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Lessons Learned: A Perspective from Golden Pond

*Barrett Lee
Pennsylvania State University*

Being named the 2020 recipient of the Robert and Helen Lynd Award for Lifetime Achievement has been both gratifying and humbling, given the distinguished honorees who preceded me. I was taken by surprise when Kevin Gotham (the Lynd committee chair) first passed along the news last spring. That initial reaction quickly gave way to an appreciation of the award as a collective rather than solo accomplishment. From my undergraduate days to the present, I've had the good fortune to learn from and work with many talented and inspiring students, mentors, colleagues, and collaborators.



The award was bestowed during a stage in life—my first year of retirement—when it's common to look back, attempting to make sense of the path followed thus far. Perhaps the down time and massive
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Message from the Chair

*Derek Hyra
American University*

Let me start by wishing everyone a happy, healthy, and productive New Year. 2020 was nothing short of a high speed train wreck. The pandemic and continued police brutality brought on immeasurable suffering and loss, exposing once again the dire consequences of systemic racial inequality. Communities of color have been disproportionately affected by this virus and police aggres-

sion. Now more than ever our sociologically-informed, community and urban research is greatly needed, and I implore you to position your work to help fuel social justice efforts aimed at ameliorating racial and spatial inequality.

On the social justice front, the CUSS Council has taken action. First, in November 2019, the Council unanimously approved important by-law amendments. This year you will be asked to vote on changes that, if approved, would
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Lessons Learned, cont'd.

disruption associated with the coronavirus pandemic have heightened this tendency toward reflection. On several occasions recently, I've wondered how the arc of my career might differ if I were just starting out. I suspect that CUSS would again serve as a stabilizing force, a place to learn the ropes. For a somewhat shy graduate student 45 years ago, the section provided intellectual and social connection to others who shared his fascination with urban change and inequality.

My purpose here is to come full circle, offering a few observations about professional life as seen through the rearview mirror that might be helpful to younger CUSS members, particularly those still in graduate school or less than a decade beyond the dissertation defense. These 'lessons', illustrated with personal experiences, are ones that I took a while to learn. Thankfully, junior scholars today appear to be quicker studies. They need to be, in light of the many career challenges that have emerged in both academic and non-academic employment arenas. My cohort of urban and community sociologists had less uncertain professional routes to navigate.

Much of what I have to say is in response to the 'strategic planning' model of career building. Many of us resort to this approach at some point. With respect to research, for example, we select topics calculated to have the greatest payoff, prioritize them in timetable fashion, and establish productivity goals (how many papers to write, by when, submitted to which outlets). The concept of strategic planning is often introduced in the graduate curriculum via a professional socialization and development seminar. Having a plan helps keep students on track to the degree, hopefully amassing

a record that will make them viable job candidates. Assistant professors may formulate such plans in pursuit of tenure. Because strategic planning is intended to link means and ends in a thoughtful manner, it's not only appealing but necessary in some form.

Yet faithful adherence to a plan can be rather difficult. One reason is that the strategic planning model underestimates the role played by luck, good as well as bad. Late during my second year in graduate school at the University of Washington—where I'd gone to study social psychology and the sociology of work and occupations—disillusionment with these substantive areas and a lack of hands-on participation in research had pushed me to the brink of dropping out. Indeed, I'd already submitted an application for a grocery store stock clerk job. At the last minute, the chair of the department told me about a position announcement that had just reached his desk. A team of Seattle epidemiologists was looking for a research assistant to take the lead on the survey component of their NIH-funded investigation of diphtheria and meningitis outbreaks in the local skid row population. I eagerly accepted the position, then spent six intensive months doing preliminary fieldwork, concocting a sampling procedure, and (with the help of a social service outreach worker) interviewing roughly 200 homeless people.

Immersion in the nuts and bolts of the survey, from design through data collection and analysis, marked a critical turning point. Although coming out of the blue, the opportunity convinced me to commit fully to becoming a sociologist. The depth of engagement required by the Seattle skid row study was incredibly fulfilling, as was the contribution that the

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Message from the Communication Team

This issue of the CUSS Newsletter is the second produced by the communication team. Joining us with this issue is Leigh-Anna Hidalgo. Continuing tradition, the feature article of this issue is an essay written by Lynd Award winner Barrett Lee. The newsletter also features a piece on teaching urban sociology during the pandemic by Colleen Wynn, an interview with 2020 graduate paper award winner Jake Carlson, and Richard Ocejo's vision for City and Community. In addition to the PDF being distributed via the listserv, articles are posted on Comurb.org.

The team continues to expand its social media outreach via Twitter (@ComUrbASA), and Facebook (CUSS). We welcome suggestions as to how we can publicize and highlight members' work. In particular, we are always looking for short essays or editorial-style pieces for the

website. Please contact us if you are interested.

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Lessons Learned, cont'd.

survey results made to understanding and addressing the local diphtheria epidemic. The study eventually yielded my first publication, a 1978 article in *Demography*. At the time, however, my RA role was also stressful, slowing progress toward the master's degree and piling atop an already substantial course load.

The insight to be drawn from this anecdote is that all manner of unforeseen events and circumstances, including those operating at a contextual level (think COVID-19 and the Great Recession), can alter or disrupt our best-laid professional plans. Having goals and a schedule for achieving them is fine, but flexibility and the willingness to adapt are essential. I've come to view careers as continually being in revise-and-resubmit mode because of what we can't anticipate.

Another aspect of the ideal-typical strategic plan—rationally choosing important, timely, or cutting-edge research topics—seems to me easier said than done. An obvious complication is a lack of clarity over which topics meet these criteria. More intriguing, however, is the influence of our own biographies. Sometimes the biographical pull toward specific areas of inquiry may be subtle,

discerned only in retrospect. As a case in point, I believe that my interest in homelessness predated the Seattle survey, rooted in parental conversations I overheard as a child about my grandmother's brief period on the streets of Oakland as a 'bag lady' struggling with dementia. Similarly, a recent investigation of patterns and sources of racial-ethnic diversity in American communities was fueled in part by enduring fascination with intergroup relations in my hometown of Salinas, CA, an agricultural center ('Salad Bowl of the World') where people of Mexican, Filipino, Chinese, and Japanese ancestry have long histories. Collaborating with Penn State alumni Chad Farrell, Matt Hall, Laura Tach, and Greg Sharp on this study was a real treat.

Other biographical prompts are more direct and contemporaneous. When my partner Carol Zeiss and I were preparing to buy our first home in Nashville during the early 1980s (while I was at Vanderbilt), I took a quick look at census data on housing and demographic trends in the surrounding neighborhood, which we liked in part because of its mixed racial

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Teaching Urban Sociology in a Time of Mass Uprisings for Racial Justice & the COVID-19 Pandemic



Colleen E. Wynn
University of Indianapolis

[According to the US Census Bureau](#), the majority of Americans live in urban areas. And, as urban sociologists, we've known cities matter for a long time, but more and more we're seeing the rest of society take note. Cities played a major role as the location and backdrop for the mass uprisings for racial justice we saw earlier this year, especially mid-sized cities in the South and Midwest that are often included but not highlighted in our scholarly work. George Floyd's brutal murder by police in Minneapolis helped to spark the [mass uprisings](#) we saw earlier this year and the current civil rights movement, as did [Breonna Taylor's murder](#) in her home by Louisville Metro Police in my hometown of Louisville. In Indianapolis, where I live and teach, [Indianapolis Metropolitan Police shot and killed Dreasion Reed and McHale Rose](#), two incidents which have not received as much national attention but have [locally mobilized many activists](#). These are, of course, only a few cases. Activists and organizers across the country mobilized around these cases, as well as many others that have not received nearly as much national attention.

Cities have also been at the center of the discussions around COVID-19. We all watched [New York City spike in cases and shut down](#), losing much of what "[made it NYC](#)" at least temporarily. This prompted many to ask "[are cities worth it?](#)" "[are cities dead?](#)" "[are people fleeing?](#)" and while we won't know the full effects of the pandemic (and everything else) until it's over, cities aren't going anywhere. While the Pew Research Center reports [22% of US adults moved during COVID](#), about a quarter of these moves (23%) were due to closures of colleges and universities. Additionally, Pew does not tell us how many

of these moves were to a new place, they only captured moves in general. It seems likely that many of those "fleeing" cities were the people who could afford to "escape," and those who were already considering a move or needed to move for a new job. Additionally, it is likely that many of these movers relocated to other cities. Some more [recent articles](#) also have started to consider that some of these moves may not be COVID-motivated or may be [temporary](#). While we have heard a lot from the media about the mass exodus from cities, there is other evidence to show that there have actually been [fewer moves during the pandemic](#). Just as the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated existing inequalities in other aspects of life, it has likely done so in this case as well. This is perhaps only the latest iteration in wealthy White-flight to suburban areas.

The pandemic and uprisings for racial justice are of course, not mutually exclusive events. Some of the articles covering flight from cities mention "[fear of violence tied to protests](#)" as among the reasons why wealthier White families are seeking refuge in isolated suburban communities. But these are perhaps the same families that may already isolate themselves in [predominantly White and affluent areas](#) and [appear to be driving racial residential segregation](#) as they "[move for the kids](#)." Samantha Friedman and I find that [White married-couple families experience the greatest levels of isolation](#) in an analysis of residential isolation by race/ethnicity and family structure. As White families continue to use their relative wealth and privilege to insulate themselves, the pandemic has [disproportionately been felt by Black and Hispanic/Latinx communities](#). This disproportionate impact is tied to all the other inequalities of living in what is inherently a racist society built on white supremacy.

As the uprisings helped to illuminate gaps in knowledge, we saw an [enormous demand for books on anti-racism](#). As scholars and educators, while we always want people to do the reading, we must acknowledge that [allies need to be doing more](#) than [just reading](#) in this moment. In recent years, we've also seen more media engagement with our work and the concepts we study. Journalists have written on [gentrification](#) (and how it may have [played a role in Breonna Taylor's murder](#)), [evictions](#) (and how the [pandemic is exacerbating](#) them), [fair housing](#), [redlining](#), [racist housing covenants](#), [residential](#)

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Teaching Urban Sociology, cont'd.

[segregation](#) (and [how segregation shapes COVID outcomes](#)), [environmental racism](#), [equitable development](#), and many more concepts. So, more students may be coming into our classrooms with a surface-level of knowledge about these concepts, but not necessarily a deeper academic understanding. This allows us to be able to engage them in deeper thinking about these issues which are plaguing their communities and communities across the country and around the world.

The backdrop to all of these changes and the ongoing inequality is, of course, a combination of white supremacy, racist government policies, and neoliberalism, which allow for continuing residential segregation, urban

renewal, gentrification, rising evictions, and compounding inequality. Thus, we, as people who study cities and urban life have an important role to play in conversations. One of the most important places we can be having these conversations is in our classrooms. As someone who studies segregation and housing, I (and many other urban scholars) have long said housing is key and is connected to everything else, and it seems others are coming to this realization as well. Our classrooms give us a platform to teach about inequality and connect to so many other areas like health, schools/education, the environ-
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Chair's Message, cont'd.

establish a new Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee. The DEI Committee, under the direction of an elected chair, will undertake activities to understand and reduce racial/ethnic disparities that exist within our section. The establishment of a DEI Committee would demonstrate our section's steadfast commitment to fairness. I ask that you vote in favor of this timely and needed by-law change.

Second, while we regretfully cannot meet in person in Chicago this summer, our Council has proposed four themed sessions intended to highlight scholarship on important contemporary urban issues. We will have online sessions on the global uprisings and the Black Lives Matter movement; the pandemic and its impact on cities; emerging urban politics and policies; and critical perspectives on injustice embedded in our urban sociology traditions. My hope is that our 2021 ASA sessions will facilitate meaningful discourses both within and beyond the academy. Be sure to [submit](#) a paper for one of these sessions by February 3.

Third, our section's journal, [City & Community](#) (C&C), has made strategic changes intended to advance diversity and inclusion. Richard E. Ocejo, C&C's new editor, has refreshed the journal's editorial leadership to include new people and perspectives. Moreover, the journal will

implement an exciting professional development program for young scholars. This new program will serve as a systematic support structure, along with our section's annual meeting mentoring initiative, to advance the next generation of talented urban sociologists.

No question, the pandemic has seriously challenged and tested us emotionally, financially, and physically; sadly, we have lost family members, friends, and colleagues. While we will not be together in Chicago this year to comfort one another (or to celebrate our successes), we should take solace in knowing we are part of a special group that produces knowledge to challenge and change our society for the better. Rest assured, in 2022 in Los Angeles, we will be together and we will lecture, laugh, and libate. Until then stay healthy, motivated, and safe! And do not forget to [renew](#) your CUSS membership and [nominate](#) your colleagues (or yourself) for one of our annual awards!

Teaching Urban Sociology, cont'd.

ment, politics, etc.

Our classes also allow us to impart many skills to our students like [data access/literacy](#) and [analysis/interpretation](#), and to [take them out into the field and allow them to experience cities](#) and what we discuss in the classroom. These experiences allow the content to come to life for our students. We can also connect them to people working on these issues on the ground and help sociology come alive for them in new and exciting ways. I invite the [Fair Housing Center of Central Indiana \(FHCCI\)](#) to come to my urban classes, which gives the students the chance to hear about how housing policy is playing out on the ground in our city. I have even had previous students start working as housing testers for FHCCI. Additionally, I am able to invite alumni who are doing applied urban sociology in Indianapolis, such as those [working with homeless individuals](#), to share their experiences of providing direct services. These guest speakers help to make what I say and what we read more real for the students as they can see how these big issues we discuss in the classroom play out in our city and learn more about potential careers in these areas.

This past summer, several students from my urban class last year reached out to me to tell me how much they had been thinking about what we had talked about and that they could “see” it all happening “out in the world.” This kind of reaction is always meaningful, but it was especially so as I distanced during the pandemic and worked most of the summer prepping my classes to be virtual this year. It was a crucial reminder that the work we do in our classrooms matters and that our students are eager to engage in conversations around urban sociology and how it connects to the world they’re experiencing.

As we all continue to distance and look for ways to recreate the community we often feel in our departments, I encourage you to think about sharing your teaching resources via ASA’s [Teaching Resources and Innovations Library \(TRAILS\)](#). TRAILS has many wonderful activities and assignments (I’ve included some recent urban ones below), but there is room for so many more. Additionally, I find many resources and learn so much from colleagues on Twitter (@colleenewynn) in urban sociology, other urban fields, and across other areas of sociology. I would encourage those who are not currently part of the

#SocTwitter community to create an account and find some fellow sociologists to learn from and with! Especially now, let’s share our expertise and the exciting and innovative ways of doing this work as we continue to help our students to see how and why urban sociology matters.

TRAILS activities/assignments (in chronological order)

- [Neighborhood Tour Project](#) by Colleen E. Wynn
- [Urban Sociology Syllabus](#) by Judith R. Halasz
- [Exploring Neighborhood Inequality with Census Data](#) by Ellen M. Whitehead
- [Subsidies, Uneven Development, and the Race to the Bottom](#) by Colby King
- [Metropolitan Area Characteristics and Residential Segregation Using American FactFinder](#) by Colleen E. Wynn
- [World’s Largest: Understanding Expressions of Place Character and Efforts to Attract Economic Investment](#) by Colby King
- [The City According to....: The Theory of Urban Sociology](#) by Mark P. Killian
- [Embracing the Learner-Centered Approach: A Neighborhood Research Example](#) by Daniel M. Sullivan
- [Public and private urban space](#) by Paul W. Clarke and Carla R. Corroto

What to Expect at *City & Community*



Richard Ocejo
John Jay College

It is an absolute honor to be the next Editor-in-Chief at *City & Community*. The journal began publication around when I started graduate school, so there hasn't been a time when I haven't known of its existence. Whether from reading its pages, contributing as an author, or assigning its pieces in my courses, it has played an indispensable role in my career. And now getting to run *City & Community* at this stage in its history, build on the efforts of so many great Editors and scholars, and take it to another level, is a dream come true.

All academic journals face the same challenge. They must establish and maintain core areas of interest to serve a distinct scholarly community while simultaneously trying to grow their authorship and readership by incorporating new ideas, approaches, and even topics into their pages. In other words, grow from the core or die on the vine. To this end, my overall aims for the journal are to strengthen the dialogue between urban sociology and other sociological literatures; diversify *City & Community's* leadership, readership, and authorship; enhance the exposure of our subfield's scholarly output; and make the journal an even more inclusive academic forum than it already is.

In this brief post I'd like to let you all know about some new initiatives we'll be implementing next year to further these goals. But first, a very special "thank you," "tip of the hat," and "round of applause" to Deirdre Oakley, who has edited the journal for the past three years. Whether through phone calls, emails, or texts, Deirdre has been incredible in supporting me during this editorial transition. The journal has had some wonderful achievements under her editorship, and through her guidance I hope to keep it going in the right direction. Congratulations to her

on a job well done!

1) Development Program

City & Community has a reputation for being a welcoming place for graduate students and young scholars, and several editors in the past have informally helped these folks develop their work. I have formalized these efforts by starting a mentorship program. Mentors from the editorial board or CUSS membership will be assigned a mentee (and receive a small stipend for their efforts) to help them develop their scholarly work.

Here is the program's official announcement and description:

City & Community's Urban Scholars Development Program

On January 1, 2021, *City & Community* will be launching its Urban Scholars Development Program, aimed at providing one-on-one mentorship for early-career urban scholars (graduate students, post-docs, recent graduates) to aid them in their scholarship. In doing so we are developing the next generation of urban researchers and expanding the urban literature.

Potential mentees may email the journal directly (cicojournal@gmail.com) to be considered for the program or may be offered the opportunity to participate by the Editor-in-Chief or a Deputy Editor upon submission to the journal. Mentees will get assigned a faculty mentor from the editorial board to help them with their work. Mentors will help shape the mentees' work into a publishable manuscript and work with them at least until the first successful submission to a peer-reviewed journal.

Scholars from underrepresented backgrounds are strongly encouraged to apply.

Eligibility criteria:

- Must have no prior sole-authored academic publications
- Must have an article-length manuscript

While the expectation is authors will submit their
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City & Community, cont'd.

finished work to *City & Community* upon completing mentorship, they are not required to do so. (Note: going through the program is not a substitute for peer review.)

Since making the announcement we have thus far had over two dozen inquiries from developing scholars looking to improve their work! If you would like to serve as a mentor, or have any questions, feel free to email me (cicojournal@gmail.com or rocejo@jjay.cuny.edu). And if you have know anyone who would benefit from such mentorship, please have them also get in touch!

2) Book review revamp:

In addition to traditional book reviews, the journal will also start reviewing non-English books in urban studies from around the world. These are titles our readers would likely miss otherwise. We will also start conducting podcast interviews with book authors (in collaboration with the [New Books Network](#)). Both of these initiatives should help us promote the journal and provide material to share through social media (see below).

Special thanks to Sofya Aptekar and Ervin Kosta, who are our next co-editors of book reviews and will be managing these initiatives. If you know any recently-published non-English books or bilingual urban scholars who may be interested in reviewing them, or if you'd be interested in interviewing book authors, please let Sofya (Sofya.Aptekar@slu.cuny.edu) and Ervin (kosta@hws.edu) know.

3) Website and Twitter:

As you may know, *City & Community's* new publisher is SAGE, which also publishes every other ASA journal. Through them we'll be able to feature podcast-style interviews with authors of articles in forthcoming issues. We will also try to continue with the video abstracts and are exploring some blog options (through SAGE or another outlet).

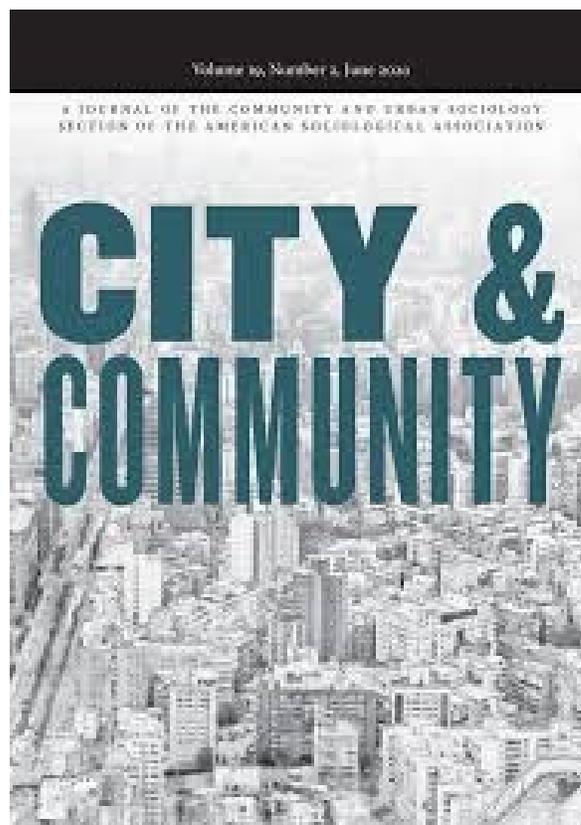
And as you may also know, *City & Community's* Twitter handle is @CiCoJournal. However, the account has been dormant for a year. We are changing that. Very soon we will start tweeting regularly about the journal, subfield, and other related matters. If you are on Twitter please

follow us.

4) Special Issues/Symposia

We will continue to regularly publish special issues/symposia in the journal on important, current topics. These are excellent opportunities to expand our scope and readership. The first new one under my editorship will be "Urban Processes Under Racial Capitalism," with Prentiss Dantzer, Junia Howell, and Elizabeth Korver-Glenn serving as guest editors (Prentiss is also one of our deputy editors). I'm looking forward to working on many more.

We hope you find this first round of initiatives as exciting as we do. A journal is only as strong as its core readers and authors, which is what I consider CUSS's membership to be. More than *City & Community's* institutional home, CUSS is the its lifeblood. I want to thank you all for supporting the journal all these years and I can't wait to see how far we can take it.



Lessons Learned, cont'd.

composition. What surprised me was how similar the shares of African American and white residents had remained over multiple decades, contrary to conventional wisdom about racial succession and white flight. During the next couple of years, this chance observation evolved into a funded project that explored varied trajectories of neighborhood change and stability.

The inclination to tackle research questions with biographical relevance can have energizing effects. After all, curiosity about one's own life experiences and a desire to understand them are strong sources of motivation. They may better sustain a line of research than would a less personal topic selected primarily because of its scientific promise or cachet. Even when we make careful, calculated decisions regarding what to study—and what our distinctive contribution will be—things don't always go according to plan. In the 2000s, a group of Penn State colleagues and I developed a new method for examining racial residential segregation across local environments of varying spatial scales. Despite our intention to provide an alternative conceptual and measurement approach to traditional census tract analyses reliant on the index of dissimilarity, work from the project has regularly been employed to justify the tract-based status quo, given the broadly similar conclusions produced by the two approaches.

Results can also be distorted, especially during the process of media dissemination. I vividly recall the shock of reading a *USA Today* article that used findings from Karen Campbell's and my research on neighborhood social networks to offer advice (ostensibly from us) about how to be a good neighbor. Some studies will fail to produce any results of note despite one's best efforts. Like most senior investigators, I've hit my share of dead ends. A reasonable take-away from this experience and other unexpected or unintended research outcomes is that they are par for the course, no matter how disappointed or frustrated you might feel. Accept that fact and move on!

Recognizing the wild-card character of luck, biography, and unexpected outcomes encourages a more realistic view of strategic planning but hardly precludes it. Younger scholars should be actively constructing their research careers in a variety of ways. Agency can be exercised by making contacts (both individually and through involve-

ment in organizations like CUSS), proposing collaborations, applying for grants and fellowships, and reaching across disciplinary boundaries. Apropos the last option, I've gained much throughout my career from partnerships with geographers, demographers, psychologists, and policy experts. A forthcoming volume of *The Annals* about the dynamics of homelessness, coedited with community psychologist Beth Shinn and housing policy scholar Dennis Culhane, reveals the novel perspectives that emerge from this sort of cross-fertilization.

My emphasis thus far on the research dimension of professional life reflects what sociologists spend their time doing in many types of work environments. Research is certainly the privileged activity at universities, where it carries disproportionate weight in salary and promotion decisions. Because of this reward structure, junior faculty members are incentivized to keep committee assignments and other service duties to a minimum. I managed to limit such 'dirty work' prior to earning tenure. As my service load increased afterwards, however, three things became increasingly apparent. First, like a non-trivial number of academics, I discovered that I was fairly competent at administrative tasks, serving for 17 years as either department head or director of the sociology graduate or undergraduate programs at Penn State. Second, service activities provide needed balance to an ego-centric career focus: doing your fair share for the collective good can be quite satisfying.

A final revelation concerns the expansive scope of service. Conventional forms include not only intramural roles—in academic settings these range from college committees to deanships and beyond—but also assistance to professional associations, government agencies, and community stakeholders. A case can be made that public sociology qualifies as service since practitioners are benefiting the discipline and wider audiences by showing the relevance of sociological knowledge to pressing problems. Direct involvement in organizations devoted to the solution of such problems should count as well. While most of my service of this kind addresses housing insecurity (e.g. as a member of a local homeless advocacy group, the board of an affordable housing foundation,

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Lessons Learned, cont'd.

and the research council of the National Alliance to End Homelessness), many urban and community sociologists have more diversified 'action' portfolios. Generally speaking, the breadth of the service concept means that it's easy to find ways to contribute that align with one's interests, values, and abilities.

For those in academic settings, the temptation to place research, teaching, and service in separate silos is strong, but there are good reasons to resist it. Exploiting potential intersections among the three domains can increase intellectual engagement, efficiency, and productivity. A straightforward strategy involves teaching what we study (which is presumably what we're passionate about). Although departmental curricula and class enrollments may constrain what's doable, offers to develop new courses are often welcomed. Almost every time I taught 'Homelessness in America' at the undergraduate level or my graduate seminar on 'Race, Immigration, and Residential Inequality', dialog with students yielded questions or ideas that improved my research, which in turn would lead to revisions of course content.

Mutually reinforcing links between research and service are also possible. To give but one illustration, as a member of the Nashville Coalition for the Homeless during the 1980s, I designed and directed an enumeration of the local homeless population that produced overtime data in support of the coalition's initiatives. The enumeration methods and results also attracted attention from scholars and the applied research community through conference presentations and a couple of publications.

Considering how different domains of professional activity might connect with each other, while useful, obscures the

bigger picture: the relationship between those domains as a whole (i.e., work) and the rest of one's life. Obviously, this relationship varies greatly from one individual to the next, within individuals over time, and across a number of contexts. For a few scholars, their work is their life, or appears to be so. Most of us have other people, pursuits, and responsibilities that we value, a fact which can make managing work and everything else challenging.

I was never able to develop a consistent approach to this balancing act. During occasional stretches, especially early in my career and later when overloaded by administrative duties, work consumed me. In response, I would try to adhere to self-imposed rules, such as taking certain days off or working only between specific hours. Such efforts at compartmentalization became more effective once my partner Carol and I had children; priorities shifted dramatically. The lesson from my experience seems less about identifying a single best solution for reconciling work and non-work roles than about remaining open to change. Because the circumstances of one's life and career are fluid, a person must be nimble enough to adjust as necessary. (Remember that this lesson, like all others in the essay, is based on the retrospective observations of a senior citizen who's no longer employed and thus should be evaluated with a critical eye.)

Something I'm still trying to figure out about careers is how they end. On this snowy morning, Carol and I are warmly ensconced in our house in the woods, with the outdoor activities and wildlife that we cherish close at hand. Opportunities for cultural consumption are easily accessible, and we hope to resume post-retirement travel (curtailed in March of

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For those in academic settings, the temptation to place research, teaching, and service in separate silos is strong, but there are good reasons to resist it.

Lessons Learned, cont'd.

2020 by the pandemic) in the foreseeable future. From these few details, you might reasonably conclude that we've moved to 'golden pond' and that I've gone cold turkey, abruptly leaving behind all professional endeavors.

Think again. We recently celebrated 30 years of residence in the same home. To my surprise, I'm still research active, mentoring students, and engaged in service outside the university. The difference, however, is that these forms of professional involvement now occur

on a more relaxed schedule, interwoven with leisure reading, hiking, pickleball, volunteering, and all of the other fun stuff. But an element of continuity is evident as well. Scholarship, whether attached to a paycheck or not, remains intrinsically rewarding, driven by curiosity and blurring the boundary between vocation and avocation. I suspect this observation holds true for many CUSS members, who reflexively view the urban world through a sociological lens. Such a habit doesn't automatically die upon retirement.

Interview w/ Graduate Paper Award Winner H. Jacob Carlson



H. Jacob Carlson
Brown University

H. Jacob Carlson, a postdoctoral scholar at the Population Studies and Training Center at Brown University, was the winner of the 2020 Graduate Student Paper Award. Jake's innovative research agenda leverages the urban and political sociological traditions to address new questions about democracy, housing, and changing cities. We reached out to ask him to discuss his research, and we're including his responses below. Thanks to Jake for participating in our interview series!

What were the main findings of your paper?

The paper "Measuring Displacement" tested three common ways that we measure "displacement" to see how well they line up with each other. Displacement implies two criteria: that someone moved, and that the move was in some way "involuntary." Not all displacement studies capture both of those aspects, and I show that depending on our measurement choices, the amount of displacement across neighborhoods can vary quite widely.

I go on to show that our measurement choices can also mask sociologically important processes. In particular, I discuss the limitations of commonly used cross-sectional neighborhood data that don't trace individual mobility patterns. I show that people are simultaneously displaced *out* of neighborhoods as well as displaced *into* them. I also find that in some cases households are displaced from their home, but not their neighborhood. Those households find some way to stay close to their existing community and social ties, though likely under precarious circumstances. In both instances, we will need future research on the conditions under which people manage to move into and within gentrifying neighborhoods.

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Interview, cont'd.

What motivated you to study this particular research topic?

I've been obsessed with this puzzle in the gentrification research: that quantitative studies consistently show that gentrification is not associated with increased displacement. It has always seemed strange to me, given my own experience living in a gentrifying neighborhood, as my prior experience as a community organizer. Everyone has stories of landlords trying to push out tenants through rent increases, harassment, or eviction. So why wasn't much of the quantitative research finding this?

That led me to explore different ways that our methodological choices might be masking different aspects of the gentrification process. This paper took on one piece of that, which is how we measure the dependent variable, displacement.

What theoretical debates or methodological challenges interest you the most, and how do you see your research contributing to them?

I'm interested in the tradeoffs of our methodological choices. Perfect data doesn't exist, and the "better" data is often inaccessible (especially for poor graduate students). There will always be limitations, but we should be clear about what our data is *actually* measuring, and how well it corresponds with what we *want* to measure for our research questions.

This paper shows that when we measure who moves, without asking *why* they move, we're missing a big part of the story. Displaced people move under fundamentally different situations than other types of movers. There are interesting issues with both of them, but we should be clear what we're actually looking at.

Relatedly, I'm also interested in effect heterogeneity. Why do people in similar situations respond differently? When a precarious household in a gentrifying neighborhood is presented with another rent increase, do they leave the neighborhood entirely? Try to find a cheaper place in the same neighborhood? Or do they hunker down and further stretch their budgets? What conditions predict those different outcomes? Future research is looking at whether gentrification induces displacement pressures more in some cities than others.

What impact do you hope that your findings will have?

I hope it provides an empirical and theoretical contribution to gentrification-displacement debates. I hope it also expands our understanding of who is affected by displacement, and what happens to people after displacement occurs.

What are some future directions for this project?

While this study is only for New York City, I want to expand the analysis to include moves to the suburbs, which is a big part of the story. I'm interested in more qualitative work on the conditions under which people attempt to stay in gentrifying neighborhoods. I also want to do a similar project with how we measure gentrification. I'm also looking at how the legacy of segregation across different cities affects gentrification and displacement patterns. Relatedly, I'm going to be working on some collaborative research on how to help reduce the negative effects of gentrification through various "social housing" projects that have been gaining traction in the US and around the world.

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Annual Meeting 2021 Sessions



Racial Equity, Repair, and the Global Movement for Black Lives

Session Organizer/Chair: Monica Bell, Yale University

In the seven years since George Zimmerman's acquittal in the murder of Trayvon Martin, activists and organizers have taken to the streets to build a global movement for Black lives, making demands of their cities and communities to dismantle racism in the criminal legal system and invest in structures that support Black futures. Most recently, the uprisings of 2020 have unfolded amidst the health inequities magnified by COVID-19, highlighted racialized police violence, and a global concern over anti-blackness. This session seeks paper submissions that broadly attend to the linkages between this global movement for Black lives and the ways it has been situated and experienced locally in cities, suburbs, and rural communities. Papers in this session may address questions about the range of demands that activists are making (from prison and police reform to abolition); the range of tactics used within the social movements; the influence of contemporary queer and intersectional organizing; coalition building with Latinx, indigenous, and immigrant social movements; and the continuously changing and colliding notions of the city's racial landscapes in relationship to protest and racial discourse.

Pandemic and the Modern Metropolis

Session Organizer/Chair: Neil Brenner, University of Chicago

The COVID19 pandemic has changed the structure and organization of urban life, globally. As cities grappled with whether and how to enforce new safety measures, from physical distancing to quarantine, urban sociologists have been attentive to questions about how social life is changing, and with what consequences. What unique impact has COVID19 had on urban places? And will urban life ever be the same? Papers in this session will answer questions about how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted social life and inequality in the city: from issues related to density and population; to housing and the looming eviction crisis; surveillance and social unrest; the use or misuse of public space; food and work (in)security, mobilities, and vulnerabilities; and the newly emerging (or disappearing) formations of urban community and social life.

Community, Policy and the Politicization of Space

Session Organizer/Chair: Claudia Lopez, California State University – Long Beach

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Annual Meeting 2021 Sessions, cont'd.

In the summer of 2020, President Trump announced that he would send a “surge” of federal law enforcement officers to U.S. cities that he deemed to be riddled with disorder and lawlessness. He warned that nearby suburban enclaves could become overrun with crime if they supported the inclusion of, for example, low-income housing. These comments highlight ongoing questions about landscape hierarchies and spatial inequality as zoning and land-use regulations that continue to fuel racial/ethnic and economic disparities across multiple global contexts and scales. This session welcomes papers that investigate issues related to rural-urban-suburban divides; global migration, political segregation; and spatial conflict across regions.

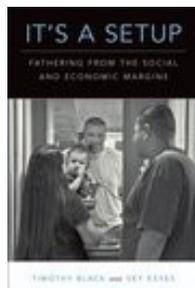
A Critical Lens on Urban Sociology

Session Organizer/Chair: Orly Clerge, University of California, Davis

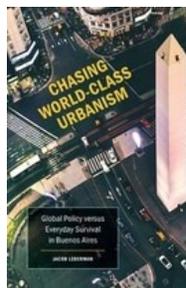
This session invites papers that broadly theorize about the origins and expansions of urban sociology as a discipline, and questions about who has benefited or lost. Papers may theorize or answer the following: What would decoloniality mean as an approach to urban sociology? How has urban sociology, as a tool, served the interests of white supremacy, patriarchy, empire, or capitalism? What is the composition of urban sociology’s “workforce,” and who earns credit and prestige? How can urban sociologists rethink curriculum, canon, epistemology, and method? What other origin stories in urban sociology remain concealed or obscured? What urban sociological approaches or schools of thought have caused harm for the communities they study? And within the field of urban sociology, what could it look like to redistribute resources or repair harm?

New Publications

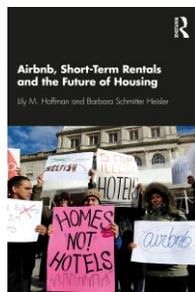
New Books



Black, T., & Keyes, S. (2020). *It's a Setup: Fathering from the Social and Economic Margins*. Oxford University Press.



Lederman, J. (2020). *Chasing World-Class Urbanism: Global Policy versus Everyday Survival in Buenos Aires*. U of Minnesota Press.



Hoffman, L. M., & Heisler, B. S. (2020). *Airbnb, Short-Term Rentals and the Future of Housing*. Routledge.



Woldoff, R. A., & Litchfield, R. C. (2020). *Digital Nomads: In Search of Freedom, Community, and Meaningful Work in the New Economy*. Oxford University Press.

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New Publications, cont'd.

New Articles

Gaddis, S. Michael, and Raj Ghoshal. 2020. "Searching for a Roommate: A Correspondence Audit Examining Racial/Ethnic and Immigrant Discrimination among Millennials." *Socius: Sociological Research for a Dynamic World* 6:1-16.

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Levy, Brian L., Nolan E. Phillips, and Robert J. Sampson. 2020. "Triple Disadvantage: Neighborhood Networks of Everyday Urban Mobility and Violence in U.S. Cities." *American Sociological Review* 85(6):925-956.

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Somashekhar, Mahesh. "Racial Inequality between Gentrifiers: How the Race of Gentrifiers Affects Retail Development in Gentrifying Neighborhoods." *City & Community* 19(4):811-844.

Williams, Anthony J. 2020. "Wayward in Sociology?" *Contexts* 19(4):82-83.