Making Sociological Methodology Even More Impactful and Inclusive

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Vision Statement
I am honored to be contacted by ASA and encouraged to apply for the Sociological Methodology (SM) editorship. I am thankful to colleagues and prior editors who recognize that I am prepared for taking this position. The current editors have done a spectacular job in lifting SM to the next level. They have identified several weaknesses of the SM and have taken effective measures to address them. During two of the years they edited (2021 and 2022), SM reached some of its highest journal impact factors in history. However, compared to its peer-journals in sociology and adjacent disciplines, a clear gap in terms of its impact remains. For example, in the latest Journal Citation Reports released in 2022, SM’s journal impact factor (JIF) is 3, ranked 37 in sociology. Its main competitor, Sociological Methods & Research (SMR) has a JIF of 6.3 and is ranked 5 in sociology. SM is doing relatively better in terms of 5-year impact factor but still lags significantly behind SMR, with SM being ranked at 17 and SMR at 7 in sociology. The current editors also have done excellent work in diversifying the SM authors and its editorial board members. But as sociology is evolving quickly from a quantitative-dominant discipline to one more welcoming of qualitative methodologies as well, more work is needed to make SM more inclusive to all types of sociologists. Hence, I will continue the excellent work of the current editors to ensure that SM is the premier methodology journal in sociology that not only publishes the most impactful methodological articles but also is more engaged with general sociologists. To achieve that, I will take the following measures.

1. **Maintain the best practices of previous editors.** These practices include utilizing the ASA meetings, newsletters, social media, and other channels to promote SM and its articles, expanding outreach to increase submissions, maintaining an excellent review time, among others.

2. **Increase outreach to more scholars in diverse areas and disciplines.** I will employ student assistants to promote SM’s social media accounts more aggressively and to create a newsletter (mailing list) to reach those scholars who are not active social media users. My team will also reach out to relevant organizations such as CDC, Population Association of America, Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management, and Academy of Management and various listservs (such as those for ASA sections, network scientists, and political methodologists) to help recruit more researchers to SM’s social media accounts and mailing list. The outreach can help increase citations to SM articles, particularly from outside of sociology (which has been a weak spot for SM in comparison to SMR).

3. **Publish articles that are more tightly connected with the mainstream of sociology.** By doing so, more general sociologists, not just methodologists, are more likely to cite the SM articles. To achieve that, I will define several publication priorities. First, I recognize that sociology has been undergoing a significant transformation for two decades or so, changing from a quantitative-dominant discipline to one far more inclusive of qualitative methods as well, as demonstrated by ASA leaders’ profiles and changing student composition. Among the top ten most cited articles in SMR in 2022, six of them deal with qualitative methods. That is partly why SMR dominates SM in terms of JIF. SM must
adjust to embrace this change. Hence, one of my priorities as the new editor is to increase the number of publications in qualitative and mixed methods, especially given that these methods are an exceedingly important methodological strength of sociology in comparison to other disciplines. To achieve this priority, I plan to have one associate editor and at least 1/3 of the editorial board members whose expertise lies specifically in qualitative and mixed methods. Second, knowing that one of the most important topics in sociology is social inequality, I will prioritize methodological papers for studying social inequality (especially with regard to gender, race, education, employment, and the like) and intersectionality, be it quantitative or qualitative. Third, with sociology being methodologically stronger than other disciplines in social network analysis (in terms of intellectual history, work quality, and the number of researchers), I plan to cultivate the legacy of publishing network papers. My approach will be selective, publishing papers that are central to the field of network research or clearly connected to other fields of sociology such as social inequality, social psychology, culture, health, and education. And fourth, as the flagship methodological journal of ASA, I would seek to ensure that $SM$ continues to engage with the frontier of social science methodology in order to disseminate and create the most advanced research methods in sociology. Two cutting-edge methodological areas are especially worth noting: Causal Inference and Computational Methods (including Bayesian Analysis, Text Analysis, Machine Learning, and Artificial Intelligence).

4. Institute additional effective practices to increase impact. First, I would carefully assess and control the number of citable articles as this goes into the denominator of the JIF. Second, research and experiences demonstrate that papers with more co-authors, greater funding support, more presentations, and accompanied software, data, or code, are more likely to be cited. Third, I will consider issuing excellent reviewer awards to scholars who provide timely and quality reviews. Lastly, noting that $SMR$ has been indexed in 30 databases while $SM$ is in only 2(?!), I will work to put $SM$ into more indices, at least the Social Sciences, Mathematical Methods category in Journal Citation Reports.

Editorial Team
The Editorial Office will include one Editor, three Associate Editors, and a Managing Editor. I will keep the current managing editor Lisa Savage if she is available. I also plan to have a few student assistants to help run the social media accounts, disseminate information, and organize workshops. $SM$ in the past (until the current co-editors) has been edited by one single editor without any associate editors (except once). With the assistance of three associate editors, it will be much easier this time to balance expertise and workload across the editorial team.

Editor Information. I am Associate Professor (tenured) of Sociology & Quantitative Theory and Methods and associated faculty of the East Asian Studies, the Goizueta Business School, and the Rollins School of Public Health at Emory University. I received a Ph.D. in Sociology (2011) and an A.M. in Statistics (2009) from Harvard University and was a doctoral fellow and a postdoc fellow at Harvard Kennedy School. I am expected to be promoted to full professor (effective fall 2024).

My research advances theories and methods for network analysis, causal inference, and Bayesian analysis with applications to studying inequality and social policy (e.g., immigration, housing, education, and redistributive policy), health (e.g., peer effects, perceived risk, network interventions, and pandemic preparedness), and organizations. I have published widely in both methodological and
I have extensive training in research methods, both quantitative and qualitative. Besides a PhD in Sociology, I have master’s degrees in Economics, Political Science, and Statistics. I have taken many **graduate level methods courses** including Econometrics that cover various regression techniques, doctoral-level probability and statistics, etc. I have also participated in many advanced methods workshops taught by renowned experts and received quality training in qualitative research methods by taking multiple relevant graduate courses. As a result of the broad training, I can evaluate methodological papers across almost the full spectrum of sociological methodology.

I also have extensive editorial experiences. I have served on the editorial board of *American Sociological Review* (2017-19) and I am currently serving on the editorial boards of all three major **quantitative journals in sociology** including *Social Science Research* (2019-), *Sociological Methodology* (2021-23), and *Sociological Methods and Research* (2017-) and on the editorial board of *Journal of Machine Learning Research* (2020-). I will serve on the board of *Social Psychology Quarterly* (2024-). I regularly review papers for these journals and provide feedback to editors to facilitate decision-making in critical situations. I have also edited several significant special issues at top journals. I co-edited *Methodological Advances in Quantitative Social Science* (*Social Science Research* 50th Anniversary Series, 2022), which includes 17 articles spanning four issues. Additionally, I edited *New Quantitative Approaches to Studying Social Inequality* (*Sociological Methods and Research* 50(3), 2021) and co-edited *Social Networks and Social Psychology* (*Social Psychology Quarterly* 83(4), 2020). These appointments and experiences together reflect the high level of esteem colleagues have attributed to my methodological expertise.

I am deeply engaged with scholarly communities both within and outside of methodology and beyond sociology. **These engagements enable me to assess more properly methodological contributions in relation to other fields in sociology and methodological development in other disciplines. It also provides me with access to a wide, diverse pool of reviewers.** (1) I have been a member of the ASA’s Section on Methodology since graduate school and have published twice in *SM* and provided many reviews for the journal. I am a recipient of the Clifford Clogg Award from the ASA Methodology Section and have been a Public Engagement Liaison of the Methodology Section (2018-20). I have also been an active member of several other ASA sections, including Medical Sociology; Mathematical Sociology; Inequality, Poverty, and Mobility; Economic Sociology; and Sociology of Education. I have served as Chairs or members for many of the ASA award committees. I also helped to organize professional conferences and regularly attend professional meetings in both sociology and various adjacent fields, such as Economics, Public Policy, and Statistics. (2) Having studied or worked in both sociology and statistics/methods departments at Harvard, Indiana University, and Emory, I have many mentors, colleagues, classmates, and alumni who are experts in advanced methods in both sociology and statistics.
research methods and whose help I can seek when needed. (3) I have advised more than 20 dissertations and taught methods classes to hundreds of graduate students and working professionals. I am also an organizer of several working groups on research methods including the online international Workshop on Advanced Research Methods (WARM).

I am strongly committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion. My research generally centers on inequality and social policy, and I have examined the impact of restrictive immigration policies and racialized pandemic discrimination. As the Director of Graduate Admission of Emory Sociology, I have met repeatedly with prospective students from under-represented groups and successfully recruited many of them into our program. More than half of the students I have advised on dissertations or honor theses are females or from racially minority backgrounds. Specifically, to help scholars from disadvantaged backgrounds engage more with SM, I plan to do the following. (1) I will more intensively reach out to these scholars through the editorial team, colleagues, and professional organizations. I will compile a list of such scholars who are also interested in research methodology and contact them periodically to solicit their suggestions and submissions. The list may also be used to facilitate meetings, mentoring, and collaborations among and beyond these scholars. I will also invite accomplished scholars with such backgrounds to serve on the editorial board. (2) With the assistance of relevant associate editors and board members, I intend to organize special issues or sections on qualitative and mixed methods or emergent research methodologies. This will open new venues for these scholars to publish in SM. (3) I am committed to develop and foster a broad range of reviewers. I intend to actively use these scholars as reviewers as long as the substance of the submissions fall into their expertise regardless the analytical approach. (4) Through WARM, I intend to attract more scholars with such backgrounds to the workshops and training sessions on advanced research methods.

Associate Editors. To help provide timely and quality reviews, I plan to have three associate editors with expertise that complements mine or in areas expected to have increased submissions. Each of them will be in charge of processing 10-15% of the submissions in designated sub-areas. The associate editors will have final decision-making power on rejections of the papers they process. The associate editors and I will consult as necessary for papers undergoing revision and at the time when papers are likely to be accepted. In addition, I will consult with previous editors as necessary.

Editorial Board. I will also work with an editorial board that can both complement and enhance my expertise and that of the associate editors. The editorial board members will help to provide needed reviews and promote SM to various communities. I will make sure to have adequate diversity on the board in terms of methodological areas, professional ranks, and demographics. In particular, I plan to have at least 1/3 of the board members who specialize in qualitative and mixed methods. I have also compiled a provisional list of editorial board members (which will evolve over time) to rotate in.

Editorial Office. The editor and the associate editors will have regular (monthly as a start) virtual meetings throughout the year to discuss review progress, publication plans, state of the journal, and other issues that arise. As the editor my responsibilities include management of the peer-review process, selection of editorial team members to help edit or review selected articles, making publication decisions based upon peer-reviews and/or associate editor’s recommendation, interacting with the publisher to facilitate timely production of articles, promoting SM articles to various research communities, and communicating with the appropriate ASA offices and committees.
Institutional Support
My departments and university are very supportive of my application for the _SM_ editorship. They will provide generous resources to help me fulfill my editorial duties and achieve my goals. (1) The Sociology department will offer a **course release** annually so that I will have ample time to work on editorial responsibilities. The Sociology department will provide **student assistants** as needed and is also considering adding a graduate course on Research Publishing to help provide even more graduate student support. (2) Both the Department of Sociology and the Department of Quantitative Theory and Methods (QTM) are committed to provide **meeting space and computing and communication tools** to meet any editorial needs. (3) The college has provided ample **travel fund** for me to attend professional meetings. Both departments have extra funds that can support additional travels and other needs. (4) Both departments and the university have many colleagues who are experts in research methods and are willing to provide **review support**. Together their expertise covers almost all areas of both quantitative methods and qualitative methods. (5) Editorial team members and authors of _SM_ articles may be invited to give talks at the seminars held at the QTM department and the Sociology department and at the online Workshop on Advanced Research Methods. These venues will provide great opportunities to disseminate new research from _SM_ and seek for new submissions for _SM_.

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