

James C. Mellody

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EDUCATION

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

Culture and Coordination in Online Communities and Organizations

Digital Platforms, Online Communities, and the Attention Economy

Professions, Occupations, and Knowledge Work

JOB MARKET PAPER

[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 just the distribution of attention, I undertake an ecological analysis of online communities, measuring the location of communities both in a structural resource space of users as well as in a cultural topic space based on language. In line with past work, I find that the most generic communities attract the bulk of attention. However, my study identifies a new pattern: by examining community location in the ecology, I find that niche communities are not relegated to the periphery of the ecology, but rather can succeed in the very center, right next to the most dominant, generic communities. This suggests a significant difference in how the allocation of attention occurs online, and a means through which online platforms provide space for culturally diverse communities to flourish.

PAPERS UNDER REVIEW

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

- R&R at *Organization Science*

WORKING PAPERS

[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

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

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

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

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

[5] 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)

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

AWARDS AND FELLOWSHIPS

- 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

“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

Organizational Processes (MIT Sloan MBA) Fall 2023

- Teaching assistant for Professor Nathan Wilmers
- Teaching ratings: 6.8/7

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

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

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

Pasona Tech, Inc., Tokyo, Japan

Summer Intern 2014

SKILLS

Programming Languages and Software: Python, R, STATA, Gephi, ATLAS.ti

Languages: English (fluent); Japanese (conversational)

REFERENCES

Ray Reagans

Alfred P. Sloan Professor of Management

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Ezra W. Zuckerman Sivan
Alvin J. Siteman (1948) Professor of Entrepreneurship and Strategy
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