

Ayad Al-Qazzaz Sociology Student *Symposium*

Spring

2025



SACRAMENTO STATE
Department of Sociology

OPENING STATEMENT

Sociological research, theory, and praxis are not merely academic exercises, but the urgent tools required for diagnosing, dismantling, and reimagining the structures perpetuating domination and inequity, violence, and death. In a world structured by racial capitalism where labor exploitation is inextricably tied to anti-Blackness, Indigenous dispossession, and migrant precarity, we must interrogate how profit is extracted along racialized and gendered lines and through the policing of bodily autonomy and the devaluation of care labor.

The space of higher education is no different. More specifically, higher education is often mythologized as a meritocratic equalizer. Yet, its increasingly McDonaldized, neoliberal layout reproduces institutional inequality and leads to the exclusion and subordination of marginalized groups. Meanwhile, right beyond the ivory tower of academia, state violence, and carceral systems function as mechanisms of social control, criminalizing poverty and dissent while reinforcing the prison-industrial complex. These injustices also amplify environmental and health inequities where pollution, medical apartheid, and climate change target poor communities of color, highlighting how colonialism is not a thing of the past but a continuous mechanism that shapes life.

With the help of media and technology, ideology acts as an engine of social control, manufacturing consent for empire while erasing resistance. Yet, despite the normalization of labor and economic precarity, we also find collective resistance, a powerful demonstration that exploitation and intersectional marginalizations are met with insurgent solidarity. These struggles are tied to the social determinants of well-being, where community-led housing initiatives, food sovereignty, and communal care are radical acts of survival. As technology and artificial intelligence reshape human futures, we must ask: Who is surveilled, who is automated into obsolescence, and how do we reclaim technological tools for intersectional resistance and liberation?

Sociology, at its best, is a discipline of reckoning and rebellion. It demands we move beyond US-centric and Eurocentric analyses to organized action, re-centering the knowledge, lived experiences, and demands of those most impacted around the globe. The question is not just how to study the world but how to change it. Ultimately, Sociology is not an individual endeavor, but a collective project rooted in community-building and organized resistance against the interconnected systems that seek to isolate, exploit, and dispossess us. From the plantation to the picket line, from the factory floor to the digital frontier, our most significant power has always been solidarity in struggle. Sociology has the potential to give us tools to define where we want to go together.

What you will witness in the SP 2025 Ayad Al-Qazzaz Sociology Student Symposium are sociologists' first steps in exploring and contextualizing most of these issues and discussing why they are of great social relevance.

DETAILED PROGRAM

9:00-9:30am	Check-In *Student presenters will meet at the Carlsen Center [Library Room 1520], to set up their posters on the easels. Light refreshments will be provided.
9:35am	Welcoming Remarks
9:45am	Poster Presentations Start *From here, students will remain by their posters and present to whomever comes by.
11:20am	Poster Presentations End *Student presentations will end
11:25am	Light Snacks *From here, light snacks/food will be served to the public
11:30am	Guest Speakers Panel Starts *Guest speakers will do a Questions-and-Answers (Q&A) Session about the importance of Sociology/Social Science research and knowledge in their respective fields via Zoom.
12:45pm	Guest Speakers Q&A Session Ends
12:50pm	Closing Remarks and Certificates
1:00pm	Wrap up

POSTER TOPICS

Student posters bridge multiple fronts of struggle and imagination, demonstrating how systems of oppression are interconnected, highlighting how these issues are not isolated; they collide in the lives of (a) marginalized people, and (b) communities, demanding intersectional analysis and collective action. True justice requires us to see the whole picture, and sociology provides a space to see and have the conversations needed to change the world for the better.

Racial Capitalism & Labor Exploitation

Description: Examines how capitalism is intertwined with racial oppression, extracting cheap or unpaid labor from marginalized groups while reinforcing racial hierarchies.

- Amazon, Racial Capitalism, and McDonaldization
- Mass incarceration and Racial Capitalism
- Prison labor under capitalism
- Farm workers' exploitation
- School-to-Prison Pipeline
- Killing the Black Body / Prison Pipeline

Gender, Sexuality, & Reproductive Justice

Description: Critiques patriarchal control over bodies, reproductive rights, and the policing of gender/sexuality, with attention to intersectional violence.

- Examining female-born people's mental health under conservative politics
- Feelings towards abortion pre/post-Trump
- The effect of pro-life values on support for familial benefits
- Killing the Black Body / Maternal health crisis
- Killing the Black Body / Urban women
- Transgender homicide and predicting tolerance
- Queer Families
- Black Queerness
- Visibility Politics / Black Trans People

Higher Education & Institutional Inequality

Description: Explores how education systems replicate inequality through access, representation, and emerging technologies like AI.

- Understanding LGBTQ+ people's experiences in higher education
- Underrepresentation of minorities in higher education
- Artificial Intelligence and its impact on faculty and students in higher education
- The negative effects of technology on primary education

State Violence & Carceral Systems

Description: Analyzes policing, incarceration, and systemic racism in state institutions, including their health and legal consequences.

- Police brutality and media influence
- Systemic racism in the health care system
- Ex-Felon jury disenfranchisement in California
- Veteran Suicide (linked to militarization & neglect)

Environmental & Health Inequities

Description: Investigates how environmental harm and health disparities are structured by race, class, and capitalism.

- Environmental racism
- The societal/environmental effects of fast fashion
- Neo-Weberian critiques of the health care system
- Race and rate of infant mortality
- Killing the Black Body / Maternal health crisis

Media, Ideology, & Social Control

Description: Unpacks how media literacy, propaganda, and discourse shape public perception and sustain hegemony.

- Media illiteracy
- The influence of personal factors on attitudes toward immigration
- Whiteness (as an ideological construct)

Labor, Precarity, & Resistance

Description: Focuses on worker exploitation, unionization, and the erosion of labor rights under neoliberal capitalism.

- Unpaid labor and wage theft
- Predicting unionization and Right-to-Work laws
- Work-life balance and general happiness

Social Determinants of Wellbeing

Description: Connects systemic oppression to life outcomes, happiness, and access to resources.

- Predicting the social determinants of life satisfaction
- Examining income and happiness
- Correlating infrastructure access with social/economic status
- The impact of federal defunding child social services on poor children
- Immigration struggles

Technology & Human Futures

Description: Critiques AI's role in reinforcing inequality and transforming social relations.

- The future of AI and effects on the human condition
- Sociology, AI, and academia

Intersectional Marginalizations

Description: Centers overlapping oppressions (race, disability, queerness) and resistance.

- Black people and disability justice
- Intersectionality, Killing the Black Body
- Factors that shape racial discrimination in the US

POSTER PRESENTERS BY CLASS

**** Research Posters ****

Sociology MA Students

Amy Plunkett
Howard Johnson III
Rodrigo da Silva

SOC 199: Individual Study Projects

Ashley Mui
Bea Marie Genelsa
Hannah Lugtu

SOC 144: Public Health

Javier Olivares

SOC 102 & SOC 103: Research Methods

Arianna Nicole Orsua
Demonza Hunter
Denzel Phoenix
Elizabeth Breeze
Humberto Lievanos
Kassie May Phoenix
Latrice Lawson
Mai Garcia
Michelle Horton
Mikayla Marquez
Mohammed Talim
Nathan Campos
Nicholas Winslow
Sarah Fowler

**** Public Theory Posters ****

Soc 123: Black Studies

Alisha Hurst
Benjamin Ferreira-Pro
Brea Royster
Carlo Guballa
Cesar Lozano
Cindy Phan
Daishawd Shelton
Diana Avalos
Eric Stokes
Imani Harper
Jamiah Person
Jenni Nelson
Judith Gutierrez
Kassandra Prado
Kieffer Tan
Kristina Rose
Liliana Briscoe
Mason Tan
Monique Ortega
Natey Hagos
Nevaeh Trigo
Sanaii Ellis
Sandra Tejeda
Tatiana Mendez
Tyrone Humphrey
Xavier Smith

Soc 192: Social Theory

Aariana Hill
Adriana Ramirez
Alexia Andrea Portilla Naranjo
Andrew Pile
Annalyn Birtcil
Bella Ahwal
Bianca Michelle Aguilar Fierros
Cindy Cortes Rodriguez
Cristopher Nunez
Devin Nghiem

Elizabeth Breeze
Evelyn Rojas-Garcia
Franco Mendieta
Helen Ross
Jackson Criswell
Jade Sapenter-Coulter
Jasmine Zamora
Jazmyn Lebrun
Jenna Nativ
Kenny Thao
Kimberly Partida Cardenas
Malayshia Belion
Maria Aguirre Contreras
Maribel Najar
Mecitli Ortiz
Paola Rojas
Raymond Ngo
Rossely Hernandez Ruiz
Samantha Picon Wagner
Sofia Fazal
Tatiana Sandoval
Trinity Howard
Vanessa Chavez
Yaire Zempoalteca Sanchez
Yoselin Hernandez

GUEST SPEAKERS PANEL

Panel Timeline

11:30 am - 12:45 pm (75 minutes)

1. Welcome & Introductions (15 min)
2. Moderated Q&A with Guest Speakers (40 min)
3. Audience Q&A (15min)
4. Closing Remarks (5 min)

Guest Speakers

Dr. Madeleine Kerrick

[Education Insight Center]

Dave Weiner

[UC Berkeley NSF I-Corps]

Jose Alvarez Torres

[California Rural Legal Assistance - Pro Bono Department]

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Ayad Al-Qazzaz

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Christopher Rogers (Committee Co-Chair)

Vanesa Alejos (Research Student Center)

Suzzanne Castaneda (University Print)

Millie Ballesteros

Lex Hylaris

Gabrielle Gonzalez

Danielle Duckett

Aya Kimura Ida

Trish Morris

Lina Rincon

Heidy Sarabia

Amanda Shigihara

&

All the Students Presenting their Work!