

# James C. Mellody

MIT Sloan School of Management  
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## EDUCATION

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### Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Sloan School of Management

Ph.D., Management

2024 (*Expected*)

Thesis: “Attention Allocation, Community Success, and Cultural Diversity in Online Communities.”

- Committee: Ray Reagans, Susan Silbey, Ezra Zuckerman Sivan
- Finalist for the 2023 INFORMS/Organization Science Dissertation Proposal Competition

S.M., Management Research

2020

### University of Pennsylvania

B.A., *summa cum laude*, East Asian Languages and Civilizations

2015

## RESEARCH INTERESTS

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Culture and Coordination in Online Communities and Organizations  
Digital Platforms, Online Communities, and the Attention Economy  
Professions, Occupations, and Knowledge Work

## JOB MARKET PAPER

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[1] Mellody, James. “Attention Allocation in Online Communities.”

- Finalist for the 2023 INFORMS/Organization Science Dissertation Proposal Competition

*Abstract.* Online communities are increasingly important sites of social and economic life. These communities depend on the attention of member resources in order to survive. This article asks the question: how is attention allocated in online communities? Early work highlighted a key promise of the internet: to counteract homogenizing cultural forces in society and provide a more egalitarian context for a greater diversity of content to find an audience. A large body of literature has found instead that the allocation of attention online resembles resource allocation in many offline settings: characterized by power-law distributions in which a few offerings attract the bulk of attention. Moving beyond a distributional analysis of attention allocation, and leveraging an underutilized pattern in individual-level attention allocation online, I examine *where* and *how* different kinds of communities can succeed online. I find similarities to existing work in terms of power-law distributional patterns, where the most generic communities attract the bulk of attention. However, I identify a key difference from prior studies based on *where* different kinds of communities can succeed: while niche communities have difficulty growing large, they can find success in the center of the attention ecology, right next to the largest, most generic communities. This suggests a difference in how the allocation of attention occurs online, and a key way in which the internet can bolster the prominence of a diversity of cultural offerings.

## PAPERS UNDER REVIEW

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[1] Conzon, Vanessa and James Mellody. “Concerted Quantification: How Expert Teams Reconcile Overwork and Client Satisfaction.”

- R&R at *Organization Science*

## WORKING PAPERS

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[1] Mellody, James. “Narrating Value: How Staff Professionals Form Embedded Relationships with Line Workers.” (preparing to submit)

[2] Mellody, James and Ray Reagans. “Beyond Representation: Extending the Effectiveness of Diversity Approaches via Individuation.” (revising manuscript)

## **WORKS IN PROGRESS**

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[1] Mellody, James. “Collective Action Online: Networks and Language of a Virtual Investor Movement.” (data analysis stage)

[2] Mellody, James. “Social and Cultural Networks in Digital Crowdfunding Platforms.” (initial theory stage)

[3] Mellody, James. “Community Moderation and User Engagement on Reddit.” (data analysis stage)

[4] Mellody, James. “Sources of Cultural Change in Online Communities.” (data analysis stage)

[5] Mellody, James and Vanessa Conzon. “Keeping Time: Interaction Scripts as Coordinating Mechanisms for Self-Organizing Teams.” (data analysis stage)

[6] Zuckerman Sivan, Ezra, Catresa Barlow, and James Mellody. “What Day is It and Who Cares about the Date? Social Media Expressions of Temporal Disorientation Before and After Pandemic Onset.” (drafting manuscript)

## **AWARDS AND FELLOWSHIPS**

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- Finalist, INFORMS/Organization Science Dissertation Proposal Competition (2023)
- AOM OMT Above and Beyond the Call of Duty Award (2023)
- Participant, AOM OMT Doctoral Student Consortium (2022)
- MIT Martin Family Fellowship for Sustainability (2020 – 2021; ~ \$100,000)
- MIT Sloan PhD Fellowship (2017 – 2023)
- Phi Beta Kappa (2016)
- Fulbright U.S. Student Program Research Grant – Alternate (2015)
- William R. LaFleur Memorial Prize for Best Undergraduate Thesis in Japanese Studies at the University of Pennsylvania (2015)
- Greater Philadelphia Asian Studies Consortium Best Paper Award (2015)

## **RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS**

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“Attention Allocation in Online Communities.”

- MIT Organization Studies Seminar, Cambridge, MA, 2023
- Academy of Management Annual Meeting, Boston, MA, 2023
- MIT Economic Sociology Working Group, Cambridge, MA, 2023

“Concerted Quantification: How Expert Teams Reconcile Overwork and Client Satisfaction.”

- Academy of Management Annual Meeting, Boston, MA, 2023

“Consolidation or Fracturing: Change in Online Communities.”

- Academy of Management Annual Meeting, Seattle, WA, 2022
- MIT Economic Sociology Working Group, Cambridge, MA, 2022

“Narrating Value: How Staff Professionals Form Embedded Relationships with Line Workers.”

- Academy of Management Annual Meeting, Virtual, 2020

- American Sociological Association Annual Meeting, Virtual, 2020
- MIT Economic Sociology Working Group, Cambridge, MA, 2020
- Law and Society Association Annual Meeting, Washington, DC, 2019

“Beyond Representation: Extending the Effectiveness of Diversity Approaches via Individuation.”

- Academy of Management Annual Meeting, Virtual, 2021

## TEACHING EXPERIENCE

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**Organizational Processes (MIT Sloan MBA)** Fall 2023

- Teaching assistant for Professor Nathan Wilmers

**Organizational Processes for Business Analytics (MIT Sloan Undergraduate)** Fall 2019, 2020

- Teaching assistant for Professor Ray Reagans; solo-taught lecture on negotiations
- Teaching ratings: 6.5/7; 5.9/7

**Power and Negotiation (MIT Sloan MBA)** Fall 2020

- Teaching assistant for Professor Basima Tewfik
- Teaching ratings: 6.3/7

**Social Entrepreneurship (Wharton Coursera Course)** Fall 2014 – Spring 2015

- Teaching assistant for Professors Ian MacMillan and James Thompson

## SERVICE

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Student Co-Organizer for 2023 Economic Sociology Job Market Showcase	2023
Reviewer, AOM OMT Division	2019 – Present
Co-Organizer for MIT Sloan Organization Studies Seminar Speaker Breakfasts	2019
Co-Organizer for MIT Sloan Behavioral and Policy Sciences Admitted Students Reception	2019
Co-Organizer for MIT Sloan Alumni Reception at AOM Annual Meeting	2019

## OTHER PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

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**Heidrick and Struggles, Inc.**, Chicago, IL and New York, NY

Leadership Consulting Analyst	2016 – 2017
Executive Search Analyst	2015 – 2016

**Snider Entrepreneurial Research Center, The Wharton School**, Philadelphia, PA

Research Assistant	2014 – 2015
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**Pasona Tech, Inc.**, Tokyo, Japan

Summer Intern	2014
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## SKILLS

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**Programming Languages and Software:** Python, R, STATA, Gephi, ATLAS.ti  
**Languages:** English (fluent); Japanese (conversational)

## REFERENCES

### Ray Reagans

*Alfred P. Sloan Professor of Management*  
*Associate Dean for DEI*  
 MIT Sloan School of Management

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**Susan S. Silbey**  
*Leon and Anne Goldberg Professor*  
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(617) 253-6952  
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**Ezra W. Zuckerman Sivan**  
*Alvin J. Siteman (1948) Professor of Entrepreneurship and Strategy*  
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