ASA Welcomes Minority Fellowship Program Cohort 40

ASA and the Minority Fellowship Program (MFP) are pleased to introduce the seven new Fellows who comprise MFP Cohort 40. The MFP Advisory Panel met this spring in Washington, DC, to review the large and highly competitive pool of applications. MFP Cohort 40 consists of PhD candidates with strong and diverse sociological research interests. The new Fellows will officially begin their participation on August 1, which also begins MFP's 40th anniversary year.

They will attend the 2013 Annual Meeting in New York, where they will take part in a day-long orientation, which 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. The members of MFP Cohort 40 will also be introduced individually and as a group during the MFP Benefit Reception on August 11. To register for the reception, see www.asanet.org/AM2013/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. Organizations, including SWS, the Eastern Sociological Society (ESS), and the Pacific Sociological Association (PSA), have also participated in the MFP Leadership Campaign.

- Edwin Ackerman
- Regina S. Baker
- Jessica Dunning-Lozano
- Joseph Ewoodzie
- Elena Shih
- Stacy Torres
- Matthew Town

**Edwin Ackerman**  
(ASA Council MFP)

Undergraduate Institution: University of California, Berkeley  
Graduate Institution: University of California, Berkeley

Edwin Ackerman, originally from the Tijuana, Mexico/San Diego, CA border region, is a doctoral candidate in the sociology department at University of California-Berkeley. He recently finished archival research in Mexico and Bolivia with funding from the Council of American Overseas Research Centers. His research interests have concentrated in political sociology with an emphasis on comparative-historical methods. One strand of work has focused on the historical trajectories of border enforcement and the "illegalization" of immigration in the United States. His papers coming from this line of work have been published in *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, the *Journal of Language and Politics*, and the *Berkeley Journal of Sociology*. Another strand of Edwin’s work deals with political party formation. His dissertation explains the emergence of hegemonic parties in relation to market forces and property arrangements. His current project looks at why the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI) in Mexico was able to incorporate peasant unions after the revolutionary upheaval in the early 20th century, while Bolivia’s Movimiento Nacional Revolucionario (MNR) attempted to emulate the PRI but failed after their revolution of the mid-1950s. In doing so, Edwin hopes to shed light on the intricacies of post-revolutionary state formation, and more broadly, the relationship between parties and civil society and
the historical conditions under which parties can have agency.

Regina S. Baker
(ABS/Leadership Campaign MFP)

Undergraduate Institution: Mercer University
Graduate Institutions: University of Georgia and Duke University

Regina Baker is a doctoral candidate at Duke University. She earned a BA in sociology at Mercer University (2007) and an MSW at the University of Georgia (UGA) (2009). While at UGA she did research and policy analysis for the Child and Family Policy Initiative at the Carl Vinson Institute of Government. She also has volunteered and worked with low-income communities and at-risk youth. These experiences sparked Regina’s research interests in social stratification and inequality (race/gender/class), particularly relating to poverty, work, and the family. Her dissertation research, which has been supported by both the Graduate School and the Center for Child and Family Policy at Duke, is a multi-level analysis of the determinants of poverty in the U.S. South. This research examines the role of family demographics, race regimes, economic structure, and politics in explaining the higher poverty in the South and income disparities within the South. Regina’s other current research examines the changing effects of marriage and work on child poverty over time as well as studying socioeconomic (im)mobility in low-income families of children with disabilities. She has also collaborated on forthcoming publications regarding inequality, family processes, and rural health (American Behavioral Scientist) and unionization and working poverty (American Sociological Review).

Jessica Dunning-Lozano (ASA Council MFP)

Undergraduate Institution: University of California, Berkeley
Graduate Institution: University of Texas–Austin

Jessica Dunning-Lozano is a doctoral candidate at the University of Texas–Austin. She received her BA from the University of California (UC) Berkeley after transferring from Laney Community College in Oakland, CA. While at UC-Berkeley, she participated in the Sociology Honors Program and cultivated her research interests in school-level practices and policies that marginalize vulnerable youth populations. After spending several years working in private-public education partnerships she pursued a master’s degree at the University of Chicago. There, she undertook a qualitative study on student-tracking practices in and out of a public alternative high school in the San Francisco Bay Area. This research further inspired her to study the micro implementation of macro-level school policies that produce disparities in quality of instruction, graduation rates, and academic trajectories by race, class, gender, and citizenship status. Her dissertation extends this prior research in the context of public disciplinary alternative education programs in Texas and examines the on-the-ground enforcement of zero-tolerance school-level policies. She focuses on in-school and out-of-school processes—the interplay of the family, juvenile justice system, and public education—to understand how disciplinary alternative education programs may operate to produce and reproduce both educational inequality and perceived student deviance and misbehavior. Jessica’s dissertation project has been funded through the Center for Mexican-American Studies Dissertation Fellowship and the University of Texas President’s Fellowship.

Joseph Ewoodzie (MSS/Leadership Campaign MFP)

Undergraduate Institution: Ithaca College
Graduate Institution: University of Wisconsin-Madison

Joseph Ewoodzie is a doctoral candidate in sociology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. His work aims to uncover deeply buried processes of meaning creation and mechanisms that ensure their reproduction or transformation. He is also interested in how social meaning structures the lives of individual and social actors. Joseph’s master’s thesis, since turned into a book manuscript titled Break Beats in the Bronx: Symbolic Boundaries and the Making of Hip Hop, combines never-before-used archival material with sociological theorizing about symbolic boundaries to provide a historical account of the making of hip hop. It focuses on a crucial span of time surprisingly under-examined in previous studies—1975-79. His dissertation takes on questions about how people acquire, prepare, and consume what they eat. To answer these questions, Joseph moved to Jackson, MS, to conduct an ethnographic study of African Americans. For 10 months in 2013, he followed more than a dozen black Jacksonians, from people who are homeless and families who live well below the poverty line to middle income and wealthy families, to observe and experience how day-to-day decisions about food are made. His work is supported by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Dissertation Grant and Mellon-Wisconsin Summer Fellowship.
Elena Shih (SWS MFP #1)

Undergraduate Institution: Pomona College
Graduate Institution: University of California, Los Angeles

Elena Shih is a PhD Candidate in the Department of Sociology at University of California-Los Angeles, where her research explores the moral economy of low-wage women’s work in the transnational counter-human trafficking movement. Her dissertation draws on multi-sited ethnographic research with faith-based and secular factions of the movement in China, Thailand, and the United States and is concerned with hierarchies of power within transnational social movements. In particular, her work sheds light on how first-world humanitarian and victim rehabilitation regimes impact the lives of low-wage migrant workers across the global south. Her research on gender-based violence began as a Mandarin intake counselor for T-Visa and VAWA (Violence Against Women Act) cases at Los Angeles’ Asian Pacific American Legal Center and further developed at the Beijing University Center for Women’s Law Studies and Legal Aid, where she was a Fulbright Fellow. In China, she co-founded a community arts project on the China-Burma border that provides public arts education as harm reduction to ethnic minority youth. She is eager to collaborate and learn from others engaged in different forms of embodied cultural activism and how they can be mobilized to address research agendas (or vice versa).

Stacy Torres (SWS MFP # 2)

Undergraduate Institution: Fordham University
Graduate Institution: New York University

Stacy was born and raised in New York City. She is a doctoral candidate in sociology at New York University, where her current work focuses on social ties among older adults aging in place. She earned her BA in comparative literature from Fordham University and MFA in nonfiction creative writing from Columbia University. Her research and teaching interests include gender, health, the family, urban communities, aging and the life course, and qualitative research methods. Stacy’s dissertation research examines urban belonging among older adults aging in a gentrified New York City neighborhood. To understand the lived experience of aging in place, she has spent the past three and a half years conducting a multi-site ethnographic study following participants as they have coped with the closing of neighborhood establishments, the loss of neighbors, friends, and family, health setbacks, depression, illness, financial struggles, and other challenges. Her work investigates how belonging to a place or a group of people helps older adults cope with multiple vulnerabilities and develop social support networks to manage crisis and everyday challenges.

Matthew Town (AKD MFP)

Undergraduate Institution: Black Hills State University
Graduate Institution: Portland State University

Matthew Town is an enrolled member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma and currently a doctoral candidate at Portland State University. He is a graduate of Black Hills State University, where he earned his undergraduate degree in sociology. At Oregon State University he earned his master's in Public Health with an emphasis in Global Health. Prior to pursuing his doctoral degree, Matthew worked as a Program Director for the Aberdeen Area Tribal Chairmen’s Health Board and the Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board. His work centered on health disparities among American Indian and Alaska Natives specifically in the areas of sexual and reproductive health, oncology health services, and substance abuse. Matthew’s work remains rooted in health disparities and focuses on indigenous health, LGBT health, and their intersection. His dissertation investigates the impacts of everyday discrimination on HIV risk behavior among American Indian/Alaska Native men who have sex with men. Using data from the HONOR Project, the largest investigation of indigenous sexual minorities in the United States, his project specifically examines the impact of racial and sexual microaggressions on mental health and sexual risk behavior as well as the moderating impacts of cultural buffers.