Proposal for Editing *American Sociological Review*

*at University of Massachusetts, Amherst*

David Cort, Laurel Smith-Doerr, Donald Tomaskovic-Devey

**Vision Statement**

*American Sociological Review* (ASR) is not only the flagship journal of the American Sociological Association (ASA), but also the top ranked Sociology journal in the world with an H5 index of 65. For comparison sake, the top journals in Anthropology, Political Sciences, Economics, and Public Policy have H5 indices of 42, 69, 160, and 62 respectively. The most recent snapshot of journal impact factors ([Web of Science 2022](https://www.webofscience.com)) in the table inset shows ASR is also currently at the forefront of social science publication, with the highest impact factor among social science flagship journals. Our editorial team proposes to continue that central role of ASR as the “go to” journal in sociology, building on current strengths while continuing to expand the journal’s reach.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Journal</th>
<th>Impact Factor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American Sociological Review</td>
<td>12.444</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Political Science Review</td>
<td>8.048</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Economic Review</td>
<td>5.429</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Anthropologist</td>
<td>3.139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal of Policy Analysis and Management</td>
<td>3.917</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the leading sociology journal in the world, we believe *American Sociological Review* should reflect the full scope of global issues and perspectives in our discipline, bringing needed sociological analysis to deep inequalities across time, place, and social worlds. During our term, we will strive to strengthen the global, comparative, and transnational reach of the journal. We will invite work from all sub-disciplines conducting transnational and comparative sociologies, and we will encourage submissions that analyze the US to do so in a global and comparative context. Global and comparative sociology is a strength of our department at UMass Amherst, including our co-editing team. This global sociology vision is inclusive – widening and deepening ASR, rather than excluding excellent submissions from any areas within our discipline.

Using this vision as foundation, how can we increase the global and transnational stretch of the journal, in publishing the work of scholars inside and outside the United States? We have three ideas: (1) building into the editorial board internationally based associate editors (we learned about this strategy from our colleague Joya Misra who used it during her editorship of *Gender & Society*); (2) increasing the numbers of reviewers outside the United States; and (3) holding annual virtual writing workshops hosted by universities in the Global South (e.g., drawing on Cort’s longstanding ties to universities in South Africa) to engage more scholars outside the United States in writing and reviewing for the journal.

Editorial team scope: The co-editors have direct experience across multiple ASA sections. Recently, Smith-Doerr has been Chair of the Science/Knowledge and Technology (SKAT) section of ASA,
Tomaskovic-Devey of the Economic Sociology section. Our collective section memberships and past leadership roles also include Medical Sociology, Population Soc, Mathematical Soc, Theory, Race/Class/Gender, Inequality/Poverty/Mobility, and Organizations/Occupations/Work. We are also active in interdisciplinary societies such as PAA, SASE, 4S, AAAS, SSSP, and APPAM.

Ensuring breadth: If we categorize sociology (admittedly simplistically) into levels of analysis and structural/cultural focus, our team of co-editors is most known for work at the meso/organizational and macro/global levels and somewhat more of a structural rather than cultural focus. We would build our editorial team, including deputy editor and editorial board members to ensure strong expertise with the social psychological/micro level as well as in cultural sociology.

Methodological depth and breadth: Methodologically, our team has deep experience with a wide breadth of approaches (e.g., quantitative administrative/secondary data and demographic analysis, qualitative interviews, social network analysis, computational text analysis, ethnography, archival/historical analysis, policy analysis, theory development, mixed/multiple method projects, field/quasi experiments, participatory/engaged methods, focus groups, evaluation research). But perhaps more importantly, we view all sociological methodologies (and epistemologies– from critical/constructivist to empirical/positivist) as valuable and desirable for inclusion in ASR, and would welcome submissions from all corners of the field. All of us have taught graduate level methods and/or statistics courses previously. Smith-Doerr has served as Director of the Institute for Social Science Research at UMass.

Team Timing: Our proposed start date is January/spring term 2024, and we would have three co-editors: David Cort, Laurel Smith-Doerr, and Donald Tomaskovic-Devey.

Co-Editor Bios

**David Cort** is Associate Professor of Sociology at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, (being considered for promotion to Full Professor this year). He is a current member of the ASR editorial board, the ASA Minority Fellowship Program Advisory Panel, and is the current co-chair of the ASA’s Committee on Professional Ethics (COPE). He has served in a variety of leadership roles at UMass, including Associate Chair and Associate Dean, where he helped create an initiative to decolonize the curriculum across the college. A 2018 Fulbright Scholar to South Africa, Cort’s research interests span the areas of social epidemiology, social demography, and social stratification. He began and continues to assist a capacity-building initiative with South Africa’s Walter Sisulu University (WSU) aimed at broadening the research capabilities of WSU faculty. His work employs quantitative and qualitative techniques - such as multilevel modeling, event history analysis, and interview methods - and has appeared in a broad array of journal outlets, including *Social Science & Medicine, International Migration Review, Social Science Research, Academic Medicine, Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, PNAS, and Research in Social Stratification and Mobility.*

**Laurel Smith-Doerr** is Professor of Sociology at UMass Amherst. She chaired the Science, Knowledge and Technology section of ASA, served on ASA Council, and as Vice President of the Eastern Sociological Society. She is PI of the $3.1M NSF ADVANCE-Institutional Transformation grant at UMass Amherst, which seeks change toward faculty equity. She was inaugural Director of the UMass Institute for Social Science Research, and serves on the faculty-led Public Engagement Project steering
committee. She has successfully coordinated high-stakes peer review processes previously as Program Director in Science, Technology and Society at the National Science Foundation and led the cross-directorate Ethics Education in Science and Engineering program. With co-authors including Tomaskovic-Devey, her *American Journal of Sociology* article won the 2020 Devah Pager award from the Inequality, Poverty, and Mobility section. Smith-Doerr’s published works include her book *Women’s Work: Gender Equity vs. Hierarchy in the Life Sciences*, and co-editing the award winning *Handbook of Science and Technology Studies*. Her articles have appeared in numerous journals and have been cited over 19,000 times. She was awarded a 2020 Fulbright fellowship to Germany (canceled due to Covid-19).

**Donald Tomaskovic-Devey** is Professor of Sociology at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst. He is past editor of *Contemporary Sociology* and the *Socio-Economic Review* and has served as President of the Southern Sociological Society and Chair of the UMass sociology department. He has chaired the OOW and Economic Sociology sections, been council member of Sex & Gender and Political Sociology, and ASA Secretary and member of Council, Nominations, Publications and Finance Committees. His research has used comparative historical, quantitative, and qualitative methodologies. Recent publications have appeared in *Nature, Human Behaviour, PNAS, PlosOne, Socio-Economic Review, Industrial and Labor Relations Review, the American Sociological Review*, and the *American Journal of Sociology*. He has published four monographs, including *Recapitalizing America: Alternatives to the Corporate Distortion of National Policy* (Routledge, 1983), *Gender and Racial Inequality at Work: The Sources and Consequences of Job Segregation* (Cornell, 1993), *Documenting Desegregation: Racial and Gender Segregation in Private Sector Employment since the Civil Rights Act* (Russell Sage Foundation, 2012) and *Relational Inequalities: An Organizational Approach* (Oxford, 2019). He has won best book and best article awards from multiple ASA sections. He has extensive international collaborations and has had visiting appointments in seven countries.

**Plan for Editorial Team**

Our CVs and bios highlight each of our past leadership roles providing relevant experience for editing this important journal. But we view this editorial team as more than the sum of its parts—we work well together as a collective. We have known each other for over nine years (when Smith-Doerr joined UMass) and have successfully collaborated on campus, department, and research projects. Tomaskovic-Devey has co-authored with Smith-Doerr, and with Cort. We would be prepared to step into a well-functioning, effective (and fun!) editing collective from day one. We will also draw on ASR deputy editors and editorial board as part of our collaborative approach to editing the journal.

Our organizational model: We plan to have one co-editor serve as the lead coordinator in each semester to ensure a smoothly running process (this model of co-editors stepping up and stepping back would also allow us to work around other commitments like fellowships). The lead co-editor will take care of submissions that are clear desk rejects and divide up the rest of the manuscript submissions among the co-editors. Co-Editors will work in close communication, with weekly meetings to discuss workload and to problem solve together. Meetings will include the managing editor and program assistants to discuss articles for publication, among other items to keep the journal running smoothly to meet deadlines. Our plan includes editorial support from two 20 hr/week graduate student Program Assistants who will be hired from among students in the highly ranked and unusually diverse UMass sociology PhD program.
Deputy editors will be called on to direct manuscript submissions on which the team has conflicts of interest (e.g. UMass Amherst authors, former Ph.D. students, recent collaborators), and to consult on peer reviewers in areas where co-editors have less expertise. The editorial board will be key to providing input and peer review for manuscripts that are innovative and exciting but perhaps need help with full execution. We view editing as a mentoring process for authors, especially authors who may be PhD students, faculty from two-year institutions, or otherwise come from less well-resourced and underserved institutional positions. We intend to spend the ASR resources, including its most valuable resource of gold standard peer review, to serve the sociology community in ways that broaden participation for authorship.

**Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice**

Equity and justice in any community requires ongoing practice. Likewise, we view expanding diversity and inclusion in sociological knowledge production as a journey rather than a destination. As a discipline that analyzes inequalities, we believe key sociological institutions like ASR should draw on the knowledge of our own leading experts for guidance in disrupting intersecting racialized and gendered systems. We are grateful to Patricia Hill Collins, whose ASA Presidential address published in ASR in 2010, provides useful guidelines for building a community to enact intersectional justice:

> Community can never be a finished thing but is always in the making. In this sense, participating in building a community is simultaneously political (negotiating differences of power within a group); dynamic (negotiating practices that balance individual and collective aspirations); and aspirational (a form of visionary pragmatism that places contemporary practices in service to broader principles) (Collins 2000, 2009).

Our community in the making means we will collect and review real time information about who is engaging with ASR as authors, reviewers, and editorial team members with an eye to racial, gender, and epistemic diversity, including Global South perspectives. Community as political means we will attend to power dynamics within our own editorial team (i.e., grad students, managing editor, and faculty) with regular communication processes and active listening methods. Community as dynamic means we will balance individual and collective aspirations by intentionally rotating co-editor responsibilities in each semester and summer period of work. Community as aspirational means we will aim for excellence in all that ASR does—in engaging authors, reviewers, editorial team members, in publishing and promoting the public facing work of ASR, and in working with the larger ASA and global sociology community to advance knowledge in our field. High aspirations for equity by race, gender, and institutional location may mean we fall short at times; our goal is to be honest about where that happens and address any shortcomings immediately as they come to our attention.

Our diversity, equity, inclusion proposition for ASR is substantially process oriented, but will also be checked with evaluation/accountability that we are meeting our goals. We will look to the ASA Publications Committee at annual meetings for feedback on where we can continue to improve. Smith-Doerr’s experience leading an NSF ADVANCE-IT project will inform this plan in both processes and specific tools for equitable peer-review evaluation and collaborative decision-making.
In a high submission journal, with a goal of making the journal even more global in scope, how can the journal fulfill its disciplinary mentoring function? The quality of ASR reviews are a prized source of intellectual mentorship by submitting authors. We do not think mentorship ends there. By globalizing the submissions, we may end up with many papers that do not fit current submission norms. How do we provide feedback and potentially publish papers that may not conform to our expectations? We see two main strategies for handling these dual problems.

One strategy is improving the quality of the submissions from the outset, helping authors recognize the qualities necessary for publication in a journal like ASR. We will seek feedback from early career colleagues and board members on guidelines for authors, and how we might modify these to encourage authors to consider the journal’s expectations before submission. For example, we hope to help authors identify how to structure and format their articles before making submissions.

A second strategy is to be open to different types of articles, even if they appear to be relatively unconventional. While articles will normally be focused on empirical data, with details about the data and method, and connections to larger sociological theory, there may be different ways an article could be presented effectively. This is particularly crucial given the global audiences we hope to engage. At heart, we want to be open to ideas and articles that will appeal to a very wide readership, while still maintaining high expectations of quality.

We will follow in previous editors’ footsteps, by serving on panels and workshops at national and regional conferences, laying out the publication process, and helping younger scholars move a paper toward publication. These workshops can be tremendously helpful, clarifying things that often seem shrouded in mystery – while also leading to more effective submissions to the journal. We will also propose a session at the International Sociological Association meetings, perhaps with editors of sociological journals located in other countries, which should be enlightening both for panelists and those attending, and support our goal of engaging with global sociology. And as mentioned above, we will seek to hold annual virtual workshops hosted by universities in the Global South where we or our colleagues at UMass Amherst have established ties to sociology communities (e.g., South Africa, Colombia, India, Korea, Brazil, Mozambique).

Smith-Doerr and Tomaskovic-Devey have previously taught the required Ph.D. student Writing course in our department. The team would petition the department to have one co-editor teach this class annually during the ASR editorship period. The goal would be to engage graduate students in discussion and training about the work of editing a journal, and provide insight into the peer review process (with strict and careful attention to confidentiality). As a PhD student, Smith-Doerr benefited from such a course taught by Paula England in her role as ASR editor. Our PhD students at UMass are diverse by race, class, gender, sexual identity, nationality, ability status, epistemic/methodological interests, and in mentoring we also expect to learn much from conversing with them about what it means to run a journal.