

Introduction: Researching Complex Inequalities: Issues, Practice and Pedagogy, In Honour of Janet Siltanen

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The idea for this special collection came out of a shared desire to recognize the impact of Janet Siltanen's mentorship and scholarship through her decades-long career in the areas of sociology of gender and labour, feminist political economy, and post-positivist research design and methodology. All three co-editors were supervised by Janet during our PhDs, and we've drawn on Janet's academic work in various ways since then. A few years ago, we got together after Helin suggested a festschrift project in honour of Janet's contributions to academia. In our conversation, we each spoke to the profound role that Janet played not only in our dissertations and the process of completing our degrees, but in how we've come to approach our own research, mentorship and collaborative practice (both inside and outside of academics). One thing that stood out for us is Janet's ongoing commitment to praxis and the consistency with which she weaves together theory and practice, not only in her scholarship but in everyday life. We wanted to create a space of reflection and conversation about Janet's work in feminist political economy and post-positivist methodology, but we also wanted to highlight her approach to mentorship and what we've all experienced as her ethics of care.

What drew each of us to Janet as a supervisor wasn't necessarily that our specific topics reflected her areas of expertise, but that her methodological approaches deeply resonated with the ways in which we each wanted to explore our areas of research. She knew that for graduate students, especially women, to succeed in academic work and, really, in order to survive in academia, the most important thing was creating a supportive, empowering and respectful environment. Janet approached mentorship with a high degree of intentionality and integrity, mentoring the whole student, not just the academic components. There was a deep feminist ethics of care and an ability to move across different roles, or different relationships with ease, while still maintaining professional boundaries.; which speaks to her skill as a mentor. There's space in the mentor relationship to be different things to each other at different times, and in different moments.

From long chats about dogs over tea, to writing retreats with goats and providing temporary

living arrangements, Janet was able to offer different kinds of support and interventions to enable her students to succeed, however that might look like for them. She modeled a form of collaborative mentorship that re-imagined the relationship between student and supervisor outside of the power dynamics and hierarchical structures that dominate much of academia. Because her methodological and pedagogical approach is highly process oriented, she's able to bring a versatility and flexibility to mentorship that greatly benefits the student. Process orientation requires holding space for a messy learning process for two critical skills for any academic work.

This doesn't mean she didn't bring a strong critical lens to her students' work (quite the opposite!), but she was able to teach her students to embrace, rather than fear, the complexity of the research process. This approach to mentorship led us to reflect on the connection between her scholarship and everyday ethics; her contributions to feminist political economy and research methods but also this ethics of care that she models in her relationship with colleagues and students.

The academic commitment she embodies far extends what we imagine a lot of other academics would understand by academic commitment. This of course connects to conversations around what it means to engage in public sociology, or critical and engaged sociology, but really, at its core, what we see in Janet is an understanding that our academic commitments pertain not only to our commitments to scholarship, but to our political commitments and personal commitments, all intertwined together. The ability to hold those together, over time, takes a high degree of skill and integrity.

The intent of this collection is not to provide a biography of Janet's past and present research, but we do want to highlight some of her work that has been most meaningful to us, from her interventions on collaborative, reflexive research, to proposals for prefigurative feminist organizing and gender equality, Janet's impact has been far-reaching. The 2015 article she cowrote with Fran Klodawsky and Caroline Andrew on feminist organizing offers an illustrative case study of prefigurative politics in everyday forms of resistance. It also serves as an excellent example of how to bring a feminist ethics of care to collaborative research. One of the central

concepts of Janet's most recent work is complexity, highlighting how to sit with both conceptual and methodological complexity such that it enriches rather than destabilizes a line of inquiry (See: Klodawsky et al 2017. *Toward Equity and Inclusion in Canadian Cities: Lessons from Critical Praxis-Oriented Research*)

Using complexity as a lens, this collection of pieces offers diverse contributions that reflect on various elements of Janet's scholarship, research collaborations, collegiality and mentorship. In *The Power of Friendship*, Judith Fewell and Liz Bondi reflect on their collaborations with Janet during her time at the University of Edinburgh and the importance of their 30 + years' relationship that was both personal, professional and intellectual. Lynda Harling-Stalker explores the concept of "making as method" to reflect on the inextricable links between theory and method that many women academics mobilize in their work. Against this backdrop, she highlights the impact of Janet's mentorship and the example she set for how to navigate academia as a woman. Wendy Bottero examines the ways in which complexity is mobilized in Janet's work, and the contributions this has made, both conceptually and methodologically. Finally, Nick Scott reflects on canine citizenship through an encounter with Janet and her dog Kaela.

Janet retired in 2018 but remains a Professor Emerita in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Carleton University, and a valued friend and mentor to many.