

Sociology Communique

Winter 2009–10

MU Sociology Welcomes Two New Faculty Members

By John Pruitt

The University of Missouri Department of Sociology welcomed two new members this academic year: Assistant Professor Eileen Bjornstrom and Visiting Assistant Professor Peeter Tammeveski.

The Tools of Success

Eileen Bjornstrom received her doctorate from The Ohio State University in 2009. Her research and teaching interests focus on medical sociology, urban sociology, social control, and research methods. Broadly, she is interested in the ways in which the economic and social char-



Assistant Professor Eileen Bjornstrom's research will focus partly on whether less-powerful groups experience context differently.

acteristics of place are associated with inequality and well-being. Within this framework, Bjornstrom is currently pursuing two lines of inquiry. The first builds from her dissertation and involves the examination of the relationship between neighborhood income inequality, social resources, and health outcomes. She is especially interested in how less-powerful groups may experience context differently and whether this contributes to health disparities. The second line of inquiry investigates the ways that the characteristics of the local built environment, such as land use, commercial diversity, and commercial decline are associated with residents' health, with a focus on propensity for obesity. She also is involved in a collaborative project that examines the ways perpetrators and victims are portrayed in television crime news and how the context of the news story and the media market influence portrayals across race and ethnicity.

While research is important to her, providing students with the tools they need to succeed is equally salient. "I care about students, and I want them to enjoy their time in the classroom. I want students to think critically about how classroom knowledge might help them move forward. In general, I want them to know that I am willing go above and beyond [the call of duty] to help them succeed."

As Bjornstrom provides the tools of success for her students, MU and the Department of Sociology are providing the tools for her own success. "There



Visiting Assistant Professor Peeter Tammeveski is interested in how nationalism and transnationalism influence specific areas of life.

is good structure and balance for strong research. The expectation for strong research is there, but I get the support I need to accomplish it. It's really nice to be in a place where teaching and research are both valued."

For Bjornstrom, "going above and beyond" is the foundation for everyone's success.

MU Sociology Provides the Right Fit for Tammeveski

Peeter Tammeveski is a new member of the department on a two-year appointment as visiting assistant professor. He received his master's degree and doctor-

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Faculty Kudos

Eileen Bjornstrom, with co-authors Robert Kaufman, Ruth Peterson, and Michael Slater, published "Race and Ethnic Representations of Lawbreakers and Victims in Crime News: A National Study of Television Coverage" in *Social Problems*. She also presented "Neighborhood Income Inequality and Obesity: Evidence of Effects Across Race-ethnicity" at the annual meetings of the Southern Demographic Association.

Wayne Brekhus received the 2009 MU Excellence in Advising Award this past spring, and the 2009 Statewide Outstanding Advisor Award from the Missouri Academic Advising Association this fall.

David Brunsmas became co-editor of *Societies Without Borders: Human Rights and the Social Sciences*. He edited *The School Uniform Manual: Key Documents* with Carmine Scicchitano. He was the author of an article in *Teaching Sociology*, and he wrote an article with Kerry Anne Rockquemore and Daniel Delgado in

The Journal of Social Issues. He published book chapters in *Covert Racism*, edited by Rodney Coates, and in *Multiracial Americans and Social Class: The Influence of Social Class on Racial Identity*, edited by Kathleen Korgen. Brunsmas published entries in *The Encyclopedia of African American History*, edited by L. M. Alexander and W. C. Rucker, and in the *Encyclopedia of Identity*, and he published a book review in *Humanity and Society*. Brunsmas gave the keynote talk for Human Rights Day at Indiana State University, organized three sessions at the annual meetings of the Southern Sociological Society in New Orleans, and was a panelist for another session at the same conference.

John Galliher received the 2009 Lee Founder's Award from the Society for the Study of Social Problems.

Jaber F. Gubrium wrote a book chapter in *Ethnographies Revisited: Constructing Theory in the Field*, edited by Anthony J. Puddephatt, William Shaffir, and Steven W. Kleinknecht, and he co-wrote

a chapter in *Authenticity in Culture, Self, and Society* with James Holstein, edited by Phillip Vannini and Patrick Williams. He presented at a research colloquium at Odense University, Denmark. He was the keynote speaker in Oslo, Norway, at the ISA/CFR Conference on Families and Memory, and at the Institute of Gerontology, in Jonkoping University, Sweden. Gubrium, David Ekert, and Marc Luborsky received a grant from the National Institute of Health for a project on the social psychology of relocation and downsizing later in life.

Victoria Johnson published "The Status of Identities: Racial Inclusion and Exclusion at West Coast Ports" in *Social Movement Studies*. She received the MU Excellence in Education Award in spring 2009, and the Konheim Travel Award from the American Association of University Professors. She also presented at the Organization of American Historians conference, and she was a presider and discussant for sessions at the American Sociological Association conference in San Francisco.

New Faculty

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ate from Pennsylvania State University in human development and family studies. Tammeveski previously held a position in the College of Education here at MU, where he taught graduate research methods courses.

His broad areas of interest are in critical, feminist, and historical perspectives on nationalism and transnationalism. From these broader interests Tammeveski addresses issues of reproduction, gender, race, and transnationalism; immigrants, refugees, and diaspora communities; and aging, family, and the life course. He is interested in how nationalism and transnationalism influence three areas of human life: sexual relations and biological reproduction, family, and aging. One area of research involves how the lives of first-generation older Estonians in the United States have been shaped by their engagement in the construction of Esto-

nian (trans)nationalism. He is currently working on a project that analyzes gender, reproduction, eugenics, and nationalism in the interwar Estonian Republic between 1920 and 1940.

His wide array of interests came about as he cultivated a growing open-mindedness. As unforeseen aspects of his research are revealed, he makes provisions to incorporate them into his projects. This open-mindedness allows him to think about his research more reflexively as he draws parallels between his evolving observations and those of his participants.

Tammeveski's teaching philosophy centers on a student-focused approach that he attributes, in part, to being in the College of Education, where he learned different strategies from his peers. Tammeveski tries to "create conditions in the classroom that help students become better learners who want to experience

different things and become more reflective." His goals for his students are to have "conceptual strengths as well as the ability to practically apply a set of skills to their choices of research endeavors and to the everyday world."

Tammeveski is settling into the sociology department very well. "Coming from an interdisciplinary background you have so many tracks open to you," he says. "This department is a good fit for me for a couple of reasons. First, because most of the work I do is more sociological than anything else. Second, this department is very qualitative, which methodologically is a strength for me, so I couldn't wish for anything better."

"It has been really pleasant for me to come to this department," he says. "It was actually a long-term dream of mine, so I finally made it."

Brekhus Receives Multiple Advising Awards

By John Pruitt

The role of director of undergraduate studies in the Department of Sociology carries a good deal of responsibility. It includes helping students with their academic schedules, giving advice about how to make the most of their college experience, connecting students with internships, completing paperwork for graduation plans, and even discussing the transitions of life after college. In short, the director of undergraduate studies often becomes the symbolic representative of the department for students. Wayne Brekhus filled this role between August 2006 and August 2009.

Brekhus recently received two advising awards one year after receiving the William T. Kemper Teaching Award in 2008. This year's service awards were the University of Missouri Excellence in Advising Award and the Statewide Outstanding Advising Award from the Missouri Academic Advising Association (MACADA) for 2009. The MU advising award includes a plaque and \$1000 and is given to one faculty member each year who demonstrates effective advising qualities and practices that distinguish the adviser as outstanding. The MACADA



Professor Wayne Brekhus

award is given to only one person in the entire state each year and includes a plaque and \$100 that are presented at a banquet honoring the recipient. Needless to say, Brekhus believes that service to the University, and especially to students, is an important aspect of his overall job.

"It's humbling to see how significant your impact is on their [students'] lives. At a big university, it's easy for a student to become a num-

ber. It's important that they find a few people from the University community who can have a significant impact on them. I try to make sure that I give a lot of attention to each student. I may have 216 students, but they only have one adviser."

As his bookcase continues to fill with more than books, it is a safe bet that Brekhus will also continue to support students. "I like the teaching and advising side of things. I try to keep my door open and keep a lot of office hours for people to come by. I think our department has an open-door culture that allows students to drop in and feel comfortable."

For Brekhus, the real reward is not in receiving multiple service awards; it is more about watching students grow and achieve their goals. He knew each of the almost 60 undergraduate sociology majors who graduated in spring 2009. "A gratifying aspect of this position is watching students grow," he says. "There's a lot of change taking place between their freshman and senior years, and to be a part of that is rewarding."

We're Looking for You!

The MU Sociology Alumni Relations Committee is still looking for members of our extended academic family — i.e., you — to join a department ListServ (e-mail group).

Signing on to the list will keep you up to date on department news and inform you of upcoming events of interest to alumni. Possible activities include a department alumni day, networking opportunities, and lec-

tures. We are working to develop an alumni Web page through which members of the "family" can keep in touch, reacquaint themselves, or meet for the first time.

Of course, the list also gives you the opportunity to share your successes with the department, as well as offer any suggestions you may have. This newsletter will be delivered to ListServ subscribers electronically.

To sign up for the MU Sociology ListServ, send your preferred e-mail address to Debbie Friedrich, at friedrichd@missouri.edu.

We also invite you to become a fan of the University of Missouri Department of Sociology on Facebook. Stay up to date on department activities, connect with former classmates, and network with alumni.

We look forward to hearing from you!

Goings On

At work and at play, the Department of Sociology had its usual variety of events for faculty, students, and friends to attend. Below are scenes from the annual picnic, the inaugural tailgate and football game party, and the Schlosser job talk.



Above, Mike Sickels, Jennifer Correa, Joshua Olsberg, and William Force share a conversation at the annual department picnic.

Mike Sickels and Gudmundur Oddsson discuss theory at the inaugural sociology tailgate party.



Above, Jennifer Schlosser prior to giving her professional job talk based on her dissertation research.



Faculty, students, and friends prepare for the Tiger football game in style.



Sociology faculty and students watch the Tigers defeat Furman 52-12.



The first-year graduate students enjoy their introduction to the culture of the department.

Graduate Program News

Jennifer Correa's article "The Targeting of the East Los Angeles Brown Berets by a Racial Patriarchal Capitalist State: Merging Intersectionality and Social Movement Research" will appear in *Critical Sociology*. She was an invited guest lecturer during Hispanic Heritage Month at Texas A&M University-Kingsville and was the graduation commencement speaker at Dilley High School, in Dilley, Texas.

Priya Dua published "On the Contributions of Cognitive Sociology to the Sociological Study of Race" with Wayne Brekhus, David Brunsmma, and Todd Platts in *Sociology Compass*.

William Force published "Consumption Styles and the Fluid Complexity of Punk Authenticity" in *Symbolic Interaction*. He also passed his comprehensive examinations this past May, and his dissertation proposal was approved at a hearing in November.

Roslyn Fraser has accepted an offer to do research on infertility in Bangladesh. The project is funded by the National Science Foundation and is titled "Collaborate Research: Evolutionary and Comparative Models of the Demographic Transition." The NSF grant was awarded to Mary Shenk, PhD, in the MU Department of Anthropology. Fraser will be responsible for pursuing qualitative questions about infertility in the context of a developing society, which will be part of

her dissertation. She will be in Bangladesh from January to June 2010.

Lindy Hern was appointed to the editorial board of the *Journal of Applied Social Science (JASS)* and also to the board of Health Care NOW, a national grassroots group. She presented her paper "From Stalker to Board Member: Navigating the Borderlands of Scholar Activism in the Movement for Health Care Reform" at the annual conference of the Association for Applied and Clinical Sociology.

Jeff McCully presented his research titled "Assessing Competence: An Exercise in Teaching about Gender" at the University of Missouri Women's and Gender Studies Graduate Student Conference in spring 2009.

Gudmunder Oddsson published his article "Class Awareness in Iceland" in the *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*. He received his master's degree in May 2009. His thesis was titled "Class Awareness in Iceland." He presented two papers for the 2009 Midwest Sociological Society in Des Moines, Iowa, titled "Class Awareness in Iceland" and "Skipping Class." He also won the 2009 Missouri Sociological Association's (MSA) Graduate Student Paper Competition, which included an invitation to give a guest lecture at the annual MSA conference and a cash award. During summer 2009, he worked as a researcher for the Institute for Gender Equality.

Make a Gift

Gifts from our alumni and friends provide the opportunity to enrich the life of the department. We use gift funds in a variety of ways that benefit our students, such as providing annual cash awards for outstanding papers by undergraduates in our Mauksch Award competition and offering travel grants to scholarly conferences to graduate students who present research papers and attend sessions. In the past few years, we have received larger gifts that allowed us to address major needs, such as purchasing personal computers and a copying machine. We are immensely grateful, too, for gifts that help us build our endowment. Your generosity helps advance the department in general.

Please do make us one of your philanthropic priorities for 2010. A solid base of alumni support is one of the principal factors that distinguishes the best universities and departments from the rest. We hope you will be able to help us this year with a gift of \$100, \$500, or more. Donations may be mailed to the address below, or you may donate online using a credit card at <https://donatetomu.missouri.edu>. Choose College of Arts and Science in the drop-down box, then specify "sociology" or a specific fund in the larger box below.

Questions may be directed to our office manager, Debbie Friedrich, at the Department of Sociology, 312 Middlebush Hall, Columbia, MO 65211-6100. You also may contact her at 573-882-7711 or friedrichd@missouri.edu.

We pledge to use your contributions wisely. Thank you for your support!

Galliher Receives Lee Founder's Award

By John Pruit

The Lee Founder's Award was established in 1981 to recognize those who exemplify the ideals of the founders of the Society for the Study of Social Problems, Alfred McClung Lee and Elizabeth Briant Lee. The ideals include research, commitment to the organization, and maybe most important, a commitment to social justice. As Galliher puts it, "All members are committed to fairness and equality. Some are activists and some are scholars, but they are all committed to equality, [especially] racial and gender justice."

John Galliher is the recipient of the award for 2009. He became a member of the Society for the Study of Social Problems (SSSP) in 1963 as a graduate student at Indiana University. Being of limited means, he asked his mentors, Alfred Lindesmith and Albert Cohen, if he could join only one organization, which should it be? They responded with the SSSP. That conversation may have set the trajectory for Galliher's work.

The award is more than a plaque to place on a bookshelf. It is the recognition of a lifetime's worth of work that takes on special meaning for the recipient. For Galliher, "An award takes on meaning primarily because of the prior recipients, such as Irwin Deutscher and Gideon Sjoberg."

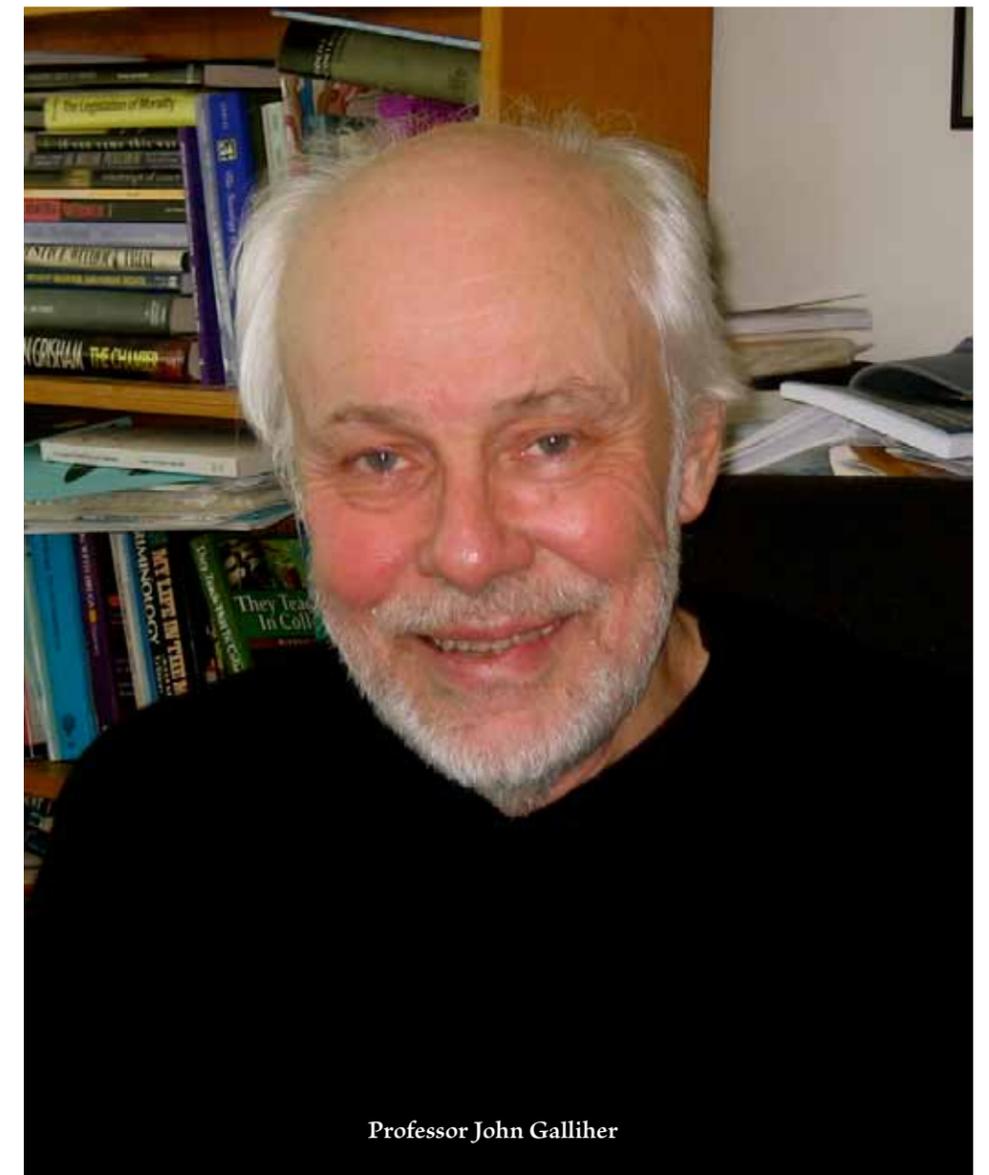
As an example of striving for social justice, Galliher is organizing a session on Troy Davis, who has been a death row inmate in Georgia for 25 years. Galliher explained that all of the people who accused Davis have recanted because they were pressured to lie, but the state is still proceeding. Galliher will be speaking on Davis' behalf. For Galliher, this is an example of how the SSSP is not just an intellectual forum but also

is capable of creating publicity to help those like Davis.

Although Galliher has received what is considered a lifetime achievement award, he has no plans to fade into the background. He is working on three books. One is about the San Francisco law firm that represented Harry Bridges, a union leader during the McCarthy era. The second is about changes in the death penalty over the past 10 years, which is also the second book in a series. The third book

is a study of research ethics regarding sociological and psychological researchers' abuse of human subjects through violations of human rights, and how these violations contributed to the creation of the institutional review board.

Above all, Galliher's enthusiasm for contributing to his field is grounded in gratitude. "I really do value being able to do research. That's what I enjoy the most," he says.



Communiqué is published annually by the Department of Sociology at the University of Missouri.

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