

# Communiqué

UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI-COLUMBIA

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

## New Faculty Examine Issues of a Global Society

### **Takeshi Wada is a pioneer in the field of relational event analysis**

New faculty member Takeshi Wada brings his zeal for the areas of economic development, contentious politics and social movements to the department. Wada, who received a doctorate in 2003 from Columbia University, is an expert on event analysis. His pioneering work in the field of relational event analysis distinguishes many of his recent articles.

Wada believes that, in addition to being rooted theoretically, research on social relations must also be methodologically sound. He argues that sociologists who study issues such as power relations and collective identity need to use proper methods to record and analyze their data to ensure that their studies maintain their validity in the body of sociological knowledge.

Wada's own scholarly work emphasizes methodology. His primary research examines how Mexico's neoliberal transformation of the economy and politics influences Mexican citizens' ability to participate in the country's politics. To conduct this research, he constructed a quantitative data set of Mexican protest events that he culled from reading thousands of newspaper reports, in Spanish, about episodes of popular protests.



*Takeshi Wada and his work cross cultural and physical boundaries. A Japanese citizen, Wada focuses his research on Mexico while teaching in the United States.*

Technical innovations in research also interest Wada. As a postdoctoral fellow at the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs at Harvard University, where Wada worked prior to coming to MU, he collaborated with a team of international relations researchers to develop computer-automated coding software. Wada knows that the backbreaking, eye-straining work of poring over microfilm is often left to graduate students, but he continues his quest to develop software that will ease the burden of tedious reading and coding.

Wada's current research plans include a cross-national study of political events. He is interested in how different political systems, political cultures and levels of economic and social development influence patterns of social movement activities. He believes that his boundary-crossing background, as a Japanese citizen researching Mexico in the United States, will lend him a unique perspective on this comparative research. He intends to involve the bright young minds in the department in his work.

"I look forward to working with young graduate students with healthy eyes and backs," he says with a smile.

**(Continues on Page 2)**



(New Faculty, Continued from Page 1)



*One aspect of Byung-Soo Kim's research investigates how, where and under what conditions firms enter foreign markets.*

### **Byung-Soo Kim will develop courses on comparative social institutions**

Culture and commerce often seem like opposing forces, but Byung-Soo Kim is more interested in the ways in which the two intersect. Kim, who joined the MU faculty in 2005 after receiving a doctorate in sociology from Stanford University, teaches organizational sociology and plans to develop courses on comparative social institutions. The courses will examine the economic organizations of

several nations and analyze how institutional factors help shape the structure of those nations' business practices.

Kim's own research focuses on economic sociology, formal organizations, political sociology, family and marriage, and social networks. His current project centers on the globalization of firms and especially references foreign direct investment by multinational corporations. Kim wants to explain how social-structural factors such as relational, institutional and cultural contexts influence foreign direct investments at the organizational level.

By using quantitative and qualitative analyses of Korean firms' foreign direct investments in the Asia-Pacific region, Kim's work investigates how, where and under what conditions firms enter foreign markets. Kim postulates that social networks among firms, industry isomorphism and a region's cultural affinities all shape a firm's decision to enter the foreign market.

Kim previously conducted research on the 1997 Asian financial crisis by investigating its origins in social organizations and institutional conditions and by examining how firms and large business groups transformed themselves after this incident. He analyzed the 30 largest South Korean business groups to find out whether the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) reforms successfully accounted for Korea's related economic activity. His study found that the IMF's imposition of global standards on South Korea produced unanticipated and varied results.

Kim also researches topics that resonate on a personal level. He recently co-wrote an *American Sociological Review* article about how the independence of young adults impacts the structure of American families.

By analyzing U.S. Census data using quantitative methods, Kim studied how young adults' economic, social and geographic independence change family dynamics by affecting the pattern and likelihood of interracial, same-sex and other nontraditional unions. This research links the independence of young adults with the decline of parents' control over their children's mate-selection process.

Because the study also finds that same-sex couples are more likely to be interracial than heterosexual couples, it indicates that same-sex and interracial couples are part of a common fabric of family diversification.

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#### **Editorial Board**

Jay Gubrium  
Amy Lane  
Nancy Moen  
Dan Glover

The department welcomes news from alumni and friends. Send announcements or milestones to the address listed above.



*Sociology students brought the department's familiar bronze sign home again when they learned it was headed for storage. Graduate students enjoying the return of the plaque are, back row from left, Matt Lammers, David Overfelt, Jeff McCully and, front row, Veronica Medina and Candace Korasick.*

## A Symbol Recovered

The sociology department's graduate students generated their own social movement when they turned a little-noticed sign into a symbol of support for their stock-in-trade.

Word spread in September that the handsome bronze plaque that graced the entrance to the old Sociology Building on Francis Quadrangle was to be removed during renovations of the building for a new journalism institute.

"Our students would have none of that," says department Chair Jay Gubrium. "Characteristically, a small social movement emerged that protested the action and called for repossession of the plaque by the department."

Small pushes turned into gentle shoves, and the 200-pound plaque was removed intact and remounted in the department's new home on the third floor of Middlebush Hall.

The bronze plaque's sturdy dimensions of six feet by three feet, lustrous sheen and boldly embossed lettering that spells "Sociology" belie its age. But subsequent sleuthing, motivated by the protest action, found that the handsome bronze plaque has been following and standing guard over the department for years.

The old Sociology Building was once the MU College of Business. When that college moved to its new quarters in Middlebush Hall in 1959, the Department of Sociology became the new tenant, and the plaque took its proud place over the building's entrance.

In 2002, the business college moved again, this time into new quarters in Cornell Hall. Notwithstanding the irony of sociology tailing business, the department replaced the business college in Middlebush Hall. Thanks to the rallying actions of sociology students, the venerable bronze plaque followed suit and again watches over the department.

## Thanks to Our Alumni

*By Jay Gubrium, department chair*



The department is growing in national visibility as a new generation of faculty members builds its research record and teaching accomplishments. Some of these are described in this newsletter. Previous newsletters can be read on the department's Web site at [missouri.edu/~socwww](http://missouri.edu/~socwww).

Your gifts help advance the department. We are immensely grateful to the many alumni and friends whose gifts supported departmental activities during the past year and helped us build our endowment funds. Many organizations ask for your support, and we appreciate those who generously share their resources with us.

Your ongoing generosity makes it possible for the department to underwrite faculty and student participation in research conferences, to offer better graduate student support and to attract research talent to departmental symposia. Do make us one of your philanthropic priorities for 2006.

Please make checks payable to the University of Missouri-Columbia. Add Department of Sociology on the memo line and send to Debbie Friedrich, Department of Sociology, 312 Middlebush Hall, Columbia, MO 65211-6100. Questions also may be directed to her at (573) 882-7711 or [friedrichd@missouri.edu](mailto:friedrichd@missouri.edu).

# Parade of Books

Publishers' notes on recent books by department faculty members

**David L. Brunσμα, editor. *Mixed Messages: Multiracial Identities in the "Color-Blind" Era.* Lynne Reinner Press, 2006.**

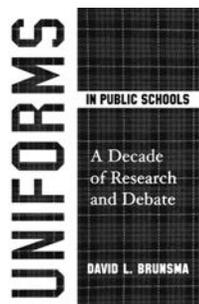
The experiences and voices of multiracial individuals challenge current categories of race. They are profoundly altering the meaning of racial identity and, in the process, changing the cultural fabric of the nation. The authors of *Mixed Messages* explore this new reality by examining what is known about multiracial identities by studying the implications of those identities for fundamental issues of justice and equality.



on school uniform policies' effectiveness has remained in dissertation and/or policy brief formats. This book provides a scholarly yet reader-friendly antidote to the ungrounded, anecdotal arguments that make up contemporary conversation about policies of standardized dress in American K-12 districts and schools.

The contributors draw upon years of educational teaching and administrative experience as well as research directed at objectively and empirically understanding the issue of elementary and middle school uniform policies. *Uniforms in Public Schools* is necessary reading for those who wish to participate in insightful and effective debate on school uniform policies.

**David L. Brunσμα, editor. *Uniforms in Public Schools: A Decade of Research and Debate.* Rowman & Littlefield Education, 2006.**



Politicians, educational administrators and the news media take a simplistic view of the debate over the establishment of uniforms in public schools. But this book shows this highly controversial issue to be complex and unquestionably rooted in correspondingly multifaceted social, political, legal, cultural, racial, material and educational structures.

Much of the empirical research



**Jaber F. Gubrium and James A. Holstein, editors. *Couples, Kids and Family Life.* Oxford University Press, 2005.**

This book, the first in the series *Social Worlds from the Inside Out*, introduces undergraduates to the study of the family — one of the largest courses taken on sociological institutions — through a series of original chapters commissioned for this volume. By

presenting the social world of the family “from the inside out” through the lived experiences of its participants, this book supplements core texts for this course with multifaceted descriptions of real-life experiences.

## Happy 20th, JAS!

*Journal of Aging Studies* (JAS), the premier international journal in its field, celebrates its 20th continuous year of publication in 2006. Published by Elsevier, JAS is headquartered in MU's sociology department, and department Chair Jay Gubrium has served as its editor since its founding in 1986. He is assisted by doctoral student Amy Lane, managing editor of *Communiqué*.

At a time when other journals in the area were either medically oriented or applied, JAS featured cutting-edge research and commentary that drew inspiration from the humanities as well as a broad range of social science concerns.



The journal has aimed from the beginning to feature scholarly papers that challenge existing theory and empirical work. JAS publishes innovative research without restrictions on theoretical and methodological orientation or academic discipline.

The publication's editorial board represents international perspectives and research endeavors. Articles in recent issues have focused on aging in Canada, Sweden, Bangladesh, Hong Kong and Turkey. As JAS moves into its third decade, its editors plan to build its connections both locally, with MU's new Center of Excellence on Aging, and internationally, with researchers worldwide who study the universal issue of growing older.

# Graduate Student Accomplishments

**David Elliott** has entries on "Pragmatism" and "Primary Groups" forthcoming in 2006 in *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Sociology*. Elliott presented his paper "Form and Content in the Thought of Georg Simmel and John Dewey" in the Explorations in Sociological Theory session at the 2005 annual meeting of the Midwest Sociological Society in Minneapolis. He also presented "Some Specifications of the Pragmatist Causal/Behavioral Theory of Meaning" in the New Developments in Symbolic Interaction Theory session at the 2005 annual meeting of the Society for the Study of Symbolic Interaction in Philadelphia.

**William Ryan Force** presented "'No, We Don't Have Any T-Shirts': Identity in a (Self-Consciously) Consumerist Punk Subculture" at the annual meeting of the Society for the Study of Symbolic Interaction in Philadelphia, Pa.

**Lindy Hern** was nominated by the sociology department's awards committee as Outstanding Teaching Assistant in 2005. She presented "A Single Prayer for Single Payer: The dynamic and contextual relationship between goal, organization and alliances in the movement for health care reform" at the Midwest Sociological Society's 2005 annual meeting. She also presented "Missourians for Single Payer Take on the 2004 Elections: What is the relationship between political opportunity and the activities of a grassroots organization" at the Society for the Study of Social Problems 2005 annual meeting.

**Maksim Kokushkin** presented "Social Policy in Education During Transition: Contrasting Public Opinion and 'Public' (Dis)investment in the Case of Bulgaria" at the Midwest Sociological Society's annual meeting in 2006. In this paper, he uses a case study of Bulgaria to examine how social policy in the sphere of education can be developed in transitional countries. Maksim looks at two contradictory trends: high public appreciation for education and simultaneously plummeting public spending on education.

The sociology department's award committee nominated **Amy Lane** as Outstanding Research Assistant in 2005 and 2006. Lane's paper "Social Movement Factions and Lobbying as Contentious Politics: Identity Construction and the Civil Rights Orientation of the National Federation of the Blind, 1959" is under review for the journal *Research in Social Science and Disability*.

**Veronica Medina** presented "Connecting Weber and DuBois: Knowing the Past, Understanding the Present" at the closing plenary of the 35th Annual Conference of the Association of Black Sociologists in Philadelphia in 2005. In the paper, she links the legacy of those two theorists by discussing three major themes that emerge from some of their selected works. At the 2006 Midwest Sociological Society's annual meeting, Medina presented her paper "Not Every Girl can be an American Girl: The Exclusivity of 'American Girl' Identity." That paper discusses ways in which the American Girl doll collection and products that carry the American Girl brand create a cost-prohibitive, racially exclusive community and reinforce traditional gender roles and expectations for girls. She participated in a panel discussion on getting into and through graduate school.

**Dave Overfelt** has been working closely with Columbia's activist community to put pressure on Walmart to be a better corporate citizen. He organized a protest on Buy Nothing Day, which has created a base for an activist community in Columbia. At the 2006 Southern Sociological Society meeting in New Orleans, Overfelt presented a paper with Veronica Medina and Olivia Hetzler that focuses on redevelopment possibilities for New Orleans in the context of New Urbanism. Overfelt worked with Assistant Professor David Brunsma, program chair for the Southern Sociological Society meetings, to organize the 2006 conference in New Orleans.

**Christie Sennott** completed a master's degree in sociology in 2005. She is first author on an article, co-written with Professor John Galliher, that is titled "Lifetime Felony Disenfranchisement in Florida, Texas and Iowa: Symbolic and Instrumental Law." That article will be published in the journal *Social Justice* in May 2006. Sennott currently teaches sociology at Pikes Peak Community College in Colorado. She also works as a member of the direct care team for Urban Peak, a transitional housing facility for homeless youths in Colorado Springs.

# Faculty Kudos

**J. Kenneth Benson**, professor, continues his work on industrial policy. He studies government policies that focus on investments in or reorganizations of specific industries such as steel or textiles. Benson is developing a framework for the comparative study of industrial policies that is based on empirical work on Swedish policies established between 1970 and 1990, and on the technology R&D policies of the Clinton administration in the U.S. This effort continues Benson's larger agenda of developing a dialectical approach to policy formation.

**Wayne Brekhus**, associate professor, is working on an invited article outlining his approach to cognitive sociology for a special issue of the *European Journal of Sociology*. The issue, "Social Theory after the Cognitive Revolution: Types of Contemporary Cognitive Sociology," will consist of six to eight articles by leading scholars from Europe and the United States who have contributed significantly to the field of cognitive sociology. His first theoretical piece in cognitive sociology, which was on the sociology of the unmarked, was recently translated into French and reprinted in the *Journal Reseaux* this year.

**Ed Brent**, professor, is completing work on the first version of his SAGrader(tm) program, which was released by Idea Works, inc. ([www.ideaworks.com](http://www.ideaworks.com)) in January 2006. Brent designed this program to automatically grade essays by comparing the content of the student's essay with the knowledge base in the substantive domain. Students submit their essays through the Web and immediately receive detailed personalized feedback indicating what they did well, what they did poorly and how they could improve their essay. Faculty can monitor submissions, review essays, change grades as appropriate and export the grades to their grade books. The first release will also include a course pack of pretested questions for introductory sociology courses. Brent hopes this program will help sociology instructors incorporate more writing assessments into introductory courses and evaluate higher-order tasks such as sociological reasoning.

**David Brunsmas**, assistant professor, was program chair for the Southern Sociological Society meetings that took place in March 2006 in New Orleans. Brunsmas's book, *Negotiations on the Color Lines of Multiracial America*, is under contract with Rowman &

Littlefield publishers. He is also preparing a second edition of *Beyond Black: Biracial Identity in America* with Kerry Ann Rockquemore. He has two forthcoming books (see Parade of Books). Several of Brunsmas's articles have been published or are in press: "Public Categories, Private Identities: Exploring Regional Differences in the Biracial Experience" is in press for *Social Science Research*; "Interracial Families and the Racial Identification of Mixed-Race Children: Evidence From the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study" appeared in 2005 in *Social Forces* 84(2); and "Public School Uniforms: What We Know Now" appeared in the Jan/Feb 2006 issue of *Principal*.

**John Galliher**, professor, is completing a biography of the late Mabel Agnes Elliott, a feminist-pacifist sociologist who lived and worked primarily during the first half of the 20th century. She was the first woman to be elected president of the National Sociological Association and was president of the Society for the Study of Social Problems between 1956 and 1957. She was a highly productive writer but was disliked by her male colleagues and had an active FBI file for approximately 30 years. She was also the victim of a major case of plagiarism. Galliher also is completing revisions of the fourth edition of his textbook *Criminology and Human Rights*. It is under contract with AltaMira Press.

**Jaber Gubrium**, professor and chair, was appointed Visiting Professor of Public Health at Odense University in Denmark. He will participate in the doctoral program in social science in medicine there and will visit twice yearly for doctoral training and research collaboration. Gubrium's book *Couples, Kids, and Family Life* was published by Oxford University Press (see Parade of Books).

**Mary Jo Neitz**, professor, received the 2005 MU Tribute to Women Award from the MU Status of Women Committee. She presented the paper "Religion and the Control of Women: An examination of Patriarchy in Sex Negative and Sex Positive Religions" at a joint session co-sponsored by the American Sociological Society and the Association for the Sociology of Religion. She also published the essay "Reflections on Religion and Place: Rural Churches an American Religion" in the September issue of the *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*. That piece resulted from her current work on a multivocal ethnography on rural churches in a post-rural environment, which was based on case studies of six Missouri communities.

## Alumna Seeks Equality in the Workplace

Just one year after leaving MU with a master's degree in sociology, Susana Climent found herself working to promote gender equality in the labor market throughout the European Union.

In May 2000, Climent returned to her native Spain to work for the Spanish Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs in its administration of the program EQUAL. The program, which is funded by the European Union's (EU) European Social Fund, lives up to its name in its mission to fight all forms of discrimination and inequalities in the labor market.

Climent's work focuses on the assessment and advising of EQUAL projects that focus on gender issues. These issues include how women reconcile personal and work life and gender desegregation in a variety of professions.

Climent says that although the highest level of the current Spanish government is composed of men and women equally, the country still has a long way to go in achieving gender equality in everyday life. EQUAL projects foster this equality by developing family support services, working with businesses and trade unions to implement family-friendly policies and promoting an attitudinal change toward the distribution of family responsibilities and domestic tasks between men and women.

EQUAL projects attempt to desegregate the labor market by fighting against vertically and horizontally segregated jobs and economic sectors, and by promoting women into male-dominated industries. They also attempt the especially difficult task of promoting men into female-dominated fields.

Because EQUAL is administered in all 25 EU member states, Climent's duties include attending meetings with and acting as liaison for members of these nations. Climent says that although her thesis examined the student movement in Madrid, her education at MU has served her well in her diversity-rich line of work.

## Speaking about Gender Issues

By Veronica Medina

In fall 2005, the Professional Development Committee invited professors and authors Joey Sprague and Pattie Thomas to speak on gender issues in the study of sociology.

Sprague teaches sociology at the University of Kansas and was named 2004 Mentor of the Year by the Sociologists for Women in Society organization. Her presentation, co-sponsored by Women's and Gender Studies, highlighted themes and analyses from her recently released book, *Feminist Methodologies for Critical Researchers: Bridging Differences*. Published by AltaMira Press as part of its Gender Lens Series, Sprague's book addresses "why and how methodologies matter: they shape the kinds of influence social science research has on society."

Sprague encouraged audience members to employ a feminist epistemology in their work as a way to avoid pitfalls and shortcomings of less critical lenses. She said researchers should avoid privileging either quantitative or qualitative methods over each other and must be aware of how power and privilege shape their own research questions and analyses.

Thomas, author of *Taking Up Space*, spoke on "Taking Up Space: Sociological Memoir as Method and Mission." She discussed how her personal experiences contributed to her unique form of sociological investigation and writing.

Thomas also participated in the Women's and Gender Studies Fall Colloquium, where the topic of discussion was "Question Feminism." She spoke on "No Fat Chicks: How Feminism is Failing Fat Women (and Therefore All Women)." Thomas, who studied under Jay Gubrium, began her presentation with a moving passage from her book.

## Alumnus Schools the Law

Michael K. Carlie, BA '66, MA '67, won numerous teaching awards in 2004 for his work as a professor in the Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Criminology at Missouri State University in Springfield. These include the Missouri Governor's Award for Excellence in Teaching, the Missouri State University Foundation Award for Teaching Excellence, the National Academic Advising Association National Award for Excellence in Academic Advisement and the University College award for Excellence in Advising.

Carlie also is involved in educating law enforcement officials. His online book about gangs, *Into the Abyss: A Personal Journey*, is required training material for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the New York City Police Department. Carlie wrote the book after four years of field research in the United States, Canada, England and the Netherlands. The book, with links to more than 2,300 gang publications on the Web, can be accessed on Google and is free.



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# Surprise!



*Joan Hermsen*

As sociology students watched, MU Chancellor Brady Deaton and other dignitaries interrupted Joan Hermsen's class one day in April to announce that the surprised associate professor had won a Kemper Fellowship for Teaching Excellence.

The prestigious MU award and \$10,000 stipend is a gift from William T. Kemper, a 1962 alumnus and Kansas City civic leader who died in 1989. Five of the awards were announced in 2006. Hermsen is the second faculty member in sociology to win a Kemper Fellowship, previously won by Barbara Bank.

Kemper Fellows receive the awards for their work with students. Hermsen is known for striving to help students develop an understanding of how their lives affect social structures.

Through courses such as Social Inequalities and through her commitment to programs that advocate social justice, students say she changes their lives for the better. She engages students in research on social inequalities in the community by involving them in studies at the Mid-Missouri Food Pantry and Habitat for Humanity.

Hermsen is considered a mentor who encourages students to be "lifelong learners." She is an academic adviser for sociology and functions as a Freshman Interest Group faculty facilitator. She has served as a member and chair of the Campus Writing Board, and she teaches writing-intensive and graduate courses that push students to develop critical-thinking skills.