

WORLD ON THE MOVE

25TH ANNIVERSARY

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Edited by Armand Gutierrez

From Section Chair:

Cecilia Menjivar

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the International Migration Section, and I could not be more excited and honored to be the Chair of the Section at this momentous occasion. The Section membership at the end of the current membership year stands at 621, unchanged from 620 in 2017, but a slight decrease from 654 in 2016. Please continue your engagement in the Section and encourage others to join us, as I do believe this is a particularly important historical moment to be doing research on immigration so that we can contribute our evidence-based voice to current debates.



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I want to first acknowledge a few people. Once again, I would like to thank David FitzGerald for organizing such a successful mini-conference at the meetings in Philadelphia, to the local organizing committee and the many volunteers, and to the sponsors. At the meetings, our panels, roundtables, and mentoring luncheon were a huge success, so I want to thank the organizers, presenters, and participants at all these events for making it so worthwhile for all of us to attend. I also want to take this opportunity to thank the WOM Editor, Armand Gutierrez, and Associate Editor, Molly Fee, for their tireless work in producing this newsletter and curating the announcements to the listserv. Even though Oshin Khachikian had stepped down from his official duties as editor, he has been helping us with the production of this anniversary special issue. With the energy, talent, and dedication of young scholars such as Armand, Molly, and Oshin the future of our Section surely is in very good hands!

These past 25 years our Section has comprised a vibrant, intellectually dynamic, creative, and productive group of scholars, most of whom are based in the United States but also around the world. Today, the current administration in Washington presents us with multiple challenges (daily it seems!) but also with plenty of opportunities to demonstrate the critical importance of our work. However, in reading old issues of WOM newsletters over the past 25 years (yes, it was delightful to read them all – you can take a peek at the very first WOM in the newsletter, see page 4), I noticed a common thread: in different years past chairs noted the continued relevance of our work in the face of increasing securitization, border control, and enforcement. Clearly, our work has remained timely (and timeless). Perhaps this is not a coincidence. The foundation of the Section in 1994 roughly coincides with the signing of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act in 1996, which set in motion the enforcement and legislative practices that have shaped quite a bit what we have been studying. Thus, since the early years of the Section we have been working in high gear, producing the highest-caliber scholarship that captures the effects of major legislative and enforcement developments. Indeed, we have been in the unusual position to have the subject of our scholarship consistently be the target of incrementally and wide-ranging punitive policies (with deeply harmful consequences for the communities we study) for almost the entire life of our Section. In my view, as a group we have responded splendidly – by producing a relevant, thoughtful, meticulously executed body of scholarship. This holds the key to our success as a community of scholars and augurs extremely well for our future.

To begin the yearlong celebration of our Section’s silver jubilee, in place of the short essays we usually publish in WOM, this special issue features invited reflections from past chairs at three times of our Section’s history: Rubén G. Rumbaut, the first chair, Peggy Levitt, chair in 2005-2006, and Min Zhou, chair in 2013-2014. In addition, the editors of *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, who have generously supported our reception over the years, have written a brief message for us on this occasion.

And as part of the *Council Member Spotlight* feature, we are pleased to highlight the work of our newly-elected Councilor Jennifer Jones in this newsletter.

With Van Tran at the helm and an outstanding local committee in New York City, we are planning a series of events for the NYC meetings to conclude our jubilee year; details are forthcoming in the next installment of WOM. For now, here is a sneak preview. Our reception will be held at CUNY, a space that three past Section chairs – Nancy Foner, Phil Kasinitz, and Richard Alba – have graciously secured for this festive occasion. And our Chair-Elect, Rubén Hernández-León, has been hard at work organizing an exciting slate of panels for the 2019 meetings (see the descriptions a few pages ahead). Stay tuned!

Please continue to share your news with us – this is an important way to keep connected, informed, and build our community.

With my warmest wishes for a relaxing winter break and for a healthful and more peaceful 2019.

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World on the Move: Council Member Spotlight

“Immigration as Race-Making”

Jennifer A. Jones

I came to the study of migration by accident.

As a child, I confidently reported my desire to be President, precociously making the case that I could be a good leader to any adult who would indulge me. Somehow, the absence of nonwhites and women in our highest elected office failed to deter me. It was not that I was unaware of or untouched by racial and gender discrimination. It was just that somehow, in Harold Washington’s Chicago, it seemed entirely plausible.

As I got older, my interest in politics got more specific. By the time I reached high school, I began to participate in Model United Nations and envisioned a career in the state department, working as part of the diplomatic core in Latin America. In college, I decided to pursue a major in international relations. At the same time, I challenged myself to grow intellectually and personally by moving away from home and headed west to California. Like anyone who has moved, I suddenly had a new lens to see myself through. This new context forced me to simultaneously wrestle with the ways in which race, my racial identity, and those of my friends and colleagues seemed to shape our life experiences in distinct ways.

Indeed, California seemed to be a different world entirely when it came to race and politics. My studies and personal life began to converge as I took a strong interest in black studies and Spanish, pursuing them as supplementary minors. I began to see connections between racial politics and meanings in my own cloistered college spaces. Attacks on affirmative action, race-related conflicts on campus, and conversations about identity and belonging with my peers re-shaped my understanding of race and politics. Later, through a semester-long study abroad program in Cuba, I came to understand race and politics in yet another context, learning about the mobilization of blackness as a political tool. While there, I studied the ways in which convoluted political relationships between the US and Cuba had racialized consequences both here and there, and was hooked on making sense of these connections.

After 9/11, some disappointing experiences with diplomats abroad and our turn away from diplomacy soured me on the foreign service but couldn’t shake an interest in how race and politics were intertwined. I changed course, and after a serendipitous placement as a sociology research assistant over the summer, decided that I wanted to continue to pursue these questions in graduate school. When I enrolled at Berkeley, I had a research agenda in mind that would allow me to dig more deeply into the relationship between black mobility and international



policy in Cuba. But, because I needed a smaller project for the MA, I took a different tack and pursued the study of group-making among multiracial college students who had just formed a new mixed-race identity-based organization. This organization had formed in the wake of political and social changes to the US Census in 2000, which, for the first time, had allowed for individuals to check two or more boxes on the race question. The ways in which they went about building collective identity were surprisingly effective. In observing how groupness was built in a short period of time, I was forced to think deeply about the processual nature of racial formation and the racial structures that impact these processes. At the end of that project, I found myself less interested in going to Cuba to conduct fieldwork and more interested in the ways that political and social context shaped the ways that people understood themselves. My background in Latin America revealed to me that racial meanings developed differently in different places, and yet preserved similar hierarchies and patterns of resource distribution. It was this background combined with my new focus on racial formation that brought me to the study of migration.

In my studies, I had come to understand immigration and the legal and social structures that regulate it as race-making practices. That is, who we decide to let in or exclude (not to mention eliminate, exploit, or dominate), who we design to integrate, politically, socially, economically, and who we determine are included in our sense of national identity is, and always has been a racial project. This is true not only in the US, but throughout Europe and Latin America, where

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racial science shaped political thought, determining both political and social ideas about what it means to move from one nation to another, what that process looks like, and what an individual’s life becomes when they arrive. It occurred to me that to understand the processual nature of racial formation, immigration was the perfect arena to conduct research. With this framing in mind, I decided instead to embark on what became a series of projects that sought to exploit immigration as a way to better understand racial formation and politics. My first project in this line of work examines how racial formation and race relations are changing in what is now commonly termed the New South.

Over the last 30 years, the U.S. Southeast has become the locus of shifting patterns of immigrant integration and race relations. Its unique characteristics of rapid demographic change, an explosion of anti-immigrant policies, cooperation with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and a large African American population, have made the region a dynamic indicator of how race and race relations are changing throughout the country.

Constructed originally as a multi-sited mixed qualitative methods project that examined racial meanings and race relations in both the sending and receiving contexts, I examined how the marginalization and racialization of Latinos in the U.S. compels them to self-identify as racial minorities and to develop positive social and political ties with blacks in ways that override many of the ethnic and racial meanings they developed in the home country.

Specifically, drawing from a community ethnography in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, I found that changes in the meaning of Latino racial identity arose from two related processes: a political backlash against Latino immigration that results in downward mobility, and what I call ‘reverse incorporation’, and through on-the-ground relations with native-born community members, whose attitudes and practices shape newcomers’ ideas about race. Forthcoming with the University of Chicago Press, the book project that resulted from this work, *The Browning of the New South*, demonstrates that shifting local political conditions play an important role in shaping racial meanings and intergroup relationships, producing positive relationships between blacks and Latinos and what I call *minority linked fate*. These findings undermine pervasive assumptions of black-brown conflict and highlight the importance of immigration practices and policies as race-making.

As I gave talks on this project, audiences continued to question whether or not blacks and Latinos could possibly get along beyond the Winston-Salem context. I knew anecdotally that the practices I observed regarding Latino immigrant identity and black-Latino coalitions were emerging elsewhere. In the process of analyzing newspaper data and tracking discourse on immigration politics in the region, I learned that Black politicians in the South continued to highlight the importance of integrating immigrants and resist punitive policy agendas throughout the South. Multiracial coalitions were popping up around immigration and civil rights issues across the region, in some cases reshaping entire state agendas. In observing significant variation in states’ approaches to immigration politics and the role of coalitions in shaping these outcomes, I came to see this as an empirical question that served as the basis for my current work with Hana Brown on the role of organizations in shaping immigration politics and racial meanings in the South.

In this new work, we examine immigration law, organizing, and discourse in two pairs of southern states: Alabama and Mississippi, and Georgia and North Carolina. In examining these pairs, we observe that despite their demographic, political, and other similarities, the two states in each pair – Alabama and Mississippi, and Georgia and North Carolina – have adopted divergent approaches to policing and incorporating immigrants. Alabama and Georgia passed among the nation’s strictest anti-immigrant laws in 2011, criminalizing the mere presence of undocumented individuals within their borders. Similar efforts have repeatedly failed in Mississippi and North Carolina. These divergences reflect different styles of organizing among immigrant advocacy and service organizations in each state. We are finding that racial discourses and racialized practices by immigrant-serving organizations matter significantly for the kinds of policies, patterns of integration and discourses around race and immigration that emerge in each state. This project combines archival, media, and interview data to interrogate the varied approaches that these organizations take in serving and advocating for non-citizens and the effects of these strategies on immigrant integration and immigration policy.

Collectively, these projects are part of a broader research agenda that aims to understand racial formation and racial change as contingent and contextual processes. These questions about race, immigration, and politics also intend to help me make sense of the importance of political change and where there might be opportunities for resistance to punitive and discriminatory conditions. For example, my work suggests that the current administration’s exclusionary agenda may provide important opportunities for coalition building as marginalization is more broadly

experienced, and race is, again, explicitly part of the national conversation. It also seeks to document the stories that are not frequently told; of grassroots efforts to build alliances and progressive agendas, rather than conflict and violence. Such scholarship, I hope, provides not only a more robust analytical framework to study and understand immigration, race, and politics but to incorporate overlooked voices back into the historical narrative.

Jennifer Jones is an Assistant Professor of Sociology and Latin American and Latino Studies at the University of Illinois at Chicago. She is the author of The Browning of the New South (forthcoming with University of Chicago Press), and co-editor with Tianna Paschel and Petra Rivera-Rideau of Afro-Latinos in Movement: Critical Approaches to Blackness and Transnationalism in the Americas (Palgrave MacMillan Press, 2016). Her recent work can also be found in such journals as Contexts, International Migration Review, Sociology of Race and Ethnicity, Ethnic and Racial Studies, and Latino Studies.

INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION NEWS

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