

The Publicizer

*Newsletter of the ASA Section on
Sociological Practice and Public Sociology*

Doing Sociology Outside of Academia



This is the first of what we hope will be a series of features on sociologists who are working outside of academia and the companies they work for. It is our hope that the information contained in these features will provide guidance to sociologists who are seeking work outside of the academe but may not know how or where to start.

This issue, we featured Kristie A. Taylor, Senior Study Director at Westat. Dr. Taylor received her PhD in Sociology from the University of Arizona. Her primary area of expertise is in tobacco research, with 20 years of experience in the design, conduct, and analysis of research and evaluation studies. She has broad expertise in tobacco surveillance systems, tobacco regulatory science and survey methodology.

Westat is one of the leading contract research organizations in the United States, serving hundreds of Federal and state agencies, research institutions, and foundations. Westat is well known for its survey research, evaluation of health and social programs, statistical designs, analysis, and reporting. You may not see our name in the news, but Westat's work is behind many of the federal government statistics you hear in the news. At our Rockville, Maryland headquarters, 2,000 employees occupy 8 environmentally friendly buildings on a 27-acre campus. Thousands more data collectors and other staff work in 8 regional offices in the U.S. and offices in 5 countries overseas.

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Editor: Dennis Watson, PhD

Doing Sociology Outside of Academia *continued from cover*

Q: How did you become interested in sociological practice and obtain your current job?

A: When I was in graduate school, I had an assistantship working on an evaluation of a local tobacco control prevention project. I became intrigued by the problem of tobacco control and regulatory science, and started to consider pursuing it after I got my degree. I was not specifically looking to get into sociological practice, but rather looking to study tobacco. I found my current job through a network connection to a woman I went to college with.

Q: What is Westat like, and what types of jobs are open to sociologists there?

A: Westat is a large company. We do research in the areas of social science, health, clinical trials, evaluation, statistical analysis, communications and social marketing. We employ over 20 sociologists with PhDs, who are as diverse in skills, expertise and interests as the field as a whole is – some are qualitative and some are quantitative, and we work in a variety of topic areas, including tobacco control, substance abuse, education, disaster research, epidemiology, nutrition, domestic violence, homelessness, criminology and justice, evaluation, health communications, immigration, military studies and survey methodology. We also employ sociologists at the master's and bachelor's levels whose expertise is just as varied.

Q: What do you do on a daily basis, and how did your sociological training prepare you for it?

A: On any given day, I might be collaborating with colleagues on designing a new study, implementing an existing study, analyzing data, or writing a journal article or report. I manage and supervise staff. My work is collaborative and team based – I work closely with other Westat employees, colleagues from universities or foundations, and people from the Federal government. I love my job.

Q: Anything else you would like to say about your work that you think is important?

A: I've seen changes to public health programs that have resulted directly or indirectly from my work, and those programs save lives.

Q: What advice can you give a sociologist who is looking to go into the world of practice?

A: No matter what area your research is in, gain as many technical skills as you can. If you are still in graduate school, take as many classes in methodology (qualitative or quantitative) and statistics as you have time for. Don't be afraid to branch out.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Thank you for your membership and participation in the Section on Sociological Practice and Public Sociology. This section relies on a committed and active membership to continue to “advance sociologically-informed research and practice, to further public discussion of sociological issues, and to promote the use of sociology to inform public policy.”

Over the last year, we have made efforts in promoting the work those sociologists – both inside and outside of academia. Under the leadership of Chloe Bird (RAND), the section continued to be an active section and find ways to promote applied and public sociology. Work continued on the directory of organizations and Casey Oberlin pulled together and submitted a proposal for a special session at ASA 2017 titled, “Preparing for Applied Work Outside of Sociology: Lessons in Translation.” We hope to continue to submit similar session proposals for future years.

Our activities at the ASA annual meeting in Seattle showcased applied research that identifies, evaluates, and promotes social policy initiatives along with sociologists who integrate their work into the public discussion. We organized an invited session that brought together sociologists who are working for social change; they included sociologists working on workplace interventions, community arts and social justice, and someone who has testified to Congress. We had an open-paper session that brought together research on bullying programs, union negotiations, a student-run homeless shelter program, and the identification of high need homeless populations. We also hosted roundtables for papers and special tables highlighting the work of URBAN, AACCS, and CAPACS. Our section meeting activities concluded with an award ceremony and reception.

I want to thank Kathleen Korgen for taking on the lion’s share of the organizing of the papers and roundtables for the August meeting. Her assistance was invaluable in making the annual meeting a success.

Thank you also to our outgoing past chair Laura Nichols (Santa Clara University) and outgoing Council members, Kathleen (Casey) Oberlin (Grinnell College), Dennis Watson (Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis) and Melissa Fry (Indiana University Southeast). Their involvement and leadership helped me transition from a council member to chair-elect and I truly benefitted from their knowledge, support and enthusiasm.

We are fortunate to have Melissa take on the position of Chair-Elect for the upcoming year and bring her experience as a council member to the leadership team. I also want to thank Dennis for continuing on as Newsletter Editor to assist with section communications. We are also fortunate to have Chloe as our Past Chair and Jenna Nargang Chernega (Winona State University) in her second year as Secretary-Treasurer. Their experience in these positions help us continue the initiatives started in the last year and keep me on track for this year. The leadership team is supported by a dedicated group of council members who come from academic and non-academic settings to bring both institutional knowledge and new ideas to the council. I welcome Caren Arbeit (RTI International), Douglas Klayman (Social Dynamics, LLC), and Catherine Mobley (Clemson University) and look forward to working with them over the next year.

The priorities for the upcoming year speak to our commitment to supporting practicing sociologists and empowering students to pursue sociological practice and public sociology. We are going to continue working on initiatives began in previous years as well pursue some new ideas. Here are a few of the things we are working on for the next year:

- **Directory of Organizations** – a group of council members compiled a list of organizations that hire and support the work of sociologists. This directory provides a valuable resource to individuals looking for non-academic sociological practice. Augie Diana has graciously continued the directory project moving forward. The next step is to find a way to publish the directory on-line, publicize its availability, and keep it updated.
- **Thematic Sessions** – building off of the thematic session that was proposed last year, we want to put together proposals for special sessions, thematic sessions and workshops at the annual ASA meeting to broaden the reach of the section and connect with other sociologists in applied positions.
- **New Award for Publication or Dissemination of Applied/Public Research** – we are examining the possibility of expanding our current section awards to honor section members who are producing high quality research and disseminating it in unique ways. Since the research of many of our members do not produce traditional academic papers, we are thinking broadly about how we conceptualize and evaluate these works.
- **Graduate Student Mentoring** – my highest priority for the year is to create a graduate mentoring program to support our many student members. Graduate students who are interested in pursuing applied research positions often do not know where to begin a search, how to translate their academic training, and how to talk to their advisors about a non-academic career. We have a great opportunity to support these students and build our membership base in the process.

As we move forward on these activities and other projects that come to our attention, the involvement of the membership is welcome. IF you have an interest in volunteering to help with any of these projects or have ideas for how the section can support you and your work, please reach out to me, Kimberly Fox (kimberly.fox@bridgew.edu). I am honored to lead this section and look forward to a productive and positive year.

Kimberly E. Fox, PhD



“Community Based Research and the Academy”

By: Gregory D. Squires

“I’d really like to be engaged in my community, to do research that will help resolve depressingly longstanding problems. But I also need to hold on to my job.”

Anonymous assistant professor

The desire to do good and do well has been a difficult balancing act for many young (and even not so young) faculty members. The aspiration to serve one’s community coupled with the pressure to publish in the right journals is a daunting challenge for many. The Urban Research Based Action Network (URBAN) is a growing collection of scholars in various disciplines who are conducting research with community organizations around the country on a wide range of issues. They include health care, labor rights, fair housing, educational inequities, and more. There are local nodes in Boston, Hartford, Los Angeles, New York, and Philadelphia. And there are disciplinary nodes in Education, Sociology, and Urban Planning. (The web site for URBAN is <http://urbanresearchnetwork.org/>. The web site for the Sociology node is <http://urbanresearchnetwork.org/category/discipline-nodes/sociology/>.) One challenge they face is publishing their research in highly respected scholarly journals.

In an effort to begin addressing this issue, the Publications Committee of the Sociology Node developed guidelines to help editors evaluate such research and to help scholars produce publishable articles on their community-based research. By generating more responsiveness to this type of research in traditional journals, more scholars will be willing and able to take on more of this kind of work. Here is the executive summary of the paper. The full paper can be found at http://urbanresearchnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/CBR-Pub_Guide_6.18.15-1.pdf

Executive Summary - Guidelines for Peer Review of Community-based Research

The URBAN Publication Committee drafted these guidelines to help editors and reviewers identify high-quality community-based research for publication. The guidelines also may help researchers conduct high-quality studies.

Definition – Community-based Research (CBR)

In broad terms, community-based research (CBR) includes community members at some level in directing, designing, implementing, analyzing, using and/or evaluating research aimed at empowering the community and facilitating social change.

Criteria for Evaluating Methodology

CBR submissions should meet prevailing standards of methodological rigor, such as careful research design, and, if applicable, reliable and valid data sources and coding. How rigor is attained, however, may differ from conventional approaches to research objectivity. In this way CBR highlights epistemological questions at the core of research. For instance, CBR researchers argue that analyzing data with community-based actors representing multiple perspectives and social locations can strengthen rather than weaken reliability and validity. To maintain rigor, CBR researchers (as do all social researchers) should:

- 1) Define terms (e.g., community, participation), and how they are operationalized.
- 2) Describe communities involved (e.g., geographic, socio-economic, ethnographic, etc.).
- 3) Spell out the nature and degree of community involvement in research process.
- 4) Explain why the selected community-based methods suit the study's aims.
- 5) Make explicit strategies and methods of data collection, organization, and analysis.
- 6) Triangulate methods to address characteristic strengths and weaknesses.
- 7) Address all relevant ethical issues such as data use, dissemination, protection of human subjects, etc.
- 8) Specify understandings outside traditional research arrangements (editorial control of presentation, data ownership, etc.).
- 9) Delineate limitations and advantages of the resulting study in design and execution.
- 10) Include community partners in evaluating research's relative and mutual benefits.

Criteria for Evaluating Theoretical Contributions

CBR may generate different forms of knowledge than conventional academic approaches. To evaluate theoretical contributions of CBR, reviewers should assess how researchers:

- (1) Integrate multiple forms and sources of knowledge, including a theoretical orientation that helps address the methodological challenges specific to a research project.
- (2) Enhance knowledge based on its application in practice;
- (3) Develop action-based theories with predictive power.

Criteria for Presenting Findings

Community-based researchers should:

- (1) Clarify collaborators' roles in conceptualizing, producing, and disseminating research.
- (2) Commit to producing knowledge in formats useful to all collaborators, including activists. This may entail preparing publications tailored to distinct audiences.

Peer-reviewed Journals Publishing Community-based Research (3.16)
SOCIOLOGY
Sociological Research Online - Home page
Interface: a journal for and about social movements
Social Movement Studies
Journal of World Systems Research
Social Problems
Field Methods
APPLIED SOCIAL SCIENCE – Engaged Social Science Research
Journal of Applied Social Science
Journal of Sociology and Social Work (JSSW)
Journal of Progressive Human Services
Community, Work, and Family
Journal of Community Practice
Journal of Poverty and Social Justice
Evidence & Policy: Journal of research, debate, and practice
Studies in Social Justice
Systemic Practice and Action Research
LEARNING THEORY AND PRACTICE
Learning Communities Journal
Learning Communities Research and Practice Washington Center at The Evergreen State College
SERVICE LEARNING & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
About JCES – Journal of Community Engagement and Scholarship
Journal of Community Engagement and Higher Education
Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement
The International Journal of Research on Service-Learning and Community Engagement
COMMUNICATION/MARKETING
Emerald Studies in Media and Communication (emphasis is new media)
International Journal of Non-profit and Voluntary Sector Marketing
HEALTH/ENVIRONMENT
Action Research - Public Health - Oxford Bibliographies -encyclopedia entry summary classic articles
Oxford Journals Medicine Journal of Public Health About the Journal
About CES4Health About Us CES4Health
International Journal of Public Health - All Volumes & Issues - Springer
Environmental Justice
Critical Public Health - ResearchGate
Public Understanding of Science
ACTION RESEARCH (METHODS)
Action Research
Canadian Journal of Action Research

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AWARDS

Congratulations to the winners of this year's section award winners!

The William Foote Whyte Award for Distinguished Contribution to Sociological Practice was awarded to Dr. Jan Marie Fritz from the University of Cincinnati for her work on sociological practice, environmental justice, community, women's studies, and health. Below is a brief selection from her nomination letter:

“Professor Jan Marie Fritz is one of the leading experts internationally in the field of sociological practice. She is a full professor at the University of Cincinnati, Ohio, in an interdisciplinary program in planning. She is also affiliated to the Department of Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies and the Department of Sociology at the University of Cincinnati. In addition, she is a Visiting Professor in the Department of Sociology at the University of Johannesburg and a special education mediator for the State of Kentucky. Professor Fritz has worked in many countries and has an excellent reputation for her global activities as a scholar, administrator and researcher. She is particularly known for her cutting-edge research in sociological practice, environmental justice, community, women's studies and health. She is the author or editor of more than 120 publications that have appeared in numerous languages (e.g., Greek, Portuguese, French and Spanish).”

The Robert Dentler Award for Outstanding Student Achievement went to two individuals, Landon Schnabel from Indiana University Bloomington for his work on violence prevention and protective order assistance and Elisabeth Becker from Yale University for her comparative work on European Muslim communities.

Honorable mentions were also given to Jennifer Tobin Gurley from Colorado State University for her work on youth creating disaster recovery and Katharine Broton from the University of Wisconsin Madison for her work on experiences for poverty and material hardship among college students.



Pictured: Jan Marie Fritz and Chloe Bird



Pictured: Elisabeth Becker and Chloe Bird



Pictured: Chloe Bird and Landon Schnabel

ADDITIONAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Community Intervention: Clinical Sociology Perspectives, edited by **Jan Marie Fritz** and Jacques Rhéaume and published by Springer as part of its clinical sociology series, received the 2016 Distinguished Scholarly Book Award from a research division (RC46 - Clinical Sociology) of the International Sociological Association. The award was received at the International Sociological Association World Forum this July in Vienna, Austria.

Section members are invited to join RC46 -Clinical Sociology and the International Sociological Association.

The next meeting of RC46 will likely be mid-August in Montreal (2017), just before the meeting of the American Sociological Association in that city. RC46 also will meet July 15-21, 2018 in Toronto in conjunction with the International Sociological Association's World Congress. For membership information, please go to

www.isa-sociology.org or for membership information and information about RC46, please contact Jan Marie Fritz at jan.fritz@uc.edu. (Jan is a former vice president of ISA and the former president of RC46.)

“What Counts? Evaluating Public Communication in Tenure and Promotion” is an ASA publication that may be of interest to section members. The document can be found at http://www.asanet.org/sites/default/files/asa_task_force_final_seps_report.pdf

Client Problem Solving Competition: Last Call

Miriam Boeri, Coordinator

The Client Problem Solving Competition (formerly Judith Little Problem Solving Competition) is a student competition that provides students with a meaningful way to exercise their sociological skills. Held at the Association for Applied and Clinical Sociology (AACS) conference October 6th-8th in Denver, Colorado, this is a unique networking opportunity and also provides students a professional experience they can include on their resumes.

We are accepting teams as they register, up to eight teams. Please register on the AACS website <http://www.aacsnet.net/> and send an email to the coordinator mboer@bentley.edu to confirm your team's participation.