Early Career Researchers at Work: A Sociologist’s Perspective

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Outline

- Research Background
- Perspectives on Research
  - Research Access
  - Research Collaboration
  - Research Dissemination
- Thoughts on Peer Review Process
- Innovative Models for Publisher-Researcher Collaboration
Research Background

- **Credentials**
  - BA, Sociology: Duke University
  - MA, Sociology: Bowling Green State University
  - PhD, Sociology: Bowling Green State University

- **Research Foci**
  - Population Health
    - Morbidities; Health Behaviors
  - Urban Sociology
    - Neighborhood Context; Metropolitan Areas
Research Background

• Population Health (selected citations)

• Urban Sociology (selected citations)
Perspectives on Research

- **Research Access**
  - Google Scholar, GWU libraries webpage, Sociological Abstracts
  - GWU library under budget constraints
    - Student researchers have different access
      - Students suggest literature searches are difficult
    - Restrictions of journals and strategies of compensation
      - Open Access
      - Targeted collaborations
Perspectives on Research

- **Research Collaboration**
  - Worked primarily with US collaborators
    - Even in international research
    - Issue: no medium to engage researchers
      - Usually through conferences, personal networks
  - Again, targeted to other researchers
    - Tenure is based on first-authored publications
      - Credit sharing with assistant professors
  - Use of technology is increasingly important
    - Communication, document sharing, “pre-reviewers”
Perspectives on Research

- Research Dissemination
  - No question that dissemination is “innate”
  - Tenure becomes the catalyst for the outlets
    - Completed 3rd year review: focus on “mainstream sociology” and “hard-core urban” outlets
      - No books, no edited volumes until tenure
  - Open Access has not caught up with academic snobbery
    - Unranked, considered lesser “quality”
      - International audience/reviewers, recently started,
      - No funding or budgeting for high publishing costs
    - Highly accessible!
  - Increased visibility of publications
Thoughts on Peer Review Process

- Length of time varies by journal
  - Crude: higher impact factor $\rightarrow$ shorter time to initial decision when reject
  - Longer wait time
    - More likely for R & R $\rightarrow$ reject
      - More likely that R & R are not given to same
  - Why this is significant?
    - Annual review process depends on 12-month productivity
    - Catch-22 with “traditional” and open-access journal
Thoughts on Peer Review Process

### The Ideal Editor
- Micromanages the process by selecting reviewers with quick turn around
- Dialogues with reviewers prior to disseminating feedback to author
- Allows for author retort

### Most Editors
- Is proactive but not an efficient delegator
- Do not consult with reviewers / make decisions
- Usually not receptive to author’s rebuttal
Innovative Models for Publisher-Researcher Collaboration

- Publishers collaborating with researchers
  - *Teaching Sociology* and American Sociology Association
- Post-review publishing
  - *Webmed Central*
- Assessing fit by word analysis in abstract
  - Springer
    - [http://www.springer.com/authors/journal+authors/helpdesk?SGWID=0-1723213-12-817204-0](http://www.springer.com/authors/journal+authors/helpdesk?SGWID=0-1723213-12-817204-0)
- Cross-journal connections
  - Instead of rejecting good papers, refer them
Thank you

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