Discussion Transcript for Webinar: Publishing and Public Sociology

21 April, 2021

SLIDE 1

Awish Aslam
Welcome, and thank you for joining us for this webinar on Publishing and Public Sociology.

SLIDE 2
As we begin, the Canadian Sociological Association Student Concerns Subcommittee wishes to situate its presence as an uninvited guest on the traditional territories of First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples across so-called Canada. This acknowledgement is to recognize the enduring relationships that exist between Indigenous nations and their territories that the CSA and its constituents work and live on. As a committee and organization, we strive to understand our role within Canada's ongoing settler colonial project that subjects Indigenous peoples to dispossession and genocide. We recognize our participation and complacency in colonial modalities and knowledge systems and are committed to Decolonial praxis that centers and affirms the contributions of Indigenous elders and scholars to the field of sociology.

SLIDE 3
So that everyone is aware, audience members are muted to limit background noise. If you do have questions that come up during the webinar, please do submit those using the Q & A function. Your questions will be visible to all attendees and panelists and audience members may also upvote questions to prioritize them. The panelists will address these questions during the open Q & A period.

SLIDE 4
My name is Awish Aslam and I am the chair and Central rep for the CSA Student Concerns subcommittee. Our subcommittee also includes our Eastern rep, Finbar Hefferon and our Western Rep. Nicole Malette. We also have to cross-appointed student reps, Carieta Thomas, who is cross-appointed with the Equity subcommittee, and Alicia Clifford, who's cross appointed with the Decolonization subcommittee.

SLIDE 5
Additionally, our team includes two student communications volunteers, Molly Harper and Kieran Maingot to promote all of our events and programming, including today's webinar.

SLIDE 6

We'd also like to thank the Canadian Sociological Association for sponsoring this initiative, and Sherry Fox, the Executive Director for the CSA for working with us to plan and organize this series. Finally, thank you to everyone who submitted suggestions when registering your comments and questions helped us understand what sort of issues you'd like panelists to address today.

SLIDE 7

Turning to our panel, we have three speakers joining us today, so I'll start by introducing each of them.
First, we have Dr. Pallavi Banerjee. Since 2015, Dr. Banerjee has been an Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology at the University of Calgary. Before this, she was a postdoctoral fellow at the sociology department at Vanderbilt University. She received her PhD in sociology from the University of Illinois, Chicago in December of 2012. Her research interests are situated at the intersections of sociology of immigration, gender, unpaid and paid labor, intersectionality, transnationalism minority families and the Global South. Her forthcoming book entitled *Dismantling Dependence: gendered migrations, Indian high-skilled immigrant families and the visa regime*, forthcoming with NYU press, explores how the immigration and visa regimes of the United States affect immigrant families of Indian professional workers in the US.

SLIDE 8
Our next panelist is Dr. Howard Ramos. Dr. Ramos is the chair of the Department of Sociology at Western University. He is a political sociologist who investigates issues of social justice and equity. He has published on social movements, human rights, Indigenous mobilization, environmental advocacy, ethnicity, race, and Atlantic Canada. He's also former president of the Canadian Sociology Association.

SLIDE 9
Our final panelist is Dr. Karen Stanbridge. Dr. Stanbridge is an Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology at Memorial University. She's a political sociologist who writes about nationalism, the state and social movements. She's the managing editor of the Canadian Review of Sociology (CRS), and producer and host of CRStal Radio, the podcast of the CRS..

SLIDE 10
Thank you to all of our panelists for joining us. We're going to start off by having each panelist provide us with a brief overview on today's topic, touching on a few specific areas where their expertise lies. So to begin, I'm going to turn things over to Pallavi.

Pallavi Banerjee

Thank you very much Awish for the introduction and for inviting me to this panel. I'm really honoured to be with the co-panelists we have and Sherry Fox for all the logistical work and the behind the scenes work that you do and also Awish - this is always so well organized. I really commend you and your team for such an organized panel and keeping us organized. Thank you!

Before I begin, in our commitment towards reconciliation and decolonization, I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the traditional territories of the Blackfoot and the people of the treaty seven in southern Alberta, which includes the six acre the Piikani, the Kainai, the Tsuut'ina and the Stoney Nakoda First Nations. This is where I work and live. I would also like to note that the University of Calgary where I work is situated on the land adjacent to where the Bow river meets the Elbow River. And the traditional Blackfoot territories, the Blackfoot name of this place is Mohkínstsis, which we now call the City of Calgary. The City of Calgary is also home to the Métis nation of Alberta, region three.

So with that, what I'm going to give a really quick overview of is writing a book because I just finished my book and this book emerged from my dissertation research, and it has been a very long process. But the first book usually is a long process. And in talking about the book, I'm also going to talk about public sociology, and how it relates to a book project or writing a book.

I will begin with the public sociology component of it, and then move into talking about writing a book, particularly from your dissertation. Public sociology, as we know is an approach to sociology that aims to communicate with and actively engage with wider audiences beyond academia. As the sociologist from Berkeley, Michael Burawoy, urges us sociologists to do is to devote some of their time to public sociology and to public dialogue about important issues.

My own training in the discipline of sociology was enmeshed with an orientation towards public sociology, having been trained and mentored by feminist scholars such as Barbara Risman, Chandra Mohan, Anna Guevarra, among others. One of the things we hear a lot as we start out in the discipline and in the early stages of our research is "Why should any anyone care about your research?" The why, the big why question. And some of the common answers that are given are that our research counts because it contributes to the field theoretically, or it informs policy or it leads to methodological innovation. But we rarely hear public sociology as part of that answer or discourse.

To take public sociology seriously, would be to say that my research makes sociological research or sociological topics accessible to public, or that it adds to the larger public and political discourse of our times. And one way we all are public sociologists, or can be public sociologists, is through our teaching.

But I found myself thinking very early on in my graduate career how I could engage more critically in public sociology through my research. And one way (and there are many ways) I thought that

could be achieved was by thinking of my research projects in terms of books as one form of dissemination. And while it is not advisable often for junior scholars, those of you who are starting out to put all your publishable projects in the book basket, writing books makes it easier.

Writing a book is a very hard process. But what it makes it easy for sociologists to reach a wider audience, then, for example, writing only research articles, which are typically read by the 100 people in your field, or maybe a few more if it is assigned in courses - if they are being read by students in various courses.

One way for me to engage in public sociology was to think about my dissertation project as a book project. And now we must understand that not all dissertation projects lend themselves to being converted into a book right away or readily. If you're writing a three-paper dissertation, you are not probably thinking about a book and you're going the article route, and that is completely fine. But if you're thinking about a dissertation as a book project, then there are some tips that I'm going to talk about in a few minutes. But also before I do that, I want to say that not all books are public sociology projects. In the next few minutes, what I'm going to talk about is the types of projects that lend itself to book projects and which books could count as public sociology books.

Which dissertation projects would lend themselves to being a book in the future? Not surprising, I think most ethnographic research or qualitative research, particularly ethnographic research, or comparative historical projects work great as book projects. Given that these projects usually are have a longer span, you are in the field for a longer time, you're interacting with different people and institutions. This produces complexities in the data gathered that have a narrative quality to them. These methodologies sort of lend to this narrativized version of data that you then collect. You can definitely write very interesting articles from these projects. But the need for brevity in papers and articles often results in reductive exposition of the data, whereas the breadth that a book allows helps one to unpack and explore the new answers of the data more comprehensively and fully. So ethnographic projects, or comparative historical projects lend themselves to book projects more readily. But quantitative projects can also become books, and they can become great books. *The Philadelphia Negro* by Du Bois. That's a tall order, I understand, but it is a great example.

When you are thinking about a book, and if you're doing a quantitative project, you need to be thinking about the story arc that your data is providing you. This story arc, if you figure out the story arc, the arc of the story that you're telling through your data, that lends itself to really interesting, amazing books. One that comes to mind is *The Equity Myth: Racialization and Indigeneity at Canadian Universities* by one of our panelists, Howard Ramos and his colleagues. This is not a book that came out of a dissertation but this is a good example of a book that incorporates quantitative data to tell a story about inequity that is intersectional within Canadian universities. Another book that comes to mind is Carlsberg's book on precarious labor that raises interesting questions about

who chooses to be contingent workers and those who are forced to be in it. This is examined through a large data set across multiple countries.

Any project can lend itself to a book project, if you have the story that you want to tell. And so, at the onset of your dissertation, if you decide you want to write a book eventually, you need to unpack some of the stories as you're writing the dissertation. For the interest of time, I'm not going to get into the nitty gritties of how to convert a dissertation into a book that can come in the Q & A. But what I'm going to discuss next is, which books then count as public sociology books, and what are some of the key characteristics of that?

In thinking about this talk, I thought of four key characteristics. The first one is a research project that is oriented to praxis, that the book you're writing are speaking to real world issues and problems, and is in the service of justice, in the service of social justice. Again, Dr. Ramos's book is a great example of that. Another book that I can think about is a book that came out a couple years back and won the ASA Distinguished Book Award. This book called *The Crook County* by Nicole Van Cleve or *Punished* by Victor Rios. These are books that are really about unpacking the inequalities and to move these systems and to address systemic injustices and to move the society to think about how we could change these practices. So, a praxis-oriented book is a public sociology book.

Then the book needs to have a strong empirical grounding, which by that what I mean is that the theory that you're positing in the book needs to be grounded in the social world that you and I walk every day. You don't have to jettison theory to make a book into a public sociology book. But you should not be using theory for the sake of using it, but to make sense of the disparateness of the data that you have. I was recently reading a book that is very powerful and written for the public. It's explicitly written for the public. The book describes and details the effects of militarization and colonization and provides an extensive and chilling account of what they look like on the ground. As I was reading this book, in one of the chapters, there is a very chilling description of violence being meted out by a colonialist state. At the end of this very chilling description, the author comes in with some theorization of what they were talking about. And that just created a dissonance for me, and I had to stop for a moment. And again, this is a public sociology book, it does a really good job, but it's also about knowing when theory informs the empirics that you are positing.

For example, Aldon Morris's book, which is based in the theory of racial exclusion in the production of knowledge within academia, traces the history of Du Bois as the architect of American sociology and being denied that mantle becomes a theory in itself. Aldon Morris talks about theory, but through this unpacking of the history of the Du Bois as a scholar in sociology, so thinking about theory in a way that lends itself to practice, I would say is another way to think about a book that eventually will become a public sociology book.

And of course, it has to be written in an accessible way, it has to be written in a way that is not obtuse or obscured in academic language, which is obfuscating and you have to kind of muddle through it right, then it does not lend itself to public interaction.

The fourth point is sort of related to accessibility. But it also is that even though you want to make your book accessible, it does not mean that your research is not solid. You don't need to water down the half of your research to be able to communicate what you want to communicate in an accessible language. Think about the project, as you start, as something that you can communicate to your neighbor or your aunt who is not an academic, your mother will read anything you write even if she doesn't understand it, but it's accessibility along with keeping your research intact. These are really hard things to do. We can talk about them break them down and talk about them later. But I don't want to take up more time. I want our other panelists to talk about their writing practices. But I will stop here and we can get into the nitty gritties of designing a dissertation that can become a book seamlessly and a public sociology book, when we come to the Q & A. Thank you.

Awish Aslam
Thanks, Pallavi. That was a really helpful overview. I'm sure people have a lot of follow up questions. And now we're going to turn things over to Howard.

Howard Ramos
Thank you Awish for organizing the event, the Student Concerns Subcommittee, and Sherry. Let me echo Pallavi in a big thank you. And it's really hard to follow Pallavi who did such a wonderful job at introducing public sociology and a lot of the kind of contours and thinking about issues and its very kind of you Pallavi to cite the work from *The Equity Myth*.

What I'd like to do is to try and share five observations when I think about the issues of publication and public sociology. So the first observation is that we are in a really amazing era, where we have an unprecedented number of ways of being a sociologist. So as was mentioned, the kind of argument around the four ways of doing sociology and making a case for public sociology, I would argue there are even more ways of being a sociologist than the four that were mentioned. And at the same time, there's an unprecedented number of venues that we can publish. This is what makes this period pretty complex to navigate. One of the things that early career people have to navigate are predatory journals. Thinking about putting things out in podcasts, which is not a written work, but is what I would say, a publication. Thinking about what's the difference between a magazine piece or a blog piece, or for even that matter, having a Twitter handle where people share ideas or results, and publications that get put into open-source repositories. In many ways, I feel it's kind of a moment where it's difficult to try and navigate that field. But it's an exciting period in the sense that there's lots of room to do sociology in very different and creative ways.

The second thing that I would like to share is that as we navigate this unprecedented number of ways of being a sociologist and these venues that keep popping up. The second point that I think is important to share is that often we get conflicting advice on publishing, and conflicting advice on being a public sociologist. And when people offer that conflicting advice, they often have very strong views about what is right or wrong in terms of being a sociologist. The thing I would want to stress that's really important is that there's no single path in navigating your way through your career or your way of doing sociology. For example, many people will say to early career researchers that you need to have a certain number of publications. Other people will say that you need to publish in specific venues, maybe the Canadian Review of Sociology or the American Sociological Review. People might say that there are certain ways or methods to try and get published, some people will say there's a prizing of the single author monograph, versus trying to buddy up with a well-known scholar and try to co-publish. Some folks will value working in teams, some people will not value that. So there's going to be a lot of conflicting advice. People will sound very convincing and have strong articulations of what that advice is. But the one thing I hope that people can keep in mind is there's no single path, and that there's very different ways of having a successful and meaningful career.

The third thing that I would like to share with folks, is that when thinking about publication, I think it's really important to think about the affordance of different venues and thinking about the audiences that consume those venues. Affordances is a concept that I'm very interested in these days. And it simply means what you can do with something, and not just taking the literal view of what you can do with something but thinking beyond what you can do with it. I think this is really important to think about as we have a whole new set of ways of publishing, that are not established yet. That really allows us to think about what can we do with those forms. In particular, thinking about the audiences. When I was a junior faculty member, or junior career researcher, the ideal was to hit that narrow audience that Pallavi mentioned, that 100 core specialists. But we now have an ability to hit people in our community or make an impact with community members, we have the ability to contribute to policy debates. We still have the ability to make contributions to the discipline in specialized venues. In thinking about the affordances and different audiences, I think that it's important to also keep in mind what I call and people in the policy world call 1, 3, and 25.

So, 1, 3 and 25 is an equation that some people in the policy world talk about. Which is the 25-page paper, the academic specialized report. That's something that's going to hit people who care about a discipline who want the technical details, who have the time to be able to read through it and have specialized knowledge and value that specialized knowledge. The 3 represents kind of, if we think about an academic article, roughly being 25 pages, 3 is a shorter brief, a condensed version. And that often in the policy world, or in the private sector, people will say, okay, the intern will read the 25-page specialized piece or the technical expert will, but they will then produce a 3-page report that they would then give to the person who is their manager, or the decision maker above them. And that's one that offers some context and offers some argument, but a lot less detail. While the 1

is basically tailoring down that information from 3-pages down to a 1-pager. And people often argue that in this current moment where we have all kinds of information landing, people are working off their cell phones, they're getting emails and text messages, the carrying capacity of very busy people is about one page. That's for not only decision makers, but also people more generally in the community.

When I talked about 1, 3, and 25, to a deputy minister, they said we send a text message to the Minister. What's important to think about in terms of 1, 3, and 25, is not to take it as things only exist in 1, 3, and 25 but rather thinking that we need to think about our ideas in different formats. This is something that Pallavi was mentioning in her contribution. Then when we think about those different formats, think about, well, what can we do in that space? What kind of argument and what kind of impact can we make in the space? In turn, think about who is the audience that consumes the information given those affordances or space.

The last thing that I want to try and share is my fifth piece of advice, which I think is the most important advice I can offer you today. As we navigate through this very complicated and chaotic publishing space, what I think is most important is do it on your own terms, be the kind of social scientists that you think you want to be, and focus as much on the process of being that social scientist in light of the four points I just mentioned. Because if you're going to go down, as I say to folks go down being you. So thank you very much.

Awish Aslam
Thanks, Howard. Really great overview of those four points as well. I'm just going to turn over to Karen.

Karen Stanbridge
Hi, everyone. I want to do the usual thanks, the round of thanks to everyone for putting this panel together. And I really appreciate being part of it and I'm very honored to be here.

I'm Karen Stanbridge with the Department of Sociology at Memorial University in St. John's, Newfoundland. I am the current managing editor of the Canadian Review of Sociology, the flagship journal of the Canadian Sociological Association. I have also recently begun producing a public podcast. As Awish mentioned at the beginning here, it's CRStal Radio, and these 30-minute podcast feature brief conversations with the authors whose work appears in in the Canadian Review of Sociology.
I'm going to talk briefly basically about two topics that I've been immersed in recently, and that is the matter of open access publishing as well as kind of the process by which I came about putting the podcast together and talk a little bit about podcasting and its possibilities in a public sociology landscape.

But before I get to that, I'm just going to say one brief thing. I agree with my previous panelists, there are loads of different ways to engage people with our sociological research. I do have to say at this point, at the point where most of you are in your career and your academic career, we don't want to count publications and so on. But if you're looking at getting a job, tenure track position at a university these days, or even get a postdoc, or apply for funding successfully, you still have to publish in traditional scholarly journals in the usual way. It's time consuming, it doesn't necessarily speak to public sociology, but it is the way. Frankly, nobody gets a degree or tenure track job through public sociology. Unfortunately, I don't see that changing very much in the near future. Public sociology, as far as at least the committees that I've been part of is a great thing, and increasingly important on a CV. But if you're looking at it, it only really has a great deal of impact if you have that more traditional CV to back it up as well. My panelists may disagree with me, and we can talk about that. But that was one thing I wanted to say to begin.

Open access for those of you who have not heard of open access publishing, it's a way these are different sort of venues through which you can make your academic scholarly work available more easily to the public. In most cases, aside from books as Pallavi mentioned, scholarly articles are only available to and through university libraries, and to academics and to people who hold subscriptions. Open access provides different avenues through which you can make your research available. So there might be a couple of reasons you want to do this, you may have to do it. There are faculty members, at least who hold grants from SSHRC and other government agencies were open access is a requirement of their grants, so they sort of have to do it. But also to there are many who want to publish open access, they wish to make their research more widely available, and indeed, in its scholarly form. And some people have more reasons for that they wish to make it available for social justice reasons, and so on.

There are a number of different ways that you can do this, if you wish. There are open access journals, there are journals, academic journals, a number of them sociological that you can send in your article. Once it's reviewed and gone through the editing process, it will be immediately available online. The Canadian Journal of Sociology is one of those, not the Canadian Review. The Canadian Journal of Sociology has been open access instant access since 2008. So that's a Canadian journal, but there are others. More common is what's called a hybrid model. Most academic publishers go by this, at least the traditional ones. They are offered only by subscription, unless the author pays for what are called article publication charges. This kind of charge that is paid to the publisher varies dramatically across disciplines, across subjects and across journals and publishers. They can be anywhere from five to $600 to thousands of dollars. The Canadian Review of Sociology will make your paper immediately accessible open access for $3,000. So clearly, it costs money. And that money has to come from somewhere, either subscribers from the authors or what have you. So, what I would suggest if you're interested in publishing open access (we can talk about it more) you have got to do your research. There's not one model. There's not one publisher, all publishers aren't doing the same things, you must do your research. Publishers will charge different rates for open

access. Indeed, it's often the case that institutions / universities offer to pay for even a percentage of the open access fees for at least faculty who are members of their university. Not sure about the grad students, but we can talk about that too. But do your research.

The last thing I want to talk about is the podcast. The idea of having a podcast as kind of extra content for the Canadian Review of Sociology. We talked about it actually for a few years, and once the pandemic rolled round, and summer came, I thought, well, you know, maybe I'll give it a shot. I am not, I admit, a podcast listener. But I am a radio listener, and I'm a huge fan of CBC Radio One, for example, news type, radio, magazine type of shows.

I started thinking, well, maybe I could put one of those together to feature the content of the Canadian Review, make this research maybe a little bit more accessible, to talk to the author's directly about their research, and to have make it a bit, punchy, more publicly accessible than the scholarly works. So great, I've got this great idea, no idea how to do this, zero. I used to make radio shows, when I was an undergrad, we were using reel to reel tape decks, which ages me horribly. It's a very steep learning curve. I talked to a lot of podcasters got a lot of advice, very steep learning curve on the technology. But I tell you, it's been great. It's a lot of fun people from the author, or the authors from the review, have been very forthcoming and very ready to submit themselves to that not by any means stressful interviews that I submit them to. And it's been great, our listenership has been going up as we continue to promote it. I'll just give you a just a quick. Well, we can do this later, I can show you the website and stuff later, but had to be a website designer too suddenly, so surprise.

Listenership is going up. It's a lot of work. If you get your work published in the Canadian review, absolutely contact me. I will want to interview you and get you on the podcast. If you're thinking of doing one yourself, remember, get the published articles out first if you want to start a podcast, it does take some time. But it is a really neat way of kind of expanding your skills, and as well as expanding your knowledge of kind of the crowd of sociologists that exist. And that's it. Thank you.

Awish Aslam

Thanks, Karen, as a really, really helpful overview of open access and the podcasts. I think people really appreciate your honesty. So I'm sure we're going to have some follow up questions. So while the audience takes some of that in and submits their questions through the Q & A, we're actually going to give panelists a chance to pose questions to one another. I see Pallavi already has the hand up.

Pallavi Banerjee

I was just trying the hand up. But since you called on me, I do have actually like a question that both Howard and Karen could probably respond to, and it's about the plethora of venues that we can publish in these days, right. And then this conversation about open access and not open access in

the mix. And this this question of predatory journals, right. And even as academics who have been around for a while, I think we sometimes get taken in by these predatory venues, whether it's in publication or even these days, conferences, there are calls for these things. And some of these predatory journals invite you by saying that this is open access. You pay money and you can publish. Whereas as Karen pointed out, that even for anything open access, we do need to pay money. For those of us who write grants, we can write that in. I think for the audience here, it might be good for us to talk a little more about how to decipher these and how to sort of navigate the choices that we have, and some choices are worse than others.

Karen Stanbridge

Thanks for the question. Yes. How do you navigate? That is the question. As we are speaking mostly with graduate students, I already kind of made my thoughts about this clear, at least in my experience.

The more traditional route, still, I believe still holds sway. Certainly, until you get to a certain point in your career, where you have a good cushioning of that of publications, either a couple of books or a few articles. Be careful, obviously, of the predatory journals. At the graduate level, publish in the Canadian journals like the Canadian Review of Sociology, Canadian Journal of sociology, and there are a few others. These are solid journals, have been in business for a long time, people know them, and they have a great reputation.

After you do that I guess the sky's the limit. As Howard said, so rightly, you want to do this on your own terms. Of course, it gets easier to do it on your own terms, the more comfortable you are. All of us here on the panel, we have nice comfy jobs, and we can do stuff like podcasts like mine. It's kind of like when you're a junior faculty member, you choose your committees very carefully, choose your publicly accessible publications carefully as well. And you want it not only to be public access, but kind of impressive public access. And if you need help doing that, ask around and find out what's going on in the discipline and so on. The Conversation, for example, is a is a place where people are publishing a lot here in Canada, which is an excellent venue.

Howard Ramos

I would agree with all of that and I would add a couple of things. I think it's not just a matter of thinking about in the academic venues but how do you figure where to publish, but also in the non-academic venues. Is publishing in The Conversation as good as publishing in the New York Times? Is publishing the New York Times as good as publishing in La Monde? When I was talking about being in such a chaotic or unprecedented time of being a sociologist, or even publishing, what I was getting at is that at 1, 3, and 25, there's this range and for books too. Is Fernwood the same as University of Toronto press and are they the same as University of Chicago or Oxford press? I still

navigate it, I kind of go back to thinking about validity. So probably, if you know, it, it's probably legit, if you've never heard of it, and it's too good to be true, it probably could be and there's going to be higher risk.

Now, you know, one of the other things that's kind of interesting to navigate is do you want to publish in something when it's a new venue, but not known, well it's going to be a higher risk, but it could be a really central venue later on. Imagine those folks who published in The Huffington Post in 1990. It became something bigger, and then now it's been eaten up by BuzzFeed, I think, or somebody bought them out. But that's the kind of thing that you're navigating, there's going to be a risk.

I also would suggest to folks is look to the people who you think are the people you want to be in your career and look at where they've published and look at the kind of spaces they go into. The other one that I think is also important to consider and I can't help but take the bait from Karen, who kind of threw down the gauntlet a little bit. At the end of the day, we still need to publish a certain number of publications. I don't disagree with that. If you want to be a tenure-track professor, that's certainly an element that you have to consider. But at the same time, it also would say that academic publishing kind of annoys me, right. Take something like Black Lives Matter, or take some of the stuff that's been going on in COVID. Look at how rapidly the world has changed. By the time I get my peer reviewed published article in a venue that has snob factor, it's two years after the fact. And it's lost all potential for impact. Certainly it's easy for me to say, as a full professor whose tenured. But without taking a little bit of risk here and there, you don't have to change. And I do believe that the Tri Council and the granting agencies are beginning to value other types of publications and public engagement and being a broader range of being not just a sociologist, but an academic.

As they say in the stock portfolio, diversify if you want to have immediate impact. I love the 600-word to 800-word format. The Conversation is probably a good place to get your feet wet, and you get some coaching and mentoring. Try an op ed, and then publish the peer reviewed stuff for the academic venue - your 25 pages that gets you the credit a couple years later. And so, to me it's not an either/or, it's a matter of trying to play with all of them. The important thing to kind of consider and just be very self-reflexive in that process. And it's kind of exciting to see a bunch of questions popping up in the chat thing. So I feel that rather than me asking a question, maybe we can get to some of those too.

Pallavi Banerjee
Sure. Should we just take questions or how do you want to do this Awish?

Awish Aslam
I think they're pretty on topic so it probably makes sense to go to some of the questions.

Pallavi Banerjee

I think there are two questions on public sociology and a couple that are directed to me, so I can start there.

As Howard was saying, academic publishing takes so long. This book that I just published, it has taken me 10 years from the time I started the project. My dissertation research, to it being out, it's been 10 years. I have published other things from that. And that's what I meant a little bit about not putting everything in the book basket, but knowing what you want for the book and what you would be using for the different types of publications.

And honestly, one of the first things that I published out of my project were two op eds that I wrote when I was a grad student. One that I wrote in the first semester of my postdoctoral fellowship. And I wrote those because the topic that I was working on was in The Conversation. It was in the policy sphere and in the public sphere, and there was a lot of media buzz about it. I was a graduate student and I wanted a job and I wanted my topic to be relevant. But there was also this idea that I did this research and if I don't enter the conversation that's so relevant to my research and wait for an article to be published in three years, it will mean nothing at that time, or it may lose relevance.

I wrote a couple of op eds and I took help from my mentors at the time. I reached out to people I knew around me, who had been writing op eds for a while. My advisor was one of them. Stephanie Coons who has written for the New York Times, forever. I reached out to Stephanie Coons and I was lucky that I knew them, they were in my network and they looked over my op ed and those got published. One was a magazine and the other was in I think it was the Washington Post. I can't remember but they got published and they got picked up. When I was on the job market, I was doing a job talk and one of my participants, called me and said, "Did you see your research got cited by the Obama administration to change the policy that was being discussed?". And it was not an academic article, it was not my book, it was in the other pieces.

So, I absolutely agree with Howard, that while you should keep the public discussion, you should keep writing those academic traditional articles. But the little caveat that I have is do them well and get help in writing an op ed. It is a skill, it's not something that you just sit down and write in an hour, it takes a long time, it also goes through peer review process, not in the traditional sense, but the person who's editing your op ed will give you feedback. Get it read by people around you, people who are experts, people who've done it, ask your advisor if you should do this. Sometimes, you actually should not jump on the bandwagon, because that can be too controversial for you to put your byline. And because when we are desperate, we often think we need to do this right now. And we jump at it. So take some time, pause, but to it would be my suggestion here.

Howard Ramos

I wish somebody would have told me this when I was doing my first publications. They don't go away. There are a few things that I've written in my earlier years that as I've kind of gotten older and seen the world a bit differently and changed my mind on a couple of things. And it's fine, I don't have any regrets. But the bigger kind of consideration is to remember that they do last, especially the peer reviewed stuff, or your dissertation, they're going to be around for the rest of your life. And I think it's fine to evolve as a as a thinker. But I think that sometimes when there's a really pressing kind of moment, that's something to keep in mind.

One of the first questions in the chat box was about experiences. Some of the best experiences I have had were with the more established companies or venues. And some of the worst experiences I have had were with the newer, less established ones so that's something to keep in mind. But I still would sometimes do newer venues too, I wouldn't say no to it, because I have one publication that's in an academic journal that at the time was an unheard-of journal, that's now a fairly decent journal. And so, it's a matter of weighing the risks.

Ian asked me a question in the chat box specifically about when you're applying to jobs, and you have multiple publications. I would say that this is going to be kind of weird advice, but I'll give it, nonetheless. I always say that when you're going to apply to a job, or you're thinking about a job, look at the webpage of the junior faculty. That's pretty much who's been hired over the last 5 to 10 years and that's what the department values. Look at where those people have published and what kind of things they've published as that's what the department could evaluate.

There are no hard written in stone valuing of single monographs versus articles versus other things. But I think that that's a pretty good gauge. And I would say the same thing for writing. The Beatles got to be the Beatles (now I'm getting dated) by playing cover songs in Germany for five years. And they basically, tried to act like the rock musicians that they liked, you can only get so far with cover songs. Eventually you have to get your own style. But that's a good way to try and get your feet wet. So if you want to do podcasting, listen to some podcasts and think about what is the affordance of the podcast you want to do? Op eds, read a bunch of op eds. You want to write a book, read books, which I know sounds like weird advice, but I think the notion of 10,000 hours.

Karen Stanbridge

I thought I would just respond to a question here about open access publications. These have been actively talked about by the Federation of Humanities and Social Sciences. I think that they did their report (and as far as I know, the only report) I believe in 2010, it's been quite a while, and there hasn't been any sort of update.

I mentioned during my introduction that there's no set model that has emerged since then. I think we were all sort of hoping that there that somebody somewhere would corral all these cats and put them together in something that would be at least recognizable across different sorts of venues and so on. But that hasn't happened. So the question about whether open access journals being

reputable... (INTERNET DROPPED). And the open access journals as well, as Pallavi already mentioned (INTERNET DROPPED). Many of them are open access, go with the rule, as Howard said, have I heard of them? Or has anybody heard of them? (INTERNET DROPPED). ...If it's open access entirely, unless that journal is known by a good number of people. (INTERNET DROPPED) Because unless it is sort of, if people respond to it in the same way that they do in the... (INTERNET DROPPED). ...the more traditional scholarly journal that was available, through subscriptions that went open access, people have heard about that one. The newer ones I can't say, but again, if there are people in your department in your field, in that in your particular specialization area. As well, it depends on your specialization, I believe that open access is more common across different the different fields of sociology so the best thing to do is to talk to people.

I can't guarantee that it's going to be faster to publish in open access. One of the things that the Canadian review has, I think, improved quite considerably over the recent years is the time to publication. And with that improving, and with review processes happening very quickly, journal articles are getting to print quite quickly. And if you are, for example, interested, and again, I am the managing editor, so I'm blowing the horn, we have in the journal if you're not familiar with it, we have a Committing Sociology section that appears in each issue, each of the four issues of the journal every year, that is a non-peer reviewed place in which the material is of course reviewed by our editor, Tracy Adams, and goes through the copy-editing process and everything. It's just not officially peer reviewed. You can get shorter pieces to press very fast. And so, there are opportunities for open or more open, I guess meaning either, either in a hybrid model or getting to press more quickly. So if you can't get published as the question said in the high-end journals, would you move to open access? It depends. Just get the information, talk to people. It may be worth your while.

Pallavi Banerjee

I think this perception that if we go to newer journals or open access journals, it will be quicker is a false perception. In fact, I've seen that the newer the journals, the more obscure the journals, it takes more time often because it's hard for them to get reviewers, they do not have the same pool of reviewers that more established journals have. Reviewers often feel more obliged to return their reviews quicker if it is the Canadian Sociological Association or Gender and Society. It's not right but that's what happens. And so, I think that perception is sort of a false perception. And I would echo that.

For grad students here, I would also say aim high. If you are going the traditional route go to the best place for your work, and then maybe if it doesn't get there, then go down. And I know, it's frustrating, and it takes a long time. And so I think diversifying is important, as Howard has been talking about, but also don't sell yourself short because of the publication process. Sometimes an editor would see a value in your work that you may not see and may shepherd you through to

publication, which happens. I have heard from new junior scholars that they thought this piece was bad, then the editor took it on, and it became beautiful. It can take time, but that could happen.

I was in the job market, pretty recently (five or six years back) but I have I am in contact with people who are in the job market given where I am in my career. I just got tenure last year and while it's really important to build a CV, if you want an academic job, like the one that Karen was saying, but also, it's also the promise of your work is really important. I've seen people getting really great jobs with two things on their CV, because their work is cutting edge, and it has promise to publish more in the future. So I think you should not also put yourself out of competition and the market because you think you don't have enough. If your work is important, go for it. That's what I would say.

Howard Ramos

I mean, I would definitely echo what Pallavi has just said, which is as the saying goes from Wayne Gretzky (to make this very Canadian and use his famous saying) is you miss 100% of the shots you don't take. That's true from going to the top journals to applying to jobs. Let the editor or the hiring committee decide you're not qualified. Don't be the one who's who decides that before you do take that chance.

One of the other questions in the chat box that popped up that I think is an important one is around ArXiv and the repositories like ResearchGate, or academic.edu, or even the ones that exist in our universities now. If you are Tri-Council funded there's now an expectation that we deposit, at least open access green. If you're unfamiliar with what open access green is, it's a lower form of open access that doesn't cost you an arm and a leg and maybe some of your first offspring. What it does is allow you to publish in the journal, but you put into the archive the pre-published last version, and it meets the requirement from funders.

That's a whole other side, diatribe or rant that I can go on, which will give you a small bit of, which is we in academia we work in a very weird era. I was trying to explain this to my father was an immigrant from Ecuador, who's in his 80s. And he was saying "So how much did you get paid for that article?" Honestly, no, no, no, we didn't get paid. He said, "So why did you do it?" And I said, well, because it's valued in the University. He said, Oh, okay. And then I told him, that actually sometimes we have to pay for open access and stuff. He said, "What you pay for it? Well, who processes it?" My colleagues.

So, we're one of the weirdest professions where we pay to get our work put into a venue that we then adjudicate that we then pay to get back and open access is a way to try and bring some rationality back to this and have an open exchange of information. We're still in the early days of it, as Karen was mentioning, and we haven't progressed far on it. But the repositories are increasingly important. And it's just like with other things, it's important to think about what are the affordances and constraints and the practices of those repositories. So ArXiv is a probably a better repository in

my mind, compared to some of the other ones which are a little bit more murky. And I would say that, for me, I don't find that academic.edu is one that I like to deposit my stuff in because of their policies. And for that matter, ResearchGate too, I rather put it into the completely academic nonprofit spaces.

Let me ask Karen and Pallavi question, if I was going to ask you a question, which is, what is the best experience you've had publishing and what is the worst experience you've had publishing?

Karen Stanbridge

Best and Worst? Well, certainly one of my favorites is one of my favorite reviews. We talk about the notorious 'reviewer number two'. One of my favorite reviews was of our book, Howard, on political sociology. There was one anonymous reviewer who stated, "I would never use a book for political teaching political sociology. But if I did, it would be this one". That was one of my favorite quotes. One of my best experiences was with The Sociological Quarterly at a time when I was warned by everyone that publishing an article in a reasonable journal would take forever. And they were only more than helpful, fast, got it to print very quickly so that was probably the best. The worst would just be hung out on the line by McGill-Queens for about three years who then said no. Those are my experiences.

Pallavi Banerjee

My best experience, I would say, is the book that I am publishing, coming out in a few months. The reason is that this is the first book I've published. I have worked on edited volumes, but this is the first monograph, and I just found it less soul-killing than publishing an article. And the reason I say this is because the review process was long and book publishing is long because people have to read the whole book and all of that, but I found the reviews to be really generous, and detailed. And while they pointed out the gaps in the book, they were meant to make it better . It was less about rejection, and more about sort of making the book better, whereas oftentimes, when I get reviews back from articles, I find them oriented towards criticism. I mean, it's, it's less about weight, because there is, the better the journal is the, you know. One of the ways that journals have high impact factor is their rejection rates. So, I think that correlates with reviews often really well. And that's sometimes it's really soul-killing, particularly when you're starting out. So, I really found the review process on my book generative, particularly the second round of reviews more than the first. And that was, I really enjoyed it.

I have two worsts, I'll say. One is the ASR. This was a recent rejection that I got. And this was after two rounds of reviews. And in the second round, there was a reviewer, 'reviewer number two', whose reviews did not make sense. It had a bunch of things pointed out like we were misciting and things like that and the editors decided to go with that reviewer. But what had also happened is that there was a change of editors, and I think there was some probably some gap there. My point is, if you know when the editorial board will change, or the editors will change, try and get your work in

before that. That was something that I really wished I did. Send it in before the reviewers turned around, because I don't think they had the same notes. Because we had written to the previous reviewers about how we disagreed with some of the characterization of our work that was made by this reviewer, for example, misciting, and we told them why. It seemed like the editor kind of took that at face value.

Then the other one was at Gender and Society. This I've never understood, and this is the other black box of publishing that you get into. This was again after the second round that it was rejected. There was one reviewer with a problem with the paper but another reviewer literally said, "This is the best revision that we've seen in the last 30 years of my career." Another was saying "Publish it right now." But it was rejected for a special issue. The reason that was given was that it was a special issue editor's decision. But it is often really frustrating to not know why something was rejected when the reviews were good. That is the other frustrating parts of publishing that makes it discouraging and these were earlier on in my career.

Awish Aslam

Thank you. We've had another question pop up. The person is asking whether Canadian universities want to see publications in international journals when looking at applications for new faculty, or publishing exclusively in Canadian sociology journals is sufficient to have a reasonable chance of getting a tenure track position. How might this vary at universities in Canada that don't have graduate programs that are hiring faculty?

Howard Ramos

I sort of pointed to some of this before, which is look at what people have been doing and their profiles before applying. It gives you a good sense of where they are. I don't think there's an absolute answer to this. But what I would say in Canada there are 96 universities that are recognized by universities Canada. And amongst those universities, there's the U 15, which are considered to be the research-focused universities. Then within the U 15, there's the U three, which is McGill, UBC and University of Toronto. I think that within each of these, there are different kinds of practices and norms. And that kind of changes the dynamics. But there's always exceptions to the norm.

When I used to teach statistics, I used to say (and this is quite true) that there's no such thing as the average person. The average is just an ideal type that you compare against. And that's why when people are giving advice, I often say take it with a grain of salt. There's always a very creative or innovative piece that uses say, a technique that nobody's thought of now in our big data AI world. Maybe it's the first sociologist to have ever done this, and published in some computer science place, or about to publish it. The hiring committee gets excited by that. Or it's indepth ethnography with a group of folks that people don't do ethnographies with and people get excited. So, one is knowing the different institutions, two is knowing their hiring practices of the last few years. And then third, it's thinking about the kind of degree of what you're doing in terms of your work.

The other thing that is weird advice (and I've had a bit of arguments with folks on this) is sometimes you can be too good. And certainly outside of the U 15, as you get into the more teaching focused schools, you can sometimes intimidate the hiring committee. They may think that the person might land here, but we won't be able to retain them, that they don't really care about teaching.

Publishing isn't the only way to land your job and it's really thinking about the type of career you want to have as an academic, and also exploring the non-academic venues that we have. It's a really exciting time in in Canada where data scientists are looking for social science. Government and policymakers are looking for social science. Finally the world is waking up to recognizing that we actually have some pretty important things to offer.

Karen Stanbridge
I would like to say 'Absolutely!' to that. There are just as there are so many different places to publish now, that means that you can be a sociologist in so many different places. The traditional tenure track position of course, is great. And, but there are so many other ways to not only use but to communicate and make a living off of your ability to sort of mobilize sociology. I was recently talking to another podcaster, who is in New York, he's at CUNY in New York. And he actually developed, while he's had this podcast, Howard, I think that you were on his podcast, he's a former Canadian graduate.

Howard Ramos
Joe Cohen.

Karen Stanbridge.
Yes, we were chatting. He has turned his podcast into sort of this production house where he's training graduate students, and then they go out, and not necessarily do podcasts, but have this kind of added skill to be able to go about doing sociology in sort of a different way. He was very proud of one of his graduates who went on to work at Pixar, he made sure to tell me that. Whether or not she's doing sociology there, I don't know. But in many ways, I think that sociologists and other intellectuals can these days (as long as you don't want to be incredibly rich) can piece together a quite a creative and rewarding career in a lot of these different venues, and have a lot of different audiences. And, yes, the tenure track job is there and it's got all its benefits. But if sociology is your drive, and you want to keep doing it, it really is quite exciting that you can build it. You have to be creative but the tools are out there and you can create really cool things.

Pallavi Banerjee
To quickly add to that I concur completely. Also, just a quick example, that was both encouraging and interesting to me. I am organizing this session at the American Sociological Association conference coming up. I am organizing it with a grad student because I had this conversation with

her and she said that she's feeling this anxiety, particularly now with COVID. She's on the market next year. She is at Harvard and has that label but she's still feeling really anxious and she wanted these conferences to do something that's beyond just academia and focused on tenure track.

So, we decided to do this panel and invite sociologists who we call creative sociologists. Those who were outside of academia. When we started (this was an invited panel and we wanted to invite people) I could believe how many of how many sociologists with PhDs are in places like Facebook, Google, Morningstar, in the real corporate sector. Most of the people we looked at are in these places and we really did not want one of them because we were like, well, what can sociologists do outside of (this is not my term) 'selling their souls'. I don't really think that it is selling your soul - you can still do a lot of good if you are in, somewhere like Facebook. I had undergrads who wanted to become police officers and go into policing, I was like good if you're a sociologist go there and dismantle the racism. Sociologists can do a lot of good. One of the panelists was the campaign manager for Elizabeth Warren and that's what she does with a sociology degree. Another person does labor organizing, and that's what she does with her sociology degree. There are a wide range of jobs that require sociologists with our skills and our visions.

Awish Aslam
Thank you. We have about nine minutes left. I'm wondering, Karen, did you want to pose a question to the other panelists?

Karen Stanbridge
Well, do you want to come on the podcast? Actually, I'm starting a CRStal Radio VIP series for which the first episode is almost ready. That is going to feature a slightly bit longer interview with Carl E. James, who won the 2020 Outstanding Contribution award for the CSA last year. Wonderful man. Fantastic experience. So, that's my question. Are you willing to come on the show?

Pallavi Banerjee
But that would mean a longer process, right? You have to publish in Canadian sociological review and then...

Karen Stanbridge
Not necessarily. We're expanding. We're expanding opportunities, right?

Howard Ramos
I say yes, and this gives me a great opportunity, I'm going to take advantage of the side door, which is Committing Sociology. I've always thought that it is a space that hasn't been used creatively enough. And what I would love to do is maybe interview a few people in there, and have a kind of dialogue, and Carl, you know, I can't disagree with you. Or I should say, I can't agree with you enough on just what a wonderful person he is. And interviewing a few people, so I'm definitely in.

Karen Stanbridge
Well, I just, I should say that the original idea that we actually received funding for from SSHRC, was to have that kind of the on-video, live sort of interviews, debates, conversations with people, in particular, around the Committing Sociology section. That didn't happen. It's not as interesting looking at faces on a screen. We've sort of went the podcast route so that maybe it's in the future, I would love, love, love to do something like that. And to have a 'Between the Ferns' kind of thing for exceptional sociologists and for Canadian sociologists in particular.

Pallavi Banerjee
Sure, I'll say yes because that's a really great way of doing public sociology. We can talk more about it. But I also thought when you were talking about the person out of New York, who's creative, and I'm wondering if there would be in the future opportunities for grad students to learn something or be part of this training.

Karen Stanbridge
Well, certainly he gave me loads of ideas. He's been in operation now for I don't know how many five, seven years something like that. He's been around for I guess it is accessible, you know, through podcast, it's a more conversation sort of, kind of program that he has, usually has two three guests on at the same time. I would love to do something like that and especially if it was affiliated with the association and with the journal, to build that kind of program. And that kind of training program would be excellent. So, thinking about it.

Howard Ramos
And then for those of you who are looking for that podcast from New York, it's called The Annex. You can get it on iTunes etc, you name it. It's a great resource and really good interviews. He's a great interviewer. It would be very exciting to see a collaboration between podcasts, etc.

Pallavi Banerjee
I just saw two questions that popped up. And I know we have very little time, but I want to try and take the first one, because I promised I would, which is "Would you give us a few points to convert thesis into a book from a public sociology lens?" The quick answer is, before you do that, read books that speak to you from a public sociology lens. Read books that you find accessible, that speak to you, that you think are important. Use those as a role model for your books. So, that's the start.

Point number two is, once you've written your dissertation, take a step back, take some distance, take a vacation from your dissertation. Do other things and then revisit, because then you'll be able to see things that are more obscure or obfuscated. One of the key points in public sociology is you do not want to confuse people. You do not want to use jargons that makes your project not accessible. You want to make it accessible, while retaining, and I hate the word rigor, I wish we can change that word to labor, but the labor of research, right, the labor that you've put into your

research, and not obscuring that, but also making that prominent. But I think that vacation from your dissertation or your major project is important. Take a step back.

Have people peer view parts of your book. You can call on your friends, you can call on your community to have them read and see what makes sense and which parts of this book really speaks to the public and how it speaks to the public. Is it speaking to the political moment? Is it speaking to something that has been festering for a long time and has not been taken up? Or is it something that is that would make it big in a few years, it may not be relevant now, right. These are things that people who have more experience in writing and in projecting will have than we do. And it's true for us to like, you know, I'm not talking to you as a to as junior scholars, just talking to us as academic community. I think I'll leave it at that the three points because there's another question and Howard or Karen can take it.

Howard Ramos

Well quickly with another question that just popped up. This reminds me of most meetings I chair where you always, at the last minute, have more people with more questions, which is good.

The question was about how do you strike a relationship with a faculty member in publishing. I would just recommend being honest and upfront about it. Where possible do it through email or have an author's agreement where everybody is very clear about what the role and expectations are. And don't be afraid to bring that up. It's pretty common. I think it helps everybody in the long run because in a two-year process of getting something out, people can misremember or things can change. Keep it as an ongoing conversation. Don't just consider it a document and be done. Have the document revisited if it takes time. And that helps avoid conflicts going forward. And if the professor says no, well, that's already a good sign that maybe that's not the right person to be working with.

SLIDE 11

Awish Aslam

Great, thank you so much! That's going to have to be our last question for today. Thank you to all of our panelists for such a great discussion and thank you to everyone for attending. We're going to be sending out a survey just to get your feedback. We would appreciate if you could fill that out. And yeah the webinar will also be posted on the CSA website.