Proposal for the Editorship of *Socius: Sociological Research for a Dynamic World*

Ryan Light, Aaron Gullickson, and C.J. Pascoe

University of Oregon

**Vision Statement**

*Socius: Sociological Research for a Dynamic World* is unique in the sociological publishing landscape and serves as a model for a discipline interested in issues of equity and public engagement. As the American Sociological Association’s only open access journal, *Socius* has quickly proven that first-rate sociological research does not have to exist solely behind expensive paywalls, but can flourish under alternative models as well. Our editorial approach will build upon the excellent foundation established by *Socius*’s founding editors, Lisa Keister and James Moody, in at least four ways: 1. Maintain fast and clear editorial decisions 2. Continue the growth of the journal both in number of submissions and in the breadth of research covered 3. Continue and expand digital publication platform 4. Encourage open science in all its facets.

1. *Rapid publication and clear editorial decisions.* Within the traditional publishing model, the typical sociological research article often takes a year or more to reach publication. This has numerous negative consequences, including newly published research that is outdated, academic careers that are stalled, and a weaker contribution to rapidly moving public debates. Other disciplines, like economics, have been more effective at contributing to public debate by having a variety of outlets that allow for rapid publication. *Socius* greatly improves sociology’s standing in this regard. We plan to continue the policies implemented by the current editorial team as outlined in the current “Guide to Reviewing for *Socius*” that have resulted in rapid publication. We will continue to desk reject papers that are very unlikely to be published, thus reducing the load on external reviewers, and up or down decisions about the quality of revisions will be made by editors after one round of revision, without resort to external reviewers except in very rare circumstances. This process will allow for both rapid publication of important results and allow researchers who are rejected to quickly find other outlets for their work.

2. *Continue growth and breadth of submissions.* Our editorial team consists of scholars with very diverse methodological and substantive interests representative of the many topic areas and methods used by sociologists. This is important for journal growth as an editorial team can signal the type of research that may be most likely to be published or at least potential submitters can perceive this to be the case. As a generalist journal, *Socius* has published an impressive array of research and we hope to continue expanding the breadth of the journal. Our team has expertise in standard quantitative methods, Bayesian methods, computational social scientific methods, qualitative field methods, as well as digital methods. Substantively, our team has published research on gender, sexuality, education, race, religion, family, social networks, organizations, and culture among other topics. We will reach out to these communities formally with regular
requests for contributions within our subfields and informally through our social networks and by networking at academic conferences.

3. Expand digital publication platform. The online journal platform offers greater opportunity for presenting research findings, yet most journals and authors are still locked into a traditional model of text, tables, and figures for the presentation of results. Socius has led the way in encouraging authors to think about alternative means of communicating results, such as with the use of short data visualization articles. We will continue and expand this important work. Specifically, we will seek to better integrate novel methods of presenting research findings such as videos, audio clips, interactive Shiny apps, and data animations directly into articles.

4. Encourage open science. The replication crisis in the social sciences has increased demands that researchers share data, code, and methods in order to increase the transparency and replicability of research findings. Our editorial team is committed to broadening this practice within the discipline of sociology and will strongly encourage open science practices for submissions to the journal, such as the use of open science badges that have proven effective in other disciplines (Kidwell et al. 2016). We will also encourage authors to submit anonymized data and methods at the review stage.

Institutional Support

The process of securing institutional support is on-going. We currently have enthusiastic support from leadership of the Department of Sociology at the University of Oregon and, with the department, the proposed editorial team is initiating discussions with the College of Arts and Science at the University. The College has a strong recent history of supporting editorial teams within sociology as faculty members in our department were recent editors of Sociological Perspectives, the flagship journal of the Pacific Sociological Association. This support included some course buyouts in recognition of the required work, some additional support for an editorial research assistant, and office space for the journal. We anticipate a similar level of support for Socius.

Editorial Strategy and Co-Editor Background Information

Our proposed editorial team and strategy are consistent with our vision statement. We believe a co-editor structure will encourage continued journal growth by building on Socius’s current strengths. Co-editorship spreads the amount of work across editors helping to ensure quick editorial decisions. Co-editorship also contributes to the expanding the journal’s footprint. Our diverse areas of expertise will encourage submissions from across sociological specializations. Our team has expertise in quantitative and qualitative methods and researchers should be confident that we can fairly assess their work alongside reviewer comments. When submitted articles are beyond the scope of our editorial team, we will turn to members of the prestigious and diverse editorial board for specific recommendations.
Light is an Associate Professor of Sociology at the University of Oregon and the inaugural Digital Scholarship Fellow in the Social Sciences at the University of Oregon Library. He studies social networks, culture, science, and social inequality. His recent work focuses on using computational methods to understand digital texts. His work has appeared in *Socius, Social Forces, Proceedings of the National Academy of Science*, among numerous others. He has served as a reviewer for two dozen journals and academic presses. He worked as an Editorial Associate for the *American Sociological Review* from 2006 to 2008 where he read hundreds of submissions for the editorial team at Ohio State University, where he received his PhD in sociology. He currently serves on the editorial boards of *Social Currents* and *Sociological Perspectives*. He was recently appointed to the editorial board of *Socius* and was recently elected to serve on the Publications Committee of the Pacific Sociological Association. He is the co-editor of the *Oxford Handbook of Social Networks*, a thirty chapter volume that is currently under contract and will be submitted in February 2019.

Gullickson is an Associate Professor of Sociology at the University of Oregon. He works primarily in the fields of race/ethnicity, stratification, family, and religion. His work has appeared in such journals as the *American Journal of Sociology, Social Forces, Demography, Sociological Science*, and *Social Science Research*, among others. He holds a PhD in Demography and Sociology from the University of California, Berkeley and an undergraduate degree in statistics from the University of Washington. As the primary instructor for the graduate statistics methods in the sociology department, he is capable of evaluating a wide variety of quantitative methods. He is also an early open science innovator in sociology who uses techniques such as git, GitHub, osf.io, and Shiny apps to share data and methods. He has served as a reviewer for over a dozen journals, and consulting/advisory editor for the *American Journal of Sociology, Social Problems*, and *Sociological Perspectives*.

Pascoe is an Associate Professor and the Nancy and David Petrone Faculty Scholar at the University of Oregon. She studies sexuality, gender, youth, schooling and digital media. Her recent work focuses on institutional and interactional reproduction of class, race, gender, and sexual inequalities in a socially progressive public school. Her award winning ethnography with University of California Press, *Dude, You’re a Fag: Masculinity and Sexuality in High School* has been reprinted multiple times and issued in a second edition. Pascoe also worked with a MacArthur Foundation funded interdisciplinary team of researchers to conduct on-and off-line qualitative research on young people’s use of new media for the M.I.T Press book *Hanging Out, Messing Around and Geeking Out: Kids Living and Learning with New Media*. Her work has appeared in *Sex Roles, Gender & Society, Sexualities* and *Body and Society* among others. She has served on editorial boards for *Gender & Society, Sex Roles, Contexts, American Journal of Sociology, Social Problems, Sociology of Education, Child and Youth Services Journal* and *International Journal of Boyhood Studies*. She is deeply dedicated public scholarship, regularly writing editorials, serving on boards of experts for non-profit organizations and giving public talks about inequality in education and adolescence.
References


https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pbio.1002456.