

SOCIOLOGICAL PRACTICE NEWSLETTER

Prepared for the American Sociological Association
Section on Sociological Practice
Summer 2007

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Editor's commentary

Communications

By Leora Lawton
TechSociety Research

Over the last several years I've served as Council member, Chair, Secretary, Webmaster and now I move into the role of Newsletter Editor. Kathryn Goldman-Schuyler has done an excellent job for the last many years. Delores Edelen had valiantly stepped up to take over, but health reasons have required that she relinquish this position. There is a certain amount of synergy between the newsletter and website, so it made sense for me to jump in.

There are a number of improvements we'd like to make with communications vehicles to the membership. The first is with this newsletter. We have been debating sending this newsletter only electronically. After polling other sections, the unanimous viewpoint is that switching to e-newsletters saves time, hassle and money. Lots of money, which means it'll be available for other efforts, such as student travel money. Plus we'll be able to have active links to websites and other online material. But no one knows what impact this change has on readership. We are exploring ways to find out, and will have more information by the business meeting in New York this August.

Further, I'd like to get more contributions from members about their professional experiences, whether they are from projects emanating from their business, or from classroom service-learning. And the newsletter can be an excellent venue for a student – graduate or undergraduate – to get a published exposure for their work.

The website has also been an area that definitely needs development to be the full-service resource that I envision. To that end, in the next several months you will be seeing targeted requests for ideas, information, content for different pages of the website. The area under particular need of attention is the resources section, but any new content areas, or revisions of existing pages, are all game. Please do take some time to respond: this website is to be by you, for you.

**Kristine J. Ajrouch
Eastern Michigan University**

Practicing Sociology to Imagine the Possibility of Another World

As we prepare to attend the upcoming annual meetings of the American Sociological Association taking place this year in New York City, I think it timely to contemplate the practice of sociology as it relates to the meeting theme: *Is Another World Possible: Sociological Perspectives on Contemporary Politics*. Those of us who consider ourselves practitioners of sociology may wish to reflect on how applying the tenets of our discipline enhance the possibility for positive change.

One key aspect of society and politics that sociology contributes an enormous amount to involves the illumination of power relations. Hierarchies of power are often difficult to recognize or describe. The intangible character of such relations makes them elusive to the average citizen. Yet, it is the organization of power, a primary underpinning of social relations, which permeates contemporary politics within the United States, the world, and in relationships between nations. For example, a recent article in *Contexts* by Ian Roxborough addresses a timely and influential political situation: the U.S. presence in Iraq. Roxborough applies the sociological imagination through careful analysis to suggest the primacy of power struggle as the key issue to address. He advances the argument that social position characteristics (i.e., ethnic group affiliation), must rise to the forefront as an issue with which to contend. For example, stratification based on tribal/family/religious affiliations presents a key social organization mechanism shaping power struggles in Iraq. A strong and influential ideology of individualism in the United States makes it difficult for most Americans to imagine this world in which group affiliations, and the power attached to such affiliations, bring to bear on disrupting (or maintaining) order. Roxborough states: "Current social science thinking suggests that neither "hearts and minds" nor "competition in coercion" accurately captures the dynamics of contention for power. What matters is control: persistent and predictable political control at the local level... local political control requires a massive commitment of manpower. It requires detailed local knowledge of the local population. This is something that police do well and military organizations do badly." He finishes by suggesting that nation-state building is a long, arduous process—in other words, there are no quick fixes, a nugget of wisdom sociological practitioners know quite well.

Perhaps most insightful for sociological practitioners is the spotlight Roxborough casts on social group affiliations. He touches on this issue momentarily. A significant and important point which we all should consider in more detail is how control over groups that wield various amounts, levels, and forms of power may be mastered at the local level? The practice of sociology involves not only identifying the root of problems and uncovering assumptions, a critical first step to be sure. Equally essential to the enterprise of sociological practice necessitates applying such knowledge to suggest effective policy recommendations that enhance quality of life for all involved. This step is best achieved through dialogue, brainstorming, and careful thinking. The role of sociological practitioners in fashioning another world is critical. The dedication to act on knowledge, above and beyond its production, is a valuable skill that makes the realization of another world possible.

Elections

The Results are In! Please congratulate the following new officers our Section:

Chair-Elect: Augie Diana
Secretary: Jammie Price
Council: Laura Nichols, Nicole Flynn, Roy Feldman, Mary Gatta

And of course, this election couldn't be possible without those who ran but did not win the majority count. We acknowledge and thank the other candidates for their active participation in our section's successful functioning.

Awards

The Council congratulates the winners of the this year's awardees. Robert Bullard is the 2007 William Foote Whyte Award. Dr. Bullard is Ware Professor of Sociology and Director of the Environmental Justice Resource Center at Clark Atlanta University. He is one of the planners of the First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit. Professor Bullard served on President Clinton's Transition Team in the Natural Resources and Environment Cluster (i.e., Departments of Energy, Interior, and Agriculture, and the Environmental Protection Agency) and on the U.S. EPA National Environmental Justice Advisory Council (NEJAC) where he chaired the Health & Research Subcommittee. Darren Noy was awarded the 2007 Student Practitioner award, for his work "Principles for Organic Public Sociology: Reflections on publicly engaged research in the San Francisco homeless policy field."

The Annual Meeting

Announcing activities at the 102nd Annual Meeting “Is Another World Possible?”

August 11-14, 2007

Every year there are more and more reasons for practicing sociologists to attend the ASA. This year there are 23 *workshops* relevant to at least some applied and clinical sociologists, no matter where their place of employ. Only five years ago, there were perhaps 4 workshops. No longer can you say that the Association is not interested in being a resource for all sociologists. Now it's worthwhile to send staff, and to encourage undergraduates, especially local residents, to attend. And for experienced sociologists, come out and learn, network, visit friends, buy some books, and have fun. And enjoy a tax-deductible vacation in New York.

Be sure to join us at the reception (see below) where we offer some nosh and drink, plus the awards presentations to this year's stellar awardees. ***Locations and Times subject to change!***

Reception:

Section on Sociological Practice Reception
Time: Sat, Aug 11 - 6:30pm - 8:00pm
Place: Sheraton New York

Meetings:

Spivack Program in Applied Social Research
Advisory Panel
Time: Sat, Aug 11 - 4:30pm - 6:10pm
Place: Hilton New York

Section on Sociological Practice Business
Meeting
Time: Sun, Aug 12 - 11:30am - 12:10pm
Place: Hilton New York

Commission on Applied and Clinical Sociology
Time: Mon, Aug 13 - 10:30am - 12:10pm
Place: Sheraton New York

Association for Applied and Clinical Sociology
Time: Mon, Aug 13 - 8:30am - 6:10pm
Place: Sheraton New York

Roundtable Sessions:

Section on Sociological Practice Open Refereed
Roundtable Session: Practicing Sociology -
Changing Society
Time: Sun, Aug 12 - 10:30am - 11:30am
Place: Hilton New York

Student Forum Roundtable 06. Demography and
Social Policy
Time: Mon, Aug 13 - 4:30pm - 6:10pm
Place: Sheraton New York

Paper Sessions:

Section on Sex and Gender Paper Session.
Gendered Questions in Law and Public Policy
Time: Sun, Aug 12 - 10:30am - 12:10pm
Place: Hilton New York
Topics: Sex and Gender, Law and Society,
Policy Analysis

Session: Is Another World Possible? The
Contribution of Sociological Practice
Time: Sun, Aug 12 - 12:30pm - 2:10pm
Place: Hilton New York

Social Policy
Time: Mon, Aug 13 - 8:30am - 10:10am
Place: Sheraton New York

Section on Children and Youth Paper Session.
Public Policy and the Lives of American Youth
Unit: Section on Children and Youth
Time: Mon, Aug 13 - 10:30am - 12:10pm
Place: Hilton New York

Housing Policy
Time: Mon, Aug 13 - 4:30pm - 6:10pm
Place: Sheraton New York

Health Policy: Emerging Issues
Time: Tue, Aug 14 - 10:30am - 12:10pm
Place: Sheraton New York

Section on Aging and the Life Course Paper
Session. Aging and Health Policy: Gender and
Race/Ethnic Dimensions (co-sponsored with the
Section on Medical Sociology)
Time: Tue, Aug 14 - 2:30pm - 4:10pm
Place: Hilton New York

Workshops:

SATURDAY

Policy and Research Workshop. Intersectionality and Public Policy: Collaborating Toward Social Justice

Time: Sat, Aug 11 - 8:30am - 10:10am

Place: Hilton New York

Policy and Research Workshop. Planning the Future of the GSS (co-sponsored by the National Science Foundation and the ASA Research Support Forum)

Time: Sat, Aug 11 - 2:30pm - 4:10pm

Place: Hilton New York

Professional Workshop. Successful Organizational Consultants: Using Our Work to Build a Better World

Time: Sat, Aug 11 - 2:30pm - 4:10pm

Place: Hilton New York

Practitioner Networking Workshop. A Hidden Washington Story: Sociologists in "Natural" Science Organizations (part of the Research Support Forum)

Time: Sat, Aug 11 - 4:30pm - 6:10pm

Place: Hilton New York

Professional Workshop. Preparing Professional Presentations

Time: Sat, Aug 11 - 4:30pm - 6:10pm

Place: Hilton New York

SUNDAY

Professional Workshop. Early Careers in Applied & Research Settings

Time: Sun, Aug 12 - 8:30am - 10:10am

Place: Hilton New York

ASA Initiatives Workshop. The Mismatch between Graduate Sociology Curriculum and the Skills Needed for Employment in Applied, Research, and Public Settings

Time: Sun, Aug 12 - 12:30pm - 2:10pm

Place: Hilton New York

Practitioner Networking Workshop. Sociologists in Federal Government

Time: Sun, Aug 12 - 10:30am - 12:10pm

Place: Hilton New York

Professional Workshop. Sociologists in Community Action Research: AIDS

Time: Sun, Aug 12 - 10:30am - 12:10pm

Place: Hilton New York

Professional Workshop. Sociologists in Community Action Research: At Risk Adolescents

Time: Sun, Aug 12 - 2:30pm - 4:10pm

Place: Sheraton New York

MONDAY

Policy and Research Workshop. Sexual Citizenship in International Perspective: Constructing a Comparative Policy Study (supported by the ASA Fund for the Advancement of the Discipline)

Time: Mon, Aug 13 - 10:30am - 12:10pm

Place: Hilton New York

Professional Workshop. Civic Engagements: College Presidents' Viewpoints on Working in the Community

Time: Mon, Aug 13 - 10:30am - 12:10pm

Place: Sheraton New York

Practitioner Networking Workshop. Challenges and Opportunities for working on State Government Contracts for Family and Childrens' Services

Time: Mon, Aug 13 - 10:30am - 12:10pm

Place: Sheraton New York

Academic Workshop. Criminology-Programs Inside and Outside of Sociology Departments (cosponsored with the American Society of Criminology)

Time: Mon, Aug 13 - 2:30pm - 4:10pm

Place: Hilton New York

Practitioner Networking Workshop. Careers in Contract Research

Time: Mon, Aug 13 - 2:30pm - 4:10pm

Place: Sheraton New York

Policy and Research Workshop. Sociology and the New National Science Foundation Initiative on The Science of Science and Innovation Policy (part of the Research Support Forum)

Time: Mon, Aug 13 - 2:30pm - 4:10pm

Place: Hilton New York

ASA Initiatives Workshop. Guidelines for Tenure and Promotion Reviews of Public Sociology (co-sponsored by the ASA Task Force on Institutionalizing Public Sociology)

Time: Mon, Aug 13 - 2:30pm - 4:10pm

Place: Sheraton New York

Policy and Research Workshop. Bringing the Social Environment into Focus in Drug Abuse Research (co-sponsored by National Institute on Drug Abuse and Minority Fellowship Program)
Time: Mon, Aug 13 - 4:30pm - 6:10pm
Place: Sheraton New York

Professional Workshop. Sociologists in Community Action Research: International Projects
Time: Tue, Aug 14 - 12:30pm - 2:10pm
Place: Sheraton New York

TUESDAY

Policy and Research Workshop. School Composition and School Outcomes
Time: Tue, Aug 14 - 8:30am - 10:10am
Place: Hilton New York

Professional Workshop. Sociologists in Community Action Research: Violence Against Women
Time: Tue, Aug 14 - 2:30pm - 4:10pm
Place: Sheraton New York

Practitioner Networking Workshop. Sociologists Working in Advertising and Marketing
Time: Tue, Aug 14 - 12:30pm - 2:10pm
Place: Hilton New York

Join the ASA community in the Big Apple!

Notes from the U.S. Field

Association of Applied and Clinical Sociology News

By Ross Koppel, President

The newly combined organization, The Association for Applied and Clinical Sociology -- merged from the Society for Applied Sociology (SAS) and the Sociological Practice Association is having its annual meeting in Michigan, at the Eagle Crest Resort and Conference Center, Ann Arbor-Marriott-Ypsilanti. October 4-6, 2007, when the colors of the surrounding woods will be turning to meet us. The bucolic setting, overlooking a lake, forests (then in fall colors), with walking and running paths, golf course, etc., is only about 15 minutes from the Detroit Airport, 5 minutes from downtown Ypsilanti, and about 15 minutes from Ann Arbor. The restaurants in Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti are wonderful; and without NYC prices.

The theme: Sociology: *From Imagination to Action* (With a hat tip to C.W. Mills and to the importance of action and practice of our members). Join fellow applied and clinical sociologists for a weekend of exchanging ideas, presenting your work, socializing, learning about others' work, eating and drinking with friends, making new friends and professional ties, being with old friends. In addition, AACS is preparing some special activities, like wine and beer tastings, and arranging for speakers from the University of Michigan's Survey Research Institute, as well as other world class places and speakers.

Call for papers and presentations: Papers, workshops, demonstrations, exchanges about sociological practice, clinical sociological work, open discussions and the like. Be creative in your ideas and we are open-minded in our understanding of what a conference should be. More important, come and learn and share. Please visit <http://www.aacsnet.org>

CALL FOR PAPERS: THE PACIFIC SOCIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

The Pacific Sociological Association has announced its Call for Papers for the 79th Annual Meeting, to be held on April 10-13, 2008, in Portland, Oregon. They have at least 10 proposed sessions on topics for applied, clinical and practice sociology, including 'Complex and ambiguous ethical dilemmas in applied research', 'Evaluating social programs: successes, failures, and innovative approaches', 'The messiness of applied sociology', and 'Service learning and sociological practice.' The deadline is October 15, 2007. For more information, visit their website, www.pacificsoc.org.

Entry-Level Staff

By Leora Lawton
Principal, TechSociety Research

One of the challenges heard frequently in research and consulting organizations, whether non-profit or for-profit, is finding entry-level staff. Ideal entry-level staff is someone with a social science background, research skills such as statistical analysis, interviewing skills, questionnaire design, and interpretive report preparation. Even though sociology undergrads could easily be prepared for these kinds of jobs, often they have been led to believe that there's nothing you can do with a sociology bachelor's degree that has actual value in today's job market. Recently I decided to teach again, and this spring I taught at class at UC Berkeley. Students were often intrigued by examples of work that I'd bring into the classroom. At the end of the course, I gave a short talk about a career in applied sociology (www.techsociety.com/cal/applied_sociology.ppt for the PowerPoint). I explained that with upper division methods courses, and the ability to use Excel, PowerPoint, HTML, and a statistical analysis program like SPSS, SAS or STATA, plus good substantive knowledge, they could walk into job, especially if they had internship experience. One student told me "I'm graduating now but I wish someone had told me that a couple of years ago."

It's obvious that another area of disconnect between the academic and non-academic worlds exists for undergraduates: many would like to do more with their degree than go to graduate school, or find a job that doesn't take advantage of their proven interest in sociology. I encourage all of you whose primary employment is outside the academy to see about giving such a talk at local institutions. And for those of you with faculty appointments, see about creating opportunities for your students to hear about real possibilities.

From my standpoint, the first area for the next development on the Sociological Practice Section website is a resource section for internships, service-learning and community-based learning, and will be seeking input from faculty, community organizations and employers, and former interns. So stay tuned for announcements on the email list.

Member News

Professor Charles Willie Visits the Bahamas as Part of Embassy's Program for Black History Month

The 2005 William Foote Whyte awardee, Charles V. Willie of Harvard University, spent February 21-23, 2007 as a guest of the U.S. Embassy, and as its keynote speaker for Black History Month, after receiving the U.S. Speaker and Specialist Grant Award from the U.S. State Department. Dr. Willie's trip was sponsored by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of International Information Programs through its U.S. Speaker Program. In a number of venues, Dr. Willie spoke with Bahamians about the social problems that confront the Bahamas and the United States, bringing his experience of over 50 years of teaching and research to bear.

Professor Willie, as a noted scholar on school desegregation and black families in the United States, spoke on February 21 about the importance of "negotiated solutions" in addressing complex problems of failing schools and student enrollment. On February 22, he presented a lecture to the Ministry of Educational Health and Family Life Educators on the breakdown of the black family structure in the United States. In addition to lectures, Professor Willie was a guest on The Morning Boil radio show with Chrissy Luv and Eddie Carter, on the Jeff Lloyd show, where he fielded calls for two hours on a variety of social topics. He also spoke at the U.S. Embassy about Dr. Martin Luther King and his impact on America.

Sociological Practice and Learning in Collaborative Work*

George Floro

I have written at times about increased appropriateness for sociologists to engage in collaborative inquiries with grassroots participants. Taking this position even while grassroots confidence in professionals appeared declining seemed puzzling to some colleagues. The effects upon professionals of increased centralization of social controls in the society did not move them. I am now prepared to illustrate the kind of collaboration that I think is most appropriate and very much needed.

The finished product for viewing is the 2007 Goat Bulletin now on the internet at <http://www.corch.net/bbpg/gb07.pdf>. My background in collaborative work of this kind over several years came from editing newsletters, including thirteen years as editor of the Wisconsin Sociologist, which had a newsletter section for sociologists in the state of Wisconsin.

My experience with newsletters extends beyond academic groups to both trade associations and non-profit associations in agriculture. The groups have differed in proportions of collaborators from "working" or producing participants primarily in professional roles to those known primarily for their grassroots production roles.

Before abstracting in this report from the 2007 Goat Bulletin an important lesson to draw from the service relationship with both elitists and grassroots is that the sociological reporting is very demanding in that all participants are to be respected. Participants must not only understand what is being said -- including the abstract theoretical concepts -- but also must demonstrate what is being presented. Keep that in mind while reading the 2007 Goat Bulletin. If and where this alone succeeds how could this work not be sociological practice?

Not all academic discussions on selected issues rise to levels of advanced summary and conclusions. For example, the leadoff story in the Bulletin is about an historical shifting of relationship among three competing control groups: large industrial corporations, organized labor, and government. The analysis, from what I have seen thus far, is largely at the level of competing economic forces. The search for what is happening by participants in both elitist and grassroots circles will not

stop here without searching for who or what is doing it. For that, one could look elsewhere. Among elitists, look at the annual meetings of the Rural Sociological Society. For such questioning among the grassroots in this report attend almost any of their meetings.

The newsletter format is designed to reach out to all participants! The most important may indeed be the so-called "working" participants. They can be identified in academic associations as well as grassroots groups. In the Goat Bulletin there are references to validating grassroots status by being able to do something, like building a house. For reaching out to all participants, the Bulletin draws upon what Charles Horton Cooley called "Roadside Notes." I discovered these while editing the Wisconsin Sociologist. These are affirmative statements that apply to everybody. Cooley wrote a book full of them, in my judgment as a great service to students. Cooley brings science and the arts together and views the arts as a source of fulfillment in life. Unfortunately, I think students ignored the Notes (Life and the Student, 1927). I wrote those in the Bulletin.

Experienced sociologists seem likely to expect that a sociologist tends to become expert within the subject area in which research is done. That kind of immersion is especially helpful as background for writing in the spirit of newsletters. In the Bulletin read about a question frequently asked goat raisers, which generates an essay. Then it is proposed as a theme for an annual celebration of the association in 2007. The question is: How many goats do you have? The essay does not mention the homesteaders but they will be at the celebration. Homesteaders raise the animals mainly for their own families. A form of the question that concerns them is: How do you keep from getting too many?

A major theme in this issue of the Bulletin is a crafted dichotomy for social analysis in the framework of sociological imagination: bringing together sides of a dichotomy perpetuated as a contradiction in the society. The dichotomy theme in the Bulletin is grassroots vs. elitists. This takes sociological imagination out of the realm of lip service and puts it to work to penetrate complex realities, coming up with discoveries about what is happening. The grassroots and the elitists need each other and the outcomes of the relationship are evident in some of the activist features in the Bulletin,

even challenging the most formidable federal bureaucracy in one of the features. An attempt is made to preserve the relationship within the band of goat raisers. No assaults upon one side or the other is encouraged. The group is composed primarily of grassroots participants, although some have elitist roles in sectors other than agriculture. Nearly all once were or presently are goat raisers. Introductions are included of elitists who are not goat raisers but are or might be interested in what this small band of goat raisers might be doing. Three of these introductions appear in this issue. Others have a presence as authors of books referenced somewhere in the Bulletin.

Professionals are accustomed to collaboration with other professionals and may hesitate to do so with grassroots people who are without professional certification. Our major interest is centered in social analysis, which goes beyond attending professional meetings or a bureaucratic status and promotion system. Opportunities have been given to us for active participation at regular scheduled meetings. At one annual meeting in rural sociology we had our own paper session and some of our participants were given expense stipends. The Bulletin reviews 18 chapters for a book of papers by our participants. The title of the proposed book is: Grassroots and Sociological Imagination. (C. Wright Mills had designed sociological imagination for the elite.)

Sociologists are familiar with student papers sponsored by their professors. The collaborative relationships require more adaptations in the learning experience and the mission of the discipline in the contemporary society. Some models of collaboration with the grassroots may be found. One that I discovered in the early 1980s, visited twice and followed closely in reports for ten years, was a rural development center at San Miguel Tzinacapan, in the State of Puebla, Mexico. What I have suggested in this report on collaboration and learning is that if participants meet the requirements of newsletters in sociology they are well on the way for collaboration with grassroots inputs. It is not easy but it can be done. Inquiry is the goal and Cooley and Mills are recognized for what they offer as crafts for social analysis, as at least a phase of sociological inquiry. It may be controversial when occupational ideologies based upon status are exposed but it can preserve credibility and authenticity.

What is appropriate is to be judged in terms of what is attempted. All with leadership offerings and an interest in being working (or productive) scholars should be willing to make clear what they are trying to do.

Reference

Cooley, Charles Horton
1927 *Life and the Student: Roadside Notes on Human Nature, Society, and Letters*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.

*By George K. Floro (The Wisconsin Sociological Association had its service award named the George Floro Service Award.)

PROFESSIONAL RESOURCES

AAPOR is sponsoring a new web-only publication Survey Practice that focuses on practical survey methods and public opinion research. Survey Practice will publish articles written by survey and public opinion professionals that provide current information on public opinion and survey research topics, have practical utility to the profession, and are written in clear language that all readers will understand.

Survey and public opinion professionals in academic, government, private companies, nonprofits, individual consultants, and students are encouraged to write articles for Survey Practice. Articles can be as short as 500 words but no longer than 5000. Articles of approximately 1500 - 2500 words are ideal for an online publication.

Survey Practice will have two sections – Research and Features. The Research section will emphasize useful and practical information designed to enhance survey quality by providing a forum to share advances in practical survey and public opinion methods. The Features section will focus on topics relevant to conditions affecting surveys and about the people who work in the survey industry.

To read more about Survey Practice and see its call for papers and editorial guidelines, please go to www.surveypactice.org. If you have an idea for an article, please contact John Kennedy, editor, kennedyj@indiana.edu, 812 855 2573.

MEMBERS ON THE MOVE

Dr. Ted Lamb has taken a new position as Senior Analyst in the Office of Institutional Research at the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs. He can be reached at tlamb2@uccs.edu or 719-262-3167.