



think SOCIOLOGY!

Volume 2, Issue 1 Fall 2013

Thoughts from the Head

Welcome to the Fall 2013 issue of our newsletter! Upon joining the department this past August, I learned that this newsletter reaches *thousands* of readers – alumni, current students, former faculty members, administrative staff members, friends of the department, and countless other people who for one reason or another find themselves browsing our website. With such a large and diverse audience in mind, I think it appropriate to take a moment to highlight some of the most exciting news about the department:

1. The recent *2013 QS World University Ranking* placed our department in the top 35 in the world, and in the top 2 in Canada. Rankings should always be taken with a big grain of salt ... but this is nonetheless an impressive result, and one that encourages us to work and excel even more.

2. The Department is now hosting the *Canadian Review of Sociology*, the flagship journal of the Canadian Sociological Association. In parallel, we continue to host *Sociological Theory*, the premier theoretical journal of the American Sociological Association.

3. Firmly rooted in Vancouver and BC, we are an increasingly global department. We publish in the leading journals of our fields and with the best book presses in the world, sponsor a *Speaker Series* featuring some of the most dynamic scholars in the discipline, have affiliations with leading institutions anywhere from China to Germany, and attract visitors and faculty and student applications from virtually every continent.

4. We are hiring! This year, for the first time, we are interviewing for two full-time, tenure-track

instructors (dedicated experts in teaching) and two tenure-track research faculty positions, one of which will have an international research profile.

A lot more could be said, and I therefore invite you to learn more about us by going to our newly redesigned website: www.soci.ubc.ca.

We decided to focus this newsletter issue on a specific theme that should appeal to our local and worldwide young readers especially: ***What sociologists have to say about finding a job in an increasingly competitive and globalized marketplace.***

We begin by offering some basic data about the job market in the Canadian context, with attention going especially to sociology majors. The next article offers some sociological insights into the socially constructed nature of job markets, and how sociology majors can prepare themselves for them. The last piece connects some of the recommendations from the previous article to published sociological research.

I would like to close by asking for your input. If you are a recent or not-so-recent sociology student, and have tips about finding a job in today's dynamic and global marketplace, or have any feedback about the content of this thematic newsletter, please share your thoughts in a few sentences in an email to soci.dept@ubc.ca. Title the message 'Job Finding Tips' so we know right away what this is about. We can share some of the best feedback in the next issue of this newsletter.

Happy Reading! ■



Francesco Duina,
Department Head,
enjoying Victor Nee &
Richard Swedberg's
[The Economic Sociology
of Capitalism](#)

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- FIVE THINGS EMPLOYERS WANT
1. INTEGRITY
 2. COMMITMENT TO VISION
 3. AWARENESS OF SELF & OTHERS
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UBC Sociology BA graduate Tammy Brimner has had the kind of exciting career that skills in sociology can foster. She began in Human Resources and quickly became a Senior Manager of Faculty Rela-

tions. Her next promotion was to Executive Director of Faculty Affairs. She is currently the Director of Business Development and Operations in Animal Care Services, sits on the Academic Leadership Development Program Planning Team, and has recently joined the United Way Steering Committee. In all of those positions, she has applied her knowledge and experience in sociology to better understand how everyday life gets organized for the faculty and staff she works with and makes it a priority to look for ways to alter their lives for the better. ■

Sociology & the Canadian Labour Market

By Neil Guppy

CW Mills' sociological imagination – private troubles and public issues – offers new BA graduates an important perspective for understanding the labour market. Finding employment is a largely private matter but it is profoundly shaped by public issues. These issues, the context in which people seek jobs if you will, relate to the health of the economy, the likelihood of older workers retiring, and the competition for work in specific sectors. Recent graduates, in all fields of study, have entered a tough labour market. The financial crisis of 2007-08 has had a lasting sting. Only gradually are opportunities returning. Below we stress the public issues Mills would highlight to reveal something about the context into which graduates will venture when looking for paid employment in the next few years.

Labour Market Composition & Size

Several key trends augur well for the future labour market success of sociology BA graduates. First, the labour market is expanding. In 2010 there were about 18.5 million Canadians working for pay, a number likely to rise to between 20.5 and 22.5 million by 2031 (Martel *et al.*, 2011). Second, the service sector, where the vast majority of sociology graduates are employed, is expanding the fastest. Although the Canadian economy remains significantly tied to resources, Table 1 shows that the vast majority of jobs and a huge slice of our economic productivity occur in the service sector – in areas such as communications, education, finance, health, human resources, management and administration, media, and transportation. Over 87% of labour market jobs are in the service sector. Certainly some of those service industry positions are McJobs, low paid and with low security, but a significant portion of them are good jobs with stable career paths. Third, older workers have been delaying retirement in recent years, in part because of better health but also because of the financial crisis and its impact on pensions.

There is good news in all of this. In a nutshell the employment market for Sociology BAs will be expanding over the next few years because the demand for workers will rise as older workers retire and as the labour force in services continues to grow.

Table 1 : Percentage Distribution of Canadian Economic Activity by Sector (2010's)

Economic Sector	% of Goods/Services Produced (\$ Value)	% of Labour Force Jobs
Agricultural	2	1
Industrial	29	23
Service	69	87

Source: Statistics Canada, CANSIM, Table 282-0008

Sociology Degrees

The number of students pursuing degrees in sociology continues to be strong. Figure 1 (on page 3) charts the number of graduates with BAs in sociology from 1970 to 2012. There is clearly an upward slope in degrees awarded to sociology graduates, although this rising slope is mainly a

function of more graduates from Canadian universities, not from an increasing proportion of students pursuing honours or majors in sociology. Nevertheless these are robust numbers given that many new academic programs have been introduced in the last few decades that directly compete for students who in earlier years often chose sociology (e.g., programs in criminology, development, public policy, women's studies).

Table 2: Occupational Destinations for Sociology BAs in Broad Labour Market Sectors

Business

- actuary
- administrative assistant
- advertising officer
- computer analyst
- consumer relations
- data entry manager
- human resources specialist
- insurance agent
- journalist
- labour relations officer
- market analyst
- merchandiser/purchaser
- personnel officer
- production manager
- project manager
- public relations officer
- publishing officer
- quality control manager
- real estate agent
- sales manager
- sales representative
- technical writing

Government

- affirmative action work
- community affairs
- development aide
- foreign service work
- human rights officer
- information officer
- legislative assistant
- personnel coordinator
- policy research
- urban / regional planner

Social Research

- census officer/analyst
- consumer researcher
- data analyst
- demographer
- market researcher
- social research specialist
- survey researcher
- systems analyst

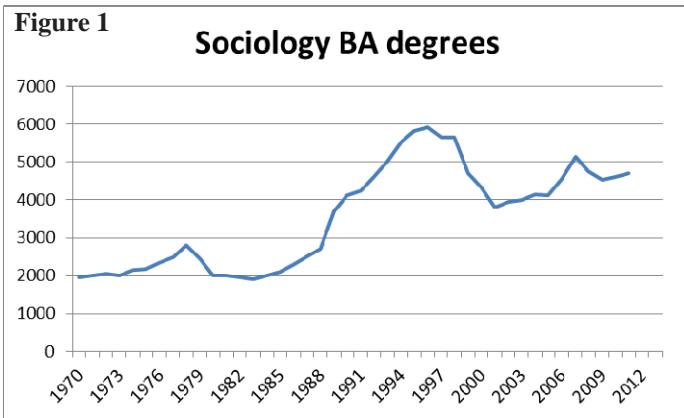
Community Affairs

- addictions counselling
- adoption counselling
- caseworker
- child development
- community organizer
- environmental organizer
- family planning
- fundraising
- gerontologist
- group home programmer
- health outreach work
- homeless / housing worker
- hospital administration
- housing coordinator
- marriage / family counselling
- occupational / career counsellor
- public health worker
- rehabilitation work
- residential planning
- social assistance advocate
- welfare counselling
- youth outreach

Teaching / Education

- admissions counsellor
- alumni relations
- continuing studies
- post-secondary recruitment
- public health educator
- records & registration
- school counsellor
- student development
- Teacher

It is also worth briefly noting here a point that Duina and Guppy develop in the next article; there is a loose fit (or loose coupling in sociological parlance) between degrees and jobs. We mean this in two important ways. First, there are few positions in which a job title explicitly says ‘sociologist.’ This does occur at Statistics Canada, in post-secondary education, but not in many other places. Second, many managers, lawyers, and planners, among others, have first degrees in sociology but professional degrees (e.g., an LLB or a JD) in their subsequent fields. Their sociology backgrounds are often invisible, hidden behind their newer professional identities. The context of a labour market that is loosely coupled for sociologists means that graduates need to work hard to find opportunities for paid employment – the professional networks of lawyers or planners are not as tight for sociologists with a BA. This loose coupling is true of many other fields of study, including anthropology, english, geography, history, and political science to name a few.



Source: Statistics Canada, BA degrees by field of study (Education in Canada plus special tabs)

Occupations Sociologists often Occupy

So, you might rightly ask, what do you do with a sociology BA? The job titles listed in Table 2 (on page 2) give you some concrete examples of where sociologists are often employed. There are a couple of important things to note about this list. First, it is only a partial list. Second, many organizations use different titles for the same basic job. Third, many of these jobs can be filled by graduates from other social science disciplines (a loose coupling effect, in sociological terminology). We should end on a comparative note. The expansion of the service sector is happening not only in Canada but also in many other countries in the world. In the case of developed economies, to the extent that there is growth, it is primarily happening in services. When it comes to developing or emerging economies, service jobs represent the main areas of growth. This, too, is good news for sociology graduates.

Conclusion

Understanding the public nature of the social forces impacting labour dynamics helps in appreciating that your journey through the job market is shaped both by your own efforts and personal biography, but also by larger contextual factors bearing on the ebb and flow of jobs. ■

Reference:

Martel, Laurent et al. (2011) ‘Projected Trends to 2031 for the Canadian Labour Force’ *Canadian Economic Observer*, Statistics Canada 11-010-X.

Sociology Students - two recent awards:

William Keats-Osborn



Graduate Student William Keats-Osborn has won a prestigious Killam Doctoral Scholarship, in addition to a SSHRC scholarship. This Killam funding will help with his scholarly work on *‘Getting Facts Straight: The Epistemic Labour of Nonfiction’*

This research focuses upon the study of knowledge in the making, and in particular the contentious boundary between social science and non-science. How, for example, does the immersive practice of nonfiction journalism differ from the rich descriptions of ethnographic research?

Amanda Cheong

Recent Sociology BA graduate, Amanda Cheong is the winner of a Statelessness Research Award, by The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Amanda is currently a PhD student in Sociology at Princeton University. She won this research award in the undergraduate category for her thesis: *‘Changing Conceptions of Citizenship Among Stateless Chinese-Bruneian Immigrants in Vancouver’*.



Cheong selected one of the world’s least-known situations of statelessness as the subject of her research: the Chinese minority of the Sultanate of Brunei Darussalam. Cheong explores the implications of statelessness for peoples’ life chances in Brunei, looks at how international migration has been adopted as one response to this situation, and how the exposure of those who have settled in Canada to a new and very different citizenship model has changed their understanding of the relationship between the individual and the state. She bases her analysis on oral history interviews with 13 Chinese-Bruneians who migrated to the Greater Vancouver area between 1974 and 2011. The jury was impressed by this original data collection and the manner in which both the methodology and the findings are presented, concluding that this well-refined and informative sociological study provides a useful contribution to deepening the understanding of statelessness. ■

Preparing for the Job Market: a Sociological Primer

By Francesco Duina & Neil Guppy

Getting a job takes work and preparation. Both begin when you turn your mind to why someone might want to hire you. Most simply, on entering the job market you are a seller. As a seller, you must have what buyers – that is, employers – want. This raises three separate questions: What do buyers want? How do you acquire those things? And how will buyers know if you have them?

Before proceeding, remember some basic sociology. Many people, and particularly economists, depict the labour market as a rational choice arena: a place ruled by reason, fact, and efficiency. Information is supposedly abundant, options are unlimited, actors know how to match their preferences with those options, and errors are rare. The result, according to this perspective, is the best utilization of talent in an economic system where employers and workers are both optimally satisfied.

But this description *does not capture what goes on in the real world*. Actual labour markets are messy places: they are socially constructed spaces where power differentials, institutionalized regularities, class structures, asymmetrical access to information, fads, emotions, the education system, and many other factors shape the making of workers, the need for jobs, how recruiting is done, how pay scales are set, and much more. Furthermore, the market is largely bureaucratized and so increasingly ‘employers’ are Human Resource Departments. Therefore, what happens in the labour market, the matching of jobs to employees, is not determined by an efficient, rational exchange process. But it also means that it isn’t a complete lottery, it isn’t arbitrary. Knowing how labour markets actually function can prove truly valuable, helping you to be savvy, prepared, and ultimately successful.

What employers want

Credentials

First and foremost employers look for credentials. Realizing exactly what this means matters. It is almost unheard of for employers to request a transcript of your grades. Grades matter for graduate or professional school admission but they become much less important if your intent is to find a job after your Bachelor’s degree. When you graduate, employers will sort you into, or out of, their competition based first on a credential. If you have the right piece of paper, then you pass the first screen. This is credentialism 101!

Obviously, in professional fields people are only hired when they have specific credentials. Physicians need an MD and lawyers require an LLD or a JD. But the majority of jobs in the white collar world – those jobs that make up most of the massive service sector of our economy – require Bachelor’s degrees. And here most often the exact field of study does not matter, although obviously some jobs have specific requirements (e.g., history teachers typically have some history training, although not necessarily are they history majors; likewise, food inspection agents often have a science background although they are not necessarily biologists or agricultural scientists). In the language of soci-

ology, there is a loose coupling between the academy and the labour market. In fact, we may say that most employers do not

really know what credentials, exactly, they wish their job candidates to have. They only have some rough ideas (the person must be ‘smart’, ‘driven’, etc.) and no specific profile: they have a need, but are often not quite sure exactly what that need is, or how to best fulfill it. While this looseness may seem confusing, it is actually good news for you: with good research (about the employer, the job, and your competition) and proper presentation on your part, you can convince employers that your credentials are precisely what they are looking for, and therefore that you have what it takes to be hired (remember here the writing of Erving Goffman and his theories of how the self can present itself in multiple ways).

You should take, then, the idea of credentials with a big grain of salt. Understand what it means, and how your sociological perspective can help you shape what employers are looking for in the first place.

Let us now turn to two other things that employers demand: experience and skills.

Experience

Employers want experienced job applicants. Why is this so? Again, most employers cannot offer a precise answer. They believe experience equates to people being job-ready and thus requiring minimal training. If probed a little more, employers might tell you that experience indicates that you have the discipline and work ethic to thrive in a job. Working life has its own culture, a culture of time management, getting along with others, and discipline. Experience with work culture reassures employers. There are plenty of reasons to question the actual importance of ‘experience’ for any given job. But, as a smart sociologist, what you should remember is that expectations matter, regardless of whether it is a rational demand or not. Thus, rather than debating the merits of having experience, you should in fact remember the cultural necessity of gaining some work experience.

Skills

Employers are rarely interested in your disciplinary skills. Again, they may only have a general idea of what skills are really needed for the openings on hand. However, every discipline provides you with a host of generic skills. Your task is to cultivate those skills that are most likely going to be appreciated by your prospective employer, and then advertise yourself along those lines. You will want to do this in a way that helps you stand out amongst other job applicants. At the same time – and this is very important – try and understand what you, as a person, really enjoy learning and doing. The idea that our private and professional lives should be totally separate, while helpful in some respects, is a potentially misleading cultural norm. We do not leave our ‘true’ selves behind when we enter the workplace. The job market is not made up of anonymous actors devoid of personality. The trick will therefore be to balance the need to build an appealing profile with your interests and passions.

With all this in mind, we can identify here a few truly critical skills:

Communications: written skills are critical but so too are your presentation skills. All white collar jobs demand reading and writing skills. Frequently you will be part of a team and expected to contribute ideas orally in team meetings. Being able to present ideas clearly and cogently counts. Learning how to be persuasive matters, and it is a skill you hone with preparation and practice. Framing and packaging matter. Assembling evidence is essential. And the job interview is an oral presentation!!!

Numeracy: being adept with numbers helps in almost any job. Max Weber's world of rationalization, where the metrics of quantification and predictability are front and centre, means that more and more jobs require you to be numerate. An ability to understand, and even better to assemble, charts, figures, graphs, and tables is an important asset.

Methods: being skilled in a range of social science methods enhances your ability to understand problem-solving. Identifying the problem – often its multi-faceted nature – is a skill in itself and this is one of the key things you learn when professors ask you about your research question, or your argument, or your hypothesis. Good, and diverse, methods training ensures you can ask good questions and understand the logic of finding nuanced, persuasive evidence.

Intercultural understanding: culture is about meaning-making. As cultures deepen and diversify, being able to comprehend others and their meaning-making is critically important to organizational success. Quite obviously, this is especially so in a globalizing world. Being practiced in diversity and inclusion is a core competency in the modern workplace. Given this, there are courses and job experiences outside the classroom (internships, summer jobs, etc.) that can help you develop, and later be able to advertise, your intercultural skills.

Critical thinking: the features of thought that signal critical thinking include a mind that is agile, creative, curious, nimble, nuanced, probing, smart, and subtle. These come with practice. They are developed by challenging yourself – moving outside of your comfort zone, both intellectually and emotionally. Smart students, and by this we mean students who will be successful, are those who choose courses with an eye to augmenting their skill sets. Building a course schedule that enriches your skill set is more important than building a course schedule that fits your social life (although having a social life is important, and employers value employees who are socially adept). Also, remember that many of these skills get honed outside the classroom.

At the same time, contrary to what one might think, it is very difficult to measure and quantify one's critical thinking abilities. More to the point, employers have no way of ascertaining how 'good' your critical thinking really is. They instead will gather data points about you from your resume, the way you talk, how you behave during an interview, and how you answer questions designed to test your analytical skills. This means that there are numerous, often subtle ways, of communicating to an employer (who may or may not be consciously focused on this) that you are indeed smart. Put yourself in the reverse role: how do you know that you are dealing with a 'smart' person when you interact with one?

Acquiring what employers want

How, then, do you acquire all these things that employers want? We have mentioned a few ways already. If you have followed this article along, the message is in fact rather simple: be purposeful, careful, and strategic. Take charge of your university career by planning for its afterlife. Be the author of your own future. Have a game plan and stick to it wisely. When you need to adapt, do so.

Here is a simple analogy. In university life, you can be a tourist or a participant. Tourists watch the years flow by, living in the moment, enjoying the freedom and the distractions. Participants learn to love exploring knowledge, and they do it vigorously. They learn to be curious; they develop a hungry mind. Participants take control of their lives; they author their futures by planning and implementing. Employers want participants. Over time you have grown intellectually, ethically, physically, and so forth. We are encouraging you to take more responsibility for your own growth; be purposeful about it, it's your life.

For a concrete example, think about the need for experience. How do you get great work experience? A good part-time job in a relevant industry is one way. Enrolling in co-operative education can also help, as can carefully chosen internships. Increasingly companies are using co-op placements and internships as ways of assessing potential employees. Take advantage of these university programs to gain experience.

Other forms of experience are also useful, although supplementary. Volunteering is recognized as valuable as it shows employers you are not too self-centered, you care about others, and you have experience working with others. Participation in athletics or the creative and performing arts is also useful. It demonstrates to employers that you have self-discipline, can work in a team setting, and are goal directed. Being involved with student governance, or with campus clubs, community organizations, or social movements can also be useful.

Notice the obvious here: university can provide you with experiences outside the classroom that are critically important to your labour market success. It is up to you to take advantage of them. But notice too, the less than obvious. The process of finding a job is really a societal – in this case, culturally-rich – affair: it is about expectations, becoming legitimate, and being sensitive to certain values and beliefs. Knowing how to make use of this social fact can you give a leg up in your search efforts (see the next article by Hirsh *et al.* on searching for employment).

Showing buyers what you have

Your success in this next phase will depend upon how well you have done in the previous two phases. It really is impossible to turn a pig's ear into a silk purse. But if you have spent some time figuring out what employers want (and how they come to want something) and learning how to acquire it, then selling yourself in the labour market is much easier. Display the 'silk' that you have acquired. This is where Goffman's impression management comes into play, or, in the lingo of the current job market, this is where you need to market your brand, where you need to show employers what is distinctive and attractive about employing you. Here, again, sociology is relevant: marketing is as much an economic action as a social one. At its core, you are constructing your image

The Sociology of Job Finding

By Elizabeth Hirsh, Sylvia Fuller, Amy Hanser, & Rima Wilkes

How do you find a job in today's tight, turbulent, unpredictable labour market? Sociologists who study job searching and labour markets identify two distinct stages: searching and screening. In the searching stage, applicants turn to online resources, career services, and their social networks for information about job openings. In the screening stage, hiring agents sort countless applications to find the 'right' worker. Thus, landing a job is a two-sided matching problem, with workers searching for good, fulfilling jobs and employers screening for capable, productive workers. So how do you maximize your chances of finding (and landing) a good job?

Job Searching: It's Who You Know. Really.

According to sociological research, over half of job seekers find their positions through ties or links in their personal networks (Fernandez, Castilla, and Moore 2000; Marsden and Gorman 2001; Neckerman and Fernandez 2003). These ties can be both 'weak' – ties to acquaintances, career counselors, and faculty members – and 'strong' – ties to friends and family members. Though both may provide sources of information (and advice) about job seeking, weak ties tend to provide access to more expansive information and are most effective for landing professional jobs. In fact, a recent study by the American Sociological Association (ASA) found that 60 percent of sociology graduates who sought job information from career services, workshops on campus, faculty members, internship supervisors, or former employers landed career-level jobs compared to only 45 percent of those who turned to family or relatives (Spalter-Roth et al. 2013). Thus, to find your dream job, visit career services, workshops, former employers, and yes, bother faculty (helping you is part of our job).

But what do you do if you exhaust your weak (and strong ties) and come up empty? For those not relying on personal contacts, online search methods may be the next best thing (Choi 2011), yet there is often a trade-off between quality and quantity – for both job seekers slogging through online postings and hiring managers reviewing hundreds of applications (Fountain 2005; Spalter-Roth et al. 2013). In fact, in the ASA study of sociology graduates, although those who used online search strategies landed jobs 68 percent of the time, those jobs were typically service and clerical work, not on the career track. Think barista, not policy analyst.

Why do networks work? It's simple: they are cheap and easy. It is far easier for employers to give a job to someone they know or has been recommended by a trusted source than to go through the trouble of putting out an ad, sifting through applicants, calling references, conducting interviews, and so on.

Applicant Screening: It's What You Know. And How You Show It.

Does this mean that knowing people is everything? Absolutely not. No one is going to hire you, even if you come highly recommended, if they don't think you can do the job well. You must convey to each and every hiring agent that you have the necessary aptitudes, competencies, and motivation. The critical problem-solving, communication, and writing skills that you have acquired through your sociology studies will make you an attractive applicant (Andrews and Higson 2008; Maes et al. 1997). The fact that you have pursued studies that highlight social diversity, intercultural understanding, and an appreciation for multifaceted forms of knowledge, including divergent ways of doing and thinking, will signal to employers that you can manage variations in interpersonal interactions and team work, which are increasingly common workplace arrangements (Bell et al. 2011).

Beyond your hard skills, be sure to showcase your personality, talents, and soft skills. Employers are looking for people who 'fit'

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in the marketplace, reflecting and adjusting to its requirements and ambiguities, and ultimately shaping that very marketplace. Thus, to present yourself you should think ahead and plan carefully. Four tips in particular come to mind:

Do your homework: figure out some areas in which you might like to work and then learn about potential employers. Figure out how you fit with them and tailor your resume to speak to their needs.

Craft a good resume: create a short overview of your accomplishments and attributes. Set out your credentials and then highlight your experiences and skill sets. Do this with a clear understanding of who your target audience really is.

Have good references: ask your best contacts for a particular job opening to write you a strong letter of reference and/or to contact people they know who can help. Give them suggestions as to what to highlight in their letters or phone interviews so that your skills and experiences are well showcased.

Prepare for the interview: your experiences and skill sets are key, but ultimately when you are interviewing you are moving to another stage of the selection process. Other interviewees, too, have attractive experiences and skill sets. You must differentiate yourself in other ways. Remember what we talked about earlier: learn about your audience, communicate things about you without saying them, convince them that you are the person they are looking for (that is, make them realize that what they want is someone like you).

One final point is in order. The loose coupling between academia and the job market we discussed earlier has an additional implication. Many university-aged students do not know with any certainty what occupational jobs or careers they want to, or will, pursue. Their preferences are far from set or formed. It follows that you should approach the job search with flexibility. Worrying about finding the 'perfect' job is pointless. There are multiple good fits, and your desires and interests will in fact be shaped and stimulated by what is out there. The process of matching you to a job, in other words, is interactive. So, this means that

well with the workplace culture – in large part because they want to work with people they feel comfortable with (Rivera 2012). Although such ‘homophily’ – or preferring people who are like you – can lead to preferential hiring in some situations, applicants who are wise to it can take advantage by seeking out companies that fit their dispositions, and play up any skills, traits, or values that ‘fit’ the company culture. Among a slew of qualified candidates, your unique experiences and traits can set you apart. Still, as much sociological research demonstrates, employers’ gender, race, and ethnic biases can lurk beneath homophily, contributing to discrimination in hiring. To ensure that your resume gets a fair look, you can craft materials in gender- and ethnically-neutral ways to prevent employers from falling back on unconscious biases and stereotypes. The other message here – do your homework on potential employers and craft your messaging accordingly.

Remember too, from your own sociology courses, that considerable research points to systemic processes of unfairness and inequality in getting a job. Be prepared for this. The world is unfair. However, you also cannot let this awareness totally undermine your personal efforts. Persistence is important. Staying positive, while sometimes difficult, is important. Being proactive is important. But enter the job search with some realism, with an awareness of this as a social process open to a myriad of ups and downs.

Finally, you need to demonstrate that you are highly motivated, can take initiative, and think for yourself (especially in professional jobs). What does this mean? Every cover letter says ‘I’m highly motivated.’ You need to *show* that you are highly motivated as you go about your life. Offer to do things for other people. Be a go-getter. Don’t wait to be asked. Someone will notice. Even if they don’t hire you on the spot, they will come away impressed, and who knows, might just provide that network-tie to your dream job. ■

you should be flexible in your expectations and what might actually work for you. Be ready to package yourself in different ways. If you think about it, the basic insight here is deeply sociological: just as the specific tasks of jobs are frequently not clearly delineated in an employer’s mind, a recent college graduate can present herself or himself to the world in different ways. Workers and jobs emerge interactively – i.e., through a fundamental process of social interaction.

Summing up.

The job market is far from being the rational, efficient, and transparent clearing house where talent is matched, in the most optimal ways, with clearly delineated and specified employment opportunities. It is instead a social arena where a host of factors – from cultural to structural – shape how workers and employers ultimately find (and define) each other. To use a classic phrase from economic sociology, the job market is ‘embedded’ in society. Understanding and preparing for this is one of the best things you can do to ensure your success. ■

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Congratulations to...

Becki Ross

Dr. Ross received the ‘Hooker Distinguished Visiting Professor Fellowship’, from McMaster University this Fall, 2013.



David Tindall

Dr. Tindall has just been named a UBC USI (University Sustainability Initiative) ‘Sustainability Teaching and Learning Fellow’ for 2013-2014.



Rima Wilkes

Dr. Wilkes is now the Editor of the *Canadian Review of Sociology*, 2013-2016.



New Award: The Martha Foschi Prize in Research and Teaching

Support Sociology! We are delighted to announce a new award we are establishing at the UBC Department of Sociology, and to share with you the opportunity to participate in its success by making a matched gift. The **Martha Foschi Prize in Research and Teaching** is a new biannual prize that will recognize excellence in sociological research and teaching, while simultaneously honouring the many accomplishments of Dr. Martha Foschi. Our goal is to raise at least \$30,000 for this award.

Martha has played a leading scholarly role at UBC since she moved here in 1967. To this day she continues to work with students and conduct social experiments designed to add to our knowledge of significant social processes. Her research has been published widely and cited by colleagues around the globe. Martha touched the lives of many of us in very positive and beneficial ways. She was, and continues to be, very much the quintessential mentor, having influenced the careers of countless numbers of students.

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