Elected members present were Catherine White Berheide (ASA Secretary), Karen Cerulo (Chair), James Jasper, Erin Kelly, Peggy Levitt, Mary Romero (ASA Secretary-Elect), Vincent Roscigno, and Steven Vallas. Past President Erik Olin Wright and incoming elected member Jennifer Barber also attended as observers.


Present from the Executive Office were Sally T. Hillsman (Executive Officer), Karen Gray Edwards (Director of Publications and Membership), and Janine Chiappa McKenna (Journals and Publications Manager). Erica Howard, Thomas Mankowski, and Eric Moran from SAGE were also present.

The meeting convened at 9:30 a.m.

The Committee approved the agenda and introductions were made.

The Chair thanked the Committee for its work since the last meeting.

Report from the Executive Officer

Hillsman discussed the proposed open access sociology journal to be published in collaboration with SAGE. The Committee discussed possible options of who will pay for publication (e.g., government, foundations, and universities) and it was noted that the author-pays model appears to be the standard for open access. Questions arose from the author-pay model: Do authors pay at submission or at acceptance? How much? Should there be a variable rate structure and, if so, based on what criteria?

The proposed journal will be completely open access using an author-pays model. There are two compelling reasons to launch this type of journal: If ASA does not, another publisher will either as publisher owned or in collaboration with a society. It is in ASA’s best interest as the national disciplinary society for sociology to serve as the standard bearer for such a journal. Plus, SAGE wants to get in on the ground floor of a sociology journal and do it in collaboration with the ASA, which provides resources that ASA needs to ensure financial stability. There appears to be enthusiasm for open access within the discipline, but it is less clear if members generally understand that open access means author pays.

The Committee wondered how the journal would be distinguished from the many open access journals available, what the journal’s focus would be, and how the journal would be regarded in relation to the other ASA journals. Jasper suggested spreading the costs by asking for a submission fee and a
publication fee, but waiving the submission fees for the first year to build up submissions. Berheide noted that ASA does not have funds available for launching this type of publication without publisher support. Moran noted that author pays does not mean the author personally pays—as often as not, it is universities, typically larger universities, that provide resources for these publication fees. Committee members noted that there are fewer tenure-track positions overall so financial support for these unaffiliated authors would not exist. The Committee discussed tying submission fees to membership rates and wondered if SAGE is looking at this as investment and will raise submission fees to sustain it.

There was also discussion on post-publication review, making a requirement for authors to submit their data for replication, and allowing an opportunity for online public discussion of the paper. The goal is to make the journal the premiere open-access journal in the discipline. It would also provide an outlet for areas that our traditional journals do not cover.

Hillsman noted that there are no time or space constraints with an open access journal. She also provided a history of ASA’s titles and how they were acquired. Various sections have proposed journals because the general ASA journals do not meet their needs; other sections want to propose journals but do not have the membership base to do so.

The Committee expressed concern about the financial structure and language of the proposal— is it intended to be profitable for the ASA? It was also noted that referring to it as second tier may not be ideal. It was pointed out that currently each author pays by submitting the copyright, which benefits ASA financially. ASA needs to find new revenue streams because members and libraries are not buying as many journals. Hillsman stated that the battle should be over the ideals, not the language in the proposal, which can be modified.

Cerulo asked the Committee to create a list of questions regarding the new journal that the Executive Office could address, such as the language on the mission of the journal (e.g., make it the top tier in open access), the peer review language (i.e., “light” peer review), and the financial plan. It was noted that graduate student training happens through the peer review and a light review could be detrimental. There were discussions on alternative models, such as having an ASA endorsement for working papers and the author would pay for the review, and that Section award-winning papers could be published in this open access journal.

Moran stated that there are minimal data available, but open access journals are evolving. SAGE feels that it needs to experiment with this and wants to partner with ASA. A journal like this would allow broader reach for an article that could normally only appear in one subspecialized journal.

Report of the Secretary

*Standardizing Editorial Office Funding:* Berheide provided a brief summary of the proposal that was supported by the Executive Office and Budget Committee as a way to standardize editorial office funding. The proposal is not intended to necessarily save money as much as it is to create a fair and equitable structure across journals. Further, in some institutions the cost of using graduate student labor is so costly that alternative models should be encouraged.
For most journals, the proposal bases staffing on manuscript submissions, using an average estimated cost for each FTE (for budgeting purposes only).

Journal editors noted individual concerns about the funding proposal, particularly that it could change who is able to apply for open editorships, which could be detrimental to the journals. Private universities could possibly underwrite the editorial office funding, but public institutions likely could not. Editor applicants do not provide information on university funding so that the best applicant can be selected. Universities may see the journals as a way to add funding to their graduate program.

Committee members were concerned about how the algorithm was determined as well as whether such a formulaic approach might limit the ability of candidates at certain institutions to apply for editorships.

The Committee was not clear on the impetus for the proposal and felt that the attempt to standardize editorial office staffing and costs does not take into account specific needs for specific journals. Further, what is labeled as “clerical” work was frequently professional work, requiring significant substantive knowledge. Also, basing the allocations on submitted manuscript numbers discounts the time needed to process revise and resubmits. If the core allocation is not high enough, editors and their teams may not have the time or energy to pursue special initiatives.

The Committee asked for editors to submit their comments on the proposed guidelines, and for those comments and more detailed information (including allocations for both “core activities” and “special initiatives”) to be provided for consideration at the December meeting.

Future Direction of Contexts

This agenda item was tabled until the December meeting.

SAGE Production Issues

Liao led the discussion on issues he experienced in working with SAGE on the 2012 and 2013 issues of Sociological Methodology, bringing up points he mentioned in the December 2012 meeting (e.g., lack of substantive copyediting). As an aside, Berheide reminded editors that there are funds for non-SAGE copyediting in the 2013 budget.

Liao noted his difficulties with SAGE’s typesetting under SAGE and that converting figures from color to grayscale causes information within the figure to be lost. There is only about one paper (with multiple color figures) every two years that would need figures published in color.

Berheide noted that ASA needs to make sure that allowing color figures does not create inequities between authors who can and cannot pay. The Committee discussed other ways authors could pay for color figures if institutional funding is an issue.

Mankowski discussed the previous production issues and he requested that editors contact him directly when there are problems. He sends e-mails to the managing editors every two weeks and there is very
little response. Lowney suggested checklists for both editors and SAGE production to ensure the journals run smoothly. The editors also made inquiries about SAGEtrack maintenance and archiving.

**Report from the Archives Subcommittee**

Cerulo discussed the questionnaire that the subcommittee (Bills, Cerulo [chair], Gross, and Kelly) created at Council’s request regarding retaining rejected manuscript and review files for archiving. They recommended taking a sample of membership (10-20 percent of authors and reviewers) by working with the ASA Research Department.

**Report on Change in Term Limits for American Sociological Review Editors**

The Committee wondered how often there have been ASR editorial terms of six years. Prior to the current editors, the last time an ASR term was longer than four years was in 1982-1986 (Sheldon Stryker). An extension beyond a fourth year has become very unusual.

Wright suggested offering a three-year term plus a one-year extension rather than changing the term to a flat four-year term. Other Committee members agreed, based on author concerns about editorial slant. However, it was noted that it could be cumbersome to change the standards for just the American Sociological Review and wondered if term limits shouldn’t change for all ASA journals.

**Availability of Data for Manuscripts under Review**

McCammon gave background on the difficulties in trying to obtain government-funded data cited in an American Sociological Review manuscript under review. The Committee offered suggestions such as having the author provide detailed instructions for editors and reviewers to apply for the data or contacting someone else who may already have access to the data.

**Journal Submission and Publication Data**

The Committee discussed the American Sociological Review’s increase in submissions, particularly with international submissions, as a result of transition to SAGEtrack. McCammon feels that it is leveling off. Moran noted that significantly more international institutions now have access to the journal as a result of the transition to SAGE.

The Committee wondered if the increase in submissions was also affecting R&R decisions; if something that was revised multiple times is still rejected due to space constraints. McCammon discussed the potential rejection of second and third round R&Rs; she also noted that their rejection rates are similar to those of previous editors.

**Temporary Increases for Sociology of Education and Social Psychology Quarterly Page Allocations**

In 2011, the Committee recommended and Council approved 30-page increases for Sociology of Education and Social Psychology Quarterly for two years (2012 and 2013) to help alleviate manuscript backlogs. The Committee discussed if these should be made permanent or if the temporary increase
helped eliminate some of the backlog. Johnson stated that the increase is still needed for *Social Psychology Quarterly* due to the number of R&Rs. Bills stated that when he took over *Sociology of Education* there was an extensive backlog of accepted articles.

**Discussion on Journal Editor Nominations**

Subcommittees were created to work with the Executive Office on editor selection for *Contemporary Sociology, Contexts, Social Psychology Quarterly, and Teaching Sociology*.

The Committee reviewed the rosters of nominees and made additions and deletions.

**Review of Editorial Board Nominations**

The Committee reviewed editorial board nominations.

**Proposal for ASA Blog(s)**

Vallas gave background on the proposal: Zussman contacted 17 bloggers asking about what they do, and the Society Pages is a great example of an umbrella of blogs. ASA could do more regarding blogging and have a bigger digital presence. The proposal suggested that ASA could partner with an existing blog or create something in conjunction with the ASA Sections. The subcommittee wants guidance from the Committee and the ASA Executive Office to figure out how to make a presence with a plan to make a proposal in December.

The Committee discussed linking from the ASA website to blogs; the subcommittee looked at the website of 100 social science societies and none provide links to outside blogs. The possibility of blogs in relation to the journals was also discussed by the Committee.

The subcommittee feels ASA should be hosting its own blog, even if postings are just summaries of journal articles. Authors could be asked to write a 500- to 1,000-word piece for posting on an ASA blog. The Committee discussed if comments on blog posts should be anonymous or if a login should be required.

Hillsman asked about the publications purpose for these blogs. Is it for internal discussion within the discipline? Is it to have a translation function? What are the essential functions for this?

The Committee discussed what kind of information would be disseminated, such as if there would be a summary of the *American Journal of Sociology* or limited to only ASA journals. The Committee asked representatives of the blog subcommittee to connect with the social media committee that Annette Lareau is initiating, and to prepare a new proposal for December.

**New Business**

Liao discussed two problematic submissions to *Sociological Methodology*—one was rejected because it appeared to be submitted elsewhere; another appeared to be plagiarized. He asked to have a list of
manuscript submission principles posted on the website, including penalties if principles are not followed. Editors could educate students about the incidents. Liao asked to have a subcommittee formed to work on standards for this. Liao will chair the subcommittee (McCammon also on subcommittee). The Committee discussed updating the Code of Ethics and working with COPE to create standards. Lowney would like a broader discussion on Institutional Review Boards, perhaps as part of the Code of Ethics.

Executive Session

The Committee voted to:

- Support the open access journal proposal with the following changes: the intellectual focus needs to be more clearly stated; the specifics of the review process need to be better articulated; and it should be described as a top-tier premier open access journal with a rigorous review process. Carried unanimously.
- Ask the Executive Office to provide information to editors on how the editorial office funding model was created and to request their input on its potential effect on budgets and core activities. This information will be provided to the Committee for further discussion in December. Carried unanimously.
- Recommend to Council to approve the request from Sociological Methodology to allow color figures if it is determined that concepts are not clear when an image is converted to grayscale. The cost of color printing will be paid by the author, not the journal. Carried unanimously.
- Recommend to Council a change in the term of editorship for the American Sociological Review to a maximum of four years (the same three-year initial term with an extension of no more than one additional year). Carried, four in favor, three opposed.
- Recommend to Council continuing the 30-page increase for Social Psychology Quarterly through Hegtvedt’s term (2014). Carried unanimously.
- Recommend to Council to continue Sociology of Education’s 30-page increase for 2014. A permanent increase will require data showing an increased and appropriate backlog. Carried unanimously.
- To forward to Council the recommendation from the archive subcommittee to conduct a membership survey to determine the potential impact on submissions and reviews should ASA decide to maintain an archive of manuscripts and reviews for future use. Carried unanimously.
- Approve nominations for new editorial board members. Carried unanimously.
- Create subcommittee on ethics with Kelly, Liao (chair), and McCammon as members. Carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m. The Committee will meet next on December 14-15, 2013, in Washington, DC.