

PROMOTION RECOMMENDATION  
The University of Michigan  
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts

Sandra R. Levitsky, assistant professor of sociology, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, is recommended for promotion to associate professor of sociology, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.

Academic Degrees:

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| Ph.D. | 2006 | University of Wisconsin, Madison                |
| M.S.  | 2001 | University of Wisconsin-Madison                 |
| J.D.  | 1997 | University of Minnesota Law School. Minneapolis |
| B.A.  | 1993 | Amherst College                                 |

Professional Record:

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|----------------|---|
| 2009 – present | Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, University of Michigan                          |
| 2007 – 2009    | Post-doctoral Research Fellow, Department of Sociology, University of Michigan                |
| 2003 – 2006    | Visiting Scholar and Lecturer, Department of Sociology, University of California, Los Angeles |

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching – Professor Levitsky’s primary teaching areas are in law and society and in social movements. She has taught twelve undergraduate courses and two graduate seminars. Student evaluations are spectacular and on average are in the upper quartile across the board. Her teaching success lies in her passion for the materials, her engaging and clear lecturing style, and the innovative, effective teaching methods she has developed. To ensure that students in large courses participate in discussions, she requires them to post on a class blog and comment on other students’ posts. She also emphasizes the development of writing skills, and her courses require several short writing assignments. Professor Levitsky has advised six students on their honors thesis. Her record of graduate teaching and advising has also been impressive. She has been a co-facilitator of the graduate workshop in social movements. She has served on the dissertation committees of nine students who have completed their Ph.D., is the chair or co-chair of four dissertation committees, as well as a member of four committees. She has also served as a member or chair of six publishable paper committees, and is serving as a faculty advisor for five students at earlier stages of graduate study.

Research – Professor Levitsky’s research is situated at the intersection of the sociology of law, social movements, political sociology, and social policy. She approaches important topics in American social policy in interesting and innovative ways. She primarily uses a variety of qualitative methods, including observations, individual and group interviews as well as archival materials that are sometimes supplemented with quantitative data. Professor Levitsky has published a book, five book chapters, and four articles. She is a co-editor of a second book. Her book, Caring for Our Own, reveals a dimension of social life rarely discussed: how ordinary citizens understand and interpret political issues. Her second project is on the campaign for universal childcare and examines the kind of top-down campaign of elites likely to succeed in

the U.S., and theorizes the necessary conditions for success. Professor Levitsky's research shows a positive trajectory and an increasing willingness to engage a broader range of topics, approaches, and methods.

Recent and Significant Publications:

Caring for Our Own: Why There is No Political Demand for New American Social Welfare Rights, Oxford University Press, 2014.

"Integrating law and health policy," *Annual Review of Law and Social Science*, 9, 2013, pp. 33-50.

Social Movements and the Transformation of American Health Care, with J. Banaszak-Holl and M. Zald, (eds.), Oxford University Press, 2010.

"What rights?": The construction of political claims to American health care entitlements," *Law and Society Review*, 42(3), 2008, pp. 551-589.

Service – Professor Levitsky's service record is exemplary. In addition to serving on the departmental Committee on Graduate Affairs, Colloquium Committee, and two program area committees, she has served twice on the Executive Committee and the Personnel Committee. She has been instrumental in developing the Law and Society minor and is serving as the director of the Undergraduate Program. Professor Levitsky has been an active presence in faculty meetings, job talks, meetings with job candidates, and admissions recruitment events. In the broader intellectual community, she offers her services to American Sociology Association sections and serves as a reviewer for a number of scholarly journals. Professor Levitsky has also been very active in the Law and Society Association. She took the lead in developing an undergraduate minor in law and society that has encouraged many pre-law students to major in sociology.

External Reviewers:

Reviewer (A)

"Levitsky's scholarship consistently displays sharp theoretical analysis, elegant deployment of qualitative evidence drawn from diverse sources, and engagement with a sustained theoretical agenda that explores the processes that constrain and constitute the possibilities of political mobilization and policy change."

Reviewer (B)

"...Levitsky's book, Caring for Our Own (2014), is a masterpiece in the field of sociolegal studies. ... I think that Sandra Levitsky's work is important and path-breaking. Her record is impressive. ... Were Professor Levitsky being considered for tenure [at my institution], I have no doubt that she would be granted tenure. I think she is one of the most talented law and society scholars of her generation...when they were at her stage. I believe that she should be granted tenure at the University of Michigan."

Reviewer (C)

"...[I] think that she is one of the most interesting, original, and important sociolegal scholars [of her cohort] working on topics in the area of law, rights, and social movements. ... She is a very smart and important scholar who is making a difference in the questions that are asked as well as the modes of analysis and empirical inquiry that are mobilized to answer them."

Reviewer (D)

“Levitsky’s engagement with multiple subfields is far from superficial and reflects the kind of expertise we would expect from specialists in each of them. ...she has identified a set of substantively important questions that have provided her with the opportunity to stake out her own theoretical approach in a way that engages with central debates within and across these fields. It is at such intersections that the more interesting work is being done and I believe that Levitsky’s work is really in the top tier of recently promoted junior faculty and those approaching tenure...”

Reviewer (E)

“...I always have found Professor Levitsky and her work to be insightful and innovative. With the publication and early reception of her remarkable *Caring for Our Own*, however, she has moved into the front ranks of her generation of scholars working at the intersection of law and social movements, which is a particularly vibrant area of inquiry. I would argue that she belongs among the front ranks of sociologists in her generation regardless of subfield.”

Reviewer (F)

“...I strongly believe that Sandy’s record merits promotion and tenure. I also am very enthusiastic about her new research on the politics of early childhood education. The new work too promises fundamental – and policy relevant – sociological insights into the opportunities and limits for social change to improve well-being.”

Summary of Recommendation:

Professor Levitsky has produced a strong record of scholarship, and has made extraordinary and unique contributions to our teaching and service missions. In all three areas she clears the bar for promotion. On behalf the Executive Committee of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, I recommend that Assistant Professor Sandra R. Levitsky be promoted to the rank of associate professor of sociology, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.



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Andrew D. Martin, Dean  
Professor of Political Science and Statistics  
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts

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