

Humanity & Society

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Mark George
Department of Sociology, Anthropology & Criminal Justice
Valdosta State University
Valdosta, GA

Dear Mark:

I am writing about the manuscript (#0702a) entitled "Becoming a Race Traitor: The Work of White Critical Antiracists" that you submitted to *Humanity & Society*. The reviewers (Schneider and Spector) found the paper to be interesting, consistent with the goals of the journal and likely to be of interest to sociologists. However, they also note some important concerns that must be addressed. Therefore I invite you to *revise and resubmit* this manuscript.

Both reviewers suggest that you clarify how theory informs your research and how you use it to analyze your data. The reviewers also commented on the literature review. Spector notes that the literature is somewhat dated and does not take advantage of the important work on race that has been done in the last ten years. Similarly, Schneider suggests that you review the literature on women's activism since you make some assumptions about it that may or may not be true. She also asks for greater detail on the methods you used. Schneider, and I agree, that the analysis would be strengthened by focusing on fewer issues so you can examine them in greater depth.

I trust you will be able to make these changes. If you choose to do so, please send an electronic copy along with an email specifying the changes you have made (or your rationale for not doing so) to humanityandsociety@und.edu. If you have any questions, please let me know.

Thank you for your interest in the journal and best wishes on your revisions. I look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Cordially,

Kathleen A. Tiemann, Editor
Humanity & Society
enc.

Zoann K. Snyder

Review comments to author:

Becoming a Race Traitor: The Work of White Critical Antiracists

Mark Patrick George PhD - Assistant Professor

Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Criminal Justice

Valdosta State University

Valdosta, GA

Hi. I found your manuscript interesting and to have great potential as a contribution to sociological/social scientific knowledge regarding antiracism. I believe you have rich data from your interviews, and I would like to see more discussion of your data and analysis than is presented in your current manuscript. Given that journals have and enforce page limits, I suggest that perhaps you might want to spend more time on fewer issues and provide more depth and detail to what you do discuss.

Here are my suggestions to strengthen your current research and, perhaps, to help with future work:

1. You mention relevant theory, but don't do much with it. Tell the reader how theory informs your research and how you use theory to analyze your data. I know your work is applied, but if you raise theory, then you have to discuss how you use it and reflect on theory in your findings and/or conclusion.
2. Your methodology needs more discussion. I know you employed research methodology, so talk a bit about what you did and why. Not all readers will be well-versed in qualitative methodology and some readers will critique your work as not really science.
3. You note in several places that you didn't research literature on women's participation in social movements so you anticipate that women participate in social movements because of women's inequality. I recommend that you do spend some time reviewing recent work on women's activism. Maybe you are correct in your assumption, but you need to back up your claims and/or note findings to the contrary. The same is true with respect to your disclaimer about not finding any lower income antiracists. Explore more in this area. Does this mean that only the folks with middle income resources can afford time to reflect on social issues or are there alternate explanations.

I look forward to seeing more of your work in print. Best wishes, Z

REPORT TO THE AUTHOR(S)

MS#: 0702a

Reviewer: Alan Spector

Author: Mark George

Title: “Becoming a Race Traitor: The Work of White Critical Antiracists”

I had to work to separate (friendly) criticisms I have of the Peggy McIntosh approach to winning “whites” to oppose racist oppression (the approach of most of the activists reviewed) from my own experiences as an anti-racist activist (including helping found the International Committee Against Racism and working with that for twenty five years) as well as other organizations, and also as a teacher who emphasizes anti-racism in all my courses. Our work has been somewhat successful, including among the core white working class youth here in Rust Belt Northwest Indiana. Let me discuss this for a moment, although it may not be relevant to evaluating the article (which I do recommend).

Making “whites” aware of how “minority group members” experience severe discrimination that is often “invisible” to “white” folks is obviously important. But couching it in terms that might evoke “guilt” or implying that whites fundamentally benefit from racism (of course they do gain important material advantages in many settings... but do they benefit in a fundamental way)...well, asserting that sets up a fundamental conflict between blacks and whites, instead of struggling to win whites to understand that they NEED the wisdom and strength of black folks to successfully oppose the many forms of oppression that we experience. Here’s a little something I wrote about this, very informal, about ten years old.

<http://www.geocities.com/elethinker/RG/RacismSpector.htm>

The “guilt” approach might also explain why some “middle class” whites are attracted to this, while very few working class whites are involved with that.

Okay, enough about that.

The article deals with a vitally important subject. It clearly demonstrates a great deal of work and thought. The only somewhat serious criticisms I might offer is that 1) it really isn’t “sociological” enough; it deals with an important sociological issue, but for a paper that is nearly twenty pages long, a theoretical discussion of about one page does not seem adequate. So much of the paper comes across as (very interesting) descriptive journalism rather than sociology. Related to this is that the literature review is thin and the sources are dated. The most recent is eleven years old, and many go back twenty years or more. There has been an explosion of work on this topic in the past ten years...(Joe Feagin, Melanie Bush, our own Woody (Ashley) Doane and many more)...more discussion of recent work that frames it more theoretically would be important.

All of the comments about the manuscript in the last paragraph are completely separate from my own thoughts on effective anti-racist organizing and teaching. I do believe that a fine paper can be published that doesn’t exactly share my perspective! This has the foundation of an excellent paper; the revisions I’m suggesting should not be very time-consuming.