ASA Welcomes Eight New MFP Fellows

ASA and the Minority Fellowship Program (MFP) are pleased to introduce the eight new Fellows who comprise MFP Cohort 39. The MFP Advisory Panel met this spring in Washington, DC, to review the large and highly competitive pool of applications. MFP Cohort 39 consists of PhD candidates with strong and diverse sociological research interests. The new Fellows will officially begin their participation on August 1, 2012.

They will attend the 2012 Annual Meeting in Denver, where they will take part in a day-long orientation on Thursday, August 16, that will include a brief history of ASA and a series of research and professional development-themed presentations by sociologists (including several former Fellows) with expertise in a variety of areas. The new Fellows will also participate in a number of required sessions and workshops and have the opportunity to network with sociologists with similar interests. At the Annual Meeting, they will attend a host of MFP-sponsored events, including a breakfast meeting with all current MFP Fellows on August 17. The members of MFP Cohort 39 will also be introduced individually and as a group during the MFP Benefit Reception on August 18. To register for the reception, see www.asanet.org/AM2012/registration.cfm.

Since 2010, MFP has been generously supported in full by Sociologists for Women in Society (SWS), Alpha Kappa Delta (AKD), the Midwest Sociological Society (MSS), the Association of Black Sociologists (ABS), the Southwestern Sociological Association (SSA), and ASA Council, as well as through the significant gifts made by individual ASA members and organizations through the recent MFP Leadership Campaign and other annual contributions. As organizations, SWS, the Eastern Sociological Society (ESS), and the Pacific Sociological Association (PSA) have each participated in the MFP Leadership Campaign.

• Brandi Gilbert
• Anna R. Haskins
• Amy Irby-Shasanmi
• Yaejoon Kwon
• Krystale Littlejohn
• Victor Ray
• Rachel R. Sarabia
• Deadric Williams

Brandi Gilbert (AKD MFP)

Undergraduate Institution: University of Delaware.

Graduate Institution: University of Colorado.

Brandi is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Sociology at the University of Colorado and a research assistant at the Natural Hazards Center (NHC), where she explores the social impacts of disasters. She received her bachelor’s degree in Elementary Education from the University of Delaware (UD). While at UD, she became interested in sociological disaster research as a part of Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program, examining adolescent coping strategies in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. As a graduate student, Brandi’s work at the NHC has included research on disaster preparedness among community-based organizations that serve vulnerable populations in the San Francisco Bay Area and housing recovery efforts following the Haiti earthquake. Currently, Brandi is conducting her dissertation research on the impacts of the BP oil spill on youth whose parents are tied to commercial seafood and shipbuilding industries. Her work examines how family dynamics, social ties, and recreational and educational activities may have shifted in the aftermath of the spill; the ways in which youth make sense of the disaster and its implications for themselves and their families; and how they cope with the disaster impacts.

Anna R. Haskins (ASA Council MFP)

Undergraduate Institution: University of Michigan.

Graduate Institution: University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Anna is a doctoral candidate in sociology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where her current work focuses on the intergenerational effects of mass incarceration on children’s educational outcomes and academic trajectories. She received her bachelor’s degree in education from the University of Michigan and taught elementary school for several years before pursuing graduate studies in sociology. Anna’s research agenda stems from a deep-rooted commitment to eradicating racial inequities in education and, in particular, a desire to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the role mass incarceration in both the intergenerational transmission of inequality and the persistence of racial disparities in educational outcomes. Her master’s thesis used quasi-experimental methods to explore the effects of paternal incarceration on child school readiness. Her dissertation extends this work by bringing together research on the black-white achievement gap and work on the social consequences of rising black male incarceration rates.
to explore how three of America’s most powerful social institutions—the family, the school, and the penal system—jointly contribute to educational inequality. Anna’s work has received student paper awards in the areas of sociology of education and sociology of population, and she has been supported through a variety of funding agencies, including the Institute of Education Sciences, the National Science Foundation, and the Ford Foundation.

Back to Top of Page

Amy Irby-Shasanmi (ABS/Leadership Campaign MFP)

Undergraduate Institution: DePauw University.

Graduate Institution: Indiana University-Bloomington.

Amy is a PhD student in the Department of Sociology at Indiana University-Bloomington. Prior to graduate school, Amy worked as a resident advisor in a group home serving youth. These youth, most of whom were minority and/or from low socioeconomic backgrounds, suffered from abuse, neglect, and repeated placement failures. With these youth, she became aware of negative public attitudes toward mental illness and saw the effect stigma had on their lives. In this regard, her applied work experience is an integral part of her understanding of issues surrounding health. As a scholar, she seeks to understand the interrelated roles of race/ethnicity, social relationships, and stratification in shaping health disparities. In one publication she gives attention to the ways in which stress and network characteristics influence thoughts about life expectancy among Blacks. The merging of her pedagogy and research led to the creation of a pedagogical tool that physically demonstrates health stratification. Her dissertation broadly investigates how race relations affect health by focusing on individuals in inter-ethnic relationships. Her objective is to demonstrate how racialized and gendered systems affect the most intimate of relationships and produce disparities in health across and within couples.

Back to Top of Page

Yaejoon Kwon (SWS MFP #1)

Undergraduate Institution: Northwestern University.

Graduate Institution: University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Yaejoon grew up in St. Paul, MN, and received a BA from Northwestern University. Currently, she is a doctoral student at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign where she serves as the graduate student representative on the Asian American Studies Advisory Committee and chair of the Asian Pacific American Graduate Students Organization. Her research and teaching interests include U.S. state-formation, race, gender, and violence. Her dissertation will examine the post-1945 U.S. military empire, specifically analyzing the legal, physical, and emotional infrastructures of the U.S. military occupation in southern Korea. Focusing on how crimes involving U.S. soldiers are debated within the military, she is interested in how these debates change over time and in relation to transnational race and gender formations. Yaejoon is thankful for the intellectual and emotional support of her home department, mentors, and financial support from the Asian American Studies Program’s Jeffrey S. Tanaka grant, the Bastian summer dissertation fellowship, and the Center for East Asian and Pacific Studies’ Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowship.

Back to Top of Page

Krystale Littlejohn (SWS MFP #2)

Undergraduate Institution: Occidental College.

Graduate Institution: Stanford University.

Krystale is a doctoral candidate at Stanford University studying race and ethnicity, social inequality, and sociology of the family. She earned her BA in sociology and Spanish Language and Culture at Occidental College. She currently has two lines of research. One project focuses on the social dimensions of birth control use as a window into understanding subgroup differences in unintended pregnancy and fertility. In a forthcoming paper, she uses National Survey of Family Growth (2002) data to examine race and education differences in choosing to stop birth control because of dissatisfaction as a potential explanation for disparities in unintended pregnancy. In another manuscript currently under preparation, she uses qualitative data to examine women’s experiences with contraceptive side effects to understand the relationship between the social dimensions of side effects, pregnancy prevention, and contraceptive negotiation. In her dissertation, she focuses on the relationship between race and partnership for people who identify with more than one race in the United States to examine how race and racial boundaries are produced and reproduced through partnership and marriage and the extent to which multiracials challenge racial boundaries in the 21st century.

Back to Top of Page

Victor Ray (Leadership Campaign MFP)

Undergraduate Institutions: Borough of Manhattan Community College and Vassar College.

Graduate Institution: Duke University.

Victor is a doctoral candidate in sociology at Duke University. He began his studies at the Borough of Manhattan Community College and finished his undergraduate degree in Urban Studies at Vassar, where he graduated Phi Beta Kappa in 2007. At both schools, Victor was heavily involved in student politics, especially in relation to access to college for low-income and minority students and campus racial climate. Since arriving at Duke, Victor has collaborated on articles on race and race theory for a number of journals, such as the Journal of African American Studies and the Journal of Marriage and Family. Victor’s dissertation research, supported by the Ford Foundation and the National Science Foundation, among others, focuses on how race and gender shape the transition to civilian life for veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts. Using qualitative interviews, he explores how the
possible mental health effects of life in a combat zone impacts the daily lives of veterans as they reintegrate into work and family. Victor was honored that his peers nominated him for the Duke Graduate School’s highly competitive Dean’s Award for Excellence in Mentoring, which he was awarded.

Rachel R. Sarabia (ASA Council MFP)

*Undergraduate Institution:* University of California-Los Angeles.

*Graduate Institution:* University of California-Santa Barbara.

Rachel is a doctoral candidate in sociology at the University of California-Santa Barbara (UCSB). She earned her BA from the University of California-Los Angeles (UCLA) in 2007 and her master’s degree from UCSB in 2009. Her participation in the Ronald E. McNair Scholars Program and Sociology Honors Program at UCLA ignited her desire to seek advanced degrees in sociology and engage in research that informs public policy. Rachel’s research interests are in juvenile and social justice, race, class, and gender studies, and urban ethnography. Her life experiences and family fuel her passion for finding solutions to the struggles that poor, urban populations face. Rachel’s dissertation research—supported by the Ford Foundation, the Chicana/o Studies Institute, and the Department of Sociology at UCSB—examines the experiences of Latina women and Latina/o youth living in a low-income public housing development in Southern California. She documents how women and youths’ abilities to navigate the streets, negotiate violence, and avoid victimization and criminalization within and outside of the public housing development is tied to the performance of situational masculinities. Additionally, Rachel links the conditions and perpetuation of poverty to institutionalized economic racism, residential segregation, and disproportionate urban poverty.

Deadric Williams (MSS MFP)

*Undergraduate Institution:* Mississippi State University.

*Graduate Institution:* University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Deadric is a doctoral student at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln with research interests in the sociology of family, race and ethnicity, neighborhood disadvantage, and quantitative methods. Originally from Mississippi, Deadric received his bachelor’s degree in English and master’s degree in sociology from Mississippi State University (MSU). While at MSU, he received the outstanding master’s student award and taught several sociology courses. His master’s thesis examined the predictors of paternal commitment and paternal involvement among low-income African-American fathers. While at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Deadric has been working on a series of research projects using data from the Fragile Families and Child Well-being Study. His research seeks to understand within-family interpersonal processes by examining the effects of economic hardship on relationship distress through several mediating factors such as depressive symptoms, inter-parental discord, and parenting stress among mothers and fathers. Most of Deadric’s research takes a dyadic longitudinal structural equation model approach. His first paper is currently under review. Deadric is also involved with studies using the Add Health friendship network data to understand the longitudinal effects of friendship ties and alcohol use among adolescents. He has received several departmental fellowships and research awards.