



SOCIOLOGICAL PRACTICE NEWSLETTER

Prepared for the American Sociological Association

Section on Sociological Practice

Summer 2005

MERGER NEWS:

AACS has Incorporated

Augie Diana and Ross Koppel

Our new organization, the Association for Applied and Clinical Sociology (AACS), has been incorporated in the state of Virginia. Bob Dotzler, SPA treasurer, completed the forms and received confirmation from the government. We are now seeking 501(c)3 status as a non-profit professional/research/scholarly association. That process can take a few months, but is granted retroactively to the date of incorporation.

Though the missions of the two merging organizations were similar and intentions clear, many well-documented features of organizations posed challenges. Although both organizations contain sociologists and have as their focus the application of sociological knowledge (theory and research) to practical environments, SAS and SPA historically had chosen to organize themselves differently.

On the mundane but critical level, the merger involves joining or modifying assets, budgets, boards, by-laws, publications, ethics codes, membership structures, meeting schedules, meeting formats, board rules, officer and committee roles, and dues structures. Fortunately, we have found a positive, warm and ecumenical spirit among the merger task forces and boards; and the process has gone surprisingly well. The Journal has been publishing jointly for the past year, so that the merger of the journals is mostly accomplished. By-laws were similar, although there's nothing like a close examination of old organizational documents to reveal internal inconsistencies and the vestigial remains of earlier solutions. Other joining processes are generally smooth.

Join us to celebrate and envision our new organization at the Joint Conference, following the ASA Meeting at the Philadelphia Marriott, August 16-17.

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Another tool for practice...

Dr. Billson leads training sessions on focus groups. Here she discusses the uses of this classical applied tool.

What Is A Focus Group? Reviving an Applied Sociology Method

Janet Mancini Billson

Group Dimensions International

Although sociologists Robert K. Merton and Patricia L. Kendall initially conceptualized focus group research in their 1946 article, "The Focussed Interview" (*American Journal of Sociology*),¹ for decades the approach was relatively ignored by sociologists and misused by market researchers (who began to popularize them without much regard for rigor in the 1960s). Focus groups have recently become a respected qualitative method, however, as researchers have found ways to ensure systematic data collection, neutral, skilled moderation, and careful research design. Focus group research emanates from sociological theories regarding both data collection and group interaction. The approach is flexible and versatile, and is now being used widely in social policy, scholarly, and dissertation research.

Purpose: Focus groups present an ideal vehicle for making data-driven recommendations for innovative changes in policies, programs, organizational structure, and development strategies.

Uses: Both private and public sectors have adopted focus groups to study values, attitudes, product preferences, political images, social issues, motivations, and program or policy impacts. Organizations use focus groups to determine client needs and interests; conduct program evaluations; test materials or plans; pre-test survey questionnaires; and explore complex problems. The uses of focus groups differ greatly in topic, scope, and end product, but they have much in common.

The most appropriate uses of focus groups occur when researchers desire group interaction around a topic, seek complexity of responses, and value triangulation of methods (which reinforces the advantages and power of each method, while at the same time minimizing their disadvantages and weaknesses).

- In evaluation research, participants reflect on an experience they have shared (e.g., a policy, program, conference, course) and suggest improvements.
- In product evaluation, respondents offer views of products (e.g., a development manual, website, or technical assistance module).
- In stakeholder and needs assessment research, respondents express their needs for information, programs, services, etc.

Size: A focus group interview works best with 6 to 12 people, which allows for breadth and variation in viewpoints, yet ensures that every respondent has enough "air time" to participate with depth.

Timing: Focus groups usually last about 120 minutes without a break, which allows time for following through on each major line of questioning without leading to moderator and/or respondent burnout.

Questions: Focus group questions are generally open-ended; the moderator does not supply alternative responses or introduce his/her opinion into the conversation.

Pros and Cons of Focus Groups

Unless research design, recruitment of group members, moderation, data analysis, and report preparation follow the canons of good social science, the method will generate misleading information and unreliable data. As with any other research approach, focus group researchers should be grounded in general principles of scientific analysis and trained in group dynamics. Training can help to minimize the weaknesses and maximize the strengths of focus group research.

Pros: Focus groups

- ♦ Are useful in evaluating programs, courses, and other shared experiences.
- ♦ Can be used for program monitoring, enabling mid-course corrections instead of allowing problems to persist and lead to poor end-point evaluations.
- ♦ May be less expensive than other methods, depending upon setting.
- ♦ Afford depth and insight; responses contextualize quantitative data from pre- and post-tests or surveys.
- ♦ Generate insights that might not occur without the cross-fertilization of ideas that occurs in a well-moderated focus group.

Cons: On the other hand, focus groups

- ♦ Require careful planning.
- ♦ Can be difficult to organize.
- ♦ Often suffer from poor research design, which makes it difficult to interpret findings.
- ♦ Can become politicized if recruitment is carried out by local organizers or leaders.
- ♦ Result in poor data if weak moderation allows a few people to dominate.
- ♦ Yield questionable results when loosely structured, leading, or badly moderated.
- ♦ Depend on expertise in analyzing qualitative data, or important themes may be lost or findings may be misconstrued.

When carefully designed and properly executed, though, focus group research produces useful data that can trigger insights and suggest further research.

¹ This early exploration was followed by *The Focused Interview: A Manual of Problems and Procedures*, by Robert K. Merton, Albert E. Gollin, and Patricia L. Kendall. New York: The Free Press, 1956; a revised version of this classic was published in 1990. "Focussed [sic] group interview" was shortened over the years to "focus group."

To learn more: *Conducting Professional Focus Groups for Social, Academic, and Policy Research*. Two-day, intensive training workshop, Sept. 22-23, Barrington, Rhode Island, and optional third "clinic day" Sept. 24; 401-246-0797 or 401-465-6004 for further information; limited to eight participants; Deadline August 1, <<http://www.focusgroupdimensions.com>>.

SECTION AWARDS

The Nominations Committee of the Sociological Practice Section is pleased to announce the winners of the William Foote Whyte and Student Practitioner Awards. There were many excellent nominees for both awards, which will be presented at the **Reception in Philadelphia, Monday August 15, 6.30 pm.**

The **William Foote Whyte Award** is presented to an individual who has made notable contributions to sociological practice which can include several of the following elements: outstanding clinical or applied work, exceptional service to the section, publications that advance both the theory and methods of sociological practice, or mentoring and training of student for careers in sociological practice.

This year's winner is **Severyn T. Bruyn**, Professor Emeritus, Boston College. Professor Bruyn's interests are in the areas of community development, social economy, and cultural evolution. He was among the first to write extensively on the philosophy and logic of participant observation. From his early work interning as a sociologist in the federal prison system in the late 1940s through his work in the 50s directing a program in community development, he explored and developed new arenas for sociological practice.

He was a pioneer in illuminating the sociological aspects of business and the "social economy." His studies in Central America, the Caribbean, and Europe emphasize field research. He has organized a number of conferences at Boston College on the topics of world peace, community development and joint-degree projects with the School of Management.

His books include *Communities in Action* (1963), *The Human Perspective in Sociology: The Methodology of Participation* (1966), *The Social Economy: People Transforming Modern Business* (1977), *Nonviolent Action and Social Change* (1979), *The Field of Social Investment* (1987), *A Civil Economy: Transforming the Market in the 21st Century* (2000), and others. His current writing concerns the idea of the "sacred" and involves an extensive critique of the modern university.

The winner of the **Student Practitioner Award** is **Dolores Edelen**, who has an MA in Applied Sociology from the Department of Sociology and Anthropology of the University of Central Florida. She is the first candidate accepted into the department's new PhD program. Her interests include: the Sociology of Mental Illness, Education, Work and Occupations; and Clinical, Organizational, and Urban Sociology. A research associate with the department's Institute of Social and Behavioral Sciences (ISBS), she has conducted a variety of social problems research for local policy makers. Her latest publication, drawn from her thesis work on the community effects of churn (population turnover) is a co-authored encyclopedia entry on public housing. She is the 2003-04 winner of the Society for Applied Sociology (SAS) problem-solving competition.

Feature: Point of View

Note from the Editor: In each issue, either I or another contributor address a topic that has implications for both society and our field.

THE NEXT 100 YEARS...

Practicing Sociology to Revitalize Organizations

Kathryn Goldman Schuyler
Alliant International University

People spend most of their lives in organizations. Historically, some of the key works in sociology focus on the role of organizations in our lives and in the development of society, yet in the today's world of organizational consulting, the field of 'organizational psychology' thrives, while 'organizational sociology' is a relatively underdeveloped area.

I believe that fostering the development of healthier organizations can have a huge impact on people's lives. Many of us work in them (occupying a period of time equivalent to one-third of our lives), and everyone interacts with large organizations in significant ways. We are customers in the health care system, students and parents of children in schools, and citizens who are impacted by city, county, state, and federal governments. If our experiences in these portions of our lives were conducive to positive human relations, to a sense of self-worth, and to mutual respect, it would be a powerful force for positive change in the world.

Most people learn about organizations as they do about families: from their real-life experience of them, not from what is written or known in the scholarly world. This means that the organizations that affect large portions of the population have a tremendous impact on people's ideas about what an organization is, what it can or cannot be, and the extent to which they constitute a force for good or ill. Unfortunately, many organizational leaders do not grasp the impact of their organization on the state of mind of those working within it or doing business with it, nor have they been taught about how much their own state of mind influences the resilience and performance of the organization.

My commitment is to a sociological practice that contributes significantly to the creation of organizations that support "reciprocal nourishment" between individuals and organizations, and address the impact of the organization on the environment. This means organizations designed to enable the growth and development of their members, with jobs and training designed so individuals have the knowledge and skills to enhance the organization's long-term viability. This is in harmony with the 'triple bottom line,' approach that measures social and environmental criteria, in addition to traditional economic ones.

If we increasingly incorporate theory and practice on working with organizations into our undergraduate and graduate training, organizational sociology can be a flourishing arena for practice.

Practice-Related Events at ASA Annual Meeting in Philadelphia

Please check the ASA and SAS websites for additional information. Unless otherwise specified, sessions are at the Philadelphia Marriott. Only the designated presenter is listed below; other authors listed in programs and on websites.

WORKSHOP: Developing an Internship Program in Applied Sociology. Sat, Aug 13, 8:30 - 10:10 AM.

Organizer: Jammie Price (Appalachian State University)

WORKSHOP: Teaching Applied Sociology. Sat, Aug 13, 10:30 AM - 12:10 AM. Organizer: Robert E. Kettlitz (Hastings College)

Leaders: John E. Glass (Colin County Community College), Robert E. Kettlitz (Hastings College), Laurie M. Joyner (Loyola University-New Orleans), Jammie Price (Appalachian State University), Tillman Rodabough (Baylor University), Stephen F. Steele (Anne Arundel Community College), Jay A. Weinstein (Eastern Michigan University)

THEMES: As contrasted with the traditional sociology curriculum... (1) Topics: How do conceptual and theoretical materials differ in teaching applied sociology? (2) Tools: What tools do students taking applied sociology acquire that are not provided otherwise? (3) Tasks: What are the purposes and nature of the active learning strategies employed in teaching applied sociology?

WORKSHOP: Community-Based Research: A Workshop of Teaching to Diversify Voices. Sat, Aug 13, 10:30 AM - 12:10 PM, Loews Hotel.

WORKSHOP: Career Opportunities for Sociologists in State Government. Sunday, August 14, 8:30 AM - 10:10 PM.

WORKSHOP: Consulting to Create Organizations of the Future (Co-Sponsor: Section on Sociological Practice) Sun, Aug 14, 10:30 AM - 12:10 PM. Organizer and President: Kathryn Goldman Schuyler (Alliant International University).

Leaders: Kathy Stolley (Northrop Grumman), Kathryn Goldman Schuyler (Alliant International University)

Combines presentations on specific consulting projects with experiential activities designed to assist participants in clarifying their own goals, strengths, skills, and learning needs as consultants. Dr. Stolley discusses group decision support software (GDSS) used in consulting to NATO and the US Joint Forces Command. Dr. Goldman Schuyler shares work with executives on organizational transformation and change.

POSTER SESSION: Applied and Clinical Sociology. Co-sponsors: Society for Applied Sociology & Sociological Practice Association, Sun, Aug 14, 10:30 AM - 12:10 PM. Organizer: Joan Vitek Hiller (Social Research Associates, Inc.)

01. Deaf Prison Inmates: Characteristics and Conditions *Margaret Weigers Vitullo (Gallaudet University)

02. "I'm Tired, Not Sad": Benefits and Burdens of Mothering a Child with a Disability, *Sara E. Green (University of South Florida)

03. Five-Decade Analysis of Gender Disparities in Japanese Mother's Day and Father's Day Comic Strips, *Saori Yasumoto (Georgia State University)

04. Man's Best Friend? Stage of Family Life, Dog Ownership, and Self-Esteem, *Krista Marie Clark (Purdue University)

05. Comparing the Long Term Consequences of Drug Treatment Using Latent Growth Curve Models, *Tihomir N Enev (University of Delaware)

WORKSHOP: Non-Academic Career Search. Sun, Aug 14, 12:30 - 2:10 PM Organizer and Leader: Cynthia L. Sipe

Panelists: Deborah Holtzman (Centers for Disease Control), Melody A. Lawrence (Life Care Centers of America), Leora Lawton (TechSociety Research)

TOPICS: 1. Getting to the interview ... networking, job ads, attitude, presentation of self; 2. Interviewing - getting them, behaving in them, following up after, the first, second, third...offers, negotiations; 3. Getting to the next job...networking on the job, getting recognition for work done, dealing with adversaries; 4. Non-academic soft skills...being proactive, continuous education, getting it done...from calendars, to knowing MS office, etc.

REGULAR SESSION: Applied/Clinical Sociological Research. Mon, Aug 15, 10:30 AM - 12:10 PM.

Organizer & President: James G. Houglund (University of Kentucky)

C. Margaret Hall (Georgetown University) *Narrative As Vital Methodology In Clinical Sociology*

Helen Rosenberg (Univ of Wisconsin-Parkside) *Program Evaluation in Community Context: Competing Perspectives on the Meaning of Success*

Molly A McGarrigle Stuhlsatz (BSCS) *Student Self Perception of Interest and Ability in Science*

Jay A. Weinstein (Eastern Michigan University) *The Marginalization of Application in US Sociology*

Discussant: James Sherohman (St Cloud State University)

WORKSHOP: Career Paths Outside the Academy. Mon, Aug 15, 2:30 - 4:10 PM. Organizer: Leora Lawton (TechSociety Research) President: Estelle Disch (University of Massachusetts, Boston)

Panelists: Alice Kroliczak (Health Resources & Services Admin), Margaret Mueller, (Leo J. Shapiro & Associates), Melissa Katherine Marcello (Pursuant Research)

TOPICS: 1) insights on what knowledge, skills and abilities a sociologist needs which they may not have been exposed to in their sociological education 2) how attendees could acquire those knowledge, skills, and abilities 3) what non-academic career paths look like.

WORKSHOP: Careers for Sociologists in the Justice System. Mon, Aug 15, 4:30 - 6:10 PM.

SPECIAL SESSION: "Targeting, Race/Ethnicity, and Censuses: Past and Future", Co-Sponsors: Section on Sociological Practice, Section on Racial and Ethnic Minorities, Mon, Aug 15, 4:30 - 6:10 PM.

Organizer & Presider: Kathryn Goldman Schuyler (Alliant International University)

William Seltzer (Fordham University) *Population Data, Racial/Ethnic Targeting, Human Rights, and Ethics*

Ellen Percy Kraly (Colgate University) *Australian Aborigines and Australian Censuses: The Reckoning of Section 127 of the Commonwealth Constitution*

Clara E. Rodriguez (Fordham University) *Race/Ethnicity, Latinos and the U.S. Census*

Margo J. Anderson (University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee) *Insights from Historical Analysis*

WORKSHOP: MFP Proposal Writing. Tues, Aug 16, 8:30 AM - 10:10 AM.

TEACHING WORKSHOP: The Place of Theory in Applied Sociology. Tues, Aug 16, 10:30 AM to 12:10 PM. Organizers: Jay A. Weinstein (Eastern Michigan University), Marvin S. Finkelstein.

Panelists: Kristine J. Ajrouch (Eastern Michigan University), Michael J. Capece, Robert A. Dentler (University of Massachusetts- Boston), Judith K. Little (Humboldt State University), Jammie Price (Appalachian State University), Stephen F. Steele (Anne Arundel Community College)

Participants discuss: (1) the challenges and prospects associated with integrating theoretical perspectives into courses on applied sociology and (2) the role of application-focused material in courses on sociological theory. Our premise is that theory is one of the applied sociologist's most potent tools for problem solving and that its use distinguishes sociological practitioners from other professionals who do similar work.

SECTION SESSION: "The Future of Sociological Practice: Conceptualization and Measurement Issues", Tues, Aug 16, 10:30 AM - 12:10 PM. Organizer & Presider: Eleanor J. Lyon (University of Connecticut)

Diana M. Pearce (University of Washington) *Changing Measures, Changing Perspectives: How The Self-Sufficiency Standard Yields New Understandings Of The Nature Of Poverty*

Stacey S. Merola (American Institutes for Research) *The Problem of Measuring SES on Educational Assessments*

Holly Reed (Brown University) *The Contribution of Sociology to Forced Migration Research*

Nicole Kempeskie (New York University) *The Sociologist: A Dramatized Exploration of Feminist Roles and Research Methods*

SECTION SESSION: "Comparative Perspectives on Sociological Practice", Tues, Aug 16, 12:30-2:00 PM).

Organizer: Eleanor J. Lyon (University of Connecticut) Presider: Kristine Ajrouch (Eastern Michigan University)

Mary Gatta (Rutgers University) *Symbiotic Partnering of Sociology and Public Policy: An Example from Workforce Development*

Gail Elizabeth Murphy-Geiss (Colorado College) *Midwifery as Established Sect: An Expanded Application of the Church-Sect Continuum*

Randy Stoecker (University of Toledo) *Are We Making a Change?: The Data and Research Needs of Toledo Area Non-Profit Organizations*

Stephen F. Steele (Anne Arundel Community College) *The Sociology of the Future, or Does Sociology Have a Future?*

MEETINGS

Spivack Program in Applied Social Research Advisory Panel, Mon, Aug 15, 2:30 PM to 4:10 PM

Commission on Applied and Clinical Sociology (CACS), Mon, Aug 15, 2:30 to 6:10 PM.

Joint Board Meeting, SAS and SPA, Mon, Aug 15, Time TBD.

Association for Applied and Clinical Research Board Meeting, Mon, Aug 15, 4:30 PM - 8 PM.

The SP Section Reception and Awards Ceremony (Co-sponsored by SAS and SPA). Mon, Aug 15, 6:30-8:15 PM.

The SP Section Business & Council Meeting: Bring ideas for a better section. Tues, Aug 16, 8:30 - 10:10 AM.

The Joint SAS-SPA Annual Meeting. Meeting August 16 (after SP sessions) and August 17. Registration and other information can be found at the SAS website <http://www.appliedsoc.org/>

Joint Board Meeting, SAS and SPA, Tues, Aug 16, 8-10 PM

Joint Board Meeting, SAS and SPA, Wed Aug 17, TBD – at close of conference.

Practice Section Seeks Newsletter Editor

The Practice Section of the ASA will transition to a new Editor for this newsletter over the coming year.

We seek someone interested in producing a lively, informative newsletter two or three times per year. Requires person who anticipates deadlines, writes and edits capably, can do layout, and needs no supervision. Ideally: good at enrolling others in writing columns and news with previous experience producing a similar publication is desirable, but not essential.

Interested? Contact Kathryn Goldman Schuyler, kgschuyler@alliant.edu.

Congratulations to Newly Elected Section Officers

The Section welcomes its newly elected officers. The Chair-Elect for 2005-06 is **Kristine J. Ajrouch**. Kristine is an Associate Professor in the Dept of Sociology, Anthropology, and Criminology at Eastern Michigan University (2000-present). She has been active in the Section for many years, and is just completing a three-year term on the Council of the Section.

Past Section Chair **Leora Lawton** becomes Secretary of the Section.

Three new Council members will take office in 2005 and will serve through 2008. They are:

Robert Dentler, University of Massachusetts at Boston, robertd917@aol.com

Sam Friedman, National Development and Research Institutes, Inc., sam.friedman@ndri.org

Alice Kroliczak, Health Resources and Services Administration, AKroliczak@hrsa.gov

Thanks to everyone who agreed to be a candidate for office this year, as well as to our outgoing officers!

A Note from the Chair

Reflections on the ASA Centennial

Jay Weinstein, Eastern Michigan University

A few weeks from now we will be gathering in Philadelphia to celebrate the American Sociological Association's Centennial. Naturally, this will be an occasion to reflect on past achievements. It is likely that the meeting will also prompt us to consider some significant missed opportunities. For those with an interest in sociological practice, these reflections will have special meaning. It hardly needs to be said that applied and clinical approaches have played an unusual and often ambiguous role in the evolution of the field. Yet, I believe that we are now embarking on a new era in the history of "the other sociology."

Looking Back

The field of sociology, at least so-named, began as a social movement in Europe during revolutionary times. This novel "positive philosophy" was clearly meant to serve as a guide to human conduct in creating a better world. In the United States, in particular, this commitment was realized most effectively with the rise of the Chicago School in the first decades of the twentieth century. During this period, the terms "applied" and "clinical" sociology became part of the vocabulary of the discipline. It was also the era of Jane Addams and Emily Greene Balch, two sociologists who won the Nobel Prize for contributions to the improvement of the human condition.

At about the same time, Weber, Durkheim, and their associates in Europe, along with William Graham Sumner and the founders of what was to become the American Sociological Association in the U.S., were fighting the battle for academic legitimacy; which they ultimately won. The most visible and most consequential result of this victory is that sociology courses became a regular part of university curricula and degree programs.

Of equal importance, scholarly journals were established in the field, beginning with *L'Année sociologique* in France and the *American Journal of Sociology* in the US. Nevertheless, in an evolutionary process that Weber famously taught the world to understand, the charisma of the sociology movement was routinized as the field became a profession. This also entailed the marginalization of sociological practice.

In effect, the struggle for academic legitimacy replaced the struggle for social justice on sociology's collective agenda. According to the new gatekeepers, the field was to be understood as a profession rather than a social movement. Application was relegated to the margins of the discipline and – if it was recognized at all, it was viewed as an inferior activity.

Many of us were educated in this "pure science" tradition. We were strongly encouraged to seek academic careers in which the number of articles published in refereed journals was used as the primary measure of our worth. And we were vigorously discouraged from entertaining the "adolescent fantasy" that sociology was to be used to improve the world.

Fortunately, things are beginning to change. For various reasons, some intellectual, some political, and some market-driven, we are now experiencing a rebirth of sociological practice. I urge section members to use the ASA Centennial meeting to celebrate this rebirth and to encourage participants and colleagues to join us in helping to lead the discipline back to its applied roots.

Looking Ahead

This is the context in which I believe we should view the merger of the Society for Applied Sociology (SAS) and the Sociological Practice Association (SPA). Technically, SAS and SPA will be dissolved and a new organization will simultaneously be created to take their place: The Association for Applied and Clinical Sociology (AACS). A merger of this type has been contemplated informally several times since the two organizations were founded separately in the late 1970s.

One of the most significant outcomes of the merger involves the relationship between applied and clinical sociologists and mainstream sociology, as represented by the ASA. Clearly part of the reason that SAS and SPA were created is that members believed that the ASA was not pursuing the interests of the sociological practitioner. In recognition of these potential disparities, the ASA has undertaken numerous initiatives to forge a stronger relationship between its, largely academic, membership and applied and clinical sociologists. The most enduring of these was the creation of the ASA Section on Sociological Practice (SP) in 1978.

With the merger, and with considerable encouragement by the ASA, a genuine belief is emerging that AACS is a part – albeit a unique part – of the community of sociologists the ASA represents. The movement toward merger has been accompanied by the forging of closer ties – and considerable overlapping membership – with the ASA SP Section. The Philadelphia meeting will include the most thorough integration of events featuring applied and clinical sociology in the history of the field: These include the first Annual Meeting of AACS, SP Section Activities, and ASA regular and special sessions.

Significant challenges face the SP Section and AACS, some of which are shared by all voluntary associations of this type and some of which are unique. Most daunting, perhaps, is the need to confront a perennial structural problem, one that has been discussed at several Section Council and business meeting over the past several years. This is the relative inaccessibility of sociologists who work outside of academe. There is no publication comparable to the *ASA Guide to Graduate Programs* that will help us locate sociologists in industry, the public sector, and or non-profit organizations. And, even if such a guide could be created, it would be relatively ineffective because of the large number of sociologists (many of them non-Ph.D.s) who refer to themselves with another label and whose job description makes no mention of sociology. Surveys using cobbled-together research designs that include snowball sampling and listings of organizational personnel suggest that there are thousands, perhaps tens of thousands of applied and clinical sociologists in the US alone. Finding them, however, is a daunting task. And perhaps even more difficult is convincing those who can be found that it will benefit them to join our association.

Proposals for the Future of the Section

In the previous issue of this newsletter, I asked for some suggestions that might help us achieve our goals. Here are three of the most frequently mentioned. First, our members should consider joining and becoming active in one or more of the 43 ASA sections that support their substantive interests. After all, every practitioner practices *something*: for instance, urban and community sociology, demography, or criminology. This type of outreach can be used to inform others about the role of the SP section and the nature of its work. It would also

make it easier to recruit members of these sections to join with us.

Second, we should support AACS, and encourage it to support us. We can routinely hold jointly-sponsored events, at the annual ASA meetings and other times of year. We might also explore the possibility of discounted membership dues in AACS for those who also belong to the SP Section.

Third, although the Section no longer publishes a journal, we can readily make the AACS journal “ours.” With the merger, a new semi-annual refereed journal will be replacing *The Journal of Applied Sociology* and *Sociological Practice*, which have been published jointly for the past three issues. As editor, I can devote a section of every issue to the abstracts of papers delivered at SP Sessions at annual ASA meetings. Or we can run special SP issues with guest editors. The possibilities are virtually unlimited.

The ASA Section on Sociological Practice has always been relatively small and it has always operated more or less at the margins of the larger organization. But we have also been fortunate to have dedicated, creative, hard-working members. We sincerely hope that these membership qualities, enhanced by the energy generated by the creation of AACS, will sustain the Section and help it overcome the inevitable obstacles that it will encounter. The rest, of course, is up to us.

Jay

To reach Jay: <weinsteinjay@sbcglobal.net>

The Clinical Sociology Review with Sociological Practice on Disk is a useful teaching tool for courses in Clinical Sociology, Sociological Practice, Social Problems and others.

CSR on Disk has been produced as a public service to the field by long term member David J. Kallen. The complete table of contents is available at <http://www.dragonflycompany.com>. If ten or more copies are ordered for student use the CD will be made available at a very attractive price.

BOOKS BY MEMBERS

Kathy Stolley, **The Basics of Sociology** (Greenwood Press, 2005). Provides an introduction to core concepts in sociology and extends traditional applications by addressing globalization and the Internet. Other features include a sociology timeline, biographical profiles of more than 70 social scientists, and a chapter devoted to careers in sociology (including career preparation). Each chapter contains a list of applied career options as well as additional print and non-print resources.

Praeger of Greenwood Publishers has just published Robert Dentler's textbook, **Practicing Sociology: Selected Fields**. It is available in paperback and hard cover. The book is aimed at orienting graduate students and senior sociology majors toward work in practice. For an examination copy or purchase, email your request to text@greenwood.com

Applied Sociology and Coastal Zone Management: Research on Resource Use, Seafood Safety and Ecological Knowledge

J. Steven Picou

Cecelia Formichella

Department of Sociology, Anthropology & Social Work
University of South Alabama

Over the last decade, applied sociologists have become increasingly interested in the theoretical and practical issues associated with the relationship between human communities and the biophysical environment (Picou, 2000; Picou and Marshall, 2002). Current estimates place between 30 to 70 percent of the American population living within approximately 160 miles of U.S. coastal zones (Creel, 2003). Given this increase in human impacts on the coastal environment and its resources, there are potentially many harmful consequences to ecosystems resulting in threats to their long-term survival. In addition, resource-use patterns of humans are diverse and may lead to competition for strategic influence over the development and/or preservation of these biophysical resources and coastal areas. The continued ecological health and vitality of coastal zone regions is necessarily dependent on empirical information regarding human impacts to facilitate decisions of policymakers, resource managers and community leaders for the implementation of beneficial and effective policies.

The systematic collection of data from user-groups provides policy makers with valuable information regarding attitudes toward the natural environment and its resources, resource depletion, educational needs of coastal communities, as well as shifts in public opinion regarding environmental concerns. Our present research agenda focuses on issues pertinent to the sustainability of the Gulf coast region with the intention of providing relevant and meaningful information to policy makers, community leaders and the general public. In a project entitled, "Environmental Attitudes and Resource Use: Assessing the Impact of 'Snowbirds' on the Alabama Coastal Zone," the focus is on environmental attitudes and resource impacts of these temporary residents to the Alabama Coastal Zone. In south Alabama alone, it is estimated that, in the winter, over 40,000 "snowbirds" migrate to the coastal region for a time period which may last as long as six months. Nonetheless, there is very little reliable information regarding their environmental attitudes, behavioral patterns and use of natural resources. Given the increasing numbers of winter migrants to these southern coastal areas, the likelihood of impacts to the natural environment is significant.

Not only does population growth result in more impacts on the biophysical environment and its resources, but it also has consequences for environmental pollution. This, in turn, may increase the risks associated

with food consumption, and in this particular case of coastal regions, seafood consumption.

Two areas of concern related to seafood consumption are methylmercury contamination of finfish and the risks associated with the consumption of oysters, most notably raw oysters. We are currently collecting data related to both of these issues. In a project funded by the *Mississippi Alabama Sea Grant Consortium*, "Patterns of Seafood Consumption among Residents of the Coastal Regions of Alabama and Mississippi," a poll of recreational anglers in the five coastal counties of Alabama and Mississippi will document fish consumption patterns to determine level of exposure to methylmercury for this high-risk group. This research has important policy implications for two reasons. First, preliminary results suggest that most recreational anglers are male; second, warnings for the risk associated methylmercury toxicity generally target children and pregnant women, potentially overlooking the health consequences for males.

In a related study ("Assessing Public Awareness of the Benefits of Oyster Reef Restoration: Laying the Technical Groundwork for an Educational Outreach Program"), we are assessing public opinion as it relates to: (1) patterns of oyster consumption; (2) risks for individual health; (2) perceptions of effective management strategies of the oyster fishery; and (4) the benefits of the oyster fishery for local marine environments. The results of this research will be used to develop and implement a public educational outreach campaign for residents of the southern Alabama Coastal region.

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Applied Sociologists and Abortion Clinic Men: Helping Males Become Men

Arthur B. Shostak
Drexel University

We could do much - quickly and at an affordable cost - to reduce the number and the toll of abortions - if only we would open our eyes and see available for contraception education over 600,000 men who annually sit and twiddle their thumbs in abortion clinic waiting rooms. Their presence, while ignored by the clinics and society alike, offers an overlooked opportunity to significantly help prevent unwanted and ill-timed pregnancies ... provided a small, but dedicated cadre of sociological practitioners take up this cause.

Background. After sitting myself in the late 1970s in a clinic waiting room, I created the first-ever national study of the experience of such men. In 1984 I secured a thousand mail surveys from men at 30 cooperating clinics in 18 states. (About 200 of the respondents were later interviewed). Afterward I served as the primary author of the first, and still the only academic book on the subject, *Men and Abortion: Lessons, Losses, and Love* (1984). Over the past 20 years, I have gotten nearly 3,000 men to complete surveys I collected in 1999, 2000, and again in 2004. (1)

Findings. Most commonly, waiting room men experience a sense of powerlessness aggravated by a failure to process the matter (59% have not discussed the abortion with anyone other than the clinic patient). While in 1983 some 68% of 30 cooperating clinics had a pamphlet rack and/or reading material specifically designed to help waiting room men answer some of their questions about abortion, the figure by 1999 had fallen to 22% ... a datum that tells far more than first appearant.

Once inside the clinic (having often had to pass through a gauntlet of vitriolic or prayerful anti-abortion protestors), males discover there is nothing for them to do save for nervous, silent time-passing. Some 25% in 2004 (55% in 1999; 74% in 1983) would have liked a private meeting with a counselor and their partner before the procedure. But very few clinics (only 40% in 1999) offer this. Some 39% of the males in 1999 would have liked a private meeting with a clinic counselor. But only 40% of the clinics offered this service. Given the high percent who in 2004 said they felt guilty (24%), sad (21%), and afraid (18%), a case would seem strong for the provision of male counseling.

Some 65% in 2004 would have liked to have accompanied their partner throughout the abortion-provided she first agreed. But in 1999 only 23% of the clinics in 1999 made this possible, and there is no reason to believe the figure in 2004 was any higher. Similarly, some 87% in 2004 wanted to hold the hand of their partner in the Recovery Room, but only 24% of the clinics in 1999 allowed this.

Little wonder, accordingly, that almost all of the men deem the abortion experience one of the most difficult of

their lives. And 93% in 1984 (and almost as many thereafter) said they would be more careful about risking pregnancy after this abortion. Yet one on four in 1984 were repeaters! And, in 2004, the number of repeaters was still a high 19%.

Roles for Applied Sociologists. Plainly, something is wrong, as far too many waiting room males are taking a return seat. And this is where sociological practitioners can help.

To begin with, we could raise consciousness about the matter by including it in our course material. (I have found that a very small number of males are willing to tell the class much of consequence about their own experience). Students could be encouraged to chose the subject for term paper research. They could be asked to imagine how clinic directors might rationalize the neglect (as in citing small budgets, or the notion the female is their only concern, etc.), and then assess these notions. The discussion could lead to students suggesting ways to remedy the problems, and even ways to help pay for these remedies.

Second, we could ourselves undertake research, and thereby help get complexities in the matter overdue attention. Typical of hard questions to tackle is one which asks why a very small number of clinics offer some males services, while the vast majority do not do so: What explain the difference, and how might the ratio soon be changed in favor of the former? (2) What part does the ideology of clinic staffers play? The pressure bought on clinics by extremists among the anti-abortion crowd? By endless anxiety where the Roe Decision is concerned?

Third, we could help clinics appreciate how very little might be necessary to accomplish so very much: Pamphlets have been written for free distribution (though unavailable in about 75% of the clinics). Many clinics could sponsor small-group discussions (complete with "show-and-tell" attention to the technologies of contraception)-an educational aid conspicuous by its absence. All of the clinics could add a VCR or DVD viewing machine to the waiting room and thereby put sound and pragmatic family planning material on view. All of the clinics could post large wall charts of family-planning ideas, and offer take-away wallet-size copies.

Fourth, we could join with supportive specialists in bill-paying economics and explore how to help cover the costs of male services (the insurance some females have would not help here). Clinic resources could be expanded if family planning philanthropies were approached for help in meeting the cost of male services. As well, males could be asked to help by paying on a sliding scale basis. Interestingly enough, 62% in 2004 (up from 50% in 1999) signaled their willingness to help pay some unspecified amount for male service options. Some 51% in 1999 indicated that the couple's choice of a provider would have been influenced by the availability of male-aiding services.

Finally, we could reach out to likely allies here - such as Planned Parenthood, the National Abortion

Federation, and associations of abortion clinics - to learn why they have neglected this seemingly obvious opportunity to help 600,000 sexually-active males learn how to become better users of contraception. Once we understand their neglect, we could join with them in identifying remedies.

Summary. As a couple willfully initiates a conception (except in the case of incest or rape), two people, rather than only the female, warrant help when an abortion is requested. Reforms here are overdue. Were 600,000 men in 2005 to have (now unavailable) service options in the waiting room men say they favor, we might soon have far fewer male repeaters. Many such men might gain a new understanding of family planning techniques, and help avoid any further resort to an abortion. Were even half of 600,000 waiting-room males to become non-repeaters, this would represent a sizeable reduction in the nation's 1,400,000 annual abortions.

If we want couples to leave an abortion clinic with the least possible harm done, and the greatest likelihood of not returning, we cannot begin soon enough to help males "come in from the cold." Males with newly-gained knowledge of family planning options could make far-reaching contributions to American society the rest of their lives, gains that include and extend far beyond the abortion challenge.

Footnotes:

(1) This note is adapted from an article - ABORTION CLINICS AND WAITING ROOM MEN: SOCIOLOGICAL INSIGHTS, by Arthur B. Shostak, Ross Koppel, and Jennifer Perkins, in the Journal of the Washington Academy of Sciences, Summer, 2005. (At press). The data entry assistance of Lauren Hetland was indispensable, and we are very appreciative. Likewise, the data analysis of Jennifer Perkins of Kenyon College was quite valuable.

(2) Claire Keyes, the director of a major Eastern Seaboard clinic, has been invaluable in very many ways, and cannot be thanked enough. Many of our interpretations have been revised and always improved after she critiqued the material. However, she cannot be held in any way responsible for this paper which was done without her review.

Bibliographic Notes:

Shostak, Arthur; Gary McLouth, and Lynn Seng, Men and Abortion: Lessons, Losses, and Love. New York: Praeger, 1984. See also A. Shostak, "I Am NOT a Rock: Men and Abortion in America," SWS Network News (The Newsletter of Sociologists for Women in Society), December 2003.

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Join colleagues at the Joint Reception, Monday, Aug 15, 6.30 pm- Philadelphia Marriott

MEMBER NEWS

Kathy Stolley is joining the faculty of Virginia Wesleyan College in Norfolk, VA this fall as Assistant Professor of Sociology.

Kathryn Goldman Schuyler was elected to the Board of Trustees of Alliant International University by the Faculty at Large of the university.

John E. Glass is joining the faculty of Colin County Community College in Frisco TX as Professor of Sociology. The college is noted for its nationally recognized Service Learning program.

RECENT MEMBER ARTICLES

Picou, J.S., Marshall, B., Gill, D. (2004) Disaster, Litigation and the Corrosive Community, *Social Forces*, 82 (4), 1493-1522.

Picou, J.S., Marshall, B., Schlichtmann, J. (2004) Technological Disasters, Litigation Stress, and the Use of Alternative Dispute Resolution Mechanisms, *Law And Policy*, 26 (2), 289-307.

Goldman Schuyler, K. (2003-2004) A systems approach to learning and change: Cindy's story. *Somatics*, 14(3), 14-23.

CALL FOR PAPERS

Beginning in Fall 2005, a new journal will succeed the *Journal of Applied Sociology* and *Sociological Practice*. It will be an official, peer-refereed publication of the Association for Applied and Clinical Sociology. The journal will publish research articles, essays, research reports, teaching notes, and book reviews on a wide range of topics of interest to the sociological practitioner. All submissions are now being processed electronically. Please send as an e-mail attachment a word-processed document (not .pdf) file of the paper (Word, WordPerfect, etc.), an abstract of no more than 150 words, and a brief biographical statement to: Jay Weinstein, Editor AACS Journal, Department of Sociology Eastern Michigan University Ypsilanti, MI 48197. E-mail: jay.weinstein@emich.edu. Tables and figures must be camera-ready. Submissions should be accompanied by a \$10 processing fee (this fee is waived for AACS members).

The Practical Sociologist

Tips for Sociologists in Private Practice

Leora Lawton

TechSociety Research

In today's world of high-speed and wireless communications, a sign of a company's competence is its website. If a colleague has heard about your services and wants to find out more, they should be able to find you upon 'googling' your or your company's name. If they don't find your website, they begin to wonder how clued in you are for today's business, organizational and research challenges. An 'unbranded' email address (e.g., T.Test@hotmail.com) looks amateurish. Fortunately, whether you are an independent consultant or employ a team, it's not hard to develop your internet home.

Websites for consultants need not be complex. A home page announcing the basic category of service, with links to contact information, staff, white papers, articles or reports, and a detail of services and products offered will be quite respectable. One optional feature allows customers to login and access reports with a password (known as authentication), useful when clients may have limits to the size of attachments in incoming email. The basic design of the page should be consistent throughout the site: the same color schemes, button or navigation bar designs and placement. In the honeymoon stage of websites (during 1999-2002) websites developed by techie webmasters were gaudy and overdesigned. Now the style is simple and clean, with enough styled design features to look professionally done.

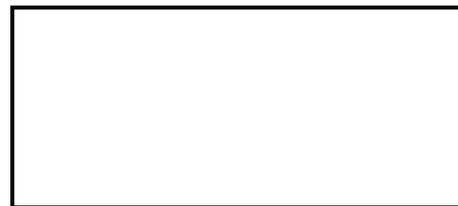
The process to create a website is relatively straightforward. First, select a domain name that is easy to spell upon hearing it. I learned this lesson personally: I have to spell my domain, www.techsociety.com each time, and someone once heard "TexasID". Names that begin with 'A' will come up earlier in many search engines and directories. The domain name can describe your business "www.k12programevaluation.com" (still available as of this writing), or contain your name, especially if your name is easy to spell: www.garciaaresearch.com.

You can find out if it's available by visiting any web hosting and domain registration company, such as www.godaddy.com. Registration of the domain name is about \$10/year. (I still regret not registering cocacola.com and ford.com back in 1995, but then it cost about \$250 annually.) Registration makes the name yours, and the next thing to do is to host the domain name, that is, give the name and place. Many companies will do both the registration and domain hosting, but you don't have to register and host in the same place. Hosting costs about \$5 to \$20 per month, depending on features needed and estimated traffic to the site.

Building it is the next step. If you are busy or don't know anything about the web, you will want to hire someone to build it for you, and then teach you how to maintain it, or have them available on-call to assist you. This project need not be very expensive: many can be constructed for less than \$500, sometimes assisted by free or low-cost templates. Be warned: friends and older children who can do this work might be good for simple one-off projects, but don't expect to rely on them over the long haul. A good webmaster will know how to promote the site, and how to add various programmable features, such as the password-protected areas for clients, or forms. You can learn more about building websites from www.yahoo.com, which is pricier but designed so that practically anyone can use it. Click on their "web hosting" option for small businesses. Or go to www.100best-free-web-space.com, where they have a wealth of links with glossaries and guides to help you learn your way.

To reach Leora: <lawton@techsociety.com>

Your Vision for the AACCS here



OpenSpace Visioning Session SAS/SPA Conference Tuesday Aug 16 5.30 pm

A structured, informal whole-group session using methods designed to bring large groups together for creative thinking and solution finding. A blend of small groups and whole group dialogue to clarify what is important to us and how we'd like our new organization to serve us, as members, and contribute to social change. The output will be used by the Board in developing a strategic plan for the AACCS.

Letters to the Editor

Sociological practice in India

Editor -

We have recently formed the Society for Applied Sociology (India) and have about 50 members.

Why such an organization? Sociology in India is mostly the product of the west. In the beginning there was a trend toward studying western societies. The influence of British tradition had implications for the unit of analysis and even the choice of problems. Because of a certain degree of western, Euro-centric and American bias, sociological practice, teaching and research in India did not develop their own character.

Because of the elitist mind-set of those who earned doctoral degrees in the U.K. or U.S.A, the growth of Indian sociology followed a slow and tortuous path. However, indigenous applied sociology developed. In the 1970s, sociology made its value felt by planners, administrators, and policy makers. The discipline found a place in the major research institutes, institutes of technology, NGO sectors, management, the planning commission, some ministries and institutes of tribal development and also in industries. In the 1970's, India's sociology made a useful contribution to applied fields like health, nutrition, education, welfare, industry, rural and urban development.

It can be argued that sociology in India still suffers from a crisis of professional stability, a lack of scientific methodological knowledge, an identity crisis, and the intellectual elitism of the theory-cultivators. In India, as in many parts of the world, sociology is in need of renewal. Our country is the victim of globalization gloom, and we see the clouds of poverty, illiteracy, health hazards, industrial risks, unemployment, dowry death, malnutrition, family disorganization, urban poverty, child abuse, sex assault etc. We perceive the immense scope for applied sociological research, and feel a motivation to do good for society. From this motivation, we have formed SASI to explore the vast potential for applied or practicing sociology in India.

Ethics of the society: We developed the following principles of professional ethics and standards: the right of all individuals to be treated with culturally sensitive respect and dignity, regardless of their relationship to the professional activities being conducted, the right of members to engage in free inquiry and publicly clarify their research and findings if either is misrepresented, the responsibility of members to be sensitive to their personal beliefs and advocacy regarding an issue as it relates to their ability to objectively perform professional activities related to that same issue, the responsibility of members to evaluate the potential positive outcomes of their professional activities and act in a manner consistent with the principles of this code.

In the practice of sociology, it is the responsibility of members, above all else, to knowingly do no harm to those they serve or their research subjects. This

responsibility includes all individuals and social groups regardless of the member's assessment of the legitimacy or role in society of that person or group.

The objectives of the society are: 1) To arrange and organize lectures, seminars, workshops, symposiums for the exchange of ideas and diffusion of knowledge in the field of social sciences. 2) To undertake research projects (both academic and action research) to help planners and policy makers in national planning and development. 3) To render voluntary welfare services to the poor, the aged, the sick, the disadvantaged, and abused woman. 4) To organize and arrange counseling for the handicapped, abused woman and orphans. 5) To maintain interaction between sociologists and clients (non-sociologists).

Officers:

Dr. Samir Dasgupta (D.Litt.), Professor of Sociology, University of Kalyani, West Bengal, India: President

Dr. Alak Kumar Majumder, Retd. Professor of Sociology, Bidhan Chandra Agricultural University: Vice President

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Among the members are Social Workers, NGO workers, Social activists, Epidemiologists, Scholars in the field of social sciences, law practitioners, Doctors.

Current and planned activities: 1) At present we are doing research on treatment hazards of cancer patients and helping them to increase their awareness and mental strength. 2) We shall publish a journal (bi-annual) "**Applied Sociologists**" very shortly. 3) We are planning an action-oriented project on Salt makers in India to increase the level of awareness of the illiterate salt makers who are suffering very badly from an occupational skin disease and to support them in developing schemes for better education, better health and better living.

Samir Dasgupta

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