Theory and Social Structure*, and Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann’s *The Social Construction of Reality*—was C. Wright Mills’ *The Sociological Imagination*. In this well known work, Mills argues that our ability to connect the individual to the social, the personal to the historical, is an important step toward putting knowledge to work and turning understanding into action. It is from this idea—one noted 25 years ago to be among the most important contributions to the sociological heritage of the twentieth century—that we derive our theme for this year’s conference: *The Sociological Imagination: From Idea to Practice*. This theme encourages us to explore Mills’ twentieth century conceptualization of the discipline and its potential in the context of the twenty-first. We encourage you to consider how this intellectual heritage is reflected in your own work, and to share your observations, interests, and insights at our annual conference. We hope to see you there.

2023 ISA Conference

Theme: *The Sociological Imagination: From Idea to Practice*

Location: Eastern Illinois University (Charleston, IL)

Submission Deadline: October 1st

Conference Date: November 3rd

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Call for Abstracts and Proposals

The conference submission system is now open. We welcome the following types of submissions:

⇒ *Paper Abstracts*

To have an individual paper considered for presentation, submit an abstract of your work. Abstracts accepted for presentation will be organized into thematic sessions, with each session typically including four or five presentations.

⇒ *Special Session Proposals*

If you have an interest in organizing and facilitating a panel, workshop, or other special session for the conference, we invite you to submit a Special Session Proposal. Proposals should include the following information: The proposed format of the session (panel, workshop, or other format), a title for the session, a statement of the purpose of the session, and a description of the session.

See the ISA website for submission instructions.

Student Paper Competitions

We are excited to continue our tradition of recognizing student scholarship by hosting student paper competitions in conjunction with our annual conference. Graduate and undergraduate students who submit an abstract of their work to be considered for presentation at the conference may optionally submit the completed paper for consideration for one of our student paper competitions as well. As in years past, winners of the student paper competitions will be recognized at the conference and awarded a cash prize. See the ISA website for more information.

Service Opportunities

Our annual conference is made possible by the valuable and voluntary services provided by our members. We are currently seeking volunteers to serve as Session Presiders at the conference and on our Student Paper Competition Awards Selection Committees. See the ISA website for more information about these service opportunities.