



## Thoughts from the Head

By *Francesco Duina*

Welcome to the Spring 2015 issue of our newsletter! In an effort to be environmentally sound and to lower our production and distribution costs (we reach over 3,000 readers), our newsletter will now be distributed only in electronic format. *[A few hard-copy editions - like this one you have in your hand - will be available in the Department.]* As a reminder, our department's website ([soci.ubc.ca](http://soci.ubc.ca)) is constantly updated with news. And, we are now on Twitter.

In the Fall 2014 Newsletter, I mentioned several international initiatives we have been pursuing. Our dual-degree program with Sciences Po (l'Institut d'études politiques de Paris) in France is now in full motion. Five of our faculty members held a full day workshop in Paris in November 2014 to exchange research and collaboration ideas with our Sciences Po colleagues. Professor David Tindall will be heading to France this summer to teach a core course in the program. In parallel, in January 2015 we signed a 3 year cooperation agreement with the East China University of Science and Technology (ECUST) Sociology Department to promote faculty and graduate student exchanges, as well as joint research efforts. Located in Shanghai, ECUST is a preeminent university in China, with a dynamic and growing Sociology faculty and graduate student body. We have also begun exploring collaboration possibilities with Wuhan University in China and with the University of Washington in Seattle. All these initiatives highlights UBC Sociology's increased international visibility and interests. We have global aspirations!

With that in mind, I am very pleased to announce that we have successfully recruited one of the brightest and most accomplished young scholars on the job market this year: Qiang Fu. Qiang is currently finishing his dissertation at Duke University. He is a specialist on urban life, health (especially among children), and politics in China. He will join us in July and will bring to the Department deep knowledge of China.

Let me now turn to this newsletter's contributions. While certainly looking beyond Canada, UBC Sociology is also committed to Canada, British Columbia, and the local community right here in Vancouver. A number of our faculty members have and cultivate deep connections to the downtown area, UBC itself, and our students. Other faculty members focus their very research on community participation. Indeed, the four new faculty members who joined our department in 2014-2015 (Silvia Bartolic and Kerry Greer – our two tenure-track Instructors; and Assistant Professors Catherine Corrigan-Brown and Lindsey Richardson) exemplify this. This newsletter is accordingly focused on our *community* ties. Here is what you will find:

1. Lindsey Richardson describes her research in the Vancouver area (partly in her position at the B.C. Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS) on socio-economic disadvantage and health among drug users
2. Kerry Greer writes about her deep interests in student learning, pedagogy, and teaching excellence

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## “How’d you get into that?” The Winding Road to Research on Work, Socio-economic Disadvantage and Health Among People Who Use Drugs

By *Lindsey Richardson*

One of the most common questions I get asked by people when they find out about my research is “how did you get into that?” Every scholar has a different answer to this question – be it a compelling and unmet challenge, a personal experience, a desire to pursue social justice or even a longstanding passion that can be nurtured through academia. Usually it is a combination of many of these things.

The seeds of my research – which broadly focuses on socio-economic disadvantage and health among people who use drugs – were planted long ago. As a public servant working in social policy and social development first with the federal government and then the municipal government in Vancouver (2001-2006), I was



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## The Changing Nature of Community Engagement



By Catherine Corrigan-Brown

A vibrant civil society, including citizens actively engaging in social movements, is vital to the healthy functioning of democracy. It also provides the foundation for a variety of social goods that make for a better society such as increased trust, lower crime rates, and greater citizen satisfaction with the political process. Some types of civic participation, particularly attendance at protest events, are on the rise. However, my research shows that the nature of engagement has fundamentally changed in recent decades. While more people are attending protest events, fewer are participating in the social movement organizations and community groups that have long served as the bedrock for social and political change. In effect, the community foundation of engagement, which is often fostered through individual participation in groups, is being supplanted by episodic attendance at large events. This increasing individualization of social engagement has important implications for both the continuity of participation and the potential success of campaigns for social change.

In *Patterns of Protest*, I examine the individuals who participate in social movements and assesses why and how they come to engage in these groups and causes over the course of their lives (2012). Contrary to the concerns raised by Putnam and others who lament the decline of civil society and community engagement (2000), I find that activism is on the rise. Indeed, my work shows that approximately 65 percent of people have engaged in some form of contentious activity, such as protesting. In addition, the stereotype of the 1960s and 1970s as a time of very high levels of protest is somewhat misleading. While the protest events during that period might have been more dramatic than in previous times, protest levels in Canada, the United States, and other democracies are considerably higher today (World Values Survey, 2014). This work leads us to feel optimistic about the health of civil society and the community foundations upon which it relies.

While many people are engaging in acts of protest, this is only one measure of the health of civil society. It is equally important to examine participation in social movement organizations and other community groups. The trends in these two modes of participation differ significantly over time. While engagement in protest events is increasing over time in Canada and the US, membership in groups is decreasing. In fact, since 1982 the cohort from my study saw declining involvement in groups, from a high of 28.3 percent in 1982 to only 9.2 percent in 1997. In contrast, engagement in protest activity has increased slowly and steadily through-

out the period from 1965 (15.2%) to 1997 (21.7%) and is climbing even higher since this time. Cross-national data, such as data collected in the World Values Survey, show similar trends.

These changes reflect a shift in civil society away from involvement in groups. This decline is especially steep for young activists who are quite unlikely to join social movement organizations. In essence, modern activists do protest – they simply do so outside of groups and affiliations (Corrigan-Brown, 2012). The change from activism within groups to a more episodic style of protest activity has important implications for the health of community and civil society in Canada and around the world.

The recent mobilization against the expansion of the Enbridge Northern Gateway pipeline illustrates the changing nature of civic engagement. There were a series of highly visible events to resist the pipeline across Vancouver outside the downtown library, at Sunset Beach, and Science World, and on Burnaby Mountain. There were also coordinated protests against the development of the pipeline across BC and Canada. These events were large in scale, coordinated, and received significant media coverage.

The news coverage of these protests highlighted the role of groups in the mobilization. For example, the *Vancouver Sun* quoted the leader of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs and discussed a statement against the pipeline signed by 28 First Nation bands and the 3 main Aboriginal organizations in BC. CBC coverage discussed the role of environmental groups, such as the Sierra Club and ForestEthics Advocacy, and coalitions among youth, unions, and scientists. However, the presence of these quotes from organizational leaders in media coverage should not be taken as evidence of their prominence at the events. Much research on media routines and news collection finds that the media tend to seek out leader of organizations for quotes and information on protest and social movements, even if these leaders or groups are peripheral to the event (Myers and Caniglia 2004). There are myriad reasons for this, including the legitimacy these organizations bring to the story and the ease of finding organizational leaders when journalists are seeking information. However, while these organizations and their leaders were prominent in the media coverage of the events, my research would lead us to expect that the majority of the participants at these events were not affiliated with groups.

The implications of this changing nature of protest engagement – from group membership to event participation – are many. For individual activists, participating in protest events without group affiliation is much less likely to be sustained over time. Without regular and routine engagement, something that is much more likely to happen when one participates in an organization, it is easier to discontinue participation after one campaign. Participants without group affiliations are less likely to develop an identity as an activist or friendships with other activists, both of which are strong



predictors of continued engagement over time (Corrigall-Brown, 2012).

There are also macro-level implications of the rise of event engagement at the expense of group membership. Causes without sustained support over time are less likely to succeed. Event participants come to large protests but, without group affiliations, they are less likely to engage in the more mundane labour that occurs between big events. This labour between events is critical to organize campaigns, maintain membership, and highlight issues to the media. Organizations and their members keep issues and causes in the public and media's eye when dramatic displays are not happening. However, the activist who engages in events but is not a member of a group is less likely to do this critical work that is pivotal to long-term movement success.

It is clear that engagement in civil society is not declining; it is simply evolving. Individuals are engaging in protest more than ever before, but in activities that are less tied to group membership. They are also more likely to participate in alternative types of engagement, such as technological activism on Facebook or Twitter. While this should be heartening, as it means that more people, particularly youth, are participating in the political system, it also does not necessarily create the vibrant civil society and community engagement that earlier work shows is vital for fostering social trust and solidarity. Episodic activists can populate large protests, such as the ones to resist the pipeline, but these movements cannot be sustained or successful without the membership of these activists in groups. It

is through this group membership and sustained participation that deep community ties and networks are created and maintained. ■

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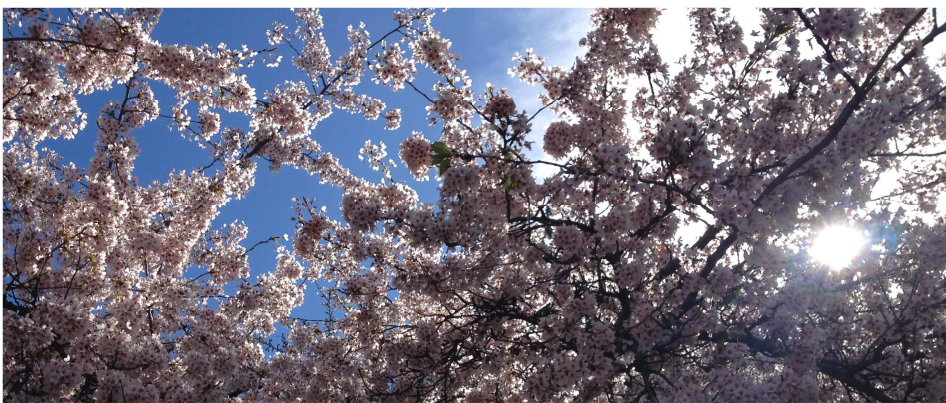
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"Thoughts from the Head", continues, from front cover...

3. Catherine Corrigall-Brown discusses her research interests in the evolution of civic engagement
4. Neil Guppy recounts the incredible story of a 20+ year old initiative someone in our Department undertook to recycle pop cans and collect the resulting pennies to create and grow the Sociology Pop Can Scholarship Fund. Standing at over \$40,000 (!) today, it has supported our students in a variety of ways over the years. True to his community spirit, Neil does not reveal *who* actually started the fund. I will let you, our readers, guess that and I invite you to contribute to this endowed fund).
5. Silvia Bartolic recounts the many ways she has contributed to, and worked, in the local Vancouver community and how she came to join our Department.
6. Last but not least, TA, Community Liaison, and Alumnus Negar Hooshmand provides us with a fascinating account of the Summer 2014's Urban Ethnographic Field School.

This will be the last newsletter with me as Head of Sociology. It has been absolutely wonderful to lead this Department during the



last couple of years – we are indeed a very dynamic, productive, and collegial unit. Many more good things are sure to come, and our Newsletter will certainly report on those. The Fall 2015 issue will have Professor Sean Lauer as Acting Head and Editor-in-chief.

There is much to enjoy in this issue.  
Happy Reading! ■

-Francesco Duina

## Raucous and Resource of the Instructor's Office



*By Kerry Greer*

Neil Guppy, the former Department Head took me out for lunch my first full day on the job last July and upon returning to the office invited me to move into a brightly lit office in the small corridor that is, on most days, secluded and quiet. A day or so after making the offer and after I had moved my books, he admitted that he had questioned this decision given my focus is on teaching, and hence he anticipated that my office would be frequented by students, and this could transform the quiet workspace into something else. There are days when I do not doubt he feels some regret.

Two months into the job I came back from class trailed by several students who were anxious to meet to discuss the papers that they were writing for a 300-level course. Quickly the quiet corridor filled up with students and my office hours were extended by an hour. My teaching assistant was busy marking exams from another class at a desk in my office, (as I like to keep myself available to any questions that come up when I cannot do all of the grading myself) and she glanced up at the line of students and asked, "How do you get your own work done?"

I love this question. I love it because I can answer it fully and truthfully without the tug of guilt and dissociation I was primed to experience during my graduate training. I can declare without hesitation that **THIS** is my work. Meeting with students, helping to guide them through the process of writing papers, helping identify their strengths and develop strategies to overcome their challenges. One student who came into my office was a student I had noticed regularly achieved among the highest scores on an exam, but whose name I could not yet match to a face. When she introduced herself I was delighted to finally know who this student was, and invited her to share with me her plans for the future. She hesitated, but then revealed that was interested in attending a graduate program to become a certified therapist, but was despairing because she did not know how to ask faculty for letters of recommendation. As a quiet student she believed that no one would have anything to say about her. I explained that many faculty members hold a reservoir of praise for the quiet students who excel, and that it rekindles our appreciation in the classroom knowing that there is a lot more going on than a typical class discussion might reveal. And I assured her that faculty would be willing to write letters to help her achieve her goals, especially since she was so clear on what those goals were. We

set a time to meet and develop a strategy—identifying specific faculty to approach, and how to craft a letter requesting a recommendation.

As a sociologist, I know that there is a lot more going on in this exchange besides one student being shy. Women, especially visible minorities, have an added challenge in

asking faculty for recognition of their abilities. Research shows that women have less confidence in their abilities, even as they outperform their male counterparts in academic pursuits. Sensitive to this, and because my job includes "Educational Leadership," I get to spend some of my working hours developing ways to help students in the Sociology Department develop professional identities, and frame their accomplishments in ways that will help them stand out to admission committees and employers. I am developing a set of guidelines for asking for letters of recommendation that I hope other faculty will share with their students. I sat on an "Applying to Graduate School" panel where I shared some strategies for approaching not just letters of recommendation, but also writing statements of purpose, and managing the application process. As I gain more experience and discover practices that work, I look forward to sharing these guidelines with all faculty as well. In this way, my role as Instructor in the department will be a resource to not just the students who come into my office, but students who work with any of the faculty in our department.

As the term comes to an end I look forward to branching into new territories. I am committed to helping students shape their professional goals through experiential learning and am looking forward to teaching the Urban Ethnography course this summer. New to Vancouver, it will provide me with an opportunity to revisit my own research interests in how non-profit community groups supplement state efforts to address social problems. I see this as an area rich for opportunities to collaborate with undergraduate students—to develop their research skills while also building a set of professional aptitudes that will help them focus their career goals, while also helping these organizations. And getting myself off campus and into downtown Vancouver will return our shared corridor to its quiet state. My guess is that Neil Guppy will miss the noise. ■





## The Story of a Scholarship

*By Neil Guppy*

Money for graduate students is always tight. And Vancouver is expensive. Add to this a provincial government historically, and currently, leery of funding bookish wonks, especially bookish wonks who study inequality, climate change, and social injustice.

Many a Department meeting has heard laments about the need for more dollars for students. Eloquent speeches by professors were long on words, but short on action.

But then our little world changed a bit. We heard of a Zoology professor who had moved into action. He collected pop cans and directed the 'return-it' revenue to a graduate scholarship fund. Thus was born the Sociology Pop Can Scholarship fund.

Many are sceptical that the 5-cent-a-can refund is worth the effort – reminiscent of bake sales and the military budget! However, as of today, the endowed fund boasts \$43,297.13. It has taken us over 20 years, but the financial returns to our students are perpetual.

The annual proceeds of about \$1,500, while still meagre, have made a difference. One year Christine Hochbalm, a visually impaired PhD student, used the funds to defray costs of presenting her research in Canada, Denmark, and the United States. Another year the money was used by Sophia Woodman to help support fieldwork research in China.

While it is mainly pop can returns that have funded the endowment, a couple of other creative ideas have helped. Barbara Aldridge realized that Lewis Vending machines was doing a good business selling us soft drinks and accessories. She asked

them to match the money we collected over a three month stretch – the matching dollars netted us another \$300. But she went a step further and got the Dean of Arts, then David Elkins, to match the \$600 she had just raised.

In a second creative spurt we put together a collection of readings featuring research of Department faculty. We required the book for Sociology 100. That netted us a few thousand dollars, although Bruce Arai suffered back pain for years after lugging cartons of books to classrooms.

Bruce's pain was not the only sourness associated with the scholarship. In one of our weaker moments a work study student volunteered to take many bags of cans and plastic bottles to the return-it depot. He borrowed the archie truck for the trip. However, the archie truck had roof racks and a Thule carry-all on top. The recycling depot had a low garage ceiling. UBC's insurance covered most of the damage!

Binning in the building has also been improved with recent recycling efforts and separate bins for cans and bottles. Every nickel helps to grow the fund so when in AnSo, drink wisely and recycle. ■



*"How'd you get into that" continues from page 3...*

familiar with the challenges facing inner city residents in our city: an explosive HIV epidemic, intractable struggles with addiction and mental illness, endemic poverty, and widespread involvement with the criminal justice system, among others. I was also seeing first hand the ways in which (well-intentioned) public policies were contributing to these issues, for example by criminalizing people in need of health and social support. I wondered whether sociological perspectives on policy and social development could improve our understanding of the overlapping challenges of HIV, addiction and poverty.

I had the good fortune of doing my graduate work at Oxford under the supervision of Jonathan Gershuny. "J" ran the British

Household Panel Study for more than two decades, and is a leading economic sociologist in time use and longitudinal research. He studies our daily activities in painstaking detail. Entertainingly, he was once featured in the Guardian as "the professor of the washing up" following a study outlining changes in the domestic division of labour over multiple decades. In our early discussions J helped refine my general interests into a line of research that focused on a critical component of people who use drugs' day-to-day lives: their relationship with money. And, more specifically, to examine

*Continues on back cover ...*

# It Takes a Village: How I Became an Instructor



By Silvia Bartolic

Getting hired as a tenure stream Instructor was a dream come true! As far back as I can remember, I wanted to teach. I have been inspired by several great teachers and mentors – perhaps without their knowing the profound effect they have had on my path to UBC Sociology and my current teaching philosophy.

I officially began teaching music in the Beefeater Band when I was 17. (That is, if you don't count quizzing my brother on French vocabulary throughout high school – much to his chagrin). This was a community marching band located in Vancouver BC directed by Mr. Gordon Olson. I began there as a student when I was 8 years old (old enough to have arms long enough to reach the keys on my flute!). As a student, I was there to learn music. But there was so much more to this than music – Mr. Olson commanded discipline and inspired dedication and hard work regardless of how old you were and where you came from. He also created a sense of community within our band that reached out into the local neighbourhood. We played in competitions, in parades, at football games (half time show) and most importantly at charity events. We became a family that worked towards giving back to the community that we were a part of. Teaching there, for me, was an opportunity to nurture the newest members in the way that I was nurtured and to instill the same sense of dedication to the craft as well as to the community.

In high school I was inspired by Dr. Gary Poole (currently associate director of the School of Population and Public Health in UBC's Faculty of Medicine and past director of the Centre for Teaching and Academic Growth and the Institute for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning). I knew him as my English and Psychology teacher. Dr. Poole's passion for teaching and for Psychology made me want to become a professor – at 18 I knew what I wanted to be when I grew up! It wasn't so much what he taught but *how* he taught. His enthusiasm was unbridled. I poured through the course materials and hung on every word. He gave me the opportunity to tutor an autistic student. I was challenged and motivated. I believe I learned more out of the exchange than I taught – the experience was phenomenal. Here I learned patience and creativity and that learning can occur in unimaginable ways.

As I was working towards graduate school, I volunteered at organizations like the Vancouver SPCA. Not only did I dog walk, I worked on research and fundraising initiatives to try to teach community members about animal welfare. I was inspired by the generosity of spirit of many of the volunteers and their fierce dedication to a cause.

In graduate school, I followed Dr. Jim White – now my colleague in our department. I believe I took every course he taught and asked him to co-supervise my Master's thesis. Jim was/is a captivating speaker. He

told stories – a strategy I now use when I teach. He laughed with us and commiserated with our frustrations (SPSS code!). He prompted me to take a course in teaching from the Education department and I subsequently got the opportunity to teach as a Sessional Instructor. Dr. Dan Perlman (former UBC Family Studies professor and now Professor of Human Development and Family Studies at the University of North Carolina – Greensboro) offered to team teach with me so that I could be mentored through the process. I don't think I could accurately describe Dan's dedication to his colleagues and students – generous with his time is an understatement! Even today he will answer a 'short' email question with a 1-2 page email response. From this experience I try to be giving of my time to the best of my ability.

Dr. Tony Bates, former director of UBC's Distance Education and Technology unit welcomed me into the world of Distance Education. Though my work with him was mostly research based, I found myself teaching (and learning) about online learning. He was an incredible mentor as he had utmost belief in the ability of his staff and thus afforded us many opportunities that we wouldn't normally receive. We all worked extra hard to be sure to be worthy of his faith in us. He taught me to encourage rather than micro-manage; to give guidance and then trust there will be carry-through.

Graduate school at the University of Texas at Austin allowed me to teach Kindergarten in a lab school. Ms. Sandy Dillon was a truly talented Kindergarten teacher. My first day with eighteen 5-yr olds ended in a migraine! In less than two weeks however, she had them discussing and solving their own problems. From Sandy I learned the importance of organization and preparation (I'm still working on the organization!).

Coming back to BC, I acquired four wonderful step daughters (along with a husband) and a now 10 month old son. The role of parent has given me the opportunity to teach and mentor the next generation in a personal context. Growing up in the Vancouver Croatian community, I didn't think much about the challenges my parents faced as immigrants to Canada and the sacrifices they made so that I could have the opportunity to be 'whatever I wanted'. Now that I have children, I feel the need to teach them about this part of my cultural heritage and to give voice to the struggles of past and present immigrants – and to acknowledge, my parents are *still* sacrificing so that I can do what I always wanted.

In my role as Instructor in Sociology my goal is to have some kind of meaningful impact on my students in the way that others have had a profound impact on me. My colleagues in the department as well as other units on campus such as the Center for Teaching Learning and Technology continue to inspire and support me. As an Instructor, it is hard to always know if I have made a difference. I do know that some of my students have gone on to be doctors, lawyers, and teachers as well as social scientists and will one day soon be giving back to the community. I'd like to think I played a small part in their success and hope I can continue to do so in significant ways. ■





## The City as Fieldsite

### Experiential Learning & Student Research in the Urban Ethnographic Field School

*By Negar Hooshmand, TA, Community Liaison, and Field School Alumnus*

The Urban Ethnographic Field School (UEFS, formerly IVEFS), a hands-on ethnography course co-taught by the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, completed its 5th iteration last June. This year the Field School was taught by Dr. Thomas Kemple and Heather Holroyd from the Department of Sociology and Ana Vivaldi from the Department of Anthropology. Class seminars were held Monday through Thursday at the UBC Learning Exchange at 612 Main Street,

where the Downtown Eastside meets Chinatown meets the latest wave of gentrification. The seminars consisted of the discussion of two key books on the theory and practice of ethnographic fieldwork along with numerous chapters and arti-

cles related to the empirical and methodological underpinnings of ethnography; the presentation and discussion of ethnographic films; three interactive workshops on ethnographic research and writing where students worked with and analyzed their data; a field trip to Insite (Vancouver's safe injection site); and a guest speaker discussing the relationship between ethnographic fieldwork and the development of harm reduction strategies. In addition to coursework, the cohort of 28 students completed at least 6-8 hours per week of community service learning in placements at Neighbourhood Houses and community organizations across Vancouver, producing high-impact research through collaborative projects. Students had the opportunity to disseminate their research findings in group presentations to our community partners at a public event held at the UBC Learning Exchange on the evening of June 19<sup>th</sup>, the last day of the Field School.

Individual student research papers examined how the UN-mandated 'Right to Food' text is manifested in practice in Vancouver's downtown eastside (DTES); how social space is created and evolves at a community organization and the impact of funding structures on core programs; how institutional

structures shape the everyday struggles of individuals living precariously in the DTES; how adaptability and freedom of movement in an organization for youth can facilitate their safety and wellbeing; and how bureaucratic systems of Canadian government organizations subsume the identities, lifestories and experiences of refugees through the use of institutional categories, among many other topics.

Student collaborative projects included the planning and organi-

zation of World Refugee Day; gathering data through surveys and focus groups and producing a report about the experience of Chinese Elders accessing the food line-ups in the DTES; the creation of an educational video



about the diverse impacts of Adult Education Programs coordinated through the Learning Exchange; helping with the organization of the Car Free Festival for Leave Out Violence BC (LOVE); assisting Neighbourhood Houses with the CAPC (Community Action Program for Children) conference; creating a Family Resource Pamphlet for the West End Family in Action Committee; producing a promotional video for Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood House that depicts their wide-range of programs and activities; and many more.

The teaching team would like to congratulate the students for their outstanding work, enthusiasm, and commitment, and to express their gratitude to the 14 community organizations that hosted students during these intense six weeks (including seven Neighbourhood Houses, Ray-Cam Community Center, Settlement Orientation Services, Leave Out Violence BC, First United Church, Salvation Army, and Union Gospel Mission). We would also like to acknowledge the ongoing support of the Departments of Anthropology and Sociology, the UBC Center for Community Engaged Learning and the UBC Learning Exchange, without whom the Field School would not have been possible. ■

"How'd you get into that" continues from page 5...

the employment patterns of people who use drugs and how they are affected by individual, social, structural and health disadvantage.

From there, I was fortunate to connect with Drs. Thomas Kerr and Evan Wood, co-directors of Urban Health Research Initiative (UHRI), a research group within the B.C. Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS. I had become familiar with their work during my time as a civil servant. Led by Dr. Julio Montaner, the Centre is among the world's foremost HIV/AIDS and urban health research institutions, having made significant contributions in British Columbia, nationally and internationally to the development, ongoing monitoring and dissemination of comprehensive research and treatment programs for HIV and related diseases. The Centre also conducts internationally renowned, policy relevant research in the areas of addiction, aboriginal health, gender, neighbourhood disadvantage and crime.

Drs. Kerr and Wood happen to run a study (The Vancouver Injection Drug Users' study, known as "VIDUS") that produces one of the few longitudinal cohort datasets in the world that collects information about drug use *and* income generation. My proposed research aligned with an area they hoped someone would take on, and I developed a series of studies for my thesis based on information collected through VIDUS. So began a longstanding, and fruitful relationship that allowed me to continue my training abroad, but maintain strong local ties to the unique challenges facing Vancouver. As one of the sole sociologists involved with the Centre's work, I hoped I could bring unique perspectives to their existing research.

As I began working with the VIDUS data, it became clear that it was important to consider people's research participation trajectories. Some of the key activities that I was interested in (such as employment and drug use) seemed to shape participation in the study. It also became clear that employment was strongly implicated in configurations of drug use, disadvantage and health risk. What was not clear was the "how" and the "why" of some of the relationships I was seeing in my statistical results. It became increasingly apparent that a different approach would be needed to better answer these questions. I teamed up with UHRI's qualitative research program to speak with VIDUS participants about connections between drug use and employment. My quantitative doctoral thesis became a mixed methods study.

By the end of my doctorate, I had a much clearer understanding of the social and health implications of work among people

who use drugs. But, quite predictably, had many more questions than I had answers. What about the health impacts of other forms of income generation among people who use drugs, such as income assistance, informal recycling (i.e., "binning") and drug dealing? Is individual income a good predictor of material security among people who use drugs? What are the specific considerations related to research participation when conducting addictions research? And, perhaps, most importantly, can anything be done to change the social and structural conditions that produce and reinforce socio-economic disadvantage among people who use drugs?

As a Canadian Institutes for Health Research Post-doctoral Research Fellow under the supervision of Dr. Kerr at the Division of AIDS in the faculty of Medicine at UBC and Dr. Tom Patterson in the Department of Psychiatry at the University of California at San Diego, I began to address some of the outstanding questions of my doctoral research. This research continues today.

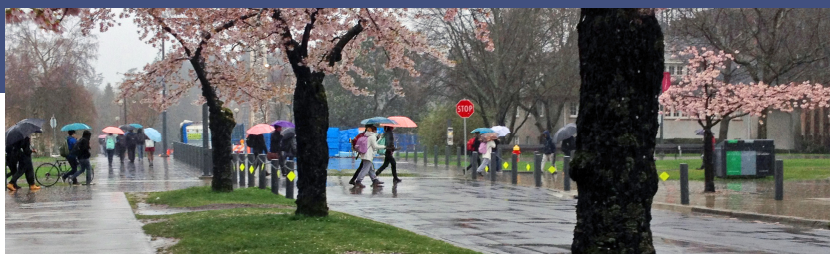
Now, a central focus of my work is to translate findings from my research into studies that evaluate changes to the social and structural conditions that amplify drug-related harm. For example, I am currently leading a Canadian Institutes of Health Research-funded randomized controlled trial that will look at whether or not changing the timing and frequency of income assistance payments can reduce drug related harm, such as overdose or drug market violence. This harm escalates around currently coordinated income assistance cheque issue days each month. An additional intervention study still in the planning stage will explore whether improving people's access to particular types of flexible employment can similarly improve labour market and associated health outcomes. Combining longitudinal quantitative and nested qualitative evaluations, with strong consideration of research participation, are all key components of this work.

As one of the new members of the Department of Sociology this year and a newly-appointed Research Scientist at the B.C. Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS, I am thrilled to have the opportunity to maintain an intellectual home within my discipline, while continuing to work with a research organization that is working to improve the lives of some of society's most disadvantaged members. I look forward to working with department faculty and students alike in the coming years. If anything I'm working on has piqued your interest, I encourage you to drop by my office (ANSO 3125) or email me at Lindsey.Richardson@ubc.ca ■

think SOCIOLOGY!



a place of mind  
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Faculty of Arts  
Department of Sociology



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