

MIRA DEBS

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CURRENT ACADEMIC APPOINTMENT

August 2017- **Executive Director**, Yale University Education Studies Program
Lecturer, Yale Department of Sociology

PAST ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

Spring 2020 **Visiting Professor**, Yale-NUS College, Singapore, Global Affairs Program

January 2017-July 2017 **Post-Doctoral Scholar**, Yale University Political Science and Education Studies Program

Spring 2015 **Visiting Professor**, Wesleyan University, Department of Sociology

EDUCATION

2016 Yale University, PhD Sociology
2002 Oxford University, PCGE Secondary History
2001 Oxford University, MPhil European Politics and Society
1999 University of Chicago, BA (with high honors) General Studies in the Humanities

RESEARCH INTERESTS

school desegregation and integration, urban education, school choice, parent involvement, comparative international education and progressive public schools

PUBLICATIONS

Books

Diverse Families, Desirable Schools: Public Montessori in the era of school choice. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press, 2019.

Reviews: Amy Langenkamp, *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol 125, No. 6 (Summer 2020) pp. 1682-1684; Katie Dulaney, *American Journal of Education Forum*, Feb. 2020; Matt Barnum, *Chalkbeat*, April, 2019; Angela Murray, *Montessori Life*, Summer 2019, pp. 54-55; David Kahn, *Montessori Collaborative World Review*, Summer 2019, pp. 113-119. Featured in Dana Goldstein, *New York Times*, Sept. 2018; Laura Meckler, *Washington Post*, Nov. 2018; Emily Langhorne, *Forbes*, March 2019.

Peer reviewed journal articles

- (2019) “‘To be Strict on your own’: Black and Latinx parents evaluate school discipline” (with Joanne Golann & Anna Weiss) *American Education Research Journal*. 56(5): 1896-1929.
- (2017) “Students of Color and Public Montessori Schools: A Review of the Literature” (with Katie Brown), *Journal of Montessori Research*. 3(1): 1-15.
- (2016) “Racial and Economic Diversity of Public Montessori Schools.” *Journal of Montessori Research*, 2016: 2(2):15-34.

4. (2014) "The Suffering of Symbols: Giotto Frescoes and the Cultural Trauma of Objects." *Cultural Sociology*, 7(4):479-94. Sage Prize Finalist for the top 4 *Cultural Sociology* articles (of 27 published in 2013.)
5. (2013) "The Uses of Cultural Trauma: Gandhi's Assassination, Partition and Secular Nationalism in Post-Independence India," *Nations and Nationalism*, 19(4): 635-653.
6. (2013) "Toward a Cultural Sociology of Nationalism" (with Eric Woods) and co-editor, Special issue on Cultural Sociology for *Nations and Nationalism*, 19(4): 607-614.

Papers under review

"Kiasu parents go to school: Primary School Choice and Educational Inequality in Singapore" (with Hoi-Shang Cheung) Under review at *Comparative Education*.

"'I am not a guinea pig': An Analysis of Parental Advocacy in the German Detracking Movement." (with Lana Apple.) Under review at *Comparative Education Review*.

Working papers

"The new generation of integration activists: History & landscape of NYC integration work 2014-2020." (with Molly Makris & Elise Castillo.)

"Adaptive and Contested Framings of Montessori in India: the long history of Indian progressive education"

"Rehabilitating a difficult memory? White Students Narrating the Integration of Central High School 1957-58"

"Beyond Bricks and Mortar: dynamic commemoration, divergent memories and memory entrepreneurs in Little Rock Central High's desegregation crisis"

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

2020 **Visiting Professor**, Yale-NUS, Comparative International Education

2016-
present **Lecturer**, Education Studies Program, Sociology and Political Science Department (2016), Yale University
Foundations in Education Studies, Public Schools and Public Policy, Cities, Suburbs and School Choice, Advanced Topics in Education Studies, Senior Capstone

2015 **Lecturer**, Sociology Department, Wesleyan University, Education Policy Senior Capstone Seminar

2013-2015 **Teaching Fellow**, Education Studies Program & Sociology, Yale University
Foundations in Education Studies, Elizabeth Carroll; Methods of Inquiry, Matthew Mahler; Sociology of the Arts and Popular Culture, Ron Eyerman; Cultural Sociology, Jeff Alexander

GRANTS AND FELLOWSHIPS

- 2020 Spencer Foundation, Covid-19 grant for NYC school integration activists project (one of 20 projects selected from 1360 applications)
- 2019 Wend Ventures & Brady Foundation, Community Reading Grant supporting public presentations and 200 copies of *Diverse Families, Desirable Schools* for 10 public Montessori schools
- 2013 American Montessori Society Research Grant
- 1999 Rhodes Scholarship

AWARDS

- 2020 American Montessori Society Montessori Innovator Award.
- 2013 Sage Prize Finalist for one of the top 4 *Cultural Sociology* articles (of 27 published in 2013.)

PUBLIC SCHOLARSHIP

Media Publications

["The huge problem with education 'pandemic pods' suddenly cropping up."](#) *Washington Post*, (with JPB Gerald) July 22, 2020.

["Some No Excuses Charter Schools Say They are Changing. Are they? Can They?"](#) *Washington Post Answer Sheet*, (with Joanne Golann and Chris Torres) August 29, 2019.

["Global Adaptation: Montessori in India."](#) *Harvard Education Press Blog*, August 3, 2019.

["The harsh discipline of no-excuses charter schools: is it worth the promise?"](#) *Ed Week* (with Joanne Golann).

["Jeff Bezos and the Trap of the Charitable-Industrial Complex."](#) *New York Times*, September 23, 2018

Selected Media Coverage

- Amanda Blanco and Susan Dunne, August 21, 2020, ["'Learning pods' gaining popularity in the coronavirus pandemic, but experts warn they could widen the Connecticut's Achievement Gap."](#) *Hartford Courant*.
- Jay Matthews, August 2, 2019 ["No Excuses make no excuses for updating their approach."](#) *Washington Post*.
- Jennifer Berkshire and Jack Schneider, May 2, 2019, ["Different Strokes for Different Folks?"](#) *Have you Heard* podcast.
- Matt Barnum, April 30, 2019, ["What does Montessori mean in the age of school choice? Researcher Mira Debs explains."](#) *Chalkbeat*.
- Nora Fleming, April 28, 2019, ["A Public School Makes the Case for Montessori for All."](#) *Edutopia*.
- Emily Langhorne, March 27, 2019 ["The Montessori Comeback."](#) *Forbes*.
- Goldstein, Dana Sept. 21, 2018 ["Jeff Bezos Cites a Big Number, but Few Details, in Plan for Low-Income Montessori Preschools."](#) *New York Times*.

- Meckler, Laura, Nov. 5, 2018 “Montessori, long a favorite for wealthy families, struggles to expand its reach.” *Washington Post*.
- Stacy Khadaroo, 2018. “More than ‘beautiful words’: How one school fights to keep racial equity.” *Christian Science Monitor*.
- Sarah Sparks, 2016. “In Charter School Era, Montessori Model Flourishes.” *Ed Week*.

POLICY BRIEFS

Debs, Mira. 2015. “PreK availability and Access in Hartford’s Magnet and Open Choice Schools.” A Sheff Movement Brief. *Sheff Movement Coalition*. Hartford, CT.

Debs, Mira. 2014. “Simplifying the Lottery Process: Preferences.” A Sheff Movement Brief. *Sheff Movement Coalition*. Hartford, CT.

National Center for Montessori in the Public Sector. 2014. “Growth of Montessori in the public sector: 1975-2014.” West Hartford, CT: National Center for Montessori in the Public Sector.

SELECTED PRESENTATIONS

- 2019 “The Competing purposes of education” Yale Prison Education Initiative Students at McDougal-Walker Correctional Facility, CT, October and December 2019.
- “Diverse Parents, Desirable Schools: Public Montessori in the Era of School Choice” community presentations to Navadisha Montessori, Chennai, India; and with anti-racism trainee Britt Hawthorne to City Garden Montessori, St. Louis MO, Garden Oaks Montessori, Houston, TX; Murray-LaSaine Montessori, Charleston, SC; Montessori Borealis, Juneau, AK; Moore Montessori, Southern Pines, NC; Coastal Empire Montessori, Savannah, GA; Baltimore Montessori, Baltimore, MD, Coral Reef Montessori, Miami, FL; Holliday Montessori, Kansas City, MO; Parkway Montessori Middle School, St. Paul, MN; Urban Montessori, Oakland, CA
- 2018 “Education Studies is not teacher prep (and that’s actually a good thing): straddling the vocational-theoretical divide” Invited plenary address at the inaugural Education Studies conference, Dennison University, Ohio
- 2017 “A Fine Line between Autonomy and Structure: How Parents of Color Perceive Discipline at Public Montessori and No-Excuses Schools” with Joanne Golann and Anna Weiss. American Sociological Association Annual Conference, Montreal, August 2017.
American Educational Research Association, San Antonio, Texas, April 2017
- 2016 “Untouchable Carrots: Marketing School Choice and Realities in Hartford’s Inter-district Magnet Program,” American Sociological Association Annual Conference, Seattle, August 2016.
- “Conflicted Fit: Black and Latino Parents Experience of Public Montessori Schools” American Educational Research Association, Washington DC, April 2016
- 2015 “Minority Parents, Montessori Schools: Negotiating Cultural Fit in Theme Based Public Schools” American Sociological Association Annual Conference, Chicago, August 2015.

“Untouchable Carrots: Marketing School Choice and Realities in Hartford’s Inter-district Magnet Program,” American Educational Research Association Roundtable, Chicago, April 2015.

“Untouchable Carrots...” Trinity College Education Studies Department, Invited Talk, 7 April 2015.

2014 “‘No One was Marketing to Us’: Cultural Coding, School Choice and Parent Involvement” Northwestern University Ethnography Workshop, Invited Talk, September 2014

“Parent Choice and Involvement on the Ground”, Trinity College Education Studies Department, Invited Talk, February 6

2013 “The Gandhi Problem” Social Science Historical Association (SSHA), Chicago, November 21-24

2011 “Rehabilitating a Difficult Memory?” Social Science Historical Association (SSHA), Boston, November 17-20

--- American Studies Association, Baltimore, October 18-23, 2011

“The Suffering of Symbols,” Association for the Study of Ethnicity and Nationalism, London School of Economics, April 5-7, 2011

DISSERTATION ADVISING

2020 Lucy Canzonieri-Golden and Juliet King, *Lynn University* Miami, “An Examination of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy and Antibias-Antiracist Curriculum in a Montessori Setting.”

UNIVERSITY AND PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

2020 Yale prison education committee, reviewing the Yale Prison Education Initiative.

Member American Sociological Association, American Education Research Association, Society for the Study of Social Problems

Reviewer *American Sociological Review, Sociology of Education, Social Problems, Qualitative Sociology, Sociological Forum, American Journal of Cultural Sociology, Cultural Sociology, Environment and Planning A, Journal of Montessori Research*