

# Charlotte Ellertson Social Science Postdoctoral Fellowship in Abortion and Reproductive Health

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## ANNOUNCING THE 2008-2010 ELLERTSON FELLOWS

We are pleased to announce the 2008-2010 Charlotte Ellertson Social Science Postdoctoral Fellows in Abortion and Reproductive Health. Ellertson Fellows participate in a two-year postdoctoral research and leadership training fellowship. The objectives of the fellowship are to support a multidisciplinary cohort of promising new social science researchers who study abortion and reproductive health, and to produce and share research that informs policy and program design. Fellows are committed to research on abortion and careers that include a focus on scholarship and advocacy.

We selected five fellows for the third cohort of the Ellertson Fellowship, one at each of the five fellowship sites: Columbia University, the Guttmacher Institute, Ibis Reproductive Health, Johns Hopkins University and the University of California, San Francisco. We received a large number of extremely competitive applications from high caliber, socially committed researchers and future leaders in the field of reproductive health.

The five 2008-2010 Ellertson fellows are:

**Danielle Bessett**, *PhD expected May 2008, Sociology, New York University*

Danielle Bessett's dissertation is a multi-method study of reproductive experiences and inequities as they are reflected in longitudinal interviews with 64 pregnant women in the Northeastern U.S. and explores how these women define a "normal" pregnancy. Her research interests include pregnancy, abortion, reproductive rights, medicine, gender, family and inequality. As an Ellertson Fellow, she intends to develop her dissertation into a book, enhancing its accessibility for practitioner, policymaker, and popular audiences, as well as to embark on a new study of the effect of previous abortions on women's experiences of pregnancy. She will work with [Deborah Kacanek](#), ScD, the site director at [Ibis Reproductive Health](#) in Cambridge, MA.

**Silvia De Zordo**, *PhD expected May 2008, Social Anthropology, Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales*

Silvia De Zordo's doctoral dissertation is on state reproductive health policies and their impacts on the lives and fertility of working class, black women in Bahia (Brazil). Her research interests encompass family planning, contraception and abortion in Latin America, as well as gender and race studies, among other areas. As an Ellertson Fellow, she intends to draw on her training in social anthropology and to build on her dissertation work to investigate health professionals' moral and religious convictions and their perceptions of legal and illegal abortion in Brazil. She anticipates continued collaboration with Brazilian partners, including the Women and Health Research Center of the Federal University of Bahia which is concurrently researching legal abortion in the Northeast of Brazil. She will be working with [Wendy Chavkin](#), MD, MPH, the site director with [The Heilbrunn Department of Population and Family Health](#), at the Mailman School of Public Health at Columbia University in New York, NY.

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**Megan Kavanaugh, DrPH expected August 2008, Behavioral and Community Health Sciences, University of Pittsburgh**

Megan Kavanaugh's dissertation research explores women's pregnancy intentions and examines the social determinants of unintended pregnancy among low-income, minority and young women. Other research interests include understanding resistance to IUD adoption in the U.S. and increasing access to medication abortion in developing countries. She intends to draw on her quantitative and qualitative training to identify and investigate causal pathways through which social disadvantage leads to higher risks for unintended pregnancy, focusing in particular on women who have elective abortions. She will work with [Larry Finer](#), PhD, the site director at the [Guttmacher Institute](#) in New York, NY.

**Alison Norris, MD, PhD 2006, Epidemiology and Public Health, Yale University**

In her dissertation research, Alison Norris used a combination of epidemiologic and ethnographic methodologies to examine the contextual influences on sexuality, sexual behaviors and sexually transmitted infection (STI) prevalence for residents of a sugar cane plantation in northern Tanzania. Dr. Norris's research interests encompass the social and context-specific determinants of health and illness, particularly in the areas of sexual and reproductive health. She intends to bring her epidemiological and clinical training to bear on under-explored issues in reproductive health, particularly access to safe abortion for underserved populations of women. During her fellowship, she plans to investigate how abortion is understood, sought and experienced in Tanzania, where it is illegal except as a lifesaving procedure. She will work with [Michelle Hindin](#), PhD, MHS, the site director with the [Population, Family and Reproductive Health Department](#) and the Gates Institute for Population and Reproductive Health at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, MD.

**Julia Steinberg, PhD expected May 2008, Psychology, Arizona State University**

For her dissertation, Julia Steinberg studied how threats to women's identities arising from societal stereotypes regarding women's math abilities affect women in math fields. Her research interests encompass how identity shapes individual's behavior, cognition, and affect. As an Ellertson Fellow, she intends to draw on her training in social and quantitative psychology to conduct research on how identity affects women's pregnancy decisions and their post-pregnancy experiences. First, she plans to examine the role of stigma, female identity, and future career aspirations in women's and adolescent's decisions regarding unintended pregnancies. She also intends to explore the relationships between violence, unintended pregnancy, pregnancy outcome, and mental health. She will work with [Cynthia Harper](#), PhD, the site director at the [Bixby Center for Global Reproductive Health](#) at the University of California, San Francisco.

For further information about the Ellertson Fellowship, please contact us at [fellowship@ibisreproductivehealth.org](mailto:fellowship@ibisreproductivehealth.org), or visit our website at [www.ibisreproductivehealth.org/fellowship/index.cfm](http://www.ibisreproductivehealth.org/fellowship/index.cfm).

