

## SOCIOGRAPH

*The newsletter of Sociologists of Minnesota*

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## Returning to Normal or Another New Normal?

Saiful Islam SOM President-Elect.

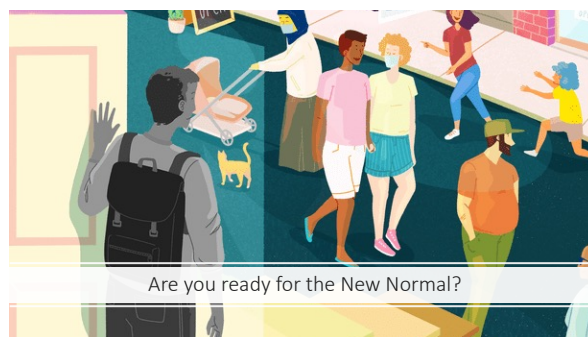
Are We Still in the Pandemic? When can we get out of the seemingly inexorable nexus of masking or no masking, in-person or virtual, and confinements and lockdowns, etc., which have now well intruded into our everyday vocabulary? When would all of us be able mingle with each other like normal

human beings? These have been the questions of the century that are keeping us perplexed. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) has recently given the COVID-19 a new status designation which is “endemic” and not a “pandemic” anymore, meaning it persists but in a less fearsome mode. As a result, all the social institutions, i.e., schools and college campuses, offices, and businesses, etc., have opened again. But there have been inconsistencies in information and debates over this supposed back to normal as many people, as well as people with health concerns are still facing vulnerability due to the COVID-19. I, myself, like many of my friends, colleagues, and relatives, encountered the COVID-19 virus this summer with so much to experience its gruesome symptoms and aftereffects. People are often harassed for wearing mask in the public places, which is totally undesirable. However, I know and truly believe this too will pass!

As I write from my home office today at Janesville Minnesota, I am making myself ready with full enthusiasm to get back to my students tomorrow at campus at the Minnesota State University Mankato. We are having the third week of the Fall semester in person or face to face whatever we may call it! To my amazement, both of my online and face to face sections have evenly filled out this semester. My classrooms were fully packed with students joined with fresh energy like it used to be years back when there was no fear of the pandemic. I uttered myself quoting from Karl Marx’s monograph *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*:

... (Humans) make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past. The tradition of all dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brains of the living. And just as they seem to be occupied with revolutionizing themselves and things, creating something that did not exist before, precisely in such epochs of revolutionary crisis they anxiously conjure up the spirits of the past to their service, ...

I hope you all have had a decent summer this year amidst all the craziness that went around the globe from the pandemic to the war in Ukraine! Oddly events should not keep us in a dark mansion like Edgar Allan Poe’s ‘The Fall of the House of Usher’ rather we should all look fresh with vibrant colors of the beautiful Minnesota Fall and happy to start and get busy again! Please keep checking our Sociologists of Minnesota website [www.socmn.org](http://www.socmn.org) for exciting announcements and updates on our upcoming SOM Conference 2022.



## SOM Annual Conference 2022

Thursday October 13 and Friday October 14 2022

In-person and Online!

Join us for our annual conference on the theme **Rural Sociology: Connecting People, Communities, Economics, Politics, Health, and Environment** this October 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup>! **We welcome discussions from other sociological topics and issues too.** The conference will be in-person to foster connections, communications, collaborations, and networking. After nearly two years of isolations, confinements, and lockdowns etc., people want to come outside of their homes and socialize with one another again as they used to do in the world before the pandemic. We also want to remain cautious; COVID-19 might have weakened by now but still remains a threat. **Therefore, the SOM Annual Conference will have the option of attending our major sessions via online.**



### **Join us in-person at Minnesota State University Mankato or virtually from anywhere in the world!**

The SOM conferences have been well attended by faculty, students, community activists, policy makers, and other audiences from the greater Minnesota and adjacent states. This year, with our conference theme, we reaffirm our ties to the rural communities, which is our roots clinging to our ancestors, land, and the earth itself. Rural sociology is about making connections with people and their life in the rural areas, which included but not limited to food, agriculture, and natural resources, land use and environment, economics of the farm production, migrant workers, rural-urban disparities, health care access, and culture and identity of the rural people. Together, we explore connections between variables, between social structures, between individuals, or between theoretical or methodological frameworks, and of course, connect with other social scientists, activists, policy makers, and fellow conscious citizens! **Our SOM conference sessions are wide open for scholars to join in from sociology, as well as, other important social science disciplines, i.e., anthropology, communication studies, economics, education, ethnic studies, gender and women's studies, global and international relations, health sciences, political science, and psychology, etc.** Undoubtedly, you could use a couple of days at the SOM Conference 2022 for sharing and exchanging your ideas, thoughts, completed work and/or even works in progress with fellow like-minded people. **If you have ideas for panels, presentations to share, papers to submit for the undergraduate or graduate student paper competition, or the desire to get involved in other ways, you are very welcome to participate.** The SOM sessions are open for any scholars including faculty, students, researchers, non-profit and global to local citizens who wants to challenge the taken-for-granted, pose new questions, and seek solutions based on our shared knowledge to make it a better world for the humans and everything else in the earth.

**Please register yourself at the Sociologists of Minnesota website <https://www.socmn.org/> to attend the SOM Annual Conference 2022 in-person or virtually on October 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>!**

## Keynote Speaker at the SOM Annual Conference 2022:

We are very excited to announce the name of our Keynote Speaker for the SOM Annual Conference 2022: **Julie Tesch**, President and CEO of Minnesota Center for Rural Policy and Development (CRPD). As we have a unique conference theme this year which is “Rural Sociology: Connecting People, Communities, Economics, Politics, Health, and Environment” who else could be better to hear from! The CRPD is a non-partisan, not-for-profit policy research organization dedicated to benefiting Minnesota by providing its policy makers with unbiased information and evaluation of issues from a rural perspective. Here is some more information about Julie:



After 25-years of living in urban areas, Julie decided it was time to return to her roots in rural Minnesota. Julie became the President & CEO in 2018 after working in Washington, DC as the executive director of the American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture. She has been involved in non-profit management and supporting the rural lifestyle her entire career through her work with the National FFA Alumni Association and the

Minnesota Agricultural Education Leadership Council (MAELC). She is a proud graduate of the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities where she received her bachelor's degree in applied economics and her Master's of Education in agricultural education.

At the Center, Julie is the chief relationship builder, manages a board of 19-members, oversees the overall management of the center, and is the pied piper of living in rural Minnesota.

Outside of work she enjoys volunteering for 4-H & FFA activities, discovering her family history through genealogy, traveling the world and discovering craft breweries and wineries across Minnesota.

In recent years, there have been renewed interests among scholars, researchers, social activists and policy makers around the globe in rural development as the precondition for the overall nation's development. Julie Tesch and her team at the Center for Rural Policy and Development have been doing incredibly important work in collecting and forwarding information about health, working condition, and environmental issues faced by the rural communities and how to satisfy their needs in the greater Minnesota.

The audiences at the SOM Annual Conference will benefit hearing from her about lessons learned on this topic. Please join us for this talk and discussion. Membership required. Please see our website <https://www.socmn.org/>

## Call for Presentations at the SOM Annual Conference 2022:

We welcome submissions for sessions, papers, posters, and panels. **Please send the title and a brief abstract (~ 3 sentences or 100 words maximum) for review to Conference Coordinator, Dr. Saiful Islam at [saiful.islam@mnsu.edu](mailto:saiful.islam@mnsu.edu) with the subject line *Sociologists of Minnesota Submission* by the **Deadline for Submissions: September 30, 2022**.** If you would like to submit a paper or serve as panelist for one of the sessions below, please indicate the session title in your email. We welcome original research on local or global issues, theoretical or applied areas, works in progress, and discussions on teaching from students, faculty, researchers, scholars, community activists, policy makers, and fellow conscious citizens.

### Some areas for panels/sessions (a sample only and could be revised and/or added more)

- |  |   |                             |                                    |
|--|---|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| • Rural Issues (e.g., Agriculture, Work, and Environment etc.) | • Diversity (i.e., Indigenous issues, Race and Ethnicity) | • Health and Illness        | • Sociology Clubs                  |
| • Global/International Issues                                  | • Family Sociology  | • Crime & Deviance          | • Sociology Career and Internships |
|  | • Social Psychology                                       | • Voices We Need to Amplify |                                    |

## Caroline Rose Student Paper Competition

The Caroline Rose Student Paper Competition is a great opportunity for students to share their work with a professional audience! The Sociologists of Minnesota is offering cash prizes for first- and second-place within the undergraduate and graduate divisions. All winners receive free conference registration, meals, and membership in SOM. Winners are expected to present at our Annual Conference on October 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>. All submissions will be reviewed by at least two members of the Student Paper Competition Committee using a rubric (available on the Sociologists of Minnesota website [www.socmn.org](http://www.socmn.org)), and all students will receive feedback from the Committee on their work, even if they do not win an Award. Faculty, please invite your students to enter their papers in recognition of their outstanding work under your guidance. Students, we welcome you to submit one or more papers. Such a submission (and win) looks good on your resume and/or graduate school application and recognizes your outstanding engagement as a student sociologist. \*Please see the accompanying rules of the competition. If there are no acceptable papers, prizes will not be offered.\* Please submit an electronic version (Word or PDF) of the paper to via email to Aaron Hoy ([aaron.hoy@mnsu.edu](mailto:aaron.hoy@mnsu.edu)). Please also indicate in your email whether you are an undergraduate or graduate student. **Deadline for Submissions: September 30, 2022.**

## Conference News: For Updates on Conference Planning and Details, visit:

<http://www.socmn.org/meeting-information>

## Get involved in Sociologists of Minnesota!

We are currently seeking students, faculty, and applied sociologists as volunteers! Reach out to SOM President Dr. Bridget Conlon Mayfield at [baconlon@stcloudstate.edu](mailto:baconlon@stcloudstate.edu) to learn more!

To see our current list of the Board of Directors, visit:

<http://www.socmn.org/governance.html>

To become a member of Sociologists of Minnesota or to renew your membership:

1. Go to <http://www.socmn.org/membership-information.html>
2. Pay online or include a check or money order made out to the Sociologists of Minnesota with your membership form.

## Caroline Rose Student Paper Competition Rules

1. The competition is open to any current or former student who wrote a paper while enrolled in a college or university in Minnesota during the 2021-2022 academic year. Students are welcome to submit empirical or theoretical papers as well as research proposals.
2. Papers co-authored by more than one student will be considered, but co-authors cannot include faculty members.
3. The paper should not exceed 30 double-spaced pages, excluding appendices and references, and should also include a brief abstract. Please number the pages.
4. Neither the student's name nor their institutional affiliation can appear in the text or in the abstract of the paper. The title should be included at the top of the first page of the text.
5. Students who submit papers to this competition are encouraged to submit the same paper to sessions at the annual meetings of the Midwest Sociological Society or the American Sociological Association.
6. The winning authors are expected to be available to present their papers at the annual conference on October 13-14.

Papers involving human subjects must have Institutional Review Board (or its equivalent) approval and must note the receipt of approval in the methodology section of the paper.

For questions, please contact Aaron Hoy ([aaron.hoy@mnsu.edu](mailto:aaron.hoy@mnsu.edu)), Student Paper Competition Committee member.