

Peter McMahan

McGill University
Department of Sociology

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Academic Appointments

Assistant Professor of Sociology, McGill University	2018–
Postdoctoral Scholar, Stanford University, Departments of Computer Science, Education, and Linguistics	2017–2018

Education

PhD Sociology, University of Chicago	2017
MPP, Harris School of Public Policy, University of Chicago	2007
BA in Mathematics, Reed College	2003

Research Interests

Social networks, status, culture, computational methods, mathematical models, statistical methods

Publications

- McMahan, Peter (2024, *forthcoming*). “Ambiguous status relations and complex hierarchy among adolescents” *Socius: Sociological Research for a Dynamic World*.
- McMahan, Peter, and Eran Shor (2024). “Status Ambiguity and Multiplicity in the Selection of NBA Awards” *Sociological Science* 11:680–706.
- McMahan, Peter and Daniel A. McFarland (2021). “Creative Destruction: The Structural Consequences of Scientific Curation” *American Sociological Review* 86(2).
- Boluda, Inès Moreno, Elizabeth Patitsas, and Peter McMahan. (2021) “What Do Computer Scientists Know About Conflict Minerals?” *LIMITS Workshop on Computing within Limits*.
- McMahan, Peter, Adam Slez, and John Levi Martin (2019). “Local Network Regressions” *Socius* 5.
- McMahan, Peter and James Evans (2018). “Ambiguity and Engagement” *American Journal of Sociology* 124(2): 860–912.
- McMahan, Peter (2016). “Like Family: Network Coevolution and the Emergence of Altruism” *Journal of Mathematical Sociology* 40(2): 112:122.

Small, Mario Luis, Vontrese Deeds Pamphile, and Peter McMahan (2015). “How Stable Is the Core Discussion Network?” *Social Networks* 40 (January): 90–102.

Padgett, John F, Peter McMahan, and Xing Zhong. 2012. “Economic Production as Chemistry II.” In *The Emergence of Organizations and Markets*, edited by John F Padgett and Woody Powell. Princeton University Press.

McMahan, Peter (2008). “Cohesive Blocks Algorithm”, ‘igraph’ package for R statistical environment.

Academic Appointments and Honors

Benjamin Bloom Fellowship, University of Chicago, Division of Social Sciences	2016–2017
Associate Editor, American Journal of Sociology	2013–2014
Manuscript Board, American Journal of Sociology	2012–2013
Academic Fellowship, University of Chicago, Division of Social Sciences	2009–2014
Academic Fellowship, University of Chicago, Harris School of Public Policy Studies	2005–2007

Workshops and Conferences

Sunbelt Conference (International Network for Social Network Analysis)

<i>Setting the Record Straight: The Dynamics of Public Critique and Rebuttal in Scientific Publication</i>	2023, Portland, OR
<i>Online Networks: Identity, Boundaries, and Culture</i> (discussant)	2022, Portland, OR
<i>Setting the Tone: How Talk Reveals Relational Structures of Power</i>	2019, Montreal, Quebec
<i>Creative Destruction: The Structure and Consequences of Scientific Curation</i>	2018, Utrecht, Netherlands
<i>Adolescent Status Hierarchies</i>	2014, Saint Petersburg Beach, FL
<i>Ambiguity and Knowledge Fragmentation</i>	2013, Hamburg, Germany
<i>Evolution of Cooperation: A Networked Model of Natural Selection</i>	2012, Redondo Beach, CA

Canadian Sociological Association annual conference

<i>Setting the Record Straight: The Dynamics of Public Critique and Rebuttal in Scientific Publication</i>	2023, Toronto, Ontario
<i>Setting the Tone: How Talk Reveals Relational Structures of Power</i>	2019, Vancouver, British Columbia

American Sociological Association annual conference

<i>Adolescent Status Hierarchies</i>	2015, Chicago, IL
<i>Ambiguity and Knowledge Fragmentation</i>	2012, Denver, CO

Invited talks

Annual Reviews

<i>Creative Destruction: The Structure and Consequences of Scientific Curation</i>	2021 board meeting
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Summer Institute in Computational Social Science

<i>Culture, Knowledge, & Data</i>	June 2021
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McGill School of Computer Science Colloquium

<i>Discovering group status structures using conversational data</i>	November 2019
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McGill Centre on Population Dynamics: Social statistics & Population Dynamics Seminar series

<i>Creative destruction: the structure and consequences of scientific curation</i>	March 2019
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Media Appearances

“Review Articles Cause ‘Dramatic Loss’ in Citations for Original Research.” (Clare Watson) Nature Index (blog), May 11, 2021. <https://www.natureindex.com/news-blog/review-articles-cause-dramatic-loss-in-citations-for-original-research>.

“Literature Reviews ‘Poach Attention’ from Original Research.” (Jack Grove) Times Higher Education (THE) (blog), May 12, 2021. <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/literature-reviews-poach-attention-original-research>.

“Academic Review Articles Lead to Fewer Citations for Underlying Research.” (Jack Grove) The Academic Times (blog), March 28, 2021. <https://academictimes.com/academic-review-articles-lead-to-fewer-citations-for-underlying-research>.

“Uncertainty in Science Communication: Include It or Lose It?” (Alice Fleerackers)
ScienceBorealis.ca Blog. May 4, 2020. <https://blog.scienceborealis.ca/uncertainty-in-science-communication-include-it-or-lose-it/>.

Teaching

† indicates course substantially revised by P. McMahan

‡ indicates new course developed by P. McMahan

Social Networks (McGill University, SOCI 624) ‡

Winter 2024 • Fall 2022

Networks and Social Structures (McGill University, SOCI 424) ‡

Winter 2024 • Fall 2022 • Fall 2021 • Fall 2020

Sociology of Science (McGill University, SOCI 325) ‡

Fall 2024 • Fall 2023 • Fall 2022 • Fall 2021 • Winter 2021 • Winter 2020

Quantitative Methods 2 (McGill University, SOCI 620) †

Winter 2023 • Winter 2022 • Winter 2021 • Winter 2020

Sociological Perspectives (McGill University, SOCI 210) †

Winter 2024 • Winter 2023 • Winter 2022 • Fall 2020 • Fall 2019 • Fall 2018

Computing for Social Sciences and Humanities (University of Chicago) ‡

2015 • 2014 • 2012 • 2011

Academic service

Service to the McGill Department of Sociology

Member, Graduate Admissions Committee, 2020–2021, 2024–2025

Member, Ad Hoc Hiring Decision-making Committee, 2024–2025

Member, Social Committee, 2024–2025

Member, Equity Committee, 2023–2024

Organizer, Graduate Professional Development Seminar, 2021–present

Organizer, Department Research Series, 2022–present

Member, Comprehensive Exam Committee (Social Stratification), 2018–present

Chair, Comprehensive Exam Committee (Sociology of Knowledge), 2018–present

Chair, Quantitative Curriculum Committee, 2023–present

Pre-tenure representative, Chair Selection Committee, 2023

Member, Search Committee (Demography), 2023

Member, Search Committee (Open), 2022

Member, Graduate Committee, 2019–2020

Departmental representative to Faculty of Arts Meetings, 2018–2021

Member, Visiting Speaker Series Committee, 2018–2019

Service to the Faculty of Arts and McGill University

Member, Fellowships Evaluation Committee for the 2023 SSHRC Canada Graduate Scholarships - Doctoral (CGS D) competition, 2022–present

Member, Internal Social Science and Humanities Development Grants committee, 2022–present

Co-organizer, Summer ‘prefresher’ courses in mathematics and R 2019–present

Pro-dean, PhD oral defense (Department of Civil Engineering and Applied Mechanics), 2021

Guest lecturer, Research Methods: Theory and Practice (EDEM 690), Faculty of Education, 2020

Co-organizer, *Stan for the people* (graduate workshop in advanced statistical computation), 2019

Service to the Profession

Journal article reviewer:

American Journal of Sociology · *American Sociological Review* · *Social Forces* · *Network Science* · *Social Networks* · *Plos One* · *Poetics*

Conferences:

Sunbelt Conference (INSNA), *reviewer and session chair*: “Online networks: Identity, boundaries, and culture”, 2022

ICA Regional Conference 2022 (Computational Communication Research), *member of programming committee and reviewer*, 2022

International Conference on Computational Social Science, *reviewer*, 2018
Social Informatics, *reviewer*, 2017

External grant/fellowship reviewer:

European Research Council (ERC) Frontier Research Grants, 2023–present

National Killam Program fellowship, 2023–present

New Frontiers in Research Fund - Exploration grant, 2020

Professional memberships

American Sociological Association

Canadian Sociological Association

McGill Centre on Population Dynamics

Consortium on Analytics for Data-Driven Decision-Making

Languages

- English (native speaker)
- French (CEFR certified level B2)
- Spanish (intermediate)