

SOCIOLOGICAL PRACTICE NEWSLETTER

Prepared for the American Sociological Association

Section on Sociological Practice

Summer 2006

Editor's commentary

Transitions for the Section Reflected in this Issue

By KATHRYN GOLDMAN SCHUYLER
Alliant International University

This issue is a rich one, so here are highlights to guide you through it.

There is lots of news: you'll read about a new interdisciplinary MS in Applied African American Studies (p. 3), descriptions of upcoming conferences (p. 4), practice-related sessions and meetings at the Montreal ASA meeting (p. 6), the revised *Directory of Programs in Applied Sociology and Practice* (p. 9), announcements of members' books (p. 9), and a new journal coming from AACPS (page 12).

Members share discussions of their current work (*Notes from the Field*). Judith Jones discusses charter schools in Maine (p. 5). Robert Dotzler invites comments about focusing on practice in teaching Introductory Sociology (p. 11). We learn how Ross Koppel's research caused the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) to spend \$320 million improving access to buses (p.13).

Our members reflect on issues of broad impact, with thoughts on the recent ASA Survey of practitioners from our outgoing chair Eleanor Lyon (p. 2), practice suggestions about becoming a Small-, Woman-, Minority- or Disabled Veteran Business (p. 8), and an interview of noted scholar Charles V. Willie on the occasion of his new book (p. 10). Two members discuss sociological implications of their work in key policy arenas (p. 14, 16), including a discussion of the Gates Foundation's efforts to eradicate diseases of poor nations.

I move out of my role as editor of the newsletter with the next issue, shifting to the background in support of incoming editor Delores Forbes-Edelen, a PhD student at the University of Central Florida. Delores has considerable experience as a practicing sociologist and won the section's student award last year. As I become Chair-elect, I plan to focus on the growth of the section, the role it plays for members, and its role within the ASA. It has been a pleasure to edit the newsletter for the past five years, and I look forward to seeing how our new editor will shape it.

Chair:

Eleanor Lyon
University of Connecticut elyon@charter.net

Chair-Elect:

Kristine J. Ajrouch
Eastern Michigan University kajrouch@emich.edu

Past Chair:

Jay Weinstein
Eastern Michigan University weinsteinjay@sbcglobal.net

Secretary:

Leora Lawton
TechSociety Research lawton@techsociety.com

Council:

Terms ending 2006:

Cynthia L. Sipe clsipe@aol.com
Theodore A. Lamb tlamb@bscs.org
Ann Marie Charvat ann@inserviceinc.net

Terms ending 2007:

A. Troy Adams, anthony.adams@emich.edu
Lynetta M. Mosby mosby@oakland.edu
J. Steven Picou spicou@usouthal.edu

Terms ending 2008:

Robert Dentler robertd917@aol.com
Sam Friedman sam.friedman@ndri.org
Alice Krolczak akrolczak@hrsa.gov

Newsletter Editor:

Kathryn Goldman Schuyler kgschuyler@alliant.edu
Alliant International University

Assistant Editor:

Delores Forbes-Edelen dedelen@mail.ucf.edu
University of Central FL

Web-Site Manager:

Leora Lawton lawton@techsociety.com
TechSociety Research

Website

www.techsociety.com/asa

Eleanor Lyon
University of Connecticut

Thoughts on the ASA Survey of Practitioners

Sociological practitioners: we now have more evidence of challenges and opportunities ahead! A draft of an important study of sociologists who work outside of academic settings has just been posted on the ASA website. It is titled “Beyond the Ivory Tower—A Survey for the Ford Foundation of Non-Academic Ph.Ds in Sociology: First Results,” and it is, indeed, preliminary. However, it provides useful and challenging information that is of particular interest to us.

Dr. Roberta Spalter-Roth completed the survey with ASA support. It was drawn from a sample of ASA members and other participating organizations (the Association for Applied and Clinical Sociology (AACS), the Rural Sociological Society, and the D.C. Sociological Society, in particular), combined with a snowball sample drawn from respondents’ suggestions. Nearly 700 sociologists completed the survey. Nearly half (46.5%) were evaluators, 14.2% were survey researchers, 12.6% were epidemiologists, 7.9% were qualitative researchers, and 6.3% were policy analysts. Thirty percent worked on health issues, 14.2% on education, 10% in statistics, and another 10% in demography and migration.

The draft focuses in particular on the relationship between sociology departments’ curricula and respondents’ employment experiences. The survey found that respondents generally reported their training was a good match for the demands of their working life in research design, statistical analysis, and survey methods. These results support the belief that sociological training is good preparation for work outside academia. Respondents reported that they were “*undertrained*,” however, in such areas as visual presentation of information (60.6%), grant writing (59.7%), program evaluation (51.9%), and policy analysis (49.1%). These are all crucial aspects of sociological practice—especially, but not only, outside of academic settings. However, it is interesting to note that few were employed as organizational consultants, which is a meaningful and lucrative area of work.

Some practitioners have raised valid methodological questions about this survey. They have questioned the restriction of respondents to practitioners who had obtained Ph.Ds, and those who were *currently* employed primarily outside of academia. These selection criteria eliminated many sociological practitioners with highly successful careers who did not complete doctoral work, as well as many (such as myself and our chair-elect) who have had extensive careers outside the academy but are presently employed by colleges and universities.

Nonetheless, the study provided valuable information—for us as well as for sociology departments. Departments would be well-advised to consider expanding their offerings so they can better prepare their students for sociological life in diverse settings. For practitioners, this is a clear opportunity. We have the skills and experience needed for such expanded training. The Section needs to take more initiative in offering training on program evaluation, grant writing, visual presentation and policy analysis—in ASA workshops, as well as at the annual AACS Conference (where such presentations are commonly included), regional meetings, and elsewhere. For practitioners in academic settings, the results should provide impetus for curricular change, as well as consideration of accreditation by the Commission on Applied and Clinical Sociology (CACS). The Commission’s standards provide a blueprint for a well-rounded practice specialization. For all of us, the fact that roughly 700 responded to the survey, while the Practice Section has approximately 200 members raises interesting questions about how we can better work to make practice an increasingly important part of the ASA and the profession.

I hope you will join us at the Section business meeting in Montreal on Friday, August 11, where we will talk about ways we can take advantage of this opportunity and strengthen Section membership. Please also participate in the practice-related sessions described elsewhere in this newsletter, and consider checking out the Commission training. I look forward to seeing you in Montreal!

Congratulations to Newly Elected Section Officers

The Section welcomes its newly elected officers. The Chair-Elect for 2006-07 is **Kathryn Goldman Schuyler**. Kathryn is an Associate Professor at the Marshall Goldsmith School of Management of Alliant International University. She has been active in the Section for many years and has edited the newsletter for the past five years.

Three new Council members will take office in 2006 and will serve through 2009. They are:

Jay Weinstein, Eastern Michigan University, weinsteinjay@sbcglobal.net
Jammie Price, Appalachian State University, pricejl@appstate.edu
Mary Virnoche, Humboldt State University, mary.virnoche@humboldt.edu

Delores Forbes-Edelen, currently assistant editor of this newsletter, will become editor as of the next issue.

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

Interdisciplinary MS in Applied African American Studies at Eastern Michigan University

Eastern Michigan University is developing a new interdisciplinary Master of Science degree in Applied African American Studies. The first entering class begins studies September 2007. The degree is intended for students who want to pursue an advanced degree in the field of African American Studies with a focus on its applications in the community. The curriculum features courses in African American Studies as well as sociology and other disciplines. Based on extensive research into other African American Studies graduate degrees, its founders believe that there is a unique and urgent need for such a program. They believe this to be the first graduate degree in Applied African American studies in the nation.

The program will enable students to integrate, in a practice setting, the theory, knowledge, and skills of the field and of the several disciplines upon which the field draws. Students will develop a professional identity, demonstrate a capacity for leadership, and adhere to the appropriate ethical standards in their practice endeavors. The program will instill a comprehensive knowledge of the field and a specialized content area, as well as educate students in critical analysis and application. Classroom and fieldwork experiences will establish a learning environment that will attract teachers, social workers, and graduates who work for profit and non-profit organizations and businesses that serve the African American community.

A unique feature of the program is a community internship, which will serve as the major element of the second-year's field experience phase of the program. During this phase, students will take a two-semester course that will provide both classroom instruction and real-world experience in intergroup relations. They will focus especially on the three communities of unique interest in the Detroit Metropolitan Area – African-American, Arabic-American, and Jewish. Each student must spend a portion of the internship in each of the three communities. Students will prepare field reports, chronicling their experiences and relating them to the material covered during the first (fall) semester of the course. The culmination of the fieldwork will be a meeting of the interns, faculty, and representatives of the organizations with which the class of interns has worked.

Several partner organizations outside of EMU have been identified. In the Arab-American Community, the coordinating organization is the Arab American Community Center for Economic and Social Services (ACCESS) in Dearborn. In the Jewish Community, this role will be played by the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit.

Congratulations to Section Award Winners – More Info Next Issue!

Dr. Barbara Altman will receive the William F. Whyte Award. Dr. Altman currently holds a Distinguished Consultant Appointment as Special Assistant for Disability Statistics at the National Center for Health Statistics. She has been a researcher in the area of disabilities for several decades, has published extensively in this area, and was the first Director of the University of Maryland's Applied Social Science Certificate Program in the 1980s.

Antoinette Swayne-Kohlman will receive the Student Practitioner Award. She is a PhD Candidate at Alliant International University in San Francisco and a business performance consultant at State Farm Insurance, where she has worked since 1993. She has a BA in sociology from Chatham College and a Masters in Human Resources and Organization Development from the University of San Francisco.

UPCOMING CONFERENCES

International Sociological Association – Durban, South Africa, July 23-29.

The Clinical Sociology division (RC46) and the Sociotechnics and Sociological Practice division (RC26) of the International Sociological Association will be meeting in Durban, South Africa from July 23-29. Among those giving presentations are Walda Katz-Fishman, Judith Gordon, Jawad Fatayer, A. Halim Wan, Randi Miller, Marina Karides and Jan Marie Fritz (a past chair of the ASA section on Sociological Practice, a past president of CSA/SPA, and currently a vice-presidential candidate for the ISA. The voting, by representatives of the national associations and research divisions, will take place in Durban.) If you are interested in joining either the clinical sociology or practice divisions or would like more information about the ISA, please go to the International Sociological Association website <http://www.ucm.es/info/isa>.

Call for Session Proposals, Papers and Presentations AACS 2006 Annual Conference – October 26-28, San Jose CA

The Association for Applied and Clinical Sociology seeks proposals that share your work in an innovative variety of formats that are described in detail on the website at www.aacsnet.org. The theme of the conference is "Sociology for What: Building Our World," with keynotes and sessions planned on social network analysis, community development, social somatics, social change in the US and across the world, and implications for sociological practice of recent developments in electronic communication.

- **Paper dialogues.** A non-traditional format with participatory discussion sessions of working papers that have been "prepublished" on the web. Our vision includes post-conference publication on the web and/or in an edited volume. Please do not plan to read a paper, but instead to discuss your methodological questions, confusing or conflicting results, successes and failures with applied work...
- **Workshops and Work Circles** offer the opportunity to meet others doing your type of work and discuss common issues and ideas. *Workshop coordinators* organize a working "how-to" session where participants share successful techniques for solving professional issues and challenges. *Work Circle Coordinators* select a concrete issue (such as assessing outcomes in schools or changes in evaluating employee performance) and write a short description of that focus.
- **Panel sessions** convene 3-4 experts to discuss a particular issue, methodology, or body of research. Session organizers balance presentations by the experts, discussion among panelists, and open discussion.
- **Poster sessions** are colorful, sometimes three-dimensional ways to engage your audience and talk about your work.
- **Field presentations** present what you do and how your work affects the community or the industry in which you work. Presenters have 15-20 minutes to showcase innovation in their field or how they were able to resolve a pressing issue.
- **Student submissions** from students in any field (including students who have graduated in 2006) should meet the following criteria: 1) original research of new or existing data 2) hypothesis driven approach with conclusions and findings 3) applied focus in research process.

Go to the conference web site for guidelines www.aacsnet.org and send your proposal to: Jay Weinstein, AACS 2006 Conference Coordinator, Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti, MI 48197. Tel: 734-487-0012; FAX: 734-487-7010; e-mail: jay.weinstein@emich.edu. Proposals must be received by September 1, 2006.

* * * * *

Clinical Sociology Review CD Available

The Complete Clinical Sociology Review with Sociological Practice on Disk is again being offered at a substantial discount for student use in fall and winter courses. The disk contains the complete text of the Clinical Sociology Review, published by the Clinical Sociology Association and the Sociological Practice Association, and the topical issues of Sociological Practice also published by the Association. Prices will be: \$30.00 for individual student orders paid by cash or check, \$35.00 if paid by charge card; and \$25.00 for 10 or more copies for classroom use, if mailed to the same address. Individual student orders must be verified by the course instructor by providing the class list and class number. Bookstore orders will be honored at the \$25.00 rate. More information on the disk may be found at the website: www.dragonflycompany.com.

Significant New Opportunities for Research and Community Service through Public Chartered Schools

By JUDITH DENTON JONES

One of the most dramatic innovations in American public education is happening as a result of a grassroots movement to develop what have become known as “public chartered schools.” With now over 3,600 chartered public schools enrolling over one million students, the movement encompasses 40 states and enjoys strong bipartisan support at the national level. This movement to develop community-based public schools where enrollment is based on common interests, rather than geography, provides sociologists with new opportunities for participant observation and a variety of other research approaches to investigate basic sociological issues.

The chartered public school model raises important questions. For example, we can study whether or not the innovative methods being tried by many of these schools actually help to overcome the traditional influence of socio-economic background on student achievement among children from low-income families. We can also examine: Why and how can such schools create positive learning environments for disadvantaged children? Why do public chartered schools have a far better safety record than traditional district-run public schools? What might be the long-term effects of public school choice (which makes school choice free and affordable for families at all income levels) on groupings of students by ethnicity, on residential segregation, on choice of curriculum focus, or on students with disabilities? Is the central tenet of admission to public chartered schools sustainable - that they are open to all students without admissions tests, holding a lottery if more students apply than there are spaces available?

Will “chartering” as a state-level policy have the hoped-for effects of inspiring district-run schools to improve, in response to parents’ ability to move their children (and each child’s per pupil allocation) to a public school chosen for that child? Will the organizational innovations central to the chartered school model be adopted by other educational programs (high degrees of legal and budgetary independence; ability to hire and fire staff efficiently; contract-based evaluations)? Will state policies authorizing chartered public schools be watered down over time as a result of the fierce opposition of traditional education groups? Or will parents, empowered by the opportunity to choose among public schools, sustain this movement to radically decentralize American public education?

Sociologists interested in social policy and social justice can play many roles in this emerging movement for equity in publicly-funded education. Sociologists in academic settings can find opportunities to work with and study public chartered schools through the “authorizing” role (the publicly-designated groups that review, award, and monitor the contracts), through teacher education programs, through research on children at risk who attend these schools, and through research on the varying organizational dynamics.

Sociologists can become participant observers as parents, members of charter school boards, and as members of community organizations partnering with these schools. We can take on technical assistance and advisory roles, such as providing assistance with the variety of evaluation efforts embedded in the chartered school model, with its emphasis on accountability for student learning, greater parental involvement, contract-based financial accountability, need to attract and retain teachers and staff, and openness and integrity in governance.

To find out more about public chartered schools, please see the many resources now available both at the state and national levels. The U.S. Department of Education website is www.uscharterschools.org; the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, www.publiccharters.org; the Center for Education Reform, www.edreform.com. Among the many excellent state support groups, try the California Association of Charter Schools, www.charterassociation.org. Others are listed on the national sites given above and many links are available on the MACS website, www.mainecharterschools.org.

* * * * *

Judith Denton Jones, Ph.D. chairs the Maine Association for Public Charter Schools, www.mainecharterschools.org; 207-763-3576; macs@mainecharterschools.org. She is the author of “The Six School Complex: A Successful Innovation in Washington, D.C.’s Public Schools,” 1986. In 1996, Dr. Denton Jones helped to found FOCUS, a non-profit support group for public chartered schools in Washington, D.C.

Practice-Related Events at ASA Annual Meeting in Montreal

Please check the ASA and section websites for additional information.

REGULAR SESSION: Applied and Clinical Sociological Research. Fri, Aug 11, 10:30am - 12:10pm Session Organizer: Kristine J. Ajrouch (Eastern Michigan University)

Presider: Denise M Reiling (Eastern Michigan University)

A Manifesto for Knowledge Democracy, Paul Edward Lachelier (University of Wisconsin-Madison)

Predictors of Attitudes Toward Child Physical Abuse, Sexual Abuse and Neglect. George T. Patterson (City University of New York)

The Applied Sociologist as Craftsman. David J. Hartmann (Western Michigan University), Subhash Sonnad (Western Michigan University)

Assessing Impediments to Fair Housing Choice in River City, Jeffry A. Will (University of North Florida), Tracy A. Milligan (University of North Florida),

John Talmage (Center for Community Initiatives, UNF), Charles E. Owens (Center for Community Initiatives, UNF)

Power and the Politics of Information: A Critical Review of Globalization Measurement and Implications, Rachael Leah Shwom-Evelich (Michigan State University), Brendan Mullan (Michigan State University), Wilson Colleen (Michigan State)

SOCIOLOGICAL PRACTICE SECTION SESSION: Sociological Practice and Consequences of Globalization. Fri, Aug 11, 2:30pm - 4:10pm. Session Organizer: Kristine J. Ajrouch (Eastern Michigan University)

Presider: Kristine J. Ajrouch (Eastern Michigan University)

Globalization and Family Relations Ingrid Arnet Connidis (University of Western Ontario)

Using Sociological Theory to Defuse the "Clash of Civilizations" and Conflicts over Mosques in Suburban Neighborhoods Louise Cainkar (University of Illinois-Chicago)

The Globalizing Influence of the Internet on the Health, Well-Being, and Culture of the Old Order Amish: The Case of Amish Herbalists and Distance

Learning, Denise M Reiling (Eastern Michigan University)

The Ivory Tower in a Flat World: The University and Applied Sociology in the Global Economy, Marv Finklestein (Southern Illinois University Edwardsville)

Discussant: Arthur B. Shostak (Drexel University)

REGULAR SESSION: Sociology of Knowledge: Knowledge in Applied Settings. Sponsor: Sociology of Knowledge. Sat, Aug 12, 2:30pm - 4:10pm. Session Organizer: Charles Camic (University of Wisconsin, Madison)

Presider: Charles Camic (University of Wisconsin, Madison)

Knowledge Production and the Public Interest. David Charles Schalliol (University of Chicago), Sarah Stewart Makela (University of Chicago)

Merchants of Expertise: Think Tanks in the U.S. Field of Power. Thomas Matthew Medvetz (University of California- Berkeley)

Quantifying Evil: Governmentality and the Origin of Criminal Statistics in the United States, 1900-1930. Saran Ghatak (Keene State College)

Producing official knowledge on populations and individuals in modern Japan. Jennifer A. Winther (UCLA)

Discussant: Gil Eyal (Columbia University)

INFORMAL ROUNDTABLES: Is There a Place for Sociologists at the Boundary between Research and Policy? Sat, Aug 12, 12:30pm - 2:10pm. Session Organizer: Henry H. Brownstein (NORC at The University of Chicago)

Abstract: At the start of the twenty-first century the ASA has embraced public sociology. But how do sociologists who continue to be educated to work as professors of sociology at universities learn to participate in the world as public sociologists? Assuming that sociologists are welcome to participate in public debate and public policymaking, how can they do so? How can sociologists have a meaningful role as social scientists in public policymaking? How can we prepare students of sociology to take advantage of those opportunities? How can we educate students of sociology and practicing sociologists to acknowledge, appreciate, and accept the role and worth of the public sociologist? The purpose of this Informal Roundtable will be to discuss these questions and to consider them in the context of the place for sociologists at the point where research and policy intersects.

TEACHING WORKSHOP: Integrating Community-Based Learning into the Curriculum. Fri, Aug 11, 2:30pm - 4:10pm. Session Organizer: Heather Sullivan-Catlin (SUNY Potsdam)

Presider: Heather Sullivan-Catlin (SUNY Potsdam)

Panelist: Brenda M. Kowalewski (Weber State University)

Panelist: Kerry J. Strand (Hood College)

Abstract: A hands-on workshop designed for faculty at all levels of familiarity with community-based (service-) learning. For those with less familiarity, the workshop is designed to support the integration of community-based learning into a single course. For those with greater familiarity with CBL pedagogy, the presenters will discuss community-based research as a particular type of CBL pedagogy that enables the integration of students into the CBR process and supports their learning of applied research.

PROFESSIONAL WORKSHOP: Preparing Effective Professional Presentations. Sat, Aug 12, 12:30pm - 2:10pm Session Co-organizers and co-leaders: Jeanne H. Ballantine (Wright State University) & Janet Hankin (Wayne State University)

Abstract: Ever try to give a presentation and lose your audience? Feel the presenter before you was a hard act to follow? Know your dream job was at stake with this speech? The goals of the workshop are to provide you with organizational techniques and tools to effectively present material to any audience in an appropriate and compelling manner. Topics covered include: selecting and organizing the topic, tailoring the talk to the audience, designing visual aids, answering questions from the audience, and other key topics. Participants will prepare parts of a sample presentation and receive handouts.

CAREER WORKSHOP: Sociological Careers in Government Science Agencies. Sat, Aug 12, 2:30pm - 4:10pm. Session

Organizer: Ronald P. Abeles (National Institutes of Health)

Leader: Ronald P. Abeles (National Institutes of Health)

Panelist: Rebecca L. Clark (Nat'l Institute of Child Health & Human Development)

Panelist: Karin A. Mack (CDC/NCIPC/DUIP)

Panelist: Beth A. Rubin (University of North Carolina-Charlotte)

Abstract: In an informal discussion with representatives from the National Institutes of Health, the Centers for Disease Control, and the National Science Foundation, options for various careers in governmental sciences agencies will be considered. Among the topics covered will be science administrative positions and research positions, opportunities for contributing to science and public policy, the working environment, sources of personal satisfaction (and dissatisfaction), temporary vs. career appointments, financial benefits, opportunities for building skills and knowledge, and sources of information about position openings. We will also discuss moving between academic and governmental science positions.

CAREER WORKSHOP: Employment Opportunities in Government. Sun, Aug 13, 10:30am - 12:10pm. Session Organizer: Dianne Mills McKay (Rutgers, the State University). Co-Leader: Dianne Mills McKay (Rutgers, the State University)

Panelist: Teresa Boyer (Nontraditional Career Resource Center)

Panelist: Mary Gatta (Rutgers University)

Panelist: Barbara A. Haley (USHUD)

Abstract: Roundtable discussion with sociologists who have careers with the state and federal government. Among the areas discussed will be the academic, substantive, and adaptive skills needed to work in government agencies. The presenters have successfully utilized their academic knowledge and research expertise to complete original research and develop policy issues that positively impact the lives of many people in their state and throughout the nation. Online learning, gender parity issues in labor and education, and nontraditional career opportunities are among the projects our presenters have directed.

RESEARCH WORKSHOP: Focus Groups in Research. Sun, Aug 13, 10:30am - 12:10pm Building: Palais des congrès de Montréal. Session Organizer: Janet Mancini Billson (Group Dimensions) .

CAREER WORKSHOP: Ending the Great Divide: The Growing Convergence between Academic and Private Sector Qualitative Research. Sun, Aug 13, 12:30pm - 2:10pm. Session Organizer: Hy Mariampolski (QualiData Research Inc.). Co-Leaders: Hy Mariampolski (QualiData Research Inc.) & Robert W. Kahle (Kahle Research Solutions)

Abstract: The presentation will trace the history and consequences of the 'great divide' between academic and private-sector researchers, followed by an assessment of the dimensions and character of the current chasm. In the field of qualitative research this hard division appears to be fraying and it is a good moment to take stock. This session will offer a platform for discussing the reasons behind the growing convergence, demonstrate the benefits of unifying the interests of academics and private sector researchers, and illustrate several models of this continuing alignment. Mariampolski and Kahle will focus on case studies drawn from their own and others' practices and show how continuing convergence will be a valuable resource for future researchers. (see ASA online program for more detail).

MEETINGS

The SP Section Business & Council Meeting: Bring ideas for a better section. Friday, August 11, 2006, 4:30pm - 6:10pm.

The SP Section Reception and Awards Ceremony (Co-sponsored by AACS). Fri, Aug 11, 6:30pm - 8:15pm.

Spivack Program in Applied Social Research Advisory Panel. Sat, Aug 12, 2:30pm - 4:10pm

Session Participants: Judith D. Auerbach (American Foundation for AIDS Rsch), John H. Evans (Univ. of California- San Diego), Bess Rothenberg (Clemson University), Rita J. Kirshstein (American Institutes for Research), Juan Onmo Sandoval (Northwestern University), Mary C. Still (American University), Margaret L. Usdansky (Syracuse University), Roberta M. Spalter-Roth (American Sociological Association), Lee Herring (American Sociological Association), Carla B. Howery (American Sociological Association)

Orientation for New Section Officers, Sun, Aug 13 - 8:30am - 10:10am

Commission on Applied and Clinical Sociology (CACS). Sunday, Aug 13, 2:30pm - 6:10pm. Chair: Melodye Lehnerer (Community College of Southern Nevada)

Committee on Sections (For SP Section Chair or Chair-elect), Sun, Aug 13, 4:30pm - 6:10pm

RELATED MEETINGS

SOCIOLOGICAL IMAGINATION GROUP. August 10. 8-10, 10-12, 2-4, 4-6 Hotel InterContinental Montreal next to the ASA annual meeting.

Theme: "Alternatives to Sociology's Tower of Babel: Building on the Sociological Imagination." Papers and discussion: (St. Laurent rm.). We hope to alternate a volume based on these meetings plus additional papers. For excerpts from our recent monographs see our website www.uab.edu/philosophy/sig. For reservations for lunch and plenary session (12-2, Les Huitres) and informal get-together (6-9) with cash bar and complementary canapes, contact Bernie Phillips at <berniefps@aol.com>

AACS Meeting. August 12, 3.30-5.00 pm. Help plan the Annual AACS conference (and have fun). Contact Ross Koppel at the Intercontinental Hotel and/or at the Practice Section reception on the evening of August 11 to find out location.

Continuing a column of the Sociological Practice section's newsletter – helpful hints and suggestions for the business of being a sociologist. Please share your words of wisdom with your fellow practitioners, or just suggest a topic, by contacting Dr. Lawton (lawton @t techsociety.com).

The Practical Sociologist

A Different Kind of Certification: Becoming a Small-, Woman, Minority- or Disabled Veteran Business

By LEORA LAWTON
Principal, TechSociety Research

One of the options potentially available to research organizations is the possibility of becoming certified as a Small Business Enterprise (SBE), or a WMDVE, a woman-, minority- or disabled veteran-owned enterprise. The advantages of becoming certified is that it allows a certified company to be eligible for certain contracts, especially for government contracts, as well as for contracts with certain other organizations such as, public utilities, non-profits and even some for-profit companies. Another primary benefit is receiving a cost advantage on the proposed bid amount, whether as a prime or sub-contractor, so that the certified company's bid is reduced by a certain percentage, such as 5%, to become more competitive with larger companies who have greater economies of scale.

For example, a 5% reduction means that a \$10,000 bid is evaluated as a \$9,500 proposed amount. Other benefits such as prompt payments, and regional priority may also be included. There are often directories of Small and WMDVE businesses that are searchable by business type and by region. These enable firms to find suitable firms for their bids and RFPs, and to be found by others searching for networking possibilities. My company is on such a list and was invited by Pacific, Gas & Electric to apply for a master contract as a research vendor, which we won.

Many governments work with local non-profits whose mission is to provide small and WMDVE businesses with skills and other professional services to give them assistance in becoming successful. For example, the Chamber of Commerce in Hampton Roads, VA created a non-profit to support small businesses in the area. As part of their mission, they provide training, assistance with development, disaster planning and recovery, and other benefits.

The major disadvantage of seeking SBE or WMDVE certification is that it takes a certain amount of tedious effort to assemble all the paperwork and documentation necessary. Fortunately, this does not need to be done annually. Companies are usually required to have a track record of success. In other words, they must have been in business for a minimum period of time, and/or have proof of contracts. Typically the process involves an application form and many or all of the following documents - and this list is not exhaustive:

1. Copy of business license
2. One to three years of tax returns indicating business status
3. Business plan
4. Marketing collateral
5. Names of significant clients
6. SIC/NAIC code
7. Statement of 51% ownership by qualifying person

An additional roadblock is that there is no single all encompassing certification system. State and local governments may have separate certification programs, although often if a company is certified by a reputable organization, then other jurisdictions will recognize it. In California, small business and disabled veteran certification is provided by the State of California's Office of Small Business and DVBE certification, but women and minority certification is provided by the California Public Utilities Commission Supplier Clearinghouse.

For anyone who wants to expand their business by working with government agencies or developing opportunities as a sub-contractor, getting certified can make those efforts more fruitful.

ASA DIRECTORY OF PROGRAMS IN APPLIED SOCIOLOGY & PRACTICE

The fourth edition of the *American Sociological Association Directory of Programs in Applied Sociology and Practice*, edited by Jeff Breese and Jay Weinstein, will be available for the first time at the Annual meeting of the ASA, Montreal, August 11-14. This edition includes overviews of 27 institutions with an applied/practice orientation in the respective academic departments. Like earlier editions of the directory, this one includes a program summary that demonstrates the nature of the concentrations, special courses, certificates, and/or internships that comprise the given program. Current training in applied and clinical sociology occurs at many different types of institutions, and is referred to by various names. For the purposes of the directory, the term "Program" is used to mean any of several training modes, whether they are in traditional sociology departments, parts of broader degree programs, or in multidisciplinary settings. The goal was to have the colleges and universities that submitted entries note how theory, knowledge, and skills are integrated in a practice setting. To qualify for a listing in the directory, the applied/practice program must offer a specific degree, concentration, or specialty.

By way of introduction to the entries, three articles have been included that address various aspects of applied/clinical sociology and sociological practice. The first, written by Jeanne Ballantine and Kenyatta Phelps addresses student focused issues. The second piece, by Catherine Mobley and Hugh Spitler, provides an overview of the work of academic and non-academic based applied sociologists. Jeff Breese's presidential address discusses the state of professional organizations in the field of applied sociology.

New Website for the Association for Applied and Clinical Sociology

By JAMMIE PRICE, AACS Web Manager

The Association for Applied and Clinical Sociology (AACS) has a new website. The new site offers an improved navigational design and a Forum to facilitate on-line discussions of topics relevant to applied and clinical sociologists. **Bob Dotzler** was the coordinator of site development, with support from co-presidents **Joan Biddle** and **Ross Koppel**. Jim Schuyler of Red 7 Communications designed the site and implemented its enhancements. Currently the site includes information about the 2006 AACS Conference in San Jose, as well as information about membership, governance, certification, and the new journal entitled *Applied Social Science*. We invite suggestions for continuous improvement of the site. Please visit <http://www.aacsnets.org>

Books by Members

Dr **Ralph W Larkin** would like to announce the publication of his new book *Comprehending Columbine*. The book analyzes the psychological motivations and social conditions that led to one of the most violent episodes in the history of American education. Unlike other books that have been written about this tragedy, Larkin gives readers a unique understanding of the cultural and environmental factors that caused two Columbine high school students to massacre twelve fellow students, a teacher, and seriously wound twenty-four others, before committing suicide. Dr Larkin is the owner of the Academic Research Consulting Service in New York City. The book is published by Temple University Press and will be coming out in November of 2006. For further information about this book you can contact Dr Larkin at his email address: <RLarkin@nyc.rr.com>

The sixth edition of The Clinical Sociology Resource Book (American Sociological Association Teaching Resources Center, 2006), edited by **Jan Marie Fritz**, will be available at the American Sociological Association conference in August. The new volume contains contributions from Malaysia, France, Canada, Australia, Italy, Japan and the United States.

New Faculty Members Join University of South Alabama

The department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Social Work at the University of South Alabama has hired four new faculty members. **Dr. Kenneth Hudson**, an expert in sociological research methods and data management, will serve as Research Associate in the Youth Violence Prevention Program, while **Dr. Douglas Marshall** will teach and conduct research in the areas of social psychology, sociology of religion and sociological theory. **Dr. Benson Chisanga**, whose research interests include urban and rural socio-economic development problems and policy and program impacts on services aimed at vulnerable populations, will teach social work; and, Ms. **Laurie Barnard (LCSW)** will serve as Field Coordinator for the new Bachelor of Social Work program.

Interview: Charles V. Willie Discusses Black Colleges

By DELORES FORBES-EDELEN, University of Central Florida

Comparing the culture of black colleges and universities of a generation ago with those in existence today, Charles V. Willie reaches the conclusion that “Black colleges are well-positioned...to help other institutions of higher education learn how to achieve unity out of diversity.” The implications of this finding for black and white college and university institutions are the subject of his new book, *The Black College Mystique*, co-authored by Richard J. Reddick, and Ronald Brown (Rowman and Littlefield). The book revisits an interest of Dr. Willie’s that has spanned thirty years, since he first convened a conference of higher-education leaders at Harvard University in 1976 to explore the complementary roles that black and white college and university institutions can play in achieving equity and excellence in higher education. That conference culminated in his first book on the subject, *Black Colleges in America*, co-edited by Ron Edmonds.

Black and white colleges measure success in fundamentally different—but complementary—ways, Dr. Willie finds. “Black colleges measure success by what students accomplish after they graduate, while white colleges measure success by the quality of students they attract,” states Dr. Willie. The former emphasizes “equity”; the latter, “excellence.” But resisting simplistic conclusions, he adds that “it isn’t a question of which focus is right or wrong, but how one paradigm can complement the other to improve the quality of higher education for all.”

An equity focus allows for greater inclusiveness, because it accepts all students where they are academically and takes them as far as they have the potential to go. With the equity model and its requirement of recruiting and retaining a diverse student body, faculty is the key to student—and institutional—success. This imperative, Dr. Willie finds, accounts for the “pluralistic faculty”, in ethnicity and gender, found in black colleges and universities. By contrast, the focus on excellence that characterizes many white colleges and universities fosters an exclusive culture because these institutions limit access to fewer students—the brightest and best—those who are able to demonstrate that they are already academic successes.

“It’s a lot like milk” says Dr. Willie. He explains that “while it is true that the cream rises to the top, we don’t get more cream at the top by restricting the amount of whole milk at the bottom. Similarly, we won’t get more quality students at the top by restricting access to those at the bottom. When we open college to more students we get more cream at the top.”

Dr. Willie cites himself and Dr. Martin Luther King as examples of this principle. Both graduated from Black colleges with marginal grade point averages (2.8 and 2.5 respectively). However, both went on to achieve success because of the exceptionally supportive faculty mentorship from which they benefited. The pedagogical culture of the Black colleges they attended allowed their faculty to see beyond grade point averages to uncover their students’ individual potential for greatness, in other areas of ability. In the case of Dr. King the faculty recognized and encouraged his excellent preaching, thinking, and planning talents, and in the case of Dr. Willie they recognized his gift for teaching, writing and research. With the mentorship of their supportive faculty, both Dr. King and Dr. Willie went on to make valuable contributions. Students whose academic performance has traditionally excluded them from some white colleges also have the potential to make similar contributions.

The implications of ignoring Dr. Willie’s findings are considerable. Because neither the equity nor excellence paradigm alone is sufficient for meeting the challenges of higher education, ignoring the cultural intelligence that black colleges have to offer will mean missing out on strategies for improving the state of higher education overall. These strategies should be disseminated and used, according to Dr. Willie, “without apologies.”

Dr. Willie’s work suggests a public sociology agenda for practitioners. He hopes it will inspire practicing sociologists to apply their sociological talents, skills, and insights to (1) facilitating meaningful collaborations between leaders of historically black and white higher education institutions; (2) identifying which of the “pluralistic” faculty recruitment and management strategies that characterize contemporary black college and university institutions hold the most promise for wider dissemination; and (3) devising innovative ways to move these strategies into practice in higher education settings where they hold promise for increasing access to and improving the quality of higher education in the United States.

Teaching Introductory Sociology: Moving from a Traditional Approach to a Sociological Practice Approach

By ROBERT DOTZLER

My key post-retirement employment has been teaching Introductory Sociology. Instructional design was one of my occupational skills while working in the “real world” with the Internal Revenue Service. Naturally, when I embarked on my new career, I thought I could bring my mature instructional design skills to this new enterprise. This has proved to be more of a challenge than I expected.

At the IRS I worked with instructional design teams developing training programs for revenue agents (accountants), revenue officers (collectors), taxpayer service representative (now called customer service reps), supervisors, managers, executives, personnel specialists, labor relations specialists, criminal investigators—a wide array of occupational roles. Each design team used some type of occupational task analysis to start the project. The purpose of the task analysis was to specify the job tasks of the occupation. Some jobs were highly specialized and distinctly concrete, e.g., the tasks involved in processing a tax return (keying the information on the return into a computer); others were highly generalized and more abstract, e.g., the tasks of an executive.

The second step was to write instructional objectives. The objectives were similar to the job tasks but eliminated tasks that employees could already perform, as well as those best learned on the job. This was followed by selecting methods and media and by writing lesson plans which would guarantee a minimal level of occupational performance by trainees. This is the ten-cent version of the systems approach to training design. As with anything as complicated as human behavior, there is the ten-cent version, the dollar version, and the ten-thousand dollar version. So taking the ten-cent version and lots the instructional design experience, I embarked on my new career teaching Introductory Sociology.

My first step was to look at several traditional texts and canned syllabi provided by ASA and my college. I found that most Introductory Sociology texts are geared to provide an overview of Sociology. They are amazingly similar in their content, covering overall perspectives, methodology, socialization, culture, organization, race and ethnicity, politics, deviance, religion, family, and so on. They all seem to agree that a key goal of Introductory Sociology is to impart the “sociological imagination.” If Mills had a penny for every time the “sociological imagination” has been and will be invoked by sociologists, his heirs could rest comfortably. I frequently use Mills’ dichotomy between a personal problem and a social problem. It concisely captures a key truth of sociology—we are social creatures shaped by social forces. Given our American individualistic ethic, this is a truth I find the need to repeat regularly and which students find hard to internalize.

The Introductory texts were not designed to prepare students to perform specific occupational tasks. Nevertheless, I forced myself to use a rudimentary system approach to training in analyzing the texts. This led me to formulate the following outcome tasks:

- Describe the steps in the scientific process
- Describe the basic sociological perspectives (functionalism, conflict, interaction)
- Recognize basic sociological concepts in various substantive fields within sociology

As it is traditional practice that students write a term paper, I added the following task:

- Prepare a paper about a social problem, describing the problem with demographic data, describing possible causes and suggesting potential solutions.

The process proposed for the paper reflected my work experience with performance problem solving which is captured in Mager and Pipe’s classic *Analyzing Performance Problems* (1984).

The papers and paper presentations on various social problems have turned out to generate most of the substantive learning that takes place. The most popular issues have been child abuse, sexual predators, educational failure, poverty, same-sex marriage, drug abuse, recidivism, sex discrimination, racial discrimination, AIDS, religious discrimination, job outsourcing, immigration, crime, teenage pregnancy and so on. The presentations are often enlightening but the cumulative effort is depressing. Most time has been spent

describing the problem, with little on concrete strategies for altering the situation. Therefore, after two years of teaching and reflecting on Introductory Sociology, I've decided to redesign my approach to orient it towards sociological practice.

The key change in the course will be expanding the problem-solving framework to give added emphasis to:

- Identifying the constituencies that have a strong interest in having the problem solved and the methods used for energizing these constituencies
- Identifying individuals and organizations that have the power to alter the problem situation (resources needed to alter causal factors or gain control over causal factors) and the methods used for moving these individuals and organizations to use their power to address the problem.

In social problem solving, this is where “the rubber meets the road.” Everything else is academic. This is the “action” in action research. This is the “practice” in sociological practice. I've concluded that this needs to be at the heart of Introductory Sociology. We have an obligation to provide our students with the skills and ability to perform citizen social problem-solving, and Introductory Sociology seems like an appropriate venue. I'll deliver this in the fall semester and expect I'll learn more than my students.

I'd appreciate your thoughts and advice on this approach to Introductory Sociology (robertdotzler@cox.net).

Association for Applied and Clinical Sociology to Publish New Journal

By JAY WEINSTEIN, Eastern Michigan University

In conjunction with the merger of the Society for Applied Sociology (SAS) and the Sociological Practice Association (SPA), the final issue of the combined journals, *Journal of Applied Sociology and Sociological Practice* was published on June 21. The successor organization, the Association for Applied and Clinical Sociology (AACS), will publish a new journal entitled *Applied Social Science*. AACS intends to make this a truly international journal—as reflected in the contents, the composition of the new advisory board, and the backgrounds of our authors.

The executive office has launched its initial membership drive, and members and friends are looking forward to its first free-standing annual conference. The conference, with the theme “Sociology for What: Building Our World,” will be held in San Jose, CA, October 26-28 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel. Additional information on the conference and other AACS activities can be found at the association's web site (www.aacsnet.org).

The inclusive tone set by the merger is reflected in the final issue of the journal in several ways. One is via inclusion of the texts of the two final presidential addresses of our predecessor organizations, delivered in Philadelphia, 2005 at the joint meeting of the two organizations. The SPA address was delivered by Ross Koppel on behalf of himself and his co-President Joan Biddle, while the SAS address was delivered by Augie Diana.

The third feature is a report about a momentous event in the history of applied sociology that is little known, even among our colleagues. The report describes the role of sociology in the transition from communism to democracy in the nation of Albania. The authors, Fatos Tarifa and Lëke Sokoli, are two of Albania's leading sociologists and social activists. Inclusion of this piece reminds us of the global importance of sociology. Copies of the last issue can be obtained from Fonda Martin, Administrative Officer, AACS, Department of Sociology, Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti, MI 48197. Tel: 734-487-0012, FAX: 734-487-7010, e-mail: sac_aacs@emich.edu.

Join colleagues at the Sociological Practice Section Business and Council Meeting (4.30 – 6.10 pm) and the Joint Reception (6.30 – 8.15 pm), Friday Aug 11, Palais des congrès de Montréal

Boston Transit System to Change Buses and Training in Response to Sociologists' Study: A \$320 Million Dollar Settlement

*Research By Ross Koppel (Univ. Of Pennsylvania And Social Research Corp) Forces Boston's Authority To
Make Massive Changes In Operations, Equipment, Personnel, and Maintenance*

Boston's transit system, the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA), agreed to spend \$320 million improving access to buses because of a study by Dr. Ross Koppel, a sociology teacher and research director in the School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania.

Dr. Koppel found that people with disabilities face a gauntlet of problems—from failed equipment to untrained drivers to ride denials and refusals of service. “The number of people out there with disabilities who are trying to get to work, to doctors' offices, to friends' [houses] is really quite large,” says Koppel. “The fact that they can [use transit] is really liberating on a social level. It's also a heck of a lot cheaper than having the individual use paratransit.”

From October to December 2004, Koppel's two person tester/observer teams boarded MBTA buses at random points throughout the system and conducted a total of 896 observations. The observers were asked to assess whether the lifts that help people in wheelchairs or with canes onto the bus actually work; if the driver helped secure the person into the seat; if the call buttons worked; how the driver responded to passenger requests; and if the drivers were courteous. All the testers were people with disabilities. The observers were mainly physical therapy graduate students.

The teams were trained before embarking on the buses, and instructed to act as though they did not know each other. Observers noted what they saw and heard on observation forms. If the forms were too obvious or inaccessible, the observers could also use cell phones wired with microphones linked to hidden tape recorders that recorded driver-tester interactions. The results showed that lifts failed 19 percent of the time and boarding denials—where the bus did not stop, the driver stated the bus was full or stopped to allow others on the bus but did not acknowledge the person with a disability—occurred in another 11 percent of cases.

Koppel said that a person with a disability had an unacceptably low chance of getting a reasonably secure ride. Koppel found that buses passed them, drivers gave obviously false excuses, didn't know how to use the lifts, and seldom called in problems—as they are required to do. Sometimes, Koppel says, testers waited 30 to 40 minutes for a bus; at other times they waited up to two hours. When they succeeded in boarding a bus, more than 91 percent of the time the wheelchair or other device was not properly secured in the designated areas. Koppel notes that if the bus driver had to stop suddenly, a poorly secured two-to three-hundred pound electric wheelchair could injure not only the disabled person but also other passengers. On the plus side, most drivers were not hostile.

After the study's completion Koppel made the observers' forms available to the MBTA and to the transit authority's new general manager. “When he finally saw our study, he was totally blown away, and he said this is the definitive study on public transit and the disabled. He did not contest our study.”

Koppel, who is also principal investigator in a Penn School of Medicine study about hospital stressors and medication errors, and whose wide-ranging research includes an assessment of the costs of Alzheimer's disease to U.S. businesses, has been appointed to monitor Detroit's public transit system, which has promised to improve access for people with disabilities. We also know that this Boston settlement has grabbed the attention of transit authorities everywhere.

“The culture has to be modified to be more accepting of the needs of people with a disability,” he says. “I hope the methods we developed in this study are used by other transit systems to find out if they are doing what they are legally obligated to do, but also [it's] what they should want to do for this increasingly large community.”

Adapted from the University of Pennsylvania's "Penn Current" May 11, 2006

[The Politics of] Eradicating Diseases of the Poor

By DONALD W. LIGHT, University of Medicine & Dentistry of New Jersey

Because of my work on market failures in health care and their impact on the poor, I found myself on the *PULL Mechanisms Working Group* for the Gates Foundation. Participants in the *Working Group* included leaders from the biotech industry; the multinational pharmaceutical industry and one of their principal legal advisers (Covington & Burling); the World Bank; the executive branches of the UK and US governments; major vaccine organizations like the Vaccine Fund; and leading academicians, principally from the field of economics. The Group's expressed goal was to figure out how to "make markets" in order to get vaccines to people in the world's poorest nations (those with under \$1,000 in per capita income) and thereby eradicate their most prevalent diseases.

The Group's work was designed to complement the Gates Foundation's much-admired *PUSH* initiative that "pushes" the development of new vaccines and drugs by creating virtual global research communities comprised of known experts in vaccine and drug research. The team synergy has already begun to transform work on neglected diseases. But Push (research grants, contracts, conferences) needed to be complemented by *PULL*, that is, funding to pay for new vaccines once they pass all their trials.

Fundamentally, the Working Group's task was to construct a completely new market, which presented a unique opportunity to put the combined knowledge of organizational, medical, and economic sociology to applied use. The Group's final plan underscored C. Wright Mills' insights found in *The Power Elite*. These insights include the observation that the power elite derives legitimacy for their actions from their "higher circle" of advisers and consultants, spokesmen, and opinion-makers. Thus, a latent function of the Working Group seems to have been to gain our unanimous endorsement for a plan that had been developed by a Gates-World Bank group years earlier for spending the billions being donated by the UK, France, the US, and other members of the G8.

The *PULL* Working Group unwittingly fulfilled this latent function with its final recommendation. The plan they endorsed, entitled an *Advanced Market Commitment* (AMC), was developed around 2000 by the Gates Professor of Economics at Harvard, Michael Kremer. Kremer's solution to the intractable problem that there is no market in poor nations is simply to create one *de novo* by allocating \$3-6 billion toward the purchase of large quantities of each new vaccine developed by the *PUSH* virtual collaborative, once these vaccines have been approved for market distribution. The proposal calls for purchasing these vaccines at prices competitive with the high-priced pharmaceuticals that dominate Western markets, while interested recipient countries would purchase these vaccines by paying a small co-pay. Thereafter, the patent-holding corporation would have to promise to make the vaccine available forever at a low, marginal price. While this proposal seems reasonable at first glance, I had objected to it for the reasons highlighted below.

1. The proposed AMC plan was structured to provide multinational companies with windfall profits. Through contractual clauses prepared by their legal advisers, these companies would be allowed to retain all their distribution rights to the vaccines (in addition to receiving billions for their purchase) and to comply with their voluntary agreement at their sole discretion.
2. No attention (or allocation) was given to overcome the considerable organizational and cultural problems of actually delivering the vaccines into the mouths or arms of their recipients. By limiting its role to that of only facilitating the purchase of the vaccines, without making any provision for ensuring that the intended victims of disease receive these life saving vaccines, the proposed AMC essentially undermines the *PUSH* collaborative's mission to eradicate the diseases that plague the world's poor.
3. The whole design commits the donated billions to a yet-undiscovered vaccine for HIV-AIDS or malaria, rather than buying already-existing but costly vaccines that could save millions of infants and children now. (See Light, "Making *Practical* Markets for Vaccines" http://medicine.plosjournals.org/archive/1549-676/2/10/pdf/10.1371_journal.pmed.0020271-L.pdf).

For objecting that AMCs benefit the multinational pharmaceutical giants more than the poor and divert funds from making effective vaccines available now, my name was erased from the list of members. Also erased from the group-member listing was the director of vaccine procurement and administration for all of Latin and Central America—someone with in-depth working knowledge of the medical, organizational and economic realities of how to eradicate diseases of the poor.

I believe that my former Working Group colleague and I were erased because the powerful organizers of this Group did not anticipate dissenting votes or minority reports. By making us invisible, they would be able to secure an apparently unanimous endorsement of the pre-existing plan they intended all along to present to the finance ministers of the G8. This plan, now being disseminated under the title, *Making Markets for Vaccines*, and being heavily promoted through a well-funded public relations blitz, has since become the official model to be used in guiding the G8 in spending the billions it has collected to aid the effort to eradicate diseases of the poor.

After the report's dissemination, I put together a small, international network of experts to expose the false promises and moral problems with this proposal and to persuade the advisors to Bill Gates and the G8 leaders that more sociologically realistic and economically beneficial alternatives should be given equal, if not primary, consideration (See <<http://www.who.int/intellectualproperty/submissions/Vaccines.FarlowLight.pdf>>, Farlow, Light, Mohoney, Widdus "Concerns Regarding the Center for Global Development Report 'Making Markets for Vaccines'"). There are indications that these efforts may be bearing fruit.

One advantage of doing public sociology aimed at the elite is that one has only to reach a small number of people and the equally small circle of journalists who write for the publications that they read. It appears that we have made progress. Each month, there are more signs that the members of the G8 are re-directing their donations away from the AMC model towards a more inclusive and pragmatic model that would bring existing but costly vaccines to poor nations—and benefit them now. Only time will tell whether or not the G8 will have the will to sustain this approach.

(Professor Donald Light is a 1999 recipient of the William Foote Whyte career award for applied sociology).

* * * *

RELATED NEWS: Berkshire Hathaway Chairman Warren Buffett will be donating the bulk of his fortune to the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The gift was valued at more than \$30 billion in late June, and is intended to significantly shape social issues including child mortality, disease control and education. The Gates Foundation now has assets valued at \$30 billion, and with this gift will ultimately double its size. Other large foundations are: the Ford Foundation (11.6 billion), the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (9.1 billion), Lilly Endowment (8.4 billion), W.K.Kellogg Foundation (7.3 billion), the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation (7.1 billion), and the David and Lucile Packard Foundation (5.8 billion). Bill Gates plans to relinquish day-to-day management of Microsoft in 2008 in order to devote most of his attention to the foundation. He brings an evidence-based style of management and high levels of access to world leaders, compared with the average philanthropist. The intention is for the grants to be catalysts for sustainable health campaigns around the world.

(Source: *Wall Street Journal*, 6/26/2006, pp. B1, B2, B5)

RECRUIT A PRACTICE SECTION MEMBER!

Want more sessions next summer at the ASA Meeting?

A lively and diverse group for dialogue and shared learning?

We are currently one of the smaller ASA sections. Let's change that!

Professors: encourage students to enroll.

Consultants and researchers: encourage colleagues to enroll.

The ASA counts membership late summer. If we build membership before September 1, we get additional funds and sessions next year.

Overlooking the Obvious about Social Change...Twice

By JOHN E. GLASS, Colin County Community College

Many sociological practitioners and applied sociologists work with specific groups of people and/or organizations to effect social change. In the process of doing so we become so focused on the task at hand that we overlook two important factors regarding social change, at any level. First, in order for any change to be effective, social structures must change. Second, structures do not exist; as some have commented, they are merely heuristics. What exists are people and their behaviors. As such, to intervene in collective behavior (i.e., large groups of people emitting patterned behavior) is to intervene in and change “structure.”

How we overlook the first issue, I’m not sure. Given our training and orientation to the world as sociologists we should know better than other social scientists about the durability of social structures and the impact they have on the different levels of social organization. Theoretically and realistically, we cannot section off a piece of social reality and effect any meaningful change at that level without taking into consideration the greater social structures that created it. This is not to say that we shouldn’t continue to effect positive social change. Where we can, we should. But, we shouldn’t forget what we know by training: that unless we can have an impact on the larger structures, these are band-aid remedies. How we come to overlook the second issue is easier to explain. For the most part, we are all trained to see the social world in terms of structures, systems, and processes. Ironically, on an empirical level, none of these things exist. All that exists are people interacting with each other. Thus the salient point for an interventionist is how to get *large groups of people* to behave differently, not how to change “structures, systems, or processes.” Since structures are fundamentally just collectives of people, when large groups of people act differently, “structures” change.

For example, for over six years I worked in the field of domestic violence as the Director of Program Evaluation for a large agency whose mission was to end domestic violence. In time I came to learn about all of the historical domestic violence interventions: shelter and outreach programs for victims, criminal prosecution and battering intervention programs for offenders, prevention programs for youth. All of these interventions were, and still are, necessary. It very quickly became clear, however, that they were, and are, not *sufficient* for fulfilling the mission of ending domestic violence. Why? Because of the enduring greater social structures that support domestic violence. If these larger structures are not changed, the interventions will never be truly effective. In fact, a change in these structures would likely make the above domestic violence interventions unnecessary. Two examples of these larger structures and their behavioral manifestations come to mind.

One of the most profound behavioral manifestations of a structure supporting domestic violence is the widespread inconsistency in sanctioning violent behavior. Violence is widely accepted as a legitimate means of problem-solving because in almost every case it works: the behavior of concern terminates after an act of violence or the threat of an act of violence. Not only is it consistently effective; it also works fast. So instead of being sanctioned as unacceptable, it is in many cases regarded as having value, regardless of the consequences to self and others. Another structural manifestation is the general lack of public support for victims of domestic violence. Most believe victims can leave violent situations, if “they wanted to”; failure to do so is thus seen as indicative of the victim’s defective character, leaving the onus of responsibility for personal safety on the victim. Much research challenges this notion, showing that many victims stay for very good reasons. The tragic irony is that the victim is *not the source of the problem*; the *perpetrator* of the violence is, as it is the violent behavior that is problematic. Yet it is the *victim* who is assigned the blame, *not* the perpetrator. To the extent that these beliefs are maintained within a large network of people, or society, and actions supportive of the victim is not reinforced, the blaming “structure” remains—and so will the perpetration of domestic violence—despite the best efforts of the many domestic violence interventionists in the community.

We, as sociologists, should know better than any other interventionists that macro structures directly influence all other levels of social organization, and that structures are just large numbers of people behaving in patterned ways. However, in developing specific applications we frequently forget this; to continue to forget this is a mistake, especially if we are interested in seeing our interventions be successful in the long term.