Promoting Sociological Research: A Toolkit

Compiled by the American Sociological Association's Task Force on Social Media

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Part I:

Social Media and You: An Overview

Why Should I Bother with Social Media, Anyway?

Jessie Daniels, Hunter College

The shortest, simplest answer to the question "why should I bother?" is "You don't have to." Really, you don't have to be on television if CNN calls. You don't need a Twitter account. But, there are some reasons you might ***want*** to do these things. Here are just a few. Using social media can facilitate:

1. Establishing yourself as an expert
2. Conceptualizing and developing ideas
3. Developing a reputation for your thoughts, ideas and interactions
4. Building relationships

1. Establishing Your Expertise

Few argue that social media engagement as currently used, measured and regarded can replace traditional methods of developing subject-matter expertise. However, providing expert context for discussions in the public domain can establish a broader profile for individual academics and the profession.

Using blogs to discuss your research can also help establish you as an expert. One plus is the turnaround time for writing a blog is so much faster than for traditional publications that we can respond to events in the news more quickly, making sociology seem more relevant. Blogs like *Huffington Post* (with 1.8 million "likes") can also be useful for sociologists to get the word out about their own work and to discuss past and current events that may be germane to those in their area. For example, the recent stories about racial profiling, Florida's stand your ground and the Michael Dunn shooting of a black teenager can serve as a vehicle for discussion among others in their areas or to those with an interest in this issue.

Sociologists can maintain a blog that documents their experiences at their respective career stages and include tips and suggestions for folks. In this way, they simultaneously share their work, their experience in the academic labor process, and offer tips and suggestions (that they did try or wish they had tried). I find this especially useful as sometimes our particular departments are less experienced with particular topics or journals that other folks are and hearing from them creates a large virtual community that one is able to tap into.

2. Conceptualizing and Developing Ideas

Writing (and especially pre-writing) for academic audiences is often an extended affair. Conference presentations and networking is a traditional method of soliciting valuable feedback as we develop concepts and ideas. Working through concepts through social media is another way to refine one's thinking. Additionally, many academics find that distilling their thinking through forced platform constraints (140 characters or a blog post) clarifies their scholarly writing. As more academics and subject matter experts use

social media, peer groups tend to develop organically. These networks of strong and weak ties provide deeper, broader audiences for feedback and divergent thinking.

3. Developing a Reputation

Developing a professional reputation is closely aligned with developing expertise. However, the audiences/publics may differ in meaningful ways. Scholars from various sub-disciplines report media, lecture, and consulting opportunities as a benefit of establishing expertise in the public domain.

Twitter contains a wealth of resources for academics. The word limit on Twitter would compel academics to think through their "tweets" before "tweeting." The ability to interact with a large community of scholars (in various stages of their career) is particularly useful for sociologists. Their ongoing conversation covers a range of topics that are frequently interjected with relevant citations and references.

In addition, Twitter has the capacity to convene an interdisciplinary discussion surrounding a particular topic. Importantly, the topics are not limited to scholars and frequently engage activists, community leaders, and organizations into the conversation. One quick example is the Michael Dunn Trial, which became "#dunntrial" on Twitter – in this way anyone who desired to be included in the conversation simply included the respective hashtag (#dunntrial) in their "tweet" or message. This conversation covered a range of subtopics that included race, gender, class, etc. can also be useful for others such as history, economics, and the legal apparatus in general.

In a similar way, conferences are "live tweeted" with a particular hashtag and scholars unable to attend said conferences are still able to follow interesting conversations and panels. This is quite interesting. One recent example is the "live tweeting" of the American Studies Association's debate–and ultimately, affirmative decision to join the–boycott, divests, and sanctions (BDS) movement against settler projects on Palestinian land.

Finally, sociologists–and social scientists in general–have the opportunity to utilize Twitter in conjunction with other platforms to narrate stories or record responses to stories. Here, I am thinking about *Storify*, an app that helps users compile a set of tweets that function to tell a story or assist in compiling evidence of what particular people said about a particular topic. Many times, rather than abstract storytelling, *Storify* is used to reconstruct a particular event (usually a controversial one) so that a person can carefully analyze how the event unfolded and the (potential) implications. Still other times, this can be used to "freeze" a particular conversation "in time" and archive it for later reference.

Twitter is a particularly useful tool to advance through various stages of the academic labor process, but also as a resource to tap into a larger community of interdisciplinary scholars who offer critical feedback and lead to collaborations that might otherwise be difficult to achieve. It definitely should not be used to replace traditional avenues of mentorship and collegiality in academic departments, but instead as a complementary avenue. For sociologists in general, Twitter offers the opportunity to engage as scholars with a community but also, Twitter offers itself as a site for inquiry and investigation. For

me, the potential for academic scholars–particularly those interested in social justice and activism–is too great to minimize and much less to ignore.

4. Building Relationships

Social media creates opportunities for networking, community building and collaboration. Not only can these connections generate publications and further thinking, but it can also create safe spaces for peer support.

It is possible to have an account with Twitter that is used solely for networking and public sociology efforts. The followers can be all fellow academics, and the posts can consist of academic successes, casual sociological observations, or (most often) links to articles that analyze current events through a sociological/critical lens. Twitter is completely public, so with everything posted you have to consider how it might affect you, for example, if you are on the job market, or how it will affect your teaching efficacy if a student finds it. So one has to be guarded with how Twitter is used. But it can be a fun way to connect to other academics and build your reputation. During conferences, it's an especially productive space where you can find out what is happening in different sessions or communicate with others attending the same session you're in. After the last ASA, some users collected all the tweets about their presentation to analyze what messages people picked up on and how well it was received.

What's useful about Facebook is the amount of space you are allowed to engage in discussions. You can post a question like "does anyone have a recommendation for my lit review on X and Y," and a whole thread could follow in which people are building off of each other's responses. There are also professional groups where information is shared about new publications or events to look out for, so it can be a great tool for both professional and personal use.

How Researchers Use Social Media

Just as there are multiple publics for social media, there are multiple reasons for using social media as an academic.

Some have cited the importance of impact, public engagement, marketability, and the social good as reasons for scholars to use social media. Others have argued that people of color, women and people from other vulnerable groups benefit from social media exposure and community building but are also at greater risk from openness.

Sociology of health researchers are using social media to target hard-to-reach populations for research on sexual behaviors, relationships and intimacy. Rob Glasgow of Emory University reports that a tweet about an Op-Ed he wrote came to the attention of the company that mass produces consumer HIV testing materials. They donated over $200,000 worth of testing materials to Rob's lab (OpEd Symposium, Emory University, September 2013).

Community researchers are using social media to communicate with young adult participants. Additionally, social media metrics like number and type of statuses, tweets,

snapchats sent during a time of day provides a treasure trove of data for longitudinal analysis — not to mention keeping up with participants across time for subsequent follow-up surveys.

These are just some of the ways that researchers are using social media, but you don't have to. If you decide you want to, though, the rest of this Toolkit is meant to offer you support for learning these new skills.

Jessie Daniels, PhD is Professor of Sociology at Hunter College and The Graduate Center. She is the author of two books*: Cyber Racism* (2009) and *White Lies* (1997), and the forthcoming books: *Going Public* (with Arlene Stein), from University of Chicago Press and *Being a Scholar in the Digital Era* (with Polly Thistlethwaite) from Policy Press.

Part II:

Interviews with Engaged Public Sociologists

The Sociological Cinema: An Interview with Lester Andrist

Jessie Daniels (JD): How did you use social media to build an audience for The Sociological Cinema?

Lester Andrist (LA): When my colleagues and I began *The Sociological Cinema* (TSC) in 2010, it was reasonably clear that we would need to advertise. In other words, we were early subscribers to the idea that if you build it, your audience *won't necessarily come*. You have to put energy into making your content visible. Even now I'm inclined to believe that it is perfectly possible to build an amazing and thoughtful website, but if you don't find creative ways to put your site on people's radars, it will languish in the less illuminated corners of the Internet.

I think that getting the word out about new posts and resources involves meeting people where they're at, and all of our friends were on Facebook, so that seemed like a logical place to create a presence. At first, we simply used Facebook to share links from our website, but the "likes" were slow to trickle in. At some point after the first month, one of us shared a political cartoon, which was related to a current event but was not directly related to the content on our website. It was almost immediately apparent that people loved that post, and by the end of the day more people had liked our page than the entire previous month. This was an important lesson and took TSC in a new direction. First, we could see by looking at site analytics that posting popular images on Facebook was a way of driving traffic to our site, even if those images never even mentioned our site in the caption. Second, by posting the cartoon to our site, we were implicitly approving of the political position made in the cartoon, and people really seemed to respond to that (mostly positively). I think it was one of the first moments that TSC had a voice or an identity, as opposed to simply being a warehouse of teaching resources.

So TSC began to develop a distinct identity as three politically conscious, public sociologists, who are hell bent on promoting the teaching of sociology (especially with video). Having shaped this identity, we opened a Twitter account. Then, maybe a year later someone suggested that Pinterest would be a good fit for us, so we opened a Pinterest account, and soon after that, we opened a Tumblr account. As we learned the ropes of each platform, it became clear that each had distinct competencies. In other words, the posts that got attention on Facebook, didn't necessarily get much attention on Twitter, etc.

Having laid out this background information, I think I can better answer your question about how we use social media to build an audience for TSC. First, to some extent, we've tried to accentuate the part of our online identity that seems to appeal to people. As mentioned above, more people became interested in who we were and what we were about once they saw we took clear positions on contemporary issues. When Michael Brown was shot and killed in Ferguson, we began posting cartoons, articles, videos, graphs, and status messages that made our position on the issue fairly clear. Irrespective of what specifically happened between officer Darren Wilson and Michael Brown, the

incident highlighted the racism in the U.S. criminal justice system. People responded to the unambiguous stance we took on the issue by liking and sharing our content and visiting our website. If, for example, we had adopted the persona of unbiased scientists reserving judgment, then I don't think we would have seen as many visitors to our site.

While making our position on political issues known, we also routinely draw connections between current events and our content. We think this is a way of signaling our relevance, and we think it has worked to build our audience. We have over 600 posts on our site, so there is a good chance that at least one of our posts will be able to offer some perspective on any given social issue. For instance, when it was announced recently that a "female Viagra" received FDA approval, we shared a video post from a couple years ago that drew attention to the role pharmaceutical companies play in medicalizing phenomena. We asked to what extent this female Viagra cured a biological problem and to what extent was a problem being constructed so that pharmaceutical companies could sell women a cure.

JD: Can you say a little about how you use analytics to build an audience?

LA: I use analytics to get feedback on what I'm posting. Social media isn't just a place where one can post links to interesting content; in order to get people to click on those links, it's important to post them in an attention-grabbing way. Depending on the platform, it can be useful to add a clever title or include a picture. By keeping an eye on one's analytics it's possible to get a sense of what works and what doesn't. I think most people rely on the number of likes a Facebook post gets or how many retweets a tweet gets in order to judge whether the post/tweet was successful or well-received. This is better than nothing, but the total number of likes or retweets can be deceptive. What is really important is the engagement rate. That is, how many people interacted with your post (liked, retweeted, shared, commented on, etc.) divided by how many people saw your post. Both Facebook and Twitter currently offer this calculation, and by taking a little time each week to look at the rate, I've been able to increase it.

For example, by looking at the engagement rate I learned that sharing a link should always be accompanied by a provocative teaser. A tweet with a URL that directs people to an article on Sigmund Freud might read, "#Freud's continuing relevance in social science http//:URL," but such a tweet would not do nearly as well as "This interesting post about #Freud's relevance will make you blush http//:URL." A second lesson gleaned from paying attention to the engagement rate is that tweets/posts with photos typically do better than ones without.

Other than the engagement rate, I also look at information about when our followers are actually online. Facebook offers this information, and it appears that most of TSC's Facebook audience is online at noon, so posting at noon makes a lot of sense.

A third way we've used analytics is to get a sense of who our audience is. For example, using site analytics I figured out that a sizeable portion of our Facebook followers are from India. Admittedly, I'm not sure how knowing this fact has affected the content we post to Facebook, but it's been interesting to see where our audience is from, and I'm

currently keeping an eye on whether that means that content related to India does better than content related to other parts of the world.

JD: You and your colleagues have taken the experience of creating TSC and used that to write a peer-reviewed article for *Teaching Sociology*. Tell us about that process.

Valerie Chepp, Paul Dean, Michael V. Miller and I published "Toward a Video Pedagogy" in *Teaching Sociology* in 2014. In the paper we describe six different types of videos one typically encounters on YouTube, and we discuss the ways each type has distinctive strengths and weaknesses when it comes to teaching sociology. The article was in large part a result of our experience with creating and maintaining the TSC website. Working on the site meant continually finding videos that could be useful for teaching sociology, and the sustained pursuit of such videos is what made it possible to begin seeing that videos could be catalogued into different types. The feedback we received from people who used the videos in their classes is what made it possible to begin formulating ideas about which kinds of videos worked well for achieving different learning goals. All of this is to say that while creating the website has certainly taken time and energy, it is *also* a well spring of new ideas about how to improve the teaching of sociology. The article could not have been written without our experience with TSC.

JD: You're finishing up graduate school. A lot of people have concerns about using social media at the early stages of their career. Have you had any negative consequences associated with TSC or with social media more generally?

As near as I can tell, the experience of editing and blogging on TSC and my association with the site has only been positive. I've certainly run across people who seem unimpressed that I regularly blog or edit a sociology teaching website, but I have never gotten the impression that this online work counted as a strike against me. (But then again, would someone tell me if it did?) In terms of what search committees or potential employers might think about my online presence, both co-editors, Valerie Chepp (Hamline University) and Paul Dean (Ohio Weslyan), have told me that their association with the site helped them when they were on the job market. Obviously, I'm hoping I'll have a similar experience when I go on the market.

Depending on the topics one tends to engage in their work, one consequence of blogging or creating an online presence is that sooner or later one of your readers will launch a not-so-constructive attack against you. I think these are moments when it is important to pause, take a breath, and carefully consider the best way of responding. People should keep in mind that their online interactions with others are a part of their online presence. It's easy to become defensive and write something one later regrets, but the fact is, snotty exchanges can be Googled. It's important to know when it is not worth responding to a comment, when it is important to delete a comment, or when it is necessary to ban a user. And when responding, it's important to stay professional, respectful, and when you've made a mistake, it's almost always a good idea to just apologize. I guess I feel fairly confident in my ability to handle abusive and critical

comments, and maybe that is another reason I tend not to worry about what future employers might think about what I've said or written online.

JD: Any other advice you might have for scholars considering using social media?

One final piece of advice comes to mind: To the extent possible, I don't think people should be afraid to use their blogs and/or other online spaces as a place to experiment. That is, I think it is important to experiment with different styles of writing (e.g., formal and informal) and different types of posts (e.g., essays, two-paragraph reflections, reviews, vlogs, podcasts, data visualizations, etc.). The type of content that people are interested in finding online includes more than just essays.

Lester Andrist is a doctoral candidate at the University of Maryland, College Park Department of Sociology. He has published on topics pertaining to gender. His current research examines the impact of indefinite detention on the racial formations of Arabs and Muslims in the United States. As co-creator of *The Sociological Cinema*, he has also been involved in developing a pedagogy centered around video. A video database can be found at http://www.thesociologicalcinema.com/

Speaking to the Press: An Interview with Stephanie Coontz

Tina Fetner (TF): Let's begin by talking about the benefits and pitfalls of "going public" with sociological research.

Stephanie Coontz (SC): The biggest benefit is getting good research out there—not just your own, but that of your colleagues. I know that the space and time constraints in the media world are very frustrating. You don't have time to develop your analysis and argument, and only a small fraction of your research will get covered. But a little piece of something that is solid research is better than a lot of cherry-picked and misrepresented factoids, and the people who bombard the press with those never hesitate to get out their incomplete and partial analyses. So I think it's extremely important to get research out there, not as a self-promoting thing, but as a way of building a network of other researchers that the press can learn from. And also as a way of countering misinterpretations and over-generalizations of the social science findings. You will seldom get the chance to fully make the case for a particular theory or policy, but you will often get the chance to correct or challenge the people who promote bad theories and policies with junk social science. You can help people reject easy answers and sweeping over generalizations. And you can often help journalists and producers broaden their own understanding of what counts as good research and of how to contextualize findings or statistics they may run across.

I know that some people are worried about being seen as self-promoters, but the best way to avoid that is to be very generous with your time, your knowledge, and your research contacts. Most journalists can tell when people are only out to promote their own book and even though they will quote them, they are also quite prepared to turn on them. So it's a win/win situation: The more you can introduce journalists to a network of other scholars the way we do with the Council on Contemporary Families—helping them find people who can supplement or even respectfully disagree with your findings—the more likely you are to really be an asset to the profession as well as a source for the press yourself.

It takes work, though. One reason I'm on a lot of reporters' short lists is that they've learned that if I don't know the answer, I will find them someone who does. Sometimes I will do two or three hours of research in response to a press call in order to give the reporter or the producer of a radio show some background data, the names and emails of someone who can help them (usually a sociologist) and ones who might have a different take or might disagree, but disagree in ways that are productive rather than off-the-wall. Journalists are always supposed to find "balance," but when they go searching for contrasting views on Google, they're likely to find outliers rather than a range of serious researchers who have differences with each other but remain in the mainstream of reputable debate. It's very important to be able to provide that to them.

The biggest pitfall is thinking that you can educate the press and public as if they were your students. You have a much more limited time frame and space, and you can't give them a test to see whether they got it right, so doing press work takes much more

preparation and precision than preparing a lecture. And it takes just as *much* preparation and precision, though of a very different kind, as writing a research paper.

Even in the best case scenarios, you're only going to get to talk about 2% of what you know. You have to choose. Or let me put it this way: You can talk about everything you know if you want, but they're only going to use 2% of it, so do you want them to choose which 2 percent to use or do you want to make that choice? You're much more likely to get your point across if you take time before the interview to select what is most relevant to the question being asked, think about how to express that in ways that they can understand and repeat, give examples that help them get it, and not be seduced into going off on other tangents that may be fascinating to other sociologists but that don't further the particular point you want to make.

TF: One of the things that I think you are particularly talented at is finding a way to capture the narrative of sociological research in a way that's not only sociological, but also approachable from a journalist's perspective. Can you talk a little bit about how you do that?

SC: It's just a matter of practice and stick-to-it-ness. Your takeaway points are almost always the last thing you get to when you first start thinking and talking about your research, so you've got to talk your way through to those first so you can skip all the throat clearing and introductory explanations and get right to the take-away point. When I conduct media workshops I always start by asking people, "What's the most important finding that you want to get out, or the biggest misconception that you want to correct? Tell it to the rest of the room in one sentence, or at most two. A sentence that simultaneously answers the 'so what' question. Why should an editor want to run this story? Why should a reader care enough to read further?"

Nobody ever gets it on the first try. It usually takes each person five or six tries and after they get critical feedback from me and other participants their summary ends up being completely different from their first attempt. That's why these workshops are very useful and you should consider either organizing your own or trying out your takeaway points on other people – preferably ones who are NOT experts in the same field. I never get it myself on the first try. After all my years doing this, I can summarize someone else's takeaway point in a sentence right away, but it takes me five or six tries and often several days to get my own ones succinct and understandable.

The reason is that we know our own research and the previous work that's been done on the topic too well to imagine what it's like not to know it, and how to explain it to someone who doesn't know the background, doesn't know the jargon, and has lots of other pressing work concerns or family concerns, and therefore needs to be assured right up front that you're going to say something that has relevance to his or her life or beliefs. I often ask people to think about how they would explain this to an intelligent teenager, but not to a family member because family members give you a break. You are not talking to your mom who will listen to anything you say. Talk to someone who has never heard "privilege" used as a verb, whose eyes glaze over when you use the word

“discourse,” and doesn’t know, when you say “this increased by 200 percent,” whether you mean it doubled, tripled, or quadrupled.

I have to say that sociologists face a special challenge in explaining their research to the public because of two things they learned in grad school. One is the paper abstract, which 9 times out of 10 is *so* abstract that it’s the equivalent of a really bad teaser for a mystery novel: “Read this book to find out how somebody did something bad to someone else and another person found it out.” The other is the literature review. We tend to start our papers and lectures by summarizing what other people think. Scholars know that there’s a “but” coming down the way. But most real people think that what you say first is what YOU think, so we have to get directly to the point. You’re NOT writing a mystery novel, so tell us right away who did what to whom.

TF: When you're getting ready to speak to somebody from the press, what are the steps you take to do the preparation to be ready to make that one big comment?

SC: You try to find out what it is that they're looking for and why. You have to understand that journalists are not just doing this out of curiosity. Often they are assigned stories by their editors. Sometimes they're editors who operate in a different socioeconomic and work world than the rest of America, and they often think that what’s going on in their milieu should be covered as a new trend – these are the ones who keep assigning stories on opt-out moms for example. If journalists come up with a question that assumes a trend that is not real, don't just tell them they're wrong, help them redirect the question or topic. They need an alternative story to take back to their editor.

Generally, though, when a reporter or radio or TV producer calls, you figure out what they want, why they want it, how you can relate to their starting point or their prior assumptions without pandering to those. Then you start thinking about what points you want to make and you winnow those down. Again, it takes tremendous preparation unless you just want to be a performance artist who throws out provocative quotes at random. If I have time, I will write down two or three takeaway points and then I'll revise those into two or three sentences, and then I'll try to make those sentences punchier and simpler. After that, I'll try to come up with the most dramatic and easily remembered fact or anecdote to back each one up. Then basically I rinse and repeat: come up with a different formulation or angle on the same takeaway points and different factoid or anecdote to illustrate it. You don't want to give them anything that might distract them from your main points.

You asked me earlier about being misquoted or misrepresented. The only way you can minimize that is if you don't try to do too much. Don't give a personal anecdote, or colorful quote, or a cute story unless it furthers your takeaway point. Use short sentences, avoid the passive voice, and practice, practice, practice. Don't ignore questions, but build a bridge from a question that takes you off topic or into some secondary point back to the main point you want to make.

Let me just say one other thing. I am very hard-nosed on this misquoting issue. Through the years I have often blushed to read some of the quotes attributed to me or pulled

from a recorded interview. But in all those years when I looked at them carefully, they were always my own fault. Only two of them were misrepresentations that you could blame on the reporter. They happened because I was not clear enough about what I wanted to say, or not succinct enough. Just yesterday I found a news story in a national paper that really missed my main point and even gave a slightly wrong impression of the research I was talking about. The problem was that in answering a very long series of questions, I made the rookie mistake of talking as if the reader was going to hear my previous answer. Every answer has to be self-contained.

TF: I think that's a really important point and I want to follow up on the piece about the actual process of practicing your questions and your answers. Because it sounds like the advice you're giving is to not try to be creative on the spot, but rather to really prepare both your answers to questions and the illustrative anecdotes ahead of time. My question is, do you practice that on a recorder, with another person, or just by yourself? What's your process?

SC: I tend to do it myself, by writing these things down. I remember fairly early in my career being asked to appear on Crossfire, with Pat Buchanan as one of the hosts. It was a debate and I spent my five hours on the plane anticipating questions and my opponent's points and writing down answers and then rewriting the answers and then shortening the answers. When I got home I said to my husband and son, I said, "Oh my God. I don't remember anything I said. I don't think I said anything that made sense." But when I watched it, I realized that although they didn't come out exactly the way I wrote them down or wanted to sound, because I had all those practice sentences and answers in my head to draw on, some of them popped up even as I thought I was floundering for answers, and it didn't sound canned.

It's really helpful to many people to practice with other people, in a workshop or small group, or just to find a hard-nosed friend, someone who will say "that's not clear" or "so what?" or really push them on something. And it's especially important to walk away from your data when you are preparing your take-away points and your potential answers. It's too easy to rely on statistics or graphs or charts or percentages as a substitute for explaining your argument in plain English. When I'm writing a book, I have a friend of mine who is not an academic who walks with me, and on the walk I will try to tell her the thesis of a chapter. Just doing that out loud makes you think about it more. Workshops are really, really good. The more I do workshops, the more I realize that what people come away with and value the most are not the tips I give them, like what we're talking about today, but the experience of being really challenged to be clear, succinct, precise, and relevant to people's lives. The more I do these workshops, the meaner I get about those challenges, and the meaner I get, the more people seem to get out of the experience.

TF: One of the things that you have a particular amount of experience with, probably more than any other sociologist, is really going into press settings that are very challenging like Fox News. I think one of the things that people worry about is that they'll be interrupted, or there will be some rude behavior. I wonder if you have some advice for how to manage that.

SC: It depends a lot on what the topic is and who the host is. You should look at it before. Watching Bill O'Reilly before I went on, I realized that a guest was going to get only one shot to make a powerful point. I had to go in thinking, "Okay, I'm only going to get one shot at an answer, and so I'm going to let things ride until the target opens up." You've really got to analyze it that way. You can practice answers to tough questions beforehand. Always try to think of the most hostile questions—the most "gotcha" questions—and what your backup answers would be.

Remember, we can't correct every misconception in the world. We have to choose which one is critical at the time. That was a big challenge for me when I first started doing radio shows after *The Way We Never Were* came out in 1992, and I wanted to tell everybody how much they didn't know about the history of family life. Instead, I just pissed my audiences off because they thought I was a know-it-all professor who was telling them they were dumb. So finally I realized that's not the way to do it. Pick and choose what you want to really take on and let the rest slide. You don't have to pretend to agree with things you don't agree with, but you can nod, you can bridge to something else by saying "well there's a lot of debate on that, but I think the really important point here is X."

Remember also you will never win over a hostile host or the audience who loves the hostile host. You're talking to the channel flipper who might have a slightly more open mind. I'd also say you don't have to go on a show if you know they're going to gang up on you. I make a point of doing it now after all these years because I figure even if you sow a seed of doubt in a couple of people's minds, it's probably worth doing, but don't do it until you're comfortable with a less confrontational format.

This is what's wonderful about having a group of people, of colleagues, that you know and trust. There are sociologists who are much better than I am at statistics and I will send journalists to them for those interviews if I think that I'm going to be really put on the spot with stuff that I might not be able to fully explain. The more that you give other people access, the more that they will be grateful to you, and the more that the press will be grateful to you, so I really do believe that this is a team building kind of thing rather than a self-promoting kind of thing.

TF: What are the benefits of participating in these press interviews? They obviously take up a lot of time and energy, so what can sociologists get out of the experience?

SC: There are personal benefits in getting your own research out, your own book known, your own institution in the press, and that's fine, but I think and hope that most of us are also motivated by a larger mission – we care about the research we do and don't want it to just be confined to academia and to people who already agree with us. Journalists and the public are bombarded with these factoids that are thrown at them by ideological think tanks who cherry pick data. They're confused by these claims. They don't understand the difference between causation and correlation. They are often too intimidated or too enthralled by averages, and need to be educated about selection factors or about the fact that averages are often produced by countervailing trends in different subgroups.

For sociologists in particular, there is this wonderful opportunity to reach out to the people who read these claims and these kind of scary ideas about what's happening in the world, or what will happen to them if they don't do what someone is telling them they should do, and help them put the claims in context, evaluate them, improve their own decision-making abilities. It's another form of teaching and I have found, contrary to the idea that press work involves oversimplifying, that doing this has made me a better teacher. I think that before I started doing this, I was only talking to the top half of my class. Now I actually understand much better how to reach the bottom 50% of the class.

I think this work has also improved my own writing because it forces me to confront fuzzy ideas, or abstract formulations that we sometimes use to avoid concrete explanations of how things work or even what the real subjects and verbs of our sentences are. It is a very easy thing to make a simple idea sound complex. The challenge is to make a complicated idea sound simple. If Einstein could explain relativity, we should certainly be able to explain our research. So when we go public, we are not only doing a public service, we're honing skills that we can use to improve our own teaching and writing.

Stephanie Coontz teaches history and family studies at The Evergreen State College in Olympia, WA. She also serves as Co-Chair and Director of Public Education at the Council on Contemporary Families, a non-profit, nonpartisan association of family researchers and practitioners based at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Her work has been featured in many newspapers such as the *New York Times*, as well as scholarly journals such as *Journal of Marriage and Family*, and she is frequently interviewed on national television and radio.

The Society Pages Website: An Interview with Douglas Hartmann and Letta Wren Page*

Jessie Daniels (JD): Doug, you and Chris Uggen started The Society Pages in 2008. Tell us about what it is and how it came to exist and the connection to Contexts Magazine.

Doug Hartmann (DH): It was part of our editorship of *Contexts*. In our original proposal (to ASA), we thought that *Contexts* needed to be more than just a print publication. That it should have a website and maybe even some social media presence. We had written that into our original proposal, but the ASA folks weren't willing to support that financially. They were willing to allow us to do it if we could figure out a way to pay for it.

So we built the Contexts.org site originally. Then, as that was taking off we eventually turned it into *The Society Pages* (*TSP*) since we were paying for it anyway and ASA didn't want it to be associated with *Contexts* directly. As we got a lot more traffic and activity and attention from the website than from the print publication, and as we got ready to let go of *Contexts*, we got very excited about all that was happening on the website. And it just continued to expand and build after we finished our term editing *Contexts.*

There's always been a relationship between the Contexts and TSP because the editors that have followed us have wanted to have some kind of online presence and we've become the host for *Contexts* as well. It's a partnership. As we built the website we focused on not just doing *Contexts* but on signing other partners. We found bloggers who were like-minded and we recruited those folks to build a community of blogs that we think all have a great sociological focus in content. So now we host them along with producing some of our own content with graduate students at Minnesota.

One of the things we did that was most successful early on was called the Contexts Crawler where we just tracked media references to sociology and sociologists, a real simple thing, but it was then that we realized how much appetite there was for sociological content online. So we created TSP separately, partly because we were paying for it anyway and partly because the ASA didn't want it to be formally affiliated with *Contexts*, which we always thought that was a little strange.

Part of the problem is that *Contexts* the magazine was launched as—and is still supported by—a model of journal library publishing as the way to fund it. It's basically funded like all research journals, which means there's a hard paywall. That model limited how much of the print publication content we could put online. That was part of why we stopped doing *Contexts*; we just wanted to be able to put more of that content that we were spending so much time on online because, unpaywalled, it got so many more eyes on it. When we realized that the publication agreements and contracts wouldn't allow that, that's when we started thinking more about the future of the website just in and of itself.

JD: Letta, do you have anything to add to that?

Letta Page (LP): For those who don't know, *Contexts* is an official publication of the American Sociological Society and sees ASA members as its core audience. Though it's meant to be the public outreach journal of the association, few bookstores stock the

magazine, and subscribers are generally ASA members. That said, it's online presence since about 2010 has widened the reach of the journal, and platforms like Facebook and Twitter have helped bring some of its articles (those that aren't paywalled by the journal's agreement with its publisher) into high school classrooms and policy discussions.

As Doug said, TSP grew out of the first iteration of *Contexts* online and out of Doug and Chris's desire to keep making sociology more visible and to keep showing both sociologists and the public what sociologists do--what they contribute, uniquely, to important conversations in the world, and how they look, uniquely, *at* the world. The site is a real labor of love, with neither professor getting a course release or pay to work on the project, and limited support coming from just three partnerships, but there are nearly a million page views a month across a suite of 20-some blogs written by academics, two popular podcasts that interview scholars about their research, research briefs vetted and written by a graduate student editorial board, features and roundtables authored by scholars who want to reach audiences beyond their classrooms, and so much more. We see lively arguments in the comments sections of our blogs, but far more restraint (even timidity) on the posts seen as "in-house" content--that written and/or edited and published under the TSP masthead rather than any individual blog post. Social media has quickly become our main referral source for readership, which means networks of readership have expanded exponentially. Still, those sharing and reading tend toward academics and college students.

JD: Letta, what has been the most successful strategy you've used to build an audience for *TSP*?

LP: In the beginning, growth was almost wholly due to the twin advantages of having been the earliest host for *Sociological Images*, Lisa Wade and Gwen Sharp's brainchild, which has become wildly popular by explaining core sociological ideas through the images and messages sprinkled throughout media. It's incredibly captivating and helps non-sociologists engage with a sociological viewpoint. It's also saturated with pop culture and so it makes for a ready-made classroom tool for professors—put the image up on the screen and let students engage with the images and the authors' takes.

Couple that with Uggen and Hartmann's reputations for excellent scholarship, and we were quickly able to build a whole array of offerings to appeal to people who use the Internet differently—from those who want to read long, in-depth articles to those listening to podcasts while on the treadmill or sharing quick "bites" from around the site on social media. Their scholarly reputation has also brought in a lot of high-profile scholars who may have once been nervous to write in a casual way or in a public way. There's understandable worry about "Internet trolls" (no one wants to see others call them stupid jerks!), about "dumbing down" research (will they be seen as pandering if they are stripped of jargon?), and about wading into any issues that could be controversial, whether among the public or among fellow academics. This attitude has happily changed, lurching forward and backward in the years since we started TSP, but more and more academics are clearly welcoming online discourse and becoming willing to write for outlets like ours. Further, they tend to be excited that we still have an

editorial office -- if they're writing a feature, they can expect it to be peer-reviewed, edited, and illustrated in a professional way that's bound to make them look good. There are few institutional rewards for this kind of writing, so it takes authors who are both determined to reach wider audiences and caring about doing so. Their confidence in Uggen and Hartmann is a real key.

In the past couple of years, seeing social media become a bigger and bigger referrer, we have engaged more outside our site. I initially took the lead with Twitter and Facebook, doing my best to be broad as well as strategic in which accounts our online "persona" would follow and building a following through a combination of contributing our unique content to news-grabbing topics, retweeting pieces featuring sociologists or otherwise engaging issues sociologically, and trying to use humor and personal engagement along the way. I would Tweet about interesting scholars our followers might want to follow, drop in a self-deprecating joke about the field, or drop into a sociology class's hashtag discussion to add a piece or two from TSP that was related and entirely free and accessible to the students.

Now, as we've crept up over 8,000 followers on Facebook and Twitter (still dwarfed by the followings our individual blogs boast!), Hartmann and Uggen have taken a more hands-on approach with social media, wanting to become a leader—a conversation-starter. We have an undergraduate and graduate student who bring in links and articles we might post about on social media to a weekly staff meeting, where we discuss the pieces and their sources, deciding which hit the bar as something we're ok with "endorsing" by sending it out via our social networks. Our own in-house content always makes the grade, and so we publicize that without question, but pieces from other outlets and even our blogs are considered a reflection on our own editorial office's goals and intentions, and so we have become far more careful in making sure that our social media feeds include only those things Hartmann and Uggen feel comfortable with.

JD: Traditionally trained academics may be intimidated by venturing into social media and they certainly were at the time that you began. So, Doug, tell us why you think blogging might be a good idea for academics.

DH: Chris Uggen pushed it first. He had started blogging early on, even before we did *Contexts*. In fact, he and I came together to do *Contexts* because he saw the benefits of public engagement from the blogging side and that came together with my ideas about current writing. But regarding the benefits, one obvious one is that you have to be nimble and on your toes about both following the news and figuring out what are the relevant sociological angles and ideas. I think some people are suited to that and others aren't. I'm suited to thinking like that. I'm not always great at blogging, but I do think where I am good is in teaching, where you're trying to connect sociology to what's going on in the real world, or figuring out how stuff in the real world can benefit from sociological research and insights. Blogging allows for that.

Also, I think some people benefit from blogging in terms of the interaction that they get with their audience. They find that invigorating and inspiring as well as it helps push them. With our site, it's a little different than that because we're as much of a

compendium of blogs and a host for bloggers as we are our own site. For me and Chris, some of our benefit is the ability we get to work with great bloggers who are sociologists on a day by day basis. We're sitting on top of the field or on top of real events by following and curating their blogs. That has been a great conduit for us to connect with people and try to be able to encourage folks to write on certain topics that they might not think about on their own.

JD: Tell us about your publishing agreement with W.W. Norton to produce curated readers.

DH: Norton gives us a certain amount of money, which largely goes to pay our production person and managing editor, Letta, to maintain the TSP site. They do that partly because they like what we do, but also because it is a bit of advertising for them. They can be in the circles of scholars and readers they want to be in and sometimes, they use it to recruit new authors as well.

We work with Norton to produce a series of books where we take content that was online originally and either just use it or adapt it for these slim books. They have the opportunity to help us determine what the topics are going to be and pick out which blog post or white papers or special features that we do would add up to a good volume. So it's an editorial partnership in that way.

JD: Who is the main audience for those books?

DH: Our aspirational audience would be the general readerships but I think the reality is they're there for teaching purposes so used mostly by sociologists who are teaching sociology classes on those topic areas. I think we're actually, those books are just getting out enough that they're able to have their sales folks see if they can get sales on them. But my sense is the ones that have sold the best like the race book, for example, and the crime book are ones where there are clear classes that go along with it. So people adopt those to have small, but accessible high-end readings that they can use for teaching.

We have high hopes! We've got one coming out on gender, which we're having Lisa Wade, who's one of our great bloggers with sociological images, special guest edit. It's supposed to parallel the larger textbook that she has with Norton, so for that one we're hoping it might get adopted as a supplementary reading. I think her book has been successful enough that even if we just get a few of those going I think it could be good for our series.

LP: We've been very pleased to see TSP start being used in lots of classrooms, because that's the point: free content available to everyone and accessible in terms of language and content. TSP has just put together its sixth volume in this Norton reader series. And it's under an agreement that almost magically allows for authors to receive royalties if their articles are published within a volume without that piece coming down from the web. Authors are encouraged to keep sharing their piece far and wide and are able to publish their pieces in any collection of their own works, even if they're in a TSP Reader. At $15, this means the books are bringing some heavy hitters in sociology into more and more hands without keeping their words away from those who'd rather read, for free,

online. The readers add discussion questions and activities, as well as "Tie-Ins" that focus on specific sociological concepts and help readers find additional examples online.

JD: Given that TSP hosts several academic blogs, you must have an informed prospective on what makes an academic blog more or less successful. What do you think makes for an engaging blog and what do you think the most common reasons are for academic blog fails?

DH: One thing: you've got to be disciplined and diligent and consistent about posting. And you have to just do that very regularly if you're going to build a readership and following. So our successful blogs are the people who just keep doing it.

I think in terms of the which content works, shorter is better. Usually, it's good having some images or graphics to go along with it, not only to make the post itself read well, but to allow it to circulate through different social media forums. I think the stuff that we like for our site and that we try to promote isn't necessarily the highest traffic blog content because I think there are blogs that succeed by being deliberately provocative, having a particular political line, or particular analytic angle that they're always constantly pushing.

What we're usually looking for is people who are able to promote more basic sociology like sociological insights or sociological research that isn't already in the public conversation or mainstream media. Though, my criteria for success on that is a little different sometimes than just big traffic because some of the stuff that we like, for example, a regular feature called "There's Research on That!" where we follow images or issues in the public media and then highlight sociological research that will help enrich that conversation. I feel like that's a successful feature for us but, and once in a while it'll spike and have a lot of downloads or hits. But even if it doesn't, we feel like that's successful.

Somebody who's good at all of that I think is Sociological Images, Lisa Wade, who I think has a great ability to find a niche between both being provocative and timely and a little opinionated but also consistently I think is just bringing in basic research and a key point or fact or finding. So that's, I think, we're proud of working with her, not only because it's got such a great following but because it's the sweet spot of where content and accessibility match up.

JD: Doug, you mentioned briefly how you measure success or how you think about success on the blog or on The Society Pages. There's a big concern for academics who are thinking about starting a blog: the issue of how it will count for tenure and promotion. What are your thoughts about this?

DH: That's a hard question right now. I think we're at a moment where it's just not quite clear yet how to measure that. We do analytics and we pay attention to what gets traffic and what doesn't and we can do things to impact that. But I would say at the end of the day, we're still less driven by those numbers than we are by the kind of posts and content that we think are important from the field for people in society to hear.

I think about good books or journal articles: you don't necessarily get a great sense of their influence by how many citations they have in the first couple years or what their downloads are. It's too hard to predict that. Some of the best things fly under the radar for a while or even for a long time, but nevertheless manage to, one day, shape people's opinions and ideas. I think we're still at the moment online where it's hard to get a good handle on what type of content and criteria for success we should be looking for. But again, for me, the thing that we're most interested in right now is people who can bring sociological research and ideas that aren't out there yet into greater circulation than they'd otherwise get.

JD: Letta, what advice do you have for scholars considering using social media to build an audience for their work?

LP: Personally, I think some of the biggest keys are:

First, take media calls. This is scary, because it's usually about a story that isn't EXACTLY what you study, but how could it be? Contribute what you can and you'll be part of making sure that sociology and society are both presented fairly. If this scares you, check out Twitter or TSP's "Clippings" section -- they're FULL of scholars taking the leap and appearing on TV news shows, writing op-eds, etc. You won't be alone!

Second, write *every* abstract as though it's the only thing anyone can read about your research, because it often is. Paywalls mean one layer of removal from your actual work, but jargon is another. The abstract is your 250-word chance to make your point: What's the big takeaway? How is it useful to scholars and to the rest of the world? What surprised you? What do you affirm by putting real numbers to long-held hunches?

Third, jump into conversations about news items that you know about. If there's a big story on gun control, check out that hashtag on Twitter and get in there. If you have the perfect graph to tell a story or a list of facts at your fingertips, put them out into the public. Academia will not be damaged by engaging in real conversations with people in every other sector of the "public." We're part of the public, not apart from it. If you're wrong, okay, you're wrong. Say that. Move on. Also, writing the 140-character-including-your-link version of your research is the new "elevator pitch"—imagine how much better your abstracts and opening paragraphs will be if you pick up this skill.

JD: And Doug, is there anything else that comes to mind as you think about academics who might be interested in venturing into social media world?

DH: One thing I'd say about *TSP*, if it's not clear, is that it is the result of a lot of partnerships and collaborations. *TSP* is the platform for facilitating that. I believe that a big part of the future for our discipline is figuring out how to support and sustain those collaborations. Because just having a bunch of bloggers isn't going to do it! It's a collective action problem of how to support and build up our grassroots ongoing effort of sociological bloggers, who are not only prolific, but can actually work to promote the best research and ideas that we have. I think that's a hard thing to achieve.

I am disappointed we don't have a stronger organizational institutional base to do that from. I think a lot of our bloggers are doing it on their own, I think we're free agents and have to be entrepreneurial to work with Norton and other folks but those aren't sustainable models yet. So that's the question for the future: what kind of infrastructure for support and collaboration are we going to be able to develop?

*Hartmann and Page were interviewed separately. Here, their responses are combined.

Douglas Hartmann is professor of sociology at the University of Minnesota. Hartmann is editor and publisher (with Christopher Uggen) of the award-winning website *TheSocietyPages.org*. He is the author or co-author of several books including, most recently, *Migration, Incorporation, and Change in an Interconnected World* (Routledge, 2015 with Syed Ali) and *Midnight Basketball: Sports, Race, and Neoliberal Social Policy* which will be released by the University of Chicago Press in 2016. Hartmann's research has also appeared in *the American Sociological Review, Ethnic and Racial Studies, the Journal of Sport and Social Issues, and Social Problems*, and his comments on sport, race, popular culture, and multiculturalism are regularly featured in a variety of media outlets.

Letta Wren Page is the associate editor and producer of *The Society Pages*, senior managing editor of *Contexts* (the public outreach journal of the American Sociological Association), and a jargon-slayer for hire. Her specialty is in helping authors identify and hone their argument in ways their target audiences can both understand and use. Page has over a decade of experience in academic editing across a range of disciplines, having edited and written copy for publications from Oxford University Press, Routledge, Taylor & Francis, W.W. Norton, the University of Chicago Press, Cambridge University Press, Stanford University Press, and many others, including dozens of journals. Page is a founder of First Amendment Arts (now Co-Exhibitions) in Minneapolis and holds degrees in History and Classical Studies (Boston University) and Art (University of Minnesota).

Building Your Audience through Social Media: An Interview with Dustin Kidd

Jessie Daniels (JD): When you did the research for your book, *Pop Culture Freaks*, did you have a particular audience in mind?

Dustin Kidd (DK): To be honest, I didn't have an audience in mind as I conducted the research. I think at that point in my career, I just wanted to do my research and publish it, but I didn't actively think about my audience. Prior to tenure, I tended to think of my audience as the tenure committee. That's not an effective way to think about your audience, but I think institutional pressures push many of us to think that way. I did the research for *Pop Culture Freaks* right after tenure, but I still had that mindset.

But when I started writing the book, I finally began to think about audience in ways that I hadn't before. I wanted to write a book that presented original research that would be interesting to scholars, but I also wanted to write a book that would be easily adopted in classes, and I wanted to be able to reach a broader audience. Those goals meant that it couldn't quite be either a monograph or a textbook. Instead, I developed the concept of making the book a field guide. It presents my research and research by others in a way that is meant to teach other scholars, students, and popular culture enthusiasts how to engage in the study of popular culture with a sociological lens.

I now try to actively think about very different audience groups who need to be engaged in different ways. Scholarly peers, students, journalists, cultural influencers, policy makers and the elusive general audience all have different reasons why they might read my work or engage my ideas. That sense of varying audiences with varying engagements particularly influences the way that I use social media. I use different types of posts to reach each of these audience types. For instance, with journalists, I like to post short observations or references to data and studies and then tag specific journalists who write about the topic. With peers, I focus on sharing newly released research (mine and especially others), funding opportunities, and links to debates related to academia. I prefer more informal discussions and debates online with students—both my students and students on other campuses who are reading my work.

JD: How did you use social media to build an audience for the book?

DK: I started well before the book came out. Although I used my platforms to mention that the book was coming and to link to it online, the goal really wasn't to promote the book but rather to build an audience for the book by fostering engagement with my work and my field. To be honest, it was an *aha!* moment that I owe to Jennifer Lena. For her book *Banding Together*, she created a Spotify playlist of songs related to the text. I saw it listed on a promo card for the book and thought it was brilliant. Suddenly it dawned on me that there are so many similar ways we can use social media to engage our audiences.

Here are some examples:

- I built a Tumblr blog full of videos, images, links, quotes, and short essays about the range of topics covered in my book. Each major topic has a hashtag and I use

those hashtags to build the thematic pages of the blog. In other words, you can read the blog as a whole, or just go to the pages for race, sexuality, tv, film, etc.
- I build a set of Pinterest boards for the book. I created one board for each chapter and then began adding supplemental boards. Each board starts with material from the book but has since expanded to cover related ideas and material that I've encountered since.
- I followed Lena's model and created a Spotify playlist for each chapter of the book.
- I created a YouTube playlist for each chapter of the book.
- I created a Prezi for each chapter of the book.
- I posted all of the original images from the book in a Flickr account (although they are also on Pinterest).
- I started an Instagram account to capture images that happen across that are related to the themes of the book.
- I created pages for the book on Facebook and Google +. (These are the *least* useful platforms for me.)
- I started a new Twitter account where I only post on issues related to the book.

JD: What type of outreach did you do to build an audience?

DK: Since my book is adopted by a lot of classes, I do outreach to those classes, and I promote that outreach on social media to encourage more adoption. I've visited a few classes in person but I've also visited several classes via Skype. I arrange with several professors to engage with their students via Twitter. In addition, through social media I was able to generate a fair amount of attention from the press, which has led to both interviews about the book and interviews where I am quoted on other topics due to my expertise on popular culture.

JD: What kind of response have you had from different audiences?

DK: I've encountered a broad range of scholars on Twitter, LinkedIn, Academia.edu, and ResearchGate that I might not have otherwise met and we've been able to use these spaces to share our work and exchange ideas.

I have met a lot of journalists explicitly through social media. For instance, this past summer a journalist at the *LA Times* tweeted that she needed a sociologist who studies celebrity. Twitter users connected her to me!

I have finally been able to enjoy a broad audience and to interact with them directly, primarily through Twitter.

The bulk of my other platforms are primarily used by instructors as resource databases. But that has meant more professors assigning the book and more students reading the book. Thanks to all of that engagement with professors, I was just asked to begin work on a new edition.

Dustin Kidd is associate professor of sociology at Temple University. He studies art and popular culture with a focus on issues of policy, regulation, and identity. His first book, *Legislating Creativity* (2010) explored arts controversies related to government funding for the arts and the NEA. His more recent book, *Pop Culture Freaks* (2014) examines the influence of identity (race, class, gender, sexuality, disability, and nationality) on the labor force, content, and audience for the culture industries, focusing especially on film and television. He is active on Twitter (*@PopCultureFreak*) and blogs at *popculturefreaks.tumblr.com*.

Using Social Media to Promote Your Book: Interview with Alondra Nelson

Jessie Daniels (JD): You wrote this wonderful award-winning book, *Body and Soul: The Black Panther Party and the Fight against Medical Discrimination.* When you were writing it, did you have a particular audience in mind?

Alondra Nelson (AN): This was a "tenure book,"—the book I needed to publish in order to be awarded tenure in the academy—so I certainly had in mind the audience of my senior colleagues, who would be evaluating me. *Body and Soul* is a mostly historical project. But, at times, I left the archive and took an ethnographic approach to this historical project. I visited locations of former Black Panther Party chapters and clinics; I spent time walking through these neighborhoods and tried to imagine how they might have been 40 or 45 years prior. And because several of the key figures in the account I tell in *Body and Soul* had become distrustful of researchers and reporters, whom they felt didn't relay their stories faithfully, I had to spend years building trust with my informants. Building this trust often meant attending events and social gatherings, or showing up at workshops and meetings that, on the face of it, had nothing to do with the history of the Black Panther Party I was writing. But creating this trust was critical to my ability to write this book because these individuals ultimately shared valuable information with me. By the time I was finishing the project, this group of men and women, who were members or allies of the BPP in the 1960s and 1970s, were also one of my intended audiences for the book. So an explicit audience was also the activists who were engaged in the struggles that I write about. When writing *Body and Soul*, I worked very hard to walk a fine line in which I was using language, concepts and theories that we use in our work as sociologists. At the same time, I wanted the book to be plainly stated enough so that non-academics who are interested in the topic could read it.

JD: How did you use social media to build an audience for the book?

AN: Because I'm a veteran social media user, I didn't really think about it in any strategic sense. Social media was already a way that I interacted with the world and it seamlessly became a way that I shared with friends and colleagues what was going on with the progress of the book, and later, the book tour. Using social media to build an audience for the book was just an extension of me being a social media user for almost two decades: I started a listserv devoted to discussion of "afrofuturism" back in 1998. Because I have been involved with some type of social media since these listserv days, I have longstanding virtual relationships in these spaces. So I can say to Facebook friends and Twitter followers, "Hey, I've got this book coming out and I'm really excited about it," without it feeling like a used-car salesperson. These are relationships and interactions I have been having for years and will continue to have for years, new book or not. Some of our academic colleagues come onto social media two weeks before they have a book coming out—you'll recognize this because you wrote a primer for academics on how to use Twitter. But it's the longevity of these relationships and the density of the personal networks built over time that make social media potentially useful for keeping the world abreast of new projects.

I did create a Facebook presence and page for *Body and Soul* as a place to share archival materials that I uncovered in my research, especially photographs of the Black Panther Party's health activities. I also used this Facebook page as a way to share new about the hardback and paperback publication dates, about reviews of the book in the mainstream and academic press, and also about book events.

I used Twitter in a similar way for the Black Panther book. But I've been using a more deliberate Twitter strategy more for my second book, *The Social Life of DNA: Race, Reparations, and Reconciliation after the Genome*. My interests in science and technology can be quite technical—and frankly, all my friends don't share this passion! I initially created The Social Life of DNA feed to spare my friends and colleagues—who aren't as interested as me in genetics, genetic ancestry testing, and the politics around science—from having to have these subjects in their timelines if they did not want to read about them. Then this feed evolved over time to become part of the pre-publication identity of the book.

JD: Did people reach out to you through social media to do events for *The Social Life of DNA* or *Body and Soul*?

AN: There were certainly times when I was contacted via my personal Facebook page, the *Body and Soul* Facebook page, or via Twitter about book events. Some would write and say, "Some mention of your book came up in my timeline or in my feed; this is the first time I'm hearing this account of the Black Panther Party. Can you come and tell us more?" These kinds of exchanges did lead to speaking engagements, at colleges and universities, at bookstores, and also at small community-based venues. Non-academics wrote to me, sometimes somewhat sheepishly, and asked, for example, "I'm from a small health collective in Brooklyn, would there ever be time for you to come and talk about your book?" Groups like these were also an intended audience. Not just the generation of activists that I interviewed, but a new generation too, and social media was often how people of this younger generation reached me. Social media can have a democratizing effect; it can flatten hierarchy. For some, I think it was a much more approachable way to contact me than writing to my Columbia e-mail account.

JD: You speak a lot of smaller venues, some of which many academics might think of as untraditional venues. Why, in your mind, is that an important thing to do?

AN: Because I have always had several audiences in mind for my work, it didn't seem untraditional to me. But I suppose in retrospect it probably was. Given what was happening with the Affordable Care Act, when *Body and Soul* was published, given the fact that it was published just a few years before the 50th anniversary of Black Panther Party's formation, there was wide and varied interest in the book and I wanted to respond to as much of this interest as I possibly could. I also cultivated engagement with my book in "untraditional venues." For example, whenever I would be invited to do a talk about the book for which I was being paid, particularly outside of New York City, I would seek out, or contact people who had sought me previously, and ask if I could do a free event for a community-based organization, a student groups, a public library, etc. This practice and these spaces do not feel untraditional to me, because I am in part an

ethnographer, and given my research interests this means that I spend a good deal of time with working class folks and folks of color. This sort of outreach with my work is a political commitment for me to be sure. But it is also a natural outgrowth of the way the immersive way in which I conduct both my contemporary and historical research.

JD: What kind of responses have you had from these different types of audiences?

AN: I certainly hoped for a positive response. But given the political climate and how one-sided our public memory of the Black Panther Party has been, I had been girding myself for a negative response. When the book came out, I expected a backlash from people who disliked the Party and thought that I was trying to unduly burnish its reputation (when in fact I was documenting one of the least acknowledged facets of its activism). To my surprise, I have not received a single negative e-mail, a single negative tweet, a single negative interaction about the book. To the contrary, there has been an overwhelmingly positive response from both academic and non-academic readers, including more than thirty reviews of the book and several prizes commending it.

One of the more beautiful responses was when I received a social justice award from a community-based organization in Brooklyn, which is run by feminists and trans* folks. They held a fundraising dinner, and the awarding of this award to me was part of the evening; I was gratified that my book occasioned an event that helped them to raise money for the important healing work that they do.

Among academic audiences the response has been positive as well, including in both Black studies and science and technology studies communities. If you're interested in the minutiae in how sickle cell anemia works, the genetic mechanism of it, there's something for you in *Body and Soul*. But it also contains an account of the evolution of the black freedom movement over the past half century. I think it is precisely because *Body and Soul* is a book that offers entrée to lots of different audiences—many on-ramps, you could say—that the responses to it have generally been very positive.

JD: Your new book that you mentioned, *The Social Life of DNA*, is coming out from a trade press. Your earlier book was with a university press. Could say something about how the effort to build an audience will be different when working with a trade press?

AN: One of my motivations for using social media to spread the work about *Body and Soul* was certainly to expand the audience for the book. I had devoted close to a decade of my life researching and writing this book, from a seedling as a grad school seminar paper to the hardback publication. Given all of the work that I had put into this book, I wanted it to have a better fate than an academic book written on an academic press that only sells 250 copies. I knew this was an important story that could potentially shift how we think about the history and tactics of African American politics and health politics. It's a history that so few people know about, and I was bound and determined to have more than 250 people to read it. I needed this story-- that had so much contemporary resonance--to amount to more than a dusty, rarely circulating tome in some library's rarely-used stacks.

The new book, *The Social Life of DNA: Race, Reparations, and Reconciliation after the Genome*, is about broader uses of genetic ancestry testing in Black political culture.

Because genealogy is such a popular topic, as I got closer to the completion of the book, I began to think that perhaps a trade press—that comes with wider audience reach—might be best for this book. If I was ever going to write about a topic that would definitely have a wider readership, this book about genetic ancestry testing was the one.

Beacon Press is publishing *The Social Life of DNA*. It's such an honor to work with this storied publisher that has on its list influential thinkers like Martha Nussbaum, James Baldwin, Octavia Butler, Marion Wright Edelman, Richard Hofstadter, Robin D.G. Kelley and Martin Luther King, Jr. Beacon also has a critical signaling function to potential readers. The fact that this new book is being published by a trade press signals, I think, that it's intended to be read by any and all. I hope I will be able to reach people who may have been intimidated or put off by a book published by a university press.

My editor pushed me and helped me to write prose that was even clearer and less academic in tone than in *Body and Soul*. It was difficult to be asked to go back to paragraphs that looked perfectly fine, that I thought were clarion, and be told that they were too academic. But through this exacting editing relationship, I came into a new voice as a writer.

With Beacon, I am getting a lot of help building audience for the book. The press assigned a publicist to the project; this is in contrast with other publishing experiences in which I am assigned by a press to a publicist who is working on many different book projects concurrently. I now also have a partner in thinking about new ways to use social media to publicize the book.

Alondra Nelson is professor of sociology and Dean of Social Science at Columbia University. An interdisciplinary social scientist, her research explores the intersections of science, technology, and inequality. Her most recent book, *The Social Life of DNA: Race, Reparations, and Reconciliation after the Genome* (Beacon Press, 2016), traces how claims about ancestry and genetic analysis are marshaled in a range of social and political ventures. Nelson is also the author of *Body and Soul: The Black Panther Party and the Fight against Medical Discrimination* (University of Minnesota Press, 2011), which was recognized with four scholarly awards. Chair-elect of the Science, Knowledge, and Technology section of the ASA, she is active on social media including Facebook and Twitter. More information about Nelson's research is available at www.alondranelson.com.

Sociology Source: An Interview with Nathan Palmer

Jessie Daniels (JD): When you started Sociology Source (www.sociologysource.org) did you have a particular audience in mind?

Nate Palmer (NP): At the very start I did not. I just wanted a space to develop my skills as a writer and to put on paper my thoughts about pedagogy and sociology. However, within a few months a small audience began coming to my site. They sent me emails and left comments and I saw an opportunity to start a conversation with them.

Before the end of the first year, I had a clearly defined audience in my mind; Sociology 101 teachers. I looked into the data on who teaches 101 and found that it was disproportionately contingent faculty, graduate students, and early career faculty. Supporting them became singular focus. I decided to publish content that I thought would delete my target audience even if it would displease/be irrelevant to other sociology educators. I love Tibor Kalman's quote that, “When you make something no one hates, no one loves it.” I want my audience to love what I'm sharing, even if that means that others who could be in my audience hate it.

JD: How did you use social media to build an audience for Sociology Source?

NP: I share all of my posts via Twitter, a Facebook page, and Google+. I also shared content that was thematically related to keep the conversation going between posts.

JD: Do you use analytics? Do these influence how you build an audience?

NP: I use Google Analytics and pay attention to the analytics provided by Facebook and Twitter. While I look at these, I don't often allow them to affect what I write. In the past, when I have tried to emulate the characteristics of a popular post, they have rarely paid off the second time. I think analytics tell you how popular something was, but not why something was popular. Also, my basic understanding of how things go viral online suggests to me that the process is far more complex than even the best analytics can provide you. Lastly, I only have so much time to dedicate to Sociology Source. I'd rather spend it figuring out what I want to say than figuring out which title is better click-bait.

JD: What kind of response have you had from your audiences?

NP: With a few rare exceptions my readers have been appreciative of my work. I get regular emails/social media posts from readers thanking me for sharing a resource or telling me that they really liked my idea on something. At least once a month I get emails from readers asking me how to solve a teaching related question or how to handle a classroom situation. A few times a year I get emails or social media comments that challenge my arguments. I really love these because they help me think about my ideas in a new way and also these critiques help me find the weaknesses in my arguments. Over the last 5+ years, I've received less than 10 hostile or abusive comments. Typically, these are ad hominem attacks on me or concise explanations of how my idea, my career, or my discipline are completely detached from their reality.

JD: Any advice for scholars considering using social media for their research?

NP: Before you jump in, have a goal in mind. When people say to me, "I want to start a blog for my research." I always reply, "Great! But, why do you want to blog about your research? Imagine that your blog gets you 100% of your desired audience. Now that you have their attention, what do you want to do with it?" When you know what your goals are, it's easier to identify what you should be talking about and how you should frame your discussions.

On a separate note, before you share your research on social media you should fully wrap your mind around the fact that any conversation delivered via social media is potentially a conversation with the world. You should be ready for comments from people who are not in your discipline, not academics, and not informed about the topic. It's easy to find like-minded people on social media. It's easy to get used to interacting with those like-minded people and come to assume that is your audience. However, in truth that is only a portion of your possible audience. Your tweets, blog posts, or social media posts in general may never go viral, but if they do, you want to have a plan. Will you ignore the mob of haters? Will you try to shout them down? Or more simply, will you try to correct their misperceptions of what you said? Decide in advance how you'll handle things when your audience grows exponentially in an instant.

Nathan Palmer is a Senior Lecturer at Georgia Southern University. He received his M.A. in Sociology from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in 2008 and is currently completing his Ph.D. His research examines how our individual social location affects the type of explanations we choose when asked to explain empirical intergroup differences and how taking an intro to sociology class may alter our habits of explanations through the development of a sociological imagination. He also frequently speaks publicly about racism, social media, and teaching. Currently Nathan is the teaching and learning section editor for the ASA journal Contexts. He is also the creator/editor-in-chief of SociologySource.org and SociologyInFocus.com. In 2014 Nathan was named the Wells Warren Professor of the Year at Georgia Southern.

On-Camera Interviews: An Interview with C.J. Pascoe

Tina Fetner (TF): As the author of the best-selling book, *Dude You're a Fag*, you've been interviewed on camera many times. How do you prepare to talk about your research in on-camera setting?

CJ Pascoe (CJ): The first time or two that I was interviewed on camera, I didn't prepare at all. I hadn't really had any encounters with public sociology and it hadn't really occurred to me that the reporters had their own story, their own agenda, and that I needed to be really familiar with the points I wanted to make in order to be interviewed in any sort of successful way.

The first time that I realized I needed to learn some of the best practices about being prepared to talk on camera was when I saw Barry Glassner speak at ASA. He spoke about being interviewed by Bill O'Reilly. He talked about facing a really hostile audience and how to prepare for that. I took his advice really seriously and have used it ever since. It's been so helpful.

His main point was to develop three talking points. What are the three points you want to get across? Return to those points throughout your interview. Have your wording for those prepared before you go into the interview so that you know what it is you want to say and regardless of what the story line the reporter wants to guide you to, which is great, what they want to do, they want you to say a particular story that fits with their frame regardless of their particular story, you can have your three points.

In a best case scenario—when there's real synergy between you and the reporter—their frame and your story line fit together. That absolutely happens, it's wonderful when it does happen. It feels really good when it does happen.

One of the ways I always prepare is that I make sure to note who I'm being interviewed by because sometimes you can see other interviews that they've done. Who the audience is, who are the people that watch the documentary or the show, the news, the cast that you're going to be on because you might frame what you're saying slightly differently depending on who the interviewer is and who the intended audience is and to know sort of what the topic is. What's the over-arching topic or frame or story that they're linking to your interview? Know whether it's live or not. If it's not live, you get to stop. You get to think about the question and then you get to answer it. If it is live, then you need to be very prepared to think on your feet. You don't get do-overs. That's very challenging for some of us.

A key thing is to know who you're being interviewed by, who the audience is and what the topic is. The second thing is to develop the main points you're going to get across, usually about three of them. The third thing that I always do is I pick particular examples. Those examples are ones that I can tie very tightly to the points that I want to make. That is, hook the points that you're making to a bucket of examples and those examples can be statistics, they can be ethnographic moments, or they can be examples from interviews you've done. They can be a mix of the three. I always have some sort of

evocative example that people can attach emotionally to that I can then spin out my main points from, if that makes sense.

TF: The talking points, how simple or complex are they? Do you have an example?

CJ: It depends on the audience. If you're going to be interviewed for a PR segment, that's one thing, but if you're going to be in a documentary or some sort of a long form story, then the points you can make can be a little bit more complex.

If you're going to be interviewed for a newscast—if you're going to be interviewed for some sort of nightly news segment—the talking points need to be very quick and concise.

For instance, here's an example about homophobia. I often get a lot of calls when there's some sort of tragedy in the news about a young person suffering from a homophobic bully and I'll get a call to talk about that. The thing you don't want to do is to develop talking points that are like, "Well, you know we all have to engage in these reformative responses to gendered expectations in society." That's not a good point.

What you want to do is talk in language that regular people who haven't sat through your social gender community class can understand, which is something like, "You know, what's interesting is that we often think of homophobia as a simplistic fear of gay people. We think of homophobia as a fear of gay people but when we look at the sort of homophobic bullying that has happened in an incidence like this with tragic consequences, what we often see is what kids are doing when they use homophobic insults is that they're trying to teach each other a lesson about what our society expects of men." Something like that.

Sometimes you have to use language that we don't use as sociologists, gender roles which is a language that I'm not totally fond of. It resonates with audiences or words like stereotypes, which again is not something I would necessarily use in a sociological context but if you say the phrase, "gender stereotypes" people know what that means. Then you can make it more complex if you have more time. Be prepared to use language that your mom and dad or brothers and sisters will understand. Try out your points on your family members, assuming your family members aren't also academics. That's always helpful in making your language more accessible.

TF: It sounds like you have different audience expectations based on who is interviewing you. Can you say more about what audience you're hoping to reach when you agree to an on-camera interview?

CJ: The general audience I'm hoping to reach, the assumed audience that's in my brain if I don't have any particular information about who it is, is that the audience is someone, again like my mom. Someone who is engaged in the world and thinks about things and cares about problems in the world but doesn't necessarily have the time, energy or desire to sit around and study all those things, which is what our job is.

I consider my responsibility then to be the person who's weighed through all the research and is able to say, "Look, this is what the research says about a particular topic"

and give that person a way into talking about whatever social topic or social problem they care about without having to spend their life studying it, which is what we do.

I often think about it in terms that it's a social problem that I care about that I don't actually research. It's like global warming. I care about global warming. When I hear an expert talk about global warming, I would like them to give me the main points that I need to know about this problem and what are some interesting solutions to it. It's not my topic but I'm an educated human being who could understand a basic analysis of the problem and basic solutions to it and that's who I tend to think of my audience as someone who is engaged in the world but might not spend their lives researching a particular problem that I'm researching.

Then again, if you do have information about your audience, think about examples from whatever topic you're talking about that will resonate with those audiences. For instance, if whatever I'm being interviewed for is going to be shown to high school students, I'll pick examples and use language that resonates more with them than if I'm going to be, for instance just this past week I was videotaped for a PFLAG video, my message for a PFLAG video is going to be different than my message to high school students; if I'm talking to parents and grownups versus kids. If you do have information about your audience, tailor your examples to ones that might resonate for them.

TF: Related to the idea of tailoring, I think one of the challenges for sociologists is to come up with the language that is different from what the interviewer is expecting. Do you have advice how to successfully do that on camera and especially in a live setting?

CJ: One of the things that I often do is I always try to empathize with the point that the journalist is trying to make. Develop language that switches the topic from the journalist's or the interviewer's perspective to your perspective. Something I see a lot is the journalist will ask something about, "Doesn't this mean we just need more education about homophobia?" or something like that.

I might respond with "A lot of people think that. That's a common solution to this problem and I could see why that would be. But instead, I would suggest X, Y and Z." This is why. To validate their point, to validate whatever it is their particular agenda or ideas are, so you don't get into a combative situation but you establish a sort of working relationship, "We're working together here and I can see why you'd think that. But what if we think about it this way?"

One of the things I do because these situations can get combative. Some people are just always going to be combative. If you're going to be interviewed by Fox News, there's not much you can necessarily do to get on the same side. Maybe in some instances you can and some you can't.

I've been interviewed by an NPR journalist--I can't remember what the topic was, but it was some instance where I suggested that the expectations of young men were involved in whatever the situation was. She got very hostile with me for suggesting that. But it can happen in any situation. I think the best way to deal with it is to validate the viewpoint, but redirect the conversation.

Actually one of the topics I've had to combat a lot with is my research on websites that are focused on eating disorders. Primarily women go on these particular websites and seek support in living anorexic, what they call the anorexic lifestyle.

They see anorexia mostly as a positive thing. It's more complicated than that, but that's essentially it. They see anorexia or eating disorders as mostly positive things. There'll be women for instance, who are wanting keep their calorie intake under X amount of calories per day and they seek advice on doing that.

When a reports asked me about that, they often have a frame of "How do we get rid of these websites? How do we keep young girls away from these websites?" "We don't want young women engaging in eating disorders and starving themselves to death."

But one of the things that my co-author and I noticed when we analyzed these websites was how similar they sounded to mainstream dieting magazines or to advice that doctors give to overweight patients. It's one of the points I make, "The websites aren't the problems. It's a reflection of a society-wide problem in which we demonize fat people." One of the shifts I often have to make is this exact shift in these discussions when a reporter says: "How do we keep young girls from going to these websites?" They want an answer to that. But I want to give them the answer that critiques society. I say something like: "Well, that's one way to talk about this particular problem--how do we keep kids away from these particular websites. But I would suggest that we might want to think about the way in which we talk about weight in general as a society. When kids sit in health class and are told again, and again, and again that fat is bad, it's no surprise that they're going to these websites to figure out how to lose weight. Perhaps maybe we need to step back and think about a more holistic approach to accepting diverse bodies, rather than demonizing these particular websites, which are actually a very small problem."

That's just one of the ways you can try to shift the discussion and move on.

TF: Taking on this "free choice, individualist" frame that is the norm outside of sociology is a challenge in any interaction, but it is particularly tough when you're live on the air.

CJ: I would advise people who are going to do an on air interview to practice that. Sit down with a friend and hopefully not a sociologist, but maybe a sociologist who can ask you questions from a more individual perspective or from a popular perspective on your topic and you can practice those pivots. I think those pivots are really key in having a successful interview.

I would advise people also to watch other sociologists do their thing. Watching Phillip Cohen on anything is amazing. He does a great job of bringing out evocative statistics and keeping his cool. She's not a sociologist, but she is fabulous with aggressive reporters, Stephanie Coontz. Watching her on Bill O'Reilly is just fabulous for how to deal with someone who opposes what it is you are doing or thinks they oppose what you're doing and she is able to find common ground with him in a really interesting way.

I would watch a couple academics get interviewed and take notes on some of the pivots they make and some of the language they use.

TF: Fox News is very salient in the minds of some sociologists who are nervous about being interviewed on camera. They might be concerned with being treated rudely, with being interrupted, or with facing an aggressive interviewer. Do you have advice for that particular situation?

CJ: It depends on how the rudeness happens. I think on the one hand it's okay to say, "No." I would actually put that out there. It is okay to say, "No" if A) you don't feel like you want to deal with that kind of aggressive ... if you know it's a situation in which its going to be aggressive. It's okay to just say, "No." I've been asked to do right-wing media and I've said, "No" multiple times, just because I haven't been confident in my ability to necessarily get my point across. I was probably one or two years out of graduate school and it made me way too nervous.

I again would emphasize looking for common ground. Getting everybody on board. For instance, this is one of the ways you can prepare of the interview itself is to think about what are things that everybody's on board with? Nobody wants anybody to be bullied. Use that as your common ground. No matter right-wing, left-wing, bullying is bad. We all agree as a society bullying is bad. To use that as your pivot point. Unless you enjoy the battle and some people do and that's fine. For those of us who don't, say you're on Fox News or something, or some very aggressive interview situation you can say, "Well what I hear you saying is that you are upset about X." I often say bullying or whatever topic, eating disorders, same thing. Nobody wants anybody to have an eating disorder.

Find that thing you can all agree on and then you can say something like, "Where it seems like we differ is I would analyze this as X, Y and Z." Again, being prepared with that sort of language, "Where we differ is", pointing out the common ground and then using neutral language to establish a slightly different position.

There are people who live for the argument. If you watch Reza Aslan for instance when he goes on Fox News, he takes a very aggressive stance and I think that's fine if that's how you work. That's not what I feel comfortable with. I suppose there's value to it. I think you need to figure out what your strength is. I'm sure there are sociologists for whom that is a strength.

Again, I wouldn't necessarily recommend getting hostile. I would emphasize, empathize with their position and then use neutral language to pivot to your position.

TF: What do you have to say about the fact of being seen? If you're on camera it raises certain presentations of self-issue. Where do you look? How do you sit and how do you avoid looking particularly self-conscious? Is there a piece of advice that you have in that arena?

CJ: That's such a good question. Sit up straight. I learned that on film. Wear dark colors. Put on some matte foundation whether you're a boy or a girl because it stops the shine. Those are all the basic things.

One thing you might want to do, as painful as it may be, is to watch yourself on video beforehand to watch what you do with your hands. I'm a big hand talker. Watch what you do with your hands, make sure they're away from your face. Don't look at the camera. I suppose there are instances when one could look at the camera, but if you practice being on video, practice looking to the side of the camera, usually where the reporter is sitting. It's strange either way to look at the camera or to not look at the camera. Neither feels comfortable to me.

I think some academics are sort of closet performers. That's one of the things we like. For those of us who are: just tap into that inner actor. Here's your moment, you're on camera. This is your acting moment, go with it. Be that sort of vibrant soul they don't really teach in classes. Really that's all you're doing is you're explaining to a TV audience a particular analysis of how the world works—just like you do with your classes.

The camera... it's really just your students out there. Think about the audience behind the camera as your students watching you perform. For me, that makes me more comfortable. I love being that charismatic professor! It's a way of perhaps helping you tap into a particular way of being that might feel more natural than the camera makes you feel.

TF: If you had to tell sociologists what are the positive aspects about being interviewed on camera, or why they might want to consider going on camera to share their perspectives on a hot topic, what would you say?

CJ: We have something to say! We spend our whole lives studying how society works. My hunch is a lot of us study how society works because we care about the society in which we live. If we want this to be a more just and equitable society, then we want public policy decisions to be based on actual research. We've got that research. We also want to help, at least I think we should want to help shape public discussion about the topics that we study.

If we can help, especially those of us in the United States, think about topics or social problems from a perspective that takes into account social forces and not just individual choice, just sort of re-frame the discussion from a purely economic one to a more sociological one, if we can do that I can't imagine why we wouldn't want to be interviewed on camera. Help provide people with the language that they need to have those sorts of discussions.

There are all sorts of reasons why people don't discuss topics sociologically, but one of the simple reasons is they just don't have the language. Most people don't take sociology classes in high school. They take economics classes in high school. If we can help provide people with a language—an alternate frame for understanding the reality in which they live—I don't understand why we wouldn't take that opportunity.

C.J. Pascoe is associate professor of sociology at the University of Oregon. She has written extensively on issues of masculinity, homophobia, youth and new media use. She is the author of the award winning book *Dude, You're a Fag: Masculinity and Sexuality in High School* as well as the co-editor of the volume *Exploring Masculinities: Identity, Inequality, Continuity and Change.* Her research has been featured in the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal* and *National Public Radio*. She is currently researching young people's cultures of love and romance, LGBTQ coming of age experiences and homophobia in online spaces.

Sociological Images: An Interview with Lisa Wade

Jessie Daniels: You recently won an award from the ASA for your efforts with *Sociological Images*. Can you say a little bit about how the blog came about, and how you think about your audience there?

Lisa Wade (LW): I started the blog in 2007 as a teaching resource for myself and a handful of my friends. It was one year out of graduate school and all the people I TA'd with back in grad school were spread out all over the country or still back in Wisconsin. It was also a time before the Internet had so many images and visuals on it, and so most of the materials I was using in class I uploaded myself. Like a lot of us were doing back then, I would ask students to collect ads for analysis and have them turn them in to me, and then I would take the good ones and scan them and use them in class later. Or I would tear ads out of the magazines at the dentist's office. You know, steal them.

So, I started this Blogspot blog, and I invited maybe six people to be a part of it, mostly people from grad school. As with most group blogs, only two of us ended up actually doing it more than one or two times, and that was me and Gwen Sharp. Early posts would be an image and a meaningless title – this was before OMG, but something like that. We would expect it to make sense to each other somehow. It was pretty simple, really. And, to be fair, I wasn't a very sophisticated thinker at the time. People tend to think that getting a PhD means you're a sophisticated thinker, but it just means you're a little more sophisticated than you were a few years back. I've grown a lot in the last eight years of the blog, and you can definitely see that if you look.

So Gwen and I are swapping these things back and forth, and then people started commenting. I have no idea where they came from, why they were there, but people started making comments.

In response, we started being a little bit more careful in what we titled things. We would title something like "sexual objectification." As people kept commenting, we started writing in the blog post itself, something like "Sexual objectification is…." And people kept commenting. The next thing you knew, we were saying, "Sexual objectification is…, and this is an example of that because…," and the rest is history. I didn't have the idea to make *SocImages* what it is today. I stumbled into it accidentally, by doing it.

JD: Just to clarify, you would say your audience is really other people, other sociologists, people who were in grad school with you and who were also teaching, is that right?

LW: I thought that was who the audience would be, a few grad students, sociology professors, but that's not how it turned out. I don't have a good idea today of what percentage of the readers are not professors or students, but a large percentage of them. I'm going to guess 80% of the people would not be involved in sociology in any way.

JD: That brings me to the question of analytics. (Analytics for those who are new to the idea are just numbers or data that you get about the blog and how it's doing.) I wonder

how much you pay attention to those for *Sociological Images*? I know you wrote an article, a peer-reviewed article with Gwen Sharp that went through some of the numbers. I just wondered how much you paid attention to that over the course of the blog and if you use that in any way as a strategy for building an audience?

LW: No, not as a strategy, I don't. The only routine way I pay attention to the analytics is at the end of every month, I post a "Here's how this month looked" post, and I tend to look at the posts that got the most likes, and I say, "Here's the most liked posts this month." That's usually the extent to which I pay attention to analytics.

Occasionally, like for that peer-reviewed article or for the talk I gave at Midwest Sociological Society this year, I dig into the analytics to figure out exactly what's going on. That's always really interesting to do. It's interesting and exciting to see how many people are coming by and where they're coming from.

Another difference between then, the beginning, and now is that back then, I expected people to come to the website to consume the information. Now, with the social media aspect, it would be impossible to do *SocImages* without social media. The Facebook page is the number one referrer after random searches in Google. That's even with Facebook squeezing down on the number of your followers that they show your material to.

JD: That's my next question: How do you use social media? To what extent has your use of social media been conscious or how has it evolved?

LW: It's very interesting because first we did Facebook, and then we did Twitter, and then we did Pinterest. Honestly, maybe we've been doing Facebook for five years, maybe Twitter for four, Pinterest for two, something like that. I'm not really sure, but Pinterest seemed like a really perfect type of auxiliary site for *SocImages*. It allows me to build collections of images that are really easy to look at and use, but collect them in sociologically relevant categories. Pinterest is definitely the least of those three in terms of bringing attention to the site. Facebook is massive. We have over 75,000 followers on Facebook now. It's just huge.

I think social media makes it really hard to know what your impact is. Google Analytics tell me how many people come to the website, and where they go, and where they're coming from, but most people that see *SocImages* post on Twitter or on Facebook. They don't click on those links. For those people, you have the opportunity to have an impact, but in a tiny way. I try to make sure all of my Facebook and Twitter posts encapsulate an idea in themselves so that if even if a person doesn't go to the blog, they still are getting a sociological lesson.

For example, I might say, "The middle class is still shrinking," or something like that. That just alerts somebody to this concept of, "Oh, the middle class is shrinking. That's interesting." Maybe they don't click on the link, but maybe a week later, they hear something similar and they click on some other link, or maybe they start a conversation with someone. It gets out these important ideas, but there's no way of measuring that impact, that I know of, and I'm too busy to bother measuring everything anyway. Not to mention the qualitative impact of all those tiny messages. It says right on Facebook how many people have viewed your post. I would say that my typical Facebook post reaches

30,000 people. Most of them don't click, but that's still 30,000 people that saw an important sociological idea.

JD: An issue that comes up a lot when I talk to people, especially academics, about venturing into social media, is that they're very concerned about trolls and other negative aspects of being online. I wonder if you've had any negative experiences from *Sociological Images* and how you've handled these?

LW: I definitely encounter trolls. I don't read the comments, mostly because I just don't have the time. People can say pretty nasty stuff in there and I wouldn't know about it, but sometimes they get flagged by a reader and I'm alerted to consider deleting them. I don't think I personally get as much as I hear other people getting. When I do get it, I'm really quick to dismiss and ignore criticisms that are just obviously stupid. Someone who tells me I should "suck a dick and die" does not bother me at all. Not even for a half second.

Absolutely none of my emotional energy goes towards that person, and I've never been actually threatened. A lot of people have said things like, "I hope you get raped." Nobody has said, "I'm going to rape you." Nobody that I know of, anyway. I do occasionally get people that go through the trouble of finding my email address—which they'd have to Google my name, find out where I teach, follow the links, find the email address, etc.—and then they send me diatribes directly into my email inbox. But usually they seem to be perfectly satisfied having had their say. "Oh, good, I called her a cunt 16 times, and now I feel better." I rarely hear anything from them again.

Once, I had a guy that did that three separate times in a week. He just kept sending me emails, but then he ran out of steam and went away. There's that. That kind of trolling does not really bother me.

But there are also people who criticize me for really good reasons, and that is something I spend a lot more energy on. Do I need to change my post? How do I incorporate the criticism into future posts and other writing I do? I spend my energy on that.

Then there's also a third kind of thing going on – and I wouldn't call this trolling, but it is a form of criticism. People who do critical analysis publicly, especially if they are making some sort of claim to being even tangentially involved in social justice stuff like a lot of sociologists are, encounter efforts to hold them accountable to all social issues perfectly at all times. It sounds something like: "Oh, but you didn't address blank in this post, or you discussed them wrong, which means you're erasing them, which means you must think everyone is [insert dominant group here] in this post, therefore you're [insert -ist, -phobic, or similar term here]. This is symbolic violence." That's hard. Because I want to be accountable. And I want people to *hold* me accountable. Intersectionality is important, but it's also a process of multiplication that has no ceiling or floor. And I try to be attentive to as much literature as I can, but there's just going to be some stuff I don't know.

Sometimes I do feel a little bit hostage to trying not to hurt anyone or symbolically annihilate anyone, when I just want to do sociology. It's a kind of criticism that I'm still

processing. I suspect that we as a field are going to have to figure out exactly where intersectionality leads us both analytically and morally.

For now, one of my solutions to this is to try to give people that criticize me a platform. Not too long ago, for example, I put up a post about drag queens, and I made some comments about that, and then two people wrote criticisms and posted them elsewhere. I just asked for their permission to put those posts up on *SocImages*. Being wrong or getting criticized is okay with me. There is this idea that we're supposed to be humiliated by such things, but I don't accept that. We're all going to be those things sometimes, and so I just give them a platform.

In the end, I don't really feel like it hurts me to acknowledge that a post wasn't perfect, or even was ignorant or hurtful, as long as I accept the criticism. And anyway, I need other people's voices. First, I want to learn. But, second, SocImages needs them. I'm just one person. I am never going to be able to say all the things, so I need other voices and I need other brains if I want to make even the barest claim that *SocImages* is a generalist website.

JD: Last question: You recently got a contract for a trade press book about your research, and I wonder if you could share how you think *Sociological Images* figured into that process?

LW: It's likely the contract I got for the trade book was helped by the social media following that I could claim--it's likely that they looked at those numbers. I certainly put it in my proposal. I said, "I have so many followers on all of these social media sites that I basically control." I think when I added it up, it was something like 125,000 or 130,000 social media followers in total. They didn't talk to me about that, but I do hear that publishers like to give book contracts to people who already have an audience so that they don't have to do all the work to get your book out there.

I think, more important than that is the fact that I've written 3,000 blog posts in the last eight years. I am probably better at writing for a general audience than I would be if I hadn't written 3,000 blog posts. It's a skill that requires a lot of practice, and practice is putting in the time. It's eight years of daily writing, so I think that has helped me so much in becoming someone who knows how to cut through—I can't remember if it was Doug Hartman or Chris Uggen—but one of them said that I'm good at skipping the "throat clearing" when writing, like someone who says, "I've been thinking about this for a while, and I wanted to say blah, blah, blah," then they get around to talking about. Anyway, I've just learned skills like that, ideas about how to write and what's important. And I've gotten a voice, I think, and I'm a faster writer than I would have been. It's made me start paying attention when I read, so that I get ideas about what I like and what I don't like. For example, in most contexts I personally don't like it when bloggers talk about themselves. I think often it usually distracts from the idea. So, when I do it, it's very thoughtful. I'm thinking, "Okay, I'm talking about myself. Do I really want to do this?"

I'm sure that having written a blog all those years has just made me a better writer for the general public and I think that's been good for me and I'd like to think it's been good for sociology, too.

Lisa Wade is an Associate Professor at Occidental College. She received her doctorate from University of Madison. She has written extensively on gender particularly gender and sexuality. She is also the author of a textbook (with Myra Max Feree) entitled *Gender: Ideas*, *Interactions*, *Institutions* (Norton) and the forthcoming *American Hookup: The New Culture of Sex on Campus* (Norton). Her blog, *Sociological Images*, has received numerous awards, including the ASA Distinguished Contribution to Teaching in 2015. The blog, which receives millions of visitors annually, can be reached here: thesocietypages.org/socimages/

Part III:

Best Practices and Practical Advice

Tips for Promoting a New Book: Part I

Annette Lareau, University of Pennsylvania

You spent a long time framing a study, collecting the data, writing the results, and revising it many times. Congratulations on finishing the book! If you take the mission of public sociology seriously, it is helpful to share your results with others. This piece offers "free advice" of how to promote your book.

Events/activities to undertake by the press, the university/department, or you as an individual to promote the book:

- Have a book party (sponsored by department, school, university, publisher, or host it yourself)
- Have the university or school do a press release
- Write an op-ed for a major newspaper (see below) – use current event or anniversary of important historical event as the hook (e.g., anniversary of the Civil Rights Act, War on Poverty, Black History Month, etc.)

Things to do in preparation:

- Write a short summary that can be posted on a personal or university website, on Facebook, on LinkedIn, that can be sent to bloggers and relevant listservs.
- Work on vivid language to describe the themes of the book in short sound bites.
- Work on your website: post a copy of the book and a short summary; prepare and post a question and answer segment on your book. Provide a link on your website to the website for the book by the publisher.
- When you have a chance to talk to people who can be influential about your book (reporters, journalists, prominent academics, or to anyone else you think can help you market the book, etc.), offer to send them a book. In some cases, the publisher may have an electronic version that you can send or can send for you. For example, if you talk to a journalist who has a deadline for tomorrow, offer to send them an electronic copy of the book (and make sure the press is prepared to respond quickly).
- Work on honing your message. An op-ed is short, a radio interview may be 3 minutes, a reporter may listen for only a few sentences. You need to know the key message of your book and be able to communicate that clearly and in an interesting way in a few sentences.
- Think about who else has done research on a topic similar to yours and be prepared to talk about them so that you can place your work within a community of scholars. You are trying to promote the ideas, to create a gloss around your work.
- Write an article that summarizes the book and send it to people who might read an article but not the book.
- Do a practice interview, for example, with a friend or your press office at your institution.

- Prepare a great presentation and offer to give it in as many places as you can. Tell everyone the book is out and offer to do talks. You can volunteer to give the talk and even say that you don't need an honorarium, you are just happy to talk about the ideas. Work hard on this talk. Prepare beautiful visuals (lots of pictures). Have people critique it. Once you get it well organized, it is not necessary to change it. You can give the same talk over and over again. You want to find ways to give the talk to as many people as possible.
- If you want to address a more complex argument than seems appropriate for a seminar presentation (or other type of presentation), then perhaps develop a handout that has the whole argument diagrammed and perhaps labeled with sections A, B, C, etc., and then let the audience know that you are only going to talk about this section and that section but not the whole thing.
- Look for a hook that will help others take note of your book (e.g., Johnson's prediction that signing the Civil Rights Movement would lose the South for a generation; that only 33% of white males in Alabama voted for Obama; or new research on segregation). Ask, "What is going on here? Why don't we understand this?" Show how your book helps explain something others care about but can't figure out.
- If you are good at it and willing to keep it up, create a blog and write about issues that are relevant to the book. Send information on your book (and the brief summary) to others who have blogs.
- Google your name and see what comes up. Search for places where you can place information about the book and yourself, with pictures and summaries.

Major newspapers: Things to Consider

- Ideally, you would like to have an op-ed in the *New York Times*: but keep in mind that they like to be first—i.e., to have an exclusive—so try that first.
- If not the *NY Times*, then you would like to have op-eds in the *LA Times*, the *Chicago Tribune*, the *Washington Post*, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, or another major newspaper.
- Ask anyone you know if they know anyone who has access to these papers or knows how to get the interest of an editor or journalist; tell them that you would like to talk about your book and how to get it reviewed. Offer a copy.
- Send the book and a handwritten note (in blue ink) to a prominent journalist: e.g., David Brooks from the *NY Times*. Mention the name of someone they would know (e.g., David Brooks has cited my work, so you could mention my name).
- An op-ed is about 600-750 words and within the first two sentences, you have to have stated your main thesis. The op-ed does not have to address everything in your book. It should be focused, interesting, and have a hook that is contemporary.
- Look at articles on the topic of your book or related topics and see who the journalists are; try to contact them or offer to send them a book.
- For each major newspaper: see who the journalist was on a major series, e.g., on race issues, send an e-mail indicating something like: "I see you have done work

on X and I see that you emphasize Y. My work shows Z. I am not alone in this. These other people have done similar work and found the same thing. Would you like me to send a copy of my book?" Send to two or three different reporters.

Other ways to get the word out:

- Post information about the book on listservs of which you are aware, including for ASA sections.
- Post it on your Facebook page. Use Twitter. (See the relevant documents in the ASA Toolkit).
- Have someone nominate you for an Author Meets the Critic session at ASA or one or more of the regional meetings. The deadlines for ASA are incredibly early; usually it is in the fall or winter for the meeting two years hence.
- Make sure your book is nominated for all of the major awards at ASA or other professional associations: ASA awards, Section awards (e.g., Race, Political Sociology, Inequality, Organizations and Work), C. Wright Mills award, regional association awards. Know the deadlines. ESS is probably August or September. E.g., the deadline for the C. Wright Mills award is in December and you can only be considered in the year that the book was published. It is best if someone else nominates you, if you can ask friends to help.
- Write an e-mail to everyone you know in your address book. Ask them to tell three of their friends about the book. Call in chips and use your networks. But, remember that there is norm of reciprocity. If others do it for you, then you need to be sure to do it for them. Call in every chip, but then also pay back as well. You will end up owing a lot of favors.
- Talk to everyone you know and find out who they know in the media (newspapers, radio interviews, NPR). Get contact information from those who have done such interviews before.
- Contact the alumni magazines for the universities from which you graduated or from your current university. If there is a university newsletter, a university magazine, etc., try to get an article or mention of your book.
- Send a book and a note to Charlie Rose, to Bill Moyers, Stephen Colbert, Jon Stewart, Talking Points Memo, Huffington Post, etc. Shoot for the moon. This is the time to do it.
- Make a list of about 15 or so influential academics and ask the press to send them copies of the book. Send a personalized note to each about why they might be interested in your book.
- Provide information to prominent websites (e.g., the Inequality website at Stanford)

Promoting your book is probably going to take a lot of time at first. For some weeks it can almost be a full-time job, but if you find an audience, it will be worth it. Still, you should be prepared for hiccups and rejection. Some efforts will fail. You need to throw a lot of things out there and see what sticks. The only way to have your book noticed, to sell a lot of copies, and to have your ideas become a focus of conversation is if people

know about your book and find it easy to understand why they should care. You want to help people understand why your book is important.

Annette Lareau is the Stanley I. Sheerr Professor in the Department of Sociology at the University of Pennsylvania. She has done qualitative research on the processes through which social class shapes children's daily lives. She is the author of *Unequal Childhoods: Class, Race, and Family Life* which won a distinguished publication award from the Sociology of Family, Sociology of Childhood, and Sociology of Culture sections of the American Sociological Association. She is also the co-editor (with Kimberly Goyette) of the 2014 book *Choosing Homes, Choosing Schools* which examines the factors that influence parents' decisions on where to live and where to send their children to school. She also co-edited the books *Educational Research on Trial*, *Social Class: How Does it Work*, and *Journeys through Ethnography*. Her work has been written about by Malcolm Gladwell in his book *Outliers* as well as by David Brooks. Lareau is a Past President of the American Sociological Association.

Tips for Promoting a New Book: Part II

Abigail C. Saguy, University of California, Los Angeles

My first book, *What is Sexual Harassment? From Capitol Hill to the Sorbonne*, based on my doctoral dissertation, came out in 2003. At the time, I was an assistant professor and feeling pressure to show that I was making headway on a new, post-dissertation project. I was also negotiating the demands of caring for a new baby. As a result, I did not feel that I could afford to spend too much time promoting my book, something that I regretted later. After spending a decade researching and writing the book, it's a shame not to spend the time necessary to make sure that the book gets as wide an audience as possible!

When my second book, *What's Wrong with Fat?*, was published in 2013, I vowed not to make the same mistake. This time, I promised myself, I would give myself permission to spend time promoting the book. For me, prioritizing the work of book promotion was the first step to success. This meant reserving some time each day, during the first months after publication, to spend on book promotion tasks. It also meant being willing to drop everything if an opportunity, say, to write an op-ed presented itself.

In September, when my book was in press, I began planning for the January 2013 release. I reached out to supportive colleagues to help organize author-meets-critic panels at regional conferences, including the Pacific Sociological Association and the Southern Sociological Association, and at UCLA. I also submitted my book for consideration for an author-meets-critic panel at the 2014 ASA meeting and was deeply honored that my book was among 19 books (out of 350 submissions) to be accepted. I let my colleagues at other universities know that I would be delighted to present a book talk in their seminar series.

Importantly, I enrolled in an all-day workshop on op-ed and other public writing, provided by the Op-Ed project, a "social venture founded to increase the range of voices and quality of ideas we hear in the world." Not only did this workshop provide me with an effective crash-course in op-ed writing, but it also came with year-long access to mentors, who would read and comment on my drafts within 48 hours.

As pressures to be thin and dieting were important themes in my book, I saw the upcoming New Year and its associated resolutions as a great hook for an op-ed piece. As this was an event that could be predicted with certainty, it provided me with ample lead time to write, solicit feedback, rewrite, solicit more feedback, and rewrite again my piece. After several drafts, "Why we Diet" was published in the *Los Angeles Times* op-ed section on January 4 2013. I continued writing op-eds in the months that followed, including a piece on "size profiling"–the tendency of doctors to assume that any ailment suffered by a heavy patient is due to their weight without doing proper tests–in the *Washington Post*.

As I published more, editors began to seek me out to comment on current events related to the topic of my book. Thus, when the American Medical Association (AMA) decided to define obesity as a disease, *Time* asked me to comment. I had many other demands on my time at the moment, but dropped everything to write 550 words on the topic.

Following this publication, the *U.S. News and World Report* asked me to take part in an online debate on the same topic. Via list servers, I encouraged colleagues working on similar topics to vote and was gratified to receive the greatest number of votes of the seven contributors!

During this time, I also created a Facebook page and Twitter account that I updated regularly with interesting links related to the topic of my book. At one point, I had an undergraduate research assistant help identify and post relevant content. I created a personal webpage, where I posted the first chapter of my book and links to media coverage.

Oxford University Press and UCLA publicists also worked hard to get the word out about my book. Oxford sent books to various news outlets and the UCLA publicist Meg Sullivan helped me write a press release. While it is impossible to know for sure, I suspect this work was instrumental in the *New York Times* review of my book and the invitations I received (and accepted!) to be interviewed about my book on various NPR affiliated channels.

Now 18 months since the publication of my book, I am doing less to actively promote it. I do not update my Facebook page or Twitter feed as regularly. However, I do continue to accept invitations to speak about the book and to write op-eds, even when these invitations arrive at inconvenient times and have opportunity costs. I recently wrote two pieces for Zocalo Forum, both of which ended up being reprinted by larger media outlets, including *Time* and *USA Today*.

I would like to conclude by saying that I believe that it is important that sociologists take part in public debates about issues on which we have expertise. It is a privilege to spend one's life conducting research and analyzing the world in which we live. I believe that it is a crime to hoard the fruits of this labor. We owe it to society to share what we have learned in a variety of forums. One important venue is, of course, undergraduate teaching. Op-ed–and other public– writing is another. I would love to see even more sociologists in the pages and screens of various media outlets!

Abigail Saguy is Professor of Sociology and Gender Studies at UCLA. She is the author of *What's Wrong with Fat?* (2013) and *What is Sexual Harassment? From Capitol Hill to the Sorbonne (2003).* Her teaching and research interests include gender, culture, the body, politics, law and public health.

Tips for Promoting a New Book: Part III

Elizabeth A. Armstrong, University of Michigan
Laura T. Hamilton, University of California, Merced

The essays by Lareau and Saguy offer a range of ways to promote a new book. The actions suggested are concrete and, seemingly, shouldn't be difficult to implement. Yet they are. At least we found them so. Some we managed to do, while others we did not. Ambivalence about self-promotion got in the way, as did the demands of life and the rest of our jobs. In this essay, we explore some of these difficulties in the hopes that our thoughts and experiences might help you decide what strategies are right for you—and which you simply don't have the time, energy, or psychological resources to employ.

There is no doubt that some degree of public engagement is important. As sociologists of culture have illustrated, sponsorship is a key to explaining why some cultural products reach an audience while others do not. This is perhaps more true now than ever before. We live in a world so saturated with ideas that those without a sponsor may be orphaned. But what amount of effort and time is reasonable to devote to such an endeavor? Adding up the hours that would be required to execute the tasks outlined in the other essays provides a sense of just how time-consuming book promotion can be. Annette Lareau describes book promotion as becoming a "full time job" for a while, and Abigail Saguy notes that promotion "meant being willing to drop everything" if an opportunity presented itself. Even if you would dearly love to do so, you may not be in a position where you can devote this much time to promoting your book.

We employed many of the strategies that Lareau and others recommend, but drew the line when we just didn't feel comfortable. Even with two of us, we did not have the time or energy to do everything. The expectation that academics actively promote our books adds new pressure to our already demanding jobs. In the past, the conventional scholarly approach was to let the work speak for itself, while moving on to new ideas and new topics. Our guess is that few of us entered graduate school aware of the fact that the deliberate and intentional promotion of our work would become a substantial part of our jobs. It adds a fourth dimension to the conventional triumvirate of research, service, and teaching—one that is not conventionally evaluated in tenure and promotion decisions.

Attempting to promote a book is also not a terribly efficient use of time. Laura wrote an op-ed that never ran. Elizabeth was invited to be on an evening television news show at one point. After an afternoon of stress about what to wear on television, the segment was cancelled. Attempting to accommodate the 24-hour media news cycle is difficult. For example, Elizabeth was asked to do a radio interview on a weekend while traveling for work. She ended up doing the interview in a noisy hallway at a conference. Working with journalists requires being willing and able to drop everything to enable them to meet their deadlines. This doesn't necessary mesh well with work/life balance. And it can wreak havoc with a writing schedule. One 15-minute interview can torpedo a whole day, especially if it does not go well.

Selling our work can be risky, especially for assistant professors: Time spent promoting a book is time spent away from the production of new research. This raises questions about how to balance "production" and "sales." Here we advise you to be strategic about what is likely to have an impact and to just do what you can in the time you have. In doing so, we pull on examples from our own experiences.

Paying for the Party received a great deal of media attention. *The New York Times*, *Inside Higher Ed*, and *The Chronicle of Higher Education* all covered the book shortly after it came out, in part because the topic happened to be "hot" at the time. We put effort into getting our book into the hands of these well-read outlets, and made sure to return their calls and emails immediately. The Associated Press, which disseminates news to outlets around the world, and any NPR requests were also granted primacy. Journalists that we knew from prior media coverage who seemed to "get it" were also some of our first contacts. We have each done probably 40-50 interviews since the book came out in 2013 and about as many presentations. But we did not do every interview or accept every speaking engagement. We had to draw a line somewhere. Websites with smaller readerships, local or university papers, and groups with viewpoints running sharply counter to our own were lowest priority.

The emotional labor of promoting a book is challenging to manage. Many of us have been taught that being actively self-promotional is inappropriate. Elizabeth, for example, hears her Midwestern parents' voices telling her that it is "bad form" to "toot your own horn" when she contemplates engaging in active promotion of research. Overcoming these messages is possible, but it means that relatively straightforward tasks sometimes require more emotional reserves than it seems like they should. For example, ambivalence led Elizabeth to put off getting a promotional photograph taken for several weeks. Laura had to keep hounding her about getting it done, and she eventually did. But something as simple as a photograph can feel overwhelming. Having someone to talk to about the pressures and discomforts of book promotion—especially a scholar who has been through it before—is invaluable.

One wonderful and unexpected bonus of co-authoring a book was having a built in support system. We vented to each other, shared emotions, and relied on each other as a springboard for ideas and strategies. Importantly, we also helped each other to decide how to approach book promotion and when we could refuse an onerous task. This structure naturally arose from our particular relationship with each other. However, we suggest that all scholars cultivate a set of trusted confidantes to help determine what forms of self-promotion are consistent with personal values, energy levels, and life demands. An unofficial "no" committee—that is, people who tell you when a demand or task is too much and only grant permission when the effort is likely to pay off—can be an effective way to set realistic limits and make sure you do not miss out on important promotional opportunities.

We also employed a few strategies to manage the large workload associated with marketing the book. In the midst of key life events, such as moves and the birth of children, Laura and Elizabeth could rely on the other person to pick up the slack. Of course, not everyone has a trusty co-author. Had the book been single authored,

sometimes life circumstances (and our sanity) would have taken precedence. However, there are ways to make this a group effort, even when you are the sole author. For instance, we also benefited from a rich network of scholar-friends and supporters working on similar topics, who carried word of our research even when we could not. In this sense, getting your work in the hands of the people most likely to understand, appreciate, and promote it may be the single most important thing you can do to promote your book.

Harvard University Press, and the wonderful team handling *Paying for the Party* (headed by editor Elizabeth Knoll), also played an active role in sending free copies of the book to any interested media outlet or book award for which we were nominated. Not all presses are so keen to do this publicity work, nor do they have the infrastructure to make it happen. Whatever the press does not do falls to the individual (e.g., obtaining book copies and individually mailing them out with marketing material). In deciding where to publish a book, it is important to have a conversation with the press about marketing strategy, the audience(s) they are aiming to reach, and just how aggressively they will push the book.

It may also be easier to devote energies to promotion if you find synergies between promotion and the development of new research. We definitely did. Our knowledge of the university, student culture, gender, sexuality, and related topics has gotten deeper and richer in conversations with our audiences. Readers email us questions and queries, connecting their college experiences to those of the young women we studied. Scholarly audiences have pushed us on the theoretical claims that we made. Journalists alerted us that the sexual cultures that we studied continue to evolve with each new cohort and the emergence of new technologies. Keeping abreast of the news has been just as much a part of promotion as it has been richly informational—necessary for us to understand how the topics we study are discussed in the media and understood by the public.

Our current and future research agendas now bear the imprint of these synergistic interactions and conversations. Elizabeth's new project on how universities are responding to sexual violence is deeply informed by what she has learned in the course of various speaking engagements over the past couple of years. Laura concluded her new book on college parenting, *Parenting to a Degree: How Family Matters for College Women's Success*, by referencing an enlightening conversation she had years earlier with an international reporter. In conducting a new round of interviews with women from *Paying for the Party*, we often think about reader reactions.

Although we agree that it is important that sociologists participate in public debates, we think it is important that scholars approach this with realistic expectations about the effort required and the unpredictability of the payoff of this effort. It is important that we balance promotion with the rest of the demands placed on us. Authors should consider carefully what efforts make sense given their particular circumstances, especially their career stage and family needs. Finding ways to make what you can do count will help, as will a strong social and academic support system. But sometimes it is ok to acknowledge that you cannot—and will not—do it all.

Elizabeth A. Armstrong is a sociologist with research interests in the areas of sexuality, gender, culture, organizations, social movements, and higher education. After teaching at Indiana University, Professor Armstrong joined the Department of Sociology and the Organizational Studies Program at the University of Michigan in 2009. She was a fellow at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University and a recipient of a National Academy of Education/Spencer Postdoctoral Fellowship. She earned her M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in Sociology at the University of California-Berkeley and a B.A. in Sociology and Computer Science from the University of Michigan.

Laura Hamilton is an Associate Professor of Sociology at the University of California, Merced. Broadly, her interests include gender, sexuality, family, education, social class, and mixed research methods. Hamilton earned her Ph.D. in sociology from Indiana University in 2010, and her B.A. in sociology from DePauw University in 2001. Hamilton's first book, equally-authored with Elizabeth A. Armstrong, *Paying for the Party: How College Maintains Inequality* won the 2015 American Sociological Association Distinguished Book Award. Hamilton's second, solo-authored, book, *Parenting to a Degree: How Family Matters for College and Beyond* (2016) examines the parenting approaches of mothers and fathers as their daughters move through Midwest U and into the workforce. Contrary to negative media portrayals of helicopter parents, Hamilton finds that successfully navigating a school like MU without involved parents is near impossible.

Trade or Academic Press: Which is Right for Me?

Dalton Conley, New York University

First a bit of clarification: Whether a book is published "trade" or not is really only a matter of what discount (if any) off the list price the publisher offers the retailer. (Trade books get a bigger discount.) University presses offer some titles as "trade" and some as "academic" monographs. Indeed, most of the major academic publishers have both trade and academic divisions. Even some of the commercial publishers have both academic and trade divisions (such as W.W. Norton, for instance).

So what people really mean when they are asking the question, "Should I go trade?" is whether they should publish their book with a commercial or academic publisher. (Within either type, it is usually better to go trade, since these are the books that will be marketed more aggressively.) Of course, the answer depends. But before I get to that answer, I would like to address yet another distinction: paperback v. cloth v. simultaneous issuance.

Some books will be brought out only in cloth (i.e. hardcover). The reason for this is that generally mainstream review outlets only consider books that are released only in cloth alone at first. The downside is that, as you probably know, cloth books are priced much higher, so sales may suffer. The ideal situation is to be published in cloth but then a year or so later, to be published in paper. The cloth book acts as an advertisement of sorts for the paperback that may be assigned in courses and/or bought by a wider range of readers. The risk, of course, is that if you do not sell enough in cloth, your book may never see the light of day as a paperback.

On the other hand, if a publisher does not expect a book to garner review attention from the mainstream and publishing industry press, it may issue it in paper only or in simultaneous paper/cloth. This (almost) guarantees a lack of review or feature attention outside the academic journals and blogs. When done simultaneously, the point is to price the hardcover super high so that much money is made off a very limited number of sales (mostly library purchases). Of course, with ebooks and declining library purchases, the whole model is in flux. I have published books both as cloth only first and as simultaneous and as paper only (my textbook). I think, with one exception, the right decision was made by the publisher in each case. You, of course, should have some say in this strategy, but may not have the final say in some cases (unless you have leverage).

So, once you know that you want to publish with a trade discount and cloth only (or paper only or simultaneous), the question becomes which sort of publisher. Most of us for most of our careers will not have the choice to go with a commercial press, but if we are lucky enough to enjoy such a conundrum, it can indeed become a tricky choice. If you are untenured, most of your colleagues will say to go with an academic press. Ignore them. The real issue is the quality of the press. Publishing a book with Norton or Farrar Strauss Giroux or Knopf is just as prestigious (and will generate more jealousy among your colleagues) as cutting a deal with any of the top university presses (and more prestigious than a second tier academic press). Classics of sociology like Jencks et al.

Inequality or Liebow's *Tally's Corner*, were published by commercial presses. That said, if you are going with a well-respected commercial press, you still have to ask yourself whether you will have the same freedom to write as nuanced a book as you need to write to maintain your academic integrity.

You may also ask yourself whether you are only a book person, or whether you are also an article person. If you are publishing peer reviewed articles in addition to writing books, going with an academic press is not as critical since you can demonstrate a body of work that has been vetted by double-blind review. In fact, university press reviews are generally single-blind (i.e. the reviewers know who the author is), and thus a top journal article is often seen as having been more vetted than even a top-ranked university press book. But if the book is the only line on your academic vita, then you might think twice. I do not necessarily say that going commercial is a career killer—just that you have to be more careful. After all, commercial books get more widespread attention—on average—than university press books do. That kind of attention may rub some colleagues the wrong way, but deans and higher ups love it, as long as the name of your employer is spelled right in the coverage.

Sometimes you may want to go with an academic press not because you need to write a less mainstream book, or even due to tenure fears, but simply because you think you will get better treatment with that press. If you have written the kind of book that is meriting commercial editors' attention, then some academic publishers may *really* lavish you with promises. When I was deciding what to do with my second book, *Honky*, I had an offer from Random House, and I had an offer from the University of California Press (which was already publishing my first, academic book, *Being Black, Living in the Red*.) Despite the lure of the big pond of commercial publishing, I decided to go with California, because I feared being a "skip": a mid-list book in a huge catalog that was passed over by the sales reps and marketers as they were pitching that season's titles to booksellers. This was an especially acute concern since the monetary advance Random House offered was four figures, and they were publishing Mario Puzo's latest novel the same season. The size of the advance tells one the level of investment in the book (do not bother trying to explain the idea of sunk costs to publishers). Meanwhile, the same advance from California represented a huge investment such that they offered to make my book the lead title of the season.

Indeed, there have been many huge sellers published by academic presses. Think *Slim's Table* or *On the Run* for Chicago or *Irrational Exuberance* or *On Bullshit* for Princeton or *Capital in the Twenty-First Century* for Harvard or *Unequal Childhoods* for California.

As I hope is evident, the choice is not obvious. Just be thankful to have such a choice.

Dalton Conley earned his PhD in sociology from Columbia University in 1996 and a PhD in Biology (Genomics) from NYU in 2014. His research focuses on how socio-economic status and health are transmitted across generations and on the public policies that affect those processes. He studies sibling differences in socioeconomic success; racial inequalities; the measurement of class; and how health and biology affect (and are affected by) social position. His publications include *Being Black, Living in the Red; The Starting Gate; Honky*; *The Pecking Order; You May Ask Yourself;* and *Parentology*. He is a Research

Associate at the National Bureau of Economic Research and has been the recipient of Guggenheim and Russell Sage Foundation fellowships as well as the Alan T. Waterman Award of the National Science Foundation.

From Tweet to Blog Post to Peer-Reviewed Article: How to be a Scholar Now.

Jessie Daniels, City University of New York

Digital media is changing how I do my work as a scholar. How I work today bears little resemblance to the way I was trained as a scholar, but has everything to do with being fluid with both scholarship and digital technologies. To illustrate what I mean by this, I describe the process behind a recent article of mine that started with a Tweet at an academic conference, then became a blog post, then a series of blog posts, and was eventually an article in a peer-reviewed journal.

The germ of an idea for my paper, "Race and racism in Internet Studies: A Review and Critique" in *New Media & Society*, began at the American Sociology Association Annual Meeting in 2010. I attended sessions about online discourse and, given my interest in racism in online discourse, I kept expecting someone to bring up this issue.

I was disappointed by the lack of attention to racism, or race more generally, in the sessions I attended, and Tweeted that observation, using the hashtag of the conference (#asa2010). When I consulted the program for the conference I was truly perplexed to find that the *only* session on race and digital media was the one I'd help organize. In a lot of ways, a Tweet is just a "soundbite" in 140-characters of text. And, as the astrophysicist Neil deGrasse Tyson suggests, there's nothing wrong with a sound-bite, especially if you want to reach a wider audience than just other specialists in your field.

That one Tweet – and the lack of scholarship it spoke to – got me thinking about the kinds of sessions I would like to see at the ASA and the sorts of things I thought sociologists should be studying in this area, so I wrote a blog post about it. As I usually do now, I shared that blog post via Twitter.

I got many responses from people who shared their work, and the work of their students, friends and colleagues, with me in the form of comments to the blog or @replies on Twitter. The suggestions for further citations came from people I know almost exclusively through our interactions via the blog or Twitter. That feedback from geographically-remote, institutionally-varied yet digitally-close colleagues got me thinking about expanding that single blog post into a series of posts. I wanted to review the wide-range of interdisciplinary work happening in what scholars call "Internet studies." Why bother with this, one might reasonably ask?

Central to this new workflow of scholarship is the blog, Racism Review (RR), which I started in 2007 with Joe Feagin, a Past President of the ASA, with the goal of creating an online resource for reliable, scholarly information for journalists, students and members of the general public who are seeking solid evidence-based research and analysis of "race" and racism. The blog has very much become part of "how to be a scholar" in the current, digital moment. I use it to post first drafts of ideas, to keep up-to-date on the research literature, and since I firmly believe that writing ***is*** thinking, I often use it to work out just what I think about something.

The blog has also become a way to support other scholars both in their research and in teaching. A number of academics have told us that they use the blog in teaching; one, Kimberley Ducey (Asst. Prof., University of Winnipeg) uses RR blog posts in an instructor's manual for a traditional intro sociology textbook as lecture suggestions, in-class activities, and essays/assignments. Through the many guest bloggers we host, I learn about other people's scholarly work that I might not otherwise know about. And, the blog has become a mentoring platform, where early career scholars often get started with blogging and then go on to create their own. The blog is also content-hungry, so I'm always thinking about scholarship that might make an interesting blog post. So, back to the series of posts.

From late February to early March, 2011, I did a series of blog posts that expanded on the initial "10 Things," post. Those posts were all about the current scholarship on race, racism and the Internet with each one focusing on a different sub-field in sociology, including: 1) Internet infrastructure and labor force issues; 2) digital divides and mobile technology; 3) racist social movement groups; 4) social networking sites; 5) dating; 6) housing; and 7) the comments sections of news and sports sites. This last area, racism in comments sections, prompted a research collaboration with one of the presenters from

that 2010 ASA session I organized. The paper from that project eventually appeared in the journal *Media, Culture & Society*.

At about the same, there was a fortuitous *Call for Papers* for a special issue on Internet studies at 15 years into the field. So I combined all of the blog posts into one paper, and thought more about what my critique of the field as a whole might be. For that critique, I ended up revisiting some of Stuart Hall's earlier writing about the "spectacle" of race in media scholarship and incorporated that with elements of Joe Feagin and Sean Elias' critique of "racial formation" as a weak theoretical frame for Internet studies. The paper went into an extended peer review process, I revised it once, and it finally appeared in December 2012, and in print in August, 2013.

Except for the very end of this process–submitting the paper to the journal for peer-review– none of this way of working bares the least bit of resemblance to how I was trained to be a scholar. My primary job as an academic is to create new knowledge, traditionally measured by the number of articles and books I produce. Traditional graduate school training has taught us to think of a "pipeline" of notes, posters, conference papers, journal submissions (and/or, book proposals), revisions, resubmissions and finally, print publication. For me, how to be a scholar now is completely different than when I went to graduate school because of the way that digital media infuses pretty much every step.

This process I've described here – from Tweet at an academic conference, to a blog post, to a series of blog posts to a paper that became an article – is just one of many possible iterations of how to be a scholar now using digital media. Other permutations of how to be a scholar now might include live Tweeting an article you're reading. Sometimes, when I get pre-set "alerts" in my email about newly published scholarship I'm interested in, I will share a title and a link via Twitter. If, upon reading further, I find the piece especially perspicacious, I may share select sentences via Twitter. If it happens that there's a current event in the news that the article can help illuminate, then I'll draft a blog post that incorporates it.

My experience with the germ of an idea shared as a Tweet at an academic conference that became a blog post, then a series of blog posts, and (eventually) a peer-reviewed article is just one example of the changing nature of scholarship. From where I sit, being a scholar now involves creating knowledge in ways that are more open, more fluid, and more easily read by wider audiences.

Jessie Daniels, PhD, is Professor of Sociology at Hunter College and The Graduate Center. She is the author of two books: *Cyber Racism* (2009) and *White Lies* (1997), and the forthcoming books: *Going Public* (with Arlene Stein), from University of Chicago Press, and *Being a Scholar in the Digital Era* (with Polly Thistlethwaite), from Policy Press.

Using Facebook to Promote Research

Roberto G. Gonzales, Harvard University

I am often behind the curve when it comes to advances in technology. I am still, as my students say, very much "old school" when it comes to reading hard copies of assignments. Much to their dismay, I ask for paper copies of assignments, rather than having them send me their work digitally. And if they did, I would print it out anyway so I could more comfortably read it and handwrite comments. I have never read a book on a computer or tablet. And, as late as 2006, I was still exclusively listening to music on cassette—imagine my embarrassment when I had to stop running laps at my university gym in order to turn over the tape! My wife teases me about this all of the time.

But I have managed to find some success with social media. While I am still new to Twitter, I have found great enjoyment in Facebook. I probably use it several times a week. By current count, I have close to 2,500 "Friends," including high school classmates, young people I knew in my previous work with as a youth organizer, undergraduates and graduate students interested in my scholarly work, academic colleagues, and a range of friends and colleagues involved in education or immigrant rights advocacy. This number pales in comparison to the likes of Jose Antonio Vargas or Junot Diaz who also write about immigration and who have tens of thousands of followers and whose posts garner hundreds of likes. It is enough, however, for me to effectively promote my work.

On my page, you won't find too many personal reflections and only a handful of family photos. I mostly use Facebook to highlight my scholarship and to post related articles. In my general awkwardness with technology, I have found that social media is a great way to get the word out. As a community organizer in my past life, I understand that social connections and social relationships are valuable for both fostering community and for accomplishing one's goals. It is difficult to live in isolation and an impossibility to have any impact without strong social networks. So, if I have a new journal article coming out or if I am giving a talk at a local university, I can let my Facebook friends know. And chances are, my post will appeal to a sizable share of them. I still use email to connect with friends and academic colleagues—I cannot escape it as many of my senior colleagues are not on Facebook—but I find that with one carefully crafted post I can reach hundreds of people who may have an interest, who might spread the word, and who are likely to engage further (e.g., by clicking on or reading the article or by attending an event).

My use of social media may not work for everyone, but here is what has worked for me. First, according to almost everything that has been written about social media, in order to be effective one must have a critical mass of Friends or "Followers." There are differences of opinion on how many is enough and how many is too much. As I mentioned before, while I am not at the level of high-profile celebrity writers, my friend list is much larger than average, and large enough to elicit interest and to keep discussions going.

Perhaps equally important to the number of contacts, is the type of Friends one has on her or his list. Naturally, I know that my good friends and family members will be encouraging and enthusiastic of my posts and professional accomplishments because they support me. But I also look to cultivate an audience for my work that is composed of people who have a central or at least peripheral interest in my scholarly work. Academic colleagues in one's field are a great starting point. But there are other relevant audiences. Graduate students and undergraduates are also consumers and producers of academic knowledge and they are likely to have great interest in engaging topics that are relevant to their interests. In addition, social media provides great opportunities for scholars to connect with broader publics: reporters, teachers and other educators, parents, community organizers and advocates (this is my list, but other academics may have different audiences). Many, but not all, academic areas are connected to issues people debate and care about. It is critically important for me to continually engage these audiences.

And, as for engagement, I have found that in order to be effective with social media, one needs to routinely engage one's Friends or Followers. Most academics do not have weekly speaking engagements and especially do not have journal articles that come out as often as the daily news cycle. But I have found that my general area of immigration is covered almost daily in the press. And I try to share as much as I can. For many of my friends on the periphery of this issue, or not connected to the media I can access through my broader network, I have been told that mine is their go-to page where they seek out information and can access the public and scholarly debates. And the great thing about having such a large and diverse group of Facebook contacts is that they also share some really great stuff from a wide range of media outlets and blogs. They provide me ample opportunities to comment on others' posts and to share them with my network of friends. I see this type of everyday engagement as the social glue that bonds me with my online social networks. So that when I have an announcement to make, I know that many of those on my contact list are anxious to learn more and eager to share.

In mid-December, I received an advance copy of my now-released book, *Lives in Limbo*. As is the case for many first-time authors, the publication of my book has been a highpoint of my early career. When I received my advance copy I was so giddy I carried it with me everywhere I went for three days. I wanted to share the good news so I had a colleague take a picture of me holding my new book and I posted it to my Facebook page. Within days, the post had almost 700 likes, and was shared by more than 20 people. In the last month, more than a dozen of my contacts have posted messages about receiving my book in the mail and have shared similar photos of them holding my book. I'm grateful beyond words for their enthusiasm. I'm also very pleased with the reach posts like this have enjoyed.

It is too early to discern how wide the gap may be between the support I've received from Facebook contacts and the possible influence the ideas I have laid out in my book might be having. This is, perhaps, one potential limitation of social media.

Accomplishments garner much attention and praise. It is not always possible to know how much engagement our contacts are having with our ideas.

This may be something for me to ponder or, perhaps, share as a question on Facebook.

Roberto Gonzales is a qualitative sociologist whose research focuses on the ways in which legal and educational institutions shape the everyday experiences of poor, minority, and immigrant youth along the life course. He is recognized as one of the nation's leading experts on undocumented immigrant youth and young adults. Over the last decade he has been engaged in critical inquiry regarding what happens to undocumented immigrant children as they make transitions to adolescence and young adulthood. His West Coast Undocumented Young Adults Research Project in Los Angeles and Seattle has collected in-depth qualitative data on over 300 undocumented young adults who have lived in the U.S. since childhood. This research has helped scholars, policymakers, and educators gain a better understanding of their educational trajectories, how they come of age, and how a segment of these young people engages in civic and political activity. His work has been featured in the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Los Angeles Times*, *TIME*, *Wall Street Journal*, *U.S. News and World Report*, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, *CNN*, and *NPR*. He is currently completing a book manuscript based on his 10-year study of undocumented young adults in Los Angeles.

Best Practices for Podcasting

Heidi Knoblauch, Yale University

The first thing I learned about podcasting was that it is powerful medium. Podcasting is powerful not only because it has the ability to relate complex arguments into digestible bits of information, but also because it can transform those arguments into relatable stories. Rather than shoving statistics at an audience, podcasts can transform statistics about subjects (i.e. the number of people arrested in 2012 in the U.S. on nonviolent drug charges was 1.55 million) into stories about real people who felt the impact of those statistics. The unique ability of audio to highlight the experience of making knowledge can also connect listeners to scholarship in a way that books often fail to do. Podcasts can allow academics to infuse themselves into the arguments they make rather than downplay their connection to their scholarship.

Podcasts–meaning audio uploaded to iTunes–are just one way to use audio to connect with a wider audience. There are many other platforms including WordPress, SoundCloud, and MixCloud that allow you to share audio. Often, these non-iTunes venues allow for a stronger engagement with your audience because they allow users to post comments on audio files. And, depending on your resources, posting at all four of these venues can give you the most engagement.

Making a good podcast requires planning. A podcast posted on iTunes should have a consistent length, release time, and theme to be successful. In other words, if you want to create a weekly interview-based topically connected 15-minute podcast series, iTunes is probably the most powerful platform to gain a strong following. On the other hand, if you want to post interviews sporadically and have audio that varies in length and topic then something like SoundCloud or your own personal WordPress site would probably gain more traction.

Not all good audio projects have to be formatted like a podcast. Projects can vary in length and subject but use the same intro and outro to make the audio files cohesive. For example, theJustPublics@365 Podcast Series uses the same music intro and outro for every episode. We also use that slice of audio for our shorter audio projects that we post exclusively to SoundCloud.

Collecting audio does not have to be expensive, but it can be. Like most media projects, you can make podcasts as expensive or inexpensive as you want. SoundCloud has the hefty price tag of $121.50 per year to upload an unlimited number of tracks. Using services like BuzzSprout, which offer podcast hosting, can cost between $12 and $24 a month. You can upload audio to a server and link that file in a post in your WordPress site. Audio files take up a large amount of room so, often, you will have to pay for some type of server space.

You can be scrappy with equipment. Smartphones have the ability to record surprisingly excellent audio. iPhone apps like Voice Recorder HD ($1.99) or the built in Voice Memos can give you high quality audio. If you want to have higher quality audio you can

purchase a number of different microphones that plug directly into your computer (I like the Apogee Electronics MiC Studio Quality USB Microphone) or that plug right into your iPhone or Android (I like the Rode SmartLav or the iRig MIC Cast).

Editing can make all the difference. You can use a number of different programs to edit your audio. GarageBand is one of the easier ways to learn to edit your audio. You can record directly into GarageBand or import audio from prerecorded files. It is free to Mac users so it is a great option for beginners. Audacity is free, open source, cross-platform software for recording and editing sounds that is compatible with PCs and Macs. It is slightly more clunky than GarageBand, but is an equally effective way to edit audio.

Length is up for debate. There are ongoing debates about how long a podcast should be. Some say 3 minutes, some say 30 minutes. I say, the most important thing is to pick a length and stick to it. If your audience is engaging with 30-minutes of content, there is no reason to switch to a 3-minute format. On the other hand, if you are making 30-minute podcasts and no one is engaging with them, it may be time to rethink your strategy.

There are many different types of podcasts. One powerful way to weave stories for listeners is through audio interviews. The podcasts and audio that I have produced for JustPublics@365 have mostly consisted of these. I think interviews are most effective when combined with "on the ground" audio, but they can also be powerful in and of themselves.

Heidi Knoblauch received a dual B.A. in History and in Health and Society from University of Rochester and her Ph.D. in History from Yale University. Her areas of specialization are in 19th and 20th century history of science and medicine in America, visual studies, and material culture; she is particularly interested in the history of clinical photography, the doctor-patient relationship, and privacy in the clinic. Most recently, Heidi served as Program Coordinator for the JustPublics@365 Project at the City University of New York, where she aimed to connect academics, journalists, and activists in ways that fostered transformation on issues of social justice. In addition to regularly contributing to academic conferences and journals, she has contributed to *Slate*, spoken at a number of public lectures, and taught "media camp" workshops for faculty and students interested in expanding their digital skills.

Promoting Your Research with Social Media

Arielle Kuperberg, The University of North Carolina at Greensboro

The basis of any research career is solid, peer-reviewed published research; social media or popular media attention won't get you an academic job or tenure if you don't have solid credentials, including your education, teaching experience, and most importantly, peer-reviewed publications. That being said, using social media isn't the opposite of research or a successful academic career, nor is it purely a time-wasting enterprise. As sociologists, we know the importance of social network ties to career success. Building an intellectual community with the aid of social media can propel a career forward and lead to numerous opportunities.

I first began using Facebook to keep in touch with my friends and family as I followed the common path of moving several times in pursuit of an academic career, especially after I moved from the Northeast to North Carolina for my professorship at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Facebook has since been instrumental to my career, allowing me to keep in touch and build ties with sociologists around the country, develop research ideas as I chat with other Facebookers about current events and academic topics, and providing new ideas for the classroom in Facebook teaching groups. I even found a research collaborator after we became online friends, via a Facebook group for mothers with PhDs, and then discovered we were both working on the same research topic. Another coauthor is a grad school friend I probably would have fallen out of touch with if it wasn't for Facebook.

My social media ties also helped me maintain ties with grad school professors that later led to major popular media exposure, and more recently, being asked to write this article describing my experience and advice on using social media.

After keeping in touch with my dissertation committee member and ASA Vice President Barbara Risman on Facebook, and watching her post her own frequent public sociology content, I emailed her in late 2013 expressing my interest in doing more "public sociology" and asking for advice on promoting my then-forthcoming article (JMF, 2014) explaining the connection between cohabitation and divorce. She advised me to join the Council on Contemporary Families (CCF), an organization aimed at connecting research on families to the media, and wrote an introductory email to several members of the organization. For the cost of a small yearly membership fee, they helped me carefully craft a research brief, gathered other researchers to write companion pieces, put together a press release and sent it to their reporter contacts (including the two who first picked up the story), and called me the night before my first interviews to give me advice on how to talk to reporters. Later they reposted my research brief to their blog, and published an additional blog post I wrote on cohabitation, divorce and marriage. And no, they didn't pay me to say this.

When my press release was picked up and appeared in dozens of local and international outlets, I posted the links to Facebook and found that sociologists and other friends began promoting it to their friends, spreading the word. I wrote another research brief

for a CCF research symposium that received media attention, and my media exposure led to further opportunities, as other reporters who saw my name in the news began contacting me to comment on various stories related to marriage, cohabitation and divorce. This year I commented on stories in the *Associated Press*, the *New York Times*, *Cosmopolitan*, and *Live Science*.

Unfortunately, we don't have a CCF for every subfield of sociology, and not everyone's dissertation committee members later become Vice President of ASA. However, every subfield and many departments have senior scholars who have prior media attention and contacts with reporters. Ask those who have been there and done that for their advice talking to the media, and (once they know and like you, and you have a research study to promote) find out if they know of any reporters writing about your subfield.

Here is the practical advice I have gathered from others over the years, and some from my own experiences:

When you talk to reporters, be prompt in your responses to email inquiries, because they are working to a deadline; they may need a quote by the end of the day, and will move on to the next person if they don't hear from you. Be professional but also friendly; I once told a reporter to "Just call me Arielle" and she thanked me, and told me the last professor she had interviewed was "really pompous."

When responding to an email inquiry, ask what the story is about and whether they want to know anything in particular. Take the time to prepare for interviews. Recently I was asked to comment on a story about The Simpsons' separation, and I prepared by looking up, skimming through, and writing some notes on several recent academic articles on causes and timing of separation. If it is your research, review your findings, and jot down some key numbers and a few 'talking points' that you can look at while you are on the phone. Make sure you know the exact name of your own paper; Dan Savage once stumped me on that question on his podcast. Fortunately, it wasn't live and they edited it out later, and I now always keep a copy of my paper open on my computer during calls with reporters.

You can write these talking points up as a *research brief*, also known as a *white paper* or *brief report*, *which* is a 1-2 page (single spaced) paper summarizing your main points, which can be a reference to send to reporters and to the press officer at your university when promoting your research. CCF Director of Research and Public Education Stephanie Coontz has given me several tips on writing these:

First, you want to bring reporters along on a journey, summarizing the issue and common wisdom/past research on that issue, then what was wrong with that common wisdom, your methods, and finally your main findings. Second, avoid use of the word "I" as in "I did this research" except in a short jargon-free methods paragraph (even though this is standard practice in "active" academic writing) since journalists will suspect that you are self-promoting instead of being objective. Third, reporters often want to have an "inside scoop" on a paper that has not yet been published. If you plan to write a research brief to send to media contacts, start working on it after a conditional accept, and be sure to get permission from the journal editor to send it out as soon as you have the final accept,

before the paper is published online. The best time for a media release is a few weeks before an article will be published.

You can also write a *press release* that will make up the body of your email to reporters, with the research brief as a link, or as a stand-alone piece. In a press release (unlike a research brief) you don't want to "bury the lead", so make sure the main points are up front, clear, succinct, snappy, and perhaps in italic type. Have one or two main "talking points." I once heard advice to "just have one number." In my experience you can have a few numbers, as long as you only have one or two main *points* that you can easily talk about.

Research briefs or press releases can easily translate to *blog posts*. Publishing a guest post on an established sociological blog can often be just a matter of asking someone in charge if you can, and pitching them a draft. Tying your research to a current story that is circulating in the media is very effective. If you can't find a blog that is willing to publish your research, start your own, and publish other's posts on a specific theme.

Some sociologists that I've encountered seem to have an aversion to the popular press, and have the idea that reporters are out to twist your message or trick you. But **remember: YOU ARE THE EXPERT**. You likely have a PhD (or soon will), have done years of research, and you are talking to a journalist who knows little or nothing about your research topic and field. I often end up explaining simple sociological concepts and trends, such as the rising age at marriage, that are second nature to me at this point. The vast majority of reporters are not there to skew your message to prove some point. Most of them are there to get a good story that will be interesting to their constituents, but also want to have an accurate story that won't get them in trouble later on.

What about the few reporters who are trying to prove a point? If you can handle the Q and A section of a job talk, or a hostile undergraduate student, you can handle any reporter—and the questions won't be nearly as hard. Last year a conservative radio talk show host asked me a 'gotcha' question about a study showing that married people who had their spouse in the room while being electrocuted were less stressed out than cohabiting couples. I calmly responded that I was not saying that cohabitation was the same thing as marriage, and actually have published prior research showing that behavior in cohabitation and marriage differed in several ways, but even though they are different, premarital cohabitation in and of itself still does not cause couples to later divorce after marriage.

When you start having contact with reporters, build up a list of media contacts. When ASA sends out reporter requests and the research is related to your area of expertise, respond! Contacts can sometimes come from unusual places; I had a student interning at a local TV news station who heard about my research on student loans in class, told her boss, and I ended up on the local news. Whenever you talk to a reporter, ask if they would be interested in hearing about your future research, and save their contact information. When you write a press release and/or research brief for your next project, email them to remind them about your previous contact, tell them about your forthcoming project, and offer to talk to them further.

But long before you get to the point where you are building a list of media contents, you should be building a social network of professional sociologists. ASA and larger conferences that everyone attends, regional conferences, and very small conferences focused on a research area or dataset are all great places to network. When attending conferences, search the program index for scholars that you cite often, go to their talk, stick around after to introduce yourself, give an elevator pitch about your research, and ask for advice about articles you should be reading. At the next conference, remind them about where you first met, and give them an update on your research. If they seem amenable, ask if you can email them a copy of your paper for comments (only do this if you actually have a finished draft, or will in the near future).

If you really strike if off, ask if they're on Facebook. Use social media connections to keep in touch and build relationships between conferences. At later conferences, email them beforehand to arrange meetings over coffee—but only once, don't repeatedly email them if they don't respond. Once your networks are well developed, arrange meals at conferences with several scholars.

When first starting out, dissertation committee members and other professor-coauthors can introduce you to other senior scholars as their student (and you can ask them to do this!), and are a great way to start building sociological social networks. As a grad student, having at least one person on your committee who will introduce you to other scholars should be a must. This should be far from the only criteria when picking a chair—and should actually be fairly low on the list—but make sure that if your chair is bad at this, you have someone else on your committee to take on this role. Also, do not discount the importance of creating and sustaining ties with your fellow grad students. They are the future senior scholars in the field, and after you graduate, they will be your closest network connections.

Social media can be an important tool with which to build and strengthen ties with your professional networks. Establish a social media presence by creating Facebook, Twitter, and/or other social media accounts. Friend people you know in 'real life' and those you interact with regularly online, post content regularly, and comment on other's content. But don't get overwhelmed—it's ok to not respond to everything. Don't be afraid to 'friend' scholars you have interacted with who you come across on social media—and don't take it personally if they don't friend you back, many people prefer to keep their professional and Facebook lives separate, especially if you are still a student.

If you start friending professional contacts on pre-existing social media accounts, keep in mind that those contacts will see your Facebook posts and pictures, so untag yourself in that drunken bong pic that your college roommate thought was hilarious. But don't censor your ideas, and keep posting about your political opinions/kids/home brewing hobby/Burning Man trip/beard contest entry. Being a professional doesn't mean erasing your personality. Think of social media as your own personal soapbox, from which you can inform or ask your contacts about anything you want to at that moment—but strive to be more like the labor activists soapboxers, and less like the unhinged conspiracy theorist types. Remember the delete button if you panic after posting something.

Students are a different story entirely, and you need to figure out your own policy on social media and students. I avoid accepted friend requests from students who are in my classes until after they have graduated (if an undergrad) or completed my class (if a grad student). I don't 'friend request' my students, and will also only accept requests from students who I enjoyed talking to in class, and especially those who I talked to or worked with extensively outside of class. I don't feel obligated to friend people just because they were a student in my class, but I won't turn down a friend request from a former TA or RA. By allowing anyone to follow my page [Go to settings, click "Followers" and then "Everybody" next to "Who can follow you"], students can follow my page and get public updates, which I tend to restrict to links to my new publications, and popular media articles that mention my research.

Then, start posting academic content! I occasionally post surprising graphs and findings from my research-in-progress to see whether my Facebook friends agree with my theoretical explanations or can think of other ones. Comments from academics in other fields can be especially enlightening, and reading other's posts on my news feed often alerts me to new research and news related to my research. To paraphrase a Sociologists for Women in Society talk I attended early in my career that has guided me ever since: if you're always arguing with someone on Facebook about a specific topic, that's your next study! Some of the most compelling sociological research topics are those affecting your life and the lives of your friends, students, and family members, but that have little academic attention, and reading Facebook is a great way to find out about trends in society worthy of further research.

Facebook groups and anonymous message boards can be especially useful when seeking career, teaching, and publishing advice. My favorites include Sociological Job Market Rumors, the Sociological Job Market Forum (both are unruly, anonymous message boards that often discuss topics far beyond the job market), the Teaching with a Sociological Lens Facebook group, the PhD Mamas Facebook group, and the *Chronicle of Higher Ed* Forums.

My last piece of advice is to enjoy yourself. Facebook is fun, and I wouldn't do it if it wasn't. I get to have fun discussions with fellow academics, old grad student buddies, and random friends about any topic I am interested in at the moment. Talking to the media is very much like a job interview, or like when I first started teaching; it can stress you out in advance (especially when you are new to the experience), but once you get over the stress, it is actually really fun to talk about your research with other people who are interested in what you have to say, and unlike a job interview, you are almost guaranteed to have a good outcome: a voice in the public conversation. Most academics have something interesting to say, and people want to hear those things, especially from experts like you—so be the one to say it. The more people know about your research, the bigger impact it will have on future research, policy, and people's lives.

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dozens of leading national and international media outlets in the past two years. She can be reached at: atkuperb@uncg.edu

Best Practices for Writing Op-Eds

Tressie McMillan Cottom, Virginia Commonwealth University

Op-Eds, or opinion-editorials, remain a foundational way for academics to engage audiences and broaden their research impact. The OpEd Project (www.theopedproject.org) was founded to increase the visibility of women and minorities on the op-ed pages of major news publications. They found that op-ed pages of the *New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and the *Los Angeles Times* are critical gatekeepers for public intellectuals and public scholarship to reach mass media.

Op-Ed writing is a genre. They should be brief, have a clear narrative arc, make a statement, and leverage your expertise. How to do that in the suggested 750-word limit?

1. Lead with your baubles

The short-form style of op-eds means you rarely have time to show your expertise through complex argumentation or citations. Instead, readers (and editors) must trust you, the writer, to have done due diligence on your topic. Leading with your baubles—or all the markers of your expertise—is the most efficient way to do that. Baubles should include your institutional affiliation, major publications (think major press and journals), and research roles. But, don't just think of your professional baubles. Think about your lived experience. Are you a member of the group that you study? Have you participated in the rituals that you examine? For example, you may study sociology of religion and have all the institutional baubles to show for your expertise. But, if you have also been a faith leader for 10 years, you should consider mentioning it!

2. Be relevant and timely

News moves much faster than academic publishing. Spending a few weeks crafting the perfect sentence will often mean that the story has become stale for editors. Consider the relevancy of your research and expertise broadly. You may study a small sub-community of artisan urban farmers in the Northwest but through the particular you also have expertise on agriculture, labor, status formation, land regulations and community. Once you have thought deeply and broadly, consider using social media to track news items of interest. Using hashtags on Twitter, Google alerts, and following social media users with similar interests is a great way to catch a prime op-ed opportunity as it's happening.

3. Make one point. I mean it: one, single point.

That's not a joke. One op-ed = one point. Period.

For more conventions on form and structure see best practices from The OpEd Project.

4. See how sociologists are displaying their expertise through op-ed writing. Just Google:

"A Poverty of the Mind" in the *New York Times*

"Loneliness and Violence" in the *Washington Post*

“Mexican American Mobility” in the *Los Angeles Times*

“We Are Not All in This Together’ in the *New York Times*

Tressie McMillan Cottom is an assistant professor of sociology at Virginia Commonwealth University (Fall 2015). She is a faculty associate at the Berkman Center for Internet & Society, Harvard University. She earned her Ph.D. in Sociology from Emory University in Atlanta, GA with a case study of the political economy of for-profit colleges in the era of financialized U.S. higher education. Tressie’s current research examines how we learn for work in the new economy. That includes thinking about academic capitalism, labor market correspondence, for-profit and online credentials, and media interactions. Tressie lectures and publishes widely. Currently, she is a contributing editor with *Dissent* and a contributing writer with *The Atlantic*.

Accessing Emergent Online Content via RSS

Michael V. Miller, University of Texas, San Antonio

RSS (i.e., Rich Site Summary) is an application with great practical value. RSS allows one to easily stay abreast of emerging online text and multimedia content, but without having to continually visit distributor websites (e.g., news organizations, scholarly journals, and bloggers) as it automatically forwards the latest content to users. In short, RSS brings content to you—you don't have to go to it.

RSS has been available since the early 2000s, but remains an underused web technology. There are numerous RSS reader applications from which to choose. Virtually all are free, although securing special features or eliminating sponsoring ads may require nominal fee. The reader used to create the model discussed here is provided by Protopage (http://protopage.com). Protopage is not one of the better-known services, but has a clean display format, includes multiple options, and is easy to learn how to use.

Some Features of SociologyUTSA Model

The RSS model I've assembled is available at http://www.protopage.com/sociologyutsa. Also, a screencast video describing the model is available at http://youtu.be/wNbDA_nVHBY.

SociologyUTSA consists of a start page (SOCIOLOGY News / Websites / Blogs), and several broad content areas (Sociology Journals, Teaching Sociology, Theory, and Methods/Statistics), as well as a series of specialization pages, including such areas as Deviance/Crime, Family/Marriage, Population, Religion, and Stratification. Also included are pages on a number of related themes. For example, instructors teaching given courses would likely be interested in sites and content listed on relevant specialization pages, but they might also find useful information and class materials on Teaching Sociology, Visual Resources, Video (collections), and Humor pages. Likewise, instructors teaching research methods courses would find relevant resources on both Methods/Statistics and Data Visualization pages.

On any given page, each *widget* (i.e., box-like display) represents an RSS feed from a content distributor. I have them generally arranged in vertical alphabetical order. The main exception to this are topic news feeds from Google News and the *New York Times*, which are commonly located in the upper right-hand corner of pages to promote ease in finding. The other exception to alphabetical arrangement relates to webpages that might be of interest to users, but are either static or without RSS link. These are commonly found in the upper left-hand corner of pages. For example, on the Sociology Journals page, I include three such webpage widgets in that location (List of Sociology Journals, Directory of Open Access Journals, and Retraction Watch) through which users can access relevant materials (note: webpages can be expanded out for fuller view by clicking and grabbing the small left/downward pointing arrow located in the lower right-hand corner edge of the widget).

Each RSS widget lists the most recently posted piece of content at the top of the list. Such items will usually appear in the widget within minutes of being uploaded online by content distributors. I have all widgets set to list the latest 20 pieces of distributed content. Use of the scroll function located on the right-side of the widget allows for full viewing of posted titles. Moving the mouse cursor over the title provides brief description of the post, and clicking on the title, links one directly to the content at the distributor website.

Sites were included in the RSS reader on the basis of several rules of thumb beyond relevance to the field of sociology or work as a sociologist (inclusion, by the way, in no way indicates judgments about quality). For blog sites in particular, a basic criterion was posting recency. Numerous blogs have been created by sociologists over the past decade, although many do not appear to be active. Blogs were only included if they made at least one post during 2013-2014. Also technical problems precluded several otherwise quality sites from inclusion. For example, sociologists interested in integrating edgy and timely documentaries into classes should find the *Vice* collection worthwhile. However, the site is disruptive in that videos from there play automatically in the Protopage widget. Finally, as presently constituted, the reader includes only English language websites, blogs, and journals.

RSS is particularly helpful in trying to stay current with new journal articles (see Sociology Journals). Some publishers provide excellent RSS facilitation. Sage, for example, offers several options that can be employed for most of its titles, including *OnlineFirst*, which lists and gives access to pre-print articles, and *recent issues*, which includes articles just appearing in print form, as well as those in several earlier issues. However, a few publishers do nothing to promote RSS linkage. (Wiley, which publishes several sociology journal titles of note, indicates that it includes an RSS function, but I have never been able to get it to work.) Nevertheless, one can still become aware of new articles from such journals by inspecting their linked static webpage. (Again, by clicking and grabbing on to the small arrow located in the lower right-hand corner, the widget can be expanded out to enable access to the journal's table of contents.)

RSS is critical for systematic monitoring of new web content. Creation of RSS pages allows for exposition, arrangement, and access to resources of potential value to faculty and students. RSS can promote numerous teaching and learning objectives, including familiarizing users with the great variety of sites and resources available on the Internet, encouraging users to explore specific materials of interest, and of course, helping users to stay current with emerging scholarly articles, news stories, blog posts, and multimedia. RSS reader services are plentiful and free, and can be easily adapted for use by various entities, including professional organizations, libraries, academic departments, and individual faculty members and students.

Employ SociologyUTSA for your own purposes. In turn, please let me know about additional sites you believe should be included. I also encourage you to develop your own RSS collection. This one is too large and unwieldy for most users to efficiently monitor, and besides, you'll likely want to have a collection you can tailor to your own interests. Note that there are numerous tutorials available online that offer help in

setting up an RSS reader, but also feel free to contact me (michael.miller@utsa.edu) should you have questions.

Michael Miller is an associate professor in the University of Texas, San Antonio Department of Sociology. His teaching and research interests include social inequality, work and occupations, the U.S./Mexico border, and more recently, how academic disciplines can best incorporate online media into instruction. His work in Teaching Sociology highlights the value of a video pedagogy: http://www.slideshare.net/soconceptual/teaching-sociology-2014-andristcheppdeanmiller

Using Twitter

R. Tyson Smith, Haverford College

Social media allows users to engage in a dialog spanning the globe, but Twitter is arguably the best way to reach the greatest number of people, in the quickest fashion, and in the least mediated way. Despite its utility and wide appeal—roughly one billion people have accounts and 300 million people are active monthly users—sociology has yet to fully embrace the medium. In light of this, I was asked to comment on how it can be a valuable tool for sociologists to make our research, discipline and everyday insights, more visible and accessible. In addition, I close the essay with practical tips for how to get started on twitter and develop effective 140 character "tweets."

In my case, I tweet about research, stories, and social phenomena which range from criminal justice, race, the military, gender, Philadelphia, politics, and economic inequality to social science research. While there is something to be said for people who tweet about one particular issue—because they can be counted on for reporting and tracking that concern—from what I can tell, most people are, like myself, generalists who tweet about a range of topics that fall under some general theme (in my case the theme is our broad discipline of sociology). I sometimes tweet about violence, masculinity, class, and identity—all of which are related to my first book, *Fighting for Recognition: Identity, Masculinity, and the Act of Violence in Pro Wrestling*—but I also tweet about topics like war, foreign policy, mass incarceration, and economic opportunities, all of which are tied to my work on veterans and more recently, incarcerated veterans. Importantly, twitter can be a great place to do searches for information so one does not even need to be tweeting to benefit from the use of twitter.

I don't ordinarily track how many people view my tweets but twitter now provides statistics about "tweet activity" so for this piece I looked into the past month and learned that about 150-200 people view my tweets on average but sometimes over a 1000 people view them. If I had the inclination, I could boost this because there are now numerous resources to assist in this. Practically a whole industry has developed to help you determine how popular specific tweets are, the best times of day/week to tweet, and the opportunities to enhance your Twitter visibility and number of followers.

Social movements have become one of Twitter's most fruitful sites of action. #BlackLivesMatter took off on Twitter as almost everyone knows and the toppling of Hosni Mubarak in Egypt was called the "Twitter revolution" (although this was clearly an overblown claim). The organization of social movements through Twitter makes it a great asset to both activists and scholars alike. One can be in Pennsylvania yet closely follow developments as they unfold on the streets of Eastern Europe, Hong Kong, or San Francisco. People could follow along as activists in Palestine, for example, used Twitter to exchange tips with activists in Ferguson about how to contend with the military's use of tear gas. You can read about actions in real time and establish connections from throughout the globe in the process.

One of sociology's more prolific tweeters is Lisa Wade. She has over 13,000 followers and has logged 7,000 tweets over the past five years. Another prolific sociology tweeter

is Professor Michael Kennedy. I asked him about Twitter and he explained that he finds it to be a great way to both discover new research problems and find new colleagues to possibly work with. At one point, for example, Kennedy's work was picked up via Twitter by bloggers and scholars to critically discuss a controversial anti-piracy agreement proposed by the European Commission. Kennedy's targeted tweets to politicians about his research on Anti-ACTA (regarding transforming intellectual property rights) helped to make the case against the anti-piracy act. (http://blog.academia.edu/search/building+a+pipeline#sthash.HMQELaoN.dpuf). He expressed that Twitter allows him to develop more refined dialogs about public issues. "You can identify new networks of affinity and discover who you should be listening to if you are not already doing so."

#Hashtags are an important feature because they identify topics and affect trends. When I see a newsworthy event or important news story, I try to use a hashtag to link it to either my own scholarship or the people I know. They are especially effective in the midst of a larger cultural phenomena in which thousands (or millions) or people are focused on the same event. "Live tweeting," as it's called, during political debates, entertainment spectacles such as the Oscars or the World Cup, or social protests can be one of Twitter's most compelling uses. The hashtags allow you to enter a larger, sometimes global, conversation about the event and the discourse surrounding it. There is an opportunity to gain and contribute to sociological insights, research, and even humor.

Nevertheless, because hashtags connect you with conversations that you might not otherwise travel within, they are more likely to bring you to contested arenas. A common scenario is when you enter a broader debate and people strongly disagree with you. I have had a few spats with gun enthusiasts that are illustrative. In both times I was tweeting about research which highlights "means matter," the public health concept for how the means available to people who are having suicide ideation make a big difference in suicide rates. A remarkable number of people attempt suicide who do not "succeed" in this attempt and then go on to lead long lives because the suicide ideation can be an impulsive and a shorter term condition. If a gun is around, however, the attempt is far more likely to be lethal. This reality plus the fact that guns in the U.S. kill more people in acts of suicide than homicide makes #meansmatter an important public health issue.

I have learned that gun enthusiasts hate this social fact. On different occasions people challenged me with intensity and alacrity. I tried to retort politely to their uninformed responses and hang in there, but they practically multiplied with each rejoinder I offered. You could almost hear the high fives being digitally exchanging with one another as they try to stifle the stranger who's tweeting about the value of research, regulations, and better gun safety. Unfortunately, I gave up because I realized that many of the folks derive pleasure from the sport of the online spat, they will not be changing their minds anyway, and it's futile to argue using 140 characters—even though many do it all the time.

There are some real, practical concerns regarding the content of our tweets. Users must be cautious because tweets immediately become part of the permanent electronic

record and 140-character comments can be easily misinterpreted. One should never lose sight of the fact that we don't all tweet or opine with same degree of impunity. Since roughly 75% of college and university professors in the U.S. now occupy insecure academic positions, Twitter can present certain risks. It is only sensible to be prudent given we are working within an increasingly marketized higher education landscape and electronic searches allow future employers (or donors) to comb through *all* of your tweets. In the high profile case of Professor Salaita, for example, it was the interpretation of a handful of tweets that derailed his tenured career. (I'd suggest never tweeting while overly heated or, for that matter, while driving, intoxicated, or at a faculty meeting).

Having said that, if you have even a modicum of nerve, Twitter is a great opportunity to engage larger audiences and highlight our discipline's contributions. Most sociologists, I suspect, would agree with me that there is urgency to the issues that we study and Twitter is the most immediate way to engage and contribute to larger conversations. Waiting until there is consensus renders sociologists almost irrelevant when the world is burning away, inequalities are rising, and human suffering abounds.

Tweeting is very easy. Starting an account takes only a few minutes and most websites now have an easy to find link on the page which lets you tweet about that content as soon as you have a Twitter account. You will build followers little-by-little and I'd suggest "following back" (almost!) everyone who follows you. Often random people start following you if you're doing little more than tweeting and "liking" here and there. Feel free to follow me and I will follow you back, of course.

Even though interactions are not in person, Twitter is undoubtedly a form of impression management. The content of your tweets is the primary way to manage impressions, but another dimension of impression management is who and, more importantly, *how many* people follow you. I follow more people and organizations than I am followed by. I follow back everyone who follows me (well, almost everyone, I don't really need to be following a "top real estate agent from Jacksonville"). I also try to follow some people who see the world differently than me, like the Christian Republican who's running for office in Texas and tweets invariably about either #liberty or #constitution. It can be helpful, although also depressing, to be reminded that some people (e.g., Rep. Scott Perry) actually think that Syrian refugees should not leave the chaos of war but rather, stay and fight.

I think it's important for sociologists to follow each other and I don't think having more followers than the number that you follow matters (aside from some kind of status grab). It is possible people like to keep a feed with less content streaming through, and you probably wouldn't need to follow back folks once you have thousands of followers, but personally I find it silly when someone who is not a celebrity or major public figure—pretty much every sociologist—tries to maintain a minimal number of people whom they follow. Furthermore, it's basic etiquette to follow back a colleague (while recognizing that sociologists are not above such snubs!) and you can "mute" someone you follow, which means you stay connected but their tweets do not show up on your feed.

I must admit that I can be envious of those who have a large number of followers. Sometimes I'd like more attention regarding either important research or injustices

perpetrated by specific companies, groups, or powerful people. For example, I stumbled upon a *Patagonia*—the supposed "B" (or do-good) corporation—catalog advertisement that shames the poor and equates homelessness with being "dirtbags," but Patagonia didn't reply when I brought it to their attention through a tweet. I recently found a racist example about "basketball" and "fried chicken" in a 4th grade learning worksheet that the k12reading education company produced, but they never replied either. I have to assume that if I had a thousand more followers, they'd pay more attention and explain themselves.

So, jump in and start tweeting!

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Sociology on the Radio

Matt Wray, Temple University

Over the past 20 years or so, I've given dozens of media interviews to print journalists, television reports and talk show hosts, and to radio show hosts. Radio shows are by far my favorite medium for talking sociology. Why? Because radio's best feature is real-time back-and-forth conversation. There is a kind of intimacy to it that other media lack. Your listeners are often alone and attentive. You are in their head as a voice and personality. Moreover, in the best radio, the conversations always feel improvisational, like a spirited exchange of opinions and ideas at a lively dinner party. Sure, the topics are often set well ahead of time with a producer (more on that in a moment), but the actual dialogue, when the radio host is smart and lively, is less scripted and canned than what happens in most TV studios and it is often an unedited conversation, which never happens in newspapers and magazine reporting. Radio call-in shows are especially fun, because listeners join and redirect the conversation in interesting ways. Plus, in radio, you can never be misquoted. As anyone who has ever been misquoted can tell you, this is a huge bonus.

The Process

Radio appearances come in different shapes and forms. You might get interviewed by phone by a reporter for a news story that will include a few sentences of what you say. In longer format radio shows, you might be invited to a studio to do on-air interviews with other guests lasting up to an hour. Or your interview might be pre-recorded and later edited. In what follows, I mostly confine my remarks to live radio shows, which are a common format on NPR and in most big-city radio markets.

Radio talk shows are produced by a staff of professionals: broadcast assistants, audio engineers, producers, and presenters. You are most likely to be contacted by a producer (not the host), whose job it is to locate experts, pre-interview them by asking exploratory questions (mostly to see if your responses are "radio-friendly"), and arrange a set of questions and/or topics that the radio host or presenter will use as prompts to conduct the interview. They do this last bit by doing a pre-production briefing with the host. The producers are the key to a successful show, so make them your best friend and ask them everything. Remember that producers spend A LOT of time looking for local or national experts and if they have called you, they are hoping for a fruitful collaboration. Help them by being clear with them about how you like to frame the issue under discussion, how and why your research speaks to the issue, and what you believe is the social significance (rather than the sociological significance) of the issue.

Important: Always ask who else will be on the show or who else will be consulted. Be they intellectual friend or foe, you don't want to be surprised at the appointed hour. Producers don't always mention this information, so you should always ask.

How to Prepare

Here's a short checklist:

1. Listen to earlier episodes of the show if you can, in order to get a sense of how the show is run and what you can expect.
2. Don't ask for questions ahead of time—this can be a bit of a red flag—but do ask for a list of topics. What you want to understand is whether you are good fit for what the producer is looking for.
3. Review the Relevant Research: You probably know off the top of your head everything you need to know for a successful interview, but take few minutes to reacquaint yourself with the key findings on the topic or topics to be discussed. Don't forget to review your own published work! If you are asked a question about that paper you wrote back in 2003, and you don't accurately recall what you said, it will be embarrassing (I speak from experience here). In radio, unlike print media, you are usually your own fact checker.
4. Establish Your Message: how many ideas, facts or concepts can you get across on the radio? Probably 3 or 5 at most. These key points are your message and no matter what questions get asked, you should find a way to say them more than once. That is your goal. Think of them as Talking Points, Take Away Messages, or Things That Must Be Said, but your job is to make sure you say them in the allotted time, in an accessible—and this is most important—entertaining way.
5. Square Away the Details: Confirm the date, place, and time of the interview. If you are calling in from home, make sure your cordless phone is charged (also speaking from experience here!) and that you will be undisturbed by kids, cats, dogs, or doorbells for the duration of the interview.
6. In other words, don't try to wing it. A successful radio appearance requires preparation. On the other hand, don't just deliver a set of talking points either. You'll come off as a wooden and boring academic.

The Interview

There are really only two rules you need to follow here:

Rule 1: Answer all questions as asked, but don't neglect to tie them to one of more of your three talking points. Example: In an interview about my research on suicide, I was asked what role mental illness plays in suicide. I replied by citing some existing statistics on the frequency of diagnosed mental illness in completed suicides, and I discussed the fact that even though women report higher rates of mental illness than men, men have much higher rates of completed suicide than women. This suggests that mental illness alone does not predict suicide rates very well. But neither of these responses was on my list of talking points, so I concluded my answer with one that was: "The real issue is understanding whether and how mental illness might be caused by social distress rather than just disturbances in brain chemistry. The conventional wisdom is that the causes of suicide are individual and psychological, but sociologists disagree. We think suicide is caused by social situations and conditions."

Rule 2: Talk as if you are talking to a college sophomore who knows little about your topic. I used to work for Greenpeace—an activist organization that depended on mobilizing media interest in its actions—and the media trainer there affectionately dubbed her workshops "Teaching Hippies How to Speak English." Most academics do not speak like hippies, but the problem of accessibility to a wider audience is similar. As academics, we pride ourselves on the precision and formality of our language, but we often neglect (or intentionally dismiss) the issue of accessibility. Here are a few points to consider:

- Put yourself out there however you can: use lots of media channels to broadcast your viewpoints, your research findings, and your expert opinions. This is what will get you noticed by a radio producer.
- Use the language you would use to describe the topic to your neighbor or your dentist. Better yet: have an actual conversation with your neighbor or your dentist where you use everyday speech to communicate your ideas. You will quickly know if your message is getting through.
- Avoid jargon. In other words, avoid words (or special meanings of words) that don't appear in an abridged dictionary. For example, if you find you cannot express your ideas without using the word *hegemonic*, you're not there yet. Note: If you aren't sure whether or not you'll make sense to a general audience, write down or dictate some of what you think you will say in MS Word and check the readability statistics (found under the Spelling and Grammar tools). It will report a readability score. For example, this document, as written, is fully intelligible to the average 11th grader. Remember that more than 60 percent of adult Americans don't have a bachelor's degree, so that's about right for radio.
- Keep your responses short. If prompted, you can always add more, but if you go on for more than 2 or 3 minutes in response to a single question, you'll begin testing everyone's patience. Airtime is very valuable because it is limited. Use your time wisely.

Follow-Up

Always send your radio show host and the producer you worked with a short email thanking them for including you in their reporting. Let them know you are available for future appearances if they are covering a topic where you have expertise or an informed opinion. This is not just good manners, but it also keeps the channel open for future appearances. If the producer is looking for experts on topics you are less familiar with, it is an opportunity to connect your more expert colleagues with a media outlet. These are the small wins that help make sociology more public and draw more attention to Public Sociology.

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Week, and *The Wall Street Journal*, among dozens of other national and international publications, and he has been a guest on many radio interview and talk shows, including *NPR's All Things Considered* and *Freakonomics Radio*. You can find his work at www.mattwray.com. He wishes to thank Devorah Lissek, former *National Public Radio* producer with WHYY, for her sage advice.

Part IV:

Dealing with Public Attacks

How to Support a Scholar Who Has Come Under Attack

Eric Anthony Grollman, University of Richmond

Academics, can we talk seriously about social media for a moment? Like much of the rest of the world, we use various social media platforms. Some of us use it strictly for personal reasons, some exclusively to share our scholarly work and perspective, and others for a mixture of these reasons. I have witnessed enough attacks on scholars by conservatives, bigots, trolls, and even other academics to conclude that no one is shielded from backlash. While our academic freedom is generally protected (though, that statement is debatable), we can no longer expect our colleagues, departments, universities, disciplines, and professional organizations to stand up for us when we come under attack.

The Times (And Attacks) Have Changed

The rules of engagement have changed. We now live in a time when a 20-year-old college sophomore, who writes for a student newspaper to expose "liberal bias and abuses at Texas colleges" (see bio at end), can spark a national conservative assault on a tenure-track professor at a different university over a few tweets critiquing racism. (They believe, however, that they are somehow protecting innocent, uneducated laypeople from the evils of brainy, radical professors in the liberal ivory tower.)

Indeed, this conservative student reporter did make Dr. Zandria F. Robinson "a thing"—both in the sense of a trend of attacking her, her appearance, her politics, her identity, and her research, and by making her an object of a larger, calculated conservative attack on critical and public scholars. With a mere tweet to the president of University of Memphis, this student reporter influenced an internal investigation on Dr. Robinson. Though unsuccessful with the first assault, the site along with another conservative college student site launched a second attack that caught the attention of national conservative media.

In essence, conservatives found success in launching a national assault on the scholarship and character of Dr. Saida Grundy, and were using the formula a second time on Dr. Robinson. They got their first taste of blood in not only dragging Dr. Grundy's name and reputation through the mud, but also in influencing her university's president to issue a statement essentially calling her a racist for critiquing racism. U Memphis never formally sanctioned or criticized Dr. Robinson, but their vague tweet disclosing her departure from the university is suspect — perhaps a passive way of quieting the conservatives who demanded her termination. (Fortunately, Dr. Robison had the last word.)

I was pleasantly surprised to see Dr. Robinson's new academic home, Rhodes College, issued a statement to the press that not only sung her praises but affirmed her expertise and scholarship.

Dr. Robinson was hired for a faculty position in the Rhodes Anthropology & Sociology Department that calls for expertise in particular areas, specifically gender studies and social movements. Her expertise in these areas, her extensive understanding of the complex problems of race in American society, her deep roots in the Memphis area, and many years of successful teaching experience, made her an attractive candidate for the position…Dr. Robinson has an extensive and impressive body of scholarship that provides clarity and context to the sound bite world of social media. This situation ultimately shines a light on Rhodes as a place where intellectual engagement and the exchange of ideas are among our highest priorities.

For once, this wasn't a passive commitment to tolerate a controversial scholar's academic freedom; this was a proactive statement to say, "she knows what she's talking about, so please take several seats."

But, I worry Rhodes may be an outlier here. And, I am not entirely optimistic Rhodes would defend every scholar who comes under attack. Though I have been informally supported at my own institution, I'm not confident that I would be defended if donors threatened to withhold their financial support if I weren't fired. Dr. Tressie McMillan Cottom, an expert on academic institutions, penned an excellent essay that substantiates my doubt:

What I really wanted to point out is how yet again we have an example of how woefully underprepared universities are to deal with the reality of public scholarship, public intellectuals, or public engagement. In this age of affective economies of attention, weak ties can turn a mild grievance into something that feels like political action. In this moment we should call for institutions to state explicitly what they owe those who venture into public waters… Basically, the scale of current media is so beyond anything academia can grasp that those with agendas get a leg up on pulling the levers of universities' inherent conservativism.

Simply put, academia is behind the times. And, there's far too much academic cowardice, rather than academic bravery, to entrust our protection to our universities. Controversy—the very thing that academic freedom is designed to protect us against (professionally)—is feared rather than embraced. What's worse is that these attacks coincide with, or have even been made possible by, the decline of labor rights and protections for academics. Dr. Adia Harvey Wingfield argued this in an insightful essay, "Canaries in the Coal Mine? Saida Grundy, Zandria F. Robinson, and Why Calls for their Firing are a Problem for Everyone":

As more institutions adopt a market-based model where students are consumers, teaching is pushed off onto poorly paid adjunct professors, and administrative bloat runs rampant, the conditions that tenure track faculty have enjoyed—and that have allowed us to do our best work—are becoming increasingly weaker. In Wisconsin, Governor Scott Walker has moved to weaken tenure at state colleges and universities (with predictably bad results as noted faculty leave the flagship University of Wisconsin-Madison campus for less hostile climates). In this

type of environment, it's not really a wonder that faculty are at risk not for their scholarship, or their teaching, but because they made public statements that generated outcry and controversy.

And:

Like other employees in an increasingly neoliberal environment, academics are facing growing job insecurity and precariousness that stands to weaken and minimize the ways our jobs should allow us to contribute to understanding a changing society. If, as I suspect, Grundy and Robinson are just early indicators of what's to come for all of us, then we should all be very concerned.

In this context, besides the real professional risks, we are also largely on our own to weather trolls, harassment, rape threats, death threats, and hate mail. And, that goes for those who are relatively uncensored and those who think they maintain their public presence the "right" way. Indeed, you don't even have to engage the public outside of your classroom to find yourself under attack.

But, let's be clear: the pattern of attacks on scholars appears to suggest that people of color, women, and other scholars of marginalized backgrounds are most vulnerable to these attacks. Women of color who publicly write about racism and white privilege seem to be overrepresented among the targets of these witch hunts for critical and public scholars. Academia continues to change around us. We can no longer bury our heads in the sand, telling ourselves our only goal is to "publish or perish." There may not be a decent job left within which we can publish on the topics of our own interests and passions.

Supporting Scholars Who Come Under Attack

I have come across a fair amount of advice for targets of online (and off-line) harassment, and even offered my own. See Dr. Rebecca Schuman's reflections on dealing with trolls, "Me & My Trolls: A Love Story" and "The Thickness of My Skin." And, Joshunda Sanders', "Up to here with trolls? Tips for navigating online drama."

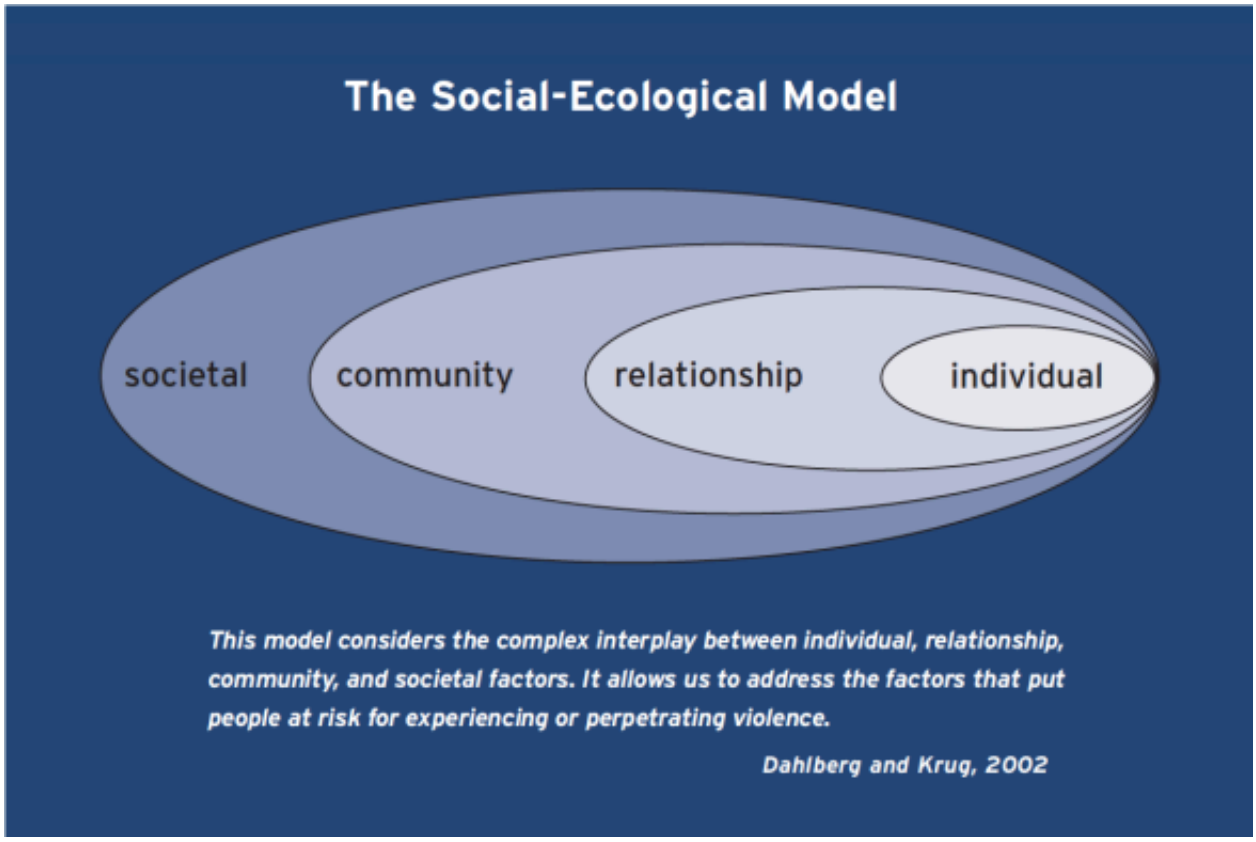
But, I have not seen any advice for others to support scholars who come under attack. So, with what little experience I have, I'm proposing my own approach. In my proposed strategy, I draw from bystander intervention work, primarily used to prevent sexual violence and support victims of such violence. In the recent past, I created a report for a local rape crisis center/domestic violence shelter on existing bystander intervention curricula. I wrote about bystander intervention for sexual violence when I blogged for the Kinsey Institute. And, I have written about using bystander intervention to fight racism and support victims of racism—a blog post that has been used as a major theme for an anti-racist group in Tennessee. I hesitate to claim expertise here, but I have referenced or heavily used the bystander intervention model enough to feel comfortable using it here.

Briefly, the bystander intervention model calls for others who are present for some problem or emergency situation to intervene in some way. The language of "bystanders" comes from the concept of the bystander effect, wherein witnesses to some crisis are

less and less likely to intervene with more and more witnesses present. If you are the only bystander present, you are quite likely to help if possible; if you are one of one hundred people, the odds are extremely slim that you'll do anything besides mind your business. Bystander intervention explicitly counters this tendency, instead demanding that bystanders intervene in whatever way possible. And, for social problems like sexual violence and racism, this approach conceptualizes the problem as a community's responsibility. To eliminate sexual violence, we are all responsible for fighting rape culture: challenging sexist jokes and comments; challenging victim-blaming; teaching and practicing sexual consent; intervening when we see sexual violence occurring; demanding justice for victims of sexual violence; and so forth.

I want to apply bystander intervention, then, to supporting scholars who are targeted by bigots, trolls, conservatives, and hostile colleagues. First, we must conceptualize such attacks as a larger problem, one which affects all of us in some way, and which we are all responsible for addressing. A culmination of factors—the absence of academic freedom policies that reflect the existence and scholars' use of social media, the decline of labor rights and protections in academia, ongoing conservative attacks on higher education (even tenure)—have produced an increasingly easy route to target and then take down public and critical scholars. And, these forces exist within the larger intersections of racism, sexism, classism, heterosexism, and other systems of oppression, thus making marginalized scholars the most vulnerable to attack and the subsequent inaction of academic institutions and organizations.

As a social problem (at least among academics), it is thus our responsibility as a broad academic community to counter these attacks and support the victims of these attacks. This community responsibility exists at multiple levels, ranging from small acts to large policy changes.



Source: Dahlberg, Linda, and Etienne Krug. 2002. " Violence – A Global Public Health Problem." Pp. 3-21 in World Report on Violence and Health, edited by E.G. Krug, L.L. Dahlberg, J.A. Mercy, A.B. Zwi, and R. Lozano. Geneva, Switzerland: World Health Organization.

A Bystander Intervention Approach to Support Attacked Scholars

We could adapt the above social-ecological model to fit academia, which should include the following levels: individual; department; university; discipline; and, the profession. Below, I offer specific ways to support scholars who are attacked, drawing from my own experiences and suggestions offered by colleagues on Twitter and Facebook (including those who have been subjected to attacks themselves). Please, offer additional suggestions in the comments section.

Individual-Level Strategies

- Assume that the targeted scholar is already aware of the attack against them. While well-intentioned, "hey did you see this awful thing about you!" can do more harm than good, potentially re-triggering their negative response to the attack. I also recommend not tagging the targeted scholar on social media if and when you share links from the attack or stories about the attack. Unlike social media platforms such as Twitter, we have a choice over who we connect with on Facebook; don't threaten one's safe space/chosen community by bringing in the external attacks.

- Offer to take over keeping up with what is written about the targeted scholar so that they do not have to. Only inform them of positive responses and anything else that seems important; don't let them know about the negative responses.
- Make an informed decision about whether to point out the attack to others. On the one hand, raising awareness and calling others to arms is useful to prevent a situation in which the attacked scholars is on her own to defend and support herself. We certainly can stand to be more aware of these attacks, to whom they are happening, and why they occur. But, on the other hand, you might empower the attackers more by giving their attack more attention and readership. In some cases, simply not feeding a troll could be effective in containing the situation.
- If you decide to raise awareness about an attack, be mindful that some colleagues (especially department colleagues and administrators at the targeted scholar's institution) may be prompted to act in a way that harms the targeted scholar. You don't want to be responsible for initiating professional consequences against the targeted scholar in your effort to support them.
- If you see that a colleague has come under attack, simply ask what they need and extend an offer of support. At a minimum, this is a reminder to the attacked scholar that they are not alone. I can say, from personal experience, sitting alone with only nasty and bigoted comments from strangers can feel very isolating; if the attacks are persistent, one might even begin to question whether their attackers' claims are true.
- Say something more helpful or useful than "you must be doing something right!" Weathering an attack is already psychologically taxing enough; asking the targeted scholar to trick their mind into seeing the attacks and threats as a compliment isn't helpful in the moment. It's hard to appreciate the supposed badge of honor that is digging deep into your skin and drawing blood.
- Don't say "just ignore it" or "just turn off the computer." We live in an age where our online interactions are a real part of our lives. It's not as simple as pretending the attack doesn't exist when you turn the computer off. And, the professional consequences are real.
- Counter the attack with supportive notes and messages. Express your appreciation of the scholars' efforts and their bravery for being a public voice. Start a campaign to encourage other friends and colleagues to send the targeted scholar kind notes and thanks. Or, take a moment to thank them using the #ThankAPublicScholar hashtag on Twitter.
- If you have been subjected to an attack in the past, reach out to an attacked scholar to let them know you have gone through it and that they are not alone. Offer advice for the best ways to weather the attack.
- Defend the attacked scholar. This can be as small as reporting offensive content from their attackers on social media or as big as writing your own

blog post or op-ed to affirm the targeted scholar. Take screen shots of offensive comments as evidence. Fight the attackers' ignorance with research if they get the targeted scholars' words/scholarship twisted. If you can stomach it, contribute to the comments section to say you agree with, or at least appreciate, the scholars' writing. (Note: These efforts may open you up to being attacked, too. I'm still blocking trolls who are giving me grief on Twitter for defending Dr. Zandria F. Robinson. And, there's foolishness.)

- If an attacked scholar is harmed professionally — whether as minor as public sanctioning or as severe as termination — hold the institution accountable for protecting academic freedom. Start a petition. Employ the advice and services of AAUP and other professional organizations. Perhaps suggest that the targeted scholar seek legal counsel, and help them raise money if they cannot afford to.
- Challenge colleagues' comments that blame attacked scholars for their own attacks. I have seen and heard scholars rationalize recent attacks, attributing blame to the targets because they used social media in a certain way, spoke/wrote in a certain tone, failed to give broader context and offer citations within the limits of a 140-character tweet, and so on. "They knew the risks!" I've even seen discussions that offer no sympathy for targets because they weren't really engaging in public scholarship — just "popping off." These sentiments suggest that there is a right way and a wrong way to engage the public. Even scholars who write more extensive op-eds, explicitly backed by research, have come under attack. As I argued in the previous section, these attacks reflect calculated assaults on higher education, liberalism, people of color, and women; and, we are all increasingly vulnerable as higher education becomes more corporatized and relies heavily on a poorly paid pool of adjunct laborers. If we conclude that the only safe way to avoid being targeted is to stop engaging the public and delete our social media accounts, we are deluding ourselves into thinking that silence will protect us. We do too little to make academia accessible, anyhow; we would only be making matters worse if we self-silence.

Department and University-Level Strategies

- If the targeted scholar is receiving death threats, threats of sexual violence, and/or hate mail, contact campus (and perhaps local) police to investigate and offer a police escort. You or the police should take over checking your colleagues' mail and answering their phone. Even if you don't agree with their actions or comments, there is no excuse for leaving them vulnerable to physical, mental, or sexual violence.
- When a colleague has come under attack, fight fire with fire—pressure your department and/or university to issue a public statement defending your colleague *and affirming their expertise and value*. **Do not** take Boston University's approach, which suggested they tolerate Dr. Saida Grundy's

academic freedom, and also called her a racist and a bigot—in a statement that "denounces" her "racially charged tweets." It would have been better for BU to say nothing at all because it only fueled her attackers' taste for blood. **DO** take Rhodes College's approach, which clarified Dr. Zandria F. Robinson's expertise, affirmed that her tweets and blog posts are backed by her expertise, and explicitly stated her value to the institution.

- When people from outside of the university target a professor and demand their termination (or worse), do not readily accept their claims at face value. Use your critical skills as a scholar to assess the significance, source, and validity of these claims. I recommend being particularly suspicious of claims that a (minority) professor has somehow harmed a privileged group (e.g., whites, men, heterosexuals, middle-class and wealthy people). Stand firm in the distinction between public statements backed by research, especially those critical of the status quo and inequality, and proclamations based solely on personal opinion. Remember that the public isn't necessarily ready to hear what scholars have to say—and that's no reason to panic. (How often do we encounter our own students' [and even colleagues'] discomfort when we challenge their worldviews?)
- Demand that your university and, if relevant, your department, establish guidelines for academic freedom that reflect today's forms of public scholarship and means of communicating with the public. Draw on existing AAUP materials on academic freedom and social media. To be clear, I am suggesting that academic freedom policies include explicit protections for scholars' use of social media, among other forms of engaging the public—not setting limits on what is considered "responsible" social media use like University of Kansas's controversial policy. The major problem with KU's policy is a stipulation that social media use that "is contrary to the best interests of the employer" may be grounds for termination. As universities have come more corporatized, it seems the quickest way to have a professor sanctioned or fired is to threaten the university's bank account (i.e., donors' financial contributions). In this vein, think about who has the most means to donate to a university; people of color (among other marginalized groups) will never have the same level of power to pressure a university to sanction/fire a controversial white professor. So, the power of the purse in academia will always loom larger for marginalized scholars.
- Related to the point above, demand that the university institute a formal means of lodging complaints of inappropriate or offensive use of social media or other engagements with the public. (There is no reason why a university president should be taking requests from students, with a known agenda to target presumably liberal professors, to investigate one of their faculty—especially via Twitter.) Just as any internal offense (such as sexual harassment, academic dishonesty) must be officially reported before any action is taken, external charges, if investigated and acted upon, should first be formally reported with proper evidence.

- Pressure your university to employ lawyers who will aggressively fight on behalf of scholars' academic freedom. (Several academics have speculated that BU's public statement about sanction of Dr. Grundy was written by cowardly lawyers who looked to protect the university, not her.)
- Demand that your department and/or university value *community* service (not just academic service) and public scholarship. Here, I explicitly mean that these efforts count in hiring, tenure, promotion, and pay raises. When university administrators praise or even demand public service, hold them accountable for actually counting and rewarding these efforts—and matching these rewards with professional protections against any backlash.
- Challenge the academic culture that demands that you "keep your head down" and "keep your mouth shut." Question the implicit assumption underlying this advice that scholars, particularly at the junior level, will be reckless and irresponsible with regard to department and university politics, and engaging with the public. In light of the few rewards and great risks entailed in serving the community and engaging the public, these efforts should be rewarded, not punished or kept quiet.
- If you work in a graduate department, advocate for explicitly discussing academic freedom and public scholarship with graduate students—perhaps make these discussions a regular part of a professional seminar, preparing future faculty programs, or some other form of mandatory professional socialization. Also, discuss the changing nature of higher education: the decline of tenure-track positions, the increase in student debt, the decline in state funding, and the corporatization of universities.
- Train your graduate students how to effectively and safely use social media and work with the media.
- Rather than attempt to "beat the activist" out of your graduate students, recognize that activism or, at least a desire to make a difference, is what drives many people into graduate school and academia (especially those from marginalized backgrounds). Find ways to harness this passion in your graduate students' careers.

Discipline and Profession-Level Strategies

- Demand that your professional organizations, especially those to which you pay dues, actively defend scholars who come under attack. This can entail issuing public statements and press releases in their defense, offering financial support and help finding new employment for those who are unexpectedly fired, and offering access to legal counsel if necessary. (Sociologists, as far as I know, ASA only intervenes when scholars have been fired by their universities — and, even then, it may not be to defend them. The rest of us are on our own.)
- Create resources to support and build community among public scholars.

- Host conferences on academic freedom, public scholarship, and intellectual activism, with at least some focus on the inherent risks of engaging the public.
- Host conference workshops on using social media and working with the media.
- Work to reverse the adjunctification of higher education.
- Demand that your local and state politicians stop making efforts to undermine academic freedom (including tenure), and start making more efforts to protect it.

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“Who Do You Think You Are?”: When Marginality Meets Academic Microcelebrity.

Tressie McMillan Cottom, Virginia Commonwealth University

I am a sociologist. That means many things but for the purposes of this analysis it means that I am inclined to count and to think in terms of groups and structure. It is also helpful to know that I have been writing and publishing online and in traditional media for over a decade. I did so first as an unaffiliated representative of one, namely myself. As my professional and personal roles shifted I have written as an embedded authority in higher education, media, and cultural institutions. My organizational role, authorial voice, and legitimacy have shifted across time, space and context (e.g. from graduate student to blogger to writer to sociologist). With those shifts, my audience and platform have changed. What changes less frequently is my embeddedness in institutions and social hierarchies that can define me against my will and constrain my efficacy in public engagement. In contrast, my social location as a black woman is read with comparable stability across multiple contexts. Consequently, as my scholarship diffuses across various audiences the risks associated with being read through marginality increase. A systematic analysis of my public writing makes the case that as academics are increasingly called to “publicly engage,” we have not fully conceptualized or counted the costs of public writing from various social locations.

I am not just a woman but also a black woman performing a particular type of expertise for large, multiple publics. As such, my experience of negative comments differs from the dominant gendered narrative of online abuse. For example, I have never received a single rape threat. Instead, increased scale and multiple publics (generated by both digital writing and social media) have elicited comments and threats specific to my illegitimacy as an intellectual, e.g. expert. It’s why some form of “who the fuck do you think you are,” as one commenter put it, is the most commonly expressed sentiment among the thousands of negative comments on my blog, As a public writer, academic and black woman, my location at the bottom of a racist, sexist social hierarchy mitigates the presumed returns on academic public engagement specifically and makes a case for reconsidering the theoretical assumptions of microcelebrity more broadly.

Academic capitalism promotes engaged academics as an empirical measure of a university’s reputational currency. Academic capitalism refers to the ways in which knowledge production increasingly embeds universities in the new economy (Berman 2011; Rhoades and Slaughter 2010). Calls for academic public-ness have been critiqued for obscuring neoliberal transformations of intellectual labor into market capital that separates the “real” academic superstars from the rank-and-file academic proletariat. Others make a populist appeal to democratized knowledges, encouraging academics and scholars (I use both to signal that one need not be an academic actor to be a scholar) to tear down institutional barriers of access. The capitalists and populists make similar assumptions: each assumes that when writing for publics, actors are individuals simultaneously embedded in institutions and dislocated from stratified status groups. But when women writing publicly have pushed social media sites to create mechanisms to

report accounts for making rape threats, they have made the implicit claim that microcelebrity and attention do not operate in the same way for all status groups.

Microcelebrity refers to the affective capital engendered and commodified by various social and new media platforms where identity and brand are merged and measured in likes, shares, follows, comments and so on. Alice Marwick calls microcelebrity a negotiation practice that: "[I]nvolves creating a persona, performing intimate connections to create the illusion of closeness, acknowledging an audience and viewing them as fans, and using strategic reveal of information to maintain interest" (2010; 2012). Microcelebrity's attention economy and the institutional incentives for academics to traffic in it share the same political economy: neoliberalism, financialization, and market logics. It should be no wonder that public engagement has been rebranded as academic microcelebrity. It is all the reach with none of the critical politics.

Cultivating attention and value for academic scholarship shares similar activities with critically engaged research. Engaged research emerged from various critical interventions of academia's white, male, elite Western bias. Black studies, feminist studies, critical education studies, and queer studies directly challenged the power relations embedded in academic knowledge production. Whether it is called "community engaged," "culturally responsive" or "participatory action" research, these epistemological projects are overtly political (Cahill 2007). They aim to bring marginalized voices to the academy and to recognize the lived experiences of the marginalized as valuable. Traditionally, these research models also aimed to engage non-academics as co-creators of their own knowledges (Olesen 2011). This often includes advertising one's research and other consciousness-raising activities.

With technological diffusion, critically engaged scholarship has embraced digital platforms to communicate, diffuse, and archive. Scholars who are also members of marginalized groups disproportionately take up this kind of engaged scholarship, often without commensurate credit from university administrators or colleagues (Ellison and Eatmen 2008; Park 1996; Stanley 2006; Taylor and Raeburn 1995; Turner et al 2008; Villalpando and Bernal 2002). Those activities look very similar to those associated with cultivating academic microcelebrity. There is a sense of a "public" to which we are in service. There is the ethos to disseminate scholarship and to leverage technology to de-institutionalize information.

But, whereas engaged scholarship has a political imperative, academic microcelebrity has a market imperative. Academic microcelebrity is ostentatiously apolitical, albeit falsely so because markets are always political. Academic microcelebrity encourages brand building as opposed to consciousness-raising; brand awareness as opposed to co-creation of knowledge. It creates perverse incentives for impact as opposed to valuing social change. Microcelebrity is the economics of attention in which academics are being encouraged, mostly through normative pressure, to brand their academic knowledge for mass consumption. However, the risks and rewards of presenting oneself "to others over the Web using tools typically associated with celebrity promotion" (Barone 2009) are not the same for all academics in the neo-liberal "public" square of private media.

As a participant in and critical observer of the various forces shaping academic capitalism (McMillan-Cottom and Tuchman 2015), digital media (Cottom 2014) and structural inequalities, I aim to put these into conversation in this essay. My approach is grounded in critical black feminist theory for its attention to interlocking oppressions, processes, and power relations. Studying interlocking oppressions calls not just for an account of identity, but an account of power (Crenshaw 1991; Hill Collins 2000) that is conducted in a "process centered, institutionally complex way" (Choo and Ferree 2010:131). Because I study education and work, I am particularly keen on the organizational processes that manifest at various intersections of marginality when scholars become brands and universities become corporations.

Microcelebrity and Academic Engagement in the Age of the Corporate University

Institutions, publics, and some media elites are encouraging academics to be more visible in the public sphere. From the institutional perspective, it makes sense to encourage your academic superstars to represent a university's brand in widely read publications. Within the context of what Gaye Tuchman and others have called the corporate university, public engagement leverages attention into brand awareness which, in turn, somehow contributes to greater prestige in the competition for prestigious students. The "in turn" part of transforming awareness into prestige is always a little fuzzy. That is likely because the process of making prestige is itself tautological: a university is prestigious because prestigious students attend and prestigious students attend universities because they are prestigious.

The populist appeal for academics to engage the public imagines a democratization of specialized knowledge. This appeal is also unfolding within the organizational context (I will use the term "logic" in the organizational theory sense to mean situational schemas that rationalize norms, behaviors, etc.) of the corporate university. Just as the proliferation of digital tools engenders a feeling of "free" and "public" access to vast amounts of information, profit logics demand that publishers, professional societies and all manner of those with claims to intellectual property erect borders to define "us" from "them." How else will "we" profit from "them" but to clearly demarcate who is who? Populist and capitalist positions for greater academic engagement with the public both aim to leverage a type of academic microcelebrity in service to their respective ideological goals.

There are multiple overlaps between academia, public discourse, and digital media. Not only are academics developing these microcelebrity practices in the cultivation of brands but also they are doing so using the digital tools from which the microcelebrity concept is derived. Engaged academics are not confined to traditional mainstream media. They are encouraged to use ostensibly democratizing tools like Twitter, Facebook, and blogs. There is a sense that one can cobble together a common public by overlapping various social media platforms and audiences. Many of my colleagues are doing a fine job of problematizing the intersections of private social media and the university. The larger project from which this essay is drawn is part of that emerging conversation. But this essay focuses specifically on the context of microcelebrity as I have experienced it from a specific social location as a racialized, gendered person who is reconstructed by

multiple publics as performing expertise. The account is specific but not singular. Black feminist theory has conceptualized race, gender, class and sexual identities as expressions of intersecting structural and social processes rendered visible in everyday life. When a black woman is performing expertise through public writing, she is doing so from a location in a set of interlocking oppressions that condition the incentives to participate in academic microcelebrity practices and obscures the risks of doing so.

What's a Nice Sociologist Doing Online? The Case of an Academic Blog

A new media class probably is not supposed to happen at a public historically black college (HBCU). For a host of historical, social, and economic reasons rooted in institutional racism, black colleges in the United States typically have less funding, fewer political ties, and paltry institutional endowments to seed emerging disciplinary programs like new media. My new media writing class was housed in an English department and taught by a new professor. The course covered writing for different publics as a rhetorical practice but it also included attention to institutional processes like Creative Commons copyright and digital attribution. The course continued a historical practice among HBCU faculty of embedding dual curriculums in traditional institutional disciplines. In this way, students who are less likely to be exposed to emerging knowledge discourses because of structural inequities become part of an underground railroad of resistance in institutional settings. By the end of the course, my professor encouraged me to purchase my own domain. Her concern was for authorial control that would signal to readers that my content should be treated according to the media and academic logics where citations and attributions are normative. I used a pre-paid credit card to purchase my domain and the website followed me to graduate school.

My earliest posts were guided by class assignment prompts. They included meditations on race, education and identity. I have since made about half of those earlier posts private. That decision was absolutely shaped by the shift in my professional identity from student to doctoral student to public writer and back again to the quasi-academic role that has now been assigned to me. Those early posts were more likely to include specific references to my family members, peer groups, and geographic location. As a student, I felt that content was in many ways protected from the scrutiny of microcelebrity. Methodologically, online digital texts such as blog entries and social media content can be used to construct truncated life histories of persons, groups, and social contexts. Diaries have been used in various social science disciplines to increase respondent recall of subjective experiences. Viewing my blog content as event history diaries allows me to document objective experiences like time but also to observe narrative changes relative to changes in my role, authority, and audience differentiation. Theoretically, the shift in content and voice maps onto the unintentional cultivation of microcelebrity that was partially an effect of my academic identity and network ties.

Marwick and others have primarily observed intent as a causal condition for microcelebrity and the practice of cultivating it as a set of activities as opposed to the institutional conditions of those activities and microcelebrity's various effects.

Microcelebrity can be a tool to develop a personal brand, to leverage attention to generate income of job prospects, and to distill media and public attention of social movements. I consider microcelebrity's cause-and-effect from my multiple attenuated status positions. My agency to create, perform or strategically reveal information is circumscribed by my ascribed status positions. As my professional and public-facing identities shift, my social location remains embedded in groups with a "shared histories based on their shared location in relations of power" (Hill Collins 1997: 376). Academic capitalism and microcelebrity promote neoliberal ideas of individualism. But power relations circumscribe the utility and value of cultivating attention in ways we rarely note, much less redress.

The shift in my authorial voice and control across time and role transition is a prime example of how attention operates variably by attenuated status identities. My transition to graduate school generated role conflict and identity negotiation common to most graduate students but that are particular to black graduate students. Numerous studies in the U.S. and the U.K (where racialized group conflict is more likely to be specific to blackness as it is understood in the U.S. context) report that black graduate students are often not integrated into their departments. One study on race, gender and the graduate student experience found the effects of gender and race matter, as "African American women appeared to be the most isolated and dissatisfied" (Ellis 2001). They report social isolation, enclosure of critical informal knowledge networks, hypervisibility and low expectations for their intellectual abilities. My posts about that early period of transition were inextricably linked to social processes of underrepresentation of minorities in high status institutional organizations, logics, and cultures.

That isolation and dissatisfaction informed my choices about what and how I would write on my blog. As the context of graduate studies sought to transform me through professionalization processes steeped in historical white male Euro-centric renderings of "graduate student-come-scholar," I sought venues wherein I could retain that part of me which I did not want to be transformed. There is nothing particularly onerous about being a black woman. I rather enjoy it. It comes with a social-cultural- linguistic history in which I have developed over 30 years of expertise. It grounds me in a body politic and an intellectual tradition that rightfully locates whatever is onerous about my identity in the systems of power that define and constrain me against my will. Public writing became a venue for retaining parts of myself that I would not submit to institutional transformation.

But channeling those parts of myself in public writing did not escape institutional and structural ascription. That ascription brought with it a unique set of challenges that are analogous to those of other graduate students, other academics, and other writers but that exist singularly at their intersections. Again, it is important to consider the organizational context within which I write. My professional identity is embedded in an institutional relationship, i.e. my academic department and university. Roles in those contexts are ordered hierarchically. The "graduate student" role is arguably near the bottom of that hierarchy. That position attenuates the power, social networks, and capital (cultural, social and economic) at my disposal to buffer the effects of

microcelebrity. Those effects include increased scrutiny not just of your person or of your cause but, given that my legitimacy is rooted in my academic role, that scrutiny also often includes critiquing my academic bona fides and intellectualism.

Were I white or male or of a higher class, it is possible that I could leverage the adage that all press is good press. The negative effects of microcelebrity are transformed into positive attention when made legible through bodies and identities more closely aligned to the assumed "natural" embodiment of rationality, intelligence and ability. That is to say that the difference between a black woman muckraking with an academic library card can be read differently than muckraking by white elite graduate students at new media outlets like Jacobin or in the public rendering of Evgeny Morozov. These persons' social locations conform to the hegemonic ("natural") embodiment of intellectual critique. This affords them a legitimacy rooted in academic authority even when they are not yet, or are still, academics.

But, as the literature on social isolation of black women in academic communities attests, there is a conceptual framework for legitimate intelligence that situates GENDER x RACE as negatively correlated with expertise (Matthew 2014; Sanders 1997; Stanley 2006). To extend this conceptual causal chain to the digital context, microcelebrity would interact with GENDER x RACE x EXPERTISE in ways that mediate the assumed value of attention in an attention economy. Put simply, all press is good press for academic microcelebrities if their social locations conform to racist and sexist norms of who should be expert. For black women who do not conform to normative expectations of "expert," microcelebrity is potentially negative. Race and gender not only shape the direction of causality but the rendering of attention as dichotomous. When attention is theorized in the context of unequal power relationships, it is a continuous variable that maps onto racist and gendered hierarchies. The difference can be seen in how my content changed as microcelebrity increased attention (e.g. traffic, comments, and diffusion to other new media platforms). My public writing position shifted in response to the volume and content of feedback from various publics: non-specialist readers, specialist readers, and academics.

Mo' Numbers, Mo' Problems: Scale, Microcelebrity and Complex Publics

At the time of this writing my website has 219 posts that are viewable by the public and 19 set as private. The publication dates range from January 14, 2012 to June 6, 2014. In that time, readers (inclusive of spam accounts) have posted 5,550 comments, 1,382 of which remain in a moderator's queue. The blog has had 2,743,127 views in that time with an all-time daily high of 203,195 views in a 24-hour period. My most active month of 429,362 visitors occurred in October 2013 with a six-month total of 310,416 visitors in 2014 on track to best the previous year's total given people remain at all interested in reading my content. I have 2,947 blog followers from twenty-four countries in North America, South Asia, Africa, and South America. Social media accounts (Facebook, Twitter, and Digg in that order) drive the majority of my blog traffic, with significant showing from external blogs like Shakesville.com and Feministing.com. Some content "jumped" platforms: eleven posts written for my blog were eventually cross-posted to new and traditional media platforms. It is impossible to track the ways posts became

remixed and diffused through sites like Tumblr and Reddit, which are designed specifically for those purposes. But link-backs from those posts and a general search reveals that it has happened often.

I share these numbers to give an idea of scale and publics. One of the consequences of scale and attention is that it produces multiple publics. Scale is actually the dependent variable of interest among both capitalist and populist appeals to academics to increase their public engagement. Theoretically, we assume that multiple publics represent increased attention. Increased attention is conceptually understood as a positive relationship with either productivity metrics (if you prefer the capitalist take) or social good (if you prefer the populist approach). But, that relationship is based on an idea of a normative, stable identity of "academic" or expert that conforms to the rendering of expert in the imagination of multiple publics. Being black and female problematizes those assumptions and scale magnifies them. At my blog, engagement with multiple publics has introduced a greater number of informed, respectful readers. Many email me or send me comments about how they appreciate reading a perspective so different from their own. As one reader put it, "I'm as different from you as probably anyone can be. And I don't understand all you say. But, I always walk away with something I'd never thought about." That's the impact populists hope for and capitalists aim to measure. But those comments are in the minority at my blog.

As publics multiply and increase in complexity, I find that there are a greater number of renderings of my legitimate claim to expertise. Those renderings are absolutely about my race and gender (obvious in my avatar images and not at all obscured in my writings). Whereas white women tend to report a significant number of rape threats when they write publicly, the overwhelming threat issued in my comment section and inbox are threats to my academic credibility. I have received 11 death threats, 19 threats of what could be considered general bodily harm, and exactly zero rape threats in three years of writing to over a million of readers. My most contentious and most commented upon posts deal directly with racism, sexism and normative beauty ideals. Those subjects are similar to what many white bloggers and public writers write about. Whereas they are threatened with rape, I am most often threatened by challenges to my institutional affiliations and credibility. In a Twitter dialogue about this essay, Natalia Cecire noted similarly that her blog comments express "indignation that [she] would dare to have a Ph.D. or talk in public" (2014). She goes on

For the research project that generated this essay, I code these "just who the fuck do you think you are" comments (so named for how frequently that sentiment is expressed) by discursive signals of the logic used by the commenter. They span readers I code as: specialist readers, non-specialist readers, and academic readers. The context and tone of the threat is specific to each group's logics, but the basis of the threat is the same. For example, a specialist reader is one coded as a frequent commenter, a blog follower, who also follows and engaged with me across more than one social media platform. Their comments most often use the sociological language or broad academic concepts in responses. They discursively signal they are "insiders" by talking about social theory specifically or appealing to generalist expertise, as in "I have long had an interest in Roman slavery." Negative comments from specialist readers include assuming that my adviser is "black like [me]" or arguing that I am in "black studies" to locate me in a context of low expectations of intellectual rigor.

Non-specialist readers have generally read a single post out of the context of my blog's organizational logic and corpus of work. They mention that they were directed to the post through a Facebook post or similar content sharing mechanism. These commenters increase when a post goes viral or jumps social media platforms. Negative responses from this group most often condemn intellectualism generally (e.g. "liberal college elite") but also specifically my location as a black woman in a university. These comments most often reference affirmative action and threaten to contact my University. The latter is particularly interesting as it supposes that their dissent will carry more weight with an organization they view as sponsoring my content than will my own formal institutional affiliation.

While the assumed authority of specialist and non-specialists is often grounded in some fictive value of amorphous whiteness, academic audiences appeal most directly to their formal institutional affiliations. Academic readers are narrowly defined here by those who use their *edu* email addresses and/or institutional titles in their comments. All but one of the negative comments from academics included in this analysis (n=119) imply that they know senior academics, have more elite affiliations than do I, and that they will use those ties to reveal me as not an intellectual inferior so much as a junior scholar. Conceptually, the two designations are similar in their implication that I do not have the power to exert dominion over my intellectual capabilities through writing for a public. It

is an indirect appeal to power that has the same motivation: separating who I am from what I am legitimately allowed to know.

Even the death threats allude to some sense of killing me at my university, in my department or during a public lecture. One writer says that they "will fuck me up in front of [my] students so they know what shit I have been teaching them." Another commenter wants to "blow [my] brains out." A larger project analyzes the content of posts, comments, and institutional contexts of all the data from my blog. Preliminary analysis reveals that negative comments outweigh the bad (although close to evenly matched) and negative comments are more numerous and abusive for content that has been shared across multiple media platforms. And the violent insult of choice focuses not on sexual violence but on attacks to the perceived incompatibility of my person with my institutional legitimacy. Really angry commenters want to have me fired, sanctioned by the university, and my brains violently excised from my body.

In all, there are twenty-nine references to divesting me of my actual brain matter. A content analysis of all 5,552 comments (those that are published and in queue, and excluding those filtered out by a spam plug-in) finds that three-fourths of comments that can be coded as "negative" most often: call into question my academic affiliation, the merits of a university that admitted me, and explicitly or implicitly cite affirmative action as the reason that I am in a PhD program. The comments are most contentious, violent and personal on posts that have platform jumped (as one might expect, see: Davis and Jurgenson 2014). If we conceptualize platform jumping as a metric of increased number and complexity of publics, more publics means more attacks on writers whose identity is most universally reviled as inferior. The stability of my black female identity, and its near uniform ascription as low-status, anti-intellectual, and non-expert, would operate most consistently across multiple publics.

From benign disagreement to death threats, the source of ire is overwhelmingly with the institutional legitimacy that constructs me as "intellectual" or "expert." While non-black women public writers have commented on dismissal of their intellectual acumen (thus the phrase "mansplaining") and expertise, the near total focus on my institutional ties and morbid fascination with alleviating me of my actual brain seems to be specific to the ways in which publics similarly read the source of my violation. It is not specifically in my gender or in my race but in the incompatibility of my race and gender with normative renderings of who should be an expert.

Other black women academics who write publicly report similar experiences. In 2012, Dr. Anthea Butler experienced one of the more coordinated attacks to unfold across social media platforms. Butler has the kind of academic microcelebrity that administrators presumably dream about. She has over 25,000 Twitter followers. She is regularly cited in mainstream publications. She has appeared on major network news talk shows like MSNBC's *Melissa Harris-Perry Show*. She is a renowned religion scholar with all the accompanying bells and whistles, e.g. tenure, publications, and citation counts. But when Butler used her expertise to speak publicly about religion and free speech (Butler 2012), a conservative social media swarm orchestrated a multi-day, multi-platform attack on her legitimacy and professional status. The website *SocialSeer* offers an informative

account of how that attack unfolded. Butler's comments were aggregated and posted by a conservative media watchdog site that encourages readers to use the power of social media to amplify their negative responses to what they perceive as liberal media bias. When the site has focused on black women scholars, its attacks have been specific to their social location and particularly vitriolic. It is an example of how microcelebrity works conversely when social media platforms converge with powerful status positions.

You might think that this is just a reaction to her comments; many people strongly disagreed with them. But to think that this was an organic reaction would miss the hand of an outside force: Twitchy.com, a website run by Michelle Malkin, whom Wikipedia describes as a "conservative blogger, political commentator and author." *Twitchy.com* is conservative and features Malkin's style of snarky rants about the left served up with over-the-top faux outrage. Like in *Spinal Tap*, *Twitchy* is always set at 11. When detractors are always set to 11, an academic's ability to ride out the outrage wave is greatly determined by institutional and social inequalities.

Groups like *Twitchy* target liberal/progressive voices on social media but they are just a formal example of the type of organic social media attacks that happen frequently when social media users target other users for mass critique. However, these attacks are not confined to social media. Butler has reported that *Twitchy* users have contacted her university. While these kinds of social media "piling ons" certainly happen to users across identity, the specificity of the violation and the direct appeals to institutional authorities are about power. Butler has tenure, which provides her a level of institutional support. However, African American women and white women are less likely to achieve tenure than are white men. These structural inequalities make academics who are black and female more likely to be the objects of ideological attacks and more vulnerable to attacks on their academic bona fides.

In 2013, new media outlet *Biology Online* approached scientist D.N. Lee to contribute an essay for publication. Lee is African American and a woman and at the time had a significant public writing platform at *Scientific American*. She had also developed a following for connecting science, science writing, and minority youth cultures across several social media platforms. When Lee asked about payment for the essay, the *Biology Online*'s agent called her an "urban whore." Of the insult, Lee said:

It wasn't just that he called me a whore – he juxtaposed it against my professional being: Are you urban scientist or an urban whore? Completely dismissing me as a scientist, a science communicator (whom he sought for my particular expertise), and someone who could offer something meaningful to his brand. (Lee 2013)

The slur worked on multiple levels to remind Lee of her presumed social location.

The insult is most legible when read through the discursive practice of race, gender and class as mutually constitutive social locations of powerlessness. Lee bills herself as an "urban scientist." First, "urban whore" reworks Lee's blog title to belittle her self-titling. Like "ghetto," urban can also be used as a racialized slur to signal the cultural denigration of space and place. Whore, of course, is a gendered insult derived from puritanical normative boundary making between acceptable and unacceptable femininity. As

instructive as the initial attack is the institutional response to Lee's published defense of her academic bona fides, *Scientific American*'s response is an example of how public discourse interacts with institutional marginalization. *Scientific American* removed Lee's popular blog from the website for two days while editors vetted the appropriateness of Lee's response. They expressed concerns that Lee had used "hip hop" language in the post (which, incidentally, can work like "ghetto" and "urban" to denigrate culture produced by black and Hispanic youth). When outraged readers, many of them scientists, pointed out that the voice of the post was in keeping with Lee's previous posts, the editors relented. The post was eventually restored to public view with an editor's note to readers that did not go so far as to apologize for censoring Lee's defense of her academic bona fides. Attenuated group status operated here on three levels: it created a space for Lee's person to be attacked within the logics of her professional networked identity; it defined the specificity of the verbal attack; and it defined the legitimacy of her official institutional affiliation as marginal.

The Question is, "Who Are YOU?" Method, Theory and Praxis in Digital Texts

Individuals experience microcelebrity and attention differently relative to the status groups in which they are embedded. With greater publics and attention, one's social location becomes more salient to the risks and returns to attention. But, scale and attention can also nudge us towards conceptualizing digital media content as meaningful socio-cultural artifacts. I speak of numbers because, again, I am a sociologist and I count things. But, also, the diffusion and growth of my blog is the organizational context for how my individual writings are linked to patterns in new media proliferation, networks, and simultaneously responds to calls for greater academic engagement with the public while running afoul of several critical academic norms.

Considering the scope and embeddedness of my blog in these processes and structures is one way that I link my analysis of digital autoethnographies to historical and social debates about identity, neoliberalism and inequality. When I make a blog post it is an asynchronous medium. The audience is largely hidden from me. Changes in search engine algorithms have even made many of the "key search terms" that readers use to find my blog invisible to me. For over a year at the time of this writing, "unknown search terms" has been in the top five of searches that drive readers to my blog. The structure of my digital platform (WordPress) and digital mechanisms (Google's encryption of search terms) and personal choices about comment moderation (I erected a moderation layer in 2013) all shape the extent to which my populist public writing medium is embedded in institutional new media practices and normative structures.

The tendency to dismiss digital writing as narrow fields of "me-search" misses the complexity of the medium and ignores the diversity of those writings. Humanities scholars have been in the forefront of those seriously considering digital artifacts as texts and data. My experiences suggest that sociologists miss an opportunity to mine emerging representations of groups, inequality, and communications when we view digital content as individual representations. All texts are socially constructed. Digital texts are not only embedded in social construction but in political and technical systems that reinscribe power, identity and relational exchanges in texts. As I have shown, the

corpus of texts from my blog allowed an event history analysis of content change that was embedded in role negotiation, status ascription, and legitimation. The architecture of the platform where I published allowed authorial control of content but could not control context collapse or social interactions. Geographical proximity in social relationships can now be reimagined as space. That reconfigures the assumed role of place and proximity in all manner of social relationships.

Mark Carrigan and others have called for a "digital sociology" that will explore "the opportunities which digital tools afford for rethinking sociological craft" (2013). The call is heavy on tools—the platforms, architecture, and cool gadgets that visualize patterns—but I caution that things and patterns are but a small bit of the promise of digital sociology. If we consider first the disciplinary value of sociology and the theoretical frameworks of digital second, we arrive at a much more satisfying future for the intersection of digital and social. The question of "who the fuck am I" instead becomes a methodological process of interrogating who are you, each of us who produces digital texts and the context within which we produce them. C. Wright Mills' appeal to a sociological imagination is useful here to consider. Digital texts embody the intersections between history and biography that Mills (1959) thought inherent to understanding social relations. Content from my blog is a ready example. I have access to the entire data set. I can track its macro discursive moments to action, space, and place. And I can consider it as a reflexive sociological practice. In this way, I have used my digital texts as methodologists use autoethnographies: reflexive, critical practices of social relationship.

The potential of digital texts goes beyond autoethnographies. Political communications produce digital texts to exert influence over civic bodies and futures. Studying those communications in the context of their organizational logics, historical context, and digital platforms is a sociological endeavor in the methodological tradition of event history analysis. Digital texts are constrained by normative choices embedded in platform modalities. I can self-define as queer on Facebook but my gender and race on Twitter is largely an ascriptive process, aided by character limits on bios and the prominence of profile images. These connections between digital structures, logics and status group ascription are, again, ripe for sociological inquiry in the organizational studies tradition. I imagine a critical sociology of private and public ownership of content that differently privileges some status groups over others. I think here of the ways in which institutional affiliations among white feminist groups have clashed with unaffiliated black and Hispanic feminists on social media. What is the value or effect of institutional embeddedness in platforms marketing as populist? These are questions that are squarely in the tradition of critical race theory, black feminist theory, and queer theories. Viewing digital texts as conceptual and methodological tools allows us to explore these kinds of questions in ways that do not obscure groups or inequality, but center them in the analysis.

Theoretically, attention economies benefit when researchers explicitly think through group processes of inequality, particularly ascribed status groups. Status groups necessarily engage historical, economic and social processes that can be difficult to disengage in aggregate "big data." Observing the texts produced from different social

locations within the matrix of interlocking oppressions is a theoretical framework for understanding digital texts as sociological processes of identity, group, organizational and political processes. Methodologically, texts can be interrogated as embedded representations of institutional practices, normative behaviors, and organizational logics. Internet studies scholars and critical humanities have done the most work there methodologically. But sociology can contribute a systematic methodology of qualitative textual analysis (discourse, content and organizational studies) to further our understanding of the social in the digital. Finally, I have argued that racialized gendered positions complicate both capitalist and populist appeals to democratized knowledges. We must attend to the ways in which social inequities, historical and contemporary racism and sexism, and the precarity of women and African Americans in institutions makes them vulnerable in knowledge production that traffics in digital attention economies.

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