

WILLIAM CHARLES

Assistant Professor
Sociology and Gerontology Department
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[Faculty Website](#)
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EDUCATION

- Ph.D. Boston College
 Sociology, August 2018
 Chair: Juliet Schor
 Committee: Sarah Babb, Natalia Sarkisian, Steven Vallas
- MA Boston College
 Sociology, May 2014
- BS Westminster College
 Sociology, May 2011
- AS Salt Lake Community College
 December, 2009

FIELDS

Organizational Theory, Sociology of Work, Economic Sociology, Political Sociology, Social Theory, Qualitative Sociology, Ethnography, Cultural Sociology

HONORS AND AWARDS

Best Management & Workplace Culture Book of the Year 2020, Porchlight Book Company, *After the Gig: How the Sharing Economy Got Hijacked and How to Win it Back*. Listed as a collaborator with lead author, Juliet Schor. 2020.

Core Postdoctoral Fellowship, Boston College Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, 2018 - 2021

Research Fellowship, Weisenbaum Institute for the Networked Society & Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung (WZB Social Science Center), Berlin, Germany, March – May 2018

Dissertation Fellowship, Boston College Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, 2017 - 2018

Fellowship, Clough Center for Study of Constitutional Democracy, Fellowship, Boston College, 2017- 2018

Summer Research Fellowship, Sociology Department, Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, Boston College, 2013, 2017

AREA EXAMS

Economic Sociology, Passed with Distinction, May 2015

Organizational Sociology, November 2015

RESEARCH PROJECTS

Disaster Publics: Mixed-methods study of public sensemaking and improvised discourse in crisis events, focused on how distrust, vernacular expertise, and symbolic bricolage shape collective responses to uncertainty. Primary case: East Palestine train derailment; analysis of social media groups and related public discourse, 2023 – present

Hyper-Coupling, Organizations, and Disaster: Comparative organizational analysis of how crises “couple” institutions, infrastructures, and publics under conditions of uncertainty. This project examines coordination breakdown, institutional ambiguity, and the emergence of ad hoc governance across organizations during disasters, with attention to cascading failures and organizational field dynamics, 2023 – present

Gig Labor: Qualitative study of on-demand labor platforms. This project explores how workers experience technologically organized work, as well as the institutional environments in which labor platforms are embedded, 2015 – present

The Maker Movement: Ethnographic case study of a makerspace that explores social dynamics in leveled production environments. This project investigates the ways in which hierarchies are constructed and defended in formally non-hierarchical organizations, 2013 – 2025

Efficiency Models in Healthcare: Extended ethnographic case study of the deployment of lean production in two healthcare organizations. This project focuses on the strategies actors use to effect organizational change, and how institutions enable and constrain the organizational change process, 2012 – 2015

TEACHING & RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Assistant Professor of Sociology, Miami University (Fall 2020 – Present)

- Organizational Leadership
- Organizations and Society
- Work and Occupational Justice
- Economy and Society
- Organizational Leadership Capstone
- Social Problems
- Research Methods

Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Weizenbaum Institute for the Networked Society, Berlin (2018)

Postdoctoral Teaching Fellow, Department of Sociology, Boston College (2019 – 2020)

- #BlackLivesMatter Meets #MeToo Labs
- What Can Machines Do? Automation in Society
- Social Movements
- Planet in Peril Labs
- Motivations for Human Cooperation
- Important Readings in Sociology

Research Team Member, Boston College (June 2013 – Spring 2018)

- Connected Consumption and Connected Economy
- MacArthur Foundation Connected Learning Research Network

Instructor, Boston College (May 2016 – Spring 2017)

- Social Problems
- Social Theory

PEER REVIEWED JOURNAL ARTICLES

Charles, William. 2026. "Identity in the Gig Economy: Aspiration, Deidentification, and Collective Solidarity Among Platform Couriers." *Sociological Forum*. doi: 10.1111/socf.70068.

Charles, William and Juliet B. Schor. 2025. "Distinction at Work: Status Practices in a Community Production Environment." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 54(3):391–422. doi: 10.1177/08912416251336208.

Gunderson, Ryan, William Charles, and Claiton Fyock. 2025. "Global Capital and Amphibian Extinctions: Ecologically Unequal Exchange with Colonial and Neocolonial Sri Lanka." *Journal of World-Systems Research* 31(2):582–614. doi: 10.5195/jwsr.2025.1315.

Charles, William and Ryan Gunderson. 2025. "Derailed and Denaturalized: The Case of East Palestine, Ohio." *Critical Sociology*. doi: 10.1177/08969205251328335.

Charles, William. 2025. "Making the Collectivist Organization: Creativity, Conformity, and Social Closure." *Poetics* 109:101982. doi: 10.1016/j.poetic.2025.101982.

Charles, William, and Ryan Gunderson. 2024. "Post-Legitimate Society." *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour* 54(4):498–516. doi: 10.1111/jtsb.12428.

Gunderson, Ryan, William Charles. "A sociology of "climatage": the appeal and counterproductivity of property destruction as a climate change strategy." *Environmental Sociology*, 2023 9(4), 398-408. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23251042.2023.2234648>.

Gunderson, Ryan, William Charles. "The Technicization of Knowledge: Georges Gurvitch's Warnings Applied to the Case of Nudge." *Distinktion: Journal of Social Theory*, 2023. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1600910X.2023.2287423>.

Schüßler, Elke, William Attwood-Charles, Juliet B. Schor, and Stefan Kirschner. "Between mutuality, autonomy and domination: rethinking digital platforms as contested relational structures." *Socio-Economic Review*, 2021. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ser/mwab038>

Schor, Juliet B., William Attwood-Charles, Mehmet Cansoy, Isak Ladegaard, and Robert Wengronowitz. 2020. "Dependence and Precarity in the Platform Economy." *Theory and Society* 49(5):833–61. doi: [10.1007/s11186-020-09408-y](https://doi.org/10.1007/s11186-020-09408-y)

Schor, Juliet B., William Attwood-Charles, and Mehmet Cansoy (collaborators). "After the Gig: How the Sharing Economy Got Hijacked and How to Win it Back." *University of California Press*. 2020. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv125jrwn>

Fitzmaurice, Connor, Isak Ladegaard, William Attwood-Charles, Mehmet Cansoy, and Luka Carfagna. "Domesticating the Market: Moral Exchange in the Sharing Economy." *Socio-Economic Review*, 2018. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ser/mwy003>

Attwood-Charles, William and Sarah Babb. "Engineering Medicine: The Deployment of Lean Production in Healthcare." *Research in the Sociology of Work*, Vol. 30, pp. 87-115, 2017. <https://doi.org/10.1108/S0277-283320170000030005>

Schor, Juliet B. and William Attwood-Charles. "The "Sharing" Economy: Labor, Inequality and Social Connection on For-profit Platforms." *Sociological Compass*, Vol. 11, Issue 8, 2017. <https://doi.org/10.1111/soc4.12493>

Schor, Juliet B., William Attwood-Charles, Connor Fitzmaurice, and Luka Carfagna. "Paradoxes of Openness and Distinction in the Sharing Economy." *Poetics*, Vol. 54, pp. 66-81, 2016. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.poetic.2015.11.001>

BOOK REVIEWS

Charles, William. Forthcoming 2026. Review of *Canaries in the Code Mine: Precarity and the Future of Tech Work*. *American Journal of Sociology*.

Charles, William. 2022. "Review of 'The Flexibility Paradox: Why Flexible Working Leads to (Self-)Exploitation.'" *Social Forces* soac079. doi: [10.1093/sf/soac079](https://doi.org/10.1093/sf/soac079).

MEDIA/BLOGS

"The Sharing Economy and the Limits of Voluntarism," (William Charles). Ossigeno (Italy), Forthcoming, 2026.

"The Tyranny of Leveled Workplaces." (William Attwood-Charles and Juliet B. Schor). *Work in Progress* (Blog of the American Sociological Association, Section on Organizations, Occupations, and Work), August 2015

"Platform Providers in the Sharing Economy." (Juliet B. Schor and William Attwood-Charles). *Work in Progress*, July 2015

PRESENTATIONS

"Field Formation in the Gig Economy," invited colloquium, Department of Sociology, University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong, January 2026 (scheduled).

"Identity and Gig Work," invited colloquium, Department of Sociology, University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, OH, November 2025.

"Gig Identity Formation," regular session paper, American Sociological Association, Chicago, IL, August 2025.

"Understanding the Platform Economy," Thematic Session, Society for the Advancement of Socio-Economics, Virtual, 2021

"Gig Couriers and Prerequisites for Labor Control," Thematic Session on The Gig Economy: Liberatory Technology or Dystopian Nightmare?, American Sociological Association, San Francisco, 2020

"Where is Control Coming From? Gig Couriers and Labor Platforms," Thematic Session on the Gig Economy: Beyond Direct Control: The Construction of Consent in the On-Demand Economy, Society for the Advancement of Socio-Economics, Amsterdam, Netherlands, 2020

"Culture, Identity, and Gig Work," Roundtable Session, Community and Urban Sociology, American Sociological Association, New York, 2019

“Dimensions of Platform Labor Control and The Experience of Gig Couriers,” Thematic Session on Technology, Control and the Platform Economy, Society for the Advancement of Socio-Economics, New York, 2019

“Culture and Collective Identity in Gig Work,” Thematic Session on Labor & Culture, Northeastern University Share Conference, Boston, 2019

“The Maker Ethic: Neo-Craftwork and the Artistic and Social Critiques of Capitalism,” Thematic Session on Craft and Artisanal Production, Consumption Mini-Conference, Philadelphia, 2018

“Technology and Control,” Roundtable Session on Innovation and Technology, Organizations, Occupations and Work, American Sociological Association, Philadelphia, 2018

“Domesticating the Market: Moral Exchange and the Sharing Economy,” Thematic Session on The Meanings of Money, Property, and Relationships, Economic Sociology, American Sociological Association, Philadelphia, 2018

“Technology and Control: Institutional Work and Digital Labor Platforms,” Globalization, Automation, and Production working group, WZB Social Science Center, Berlin, 2018

“Distinction at Work: Status Practices in Peer Production Environments,” Thematic Session on the Making and Unmaking of Good Jobs, Organizations, Occupations and Work, American Sociological Association, Montreal, 2017

“Making the Collectivist Organization: Creativity, Conformity, and Social Closure,” Thematic Session on the Solidarity Economy, Society for the Study of Social Problems, Montreal, 2017

“Institutional Entrepreneurship and Opportunity Structures,” Roundtable Session, Organizations, Occupations and Work, American Sociological Association, Seattle, 2016

“Making It Up,” Thematic Session on the Platform Economy? Sharing Economy?, Mini-Conference, Society for the Advancement of Socio-Economics, UC Berkeley, 2016

“The Postmodern Clan,” Environmental Sociology Working Group, Boston College, 2016

“Distinction at Work: An Ethnography of a Makerspace,” Massachusetts-Connecticut Symposium on Qualitative Sociology, 2015

“Engineering Medicine,” Session on Labor Studies, Society for the Study of Social Problems, 2014

“Framing Organizational Change,” Boston-Connecticut Symposium on Qualitative Sociology, 2014

“Makerspaces and the New Economy,” invited speaker Environmental Sociology course, Boston College, 2014

“Connected Learning in Spaces and Sites of the Connected Economy,” Digital Media and Learning Conference, Boston, 2014

“Engineering Fields: Implementing Lean Production in Healthcare,” Eastern Sociological Society, Philadelphia, 2013

“Workfare Regimes and the Community College,” Eastern Sociological Society, Boston, 2012

“The Occupy Movement and Horizontal Organizing,” invited speaker, Westminster College, 2011

ADDITIONAL PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

Work in the digital age: The challenges of platform firms, German Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, 2021

Massachusetts and Connecticut Qualitative Sociology Symposium, Boston College, 2015

Boston and Connecticut Qualitative Sociology Symposium, Boston University, 2014

Digital Media and Learning Conference, Boston, MA, 2014

Summer Institute in New Economics, The Johnson Foundation at Wingspread, Racine, WI, 2013

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE & EDITORSHIP

Coeditor, Special Issue of *Socio-Economic Review*, “Understanding the Platform Economy: Socio-Economic Dynamics in new Digital Markets,” 2021.

Editorial Board Member, *The Sociological Quarterly*, 2025–present.

Editorial Board Member, *Research in the Sociology of Work*, 2025–present.

Reviewer, *Social Problems*. 2024, 2025.

Reviewer, *Sociological Theory*. 2025.

Reviewer, *Social Forces*. 2022, 2023, 2025.

Reviewer, *Socio-Economic Review*. 2020, 2022, 2025.

Reviewer, *Socius*. 2022, 2024.

Reviewer, *American Sociological Review*. 2021, 2022.

Reviewer, *China Perspectives*. 2022.

Reviewer, *American Journal of Sociology*. 2022.

Reviewer, *Poetics*. 2022.

Reviewer, *City, Culture, and Society*. 2021.

Reviewer, *Geoforum*. 2021.