

MARIA-FÁTIMA SANTOS

University of Wisconsin-Madison
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APPOINTMENTS

- 2025 – Assistant Professor of Sociology, University of Wisconsin-Madison
Faculty Affiliate, Center for Law, Society and Justice
Faculty Affiliate, Law School
Faculty Affiliate, Latin American, Caribbean, and Iberian Studies Program
- 2024 – 2025 Anna Julia Cooper Postdoctoral Research Associate, University of Wisconsin-Madison

EDUCATION

- Ph.D., Sociology, University of California, Berkeley, 2024
• Designated Emphasis: Critical Theory
- M.A., Sociology, University of California, Berkeley, 2017
- B.A., Philosophy, Smith College, 2017
• Highest Honors
• Phi Beta Kappa
• John S. Mekeel Award, Best Philosophy Thesis

RESEARCH AND TEACHING INTERESTS

Social theory, political sociology, law and society, punishment, work and occupations, race and ethnicity, culture

JOURNAL ARTICLES

- Brooks, Cat, Andreia Beatriz Silva dos Santos, and **Maria-Fátima Santos** (co-first authors). 2025. "The Policing and Carceral State in Brazil and the United States: Conceptualizing, Tracking and Resisting Anti-Black Violence." *Meridians* 24(2).
*Honorable Mention, *Meridians* 2026 Paula J. Giddings Best Article Award
- Santos, Maria-Fátima**. 2024. "Penal State Power in Latin America: Cases, Concepts and Questions for the Political Sociology of Penalty." *Sociology Compass* 18(5).
- Santos, Maria-Fátima**. 2022. "Modernizing Leviathan: Carceral Reform and the Struggle for Legitimacy in Brazil's Espírito Santo State." *American Sociological Review* 87(5): 889-918.
*Distinguished Article Award, Political Sociology Section, American Sociological Association, 2023.
*Distinguished Article Award – Crime, Law & Deviance Section, American Sociological Association, 2023.

Cabral, Sandro and **Maria-Fátima Santos**. 2016. "Accountability Mechanisms in Public Services: Activating New Dynamics in a Prison System." *International Journal of Public Administration*.
* Best Paper Award, Brazilian National Association of Administration, 2012.

BOOK CHAPTERS

Santos, Maria-Fátima. 2019. "Contested Terrains and Incubators of Violence: Carceral Establishments in Democratic Brazil," In Pedroso, J., S. Gomes & M.J. Guia, *Prisons, The State & Violence*, Springer.

Cabral, Sandro and **Maria-Fátima Santos**. 2013. "Accountability no Sistema Prisional e o Papel de Organizações da Sociedade Civil", In Lourenço, L.C. (Ed.). *Punicação e Prisões no Brasil Contemporâneo*. Salvador, Bahia: EdUFBA.

OTHER WRITING

"Democracy and Racialized Violence: What Does it Mean to 'Reform' the Penal State?" Human Rights Section Newsletter. *American Sociological Association*, April 2019.

Corra pro Abraço: A Harm Reduction Approach to Challenging the Punitive and Racialized Management of Poverty in Brazil, Center for Latin American Studies Research Blog, UC Berkeley, Sep. 2018.

Brazil's Prison Reforms: Transforming Penal Systems and Democracy? Center for Latin American Studies Research Blog, UC Berkeley, Sep. 2014.

GRANTS, HONORS & AWARDS

Honorable Mention, 2026 *Meridians* Paula J. Giddings Best Article Award, 2025 (for innovative scholarship and paradigm shifting work)

Distinguished Article Award, Political Sociology Section, American Sociological Association, 2023.

Distinguished Article Award, Crime, Law & Deviance Section, American Sociological Association, 2023.

Critical Theory Dissertation Fellowship, UC Berkeley, 2023

Pinto-Fialon Fellowship, Portuguese Studies Program, UC Berkeley, 2013 - 2023

Phi Beta Kappa Northern California Association Dissertation Fellowship, 2022

Troy Duster Fellowship for Social Justice Research, 2020

Social Science Research Council International Dissertation Research Fellowship, 2019

Dissertation Completion Grant, UC Berkeley, 2018

Leo Lowenthal Fellowship, UC Berkeley Sociology Department, 2017

MMUF/Social Science Research Council Graduate Studies Enhancement Grant, 2016, 2017, 2018

Berkeley Empirical Legal Studies Fellow, Center for the Study of Law and Society, UC Berkeley, 2016

Social Justice Fellowship, UC Berkeley, 2015

Institute of International Studies Summer Research Grant, UC Berkeley, 2015

Outstanding Graduate Student Instructor Award, UC Berkeley, 2015

Center for Latin American Studies Research Grant, UC Berkeley, 2014

U.S. Fulbright Student Research Grant, Brazil, 2011

Kahn Institute Research Fellowship, Smith College, 2010

John S. Mekeel Memorial Prize for Best Philosophy Honors Thesis, 2010

Phi Beta Kappa Society Induction, 2010

Kahn Institute Research Fellowship, Smith College, 2010

Mellon Mays Undergraduate Research Fellowship, Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, 2008 - 2010

STRIDE Research Scholar, Smith College, 2006 – 2008

INVITED RESEARCH TALKS AND PRESENTATIONS

2026

University of Wisconsin-Madison, Lawyers and Democratic Decline Symposium, February

2025

University of São Paulo Law School, Punishment & Social Structure Research Center, May

Núcleo de Estudos da Violência & Dept. of Sociology, University of São Paulo, April

Núcleo de Estudos em Segurança Pública, Fundação João Pinheiro, March (2 talks)

2024

Northwestern University, Department of Sociology Ethnography Lab, November

Rutgers University, School of Criminal Justice, February

2023

Johns Hopkins University, Department of Sociology, November

Indiana University-Bloomington, Department of Sociology & Department of Criminal Justice, November

University of Minnesota-Twin Cities, Department of Sociology, November

University of Wisconsin-Madison, Department of Sociology & Center for Law, Society and Justice, October

Indigent Defense Research Association, September

CONFERENCES AND OTHER TALKS

Challenging and Legitimizing State Violence: Public Defenders at Work in São Paulo's Penal Courts. American Sociological Association Annual Meeting, Philadelphia, August 2023.

Brazil's Public Defenders in Action: A Study of Work, Inequality and Criminal Justice Reform. Law & Society Association Conference, Lisbon, July 2022.

Public Defenders At Work in São Paulo's Criminal Courts. Law & Society Assoc. Conference, Chicago, May 2021.

Brazil's Public Defenders in Action: Defending Salvador's Poor in the Shadows of Hyper-incarceration, Latin American Studies Association Conference, Boston, May 2019.

Dungeons and Democracy: Brazilian Carceral Reform in the Bureaucratic Field. International Sociology Association Conference, Vienna, July 2016.

Contesting the Carceral State: What Does a Transnational Approach Look Like? 30th Annual Empowering Women of Color Conference, Berkeley, March 2015.

Resocialization Programs in Brazil's Prisons: Expanding Penal Systems and Democratic Governance? UC Berkeley Center for Latin American Studies Research Symposium, Berkeley, November 2014.

Accountability in Prison Services: Where Are Our Principals? Brazilian National Association of Administration Conference, Rio de Janeiro, September 2012.

Prisões Públicas-Privadas: Direitos Humanos e o Sistema da Justiça. Catholic University Law, Salvador, April 2011.

Espírito Santo's Prisons: The Politics and Performance of Public-Private Prisons. Fulbright Research

in Latin America Conference, Buenos Aires, August 2011.

The Politics of Public-Private Prisons in Brazil. Vera Institute of Justice, Washington, D.C., October 2010.

COURSES TAUGHT

University of Wisconsin Madison - Undergraduate courses:

- The Penitentiary in Global Perspective: Political, Economic & Cultural Forces of Punishment (Fall 2025, Spring 2026)
- Classical Sociological Theory (Spring 2026)

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

American Sociological Association

Law and Society Association

Latin American Studies Association

OTHER PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Legal Assistant, Prison Law Office, Berkeley, CA (2012-13)

Research Assistant, Vera Institute of Justice, Department of Sentencing and Corrections, Washington D.C. (2010 – 11)