Letter from the Section Chair: Standing in Solidarity with #BlackLivesMatter

Dear AAA Community,

With Americans and people all over the world, we mourn the loss of George Floyd and many others who have lost their lives to racial injustice. These recent abuses took place amidst a pandemic that took more than 130 thousand Americans and left more than 40 million unemployed. African American, Native Americans and Latinx communities suffered heavy tolls of unemployment and fatality, and Asian Americans endured racial attacks and hate crimes as well as the highest unemployment of all ethnicities in the NYC area. We share the pain and outrage in a climate of growing intolerance and xenophobia.

We stand in solidarity with communities and organizations in support of protests across the country. We recognize that progresses Asian Americans have made benefited from decades of fights against discrimination and struggle for civil rights led by African Americans and supported by communities of all races and ethnicities. We grieve the terrible losses, express outrage, demand justice, and urge changes. We condemn interpersonal and institutionalized racism. We condemn white supremacy and state brutality. We condemn policies and institutions that perpetuate these deep racial inequalities. As victims of Exclusion Act and Internment in the past, racial attacks in the pandemic, and decades of prejudices and discriminations, Asian American communities can and should relate the pain and suffering we endure with those of others and reach across the racial divide to fight for justice. We are committed to using our knowledge of racial inequalities in classrooms and public forums to engage with students and communities, to inform policy-making, and to push for profound structural change to the current system of inequality and oppression.

In a concrete effort to support scholars of color, the AAA Council has voted unanimously to donate to the ASA Minority Fellowship Program our section budget of $1500 originally earmarked for the annual receptions and events at the ASA conference. This represents 76.8% of our section annual revenue. We are one of the 52 ASA sections making donations. I also encourage AAA members to consider individual donations to the MFP program. Direct donations are accepted at https://www.asanet.org/donate. The MFP program provides one-year of fellowship to Ph.D. students of color, some of whom are members of
our section. Our support for the program ensures diversity and representation for the future of sociology.

I thank our Newsletter editors Kevin Escudero and Carolyn Choi for soliciting submissions from AAA member reflection pieces regarding the Asian American community’s role in the Movement for Black Lives. We hope to provide a platform for our members to voice their individual perception, emotion, response, understanding, and recommendations.

Although the ASA annual conference in San Francisco has been canceled, AAA events will take place online in the form of Alternative Virtual Engagement Events. I thank the organizers and presiders of these sessions, Van Tran, Emily Walton, Junmin Wang, Jun Xu, and Wei Zhao, for their efforts in organizing live and recorded sessions. I appreciate the presenters’ support and flexibility in accommodating our requests for virtual engagements.

**To participate in these events, you will need to register and the registration is free** [https://www.asanet.org/annual-meeting-2020/registration](https://www.asanet.org/annual-meeting-2020/registration). To access the online session information after you have registered, you first need to log in to your ASA account. Once logged in, click on Virtual Engagement Portal listed under the Annual Meeting header. Then click Online Program ([https://convention2.allacademic.com/one/asa/asa20/index.php](https://convention2.allacademic.com/one/asa/asa20/index.php)) and you will be taken to the online program with logged-in status.

**Saturday, August 8, 2020, Pacific Time**
8:30-10:10am The New Economy and Changes in Asian Societies (live session at scheduled time)
2:30-4:10pm Diverse Asian American Experiences in the United States (live session at scheduled time)
4:30-5:10pm Section on Asia and Asian America Business Meeting (live session at scheduled time)
5:10-6:10pm Roundtable Sessions (various formats, check with the ASA Online Program)

**Sunday, August 9, 2020, Pacific Time**
10:30-12:10pm Asians and Asian Americans (pre-recorded session available until 09/30/2020)

We will hold a virtual award ceremony during the AAA business meeting on Saturday, August 8, 2020, at 4:30-5:10 pm (Pacific Time) as scheduled in the ASA program. Please join us to celebrate the AAA award recipients for their achievements.

I look forward to seeing you virtually in August. I wish you and loved ones health and happiness!

Yours Warmest,

Xiaoling Shu
Professor of Sociology and Director of East Asian Studies
University of California Davis
Chair, ASA Section on Asia and Asian America
Congratulations to Our New Section Officers!

Chair-Elect
Hyunjoon Park, University of Pennsylvania

Council Members (3-year term)
Amy Hsin, Queens College, City University of New York
Hyeyoung Woo, Portland State University

Student Representative
Praveena Lakshmanan, Michigan State University

Congratulations to Our Section Award Winners!

Contribution to the Field Award
Min Zhou, University of California, Los Angeles

Book Award (Asia/Transnational)
Marco Z. Garrido (University of Chicago) for *The Patchwork City: Class, Space, and Politics in Metro Manila* (University of Chicago Press, 2019)

Andrew Junker (Chinese University of Hong Kong) for *Becoming Activists in Global China: Social Movements in the Chinese Diaspora* (Cambridge University Press, 2019)

Honorable Mention

Book Award (Asian America)
Annie Fukushima (University of Utah) for *Migrant Crossings: Witnessing Human Trafficking in the U.S.* (Stanford University Press, 2019)

Research Paper Award
Sharon Quinsaat (Grinell College) for “Linkages and Strategies in Filipino Diaspora Mobilization for Regime Change”

Student Paper Award
Minwoo Jung (University of Southern California) for “Mobilizing ‘the International’: Reluctant Universalism and Pan-Ethnic Regionalism in the South Korean LGBT Movement”
Feature Article:

“A Praxis of Witnessing in these Migratory Times” by Annie Fukushima

In the United States, the twenty-first century immigration story is one of family separation, deportation, and ongoing high numbers of apprehension at the US-Mexico border (Gramlich 2020). Family apprehensions at the border have made iconic children in cages, a consequence of the Trump Administration’s 2018 “zero tolerance” immigration enforcement policy. Notions of “illegality” and criminality are readily ascribed to Latina/o migrants. During the spring of 2020, global immobility became increasingly the new norm where internal migration throughout the United States and international migration came to a slow halt as cities and states sheltered in place. Mobility, to say the least, is a twenty-first century preoccupation, where movement of bodies, consumer goods, and capital, are shaped by a homeland futurity that seeks to contain and capture the future, as a dangerous one. Racism and nativist responses to migrants are not limited to migrants entering south of the US border. Asian Americans and Asian diasporas are also impacted by US responses to immigration.

Asian diasporas in the United States and around the world are treated as dangerous where videos and social media posts share how Asians are experiencing hate crimes due to fears of COVID-19 – the hauntings of Asian migrant exclusions, where citizenship and the rights to have rights, are even suspect for the citizen and papered Asian. Scholarly research as social, political, economic, and cultural implications. Therefore, my scholarly commitments are to witnessing, where I answer: How do collectives and individual witness migratory subjects and what new forms of witnessing are needed to see migrants beyond the dualities of victim/criminal, illegal/legal, and citizen/noncitizen?

Witnessing is a central part of the human rights appeals to respond to human trafficking and migration. Witnessing is not merely passive; witnesses construct, participate in, and create the normative visions of what it means to experience contemporary violence and human rights violations in the twenty-first century. In my book Migrant Crossings, I invite the reader to enact what I call an unsettled witnessing:

“An unsettled witnessing is a commitment to witnessing without being settled with what one is seeing. Unlike spectators, witnesses are called to action. The necessary actions to unsettled witnessing include raising questions about normative aspects of events and examining the politics of representation around victimhood/criminality, citizenship, and legality, as infused with the discourse of nationhood, race, and gender. Such witnessing enables the witness to see a migrant for their complex personhood, beyond the narratives that construct them as Other, as a victim/criminal, and as a subject to be pitied” (Fukushima 2019, 15).
Central to my intellectual commitments is a praxis, the practice of theory. As a result, I have worn the hat of an “expert witness” for immigration cases, civil courts, and criminal courts. The expert’s role in court “is to provide opinions based on professional judgement... it is also important... for the expert to translate professional jargon into lay terminology” (Thoresen 1993). As an expert witness, I have offered up affidavits and testified in court. My expertise has been volunteer – organizations seeking an “expert” – and also organizations directly contacting me through word-of-mouth. Brought in as a subject matter expert on human trafficking, in each case, the judges have determined the scope of my testimony – in some cases having more flexibility, in others limiting it dramatically, reifying that “we should recognize that the admission of expert testimony is not our decision to make” (Loftus 1986). The cases I have served as an expert witness for have ranged from cases of Filipino migrants trafficked into agriculture industries, Chinese migrants allegedly forced to commit a scam, and Latino migrants trafficked into sexual economies, forced drug smuggling, and forced human smuggling. As a content expert on human trafficking, my expertise has been relied upon and my qualifications put to the test. For immigration cases, I have witnessed an increase in reliance on the expert witness for immigration courts. The standards for a T-Visa, a visa that trafficked migrants are eligible to apply for are high, where every year in the US 5,000 visas are available, and yet every year, we have yet to hit this cap (Department of Homeland Security 2017). The high standards have ushered in attorneys turning to the expert to supplement the survivor’s testimony. In the case of immigration courts, expert testimony can be “extremely valuable and probative” (Malphrus 2010).

Witnessing migration and violence has also meant that my research has traversed into community-based research; CBR is applicable research that fulfills the needs of communities. From conducting city-wide needs assessments, to collaborating with students on community projects, to contracting as a consultant researcher for non-governmental organizations, I have come to understand the role of the witness as not solely a legal one. Take for example, in 2018, when conducting a city-wide needs assessment regarding “violence against women” in San Francisco, funded by the Department on the Status of Women, I interviewed 132 individuals. Interviewees varied in race, gender, sexuality, and preferred language, including Spanish, Mandarin and Cantonese speaking participants. I collaborated with the Asian Women’s Shelter Multi-lingual Access Model program and also with a local shelter staff, to ensure language access for myself (as I do not speak either Mandarin or Cantonese) and communication with a wide range of participants. In bearing witness to migrants who experienced violence, I learned that their needs were not just about the abuse they had experienced. Many described the challenges with housing in San Francisco, feeling unsafe in their neighborhoods, the complex and daunting immigration system, and the desires to raise families and stay connected to their communities. Story upon story, reflected a deep distrust of law enforcement and how many felt left behind in a wealthy city. I also witnessed migrants discussing the centrality of organizations, the immigration attorneys, and their social networks. In many ways, what I witnessed was not profound, but rather, a normalcy of how migrant needs continue to be basic and that the needs are
Eventually, I produced a report that offered recommendations to the department in its ongoing efforts to address violence.

The work of sociology does not need to be separated from the humanities; my projects and coalitional work have facilitated opportunities to collaborate with artists, scholars, and activists in transnational contexts, from the Philippines, South Korea, Colombia, from European countries, as well as the United States, where I co-facilitated exhibits, workshops, symposiums, pedagogical activities, and scholarly writings, producing what we collectively called *Migratory Times*. I share aspects of my own intellectual journey to finding in these migratory times a praxis of unsettling witnessing of Asia and Asian America by embracing marginalized knowledge production, coalition and multiplicity.

**References:**


**#AmplifyingCommunityVoices**

In an effort to connect academic and activist spaces during this historic moment where it is critical for us to stand together and fight against state-centered violence against Black communities and communities of color, we as newsletter editors, invited members of NAKASEC (National Korean American Service and Education Consortium) to share their words and perspectives with our section members. As part of this invitation, they have provided us with a reprint of the social justice organization NAKASEC’s Woori Ujima Statement which highlights the collective role that the Asian American community must play in the Movement for Black Lives.

**Woori Ujima: Our Collective Work & Responsibility Statement by NAKASEC**
Dear Community Members,

On behalf of the National Korean American Service & Education Consortium (NAKASEC) & Affiliates, we firmly voice our support and solidarity with the Black community. The murder of George Floyd and too many other Black folx by the police and other state sanctioned systems is reprehensible and must stop- NOW. We must work towards the eradication of racism and White supremacy.

One of the major events that led to the founding of NAKASEC was the LA Uprising of 1992. After the police officers who participated in the brutal beating of Rodney King were acquitted of all charges, Black people rose up in the streets of Los Angeles, including in Koreatown, to rightfully express their pain and outrage. What many people might not know is that one year prior to the uprising, Soon Ja Du, a Korean American store owner, shot and killed Latasha Harlins, a Black teenager. This had already deepened the tensions between the Black and Asian American communities.

During the Uprising, as businesses were damaged in South Central LA, business owners called the police for help. Instead of protecting these businesses, the police guarded the wealthier, White areas of the cities and suburbs. From this experience, we as Asian Americans learned that we could no longer live below the radar and hope to provide our kids with a better life; as immigrants of color, we had to become politically engaged, build with other communities of color, and bring progressive Asian American leadership to a multi-ethnic movement at the national and local levels.

To be true allies, we also must recognize our own acts of anti-Blackness. The person who called 911 on George Floyd was an employee of a small immigrant owned family business. One of the police officers who watched and did not intervene in the murder of Mr. Floyd is Asian American. We must realize that our ignorant actions and inaction can lead to great harm; the police can and will escalate any situation, particularly those involving Black people. We must fight the anti-Blackness within ourselves and our communities.

As the uprising following the murder of George Floyd unfolds, similar to 1992, the media and institutional powers are hard at work focusing attention away from the main issue – the systematic racism and murder of Black folx in this country- and instead seek to delegitimize Black protest by boiling it down to “looting”, “property destruction” and “violent protestors.” They do this to distract us, divide us, and take away the power we could have to make real change if we truly unite. If
there is anything we Asian Americans learned from the LA Uprising, it is that we cannot allow them to divide us again.

As David Choi, owner of Seoul Tacos, said to CBS news in Chicago, “To me it’s bigger than our windows getting busted ... Our brothers and sisters in black communities and minority communities, this is happening on a regular basis. To me that’s way too much, and we stand by those folks and those communities.” Or as Ruhel Islam, owner of Gandhi Mahal restaurant, and his daughter Hafsa in Minneapolis wrote on Facebook, “Don’t worry about us, we will rebuild and we will recover ... Justice needs to be served, put those officers in jail.”

We believe that every single person in this world deserves their human and civil rights. In 2018, NAKASEC co-organized a joint convening with the UndocuBlack Network, called Woori Ujima. Woori Ujima, in Korean and Swahili, means “our collective work and responsibility.” For us as Asian Americans and immigrants, it must be our collective work and responsibility, rooted in the lessons of 1992, to support and follow the leadership of Black communities during this time, and fight in solidarity against institutional racism. It is also our responsibility to constantly learn about and challenge the anti-Blackness within each of us and in our communities. When we are successful, we will finally win the freedom and liberation all of our communities need.

With Love, NAKASEC & Affiliates
#BlackLivesMatter #Asians4BlackLives #DefundThePolice #AbolishICE

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**Resources for the Movement for Black Lives**

In concerted effort from the Chair’s Letter and the recent actions of the AAA council, as newsletter editors, we have compiled this list of resources to help serve as a starting point in the conversation regarding how Asian and Asian American sociologists can support the Movement for Black Lives. These are by no means the only resources or ways to give, but rather suggestions on some initial resources that might be of interest to section members.

**Online Resources:**

Black Lives Matter Toolkit: [https://blacklivesmatter.com/resources/](https://blacklivesmatter.com/resources/)

Asian American Racial Justice Toolkit

Asian American Advocacy Fund, Asian for Black Lives Resources and Call to Action: [https://asianamericanadvocacyfund.org/asians-for-black-lives](https://asianamericanadvocacyfund.org/asians-for-black-lives)
Readings:


Hanh Nguyen, “My fellow Asian Americans, we must address the anti-Blackness rampant in our community,” Salon, June 11, 2020.


Upcoming Event: U.S. Empire and Anti-Blackness: Where Korea and Korean America Have Been and Where We’re Headed” on Wednesday, July 29th at 11am CDT. Register here: https://forms.gle/wrwPuGvkHASBLnN57

Links for Donations & Ways to Get Involved:

Elijah McClain Memorial Fund (one of the many crowd-sourcing campaigns to help support the families of those lost to anti-Black violence): https://www.gofundme.com/f/elijah-mcclain

Black Lives Matter Global Network (movement to end state-sanctioned violence, liberate Black people, and end white supremacy): https://secure.actblue.com/donate/ms_blm_homepage_2019

Movement for Black Lives (network of 100 + organizations focusing on different aspects of civil rights and criminal justice reform movements): https://m4bl.org/

The Nation Bail Fund Network (60 + community bail funds that help pay bail within the criminal legal and immigration systems for organizers, protestors, and other community members): https://www.communityjusticeexchange.org/nbfn-directory

Minnesota Rapid Response Coalition (support efforts to build back small businesses adversely impacted by protests related to murder of George Floyd): https://wearemrrc.com/

The Nina Pop Mental Health Recovery Fund by the Okra Project (To honor Nina Pop and other Black Trans folks who have been lost to state-sanctioned violence, this fund is to help pay for mental health services for members of the Black trans community): https://www.them.us/story/okra-project-mental-health-fund-tony-mcdade-nina-pop

Helping Educate to Advance the Rights of Deaf Communities (organization assisting Deaf incarcerated individuals with access issues,
investigate wrongful convictions and educating the Deaf community about legal rights: https://behearddc.org/get-involved/

Justice LA (LA coalition currently fighting to reduce multi-billion dollar police budget): https://justicelanow.org/

Profiles of Section Graduate Students on the Job Market

Adrienne Lee Atterberry is a doctoral candidate in Sociology at Syracuse University. Her research interests include school-choice, parenting, and ethno-racial identity among US immigrant groups. Her most recent project investigates the social and cultural impacts of the global IT industry as experienced by Indian American return migrants and their families living in Bangalore, a city in southwest India. This project examines why Indian Americans choose to return to the subcontinent, the ways they raise and educate their children, and how having a childhood characterized by transnational mobility affects the forms of identity and belonging expressed by Indian American youth.

Carolyn Areum Choi is a Ph.D. candidate in Sociology at the University of Southern California and a pre-doctoral fellow in Asian American Studies at Dartmouth College. Her research examines how postcoloniality, education, migration, and class projects intersect and is currently completing her dissertation on South Korean youth workers and students across the Philippines, Australia, and the United States. She has published in the International Migration Review, Global Networks, Positions & Sexualities. When she is not writing for adults, she also writes feminist children’s books and is co-author of IntersectionAllies: We Make Room for All (Dottir Press, 2019).

Armand Gutierrez is a Ph.D. Candidate in Sociology at UCSD. He is a Ford and Cota-Robles Fellow. Utilizing both quantitative and qualitative methods, his work examines race, migration, global economic processes, and family. He has published numerous award-winning articles in journals such as Social Problems, Ethnic and Racial Studies, and Global Networks. He is currently finishing his dissertation on second-generation remittance practices. He is also developing a book manuscript on the ways in which the ancestral home country continues to shape the lives of second-generation Mexican- and Filipino-Americans.

Daniela Pila is a Ph.D. candidate in Sociology at the University at Albany, SUNY and an American Association for University Women Dissertation Fellow for 2020-2021. Her research explores legality, U.S. immigration policy, and citizenship. Her dissertation investigates how Filipino immigrants navigate (or fail to navigate) the U.S. immigration system. She draws her analysis from more than 100 hours of participant observation and 54 in-depth interviews with Filipino immigrants in the Greater New York metropolitan area.
AAA Panels at 2020 Annual Meeting

**Note:** The schedule for the virtual sessions will be available on the ASA website in mid to late July.

**Saturday, August 8, 2020**

**8:30-10:10am PST (live session at scheduled time)**

*The New Economy and Changes in Asian Societies*

**Session Organizer:** Wei Zhao (University of North Carolina, Charlotte)

**Presenters:**

- Andy Scott Chang (University of California, Berkeley), “Selling a Resume and Buying a Job: Stratification of Gender and Occupation in International Migration”
- Anning Hu (Fudan University) and Xiaogang Wu (Hong Kong University of Science and Technology), “Cultural Capital, College Entrance Examination, and Elite University Attendance in China”
- Gabriel Z. Chiu (Stanford University), “Technology Entrepreneurship in Post-Communist China: A Project of the Self Under Changing Codes of Honor”
- Caroline Reilly (University of Memphis) and Junmin Wang (University of Memphis), “Critical Mass and Women CEOs in China: Moderating Effects of Global Shareholders and State Ownership”

**Presider:** Jinmin Wang (University of Memphis)

**2:30-4:10pm PST (live session at scheduled time)**

*Diverse Asian American Experiences in the United States*

**Session Organizer/Presider:** Van C. Tran (The Graduate Center, CUNY)

**Presenters:**

- Margaret M. Chin (CUNY-Hunter College), “What’s in a Promotion? Performance Reviews, Trust, Affirmative Action”
- C.N. Le (University of Massachusetts, Amherst), “The New Wave: Recent Trends and Cultural Factors in Pan-Asian/Inter-Ethnic Asian American Marriages”
- Byung Soo Lee (University at Buffalo, SUNY) and Hyeyoung Woo (Portland State University), “For More and For Better: Children’s Education and Korean American’s Utilization of Ties to Korea”
- Anjanette Marie Chan Tack (University of Chicago), “Race
Against Ethnicity?: How Indo-Caribbeans Navigate Ethnoracial Ambiguity in New York’s Political Field

4:30-5:10pm PST (live session at scheduled time)
Section on Asia and Asian America Business Meeting
Zoom: https://ucdavisdss.zoom.us/j/8145398812

5:10-6:10pm PST
Roundtable Sessions
(various formats, check with the ASA Online Program)

Sunday, August 9, 2020, Pacific Time

10:30am-12:10pm (pre-recorded session available until 09/30/20)
Asians and Asian Americans
Session Organizer/Presider: Jun Xu (Ball State University)
Presenters:
Hannah Lee (University of Washington), “Heterogeneous Neighborhood Patterns of Asian Groups Across Immigrant Destinations”

Lingxin Hao (Johns Hopkins University) and Jiaolong He (Sun Yat-Sen University), “Housing Reform and Changing Housing Inequality in China”

Qian He (Princeton University) and Yu Xie (Princeton University), “Income Inequalities in Contemporary Rural China: Do Political Capitals Still Matter?”

Emily Walton (Dartmouth College), “Out of Place: Misrecognition and Health in Rural New England”

Lucas Germain Druhout (Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity) and Filiz Garip (Cornell University), “What’s Behind a Racial Category? Uncovering Heterogeneity Among Asian Americans Through a Data-Driven Typology”
Discussant: Emily Walton (Dartmouth College)

New Publications by Section Members


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**Member Achievements & Placements**

**Adrienne Lee Atterberry** won the 2019 Graduate Student Best Paper Award, Department of Sociology, Syracuse University for the paper, “Pathways to U.S. higher education: Capital, citizenship and Indian women MBA students.” She also received the Marleigh Grayer Ryan Award at the New York Conference on Asian Studies for the paper, “Schooling within a transnational context: Examining Indian American return migrants’ K-12 school-choice decisions.”

**Carolyn Choi** was awarded the 2020 Ph.D. Achievement Award at the University of Southern California.

**Kevin Escudero** received a 5-year NSF CAREER Award for his project, “Educational Trajectories and Career Plans under Uncertainty” focusing on immigrant graduate and professional students’ educational and career trajectories.

**Daniela Pila** received the AAUW American Dissertation Fellowship for the 2020-2021 award year and was an honorable mention for the Ford Foundation Dissertation fellowship. Daniela Pila also received a $600 travel grant from the University of Utah: Asia Center and Department of Sociology to present at the Mini-conference *21st Century Asian Migration & Incorporation* and a $200 travel grant from the Eastern Sociological Society to present at the Mini-conference *Toward a Critical Migration Studies*. From 2017-2019, she was awarded $100 from the Lee Student Support Fund for the Society for the Study of Social Problems (SSSP) conference and $400 travel grant from the Mellon Faculty Diversity Project to present research findings at Queens College, City University of New York. She was also a recipient of $600 scholarship from the Karen R. Hitchcock New Frontiers Fund for the Initiatives for Women at the University at Albany. Lastly, as Honorable Mention from the Beth B. Hess Memorial Scholarship, Daniela received $600 reward.