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Pulling the Curtain Back on Manuscript Publication in Social Science: A Survey of Anthropology, Sociology, and Criminal Justice/Criminology Journal Editors

Elizabeth Ehrhardt Mustaine
Department of Sociology
University of Central Florida

&

Richard Tewksbury
Justice Administration
University of Louisville

Abstract: This study examines the tasks and experiences of a sample of sociology/criminal justice/criminology, and anthropology journal editors. These editors filled out an online survey which asked them to estimate or describe their editorial tasks, behaviors, and views. Findings highlight the ways that journal editors approach their work, process manuscripts, and the ways different manuscript components weigh on publication decisions. Findings specifically show that there are noteworthy similarities and differences between the experiences of anthropology journal editors and those of sociology and criminal justice/criminology journal editors. For example, when making publication decisions, both groups of editors felt that how well the manuscript fit with the journal was tremendously important, the sociology/criminal justice/criminology journal editors felt that the quality of methods was also vitally important, while anthropology journal editors were more likely to think about the clarity of findings when considering whether or not to publish a manuscript. Implications are discussed.

INTRODUCTION

Interest in understanding the ways that academic disciplines, especially social sciences, go about creating, verifying, and disseminating new knowledge has grown in recent years. Today it is important to understand not only what disciplines can tell us about the social world but also how internal processes influence the discovery and dissemination of new knowledge. In recent years, an empirical approach to explaining the dynamics involved in conducting and publishing social science research has proliferated (Buckler, 2008; Carlan, Thompson and Cheeseman, 2013; Cohn and Farrington, 2011; Copes, Khey and Tewksbury, 2012; Lounds, Oakar, Knecht Moran, Gibney and Pressley, 2002; Mustaine and Tewksbury, 2013, 2008; Tewksbury, Connor and Worley, 2013; Tewksbury and Mustaine, 2012; Weir and Orrick, 2013; Worley, 2011). However, understanding the publication process from the perspectives of key players in the publication process remains elusive.

At the core of the academic process, and yet often one of the least understood processes of the profession, is the publishing of scholarly journal articles. Required of nearly all academic social scientists, and an emphasis of contemporary doctoral education, publishing works once a manuscript is written and submitted to an outlet has been the topic of rumor, innuendo, mystique and criticism for many years. Authors sometimes find the process frustrating, intimidating and most often approach such as a team process (Tewksbury and Mustaine, 2011; Worley, 2011). Reviewers find reviewing and commenting on manuscript submissions to be time consuming and less than fully rewarding (Mustaine and Tewksbury, 2008). And, to round out the groups involved, journal editors report finding their roles in the process challenging, sometimes

frustrating, and at least in some cases “a necessary evil” of the main academic pursuit (Schreck, 2006; Lounds, et al., 2002; Mustaine and Tewksbury, 2013). The current study seeks to provide social science – especially anthropology, sociology, and criminal justice/criminology, -- scholars with enhanced understandings of the process of publishing and the experiences and views of journal editors (as gatekeepers) within the social sciences.

Knowledge about the Publication Process in Social Science

It is safe to say that in the social sciences, one of the most powerful statuses that a scholar can hold is that of journal editor. Such a position carries with it the authority and power to decide what manuscripts are published, what revisions, inclusions or exclusions manuscript authors will be required to perform in order to have their work published, and in the end, which scholars are deemed “successful” and granted publication (and hence, more likely to achieve tenure, promotion and job security). Traditionally the role of journal editor has been thought of as a late-career achievement, one that presumes superior writing, editing and critical thinking skills, and as a position to be respected, trusted and revered. However, this may not be the reality of those who serve in these important roles or how they experience their roles. Until only the last decade, “few studies of editors’ behaviors have been made and little is known [about them] beyond what they reveal themselves.” (Newton, 2010, 134). When they have spoken about their roles and the challenges it presents, editors not infrequently claim to be misunderstood (Buckler, 2008) or to experience myriad unanticipated problems, including lack of respect and acceptance for their decisions (Mustaine and Tewksbury, 2013).

Providing some insights to the inner workings of journals and journal editors, a handful of scholars who have served as journal editors have written about their experiences and the operations of their journals. For instance, Bakanic, McPhail and Simon (1987) discuss the manner of manuscript processing for the *American Sociological Review* during the period of 1977-1982. Similarly, Miller and Perrucci (2001) wrote about the operations at *Social Problems* for the years 1993-1996 and most recently Tewksbury and Mustaine (2012) reported on how manuscripts were reviewed and processed at *Justice Quarterly* during 2007 - 2010. In psychology, Floyd, Cooley, Arnett, Fagan, Mercer and Hingle (2011) report results from a survey of 61 journal editors and highlight issues regarding their receipt and processing of submitted manuscripts, length of review periods, decision making and manuscript characteristics seen as desirable or likely leading to a decision to reject a manuscript. Similarly, Mustaine and Tewksbury (2013) report that sociology and criminal justice/criminology journal editors do not necessarily see the various components of manuscripts as having the same level of importance as do authors and that editors strongly believe that their publication decisions are based on “the quality of the research, the degree to which a manuscript fits with a journal’s mission and focus, and the degree of contribution a manuscript makes to accumulating knowledge” (Mustaine and Tewksbury 2013, p. 14). Specific components of manuscripts may be weighed differently in decisions by editors, and knowing what is more or less critical may be of value, especially to fledgling and neophyte authors.

Beyond examinations of journal operations and the work of editors, only one social science study has examined the experiences and perspectives of manuscript

reviewers. Mustaine and Tewksbury (2008) report on a survey of manuscript reviewers and find that the task of reviewing manuscripts for a journal is near-universally seen as a professional responsibility and that the process is fair, apolitical and truly dependent on the words and perceptions of reviewers reported in reviews. Here again, differences can be seen in what reviewers are looking for in manuscripts, and what authors believe are most important. Any such differences in interpretations are consequently left to be decided by editors.

So, while the evidence available to date suggests that most social science academics who participate in the scholarly publishing process believe the process to be generally fair and “the best process available”, the literature is sparse, and typically focused on either the activities of one publication or the experiences of scholars in one discipline. In order to continue to broaden understandings of the how, why, when, and by whom of scholarly social science publishing, it is important to explore the experiences of a wider range of key individuals in the publication process, and those in a wider range of disciplines. To date, the primary data and discussions about the publication process have come from the fields of sociology and criminology/criminal justice. In this study we address both of these needs, reiterating previous findings discussing the experiences of the scholarly journal editors in sociology and criminal justice/criminology and expanding the data to encompass the experiences of editors of anthropology journals.

THE PRESENT STUDY

The present study is focused on identifying the processes and resources drawn upon by anthropology journal editors in fulfilling their roles, as well as how they experience being editors. This information should be helpful to many researchers, but

especially to those less experienced as social science research authors. And, coupled with the responses of other social science editors, namely sociology and criminal justice (see Mustaine and Tewksbury, 2013), we add to the current literature discussing the social science publication process. Undoubtedly, younger and more inexperienced researchers can utilize this information to better understand and more productively approach the practice of publication. Also, emerging scholars may be better prepared to traverse the job market and manage their work load in ways that enable success.

We pursue this goal by examining the experiences and perspectives of a sample of journal editors from anthropology and comparing their responses to those of sociology and criminal justice/criminology journal editors.

METHODS

Data for the present study come from an anonymous survey completed by editors of anthropology, sociology and criminal justice/criminology journals listed and having impact factor scores in Thompson Reuters' *Journal Citation Reports*. In springs of 2012 and 2013 email invitations were sent to editors from these lists. Sociology and criminal justice editors were surveyed in the spring of 2012 and anthropology editors in the spring of 2013. The invitation explained the purpose of the study and provided a link to the online survey. Two weeks later, we emailed a follow up invitation to all editors reminding them to take the survey (or thanking them for taking it already). Because of a low response rate from the anthropology editors, we sent another reminder/thank you email to all of these editors two weeks after that.¹

Sample

The sample is drawn from all editors listed on the anthropology, sociology, and

criminal justice/criminology lists of ranked journals in *Journal Citation Reports*. Only editors based in the United States are included; this produced a list of 142 total journals (anthropology = 67; criminal justice/criminology = 21; sociology = 54).² However, two editors oversaw two journals each, three editors' listed email addresses never received our invitation, and five editors responded that their journal did not do peer review and therefore the survey questions were not applicable to them, thereby rendering a final sample of 132 journals/editors. A total of 83 responses were received, representing a response rate of 62.8%³.

Instrument

The survey instrument contains 51 items, presented in five sections: manuscript submission, finding reviewers, review content, manuscript publication decisions and issues, and editor experiences. Questions about manuscript submissions asked editors to report the total number of new submissions received in the past year, the total number of submissions that were rejected without external review, the typical number of reviewers editors use, the proportions of reviews completed by Editorial Board members, and the proportion of manuscripts submitted for which at least one review request was declined. In the section on finding reviewers editors reported about types of individuals used as reviewers and the ways editors identified reviewers. The questions on review content requested information on the proportion of manuscript reviews including confidential comments to the editor, experiences in the past year with receiving reviews they did not pass on to authors, editing of reviewers' reviews, and allegations of plagiarism. The questions on manuscript publication decisions and issues asked sociology and criminal justice/criminology editors to report their

acceptance rate for 2011, while anthropology editors were asked about 2012 (because they were surveyed one year later than the sociology/criminal justice/criminology editors), proportions of manuscripts where a Deputy Editor (or equivalent) was consulted on a decision, frequency of authors arguing/contesting a decision, and how often reasons for rejecting a manuscript focused on any of 10 reasons related to manuscript content. Finally, questions about editor experiences inquired how often the editor completed reviews for her/his own journal, for other journals, experiences with challenges to efficient journal operations, reasons for being editor, and scaled responses regarding their enjoyment of the experience, and stress related to the role. Note that in the interests of preserving anonymity among a small population, we only ask one demographic question: number of years serving as editor of their current journals.⁴

Analysis

Because the present study seeks to provide a description of journal editors' perspectives and experiences, descriptive statistics – frequencies, means, medians and modes -- are the primary data analysis tool.⁵ We also test for significant differences between the anthropology journal editors and the sociology and criminal

justice/criminology editors⁶. In this way we can note areas where these two groups of editors are meaningfully different and where they are significantly similar.

FINDINGS

For these results, we use measures of central tendency to describe the typical situations, circumstances, and issues faced by journal editors. Table One supplies information about manuscript submissions; Table Two highlights how editors find reviewers; Table Three provides information about the content of reviews that editors receive; Table Four reviews the publication decisions of editors and some of the issues that arise when making these decisions; Table Five lists the varying levels of importance journal editors place on manuscript components when making publication decisions; Table Six highlights some challenges that editors may face as part of their positions; and finally, Table Seven provides information about the quality of the editorial experience. Because the sociology and criminal justice/criminology editors were surveyed one year earlier than the anthropology editors we provide their responses as comparisons for the current findings regarding anthropology editors (see endnote 5).

Table 1. Manuscript Submission

Description of Manuscript Submission*	Anthro	Soc & CJ
Average number of manuscripts received	105	147.5 per year
Proportion of first time submissions that are editorial rejections	10	24%
Average number of reviewers per manuscript	2.6	3
Proportion of review requests that are turned down	39%	41%
Proportion of manuscript submissions that had at least 1 review request turned down	66	61%

*Bolded variables are those with significant differences in means across journal editor groups.

Table One provides information about the manuscript submission process. On average, anthropology editors receive approximately 105 submissions per year. This is significantly fewer than the sociology and criminal justice/criminology editors who are averaging about 148 submissions per year. We also find that anthropology editors rejected a smaller proportion of first time submissions outright (or via editorial rejection) than sociology and criminal justice/criminology editors (10% as compared to 24%, respectively). Both types of editors basically utilize the same number of reviewers, with anthropology editors using 2.6 reviewers and sociology and criminal justice/criminology editors using 3 reviewers per manuscript on average. Continuing, it appears that anthropology editors experience a similar amount of review requests being turned down as sociology and criminal justice/criminology editors (39% compared to 41%, respectively). Relatedly, anthropology editors have a higher proportion of manuscript submissions that had a least 1 review request turned down (66% vs 61%). This difference is not statistically significant, however. So, who do journal editors use as reviewers and where do they find them?

Turning to Table Two, aside from using traditional tenured and tenure-track faculty, many journal editors were willing to use other sorts of academics and experts to conduct reviews for their journals. Regarding the use of students, anthropology journal editors were less willing to use them than sociology and criminal justice/criminology editors. Specifically, no anthropology journal editors were willing to use MA students (while 3% of sociology and criminal justice/criminology editors were), but half of them were willing to use PhD students (50% compared to 76% of

sociology and criminal justice/criminology editors). Anthropology editors were also less willing to use practitioners (only 43% would use these types of experts) and proprietary school faculty (only 7% would use these scholars) than sociology and criminal justice/criminology editors (59% and 12%, respectively). Here, it may be that editors of criminal justice journals are more willing to use practitioners as reviewers since their field tends to be more policy and pragmatically oriented. Finally, anthropology editors and sociology and criminal justice/criminology editors are relatively equally likely to use non-tenure track and community college faculty (67% vs. 68% and 24% vs 23%, respectively).

The ways that editors identify potential reviewers is somewhat different for anthropology editors than sociology and criminal justice/criminology editors. To elaborate, the highest proportions of anthropology journal editors use the reference list of a submitted manuscript (87%) as well as conducting online searches for scholars in the topical areas of the manuscript (77%). This is closely followed by asking the editorial board members for recommendations (70%) and using authors of recently submitted manuscripts (63%). As noted, this is somewhat different than sociology and criminal justice/criminology editors who are most likely to maintain a journal database (92%), use the reference list of a submitted manuscript (86%), and to ask authors of recently submitted manuscript (81%). These methods are closely followed by conducting online searches for scholars in the manuscripts topical areas (75%) and asking editorial board members for recommendations (67%). So, while both types of editors are likely to utilize these top 5 methods, the order of most likely use is divergent between them. Moving on, both groups of journal editors are less likely to use the remaining 4 possible strategies for

identifying reviewers. For both groups, slightly less than half will ask others for recommendations (47% for anthropology

and 44% for sociology and criminal justice/criminology editors).

Table 2. Finding Reviewers

The Reviewing Process*	Anthro	Soc & CJ
Whom will editors use as reviewers?		
Non-tenure track faculty	67	68
PhD students	50	76
Practitioners	43	59
Community college faculty	23	24
Proprietary school faculty	7	12
MA students	0	3%
Ways editors use to identify potential reviewers		
Reference list of submitted manuscript	87	86
Conduct online searches for scholars in the topical areas	77	75
Ask editorial board members for recommendations	70	67
Maintain a journal database	63	92%
Authors of recently submitted manuscripts	63	81
Ask others for recommendations	47	44
Conference programs	23	39
Consult organizations lists of members' expertise	20	11
Personal knowledge of field/others	20	n/a
Average proportion of all reviews done by editorial board members	17	28%
Average proportion of all reviews done by editor	6	7%

*Bolded variables are those with significant differences in means across journal editor groups.

Slightly more than one-third (39%) of the sociology and criminal justice/criminology editors will use conference programs, while only 23% of anthropology editors will use that method to identify possible reviewers. Additionally, slightly less than one-fourth of the anthropology journal editors will consult the membership/member expertise lists of related professional organizations while only 11% of sociology and criminal

justice/criminology editors will use that method.

It appears that sociology and criminal justice/criminology editors are more likely to use their editorial boards to conduct reviews, as 28% of sociology and criminal justice/criminology journal reviews but only 17% of anthropology reviews were done by editorial board members. Finally, both groups of editors did approximately the

same number of reviews themselves (6% anthropology editors as compared to 7% sociology and criminal justice/criminology editors).

Next, we consider several aspects regarding the appropriateness of the content of the reviews journal editors indicated they received. Table Three highlights these aspects. Here we find that anthropology reviewers are less likely to include comments that are meant only for the journal editor (45% vs 55% of sociology and criminal justice/criminology reviewers).

However, anthropology journal editors are significantly more likely to edit a reviewer’s review before sending it out to the author (70% compared to only 40% of sociology and criminal justice/criminology reviews are edited by the journal editor). Finally, both anthropology and sociology and criminal justice/criminology journal editors received reviews that they were unwilling to send to authors, but it was a rare event (2% of anthropology reviews vs. 3% of sociology and criminal justice/criminology reviews).

Table 3. Review Content

Appropriateness of Review Content*	Anthro	Soc & CJ
Proportion of reviews with confidential comments to the editor	45	55%
Proportion of the time editor received reviews s/he was unwilling to send to authors	2	3
Proportion editors who edited a reviewer’s review before sending to author	70	40

*Bolded variables are those with significant differences in means across journal editor groups.

Moving on, we turn to aspects of publication decisions of journal editors, which are highlighted in Table Four. Initially, we see that anthropology journals have much higher acceptance rates, on average. Specifically editors reported that their acceptance rates were 41% for anthropology journals and 22% for sociology and criminal justice/criminology journals. Anthropology journal editors were also much more likely to consult with at least one deputy editor about their publication decisions than sociology and criminal justice/criminology editors. Here, approximately 47% of anthropology editor decisions involved a discussion with a

deputy editor, but only 10% of sociology and criminal justice/criminology publications decisions involved a similar consultation. Both groups of editors had authors argue with their editorial decisions, but these were infrequent (both types of editors estimated that authors argued with their decisions 5% of the time). Finally, allegations of plagiarism were very rare. Anthropology editors estimated that less than 1 manuscript per year was potentially plagiarized, and sociology and criminal justice/criminology editors estimated that about 1 manuscript per year had similar issues present.

Table 4. Manuscripts Publication Decisions and Issues

Issues arising during manuscript publication decisions*	Anthro	Soc & CJ
Average journal acceptance rate	41	22%
Proportion of decisions consulted with at least one deputy editor	47	10
Proportion of time authors argue editor decisions	5	5

Average number of manuscripts during previous year with plagiarism allegations	0.4	1
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*Bolded variables are those with significant differences in means across journal editor groups.

Continuing, we turn to the level of importance that journal editors placed on the reviewers' evaluations of various manuscript components. Recall, the survey asked editors to indicate how important (on a scale of 1—not important, to 10—extremely important) each manuscript component was in their final editorial decisions. Table Five, indicates the average importance score for each component for both groups of journal editors. It is interesting to note that while the individual importance scores are not terribly different between anthropology and sociology and criminal justice/criminology editors, the order of importance of each section does differ. Here, we find that anthropology editors value the manuscript's fit with the journal as the most important element in their publication decision (9.21 average importance score). This is followed by the clarity of findings (9.00), conclusion/discussion/implications (8.96), strength of findings (8.59), quality of methods (7.93), quality of writing (7.71), and timeliness and comprehensiveness of references (7.18). Bringing up the rear in terms of importance is the description of the methods (6.68), the literature review (6.68), and the size of potential readership (5.86).

Turning to the sociology and criminal justice/criminology editors' views, the most important element of the manuscript for their publication decision was the quality of the methods (9.22 average importance score). This was followed by the manuscript's fit with the journal (9.11), clarity of findings (8.94), description of methods (8.44), conclusion/discussion/implications (8.20), strength of findings (8.14), and quality of writing (8.03). Among those elements that

had the least importance in the sociology and criminal justice/criminology editors' publication decisions were the literature review (7.36), the timeliness and comprehensiveness of the references (7.29), and finally the size of the potential readership (6.75). Here, we find that on average sociology and criminal justice/criminology editors are more likely to view all manuscript elements as having more importance in their publication decisions than anthropology journal editors (average importance scores are higher, on average, for sociology and criminal justice/criminology than anthropology journal editors) Also, it is worth noting that both groups of editors most highly value the manuscript's fit with the journal and the clarity and strength of findings.

(Continued on next page)

Table 5. Importance of Manuscript Components in Publications Decisions

How important is each section of the manuscript in editorial decision to reject? Average importance score (1 = not important at all in rejection decision; 10=extremely important)*	Anthro	Soc & CJ
Does it fit the journal?	9.21	9.11
Clarity of findings	9	8.94
Conclusion/Discussion/Implications	8.96	8.2
Strength of findings	8.59	8.14
Quality of methods	7.93	9.22
Quality of Writing	7.71	8.03
Timeliness and comprehensiveness of references	7.18	7.29
Description of methods	6.68	8.44
Literature review	6.68	7.36
Size of potential readership	5.86	6.75

*Bolded variables are those with significant differences in means across journal editor groups.

Table Six identifies how often these journal editors may (or may not) have faced particular challenges during their tenure as editor. Here, editors used a scale of 1 (never) to 10 (all of the time) to indicate how often they experienced various challenges related to their service as journal editor. Using the mean level of frequency editors indicated they faced each listed challenge, we can see that the relative frequency (or infrequency) with which each issue came up for the editors was nearly identical. The only exception to this was having too few manuscripts submitted. This was the least frequent challenge the sociology and criminal justice/criminology editors had to face (2.89 out of 10, on average), but was the 4th most frequent challenge with which the anthropology editors had to deal (4.22 out of 10, on average). The challenge that both groups of editors had to face the most often was

having slow reviewers (7.89 out of 10, on average for anthropology and 7.75 out of 10, on average for sociology and criminal justice/criminology editors). This was followed by both anthropology and sociology and criminal justice/criminology editors saying the next most frequent problem was having too many manuscripts submitted to the journal (4.37 for anthropology and 5.56 for sociology and criminal justice/criminology journal editors), and receiving poor quality reviews (4.00 and 5.11, respectively). The problems that the anthropology and sociology and criminal justice/criminology editors experienced the least frequently were getting too many positive reviews (3.85 and 4.06, respectively), getting too few positive reviews (3.04 and 3.41, respectively), and having friends/colleagues expecting preferential treatment (2.07 and 3.25, respectively).

Table 6. Editorial Challenges

Which Challenges Has Editor Experienced (1=never; 10=all of the time)*	Average Score Anthro	Average score Soc & CJ
Slow Reviewers	7.89	7.75
Too many manuscripts submitted	4.37	5.56
Too few manuscripts submitted	4.22	2.89
Poor quality reviews	4	5.11
Too many positive reviews	3.85	4.06
Too few positive reviews	3.04	3.41
Friends/colleagues expecting preferential treatment	2.07	3.25

*Bolted variables are those with significant differences in means across journal editor groups.

Finally, Table Seven highlights some aspects of the editors' lifestyles. Here we see that both anthropology and sociology and criminal justice/criminology editors still do reviews for journals other than their own, with anthropology editors doing an average of 8.6 reviews per year and sociology and criminal justice/criminology editors doing an average of 10 per year. Regarding the primary reason the editors agreed to serve as the editor for their respective journals, both anthropology and sociology and criminal justice/criminology editors were most likely to indicate that they felt a sense of duty to the discipline/profession (50% and 34%, respectively). Anthropology editors were also likely, although much less so, to indicate that they became editors because they thought they would enjoy the work (only 9% of sociology and criminal justice/criminology editors felt similarly), and to influence the content of the journal

(17% as compared to 15% of sociology and criminal justice/criminology editors). Interestingly, none of the anthropology editors became editors to advance their careers or to receive the stipend (this compares to 6% and 2% of sociology and criminal justice/criminology editors with these reasons). And neither group of editors report becoming editors for the prestige (only 3% anthropology and 2% sociology and criminal justice/criminology editors had this reason).

Continuing, we find that both groups of editors enjoy their experiences as editors (8.11 and 8.55 out of 10 for anthropology and sociology and criminal justice/criminology editors), but also experience a moderate amount of stress (6.48 and 6.11 out of 10 for anthropology and sociology and criminal justice/criminology editors).

Table 7. Editor Experiences

Aspects of being the journal's editor*	Anthro	Soc & CJ
Number of reviews done for other journals per year	8.6	10
Primary Reason for being editor		
Sense of duty to the discipline/profession	50%	34.00%
Thought I would enjoy the work	20%	9%
To influence the content of the journal	17%	15%

For the prestige	3%	2%
To advance my career	0%	6%
To receive a stipend	0%	2%
Average enjoyment score (1=no enjoyment; 10=high enjoyment)	8.11	8.55
Average stress score (1=no stress; 10=high stress)	6.48	6.11

*Bolded variables are those with significant differences in means across journal editor groups.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Knowing how journal editors make decisions is important for scholars seeking to have their written work published. Here we see a number of similar experiences across editors in three disciplines, and some important differences. The primary differences between anthropology and sociology and criminal justice/criminology journal editors are why they became editors, the fact that anthropology editors are less likely to use a wide array of types of reviewers than sociology and criminal justice/criminology editors. Anthropology editors are also more likely to edit a reviewer’s review, and to heavily rely on their deputy editors (but not editorial board members) for publication decisions.

This information is important, particularly for less experienced scholars, because it can be used to increase one’s success as a researcher. Given the increasing research expectations placed on younger and/or new academics, these academics must ensure they work with greater efficiency.

To elaborate, in five of the areas examined anthropology journal editors report significantly different experiences than those of sociology and criminal justice/criminology editors.⁷ First, we see that anthropology journals received statistically significantly fewer manuscripts during an average year than sociology and criminal justice/criminology journals. Going along with this we also see that anthropology journals report manuscript

acceptance rates nearly double the reported acceptance rates of sociology and criminal justice/criminology journals. When examining whom editors report using as reviewers and how they locate these individuals, on nearly all issues there are statistically significant differences. Anthropology journal editors tend to be less likely to utilize a wide range of types of scholars as reviewers. Specifically, anthropology journal editors are less likely to call upon PhD students, practitioners, nontenure track faculty and community college faculty than sociology and criminal justice/criminology editors. Regarding how reviewers are identified anthropology journal editors are less likely to call upon authors of recently submitted manuscripts or to consult conference programs. However, it is notable that statistically significantly fewer manuscript reviews are done by anthropology editorial board members than at sociology and criminal justice/criminology journals. Where anthropology journal editors do heavily rely upon others is seen in the finding that nearly one-half of all publication decisions in anthropology journals include consultation with the deputy editor of the journal. As was shown in Table 5, there are only three components of a manuscript that are viewed with significantly different importance across anthropology and sociology and criminal justice/criminology journal editors regarding their influence over the publication decision. Specifically, anthropology journal editors report that both

the quality and the description of a study's methods are less influential on their publication decisions than is the case with sociology and criminal justice/criminology journal editors. However, the quality of a manuscript's conclusion/discussion/implications is significantly more important in the publication decision making process for anthropology editors than sociology and criminal justice/criminology editors. Finally, when looking at the experience of journal editors anthropology editors report three important challenges are less frequently the case than with sociology and criminal justice/criminology journal editors. Issues of poor quality reviews, too few positive reviews, and an expectation of preferential treatment from an editor's friends/colleagues are all reported significantly fewer times for the anthropology editors than the sociology and criminal justice/criminology editors.

It is also interesting to note areas of similarity (that is, variables whose means were not significantly different across the sociology and criminal justice/criminology and anthropology journal editors). One such area is the importance of various components of the manuscript in the editors' publication decisions. Here, both anthropology and sociology and criminal justice/criminology journal editors felt that a manuscript's fit with the journal, clarity of findings, and conclusion/discussion/implications were all very important, while the size of the potential readership, timeliness and comprehensiveness of references, and literature review were of least importance in the publishing decisions of these journal editors. Another area of similarity between editors groups was finding willing reviewers. Here, both groups reported experiencing frequently inviting reviewers who declined to review a manuscript.

Understanding the important similarities and differences in views and experiences among these journal editors may be crucial for success in an academic position. For example, knowing that most social science editors place the highest level of importance on the fit of the manuscript to the journal, authors would be well advised to carefully consider the outlet for their work. Here is one instance where the investment of a small amount of time upfront can save authors significant time and frustration later.

Of course, no research is perfect. While our survey was detailed, it is likely that we did not ask all relevant and interesting questions. We also did not conduct any explanatory data analyses, only descriptive. Therefore we cannot say why these differences and similarities between anthropology and sociology and criminal justice/criminology journal editors exist. Nor can we explore whether views or experiences in one area of the publication process influences views or experiences in other areas. Future research should consider these issues and more, with an emphasis on expanding the disciplines studied and the groups (e.g., reviewers, authors, co-authors) involved in the social science publication process.

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Endnotes

¹ Initially, we were somewhat confounded by the low response rate from anthropology journal editors as compared to sociology and criminal justice/criminology editors. We received several angry emails from anthropology journal editors telling us that this information was confidential (even though there was a promise of confidentiality in the consent section of the survey). We also received angry emails from some editors telling us that they were out of the office and in the field and could not possibly take the time to answer the survey. It occurred to us that the differences in the typical methods used to conduct research between anthropology and sociology/criminal justice/criminology scholars might be the reason for the confusion/anger. While sociology/criminal justice/criminology researchers often use surveys to gather data, anthropologists rarely do. This lack of familiarity with the process of surveys and the ease of maintaining confidentiality may be the cause of the lower response rate for these editors.

² We used only individuals editing journals based in the United States, because we did not want to confound our results given the different publication process associated with internationally based journals.

³ In the end, we got a 45% response rate for anthropology editors and a 75.7% response rate from sociology and criminal justice/criminology journal editors.

⁴ Readers are cautioned that we are not capable of doing any data analysis based on demographic differences across journal editors because we were not allowed to ask any demographic questions beyond years of experience as a journal editor. With an initial sampling frame of only 75 individuals, and assumptions that most journal editors are Caucasian males, it was presumed by the reviewing Institutional Review Board that any responses from non-male and non-Caucasian editors would be very easily identified. Therefore, we were not permitted to include questions about editor demographics in our instrument.

⁵ For a full accounting of the sociology and criminal justice/criminology editor responses, please see Mustaine and Tewksbury, 2013.

⁶ Because of coding problems that occurred with the sociology and criminal justice/criminology journal editors answering which type of challenges they experienced as part of their duties as journal editor, we had to ask the question differently with the anthropology journal editors. As such, we could not assess any meaningful differences between the two groups regarding their views of these challenges.

⁷ We conducted independent sample differences of means tests to see where the differences and similarities were statistically supported. All variables with significantly different means between anthropology and sociology and criminal justice/criminology editors are bolded in the tables.