Social Problems

The official journal of the Society for the Study of Social Problems

Annulla Linders, Co-Editor
Earl Wright II, Co-Editor
University of Cincinnati

July 13, 2018

To: SSSP Board of Directors, Publications Committee, Associate Editors, Editorial Board

From: Annulla Linders and Earl Wright II, Co-Editors

Re: *Social Problems* Annual Report, 2018

First, this report would not have been possible without help from a number of people, including Pamela Quiroz, former Editor; Michele Koontz, who makes everything possible; and our graduate assistants, Shaonta Allen (Managing Editor), Marcus Brooks (Assistant Editor), and Kyle Shupe (Assistant Editor). We also want to give a special thanks to Corey Dolgon who, as chair the Editorial and Publications Committee, provided invaluable guidance as we put together our application to become the new editors.

The report covers the period May 1, 2018 - July 11, 2018.

Assembling our team

We decided to keep the basic editorial structure that we inherited from Pamela Quiroz, which means a team of Associate Editors (10 in all, see attached), Advisory Editors (33 in all, see attached), Student Editors (13 in all, see attached); and a Social media editor (Trenton Haltom). We also secured 3 fantastic graduate assistants and a new Production Editor, Cindy Carlton-Ford.

The Transition

Pamela Quiroz and her team were incredibly helpful in ensuring a smooth transition. Her Editorial Assistant, Devon Jones, and Managing Editor, Maira Alvarez, spent countless hours preparing us for the transition and instructing us in how to use Manuscript Central/Scholar One. They also hosted our team for a very productive two-day visit in April of 2018. Given the complexity of all components of the journal, the transition was quite smooth and, to the best of our knowledge, did not affect our authors.

Working with Oxford University Press (OUP)

The team at OUP has also been very helpful, including especially Laura Bannon (who is our general problem solver), Brittany Hobson (marketing), Mary Jo Beaman (productions), and – not the last – Simone Larche (the Scholar One/Manuscript Central expert).

Getting to Work

In addition to simply keeping up with the work of the journal (including the backlog of manuscripts), our first few months on the job have been devoted mostly to getting to know the system and streamlining our process. We have also tried to increase efficiency in a few areas.

With the aim of ***shortening the time from submission to decision*** (to an average of three months) we have made a few changes to the structure of the work. Most significantly, we have streamlined the duties of the student board members. We still rely on them for reviewer suggestions, but we only send them the manuscripts that we have already determined should be reviewed (so, after the deflect/review decisions have been made), and we do not ask them to return to the papers after the reviews are in (they can still follow the papers as they move through the system). It is obviously too soon to evaluate the impact of this change.

With the aim of ***reducing the time and work spent on trying to secure three reviewers***, we have begun, when appropriate, to include advanced PhD students as reviewers (the student board members are instructed that potential student reviewers must have publishing experience). Again, it is too soon to determine the impact of this change (and many papers still do not have student reviewers), but our experiences so far have been good.

With the aim of ***keeping our authors happy*** we have begun to send status updates to authors whose papers have been in the review process for more than 3 months.

We have worked with Simone to try to ***streamline the workflow in Manuscript Central*** (we can move things around a but we cannot "rewrite" the setup completely, so we have found work-a-rounds). We have also expanded the use of the system, by activating a capability called "First Look," which enables us to use the system through the copy-editing process (which has greatly simplified the process whereby papers are accepted).

Cindy, the Production Editor, has also worked with the OUP production staff to ***update the ASA Style Guide*** for authors to use (apparently the journal has used the 2nd edition from 1997, when the latest and 5th edition was published in 2014), and also to try to make sure they consistently adhere to the style guide (which they haven't).

Regarding ***marketing***, our goal is to continue the wonderful work that the student-run social media committee has accomplished (previously headed by Kasey Henricks and now by Trenton Haltom). Regarding the Author Attic videos (which we really like), our aim is to shorten them (3-

5 minutes) and, if possible, to stabilize the quality of the videos. We are also working with OUP on assembling virtual issues with the help of our student board (we are planning on 3-4 such issues per year). One issue on Urban Planning was curated by Praveena Lakshmanan); another issue related to the SSSP conference theme was curated by Akiv Dawson and introduced by Marcus Brook; a third issue, on contemporary racial inequality, has been curated by Irina Chukhray.

Paper Submissions and Decisions

With only a few months into our editorship, we do not have much to report, but we have still included a basic overview of the flow of manuscripts.

Table 1: Manuscripts received since May 1, 2018

Manuscripts Received			
	New MS Received	Revised MS Received	Total MS Received
May 1, 2018 to July 11, 2018	53	6	59

Table 2: Manuscript decisions on papers in the backlog and new submissions (including revised manuscripts).

Manuscripts Decided (Total)						
	MS Deflected	MS Rejected	MS Revise & Resubmit	MS Conditional Accept	MS Accept	Total MS Decisions
May 1, 2018 to July 11, 2018	35	57	25	9	4	130
Manuscripts Decided (Backlog)						
	MS Deflected	MS Rejected	MS Revise & Resubmit	MS Conditional Accept	MS Accept	Total MS Decisions
May 1, 2018 to July 11, 2018	17	57	24	8	1	107
Manuscripts Decided (New Submissions)						
	MS Deflected	MS Rejected	MS Revise & Resubmit	MS Conditional Accept	MS Accept	Total MS Decisions
May 1, 2018 to July 11, 2018	18	0	1	1	3	23

Table 3: Time in review

Manuscripts Decided: Review Times, May 1, 2018 - July 11, 2018			
	Average Time in Days for Reviewer to Complete Review	Average Days in External Review	Average Days from Submission to Decision
Backlog	39	88	161
New Submissions	34	14	23
Total	39	87	137

Table 4: Average number of reviewers invited (to secure 3)

Manuscripts Decided: Reviewers, May 1, 2018 – July 11, 2018	
	Average Number of Reviewers Invited
Backlog	9
New Submissions	4
Total	9

Table 5: New Manuscripts by Author Country

New Manuscripts Received by Author Country			
Country	**Original**	**Revised**	**Total**
Australia	1	0	1
Canada	2	0	2
Denmark	1	0	1
Germany	2	0	2
Ireland	0	1	1
Israel	4	0	4
Mexico	1	0	1
Russian Federation	1	0	1
Spain	1	0	1
Sweden	1	0	1
United States	39	5	44
Total	53	6	59

Table 6: New Submissions by Method

New Submissions by Method		
Method	**Number of Submissions**	**Percent of Submissions**
Qualitative	23	43%
Quantitative	25	47%
Mixed	4	8%
Other	1	2%
Total	53	100%

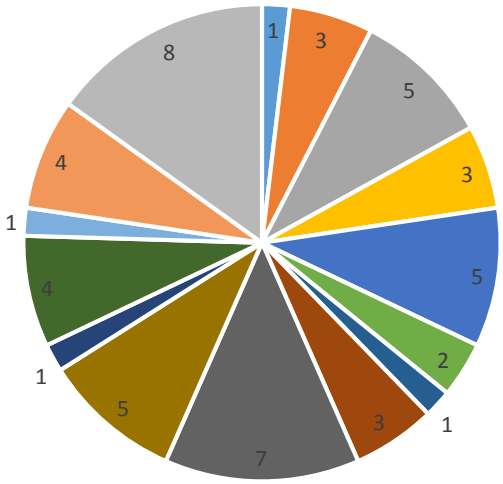
Tables and graphs on subject areas of manuscripts submitted since May 1, 2018.

Given the frequent difficulties of selecting which subject area a paper falls in, we have begun to record both primary and secondary subject areas (which means a paper on, for example, racial inequality in education can be recorded as dealing with both race and education).

Submissions by Subject Area, Primary and Secondary Coding				
Category	**Primary Subject**	**Percent Primary Subject**	**Secondary Subject**	**Percent Secondary Subject**
Children & Youth	1	2%	1	2%
Crime & Juvenile Delinquency	3	6%	3	6%
Education	5	9%	1	2%
Environment & Technology	0	0%	0	0%
Family	3	6%	2	4%
Gender	5	9%	4	8%
Health	2	3%	6	11%
Identity	0	0%	0	0%
Law & Society	0	0%	0	0%
Life Course	1	2%	1	2%
Media	0	0%	1	2%
Politics	3	6%	2	4%
Poverty, Class & Inequality	7	13%	5	9%
Race & Ethnicity	5	9%	6	11%
Religion	1	2%	1	2%
Sexuality	0	0%	2	4%
Social Movements	4	8%	4	7%
Social Welfare Policy	1	2%	1	2%
Work & Economy	4	8%	6	11%
Other	8	15%	7	13%
Not Coded	0	0%	0	0%
Total	53	100%	53	100%

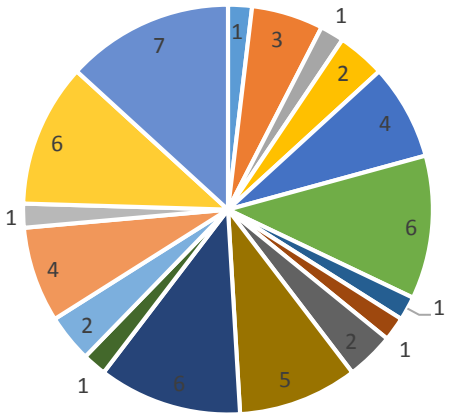
Other Coding Breakdown		
Category	**Primary**	**Secondary**
Immigration	3	3
Culture	1	1
Emotions	1	1
Ethics	1	1
Greek Life	1	
Transphobia	1	

New Submissions by Subject Area, Primary Coding



- Children & Youth
- Crime & Juvenile Delinquency
- Education
- Family
- Gender
- Health
- Life Course
- Politics
- Poverty, Class & Inequality
- Race & Ethnicity
- Religion
- Social Movements
- Social Welfare Policy
- Work & Economy
- Other

New Submissions by Subject Area, Secondary Coding



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- Other

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