

Sociology for the Curious: Why Study Sociology? Copyright © 2015
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Dedication

This book is dedicated to all the curious students and readers – senior high school students (and their parents) who are considering Sociology as their field of study, undergraduate students who are struggling to choose their

major/minor, and graduate/research/PhD students who want to pursue further studies/research in the area of Sociology.

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Preface

Given the investment in time and money that students will spend on higher education, understanding what they will learn in their chosen major and how it will prepare them for a career upon graduation is very important. As you read this book, we invite you to think about the types of skills that might be helpful for someone pursuing a career in Sociology.

For students considering an undergraduate degree in Sociology, this book has been prepared to assist you in your research of college majors by:

- providing a description of Sociology (which helps you understand what it is),
- identifying courses typically found in this type of degree (which help you focus on what you will learn), and
- discussing career opportunities in the field (which helps you understand why this degree is important for both you and perspective employers).

Additionally, this book will give you information and best practice advice on graduate/PhD studies and scholarships in Sociology. If you are a practitioner/professional in Sociology, you will find the discussion and insights from practitioner perspective interesting and helpful.

Whether you are a freshman/undergraduate student or graduate/PhD student or a practitioner, this book will give you **lots** of insights and best practice advice concerning the field of Sociology. In 18 Chapters, top professors from prestigious universities have answered answer the questions including:

- Why should you choose Sociology as your major?
- Why should you undertake a graduate/PhD degree in Sociology?
- What are the research areas/issues and scholarship opportunities in field?
- What are the career options and best practice tips for the graduates?
- What are the academic/faculty peer-perspectives as to Sociology education, research and practice?
- What are the key issues and best practices from the practitioner perspective?

A five-member Advisory and Editorial Board was established as part of the publication/review process of this book. Most of the chapters in this book are peer-reviewed (except short articles and interviews), and they have been written in plain English to give the best/easiest reading experience to the readers.

So, why study Sociology – are you curious to know? You really need to read the book to find the answers but the following paragraphs provide a brief outline of each chapter.

Now about this book itself. This is the first book of its kind ever published on Sociology education, research and practice. In this book, we have invited a number of Professors from top-ranked universities to share their perspectives and advice on Sociology to help you.

Professor Timothy Wickham-Crowley of the Georgetown University has contributed **Chapter 1** entitled "**Why Study Sociology? A Disciplinary Manifesto**". What sociologists have found, and how we think? Professor Wickham-Crowley asks you. "Sociology begins with human beings immersed and enmeshed in what the great Georg Simmel termed "the web of group affiliations" says Professor Wickham-Crowley. He asserts that sociologists just love to find out about, and then to figure out the reasons for, counterintuitive patterns of human behavior around us. Professor Wickham-Crowley wants you to consider the questions such as: Why do married couples, and people more generally, living in countries with per capita incomes ten, twenty, or thirty times higher than in the poorest nations, in fact have far fewer babies than do people in those very poor countries, when we could afford to support so many more children? Isn't America the land of opportunity? Professor Wickham-Crowley says that he often tells his students that the "concepts" which sociologists use, define, and measure are not really "right or wrong," but rather are fruitful (or not) for further and later researches. He makes the point that sociology is not just about surveys and statistics. But don't sociologists just spend their whole careers giving people surveys/questionnaires to fill out and then "number-crunching" the data thus gathered? You ask. "That certainly is one way of doing sociology, and it is a very good way of doing certain types of social analysis. If we did not do such things, how could we possibly know whether unemployment rates are going up or down, or whether crime rates are going up or down? But sociologists have many, many other ways of figuring out how the world works and "what's going on out there" explains Professor Wickham-Crowley. "Our research mansion has many rooms, and many ways of

doing sociology and becoming a sociologist. Come join us" Professor Wickham-Crowley concludes this chapter with this invitation.

Have you heard the story of the Wizard of Oz? What could the Wizard of Oz possibly have to do with sociology? Professors Tucker Brown, Roxanne Gerbrandt, and Ying Ma of the Austin Peay State University will share the story with you to explain “**Why Study Sociology?**” to you. “Contrary to popular belief, sociology is not about opinions; it is an objective, systematic analysis of society that requires one to focus their attention on the context in which social life occurs” so say Brown et al. in **Chapter 2**. The authors assure you that, as a sociologist, you will learn to think critically about a society’s thoughts, values, and practices and analyze the social arrangements and institutions that serve to reproduce or challenge the prevailing social order. They pose a number of questions for discussion: Have you noticed the majority of nurses are females, while most doctors are males? Do you experience feelings of confusion or anxiety when you visit another country or encounter cultural practices different from your own? Does this sort of discovery sounds compelling? If so, Brown et al. invite you to join them on the adventure of sociology and explore what lies beyond the curtain. You may be wondering how sociology will prepare you for employment or what type of marketable skills sociology will impart. Brown et al. tell you what roles you can expect with a bachelor’s or master’s (or higher) degree. So, as Brown et al. conclude, if you think you possess the courage to learn how to examine any social topic with an open heart and an objective mind then a sociology degree could be the start to your transformative journey.

“Sociology is essential for human liberation...and “love in action” is the plan for liberating individuals, communities, and the world, declares Professor Matthew Lee of the University of Akron in **Chapter 3** entitled **Sociology and Human Liberation**. Professor Lee starts his class by asking his students to define “love” and “true love.” Professor Lee defines love as the “act of extending one’s self in order to nurture the growth of self and others”. As he shares his learning experience with you: “We have recently renamed our class “Love in Action” in order to emphasize that we are not just thinking and talking about how to love in a healthier manner, we are attempting to put these improved ideas into practice in our daily lives”, says Professor Lee. Why? As Professor Lee mentions, his purpose in writing this chapter is to offer a justification for his position by referring to his own experiences as a sociologist interested in helping to create a better world. Professor Lee hopes that readers who are considering sociology as a field of study will better understand how this discipline can be liberating at both the individual and group level. For the past

decade, Professor Lee has been teaching a university course on the “Sociology of Love,” in which he hoped to disrupt unhealthy cultural beliefs about love and replace them with healthy ones. Armed with this new awareness of love, Professor Lee says that he asks students to engage in a content analysis of their favorite television program with reference to the types of love (or its opposite) that are being conveyed by the characters. “They are often shocked at what is revealed when they pay attention carefully to the messages that they are internalizing from the media. This is why I see sociology as essential for human liberation” Professor Lee concludes this chapter.

“Sociology: Understanding Global Problems, Creating Local Solutions” is the title of **Chapter 4** by Professors Jiping Zuo and Elizabeth Scheel of the St. Cloud State University. Why is Sociology a “cool discipline”? According to Professors Zuo and Scheel, sociology not only studies the individuals’ mind, behavior, and their immediate surroundings like family, school, and workplaces, but more importantly, it examines interactions between individuals, small groups, and the larger society. They assert you that sociology allows you to see familiar things with new eyes and provides the foundation for understanding the world around you so that you can navigate it, make informed choices in your life, and change the systems that are harming people. In this chapter, Professors Zuo and Scheel provide the example of gender inequality and discuss the key issues in sociology from various perspectives: as a helpful comparative lens, as a meaningful approach in studying cross-cultural phenomena, and as an effective tool for social change and local solutions. Do you wonder what you can do with a degree in sociology? The authors assert that you can do almost any job that seeks a general liberal education degree, but there are also promising careers that are particularly suited for sociology students. Is sociology for you? Professors Zuo and Scheel ask you a number of questions to help you: Do you want to better understand the world around you? Do you want to make informed decisions about your own life and at the voting booth? Do you want to make a difference in your community or with people? Do you want to understand the people you will be working with in your future career? Do you want to know if there are truths to common assumptions about various social issues? Do you want to create a world where social problems are addressed based on evidence rather than personal beliefs? “If so, then sociology is a discipline you should study” conclude Professors Zuo and Scheel.

Professor John Holmwood from the Nottingham University has contributed **Chapter 5** entitled **Sociology in Britain**. Professor Holmwood notes that British sociology has a distinctive character and British sociology degrees tend

to have a common pattern. For this reason, Professor Holmwood satisfies your curiosity by addressing a number of questions for you with an example of sociology teaching and research at a major British university: What do sociology graduates do? How is sociology taught? How do you decide where to apply? How much will it cost? Where can you get more information? Professor Holmwood argues that sociology is an excellent preparation, both for citizenship and employment precisely because it is an outward-looking subject engaged with social problems in a changing world. He notes that sociology does not provide a vocational qualification, but a range of critical and research based skills that enable its graduates to find employment in which they can make a difference. Why? “One thing about which we can be certain is that the social problems that confront global citizens – climate change, inequality and poverty, and social and cultural change – are the very topics that will have to be addressed by a wide-range of employers” Professor Holmwood assures you in concluding this chapter.

Why Study Sociology? “To Know and Act in the Public Interest”, answers Professor Sharon Elise of the CSU San Marcos in **Chapter 6**. What is sociology? Professor Elise defines sociology as a way of shaping our minds to learn about and question our social arrangements and relationships. According to her, sociology is a “way of seeing” that emphasizes all that is social - everything that is created, or “socially constructed,” through the social interactions of people in society: ideas, values, roles, social relationships among people and social identities. Professor Elise has rightly guessed your questions as you may ask: How do my worries as a student compare to those of other students in my region? In my country? What about students in other countries? What about others in the past? Professor Elise notes that, in raising such questions, you may begin to learn about yourself and about your society in comparison with others. “By learning to question everyday practices, setting aside assumptions and “conventional wisdom,” students begin to see how the social practices, beliefs and values that shape our lives are products of social interaction, not the outcome of some “natural law” of human nature” explains Professor Elise. In this chapter, Professor Elise discusses some questions for you: How to understand your everyday life? How to identify critical social issues and perspectives? What are the tools to study social behavior and phenomena? “I felt then, as I do now, that sociology offered the lens and the tools we can use to understand the things that most disturb and confound us. I felt then, as I do now, that the university setting and the academic discipline of sociology provided a space for the realization of our greatest desires to learn how to create and foster social justice in all our social relations” Professor Elise

shares her story with you in concluding this chapter and wishes to extend you a special invitation to pursue sociology in her department.

“Do you like Big Macs, Coca Cola, and Levis? Understanding National Identity through TV and Sociology” is the title of **Chapter 7** by Professor Deana A. Rohlinger of the Florida State University. “I won’t lie. I wasn’t born a sociologist. I didn’t enter college with a deep yearning to understand the world through a sociological lens. In fact, I wasn’t even a Sociology major in college” Professor Rohlinger confesses. “I grew up in a rural part of Ohio, where people were far more concerned about crops and cows than college. When I graduated high school, I had no idea what Sociology was. So, how did I end up being a sociologist? Strangely, my journey to find Sociology began with a simple question, “Would you like a Big Mac?”, Professor Rohlinger shares his story with you when he was surrounded by kids at a Ukrainian middle school. You really need to read his story to understand why/how chose sociology as his area of research and teaching. Professor Rohlinger offers courses on social movements and mass media and is teaching a course for the next three years titled *The Hunger Games: Collective Action and Social Movements* in which they read Suzanne Collins’ trilogy and analyze the emergence of revolutions and revolutionary leaders. “I said that I wasn’t born a sociologist. Technically, that was a lie. I was born a sociologist” says Professor Rohlinger. “I have always been curious about the world, how we live in it, and how we change it. I just didn’t have a name for my interest. I lacked the language to identify and understand the world around me” Professor Rohlinger concludes this chapter. If you feel the same, Professor Rohlinger would like to welcome you to the intellectual club and invites you to learn more about his university.

Professors Gesine K Hearn and Lauren Crosby of the Idaho State University have presented this interesting conversation between the patient and the doctor in **Chapter 8** entitled **the Sociology Bug**: The Patient - Hello doctor, I’ve come to see you today about some concerning problems. I’ve had these symptoms for some time, several months at least, and they are becoming worse! I am quite concerned that something could be seriously wrong! ...Please help me Doctor! I need to know why people behaving in patterned ways, why social forces are affecting behavior, and how society works! I need to know why I have impulses to observe people and groups, and why I have the sudden desire to act impulsively and disrupt interactions. I need to understand what is happening! Please Doctor, you have to help me alleviate these problems! The Doctor - I am glad you came to see me right away! You are experiencing a host of disturbing symptoms. We need to run some tests, but let me first make

sure I have the right symptoms: I hear you are compulsively watching people; you keep doing this wherever you go; you also engage in some inappropriate and disruptive behavior - which if I understood this correctly - you enjoy? I will order some tests and refer you to a colleague for more evaluation. I will see you again in about week after I have reviewed your tests. I am confident that we can help you. [One week later...] In reviewing all of your symptoms I discovered a similar diagnosis made years ago by Dr. Peter Berger, a sociologist. He was the first to conduct an in depth case study of an individual with similar symptoms. What you have is known in medicine as “Bacillus Sociologensia”, the common name is “Sociology Bug”. Are you feeling any better!

Sociology is a social science that is very broad in scope, says Professor Jen Dunn of Texas Tech University in **Chapter 9 (How People Influence the Social Forces that Shape their Lives?)**. Who do sociologists do? You ask. According to Professor Dunn, sociologists study humans as social beings formed by and forming the groups in which they belong, both by virtue of birth and circumstance, and sometimes of their choosing. “Sociology is a broad enough field with a large enough toolkit of research methods to allow students to study virtually anything that interests them about the relationships between people and the groups they belong to” Professor Dunn assures you. He further assures you that the scope of topics and skills for learning makes sociology a wonderful undergraduate degree to earn. Why? “Not only is everything that you study interesting—because after all, we are studying ourselves—but Sociology, like History, teaches a person the importance of historical eras and events for changing cultures and social institutions” Professor Dunn explains. How about Master’s or Doctoral degrees? Professor Dunn assures you that people who go on for a Master’s degree have even more options, including teaching at community colleges, and that doctoral degree holders find employment in academia, but also in research institutes of many kinds as well as governmental organizations like the Census Bureau. The good news from Professor Dunn is that his University offers scholarships to undergraduate and graduate students, and students accepted into the M.A. program earn a stipend and a tuition waiver for working part-time as Teaching Assistants or Research Assistants. In concluding this chapter, Professor Dunn further assures you that there is no discipline with more possibilities, both for students and for their audiences.

“I have often wondered what the discipline of Sociology really is myself” confesses Professor David LoConto from New Mexico State University in **Chapter 10**. “I am reminded of the ancient Chinese proverb, “give a man a

fish and you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.” For myself, this is what Sociology does. Sociology at its core is a field of study that teaches people how to fish, that is, how to think and evaluate the world around them” explains Professor David LoConto. What sociologists do? Professor David LoConto notes that sociologists do spend a great deal of time trying to tell others ‘how’ something happens, or ‘how’ it became the way it is. He further notes that sociologists are outstanding at understanding how people work together, fit together, and are most effective. How about employment opportunities? “If employment was only about how to do a job in its minimalist sense, then we would be cheerful robots as C. Wright Mills said” says Professor David LoConto. He offers some suggestions for you: “Sociology students must be more effective when looking for employment. You are more than just a degree. You are comprised of a host of skills. You have to market yourself that way”. How about scholarships? Now the good news from Professor David LoConto: “Currently we provide six Graduate Assistantships per year. I recently submitted a proposal that if granted would give us 10 more assistantships per year. The Graduate School provides various scholarships and other awards”. In concluding this chapter, Professor David LoConto encourages you to read the literature and asserts that sociologists who continue to do the work will succeed.

Chapter 11 is titled as **Why Study Sociology**. In this chapter, Professor Jacob Bucher of Baker University argues that a sociologist wants to know how the ‘person’ works. Professor Bucher discusses about “Sociological Imagination” which according to him is a “Mission Statement” of sociology. He compares sociology with a 500 pound gorilla to describe the scope of career opportunities in sociology. “If you are thinking about studying Sociology, I would encourage you to pair it with another discipline”. Which disciplines? How about research? Professor Bucher offers his advice in this chapter and provides information about scholarship opportunities and resources for you. “Congratulations on your decision to study Sociology... Remember if you want to understand people, or you want to understand society, you have to understand them both – Sociology will provide you with that understanding. Best of luck!”, Professor Bucher concludes.

Professor Kirsten Kramar of the University of Winnipeg has contributed **Chapter 12** entitled **Sociological Imagination: The Ability to See the Personal Troubles and Social Issues**. “I still remember the day when I had the aha sociological moment reading an academic journal article at the dining room table one afternoon while in my second year as a sociology major at the University of Winnipeg. Suddenly I got it! I understood how a sociologist

sees the world and wanted to help others do the same through teaching and research” Professor Kramar shares this interesting story with you. As Professor Kramar narrates, through sociology she came to understand that her personal experience was shaped by the social relations she found herself in during that time. When she teaches Introductory Sociology she often asks students to define the discipline of sociology. “Students will usually reply that sociology is simply “common sense.” But is not quite accurate” says Professor Kramar. What can you expect to learn? According to Professor Kramar, undergraduate sociology students learn a variety of research methods and theoretical models for explaining and understanding the dynamics of the social world. Why? “The critical thinking skills offered by a degree in sociology enables its graduates to make the necessary and often desirable transitions from one life stage to the next and one job to another and to make sense of the changes taking place all around us as we navigate the global economy” explains Professor Kramar. “Regardless of your state of life, or career interests, an education in sociology can provide you with the quality of mind required for engaged citizenship in the 21st century” Professor Kramar concludes this chapter.

Please accept “**An Invitation to Improve the World**” from Benjamin James Waddell of the Adams State University in **Chapter 13**. Is sociology a complex discipline? Why this invitation? You ask. “Sociology is a fairly straightforward discipline. As social scientists we systematically study society as a means of improving social conditions. In this sense, Sociology is an invitation to improve the world we live in. As sociologists, this is both the hope and promise of our work” explains Professor Waddell. Professor Waddell says that he begins his courses by telling his students the story of Pedro Ortiz, who was the first person to push him to think sociologically about the world. In this chapter, Professor Waddell relays this story to you as a means of revealing the power of the “sociological imagination” to help us understand the world we live in. As you read through the story Professor Waddell invites you to think of similar experiences that you have had in your lifetime. As he demonstrates in this chapter, how we choose to manage society matters a great deal, for the decisions we make today will impact future generations for years to come. “In my mind, this is why Sociology is so vital to our world. Using actual data to understand how society works gives us leverage in the political decisions that we make” Professor Waddell suggests. He further suggests that through the careful, systematic analysis of society we can arrive at better solutions for the most pressing issues of our times including immigration, war, healthcare reform, education, fertility rates, inner-city gang violence, drug abuse, and unemployment. Why should you accept Professor Waddell’s invitation in this chapter? “Sociology invites us to think carefully about the relationship between

individual action and larger social trends. By doing so we can expand our understanding of the world we live in, and in time, improve it” Professor Waddell concludes this chapter.

Why Sociology? Professor Brian K. Obach, of the State University of New York at New Paltz asks you in **Chapter 14**. Professor Obach thinks of sociologists as “doctors of society.” “While the focus of medicine is to treat injury and prevent diseases of the body, sociologists seek to address social problems such as racism, violence, inequality, poverty and the oppression of women” explains Professor Obach. To provide some insight into the different roles that sociologists play, he would like to consider the example of domestic violence, the all-too-common occurrence of (usually) women being abused by their male partners. To this end, Professor Obach poses some questions: How pervasive is this problem? Who is more vulnerable to abuse? How could such abuse be prevented? Is sociology for you? “I always say, “sociology is not for everyone; it is just for the 99.9% of us who will work with and interact with other people!” If you are in that 99.9%, then studying sociology will be beneficial to you” asserts Professor Obach. He makes an interesting remark that sociologists recognize that social problems, like domestic abuse, are in fact social. Why? “Sociology is useful for everything from addressing domestic violence to selling cars. The fact is that understanding how society works and being able to analyze social conditions is useful in any setting”, Professor Obach wants to convince you. In concluding this chapter, Professor Obach quotes the great philosopher Socrates as saying that the unexamined life is not worth living and offers an addendum to that: “The unexamined society is not worth living in. So, study society, learn how it operates, identify its problems...then change it for the better”.

The title of **Chapter 15** is **The Usefulness of Sociology**. In this chapter, Professor Meir Amor of Concordia University answers the questions as to what is sociology good for, and why study sociology. In order to explain it sociologically, Professor Amor proposes the articulation of the three intuitions. He argues that the sociological perspective is insightful, productive, and reasonable. Together, these intuitions constitute his sociological answer to the sociological challenges. By sociologically illuminating current troubling issues Professor Amor also demonstrates the usefulness of the sociological perspective. He further argues that sociology’s uniqueness as a discipline can be demonstrated by articulating the irrational basis of rationality, and by showing the non-obvious genealogy of citizenship. “It seems that the defense of human rights presents a major challenge to modern or maybe post-modern

politics and the sociological perspective might be the method with which one can provide ways to address it” concludes Professor Amor.

Sociology is interdisciplinary. For this reason, we have included chapters from other related disciplines including Economics, Criminology and Criminal Justice, Public Policy, and Sexology in this book.

“Economists put the ‘Science’ in Social Science” is the title of **Chapter 16** by Professor Michael BenGad of the City University of London. What is economics? What characterizes its approach? Why economics models are useful? What should a good undergraduate course teach you and which programmes are on offer? Professor BenGad answers these questions in this Chapter with an example of the proposal to give every adult in the United States one million dollars to make everyone rich, which he says is the “fallacy of composition”. “We are rather proud of the fact that employers, in both the private and public sectors, want to hire people with economics degrees because they value the skills, knowledge and training our students receive in our programmes”, Professor BenGad concludes.

Professor Jeffrey Ulmer of the Penn State University has contributed **Chapter 17** entitled **Criminology and Criminal Justice as a Social Science**. As Professor Ulmer says in this chapter: If you are reading this, you are probably a student who is curious about majoring in criminology and/or criminal justice. You may want to know if they are the same thing. You probably have lots of questions about the field, what it is, what it offers, and whether it is right for you. You may want to know about the career options and opportunities in this field. You may also want to know about the scholarship opportunities (yes, there are a number of scholarships offered). That is quite common among students who first encounter the idea of criminology and criminal justice as a social science major. In my career as a professor, I have tried to give my best answers to questions like these countless times. I have been teaching classes on criminology and criminal justice for over 20 years, and I served as the Undergraduate Program Director and Honor Program Advisor for our Criminology major here at Penn State University for many years. So, I’ll draw on my experience and try my best with a few questions you might be wondering about.

Why Policy Matters? Professors Daniel Gitterman and Benjamin Meier of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill ask in this chapter (**Chapter 18**). They also address various questions to satisfy your curiosity: What is public policy? Why study public policy? Why does policy matter? Gitterman

and Meier discuss various issues concerning public policy including policy vs. politics, just vs. unjust, and three central pillars of public policy education. “Our liberal arts based public policy education trains students to write, think, and argue inductively, while drawing upon evidence from a shared body of knowledge. We create the space to apply academic knowledge, skills, and expertise within context of real-life situations and experiences”, assert Professors Gitterman and Meier. How do they measure they are successful in their efforts? ‘Our metric of success is based on whether our students have “learned how to learn” so that they will be able to answer questions that will come up years from now’, conclude Professor Gitterman and Meier.

“How to avoid becoming a victim of a sexual assault?” is the title of **Chapter 19** by Carol Apt of the South Carolina State University. "If you have decided to pursue one of the many career paths that the study of Sexology can open up for you, 'Congratulations!'" says Professor Apt. Professor Apt wants you to be assured that you have chosen a fascinating, timely, and vitally important field that can lead to rewarding career opportunities in your home country and around the world. "Come on, let's face it, sex is a fascinating topic. Who in their right mind isn't interested in talking about sex, or at least hearing about it?" Professor Apt is so confident about this topic. Professor Apt asserts that sexology is a fascinating area of inquiry that can lead to rewarding lifelong careers and that you will gain knowledge and expertise that can be of benefit to you personally and professionally, as well as to many types of people and groups around the world. For the purpose of this chapter, Professor Apt considers one type of sexual assault – rape. She answers the question as to what advice can you, as a Sexologist, offer to women to decrease their chances of becoming a rape victim. In this chapter, Professor Apt offers some suggestions that could prove helpful in various settings including when driving, when going out, while at College or University, and when on the Internet. In concluding this chapter, Professor Apt again wants you to be assured that if you have chosen Sexology as a career, you have chosen well.

Professor Göran Therborn of the University of Cambridge has contributed **Chapter 20** entitled **“Why Study Sociology?”** Exploring The Endless Social Horizon”. Are you interested in societal understanding, in social issues, social problems, social history, and social change? If so, Professor Therborn suggests sociology is the optimal field of study. “How does he know? You, as an alert person, may legitimately ask. “I am no PR consultant, but someone who has been involved in social studies, teaching, and research for more than fifty years, on all five continents, with some multidisciplinary experience” says Professor Therborn. According to Professor Therborn, the great advantage of

sociology over any other social discipline is its unlimited range of interests, its multiple interfaces. “Sociology is intellectually exciting, without necessarily being very technical, but it can only thrive on a boundless curiosity, of students, teachers, and researchers, and on a permanent revolution of new learning. Sociology is an intellectual challenge” Professor Therborn asserts you. He then gives you a few examples from his books so far in this century. They include *Between Sex and Power*; *Family in the World, 1900-2000*; *From Marxism to Postmarxism? The World. A Beginner’s Guide*; *The Killing Fields of Inequality*; and *Cities of Power*. “For me personally, this hospitality to all kinds of social interests and concerns was crucial...What will come out of it remains to be seen... But working on it is great fun. Sociology is fun” Professor Therborn concludes the last chapter of this book.

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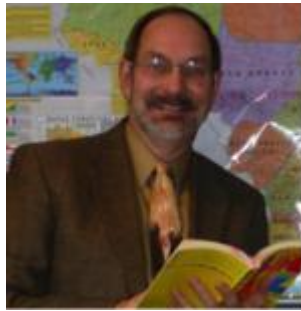
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Chapter 1: Why Study Sociology? A Disciplinary Manifesto – Professor Timothy Wickham-Crowley, PhD



Timothy P. Wickham-Crowley, PhD
Chair and Associate Professor of Sociology
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*Dr Timothy Wickham-Crowley was first educated at Princeton (A.B.) and then received his Ph.D., from Cornell in 1982. He has taught at Georgetown University since 1986, where he is Chair and Associate Professor of Sociology. In the past 15+ years he has taught courses in introduction to sociology, political sociology, social theory, modernization and development, religion, population dynamics, revolution, Latin American societies, Brazil, states and societies in Latin America, inequality, social movements, comparative sociology, the sociology of science, and his department's capstone, thesis-writing course. In 1991 he was nominated by Georgetown students and selected to become an honorary faculty member of Alpha Sigma Nu, the national Jesuit honor society. Over the last two decades he has been nominated by both students and fellow professors for several teaching awards, and in 2009 received a Dean's Award for Excellence in Teaching. He has sole-authored two books, **Exploring Revolution: Essays on Latin American Insurgency and Revolutionary Theory** (M. E. Sharpe, 1991), and **Guerrillas and Revolution in Latin America: A Comparative Study of Insurgents and Regimes** since 1956 (Princeton University Press, 1992). The latter book was nominated both for the Bryce Wood Award (for best book) given by the Latin American Studies Association (LASA) and for the Distinguished Publication Award of the American Sociological Association.*

What Sociologists Have Found, and How We Think

Writing over a hundred years ago in two books, *Rules of Sociological Method* and *Suicide*, Émile Durkheim, a Frenchman who had been trained in philosophy but soon defined himself as a sociologist, made two fundamental points, and made them most pithily. In the first book, he averred that sociology is truly a discipline set apart, one never to be confused with the psychologists' study of individual minds. (As I am fond of saying, he gave us the 11th Commandment: "Thou shalt not commit psychology.") Instead, sociology was to be the "study of a world unknown," precisely because our discipline begins with the social structures in which we are all imbedded, and the "social facts" which confront us, and not with some imagined individual(s) independent of such social forces, not with some lonely "economic man," and not with fantasies of persons "in a state of nature" (Rousseau). If our discipline had an American-style bumper sticker, it might read "Sociologists Do It in Groups."

In *Suicide*, Durkheim threw down the gauntlet in front of all who would claim that only the individual person and his or her motivations can truly be the subject of scientific study, and only such motivations could explain people's decisions to kill themselves. As he himself might argue were he to write this piece: "If only the psychological impulses of random individuals can 'explain' acts of suicide, then why are nations' rates of suicide so predictable from year to year, with the previous year's rate being the best predictor of the next year's rate?" (And as Durkheim also cleverly notes, obviously the same persons are not producing the same group-effects each year!)

He presented reams of data over many decades of the 1800s from more than a half-dozen European nations showing just such patterns in their suicide statistics, also demonstrating that each nation had its own, 'signature' pattern of suicide, which he also went on to interpret and explain. And the patterns still hold up!

Suicide Rates for both Sexes Combined in Recent Years
(deaths per 100,000 persons)

Country	2008	2006	2004	Mid-1990s
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United States	10.1	10.1	10.2	11.8
Australia	7.5	9.8	11.1	11.4
Finland	17.3	18.0	18.4	26.4
France	13.5	14.2	15.1	19.6
Greece	2.6	2.9	2.9	*4.0
Ireland	9.1	8.9	11.1	* 11.2
Italy	4.9	4.8	5.6	7.1
Japan	19.4	19.1	20.3	15.1
Mexico	4.3	4.3	3.8	*3.1
Poland	12.9	13.2	13.6	14.8
United Kingdom	5.8	6.1	6.3	*7.1

SOURCES: Various editions of the *Statistical Abstract of the United States*:
“Comparative International Statistics.”

http://www.census.gov/prod/www/statistical_abstract.html.

The (*) data come from http://fathersforlife.org/health/who_suicide_rates.htm, Table A;
accessed September 23, 2014.

But wait, there’s more to the patterns of suicide, patterns that are really counterintuitive. Some of us might understand suicide as a “reaction” to the harshness of life, to the trials of existence, to material and emotional burdens that we find ourselves unable to stand any longer. There is virtually no evidence to support that viewpoint! Suicide rates are highest in the most industrialized nations (and also the former communist nations), and have been shown to rise as a nation and its people get richer and more educated, and live longer. Women have harder lives than men, surely, yet in virtually every world nation women’s suicide rates are but a fraction of the rates of their male co-nationals. Our best data also consistently show that the long-term poor among us have lower suicide rates than do rich people.

And surely the lives of African Americans are harsher than those of their white counterparts, yet black men’s suicide rates are far less than those of white men,

and black women are far less likely to take their own lives than are white women. Durkheim's book *Suicide* gives us all sorts of clues as to why those "unexpected" patterns of suicide across different groups do indeed "make sense," if you adopt the sociological posture and ideas which animate that book and his entire life's work.

To adopt a sociological point of view usually means also abandoning perspectives on the social order which begin (and often end) with the individual and his or her motivations. In contrast, sociology begins with the evident fact that we are not social isolates! We could not even become truly human beings without sustained, nurturant interaction with other human beings, in the course of which we also become conversant with the symbolic universe specific to our own sociocultural milieu, its goods and bads, its shalts and shalt nots, and all of its cognitive, moral, and aesthetic ways of viewing the world. We absorb those "lessons" from human interactions, and could never become human by, for example, being suckled by wolves like the mythical founders of Rome, Romulus and Remus.

I repeat: sociology begins with human beings immersed and enmeshed in what the great Georg Simmel termed "the web of group affiliations." And please notice Simmel's plural usage there: "affiliations." None of us are "just" one identity, a single persona, for we are defined by multiple "locations" in a social order, including gender, class, race/ethnicity, nationality, religious belongings, organizational memberships, and so on, perhaps for a very long list (re: it is not unusual in a 20-questions- type test – "Who am I?" – to get three-dozen responses and more).

"Aha" Moments in Sociology: In Search of the Counterintuitive and the Fruitful

Sociologists just love to find out about, and then to figure out the reasons for, counterintuitive patterns of human behavior around us. Why do married couples, and people more generally, living in countries with per capita incomes ten, twenty, or thirty times higher than in the poorest nations, in fact have far fewer babies than do people in those very poor countries, when we could afford to support so many more children? (Kingsley Davis told us why over a half-century ago, in his writings about the "demographic transition.")

Why did church attendance begin to "slip" among many global Catholics, and why did far, far fewer of them "sign up" to become priests and nuns after the Vatican II reforms of the mid-1960s, reforms which factually made it far easier to be a Catholic layperson, priest, or nun everywhere in the world? (Roger

Finke and Rodney Stark told us why, in *The Churching of America, 1776-2005*.) Why do churches which demand a great deal of their congregants in regular commitments to churchly activities seem to be stronger in keeping and attracting church members than do those churches which demand very little? (Laurence Iannaccone told us why, in his essay “Why Strict Churches Are Strong”). These and many other conundrums have been cleverly and persuasively answered by many members of the sociological community.

Along the same lines: Isn't America the land of opportunity, the place where “average Joes (and Joans)” stand a much better chance of moving up through the class structure than in those stodgy, sclerotic societies from which so many Europeans emigrated? In fact, in the entire second half of the 20th century, study after study after study confirmed a great deal of “upward mobility” in virtually all of those advanced societies being compared – yes, the U.S. included, but not a shining exception – and even in some Latin American nations like Brazil (themselves often negatively stereotyped as “closed”). Of late many studies have begun, it seems, firmly to contradict our national mythos of the U.S. as “the” land of opportunity, as recent comparative mobility studies show us falling behind our European counterparts, that is, in the average Joe-and-Joan's chances to “get ahead” in society.

I often tell my students that the “concepts” which sociologists use, define, and measure are not really “right or wrong,” but rather are fruitful (or not) for further and later researches. Thus beyond findings that are simply counterintuitive we may encounter concepts and theories and interpretations which, in later decades, prove themselves to be mightily helpful in providing descriptions and explanations of brand new phenomena not even considered in those earlier works.

For example, Max Weber coined the concept of “sultanism” a full century ago, describing systems of highly personalized power concentrated in a single person at the top of a polity, with cronyism the rule for dealing with all subordinates. Many researchers in political sociology – among them myself -- have concluded for several decades now that political systems of that ilk seem to have been especially vulnerable to social-revolutionary overthrows around the world since World War II, unlike other types of “dictatorships,” unlike, collective military rule, and unlike democracies.

Beginning in the late 1950s in a number of influential books, Erving Goffman began to talk to us about how we manipulate the “self” we present to others in all sorts of routine encounters. His ideas about the “presentation of self in

everyday life” – a book title of his -- have now been used again and again to help us “read” how people interact with one another in our times, in the era of the Internet, whether in competitive video games, online chatter, Facebook, or other modes, and his influence and importance have only grown greater since his death in 1982.

While on the subject of the Internet, in his book *Night as Frontier: Colonizing the World after Dark*, author Murray Melbin provided a whole series of solid descriptions detailing the behavioral and cultural parallels displayed by Americans in “settling” spatiotemporal “frontiers.” In a 1978 journal article (same title) and that later book, Melbin systematically compared U.S. spatial frontiers of the 1800s (“The Wild West”) with a recent temporal frontier, the night-time hours as lived in America during the later 20th century. He shows decisively that we have recently “moved into” the nighttime hours with levels of incessant activity never before seen in human history, and with distinctive cultural and behavioral patterns. Among the patterns he found were an initial period of “settlement” by disproportionate numbers of young, unmarried men; high levels of sociobehavioral deviance; a lack of government regulation; and eventually a very slow pattern of transformation toward patterns routinely found in non-frontier settings.

If we consider Cyberspace to be a new frontier, a third frontier, it has also shown very similar patterns of evolution: young, single men were far and away the most common Internet “denizens” in its earliest days during the previous century; pornographic websites are a huge fraction of the web, plus others developed by various sociopolitical fringe groups; and the historical arc of the Internet is still famed for its spontaneous and unregulated character. Yet as I write this today, Internet “users” are a far, far more diverse cross-section of the population than was true a quarter-century ago, and government efforts increasingly seek to regulate the manner in which the Internet functions: both of those patterns were described as typical, later frontier developments in Murray Melbin’s writings going back more than a quarter-century!

Back in 1983 a prize-winning book appeared called *Too Many Women? The Sex Ratio Question*. It was actually a posthumous project by Marcia Guttentag – she died of a heart attack with the book only partly completed-- finished by her husband, Paul Secord. Within “low-sex-ratio” social settings, that is, ones with many more women than men, one of the many patterns she predicted and also described for past societies was a high degree of male reluctance to marry, and also men’s misogyny directed at women, with women also expressing resentment at such treatments.

Beginning in the 1980s, somewhat low sex ratios among African Americans clearly worsened in that same direction, and that change was accompanied by the unprecedented spread of misogynistic themes and lyrics into hip-hop music made by men (with women sometimes talking back, e.g. “No Scrubs” by TLC). All those patterns happened as Guttentag and Secord predicted, but well after her death. By contrast, misogynistic themes simply cannot be found from the 1950s into the 1970s in popular African American music, such as rhythm and blues, soul music, the Motown sound, and 1970s singers like Lionel Richie and the Spinners.

The Competition? A Brief Discourses on Two Other Fields I Have Studied

Any portrait of humanity which begins with us as social isolates – perhaps as “rational actors” pursuing our individual (N.B.) “self-interests” – begins with false premises, and we all know that here I am about to discuss economics. I myself have long been a partial fan of macroeconomics, and in particular of the writings of all those economic historians who have argued that (the right) “institutions” are the keys to the long-term patterns of national economic development (or not), which is also a topic of my own current research. Yet the field of economics is most famous for embracing the “rational actor model” (and that theoretical viewpoint has also substantially invaded the field of political science as well). The idea of “choices” made by “rational actors” stands today as the core-most principle of today’s microeconomics.

Yet sociologists since Max Weber have tirelessly pointed out that, since people existentially will and do have multiple values and goals, there is no single “self-interested goal” which an outsider might argue for as “the” basis for “rational” action. If that is true, then the rational actor model collapses. Moreover, Weber’s own models for all forms of social action describe rational action (which he called “calculating rationality”) as just one “mode” among others for analyzing human social action (the others being value-based, emotion-based, and tradition-based sources of action).

To repeat: the very basis of microeconomics has long been precisely a socially isolated actor making choices, as if never constrained by external, group-based, non-economic forces of any sort. Such an intellectual (perhaps better: “ideological”) stance has led economists again and again to absurdities, like denying the coercive structures which underlie and enforce systems of debt peonage. Some have even described a street-mugging as a mere transfer of resources from victim to thug.

And my goodness: what could they make of systems of slavery? (They have tried.) As is often true within complex disciplines, it has taken another economist, James S. Duesenberry, to make the most potent and biting objection to such weird reasoning visible in many – but thankfully not all – of his fellow economists’ writings: “Economics is all about how people make choices. Sociology is all about why people don’t have any choices to make.”

As for that other key academic locus of “individual” analyses, I love and have enjoyed the study of much psychology, especially social psychology; indeed, my undergraduate senior thesis was completely immersed in and reliant upon social psychological studies of child development within the kibbutzim of Israel.

Yet the psychiatric and psychological communities have a lot to answer for in their insistence upon the repeated publication and expansion of, and relentless disciplinary backing for, their official publication of a gigantic list of (presumably) scientifically well-established “interior” mental disorders – known by all and sundry as the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual, now in its 5th incarnation as DSM-5.

In his recent publication, *The Book of Woe: The DSM and the Unmaking of Psychiatry*, an insider to these fields named Gary Greenberg has convincingly argued that such listings have always had “validity” problems – do these disorders really exist, in the same empirical sense as stomach cancer or atherosclerosis? – and specialists have always encountered “reliability” problems – do they all actually agree on the same diagnoses? The answer to the first question has long been a solid, even resounding “no,” while the second issue also often fared badly when carefully assessed (e.g., p. 313). As Greenberg points out, this is the same profession which once labelled homosexual orientation a mental disorder and (in 1850) revealed to us the mental disorder of drapetomania: “the disease causing Negroes to run away” (p. 1).

How Sociologists Go about Their Business: Not Just Surveys and Statistics

But don’t sociologists just spend their whole careers giving people surveys/questionnaires to fill out and then “number-crunching” the data thus gathered? That certainly is one way of doing sociology, and it is a very good way of doing certain types of social analysis. If we did not do such things, how could we possibly know whether unemployment rates are going up or down, or whether

crime rates are going up or down? As it happens, our very best U.S. measures of both of those very important patterns of human activity derive from questionnaires/surveys given to a random sample of Americans. The Bureau of Labor Statistics regularly surveys about 60,000 American households to give us the overall unemployment rate and also the parallel rates for many sub-groupings (e.g., white female teenagers).

As for crime, our very best measures of “how much crime” is happening in America come from random-sample “victimization surveys” of Americans, and not from the number of crimes reported to (or simply known by) local police and then nationally gathered by the FBI. Why not the latter data source? Because people do not report all or even most (in some cases) crimes to the police, and thus the FBI’s data are both highly selective and fragmented. The first such victimization survey was done by Philip Ennis way back in 1967; its virtues were instantly recognizable to all who studied crime, and the FBI soon borrowed that tool, and has for decades been conducting victimization surveys of its own!

But sociologists have many, many other ways of figuring out how the world works and “what’s going on out there.” Like anthropologists, many sociologists go out into communities and cities and do field work, especially in the form of participant observation. And many such research-efforts are now mainstays of our discipline, like William Foote Whyte’s 1940s Boston-based classic, *Street Corner Society*; or groundbreaking in their new revelations, like the 1970s study by Laud Humphreys, *Tearoom Trade*, about homosexual encounters in New York’s public places, and the surprising identities of the participants therein; or perhaps a winner of the American Sociological Association’s annual award for the very best book, as was Mitchell Duneier’s diner-based study from Chicago’s South Side, *Slim’s Table: Race, Respectability, and Masculinity*; or revealing of the life-dilemmas faced by young African Americans growing up in Philadelphia, as reported in Elijah Anderson’s 1990 book, *Streetwise*; or the recent work which has gained so much national media-attention far beyond the sociological community, *On the Run: Fugitive Life in an American City*, Alice Goffman’s study of a novel “surveillance-state” targeting entire black neighborhoods in Philadelphia.

Although they are not the most basic tools of our discipline – especially as compared to psychologists’ researches – sociologists can also employ experiments to find out what is happening out there in the world. If you remember your own scientific studies, you know that, in an experiment, you try to set up the test so that only one independent/”causal” element is allowed to

“vary” within the experimental setting, and then you go on to assess whether its presence vs. absence, or perhaps the “degree” of its presence, is factually associated with differences in the outcomes which intrigue you.

In Murray Melbin’s groundbreaking 1978 journal-article, “Night as Frontier” – I say more about his research above -- he was trying to find out if people were actually more friendly and more helpful in the “wee hours of the morning” than they were during broad daylight. The details of his four experiments are less important than the experimental design: the procedures in all four experiments done in public places were identical; only the time of day across a 24-hour cycle varied for each iteration of the experiment. The results?: people were indeed found to be friendlier and more helpful during the night-time, in any experimental variant involving face-to-face contact with other people.

Sociologists also very widely make use of face-to-face, intensive interviews. Many such interviews with both pro-choice and pro-life female activists in California provided the core substance of Kristin Luker’s now-classic book from 1984, *Abortion and the Politics of Motherhood*. Via its many virtues, but mostly derived from her detailed interviews, Luker helps the reader get deep inside and really understand the previous life-choices and experiences, and the antithetical world-views, of women on both sides of that critical American debate.

Sociologists can also turn to historiographical literature and sources just as our colleagues the historians do, and consult primary and secondary written documents in order to buttress our descriptions and interpretations of the past. Most of the writings of both Karl Marx and Max Weber can be thought of as “exercises” in the writing of historical sociology, and Weber while a graduate student in fact wrote two hefty dissertations, one on medieval European trading companies and the other on agrarian institutions of the ancient world.

In our own era, Charles Tilly received his doctorate in sociology at Harvard well over a half-century ago based upon his study of older French documents, from which he crafted his first great book, *The Vendée*. It remains to this day one of the “go-to” books to consult about that great counterrevolutionary movement which emerged to oppose the French Revolution (-aries) during the 1790s. Tilly went on to write many, many more books of historical and theoretical sociology.

Perhaps most impressive in their sheer scope were two magnificent efforts: *The Contentious French: Four Centuries of Popular Struggle* (1986) and

European Revolutions, 1492-1992 (1993). And in both titles he meant it: all four centuries in that first book, and also all the nations and peoples across Europe in the second. No wonder that when he died a few years back he had long been celebrated and honored by the scholarly communities of sociologists, historians, and political scientists alike.

Sociology as a Vocation at Georgetown University

Whenever I teach “Introduction to Sociology” here at Georgetown, I like to start with the conundrum which opened this essay, the puzzle that animated Emile Durkheim’s *Suicide*, so my students can find out why a sociological perspective on social patterns is absolutely necessary. In general, then, as we stand before our students day after day, I myself and many, many other sociologists love to begin our intellectual enterprises with such puzzles which scream out for us to solve them, so we can better understand the social world around us, and then share those understandings with others.

Where appropriate, I also like to relate those intellectual/theoretical problems to the varied social problems which confront us and our society (understood as both national and global), matters that often bedevil policy makers and challenge all those among us who share broad social concerns. In my own intellectual career, I have sought out a few such “problem areas” – my own foci have been the study of social revolutions and also the sources of social and economic (under-)development – precisely because they are so very basic to the welfare of millions of humans with whom I share this planet. In those writings and researches, then, I have been engaged in *Reflections on the Causes of Human Misery, and upon Certain Proposals to Eliminate Them* (the wonderfully apt title of a 1972 book by Barrington Moore, Jr.). The very best among us as sociologists manage to combine both intellectual rigor and social concerns in works that might deeply touch both the mind and the heart.

We also try to transmit to (better: to nurture within) our own Sociology Majors that selfsame pair of goals, to push them toward becoming sociologically trained, morally concerned young citizens who are to “be for others” (a Georgetown motto). In response, their own performances have been remarkable over recent years. Despite their being taught by only a handful of campus sociologists, and despite their being but a smallish fraction of every graduating class each year, Sociology Majors have shone, absolutely shone in gathering high proportions of the top few awards given out to the very best scholar-citizens among the entire senior class of Georgetown College (the oldest school at the University). In the year 2014 they captured three of the top

five College-wide awards, while a colleague of mine right here in Sociology captured the best teacher award, as selected by the entire senior class.

In the end, the best reason to study sociology, and perhaps even become a professional sociologist, is precisely because the field is unmatched in the breadth of its scholarly and topical interests – only anthropology matches us in that respect, while economics, political science, and urban or ethnic studies are all far narrower in their disciplinary scope of interests. And as I have noted above, we also excel in the wealth and scope of the research methods by which we try to unlock social mysteries, and try to puzzle out the operations of the social world. Our research mansion has many rooms, and many ways of doing sociology and becoming a sociologist. Come join us.

Chapter 2: Why Study Sociology? Professors Tucker Brown, PhD; Roxanne Gerbrandt, PhD; and Ying Ma, PhD



Tucker Brown, PhD
Department of Sociology
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Dr Tucker Brown is an associate professor and chair of the Department of Sociology at Austin Peay State University in Clarksville, TN. Prior to becoming chair, he has previously served as coordinator for the Center for the Study of Military Life and as coordinator for the family studies minor at Austin Peay State University. He teaches a range of courses that typically includes: Introduction to Sociology, Contemporary Issues in the Family, Social Statistics, Research Methods, and Sport in Society. Originally from Pennsylvania, Brown received his B.S. from The Pennsylvania State University and holds a Ph.D. in sociology from Arizona State University. His research and scholarly interests are eclectic but have generally focused in four areas: family structure and the generation and transmission of social capital across the life course, participatory action research, pedagogy and the redesign of the undergraduate sociology curriculum, and the sociology of skateboarding.



Roxanne Gerbrandt, PhD
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Ying Ma, PhD
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Dr. Ying Ma is originally from China and obtained both B.A. and M.A. in sociology from Nanjing University in China. She then decided to further her study and research in the U.S. and received her Ph.D. in sociology from University of Cincinnati. Her specialties are immigration, race and ethnicity, gender and work. She is very interested in the experiences of contemporary immigrants to the U.S. Her dissertation examines the acquisition and maintenance of an ethnic language by immigrant children. She is now doing research on the educational outcomes of immigrant children. Dr. Ma is currently an assistant professor in the Sociology Department at Austin Peay State University in Clarksville, TN. She has been teaching a variety of sociological classes, including Race and Ethnicity, Sociological Theory, Sociology of Work and Organizations, to name a few. She is working with students to best their college experience and help them gain most from their studies.

The story of the Wizard of Oz

The story of the Wizard of Oz is recognized throughout the world. This classic narrative centers on one person's journey to a distant land and the relationships forged along the way. The story's heroine, Dorothy, befriends an unlikely collection of misfits and together they embark on an expedition to meet the Wizard of Oz who will grant their hearts' desire. The characters undergo numerous trials and tribulations and each faces down their worst fears to track down the all-powerful wizard. Arguably, the most pivotal moment of the story occurs when the group finally encounters the mighty Wizard of Oz.

However, when the unassuming group meets the wizard they discover that all is not as it appears. The Wizard of Oz was not real, but the power and influence he represented was very real. The group would "peer behind the curtain" and expose the wizard's deceptive practices that constituted his power. So now you must be thinking, what could the Wizard of Oz possibly have to do with sociology?

What could the Wizard of Oz have to do with Sociology?

First, sociology is the systematic study of society; it draws upon scientific principles and empiricism to dispel myths and challenge ideologies in an effort to reveal the social truths hidden beneath the organization and arrangements of a society or group. Therefore, sociology is the degree for you if you are the type of person who questions conventional explanations and is inclined to “peer behind the curtain.” Sociology, teaches us to pull the curtain aside and think critically about how the world actually works; how seemingly all-powerful people and social institutions shape our interactions and beliefs, and how changes in society might affect us in our everyday lives.

Sociology requires you to develop a keen, logical mind. Throughout our personal experiences, we develop opinions relating to the organization and functioning of society, but our opinions are often simple and biased, reflecting personal experience and anecdote. Thus, our observations of the social world are rarely precise and can result in inaccuracy or misinformation. The discipline of sociology requires you to “unlearn” what we think we know about society and social life and to challenge our prevailing ideologies. Contrary to popular belief, sociology is not about opinions; it is an objective, systematic analysis of society that requires one to focus their attention on the context in which social life occurs. As sociologists, we generally refer to this as, “the sociological imagination.”

The Sociological Imagination

The cultivation of your sociological imagination also requires courage, as you may be forced to confront your own biases, contradictions, and flawed systems of logic. Sociology majors learn to view the social world objectively and discover that the realities of social life can conflict with our ideals or challenge what it is we “know” to be true. Therefore, sociology is a process where we learn to see the world from a different viewpoint. Through this process, sociologists learn to account for the diversity of global perspectives and practices while developing a respect or empathy for difference. Societies may disseminate cultural messages or encourage practices that normalize the unjust treatment or marginalization of a specific segment of the population resulting in conflict and stratified social conditions. As a sociologist, you will learn to think critically about a society’s thoughts, values, and practices and analyze the social arrangements and institutions that serve to reproduce or challenge the prevailing social order.

If this discussion has perked your interest or if you found yourself nodding in agreement as you read, you may have already begun to unearth the sociologist

within yourself. If at any point in your life you have found yourself on the outside looking in, thinking objectively about your observations and experiences, then you have experienced sociology. The ability to disassociate from the situation and analyze the players and context in which it is operating is to be a sociologist.

Does this sort of discovery sounds compelling? If so, we invite you to join us on the adventure of sociology and explore what lies beyond the curtain. You see, some years ago, we were not unlike you. We were filled with excitement when we began choosing our college courses but had never heard of sociology, what it was, or what it had to offer. None of the high schools we attended required or even offered an introductory sociology course. To satisfy our curiosities, each of us found our way to sociology through an introductory course during our freshman year and approximately twenty years later, we are teaching in a sociology department at an American university, with no regrets.

If you have not Decided What Major to Choose...

If you have not decided what major to choose, or are not sure if sociology is the right fit, let us first discuss the interests of sociologists. Sociologists analyze an array of topics from various theoretical and methodological approaches. Some focus broadly on social structures, such as the political system; some are interested in smaller social interactions, such as the intimate relationship; some are intrigued by social inequality and theorize about what can be done to foster a more fair and just society; some are concerned with the latest technology and wonder how it may transform people's behaviors. As you can see, sociology encompasses a wide range of topics and is arguably the broadest discipline of all the social sciences.

But, sociology does not stop there. Sociologists do not only analyze a wide range of compelling social phenomena; they also introduce a unique perspective for viewing the social world. Take bullfighting for example; have you ever wondered why bullfighting is so popular in Spain but frowned upon in other societies? Have you noticed the majority of nurses are females, while most doctors are males? Do you experience feelings of confusion or anxiety (culture shock) when you visit another country or encounter cultural practices different from your own?

You see, humans are inquisitive and we seek to provide explanations for the mysteries embedded within our experiences. However, this can be problematic, because our explanations are often biased and our observations may be

inaccurate. Sociology attempts to rectify our shortcomings by answering these questions through rigorous scientific inquiry, not opinion and ideology. In the ways that biologists study the natural world, astronomers explore the universe, or chemists develop new compounds, sociologists examine human behavior and its interplay with the society in which it occurs.

How Sociologists Undertake the Study of Human Behavior

Now, you may be wondering exactly how sociologists undertake the study of human behavior as it occurs within their societies. The study of human behavior can be quite challenging because unlike the biologist examining a frog, sociologists do not have the luxury of simply collecting people and place them in a lab for experimentation. Nor do sociologists have any real way to manipulate the natural surroundings of people without potentially altering the results. Then, is sociology a science? Surely it is.

Sociologists follow the same principles as other sciences, but we may employ innovative methodologies designed to account for the dynamics of the human experience. Sociologists collect data by interviewing people, handing out surveys, doing ethnographic studies, or utilizing existing data (such as Census data or media content). When you delve into sociological research, you will discover that the method adopted by a sociologist is often dependent upon the question or phenomena for which an explanation is desired. Importantly, sociologists, like their counterparts in other scientific disciplines, remain value free when studying subjects and selecting topics, collecting unbiased data, and attempting to reach objective conclusions.

We hope you now have a better understanding what sociology is and what sociologists do. But, maybe you have not been sufficiently convinced that sociology is the major for you. You may be wondering how sociology will prepare you for employment or what type of marketable skills sociology will impart. Sociology and an understanding of human behavior in social contexts is valuable to any career field that relates or deals with understanding the human experience, but it goes well beyond counselling and case work focusing on individuals. The logic of sociology and knowledge of contemporary scientific methods used for collecting and analyzing social data transcend the discipline and provide the tools for better understanding the groups, organizations, and systems that influence the social arrangements and power structures of a society.

Sociology fosters critical thinking and a global perspective, skills that transcend the discipline and expand our understandings beyond our own experiences. Sociologists analyze and compare societies and cultural practices that provide insight into one's own society and culture. Through this process, we acquire knowledge and respect of other people and their practices. Inevitably, you will develop your own "sociological imagination," the ability to connect people and their problems or challenges to the broader social context. In developing your "sociological imagination" you will better recognize, empathize, and ultimately address, the challenges and inequalities facing people within and beyond the borders of your society.

Sociologists are required to develop an understanding of both quantitative and qualitative approaches to the analysis of human behavior and this valuable training makes you competitive on the job market beyond sociology. A bachelor's degree in sociology, qualifies you for jobs such as research analyst, survey researcher, social service, statisticians, and many more. With a master's degree (or higher), you can teach sociology at colleges or universities (like us), work in research institutes, or develop and administer non-profit organizations, to name a few. The options are wide open, as long as you are equipped with the general skills and knowledge learned in sociology that provides a foundation among all the sciences.

Why would you Want to Analyze and Interpret Things?

As a sociologist, you will gain a sound methodological foundation that can be employed to analyze and interpret social phenomena. So, now you're probably thinking why would I want to analyze and interpret such things?

Well, by better understanding the factors that influence the organization of society and the dynamics of social life, it becomes easier to identify and address inequalities. The identification of inequalities provides the opportunity for sociologists to inform public policy and meaningfully address these shortcomings in an effort to create a more fair and just society. Maybe that seems a bit grandiose, but in more humble terms, sociology provides the foundation for establishing an empirical basis and methodological soundness to bias-free decision making. This is especially relevant in jobs relating to government and those who are employed in publicly accountable positions for tax payer dollars or social services.

Sociology is a relatively young science, but a science nonetheless, and you need to be mindful of presenting it in such a way on the job market and to peers in

other disciplines. Too often non-majors and colleagues in more “laboratory-based” sciences discount sociology as a science and relegate sociology to an opinion based discipline mired in liberal ideology. As sociologists, we are careful not to present the discipline in a way that draws too heavily on exemplifying, anecdote, or current events. Instead, we emphasize that sociology employs theory, mathematics, and traditionally rigorous empirical methods to better understand our social worlds.

However, it also draws upon innovative methodologies specific to the analysis of social phenomena such as participant observation, ethnography, and participatory action research; methodological approaches that have only recently emerged as viable alternatives to the classical approach to scientific inquiry. The diverse skill set that undergraduates develop as sociology majors is valuable across a wide variety of disciplines and occupations and prepares students for analyzing an issue or challenge from multiple viewpoints and methodological approaches while maintaining a scientific rigor. The ability to develop a study designed to analyze an issue while accounting for multiple perspectives are skills that can be invaluable to any organization desiring a better understanding of their stakeholders.

These skills are valuable to others and most of all, valuable to you. As the parable of Oz makes clear, it was only ignorance of the characters’ own capabilities that compelled them to uncritically accept what was told to them about themselves and the world. So, if you think you possess the courage to learn how to examine any social topic with an open heart and an objective mind then a sociology degree could be the start to your transformative journey.

Chapter 3: Sociology and Human Liberation – Professor Matthew T. Lee, PhD

Matthew T. Lee, PhD
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Introduction

Sociology is essential for human liberation. Not every sociologist would define the discipline in terms of increasing human freedom and enhancing flourishing, but this is important to how I personally understand sociology and give meaning to my research, teaching, and service activities. My purpose in writing this chapter is to offer a justification for my position by referring to my own experiences as a sociologist interested in helping to create a better world. It is my hope that readers who are considering sociology as a field of study will better understand how this discipline can be liberating at both the individual and group level.

Sociology is "necessary" for human liberation, but perhaps not "sufficient." This means that our collective quest to create a better world is enhanced by a deep engagement with other disciplines, including psychology (with its emphasis on individual mental health and well-being), philosophy (which

focuses on wisdom), technology/medicine (which is essential for increasing human productivity and health) and religious studies (which explores questions of ultimate meaning). What sociology adds to these other disciplines is a thorough understanding of the social forces that influence human behavior and help shape how our society functions. These forces limit our possibilities for flourishing, but they also provide opportunities for us -- if we are able to see them and if we act in a thoughtful and coordinated way to take advantage of them.

How might this work in practice? Imagine a psychologist working with a client who is depressed. This psychologist provides therapeutic solutions that help this client overcome depression and get on with the business of living. A sociologist could enrich this individually focused work by asking, "What social conditions increase the likelihood of depression in a particular society, or in a social group within society, and how might we alter these conditions so that there is less of a need for psychological therapy?" This is not to denigrate therapy. But we need to recognize that therapy is not available to everyone and that we all win when we create social conditions that generate less psychopathology in the first place. Even under optimal conditions, some people will still become depressed. There is value in sociologists and psychologists working together to address the problem at multiple levels: individual, communal, and societal. Psychologists might have more expertise with the individual level, whereas a sociologist will likely have more to say about the broader issues.

"Love in Action": A Plan for Liberating Individuals, Communities, and the World

My discussion of psychological therapy was an abstract example, but I can provide a more concrete case. For the past decade, I have been teaching a university course on the "Sociology of Love," in which I hoped to disrupt unhealthy cultural beliefs about love and replace them with healthy ones. I saw this as part of an effort to overcome the negative socialization experiences that most students in American society have had, including me. We use the word "socialization" to refer to the process by which individuals learn culturally expected ways of thinking and acting. Some of this socialization is good, some is not. Rather than relying only on individualized therapy to help people overcome the negative socialization experiences, sociologists argue that we should also modify the cultural beliefs and values that form the foundation of this socialization in the first place. This is what I have tried to do in my Sociology of Love class, which I have recently renamed "Love in Action" in order to emphasize that we are not just thinking and talking about how to love

in a healthier manner, we are attempting to put these improved ideas into practice in our daily lives. But more than that, our goal is to contribute to the project of building a more loving society, comprised of more compassionate and empathetic organizations, institutions, and patterns of behavior. You might be wondering how a sociologist would go about doing this.

In my class, I start by asking students to define “love” and “true love.” They write their definitions down and I share all of these responses with all of the students. They can quickly see that chaos prevails. Some students believe that “true love” exists, others do not, and many are undecided. Some define love in terms of feelings, others emphasize action, such as helping others. Some are fixated on romantic love, others point to more spiritual forms. Some see love as a good thing, others believe that it is destructive (i.e., it can lead to jealousy and violence). This class exercise represents a sociological approach to the topic of love. Like the vast majority of sociologists, I see our discipline as a scientific enterprise. This means that we use the methods of science to better understand reality and to develop better social policies and practices. What I have done in my class is to use survey methods to collect data on cultural understandings of love among a sample of undergraduate students (i.e., those who enrolled in my class). I point out to students that the results of this survey do not represent the views of all people, or even all Americans (or all American students). Sociologists know the limitations of their methods. But I also note that the thoughts of the students provide a small window into how our culture defines love. What we see in the survey results is that there is much confusion. Subsequent survey questions establish that this confusion continues to cause most students a great deal of trouble in their lives.

Is there any hope of a solution to these problems? My view is that sociology cannot stop with the identification of problems and the sources of problems, although this is a necessary first step. We need to imagine solutions and develop a plan for putting them into practice. We then need to use scientific methods to determine the extent to which our solutions are actually helpful. In the class, I ask the students to set aside the definitions of love that they have internalized from their socialization experiences and to adopt a “working definition” of love that we will put into practice throughout the semester as a kind of social experiment. I will share the definition in a moment, but I want to note at the outset that by the end of the course most students have accepted the new definition of love as their own. They see it as being more beneficial than the one they implicitly relied on prior to the class. Others modify the definition in a way that better suits their experiences and circumstances. But

perhaps most importantly they begin to see love as a powerful force that can restructure society, not just as a personal experience.

The definition of love that I offer to the students draws on the works of Erich Fromm (*The Art of Loving*; 1956), a social psychologist who received a PhD in sociology and also became an important social philosopher; M. Scott Peck (*The Road Less Traveled*; 2003), a psychiatrist and best-selling author who incorporated a religious perspective in his work; Thich Nhat Hanh (*True Love*; 2006), a Vietnamese Zen Buddhist monk, peace activist, and bestselling author; and bell hooks (*All About Love*; 2001), a cultural critic and feminist activist with a PhD in literature. Inspired by these people, all of whom put their ideas into practice, I define love as the act of extending one's self in order to nurture the growth of self and others. Unlimited love extends this definition to all others without exception.

Notice that this definition does not require specific feelings. It is a verb, not a noun. Many students have had the feeling of “falling in love” and they are disappointed (to put it mildly) when these feelings dissipate or when the feelings are not returned by the person they love. I ask the students to reflect on why our culture promotes this ephemeral feeling as the gold standard for “true love,” as opposed to the action-oriented definition that I have offered to them. Of course our culture promotes both understandings of love, but by having this conversation the students become more mindful of the emphasis on feelings that they have internalized, and how that emphasis often causes them much grief by distracting them from healthy ways of experiencing love that do not require being struck by Cupid's arrow. They also realize that they can act in ways that are more intentionally loving, regardless of what they are feeling at a particular moment. I am not suggesting that feelings are unimportant, but simply trying to point out that feelings can serve loving ends and unloving ones as well. Finally, the idea of unlimited love gets them thinking outside of their narrow circle of friends, family, and romantic partners. For many, this was not an issue about which they had invested much thought.

Using Content Analysis to Better Understand Love

Armed with this new awareness of love, I ask students to engage in a content analysis of their favorite television program with reference to the types of love (or its opposite) that are being conveyed by the characters. They are often shocked at what is revealed when they pay attention carefully to the messages that they are internalizing from the media. Content analysis is one research

tool that sociologists use to systematically describe and analyze textual or video data. It is an attempt to look more objectively at these materials. The students begin by simply counting instances of love in the TV show that correspond to our class definition of love, instances that correspond to the definition of love they had prior to the class, and instances of non-loving acts such as expressions of hatred or acts of violence. Through this research activity, they see first-hand how many loving and non-loving messages they are exposed to and they begin to become aware of the negative impact this socialization has had on their thoughts and actions. Most find very few instances of love as we have defined it in the class. This awareness represents the first steps towards liberation.

Conversations with these students after they have been presented with the alternative definition of love (extending one's self in order to nurture the growth of self and others), and after they have applied this definition in their content analysis project, remind me of a great quote from sociologist Peter Berger (1963:176) in his book *Invitation to Sociology*:

We see the puppets dancing on their miniature stage, moving up and down as the strings pull them around, following the prescribed course of their various little parts. We learn to understand the logic of this theater and we find ourselves in its motions. We locate ourselves in society and thus recognize our own position as we hang from its subtle strings. For a moment we see ourselves as puppets indeed. But then we grasp a decisive difference between the puppet theater and our own drama. Unlike the puppets, we have the possibility of stopping in our movements, looking up and perceiving the machinery by which we have been moved. In this act lies the first step towards freedom.

This is why I see sociology as essential for human liberation. We can use the theories and methods of sociology to enrich our understandings of ourselves, our society, and our world. We can become more aware of impediments to human flourishing, barriers that without a sociological approach we might not even perceive, and we can make a conscious choice to make a positive change. This applies to the topic of love and it is also relevant for all of the other issues that sociologists study. This includes the family, places of employment, government/politics, education, social problems, crime, and many other issues.

In my "Love in Action" class, we build on the emerging awareness of love that develops from the content analysis. I ask students to begin to act differently in their one-on-one interactions with other people. This changes the behavioral

structure that has prevailed in their relationships with friends, family, coworkers, other students, and strangers. Much of the time, they now realize, they have been in “automatic pilot” mode, not fully aware of how they have been behaving in unconscious ways. I give them specific exercises to change this situation and many report dramatically improved relationships. I ask them to reflect on why they used to behave as they did and they once again see the importance of socialization. But we do not stop at the level of individual relationships. In subsequent weeks, we shift our focus to the community level and eventually to the entire world. We get to the point where students develop the trained capacity to see love not only as an individual-level issue, but as a property of social relations and institutions. Class activities move them in the direction of creating what the sociologist and peace activist Elise Boulding (1990) called a “global civic culture.” Boulding uses this term to refer to the idea that all groups of people have similar needs -- we all need peace and opportunities for growth and development -- but the culture of one society may be in conflict with the culture of another society and that may lead to war, domination, and other outcomes that inhibit the possibilities for growth for all people. The solution, for Boulding, is a shared, global civic culture built around empathy, altruism, and a shared bond with all people. Love is integral to such a culture.

Sociology as a Career: A Flexible Option with Diverse Applications

In addition to giving us the tools to enhance human flourishing, sociology also provides a broad-based set of skills that can be used as the foundation for many types of careers. Much helpful information about this topic can be found on the American Sociological Association’s website: www.asanet.org/employment/careers.cfm.

One strength of sociology is the flexibility that it provides. The skills that I have gained are transferrable to different specializations within academia and even to careers outside a university setting. For example, I was trained primarily in criminology and for the first decade of my career most of my research, teaching, and service was in this area. In fact, a colleague and I developed the “immigration revitalization perspective” to explain why neighborhoods with a high concentration of immigrants might have lower than expected rates of violent crime given prevailing levels of poverty, joblessness, and other adverse social conditions. This has become the predominant explanation of the relationship between immigration and crime (see Lee 2013; Lee and Martinez 2002).

How was I able to transition from the study of violent crime to the study of love? First of all, it is important to note that as professor of sociology, I am able to pick the topics that I study based on my own interests. There is no boss requiring me to stick with criminology for my entire career. So I have the freedom to pursue the topics that interest me and this will continue to change over time. If I had received a PhD in Criminology, which was my original intention, I would likely have had a more narrow range of options. But fortunately I opted for the PhD in Sociology and as a result I have been able to teach and research topics like immigration and crime, corporate crime, global anarchism, altruism and religious experience, media portrayals of battered women, how to create more compassionate organizations, and many other issues.

Second, my training as a sociologist has given me a number of important skills that benefit me regardless of the topic that I might be researching or teaching. Critical thinking is important across all areas of study. So is good written and oral communication. The ability to use the methods of science to understand a situation and develop solutions to problems is important in academic and non-academic jobs. For example, I have used similar statistical techniques to analyze police files on homicide (Lee, Martinez, and Rosenfeld 2001) and survey data on religious experience (Lee, Poloma, and Post 2013). The methods are often the same, even though the topic is different.

Third, I have gained a variety of skills related to finance, leadership, and working with diverse groups of people that are useful in my current job, but would also be helpful in a non-academic career. I have served as a Project Director on a large interdisciplinary research project which helped me understand how to work with a large budget. I am currently the Chair of my department, which also has a large budget that I have to administer. But I would suggest that it is my training in sociology, when combined with other skills that I have picked up along the way, that has helped me to make positive contributions to the governance of my university, most recently as the elected representative of the Chairs and School Directors to the Budget and Finance Subcommittee of our University Council. In addition to having gained some proficiency with financial issues, my sociological training has given me a clear understanding of the causes of problems that transcend the individual level. As a result, I am able to offer a unique perspective on the Subcommittee. These kinds of experiences are easily transferred to non-academic settings, if I were to choose to pursue that route. Most sociology students do build careers outside of universities.

As a Commissioner with the Commission on the Accreditation of Programs in Applied and Clinical Sociology, I help to promote rigorous, skill-based programming in sociology departments so that students are successful in these non-academic settings after graduation (www.sociologycommission.org). According to the American Sociological Association, sociology graduates can list the following on their resumes as skills acquired by majoring in sociology: conduct research and analyze data, communicate skillfully, practice critical thinking, and employ a global perspective. These are helpful skills with great relevance for many careers.

My own department offers undergraduate and graduate degrees leading to the PhD in Sociology. The undergraduate major in sociology provides flexibility and allows students to select from a diverse set of classes in ways that best serve their career goals. Graduates may seek employment in a range of occupations, including in business, non-profit, and research organizations. Job titles of recent graduates include: Police Officer, Program Coordinator, Crisis Intervention Specialist, Director of Planning and Development, Human Resource Specialist, Business Manager, Research Associate, Corrections Officer, Probation Officer, Juvenile Restitution Program Coordinator, Pre-Sentence Investigator, and many others. For those who pursue graduate studies, we offer competitive stipends and tuition remission (see www.uakron.edu/sociology). Some of our PhD graduates have become university Presidents, Provosts, or faculty members; others have worked for non-profits or governmental organizations. The job market continues to reward those who acquire the skills that sociology provides.

Conclusion

Although sociology as a field of study has many advantages, I would like to conclude by returning to the point that I made at the very beginning of this chapter: sociology is essential for human liberation. Gaining the ability to conduct sociological research and more generally to think sociologically empowers us to become agents of change in our communities and societies. This is perhaps the most compelling reason why you should study sociology. Issues like the acquisition of skills and career advancement are beneficial side effects. If you are engaged in positive, meaningful work, you will live a happier and more fulfilled life. Your work will also be of benefit to others, which enhances one's sense of meaning and purpose.

Sociologists tend to see the world from a vantage point that non-sociologists might miss and this can help us make the world a better place. For example, I have used material from my Love in Action course outside of the classroom. I was involved in a project to solve some problems at a local shelter for battered women and their children. As a result of getting involved with that group, I eventually led a discussion of “true love” with the women at the shelter. We explored different cultural ideals of true love and I mentioned Thich Nhat Hanh’s understanding that “true” love should increase benevolence, compassion, freedom, and joy. The women started to interrogate the ways that their understandings of love might be missing these elements and how their romantic partners had used violence to reduce their freedom and steal their joy.

It was not long before they began to think sociologically about where their understandings of love came from and how these understandings might need to be changed. They came to see that the ideal of “true love” that they had internalized because of their socialization experiences had kept them entangled with an abusive person they saw as a “soul mate” (and one is not supposed to leave a soul mate!), but who was behaving in a manner that was anything but loving. I had the impression that they would not be limited by their previous cultural understandings in the future. It was a remarkable experience.

I later reflected on how that moment in the shelter was related to a series of events that unfolded over several years in unexpected ways. A research project I had started some years earlier informed the development of my class on love, which later gave me something to say to the women in the shelter, which in turn launched them on a journey of self-discovery about the social sources of their beliefs about love and how they might transcend the limitations of this cultural baggage. But I can trace this process back even further, to sociology as a way of thinking about the world. Because of my training in sociology, my inclination is to seek out materials from diverse cultures that relate to whatever it is that I am studying. In the case of love, this led me to the work of the Buddhist monk (Thich Nhat Hanh) who I mentioned previously, whose writings highlighted a sharp discrepancy between contemporary American notions of romantic “true love” and the “true” love that brings real freedom and joy.

As a discipline, sociology cultivates the open-minded search for understanding in a way that draws on many different standpoints. This process tends to “make the familiar strange,” as the saying goes. And it seemed strange indeed, to me and to the other women in the shelter, that our cultural understandings

of love could somehow be compatible with the jealousy, anger, and violence that afflicted their lives. To return to the words of Peter Berger, they had perceived the cultural “machinery” by which they had been moved and they had taken their “first steps toward freedom.” This is the reason we study sociology.

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Chapter 4: Sociology: Understanding Global Problems, Creating Local Solutions – Professors Jiping Zuo, PhD and Elizabeth Scheel, PhD



Jiping Zuo, PhD
Chair of Sociology Program
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*Dr. Jiping Zuo is Professor of Sociology at St. Cloud State University in the U.S. Dr. Zuo is also a first-generation immigrant from China. In 1986, she went to the U.S. to study sociology and received a Ph.D degree in sociology from University of Nebraska— Lincoln in 1991. Prior to her study in the U.S., Dr. Zuo was a graduate student, majoring in international finance at Nankai University of China. Although she switched her major somewhat out of her practical concerns for financial aid, she has later fallen in love with sociology in which she finds so much meaning to her personal as well as career life. Dr. Zuo is specialized in sociology of family and China studies and mainly teaches courses in the areas of family, social statistics, research methods, and state-society relations in contemporary China. Her research interests include broader historical and social impacts on family interactions in general and on Chinese families in particular. Dr. Zuo currently explores historical family patterns in China as well as changing work-family relations in post-Mao market transition. Her publications can be found in academic journals such as *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *Family Issues*, *Critical Sociology*, *Rural Sociology*, *Science & Society*, *Sociology Quarterly*, *Sociological Perspective*, *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, etc. In 2009, Dr. Zuo published a*

book in Chinese, co-authored with Yongping Jiang, Urban Women's Work and Family in Social Transition, published by the Contemporary China Publishing House.



Elizabeth Scheel, PhD
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Dr Elizabeth Scheel teaches courses in gender and violence, sociology of the body, social deviance, social problems, community organizing, and criminology/delinquency. Her research interests are in gender and violence, sociology of the body, social problems and deviance, sociology of youth, and community organizing. She is activist oriented towards the rights of marginalized people, particularly youth, prisoners, the poor, and am particularly interested in issues of reproductive rights and sexual violence. She researches in these same areas as well as women involved in the criminal justice system through men they love.

Sociology is a Cool Discipline!

Sociology is a cool discipline! It not only studies the individuals' mind, behavior, and their immediate surroundings like family, school, and workplaces, but more important, it examines interactions between individuals, small groups, and the larger society.

Sociology allows you to see familiar things with new eyes and provides the foundation for understanding the world around you so that you can navigate it, make informed choices in your life, and change the systems that are harming

people. As one student stated, “[sociology] opens your eyes to what most people in the society can’t see.” A sociological analysis can help you further develop insight on various social issues and compassion for the people you are working with regardless your profession, be they patients who seek medical care, criminals who need help to avoid future crimes, or poor people searching for work or housing.

A sociological analysis can also inform public policy, program development and even city planning, as sociological research can steer us away from false assumptions about people towards an accurate picture of underlying issues that must be addressed if we are to be successful in the policies, programs or developments that we have planned. It will expand your mind and challenge you to consider aspects of society that others take for granted. Here are some examples of how the sociological perspective can examine common social issues, challenge popular biases about these issues, and offer practical solutions for various social problems.

Sociology—a Useful Perspective

Let’s pick a hot subject matter—gender inequality. Despite all the progress we have made towards achieving gender equality in recent decades in the U.S., gender inequality survived the 20th century into the new millennium. At home, we see women still do the majority of household chores and childcare; at the workplace, too often we witness that our male coworkers still tend to hold more prestigious positions and are paid more than our female coworkers. People often blame men for refusing to give up their male privileges, blame women for not doing enough to get ahead, or at best, complain about the slow pace in changing patriarchal culture or job discrimination. Using a sociological perspective, however, we can take our analysis to a much broader structural level and view these patterns of behaviors in the context of capitalism in American society in which profit-making truncates family well-being. This means, in a capitalist society, private firms consider wage/salary earners as variable costs to be kept to a minimum, rather than as human beings with families to support and contribute to the growth of society. Women cost private firms more than do men by virtue of their reproductive functions and childcare or other caretaking responsibilities. ⁱ

More women are catching up with men on their job/career ladders if they remain childless or have a partner take on most domestic responsibilities. Likewise, a man would see his market value decline as well if he wishes to be

more devoted to his family than market work. Seen in this light, you may shift your thinking that blames men for “male privileges,” and understand that an excess market economy that favors profits over the family pits women against men.

Extending our discussion to a related subject: job outsourcing—another common problem to many Americans, shall we blame workers, say, from Mexico, China, and India, for taking away American jobs? If we understand how globalization operates, it should not be hard for us to see, capital flows where there are lower production and labor costs but higher profit gains. Jobs flow out with capital but many of those jobs are not real jobs compared to what American workers used to earn; they only pay foreign workers a fraction of what they used to pay American workers. For example, an Indian engineer may be paid a seventh of an American engineer. Otherwise, what would be the point of American (or more precisely transnational) companies outsourcing jobs? In this case, both American men and women lose to capital. But they are not the only losers.

Even though many people and their families in developing nations which are experiencing inflows of global capital appear to be benefiting from economic gains, they are doing so at a high price. In the course of marketization by their nations such as China, Mexico, rural residents are losing their land—which David Harvey, a critical sociologist coins as “accumulation through dispossession.”ⁱⁱ In order to earn higher incomes, many wage/salary earners must work long hours and meanwhile, they lose job security, health and childcare benefits, and free education for their children, not to mention high environmental costs they have been paying, such as pollution, rapid diminishing of natural resources, and ecological disasters. This is another example of capital pitting one group of people—this time they are American workers—against others. With this critical sociological approach, you may no longer want to blame workers from other countries for job loss in American society, and more important, be able to tackle fundamental problems associated with globalization.

Sociology—a Helpful Comparative Lens

Our enhanced ability to critically examine globalization, in turn, helps bring our understanding of gender inequality to a new level by linking our everyday lives with global forces. When Zuo studied urban Chinese women in China’s recent market transition from non-market state-socialism, she noticed that urban women became more devoted to their family responsibilities than their

work role as they used to be.ⁱⁱⁱ Why, in a time where capitalism was supposed to bring new opportunities for Chinese people would women turn away from their work to retreat back to being housewives? Popular explanations included the persistence of traditional Chinese culture, maternal instinct, or even backlash to women's "excessive liberation" during the socialist era when the state required all able-bodied adult women to join the paid workforce in cities.

These theories are similar to some popular arguments used to explain why growing numbers of young women in America report they want to stay at home rather than build careers. But Zuo's analysis showed that China's integration into the global market economy was creating vicious competition, worsening workers' working conditions, and generating a sense of injustice and alienation among Chinese workers. Zuo concluded that urban women's domestic role orientation might be understood as their passive resistance to workplace brutality, rather than their mere adherence to maternal instinct or traditional gender ideology.

Sociology—a Meaningful Approach in Studying Cross-Cultural Phenomena

Additionally, the sociology perspective offers unique structural insights when we study cross-cultural experiences no matter whether they are historical phenomena or contemporary events. Now let us give you an example of family patriarchy in traditional China. Prior to the 1949 revolution, China was well known for its age-long family patriarchy in which women were oppressed. At the same time, Chinese history also witnessed rising power of a woman as she bore children, especially sons. How did women gain power as they become mothers? What was that power about? Matriarchy? If so, how could matriarchy be possible in a patriarchal society?

Zuo did a study on this subject in the first decade of the millennium.^{iv} She examined family patriarchy in the context of China's patrilineal family system—family property passed along the male line, in the early 20th century. After interviewing 80 older married individuals who came of age during that period, Zuo found that in a patrilineal family, there existed two-layered patriarchy; one was gender based and the other, generation based, and the latter often truncated the former.

This was because, unlike western industrial societies where families are consumption units mainly consisting of parents and their children, Chinese families in an agrarian society were primarily economic units characterized by

multi-generational households and all-encompassing functions to ensure the continuity of male lineage.

Ironically, it was male lineage that granted a woman power as she became the mother of the next generation. Upon the birth of her first child, the woman began to be accepted by her husband's family as one of them. With the passing of her parents-in-law at a later stage, her husband would increasingly rely on her to run the patrilineal family, hence limit his power, to a certain degree, within his culturally prescribed male role. When her sons got married, the woman was moved up to be a patriarch of the family and benefited from generation-based patriarchy by enjoying power over younger generations and day-to-day services provided by her daughters-in-law.

As we look around, the patrilineal family was not unique to China but has long existed in many nonindustrial societies. We can gain more cultural understanding of family dynamics and relations if we are able to conduct analyses through the lenses of history, structure, and life courses.

Sociology—an Effective Tool for Social Change and Local Solutions

Apart from its structural perspective and critical views that sociology brings to understanding our world, sociology is also particularly well-suited in that it meets the needs of the younger American generation who are searching for bigger roles than personal success. Many sociology majors in our department indicate that they fall in love with sociology because want to be part of the larger society; they study sociology to seek solutions to help others and rebuild communities. One student indicated in a survey: "I like how sociology views the world, how it talks about social changes; I want to work for a community to better it." Sociology can guide activists and policy makers in making effective change rather than changes based on current fads.

For example, it is commonly assumed that making organizations more professional and offering services such as individual counseling would be a positive experience for people seeking help after experiencing a trauma such as rape. However, in her research on how professionalized rape crisis centers impacted survivors, Scheel found that the women were often unsatisfied, calling multiple crisis centers and seeking more than just therapy. Many survivors felt that the professionals in the center were just trying to mollify their anger, and that the focus on them not being upset anymore made them feel like they were the "problem" to be fixed.

Instead, these survivors were searching for support for them to express their anger, get involved in political action to change the rape culture, and connect to other women like them. Ironically, this is what rape crisis centers had originally organized to accomplish, but had transformed into government funded centers run by professional staff, many who were not themselves survivors.^v

In other research on rape education, Scheel and her students, using interviews with men and women on responding to rape survivors, discovered that men were very interested in knowing how to help rape survivors, but felt alienated from current approaches to rape education. Through this research they proposed an alternative strategy that would get past men's negative feelings about being targeted as a potential perpetrator or victim or rely on protection strategies. They suggested that approaching men as allies of support would be more effective.^{vi} Sociological research can have very practical applications and move our social change efforts forward as we can rely on empirical data rather than assumptions about how to solve a social problem.

Sociology students have also worked with faculty to do research in the community to help with local needs. One group worked with a local YMCA to conduct a needs assessment of their services with members, donors, and volunteers.^{vii} Another group worked with a local task force on family violence and sexual assault on the issue of runaways, contacting national organizations and reviewing the literature to compile a report of best practices for supporting runaways, particularly those who had left abusive homes or had been victimized after they left.^{viii} Others have helped organize low income workers, created violence prevention programs for local youth, and researched new immigrants to the area. In each of these cases, students connect social theory, empirical data, and a sociological analysis to meet a local need.

Sociology – Programs and Majors

Sociology Program at St. Cloud State University

Getting students involved in a variety of capacities is the hallmark of our sociology programs. We offer a traditional sociology major and a critical applied sociology major. Both majors are aligned with St. Cloud State University's missions for the new millennium and to meet our students' needs for understanding globalization, social change, and rebuilding the community. The general sociology major program added the global sociology focus on top

of the three existing emphasis areas: family, health and aging; social problems, deviance and social justice; and political economy of society.

In the critical applied sociology major, we strengthened methodology courses that offer training in needs assessment and evaluation research, community action research, writing for general audiences and grant writing. In both programs, we emphasize sociology practice, that is, to apply sociology analyses and critical views in the real world through service learning. In many sociology classes, lower-division and upper-division alike, faculty members send their students to low-income, racial/ethnic, or immigrant communities to work with the community in providing social services and in seeking solutions to improve the community. In this way, they are not only learning sociology in the classroom but also doing sociology in society, helping effect social change.

Sociology — a Promising Career

Many students wonder: What can we do with a degree in sociology? Of course, students can do almost any job that seeks a general liberal education degree, but there are also careers that are particularly suited for sociology students. Our students find sociology very helpful in broadening their horizons, enhancing their analytical skills. Many alumni feel that their major is useful in their career. As one graduate reported, “Sociology is helpful in my counseling career in that it studies people in their environment and teaches how uncontrollable factors influence their life.”

According to the 2013 Jobs Rated Reportsix, sociology ranked as the nineteenth most appealing field in the new website’s analysis of 200 occupations; other research demonstrates that employers seek students who have excellent soft skills—the strengths of sociology majorsx. According to the most recent survey of our alumni, we found that they primarily went into social services, government, or NGOs to be professionals such as probation officers, policy analysts, staff at group homes for youth or marginalized adults, coordinators for local government programs, social service programs, and even health care programs, although many also went into the private sector in human resources, sales and marketing, or business administration.

Still other students went on to law school or pursue other professional degrees. Large numbers of them continue to focus on various social justice issues such as inequality, domestic violence, or worker’s rights. While many people know that sociology students are good at working with diverse groups of people, sociology students also gain the research and analytical skills that are highly

valued in business and social services and strengthen their ability in creating solutions to real world problems. What we have mentioned above makes sociology a cool discipline!

Do you want to better understand the world around you? Do you want to make informed decisions about your own life and at the voting booth? Do you want to make a difference in your community or with people? Do you want to understand the people you will be working with in your future career? Do you want to know if there are truths to common assumptions about various social issues? Do you want to create a world where social problems are addressed based on evidence rather than personal beliefs?

If so, then sociology is a discipline you should study. No matter whether you are interested in the impact of globalization on people's lives in your society, the impact of policy shifts in NGOs that serve rape survivors, the role of a local organization in strengthening its membership and services, or public intervention in alleviating for victims negative consequences of child abuse in the domestic setting, the sociological perspective and methodological approaches will equip you with the tools to find the answers to your questions and suggest appropriate solutions for necessary public actions.

Chapter 5: Sociology in Britain – Professor John Holmwood, PhD



John Holmwood, PhD
Professor of Sociology
University of Nottingham

John Holmwood is Professor of Sociology at the University of Nottingham. He was educated at the Universities of Cambridge and has taught at the Universities of Tasmania, Edinburgh, Sussex, and Birmingham. Together with John Scott, John is the editor of the Palgrave Handbook of British Sociology (Palgrave, 2014). He was President of the British Sociological Association between 2012-14 and is joint managing editor of Discover Society. He teaches on the first-year courses on Global Justice and Human Rights and Society, Environment and Health, and is responsible for the second-year course on Classical and Contemporary Sociological Theory.

How Sociology Makes Connections between the ‘Private Troubles’ of Individuals and their Social Causes?

British sociology is internationally recognised as making a major contribution to the discipline, second only to the United States despite Britain’s much smaller size.

Sociology in Britain has a long and important history which can be traced back to the writers of the 18th century ‘Scottish Enlightenment’ – Adam Smith, David Hume and Adam Ferguson, also well-known as forerunners of economics and philosophy. In the late 19th Century, Herbert Spencer was

internationally renowned as a sociologist and political theorist, though few now read him. Sociology at degree level is a modern discipline with few Universities offering degree programmes in sociology, until the mid-twentieth century.

More recently, sociology has come to enjoy a central place in British universities, and in public life and Sociology is now taught in most British universities as a full degree, sometimes in combination with Social Policy and sometimes as part of a Combined or Applied Social Studies programme.

British sociology has a distinctive character. Most departments were set up in the 1960s just after the publication of a very important book by the American Sociologist, C Wright Mills called *The Sociological Imagination*. According to Mills, the task of sociology is to make connections which are important but might otherwise be missed. Most importantly, to make connections between the 'private troubles' of individuals and their social causes.

For example, as individuals we frequently have a sense of anxiety about our lives, anxieties that are often amplified by the mass media in their constant need for stories to sell their papers, programmes or advertising spaces. These anxieties may be about climate change and global warming, the threat of jobs lost in the global market place, risks of nuclear accidents, food risks, threats from the web and social change more generally. For Mills, making connections increases the ability of individuals to understand current events and to intervene in them, whether in their employment or as citizens.

Sociology makes connections by analysing the social structures and processes that link people in an increasingly global world. It also addresses how these social structures are interpreted and reproduced in the everyday interactions of individuals and how meanings are constructed that sometimes can exacerbate conflicts and divisions.

What do Sociology Graduates do?

Many prospective students are interested in a university degree in order to improve their employment prospects and many also want to make a difference. The nature of the future labour-market is difficult to predict and that can be a source of anxiety for prospective students. Sociology is an excellent preparation, both for citizenship and employment precisely because it is an outward-looking subject engaged with social problems in a changing world. It does not provide a vocational qualification, but a range of critical and research

based skills that enable its graduates to find employment in which they can make a difference.

One thing about which we can be certain is that the social problems that confront global citizens – climate change, inequality and poverty, and social and cultural change – are the very topics that will have to be addressed by a wide-range of employers. Graduates of British sociology degrees find employment with Government (national and local), Non-Governmental Organisations and Voluntary Associations, and with private corporations and companies.

How is Sociology Taught?

There are two patterns of study in British universities. In English, Welsh and Northern Irish universities, students will study for three years for a Bachelors degree with Honours. In nearly all universities, your first year of study will not be counted towards your final degree performance, though you will be required to pass it in order to progress. This first, foundation year enables you to adjust to the different demands of university education and, for overseas students, perhaps, the different culture of teaching and learning that you may confront. In Scotland, the degree is a four-year degree (this pattern will be familiar to applicants from Australia, New Zealand and Canada, whose universities have adopted the Scottish system), with the final two years counted for the final degree performance. Scottish students graduate with a Masters degree with honours.

Sociology students in Britain are expected to be self-motivated and to read independently. It is taught through a variety of means, including lectures, seminars, workshops and practicals often supported via web based learning resources. You can also expect to be assigned an individual tutor who will meet with you and discuss your progress and option choices on a regular basis.

British universities are each responsible for the content of the degrees they teach. However, their curricula are reviewed by an independent agency and, from time to time, subject specialists meet to agree common standards and benchmarks.

For this reason, British sociology degrees tend to have a common pattern: in year one (years one and two in Scotland) you will have a series of introductory courses, including introductions to theory and methods of research, as well as an opportunity to pursue courses outside sociology (sociology is also available in a range of joint-degree programmes);

in year two, you will continue to do courses in theory and methods, though these will now be geared to providing the skills and methodologies to be used in a third year research project of your own design and supervised by your tutor. You will also be offered a range of optional courses in different fields of sociology, reflecting the research interests of members of staff responsible for the programme.

In year three, you will continue with optional courses, together with your research project. The latter will involve the writing of a research report or dissertation. It is a major piece of work which represents the culmination of your degree and your mastery of the ability to do sociology.

An Example: Sociology at the University of Nottingham

My own University can provide an example. Our School of Sociology and Social Policy offers several different degree programmes, utilising some common course modules:

- BA Sociology
- BA Sociology and Social Policy
- BA Criminology and Sociology
- BA Criminology and Social Policy

The BA in Sociology involves 120 credits per year (the common credit structure across the UK), of which 40 credits in each year are compulsory. Students can choose modules across the range of offerings, but they can also elects to study within a specific, structured pathway. For example, Global Studies and Human Rights; Culture Identities and Deviance; Society, Health and Environment; and Policy and Social Justice. A pathway involves a student studying at least 40 credits-worth of elective modules in years 2 and 3, plus a dissertation in year 3. All modules are 20 credits.

Year 1. Compulsory modules: Investigating Social Worlds; and Understanding Contemporary Society.

Optional modules: At least 3 from: Global Studies and Human Rights; Society, Health and Environment; Policy and Social Justice; Culture, Identities and Deviance; Criminology: Key Perspectives and Debates; and 1 module from outside the School.

Year 2: Compulsory modules: Research, Design & Practice; A primary aim of this module is to give a critical overview of different paradigms within sociological research, so that you are better equipped both to design your own

research and to assess and evaluate the work of others. The first part considers the strengths and weaknesses of qualitative research methods while the second part focuses on the strengths and weaknesses of the social survey as a research strategy. You'll spend around two hours per week in lectures as well as two hours per week in workshops.

Classical and Contemporary Sociological Theory. Optional modules: Four modules from a wide range, including: What is sociological knowledge, what are its key objects of study and how do those change? Whose knowledge is represented within sociology? What is the relation of the history of sociology to the present and how is the history of sociology told in relation to particular issues of the present? The module will address these issues through the ideas of classical social theorists (including Karl Marx, Max Weber, Emile Durkheim, G.H. Mead and W.E.B. Du Bois), as well as contemporary writers and key theoretical movements such as feminism and postcolonialism. You'll spend around two hours per week in lectures as well as two hours per week in seminars.

Family and Social Divisions; You'll consider the sociological approaches to the family ranging from early functionalist accounts to the feminist problematisation of such accounts. Starting from feminist critiques of the family the first part of the module will explore issues of gender, power and patriarchy. Drawing on second-wave feminism, the second part of the module will consider issues of diversity in family practices. Topics covered will include gender and families, families and class, families and race, migrant and transnational families, sexuality, and age and generation. Contemporary debates around the breakdown, democratisation or continuity in contemporary families will also be addressed. You'll spend around two hours per week in lectures and seminars studying for this module.

Body, the Self and Others; This module will encourage you to think critically about the body as a political entity, which carries significant meanings in society in terms of power, resistance, expression, control, deviance, individualism, risk and inequality. It asks: what is a body, what does it stand for and what is its relationship to the self and to Others? What are the social and political forces that shape human bodies and bodily experience, and how are those experiences expressed and read? How are different bodies perceived, valued and treated? This module will examine the body not through the lens of the physical or biological sciences but as the product of complex social arrangements and processes. In lectures and seminars, the module examines

the body as the container and expression of the self, as the object of social control, and as the repository of shifting race, gender and sexual categories.

Ethnicity and Everyday Life: You'll examine the intersection of two key concepts in contemporary sociology – ethnicity and everyday life. In particular you'll consider the following topics: Existing sociological theories of everyday life concerning its political relevance and historical specificity as well as methodological issues as to how 'the everyday' has been researched. Sociological models of ethnicity, the construction of ethnic boundaries and identities, the relationship between 'culture' and 'ethnicity', and its relevance in the contemporary world. You'll spend around two hours per week in lectures and seminars studying this module.

History of British Social Policy: You'll undertake a critical review of some of the key issues in the development of British social policy, including the shift from the Poor Law to an income maintenance scheme, the impact of philanthropy and the changing role of the State in the 20th century. You will have a two hour lecture once per week.

Belief, Spirituality and Religion.

Year 3: Compulsory module: Dissertation. Optional modules: Four modules from a wider range, including: Exploring Social and Cultural Life Through Film; Migration, Multiculturalism and Citizenship; The Sociology of Work and Employment; Analysing Public Policy; Gender and Media; Sociology of Prison and Incarceration; Nationalisms: The Policies of Belonging and Exclusion; Tourism, Identity and Risk; Transnationalism; Technology, Material Culture and Social Change.

How do I Decide Where to Apply?

Applying for a degree in Britain is relatively easy and straightforward. There is a single application system through an agency called UCAS. All applications have to be made through UCAS and students are able to nominate up to 5 universities to consider their application. Universities will make their decision based on your pre-university examination performance and a personal statement of your interests.

UCAS lists all Universities and their programmes of study and provides basic information about the programmes. In addition, links are provided direct to University prospectuses that will give more information. More detailed

information will be found by going to the websites of individual departments, once you have created a long-list of ones in which you might be interested. Making these choices also creates anxiety. UCAS provides some information about each course to help you decide. Unhelpfully, some of this information is collated elsewhere as a rank order of institutions and programmes. Some of this information is derived from a National Student Survey that all British graduates are asked to complete. This shows very high satisfaction rates for all universities and programmes – for example, something like 85% of all students who responded to the last two surveys declared themselves satisfied with their course. In this context, a rank order constructed out of small variations reveals very little relevant information as your sociology research methods course will tell you! High and low ranked institutions have very high rates of satisfaction - much higher, in fact, than are found in other consumer surveys! Understanding this could be your first step as a sociologist.

So, how should you choose? Most British students choose on the basis of where they would like to study that is, what kind of town or city, and what kind of university. In addition, they will look at the range of options and the nature of the options that are available. These will depend on the particular teaching staff and so, although the basic nature of a sociology degree will be similar across programmes, this will be an area of real difference.

It is not always easy to get information on course options. Because University prospectuses are made available in a printed version this tends to limit the information available. However, all departments offering sociology degree programmes will have their own webpages with detailed information about the course options they offer.

How much will it Cost?

All home/ EU students in England pay fees which the Government has set at between £6-9000 per year. The fees in Wales and Scotland are less. Government-supported loans are available to Home/EU students. Overseas students from outside the EU will pay a minimum of £9000 and are not eligible for Government-supported loans. You will also need to factor in living costs, which will vary depending upon where you choose to study. The UCAS application site provides estimates of living costs for each University.

Where can I get more information?

Sociologists in Britain have their own professional association, the British Sociological Association. It organises events and provides information about

the subject. They have prepared a free booklet on studying sociology, Discover Sociology.

If you would like to get a flavour of sociology in Britain and about the global influences on society and what can be discovered through sociological research then see Discover Society which is a free, online magazine of social research, commentary and policy analysis produced by British sociologists. It publishes 14 articles each month on sociological topics.

Chapter 6: Why Study Sociology? To Know and Act in the Public Interest – Professor Sharon Elise, PhD



Sharon Elise, PhD
Department of Sociology
California State University, San Marcos

Dr Sharon Elise received her Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of Oregon, funded by the American Sociological Association's Minority Fellowship. Her dissertation research proposal on Black, White and American Indian teenaged mothers earned her the Jane Grant Dissertation Award, the first ever given by the Center for the Study of Women in Society at the University of Oregon. As a graduate student and then professor, she pushed to bring issues of racism to the center. At CSU San Marcos since 1994, Elise led Women's Studies and Ethnic Studies and now serves as Chair of Sociology, where she created a new concentration in Critical Race Studies as well as developing related courses. The first spoken word "SLAM" winner of San Diego (1998), she also brought the language and practice of Sociopoetics to CSU San Marcos. Her research interests include intersectionality and Black feminism, Black students' college experience, Black identity and culture in Latino context, and examinations of faculty service in the CSU. She writes and publishes poetry, including her work, "Black Out of a Tight White Space." The breadth of her activism on behalf of race and gender diversity led to her award of the first President's Award for Inclusive Excellence and Diversity at CSU San Marcos.

Understanding How our Social Interactions and Practices Produce Particular Realities

Sociology is considered an academic “discipline,” meaning it is a way of shaping our minds to learn about and question our social arrangements and relationships. As a discipline it includes a set of research tools we use to develop knowledge about everything we may think of as having to do with “society.” Sociology is also a “way of seeing” that emphasizes all that is social—everything that is created, or “socially constructed,” through the social interactions of people in society: ideas, values, roles, social relationships among people and social identities.

Sociology provides its practitioners with a particular lens and a set of research practices. Once learned, the sociological perspective may illumine how our social worlds and our everyday lives are constructed so that we may better understand and act upon them.

Moreover, this lens, this way of seeing sociologically, may be purposively connected to a practice centered on social justice. It is for this reason that many students are drawn to the discipline of sociology—those who take an introductory course in sociology often find it illumines aspects of their lives that they had conceived as personal problems rather than as social phenomena. Sociology is a discipline with the potential to help us understand how our social interactions and practices, and the meanings these hold for us, produce particular realities.

U.S. sociologists have renewed calls for a critical “public” sociology, one that offers a critical lens on policies and practices that benefit elites and harm particular groups in society. The tools and lens of sociology can be used to shed light on social problems, bring the voices and experiences of marginalized peoples to public view, and reveal social practices and public policies that produce inequality and oppression. We can also use these tools to help us identify practices that move us closer to social justice.

However, to do so, sociology—its particular lens and tools—must be made accessible to people in the very “margins of society” where, as Black feminist bell hooks has said, we may gain a greater vantage point on social structure, particularly dimensions of social oppression. Sociology shows us how we make our worlds, how we make our realities. This is key to their transformation.

In departments such as mine at CSU San Marcos, faculty have created a program that engenders the development of scholar/activists who will bring forward perspectives of those who experience the issues that concern us and provide advocacy for them (<http://www.csusm.edu/sociology/>).

Understanding your Everyday Life

Sociology is a particular “way of seeing” that allows the person who adopts a sociological perspective to probe deeply into their everyday experiences. American sociologist C. Wright Mills dubbed this way of seeing the “sociological imagination” and suggested that everyone can benefit from adopting this way of looking at their lives. This perspective may be cultivated through questions that problematize things we take for granted, starting with our everyday existence.

As we question, or interrogate, our everyday lives, Mills suggested that we learn to link our personal problems to broader social issues—unemployment, high tuition, poverty, concerns about identity, divorce, family violence—and begin to look at the social practices that produce the outcomes we observe. A student may ask, how do my worries as a student compare to those of other students in my region? In my country? What about students in other countries? What about others in the past?

In raising such questions, the students may begin to learn about their self and about their society in comparison with others. By learning to question everyday practices, setting aside assumptions and “conventional wisdom,” students begin to see how the social practices, beliefs and values that shape our lives are products of social interaction, not the outcome of some “natural law” of human nature. For Mills, invoking the sociological imagination will reveal the underlying social structures that sometimes feel constraining but more often, seem natural—just as social institutions like “marriage”, “school”, “family” and “work” all seem like natural aspects of our lives. To begin to turn this gaze upon one’s own experience means to see how society and culture tell us who we are and how we are, and to see who benefits from that telling.

Identify Critical Social Issues and Perspectives

As we begin to interrogate our everyday lives, we link our individual worries to social trends. Students who have experienced great challenges are often drawn to sociology because it contains theoretical concepts and frameworks that may

help us understand our economic systems, class issues, race and ethnic conflict, gender construction, and social identity, to name but a few contemporary concerns.

When new problems “appear” in the media we may locate sociological research that provides insight on the origins and outcomes of these problems, as well as a critical lens that reveals the imbalances in social relations, power, and resources. A critical sociological lens must take into account the question of standpoint that Dorothy Smith and Patricia Hill Collins have raised: the perspective we take, as we look out upon society, will engender to a great extent what we see. A critical view requires we consider the collective standpoint of those situated at the margins of class relations, race relations, gender relations, etcetera, and this standpoint will reflect a particular knowledge of those group experiences that will reveal the problematic aspects of everyday life.

Other sources of information about society, whether mass media, peers, or other cultural representations tend to reflect hegemonic notions that obscure, rather than reveal, basic features of society such as its class and race divisions, the “naturalness” of gender and sexual relations, and ideas about enduring problems of war and greed that too often are heralded as insurmountable features of “human nature.”

So, if we wish to understand prisons we will learn different aspects of the system from the standpoint of prisoners than from that of guards. If we wish to understand the social welfare systems we will learn different aspects from those served than we will from social workers. To develop a keen sense of advocacy, we must familiarize ourselves with the everyday lives of those who experience the social problems that concern us. Sociology can help us to do this with an evolving “tool kit” of research methodologies.

Tools to Study Social Behavior and Phenomena

The perfect complement to the critical gaze that sociology may engender is the array of research methodologies available to the sociological enthusiast. The past was replete with arguments over the relative merits of quantitative versus qualitative modes of research, as well as the philosophical debates over our ability to definitively answer pressing social questions.

However, in contemporary sociology students are exposed to a diverse set of research strategies that include hypothesis testing through surveys of social

behavior and attitudes as well as more ethnographic interviews and storytelling. Sociologists use these methods to look broadly at macro level forces across all of society, meso level communities and organizations, and micro level interactions among individuals and in small groups. Students are encouraged to hone these skills so that they can be powerful advocates for institutions seeking to understand perceptions clients have of service delivery, differences in outcomes, and most effective practices. These kinds of skills can be deployed in government and community agencies, large or small. Sociologists also use tools such as storytelling, performance, and film to present findings from research that will shed light on social problems and further advocacy for the disempowered and ignored voices of those on the margins.

Teaching to Empower

Sociological knowledge is often experienced as powerfully illuminating when students first turn a critical sociological lens to their reflections on their lived, everyday experiences. In the region where CSU San Marcos students study, issues of social inequality are linked to social concerns such as immigration, funding for education, access to jobs with a living wage, gender and sexuality, family violence, racism, and housing, militarism and mass incarceration, aging and elderly abuse, to name but a few. These may be critical features of some students' lives while others, whose lives are shaped more by the absence of these worries, may be oblivious to these issues until they take a sociology class.

However, even for the privileged, critical sociology is like a new set of glasses that they can't take off—once in touch with the ways that class shapes critical issues of education, or ways race shapes notions of whether immigration is a boon or doom for society, or how absolutely people embrace the notion of gender as “natural”, they cannot “un-see” the way society looks through this lens.

While some may first consider this makes each sociology class a “depression session”, most appreciate seeing society through a lens that allows them to analyze their experiences and observations. When they have sufficiently mastered the tools of sociology to conduct research, they find themselves empowered as sociological practitioners who can use these tools to bring their concerns before various publics.

A Passionate Scholarship, a Public Sociology

Given enduring problems in the world such as human rights abuses, violence against women and children, human trafficking, racism, the ascendancy of “the market” over education and the environment, clearly the time is ripe for a passionate scholarship of sociology, a public sociology dedicated to raising the most pressing issues of our times and amplifying social justice. Students of sociology are poised to take their places in new and established agencies and bring their critical lens, research tools, and zeal for advocacy to bear on society.

As a recent student wrote at the close of a course on the Sociology of Education:

I pondered how I could not have been more observant in seeing the rampant injustice that occurred around me within my academic social space. However, I believe that Henry Giroux said it best when he articulated that sometimes, in order to interpret what we see around us, we need the proper language. I believe this course bestowed unto us the proper language with which to engage in powerful discourse that holds the power to shape our generation and implement change. Knowledge truly is power.

The knowledge he speaks of is sociological knowledge; the power he speaks of is the power to make social change.

Studying Sociology at California State University, San Marcos (CSUSM)

The Sociology Department at CSUSM is a relatively young department given the recent founding of CSUSM in 1989 as the 21st campus of the California State University system (now including 23 universities). As such, the department reflects the most recent developments in sociology. The department offers two undergraduate majors and a graduate degree. Moreover, since the department offers two majors, many students engage in a “double major” in both Sociology and Criminology & Justice Studies.

The Bachelor’s degree in Sociology includes five areas of concentration: Aging and the Life Course; Children, Youth and Families; Critical Race Studies; Health, Education and Welfare; or the “Standard” concentration that allows students a variety of electives instead of a particular area. The Bachelor’s degree in Criminology and Justice Studies is an interdisciplinary social science degree with considerable overlap in sociology. Students take elective courses in two areas and may select one area as their major focus: Area 1, Crime and Justice; and Area 2, Communities, Inequalities and Justice.

All students take courses introducing them to the discipline as well as courses in theory, inequalities, and research methods. Students also take a capstone course. Sociology students may focus on sociological scholarship or an internship. Criminology and Justice Studies students do an internship at a community agency when they take the capstone in Community service. The BCJS program was launched in 2004 and has already grown from the inception with 47 majors to over 800 majors today.

Both undergraduate majors are counted in the “top ten” most popular on campus. Indeed, 1 in every ten students majors in one or both of our programs. Many go on to attend graduate school, often in our “MASP” Program, a program offering a Master’s degree in Sociological Practice since 1996. The MASP Program offers students a deeper immersion in theory and research methods and the opportunity to specialize in a particular area of sociology, sharpen ability to engage original research, analyze and communicate results, engage sociological advocacy and develop a thesis under the close guidance of faculty advisers.

MASP graduates have gone on to serve as program directors, developers, and evaluators for community and government agencies, community college faculty, and diversity consultants, to name a few. Several have continued their studies at research universities, going on to earn Ph.D.’s and join the professoriate on tenure track appointments. Many faculty in the department maintain the mentoring relationships they established with graduate students and continue to act as mentors and recommenders, continuing the tradition of “working the pipeline” to help students reach their academic goals.

Faculty

The department is served by an illustrious faculty that presently includes eighteen (18) tenure track faculty, all with Ph.D.’s, and another fifteen to twenty (15 to 20) lecturer faculty who include a few Ph.D.’s but are primarily M.A.’s, several of whom are alumni of the MASP Program. Given the great overlap between the two major programs, almost all faculty offer courses that contribute to both majors.

Faculty maintain active research agendas that shape ongoing course development and in many courses students are given the opportunity to “do” sociology whether through sociological research or through “service learning” on site at one of the community agencies with whom the department and university have created partnerships to enhance community engagement and

education “beyond the walls” of the classroom. Faculty interests are quite varied in topical areas and faculty approach their scholarship through diverse theories and engage multiple research strategies, adding to the rich offerings in their courses.

Faculty scholarship is disseminated through academic books and articles, research reports to governmental and nongovernmental agencies and through innovative media such as poetry and performance. For more information on the individual portfolios of faculty on the tenure track, see <https://www.csusm.edu/sociology/facdirectory.html>.

A Special Invitation

Much like C. Wright Mills, I wish to extend students a special invitation to pursue sociology in my department at California State University San Marcos. We are a vibrant young department whose faculty embrace the promise of sociology that Mill’s asserted, and where our richly diverse student body and surrounding community hold much to offer students for development of an engaged scholarship that reflects the issues of the day and attempts to address the problems of our times.

My own path to sociology was shaped by the promise sociology had to help me understand my own life experiences as a Black girl who grew up during the Civil Rights period and came to maturity during the aftermath of the great social movements in the 20th Century: Black Power, Student Anti-War Movement, Women’s Liberation Movement, and Third World Student Movement. I felt then, as I do now, that sociology offered the lens and the tools we can use to understand the things that most disturb and confound us. I felt then, as I do now, that the university setting and the academic discipline of sociology provided a space for the realization of our greatest desires to learn how to create and foster social justice in all our social relations.

Chapter 7: Do you like Big Macs, Coca Cola, and Levis? Understanding National Identity through TV and Sociology - Deana A. Rohlinger, PhD



Deana A. Rohlinger
Associate Professor
Department of Sociology

Dr Deana is an Associate Professor of Sociology at Florida State University. Her work examines social movement dynamics, movement-media interactions, and strategy. She is author of pieces published in Social Problems, Sociological Theory, The Sociological Quarterly, Research in Social Movements, Conflict, & Change, The American Behavioral Scientist, Social Movement Studies, and co-editor of the book, Strategies for Social Change. Her current research projects examine the effects of Internet Communication Technology on political engagement and participation in progressive and conservative movements; analyze how movements use new and old media to shape political debates; and investigate the role of emotions and identity in the battle over Terri Schiavo.

How did I End up being a Sociologist?

I won't lie. I wasn't born a sociologist. I didn't enter college with a deep yearning to understand the world through a sociological lens. In fact, I wasn't even a Sociology major in college. I grew up in a rural part of Ohio, where people were far more concerned about crops and cows than college. When I graduated high school, I had no idea what Sociology was. So, how did I end up being a sociologist? Strangely, my journey to find Sociology began with a simple question, "Would you like a Big Mac?"

I was not in a McDonalds placing an order for burger and fries, but surrounded by kids at a Ukrainian middle school, which, as far as I could tell from the bus ride in, was nowhere near America's favorite hamburger joint. I didn't have a chance to answer the boy's Big Mac question. Other middle school students immediately jumped in with their own questions. They wanted to know what kind of mansion I lived in, whether I drank anything other than Coca Cola, how many pairs of Levis I owned, and asked if I would break dance for them - just a few moves, please! I soon realized that everything they knew about Americans had come from advertising campaigns and television shows like Bay Watch (this was right before the Internet really took off). I was their first glimpse of a "real" American and they wanted to see if I measured up to the glossy advertising. Was I wealthy, talented, and well-versed in the art of consumption?

The faces of the Ukrainian students clouded with disappointment when I explained that I lived in a rural community, I drank and ate whatever my parents saw fit to provide, I had never tried to break dance since I was worried about breaking my neck, and that I couldn't afford Levis. I had just spent most of my meager savings on a trip that allowed me to tour Eastern Europe as a People to People Student Ambassador. They gawked at me. I stood in contrast to everything they had learned about America. This experience made me want to learn more about mass media, the messages disseminated in ads and programs, and how these messages affected us, the audience.

I went with an obvious starting point and majored in mass communications. I learned a lot. I spent four years working with wonderful professors analyzing everything from rhetoric to health messages on primetime television. I couldn't believe that I got course credit for analyzing how often television characters mentioned Doritos or drank milk! I joke, but it was really interesting. I knew by my sophomore year that I wanted to pursue a graduate degree. I just wasn't sure that it should be in Communications. While I learned how corporate monies profoundly shaped media content, I still didn't understand what this meant for American society, let alone how other countries thought about

Americans. One of my professors, William Bailey, suggested that I do some reading on the topics I found interesting. It took me awhile to figure it out, but I finally realized that the books and articles that I found exciting were by Sociologists. The light bulb had finally turned on!

What did Sociology do that Communications couldn't?

What did Sociology do that Communications couldn't? Sociology helped me understand that individuals make decisions, but not in circumstances of their own design. When it comes to understanding a people, a social identity, religion, or politics, individual experience and the broader context interact in complex ways and help us cobble together an understanding of the world and our place in it.

Going back to my experience, the Ukrainian middle school kids had unrealistic expectations regarding American teenagers because their primary sources of information were American advertisements, television programs, and movies. Absent interactions with Americans, middle schoolers just assumed that teenagers would look and act like those they watched on the big – and small – screens. I imagine that Ukrainian middle school kids' understandings of Americans are far more complex in the digital age.

I still study mass media. Only now I am interested in how people use social media, news media, music, street theatre, and websites to change their circumstances. I primarily research social movements, like the recent Occupy and Tea Party movements in the United States. I try to figure out how individuals and groups use technology to organize and get those with power to do what they want. Florida State University is a great place for me to do this work. The university is in Tallahassee, which is the state capital. There are plenty of protests to observe every time the legislature is in session - and the nice weather doesn't hurt. It is much easier to study social movements and politics when it is warm most of the year.

If you are interested in mass media and culture, Florida State University is a great place study. I offer courses on social movements and mass media. For example, I am teaching a course for the next three years titled *The Hunger Games: Collective Action and Social Movements* in which we read Suzanne Collins' trilogy and analyze the emergence of revolutions and revolutionary leaders. I also offer a more general course on mass media, which can even be taken online. I am not the only faculty teaching in this area. The Sociology Department at Florida State University also offers courses on popular culture

and hip hop. If you are not interested in media and culture, the Department of Sociology offers courses in health and aging, education, race/ethnicity, gender and sexuality, marriage and family, populations, and deviance.

What can you Expect to Learn from Sociology Undergraduate Courses?

We have two goals for our sociology undergraduates. First, we want you to leave Florida State University critical and flexible thinkers. While there is a lot of talk about critical thinking, we really want our students to be able to understand and apply a range of sociological perspectives in the real world. So, even if you take a theory course, you should expect there to be lots of discussion and exercises that ask you to apply your new sociological understandings to everything from a contemporary film to the news of the day.

Second, we want you to be able to evaluate arguments and data. All of our sociology undergraduates are trained in research methods and statistics to that you know how to identify the assumptions underlying an argument and how to empirically test whether or not these assumptions are accurate.

For those of you interested in conducting research, we have programs at the department, college, and university level that provide undergraduates with opportunities to work with faculty on projects. For example, one of my undergraduates went to Morocco for two months to analyze the women's movement in the wake of Arab Spring.

Graduate Programs - Information on Funding and Fellowships

We offer a rigorous graduate program as well. If you already have a B.S. or B.A. but do not want a Ph.D., check out our applied masters program in social research. Students who go through this program typically want to beef up their data collection and analysis skills so that they can work for the state or federal government. If you are interested in our graduate program, you can expect excellent training. Our graduate students are required to take quantitative and qualitative methods courses as well as a seminar on teaching at the college level. When you peruse the faculty websites, you will see that many of our distinguished professors work with students on publications. We even offer Advanced Research Seminars and workshops to help you get the skills you need to get – and keep – an academic job.

I said that I wasn't born a sociologist. Technically, that was a lie. I was born a sociologist. I have always been curious about the world, how we live in it, and how we change it. I just didn't have a name for my interest. I lacked the language to identify and understand the world around me. If you feel the same, let me welcome you to the intellectual club and invite you to learn more about Florida State University.

Learn more about Florida State University Sociology:
The Department of Sociology website at Florida State
University:<http://coss.fsu.edu/sociology/content/faculty>

The Social Science Scholars Program:
<http://coss.fsu.edu/sss/>

Admissions: <http://admissions.fsu.edu/>

Information on funding and fellowships:<http://gradschool.fsu.edu/Funding-Awards/Graduate-School-Fellowships-and-Grants>

Chapter 8: The Sociology Bug – Professors Gesine K Hearn, PhD and Lauren Crosby, PhD



Gesine K Hearn, PhD
Department of Sociology, Social Work, and Criminal Justice
Idaho State University

Dr Gesine Hearn is an Associate Professor in Sociology and Chair of the Department of Sociology, Social Work and Criminal Justice at Idaho State University. I received my Ph.D. in 2006 from the University Erlangen-Nuernberg in Germany. Before I studied sociology, I was a nurse. My medical background influences my research interests. My research interests include lay and expert perceptions of health and disease, patient self-help organizations, and health inequalities. I have published in the area of gender, family sociology, medical profession, and patient self-help organizations.

Lauren Crosby
Department of Sociology, Social Work, and Criminal Justice
Idaho State University

Hello Doctor... Something could be Seriously Wrong!

The Patient:

Hello doctor, I've come to see you today about some concerning problems. I've had these symptoms for some time, several months at least, and they are becoming worse! I am quite concerned that something could be seriously wrong!

My most concerning symptom is my need to watch other people. I go out with friends to dinner or coffee, I go to the grocery store, everywhere I go all I want to do is watch other people! Their interactions are so interesting and complex. I've begun to see more than just two people talking, instead I see two people in very distinct roles negotiating a situation. Each person is struggling for power, manipulating the other's perception, and affecting the other's actions. This interaction is more than a conversation about dinner, a movie, or work, it is a complex performance put on by these individuals. The individuals are like actors on a stage, reading their lines and following their cues.

I have also noticed people are predictable. After countless observations, I have started to see patterns in interactions. Most people greet each other the same, with a hello and a handshake or hug, followed by "How are you?" and a warm smile. People buy groceries the same way every time also. People go up and down the aisles, remove things from shelves, and check out. The interaction with the checkout clerk is always the same too! The clerk greets the customer, perhaps engages in small talk, bags the groceries, takes the customer's money, and the customer leaves. Everywhere I go I see people doing the same things over and over, human life is so predictable! One interesting thing I have discovered is when these patterns are disrupted people get very mad! Often I deliberately do the opposite of others to elicit a reaction.

If, for example, when I am at the grocery store instead of leaving after paying for my groceries, I stay and chat with the clerk other shoppers get very angry! The other customers might glare or even angrily tell me to "Move out of the way!" Often, the clerk becomes annoyed and uncomfortable also. Recently, however, I cannot resist the temptation to disrupt these patterns I see.

It Seems Like there is Some Larger Social Force Influencing the Behavior of Individuals

I have also discovered interactions between people reveal hidden cultural traits. On a recent trip outside the US, I noticed interactions in other countries differ substantially from those in the US. Even interactions as simple as greeting a friend differed from country to country. I was amazed to witness

such diversity in social interaction. I began to think more carefully about each interaction and I discovered interactions between individuals actually reveal a lot about a group. Interactions are actually a display of what a group values and what the group finds normal.

For example, just by examining the distance between two conversing people I have discovered that some groups value privacy and personal space, while others value intimacy and close contact. I am continually fascinated by the information interaction provides.

While I have been attentively observing interaction I have started to notice something bigger is going on. Something is shaping how people interact, the power within interactions, and the decisions people make as groups and individuals. It seems like there is some larger social force influencing the behavior of individuals and groups. This is a phenomenon I have only recently noticed and I am still in the early stages of understanding it.

My initial observations suggest there is a larger social force controlling the behavior of groups and individuals. Perhaps controlling isn't the correct word, but again, my observations are in the early stages. I have noticed people do not make decisions blindly.

For example, many of my friends are graduating from college and looking for careers. Most of my friends love the outdoors, reading, and writing but none of them have chosen careers in these fields! Instead they have chosen high income professions. It seems many decisions individuals make are informed by the economy. Even the decision to marry seems to be an economic decision.

I cannot Explain What I See!

Another new phenomenon to me is inequality. When two people interact (even friends, spouses, brothers and sisters), it seems one always has more power than the other. I am having a hard time understanding why this is the case, but it seems like there is some larger social force at work here too. It appears, even when the individuals interacting are close friends, the one with the most education and money has the most power in the conversation.

The things I am seeing are so baffling to me! I am losing sleep and suffering from debilitating headaches trying to understand what is going on! I am often plagued by bouts of confusion, disorientation, and inattentiveness as I ponder what I see. I no longer feel connected to the world around me and I am more

and more confused everyday! I am often unable to find the words to describe what I see or how I feel. My head feels like it is spinning, I feel disoriented, and even uncontrollably angry that I cannot explain what I see!

Please help me Doctor! I need to know why people behaving in patterned ways, why social forces are affecting behavior, and how society works! I need to know why I have impulses to observe people and groups, and why I have the sudden desire to act impulsively and disrupt interactions. I need to understand what is happening! Please Doctor, you have to help me alleviate these problems!

The Doctor: You are Experiencing a Host of Disturbing Symptoms

The Doctor:

I am glad you came to see me right away! You are experiencing a host of disturbing symptoms.

We need to run some tests, but let me first make sure I have the right symptoms: I hear you are compulsively watching people; you keep doing this wherever you go; you also engage in some inappropriate and disruptive behavior - which if I understood this correctly - you enjoy? This compulsive behavior has now gotten to the point where you lose sleep, you have headaches from thinking so much, you are confused, and at times you feel disoriented and inattentive? And there are some bouts of anger that you have experienced because you can't understand the phenomena you observe and you have difficulties finding the right words to describe what you see and think about? I detect that your symptoms primarily arise when you are around people and they appear aggravated in unfamiliar settings like your recent trip outside the US.

Let me ask you some questions: Have you recently fallen or hit your head hard?

Patient: No.

Doctor: Are you currently taking medications?

Patient: Yes, some medicine for allergies, some medicine for headaches.

Doctor: Are you drinking alcohol; maybe more than usual?

Patient: No. I only drink a glass of wine here and there.

Doctor: Are you using drugs?

Patient: No.

Doctor: Have you been exposed to heat and sun for an extended period of time?

Patient: No. I went to some hot springs last week. Does that count?

Doctor: Are you around farm animals, in particular cows?

Patient: No. I only have a pet bunny. Is that a problem?

Doctor: No, bunnies are not a problem. There are quite a few diseases with similar symptoms and we need to rule those out. I actually do not suspect that you have these diseases, but we need to make sure we don't overlook something.

I will order some tests and refer you to a colleague for more evaluation. I will see you again in about week after I have reviewed your tests. I am confident that we can help you. Meanwhile, try to avoid crowded places and keep your mind off serious issues by engaging in exercise, light entertainment, and try to get plenty of sleep.

Invitation to Sociology – A Case Study by Dr. Peter Berger

One week later....

Doctor: Are you feeling any better! Your symptoms were quite unsettling; however, they are not unheard of. In reviewing all of your symptoms I discovered a similar diagnosis made years ago by Dr. Peter Berger, a sociologist. He was the first to conduct an in depth case study of an individual with similar symptoms. His work is now quite famous, perhaps you have heard of it, *Invitation to Sociology*. It is quite likely these symptoms and this condition have been around for hundreds (if not thousands) of years.

Although, Dr. Berger was the first to officially document a case. I am quite excited to be documenting a case of my own actually! I am sure this will make a wonderful journal article!

According to Dr. Berger, the symptoms he discovered in his patient may not be present in every person suffering from this condition. Instead Dr. Berger (1963:16) explains "what we delineate will not be found in reality in its pure form."

However, the symptoms you describe nearly perfectly match those observed by Dr. Berger. Dr. Berger (1963:15-16, 18-19, 166) lists symptoms such as "someone who is concerned with understanding society in a disciplined way," someone who "tries to be objective, and to control his[/her] personal preferences and prejudices, to perceive clearly rather than to judge normatively," "detached," "sardonic observer," "a cold manipulator of men," "a person shamelessly interested in the doings of men," someone who "[listens] to gossip despite him[/her]self, who is tempted to look through keyholes, to read other people's mail, to open closed cabinets," someone who has mastered

“[the] art of listening, quietly and with full attention.” I must warn you, these symptoms mimic those of voyeurism. Dr. Berger is quick to explain this away, however. So do not panic, you are not a voyeur! This condition is becoming more and more common among individuals today and is no cause for alarm!

However, a proper diagnosis is pivotal for restoring your health. What you have is known in medicine as “Bacillus Sociologensia”, the common name is “Sociology Bug”. I have good news and bad news about this diagnosis.

Sociology Bug: You can Live a Healthy and Productive Life once Infected

First the good news: you can live a healthy and productive life once infected. In fact, you can actually put your symptoms to very good use in the current employment market.

The bad news is that the disease is incurable – we have not yet found an antibiotic that can attack the bacillus. Once infected, you will always experience some of the symptoms first succinctly described by Berger. We do not know why some people are more susceptible to this infection than others; but so far only a small percentage of the world’s population is infected.

However, we see increasing rates of infections especially with the development of the internet, social media, and increasing globalization. High risk factors for attracting “Bacillus Sociologensia” are attending social science courses, reading books dealing with social issues, following blogs or tweets from already infected patients, being a member of a marginalized group, experiencing injustice, observing social problems first hand or hearing about social problems. Some people get infected without any particular exposure to risk factors. Symptoms typically first appear in teenage years or young adulthood, but we have also seen patients who first experienced symptoms at a much older age.

The major symptoms such as the obsession to watch people and compulsive pondering of social issues will be chronic, but some secondary issues such as headaches, difficulties finding words, or disorientation can be successfully treated. I have to warn you: although you will most likely live a successful life – in fact, people with your perspective and “obsession” are quite in demand now; this “bug” has already affected your identity and your public behavior and these traits will continue. Some people will find you annoying; you will not get invited back to parties because you tend to bring up the wrong topics; you will continue to wonder how things in the society work everywhere you go – at the

supermarket, the restaurant, the laundromat, or just driving through town. Even your family and friends might at times ask you to “lighten up” or just plain “shut up”.

You will have to learn to live with the “Sociology Bug”. The best way to address your symptoms, is to actually delve right into the issues that keep you so occupied. This will at first make some symptoms worse, but with time and increasing knowledge and skills you will actually feel pretty good (if you don’t mind people telling you to “lighten up”).

The Course of Treatment is to Study Sociology

The course of treatment I would like to suggest to you is to study sociology. Yes, this sounds frightening: treating “Bacillus Sociologensia” with Sociology. You might think that’s like treating a snake bite with more venom. And yes, this is exactly what we will do! So, you will sign up at a treatment center aka college – I have a very good one in mind – and take the prescribed course of treatment which will get you a degree in Sociology. You will beat your symptoms with developing a “sociological imagination” and research skills.

First, you will learn about the basics of Sociology in an introductory course. You will learn what this academic discipline of sociology is all about; how it started, its theoretical foundations, its methods, the core topics in the discipline, and all the things the sociological perspective and method can be applied to. Then you will hear about complex explanations of how society works and how people interact with each other and their social environment – the sociological theories, old ones and new ones. A lot of fascinating and quite puzzling ideas and concepts! You will also learn actual research methods and a course that many fear – social statistics.

Now, if you think this is not your thing, just think how this will help you explore and analyze all these observations that you are making. You told me that you were thinking about inequality, well, you will learn a lot about social inequality: its causes, patterns, and consequences. Once you learned the basic skills: theory, methods, some core issues and concepts, comes the real fun part.

Now you elect courses in areas that you are really interested in – and the sky is the limit: families, marriage, crime, deviance, environmental issues, media, sport, sexuality, religion, health and illness, popular culture, gender, war and violence,and the list goes on and on and on. In these courses, you learn how to apply your newly learned “sociological imagination”, theoretical knowledge

and research skills. You also learn a lot about the topics themselves. At the end of your treatment/studies you will have a very specific set of skills that can be applied very broadly.

In addition to learning sociological concepts and terms, research skills, theories and a good understanding how all things social work, you have also acquired a set of skills inherent in this course of study that employers really, really like: critical thinking skills, clear communication skills, creative problem solving skills, and the ability to collaborate. I just read about these skills and how important they are to companies in the New York Times (2013), The Chronicle of Higher Education (2013), and publications from Harvard University and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences (2013).

Once you go through the prescribed treatment, you will not only have learned to live with the “sociology bug,” you also will have acquired a good liberal arts education with solid research skills – a unique and in-demand combination of skills.

The Treatment Center

Now, let me tell you a little bit about the treatment center I would like to recommend to you, the sociology programs at Idaho State University in Pocatello Idaho. The university is located in the intermountain West in the United States. Major tourist destinations like Yellowstone National Park, Teton National Park and Sun Valley are all within a 2 hour drive. On campus, you will enjoy breathtaking views of the surrounding mountains and the plains to the north. You can explore miles and miles of hiking and biking trails; you can ski in winter, water ski and boat in summer, soak in the nearby hot springs year-round –all in a high desert climate with plenty of sunny days and crisp clean air.

At the actual treatment center, the department of Sociology, Social Work and Criminal Justice at Idaho State University, you will receive an excellent course of treatment by fellow sufferers. All faculty members –even our social work faculty - are infected with the sociology bug and they have not only learned to live well with the condition, they actually love it! What great role models for you! They don’t mind crashing parties, obsessing with all things social, and talking in “Sociologese”. They can’t get enough reading, thinking, and doing sociology. They are so passionate about their identity and their way of life!

Most faculty members are very young and they study an array of topics: the role of relationships in offending, reintegration of offenders, climate justice and international climate policy, environmental sustainability, sexuality and fundamental religious groups, pain and injury among athletes and veterans, caretakers of the elderly, digital media and the elderly, child welfare, sexual violence, forensic leisure science, S&M, and even vampires! And they involve you in their research – which might seem like an overdose of treatment, but with your condition, the cure is sociology – as much as you want (I wish that would be true for my addiction to gummy bears!)!

Choices in Treatment and Opportunities for Future Treatment

You have a choice in treatment: a minor or a bachelor's degree in Sociology, or advanced treatment with a Master's degree in Sociology. You can also modify your basic treatment by concentrating your studies in the areas of criminology or gender and sexuality.

In fact, you can also earn an Associate Degree in Criminology on your way to the bachelor's degree. The program at Idaho State University will provide the courses necessary to control your condition, but the program also focuses on community issues which will allow you to apply the knowledge (and your condition) in the real world. The program offers many opportunities for community internships (Department of Sociology, Social Work, and Criminal Justice 2014).

For the basic course of treatment, you will take an introductory course, a sociological methods course, a social statistics course, a classical and a contemporary theory course, and a course on social inequality. Once you acquired a solid foundation in sociology with these courses, you can indulge in an array of exciting elective courses like Juvenile Delinquency, Families in American Society, Sociology of Health and Illness, Population and Environment, The Community, Sociology of Religion, Sexual Crimes, and many more (Idaho State University Undergraduate Catalog 2014).

After completing your basic four-year treatment at Idaho State University (earning your Bachelor's degree in sociology) your symptoms will be quite manageable. However, without proper, continual treatment the symptoms might return. Continuing treatments include earning a master's or doctoral degree in sociology or finding a job using your new sociology skills. There are many occupations available to people with Bachelor degrees in sociology,

including: local government, federal government, police force, research positions, analyst positions, and social service occupations to name a few.

People diagnosed with the “sociology bug” work as analysts for the FBI, as research analysts for universities and nonprofit groups, as financial analysts, as psychosocial rehabilitation counselors, as consultants or researchers at marketing firms, or in other positions such as paralegals, managers for non-profit organizations, assistants to State Representatives, coordinators in government agencies, human resource specialists, police or parole officers, or school teachers (Spalter-Roth and Van Vooren 2008).

As you can see the opportunities for future treatment (careers) are limitless. Your research and statistical skills, critical thinking and writing skills will make you invaluable to future employers. Attending the sociology program at Idaho State University will give you the tools to control your condition and live a successful and happy life with the Sociology Bug.

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Chapter 9: How People Influence the Social Forces that Shape their Lives? - Professor Jen Dunn, PhD



Jen Dunn, PhD
Professor of Sociology
Texas Tech University

*Dr Jen Dunn is a Professor of Sociology at Texas Tech. She is a Symbolic Interactionist who is interested in sociological social psychology, especially identity work, the sociology of emotions, social problems, social movements, deviance, and victimology. Her first book, *Courting Disaster: Intimate Stalking, Culture, and Criminal Justice*, won the 2005 Charles Horton Cooley Award given by the Society for the Study of Symbolic Interaction for best book, and her second book, *Judging Victims: Why We Stigmatize Survivors and How They Reclaim Respect*, won a 2010 Choice Award for Outstanding Academic Title. She has also published in journals including *Social Problems*, *Symbolic Interaction*, *The Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, and *Sociological Inquiry*. Her current project concerns the Tiny House Movement in the U.S., and the ways in which narrative threads are woven together in the stories movement members tell about their Tiny Houses. She is always interested in hearing from prospective students, and Texas Tech is in the process of proposing a Ph.D. program in Sociology in addition to its highly regarded Master's degree. Many of her former students have gone on to become Sociologists, and others have found their degrees useful in a variety of fields including market research, government agencies, social services, and community based organizations.*

Sociologists Study How People Influence the Social Forces

Sociology is a social science that is very broad in scope. Sociologists use many different methods to study how people's beliefs, feelings, and actions are influenced by social forces and arrangements. Sociologists also study how people influence the social forces and arrangements that shape their lives. This means that we study patterns in society as powerful and far-reaching as political and economic systems, and as close at hand as the face-to-face interactions between students in a classroom or drug dealers on the street. We study culture, from the stories told at the level of nations to the special customs of very small groups, like baseball teams or adolescent cliques. We examine the effects of history on these social arrangements, and we compare institutions and organizations and even intimate relationships across cultures as well as over time.

In short, we study humans as social beings formed by and forming the groups in which they belong, both by virtue of birth and circumstance, and sometimes of their choosing. These groupings vary in their significance across cultures and over time, but generally the sex a person is assigned at birth, the racial and ethnic categories created by their societies, the social class of one's parents and earlier generations, and the ways in which one conforms to or deviates from a groups' conceptions of what is "normal" will all have a profound influence on a person's life chances and world view. This is why we say that we study "society and the individual," even when we are looking at very large groups of people or very small subcultures within a society.

Sociologists Ask Different Kinds of Research Questions

Sociologists ask many different kinds of research questions. One scholar might want to see if "race" is a variable that explains differences in educational aspirations, while another scholar is interested in how minority students navigate classroom situations when other students assume they are only there because they are on athletic scholarships, or to meet a diversity "quota."

The first scholar would be developing a testable hypothesis, and would need a large, random sample of people who answered questions about their race and educational aspirations. She might then use sophisticated statistical techniques to control for the many other possible social and other factors that could also affect the amount of variation "race" explains, such as socioeconomic status, gender, age, or immigrant status.

The second scholar is more interested in the experience of people of color going to college and the social situations that they must cope with. What are their strategies for managing two identities: “student” and “minority”? These can sometimes be in conflict, depending upon how others view the students and the students view themselves, and the kind of social interactions that perpetuate these views or that change them. This scholar is not testing a hypothesis, but will need to talk to people in depth or hang out with them for a considerable time in order to learn what the world looks like from their perspective.

In doing so, he will search for patterns that might also occur in different kinds of social situations. We call these patterns “generic social processes” and in the case described above, the interactional strategies that people of color use might also be employed by women in male-dominated occupations, or “non-traditional” students, or atheists in the rural South. Sociology is a broad enough field with a large enough toolkit of research methods to allow students to study virtually anything that interests them about the relationships between people and the groups they belong to.

Why Sociology is a Wonderful Undergraduate Degree to Earn

This scope of topics and skills for learning make sociology a wonderful undergraduate degree to earn. Not only is everything that you study interesting—because after all, we are studying ourselves—but Sociology, like History, teaches a person the importance of historical eras and events for changing cultures and social institutions. Like English, Sociology is a discipline that teaches clear communication skills, and like Psychology, research design and data analysis.

Sociology offers the opportunity to study economies and politics, like Political Science and Economics, and like the Arts, the ability to study culture. Successful Sociology majors are critical thinkers, can plan and carry out research, can process and analyze data, and can present findings in compelling and effective ways. These are highly valued skills in today’s knowledge-based economy, and transfer to a wide variety of occupations. Sociology majors go into human resource management, market research, social work, law enforcement, community based organizations, and government organizations. People who go on for a Master’s degree have even more options, including teaching at community colleges. Doctoral degree holders find employment in academia, but also in research institutes of many kinds as well as governmental organizations like the Census Bureau.

Scholarships to Undergraduate and Graduate Students

At Texas Tech University, the Sociology faculty and students have a broad range of interests, from gender differences in infanticide rates and causes, to education, to race and crime, to social movements from “survivor” movements to “tiny house” movements, migrant “trust networks,” tattoos and religiosity, what makes good teachers, and the effects of climate change on migration patterns. Currently we are developing a criminology major within sociology, and seeking a Ph.D. program that will draw upon our strengths in criminology, health and society, and migration and globalization. The University offers scholarships to undergraduate and graduate students, and students accepted into the M.A. program earn a stipend and a tuition waiver for working part-time as Teaching Assistants or Research Assistants.

Sociology is increasingly becoming the “go to” discipline for answers about social problems and public policy, and practitioners like social workers and psychologists have come to recognize the importance of cultural understandings and social contexts for working with people. Sociologists increasingly write for broad audiences, in accessible language that captures the attention of the public and educates both in and outside the classroom. Some sociologists consider themselves “public sociologists” with an obligation to foster positive change in the world through their research, and there are “applied sociologists” and “community sociologists” who are similarly engaged and doing outreach in various communities. There is no discipline with more possibilities, both for students and for their audiences.

Chapter 10: How to Understand the People and the Context in Which you will be Working? - David G. LoConto, PhD



David G. LoConto, PhD
Professor of Sociology and Head of Sociology Department
New Mexico State University

David G. LoConto is Professor of Sociology, as well as the Department Head in the Department of Sociology at New Mexico State University. He earned his Ph.D. in Sociology at Oklahoma State University, with comprehensive areas in Social Psychology and Deviance. Dr. LoConto has published in a wide variety of areas including bereavement, dreams, ethnic identity, disability, and early American Sociological thought. Though instrumental in the development of Strategic Ritualization, he approaches social phenomena as a realist with a pragmatist slant. Currently Dr. LoConto has several projects he is working on, including: (1) an analysis of the relationship of fans and Southern Culture amongst fans of Southeastern Conference college football; (2) the role-conflict of student and athlete identities for college football players; (3) bureaucratic ritualism in academia; (4) strategic ritualization found at Star Trek Conventions; and (5) identity of the wine industry in New Mexico.

How Something Happens?

I have often wondered what the discipline of Sociology really is myself. Certainly things have changed over the years both for the discipline and for me.

In many ways I see nowadays that too many times Sociologists using the discipline as a pulpit and teaching morality. I do not believe that way of doing Sociology was the intention of our founders. I am reminded of the ancient Chinese proverb, “give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.” For myself, this is what Sociology does.

Sociology at its core is a field of study that teaches people how to fish, that is, how to think and evaluate the world around them. When you look back at what Auguste Comte thought Sociology to be, as well as many of the early American Sociologists, they saw Sociology as the culmination of all the other sciences. Therefore, Sociology would connect all the dots between disciplines and make it all work. Nowadays however, I see us more on the fringe, not taking seriously the discoveries and paradigms found in other disciplines. Many state that other disciplines are simply narratives without realizing the consequences of such a statement.

We (Sociologists) do spend a great deal of time trying to tell others ‘how’ something happens, or ‘how’ it became the way it is. For instance, William Julius Wilson tells the story of how African Americans became stuck in the inner cities in the United States. Typically the common explanation has been racism. Wilson provides a different story, that is, bad timing. He demonstrates that in the industrial cities in the United States that there was a constant demand for workers. There was a push-pull factor occurring. As new workers came into the inner cities, other workers would be pushed out, moving to more stable living situations. The new arrivals lived in the worst conditions of the city. Typically what occurred is that the new arrivals were immigrants from Europe.

However, after 1924, with changes to immigration laws, it was difficult for people to come to the United States. So workers, mainly Blacks from the southern United States began moving to these northern industrial cities. They took jobs side by side with people who emigrated to the United States from Europe. They lived in the most inner parts of the city, and were the poorest of the workers. Typically what would happen is that demand from these factories would facilitate a new migration of people to the inner cities. This would have pushed southern Blacks out into a more stable environment.

However, what occurred is that the Great Depression hit. So they were left with the situation of ‘last one hired, first one fired’. They were laid off from their jobs at a time when there were no more new jobs. Quickly, what was once a

hustling and bustling area, turned into an economic bust. The infamous inner cities of the United States were born.

So what I see from Wilson's research demonstrates how Sociologists are able to explain phenomena without it being some simplistic one-word answer such as lazy, racism, or sexism. There are simply so many factors involved that facilitates what is. Janet Lever did something similar in the 1970s with regard to success in the business world and connected it to the types of play by children. She noticed that boys games were more bureaucratic than those of girls. Boys games had more people, more rules, and that the team was more important than the individual. If fights broke out, others stepped in to mitigate any problems. Girls games on the other hand were in smaller groups, had fewer rules, and that when fights broke out, the group would disband. Lever concluded that boys were being socialized to fit in better in the bureaucratic world. Bureaucracy was similar to the games boys played growing up. She was not suggesting that this socialization was a cause and effect relationship, but instead was an influence to this outcome. Certainly there were more variables involved.

In terms of what the discipline provides regarding careers, I would suggest, it can be a curse or a blessing. There is this myth regarding the purpose of universities. Do we teach a trade? Or are we educating people? It saddens me in the states that there has been this influx of philosophy that says we must teach a trade. The problem with that kind of sentiment is that the universities historically have taught a wide variety of knowledge. What we do teach, and sociology is outstanding at this, is how to understand the people and the context in which you will be working. Sociology is outstanding at understanding how people work together, fit together, and are most effective.

You are Comprised of a Host of Skills - You have to Market Yourself

If employment was only about how to do a job in its minimalist sense, then we would be cheerful robots as C. Wright Mills said. No, people are complex, influenced by a variety of phenomena. If we take this to heart, anyone with this knowledge can be successful. For myself, I find this skill to be of utmost importance. If we understand the processes of the world and place of employment around us, that also opens the door for us to then find weaknesses, explore, and see how to maximize any element. We can improve things.

Sociology teaches us not only how to understand people and their contexts, but of course, we are also teaching about communication, and how to be effective leaders and organizers. We teach and learn how to reach people at a place that is best for them. We teach and learn how to recognize this. I cannot imagine what the world would look like if we did not take the time to understand these things.

With that in mind, I find the future bright. However, Sociology students must be more effective when looking for employment. You are more than just a degree. You are comprised of a host of skills. You have to market yourself that way. You cannot accept the common cultural norms where friends, family, as well as strangers ask, 'what are you going to do with that'? No, Sociology is a tool that should be developed.

If you are making recommendations to your university about whether the university should have four or six-day work-weeks, think of all the consequences of any decision. If you go four days, that is no classes for three days per week, how does that impact the school in terms of attendance to extracurricular activities? Do the students leave town? Does attendance go up? Do businesses on campuses shut down? Does their business drop on days when school is not in session? What about businesses surrounding the campus?

Not only do universities have a responsibility to these businesses, but also these businesses also contribute to the atmosphere of the university. I cannot imagine what Oklahoma State University would be like if Eskimo Joe's was not right across from campus. It has become a tourist attraction. In other words, these businesses become extensions of the university. So a simple problem of classes four or six days a week is fraught with other problems that can be overlooked.

If we teach classes six days a week, does that mean the university has to hire more staff to man the offices? What are the fiscal effects of such a move? Do we get more students? Does this cover extra costs in utilities and staff?

What about distance education? What is the impact on departments if they begin getting stronger distance education programs? Do the faculty still show up in their offices if the students no longer come by? Do the faculty move away? What impact does that have on the atmosphere in the department?

All these things are impacted. That is what Sociology does. It forces us to think about all the variables involved in any event. It recognizes that the world can be

very complex. You then translate that to the workplace, or as a job skill and you are blessed with having the training to analyze, evaluate, and then implement changes.

Research is the Fun Part of Sociology: Without it - Things Become Stale

Research is a key area within the discipline, and certainly students can make a great deal of money simply doing research for agencies, corporations, and governments. Agencies, corporations, and governments all over the world conduct research. They need people to conduct that research for them. One of my former students does research for a utilities company. His job is to find out what consumers want and also how they feel about the services they are receiving. He then reports this to his bosses. This kind of research is important for companies to see if they are offering the kinds of services and products that customers want. We see this in many areas. We are constantly being asked now to complete surveys for companies when buying products. My latest automobile purchase was not a good experience. The survey I completed that General Motors asked for resulted in them calling me and offering me incentives to make up for their mistakes.

Overall however, research is the fun part of Sociology. This is where you discover new things. Recently I distributed a pilot study on Southeastern Conference footballs fans. There were over 70 questions, and some were open ended because I was not sure where the data was going to go. I was pilot testing this simply to gather enough information so I could finish the survey before distribution. What was cool about all of this were the responses from the participants. They were saying things that were unexpected. So not only were we getting information that was what we were hoping for, but also we were getting information that ended up blowing our minds.

Research is the discovery aspect that generates all the enthusiasm. Without discovery, things become stale.

Regarding research at New Mexico State University, we are on the Mexican border. Ideally we want to focus our attention on research that reflects the area. So we are moving in that direction. We hope that most of the faculty will do some research that is a reflection of the desert Southwest, and the border.

One of my colleagues, James Rice does research on the environment, recently doing research on the atomic bomb testing done in the region during the 1950s and 1960s. Fascinating material as it goes against a lot of the theory inherent

within Sociology these days, that is, social constructionism. When you have radiation poisoning, you can define it any way you want. The bottom line is that people are getting poisoned.

Julie Rice and Kathryn Hovey are both doing research on community development in the region. Cynthia Pelak is conducting research on racial narratives. Alison Newby is doing research on health disparities along the border. Sandra Way is looking at school inequities also in the region. Kassia Wosick does research on sexual behavior, recently publishing a book on various types of sexual relationships, and how people make nontraditional forms of relationships work against a backdrop of rituals and norms.

I myself am doing research on fun things, or largely more fun. As mentioned, I am studying fans of Southeastern Conference Football trying to understand why these fans are so fanatic, but also to identify some of their behaviors in support of that fanaticism.

Another project involves bureaucratic ritualism found in academia, that is identifying the various rituals academics participate in which stresses the importance of the ritual and not the outcome. The ritual becomes the end.

I am also looking at ritual behavior at Star Trek Conventions. Several years ago I helped develop a theory called Strategic Ritualization with David Knottnerus. Though others have developed the theory, I have not. Given that I am a Trekie, I wanted to mix both business with pleasure. So I am working on a project where I will be doing a participant study of Star Trek Conventions, focusing on the various ritual elements of the conventions.

Another project where the data has already been collected, is the Eugenics philosophy of Edward Alsworth Ross. Ross was a student of Lester Ward, and was one of the founding American Sociologists. While very liberal, he also was very much into Eugenics. He was outspoken regarding immigration, and the genetic make-up of American citizens.

I am getting ready to submit a paper on identity of college football players. In this particular research, college football players with better than a 3.0 grade point average were interviewed to get their responses on how they negotiate between the identities of 'student' and 'athlete'.

Lastly, I am currently writing a grant proposal to study the wine industry in New Mexico. Part of that research will be to look at the identity associated with

the industry, as well as to delve into the economic clusters involved in the wine industry.

Scholarships and Assistantships

Scholarships – We have a minimum amount of assistantships in the Department of Sociology. Currently we provide six Graduate Assistantships per year. I recently submitted a proposal that if granted would give us 10 more assistantships per year. We have between 50-60 graduate students, so the majority do not receive assistantships. The Graduate School provides various scholarships and other awards which can be found through the links below.

<http://prospective.nmsu.edu/graduate/awards/index.html>

<http://gradschool.nmsu.edu/ga/index.htm>

<http://gradschool.nmsu.edu/fellowships/index.htm>

Identify the Best Way to Proceed to Fix Something

I believe that Sociologists have been short-sighted. I believe we have lost touch with the real world. We have become this collection of idealists who want to facilitate change, but do not take the time to understand the everyday lives of the people around them.

Our research should help people, and a lot does. We do not however make that as apparent as we should. This issue actually has its origins some 120 years or more ago. In the United States there was a debate between those that were more conservative in their approach, typically coming out of the Social Darwinist traditions which argued that Sociological research should show how interfering in the world would actually upset the natural order and therefore do more damage long term. Those more liberal minded wanted to get involved and directly help people. Part of the problem associated with interacting and helping people, is that there was some concern over how that would be organized. Albion Small advocated for a rigid scientific methodology to not only identify what needed assistance, but also that same methodology to ascertain how to approach a remedy. Small felt that too many people in the reform camp were not practicing good science, but instead were simply leading with their hearts. Therefore, there was inconsistency and the reform desired was inefficient.

I would like to see more research not only identify social problems, but also identify the best way to proceed to fix something. These solutions however would need to be well thought out and account for various spurious relationships between variables. What I experience now when talking with Sociologists, is that they are quick to point out problems, but often lack the depth to propose legitimate solutions.

What is Real? - How do you Know it is Real?

Read research. I often tell students once they have ‘the bug’ of Sociology, to read research. If you want to do research, you have to know what has been done. It is not enough to have a good idea. Frankly, a good idea is worthless typically if it does not take into account what has been done. One should ask themselves, “How does this idea relate to the literature?” So if a student were to do research for me, I would quickly ask them how this relates to what has already been done. If the student does not have an adequate answer, I will ask that student what they have read. The bottom line is that if the student does not read the literature, they will typically be doomed to repeat research that has already been done, which of course wastes everyone’s time.

The first time I came up with an original idea for research I was in graduate school. Prior to that time, every time I would have this great idea for study, I would find that it had been done 70 years ago, 50, years ago, etc. Finally after reading the literature, I would come up with ideas that had not been tested. The other day a student came into my office and wanted to present an idea that he thought literally would ‘save the world’. He began presenting his material that would start the process of creating a utopia. I interrupted him and said, “How does this relate to Kant’s ideas on Cosmopolitanism?” He said ‘what’? I said okay, “how does this relate to Mead’s ideas on International-mindedness?” He did not know what I was talking about. He made claims that rules in the world were not real and should not bind us. I said, “what is real?” And “How do you know it is real?” He could not answer.

I was not feeling superior, but what I was trying to get across to the idealist student was that he needed to read some to gain enough knowledge to recognize the strengths and weaknesses of his ideas, but also to situate them in the history of ideas.

The discipline is strong and has a lot to offer. My concerns revolve around sociologists that do not study as much as they should or could. Originally the

discipline was supposed to be a culmination of all the other disciplines. This required that sociologists be well read in all disciplines. I do not see this attitude any longer. Hopefully however, the sociologists who continue to do the work will succeed.

Chapter 11: Why Study Sociology? – Professor Jacob Bucher, PhD

Jacob Bucher, PhD
Associate Dean of the School of Professional & Graduate Studies
Baker University

Dr. Bucher came to Baker University after receiving a M.A. and PhD from Emory University in Atlanta, GA. Dr. Bucher is also a Baker graduate, majoring in Sociology, Philosophy and Religion, with a minor in Psychology. After graduating from Baker, Dr. Bucher received a M.A. in Criminology from the University of Memphis before going to Emory. Dr. Bucher has also spent eight years in the United States Army as a military police officer. Currently Dr. Bucher teaches a range of courses but some of his primary responsibilities are classes involving social difference and inequality, as well as criminology and criminal justice. Many of his classes involve experiential learning requirements and involve a mix of lecture, small group exercises, and large group discussion. Dr. Bucher has published research in Deviant Behavior, Women & Criminal Justice, Journal of Drug Education, Youth and Society, Southwest Journal of Criminal Justice, Journal of Men's Studies, Journal of Crime & Justice, and Teaching Sociology.

A Sociologist Wants to Know How the “Person” Works

The first question I usually receive from students interested in Sociology is “what is it”? I like to respond with an intentionally vague “it’s the study of everything”. When you think about the multiple layers of social life, the intricate relationships and phenomena that create and maintain our identities, our interactions, our social institutions, and ultimately our social reality – you begin to see that “everything” is not disingenuous.

The “study of everything”, while interesting to discuss, is often unsatisfactory as students still want to know what specifically they can investigate through Sociology. To answer, it might help to think about two distinctions within Sociology – micro and macrosociology. Microsociology focuses on individuals and interpersonal interactions.

If you are curious about why we are the way we are – way you are the way you are – Sociology can provide the answers through research and theory on the development of self-concepts and identities, socialization, culture, and interactions. Macrosociology focuses on large groups and institutions. If you are curious about how society creates norms and gets people to follow them, the purposes, advantages and disadvantages of institutions – Sociology can provide the answers through research and theory on group membership, institutions such as family, religion, education and more.

It is similar to a Biologist who wants to understand how the body works; a Sociologist wants to know how the “person” works. As an Economist wants to know how national and global economies work; a Sociologist wants to know how the economy as a social institution influences, and is influenced by, culture. Furthermore, Sociology is the study of people. If you’re curious about what makes us all the same, what makes us different, and how all that plays out in society – Sociology investigates race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, age, religion, and more. I teach a class on Social Inequality and students, including non-majors, often say that the class should be required for all college students. I think this sentiment shows the importance and relevance of what we do in Sociology.

Sociological Imagination: A “Mission Statement” of Sociology

A Sociologist named C. Wright Mills coined the term “Sociological Imagination”. I think Mills originally was trying to describe what it is Sociology does, but I also think it describes what a Sociologist must have. The Sociological Imagination is an approach to understanding society with the assumption that if you want to understand how society works, you have to understand people; and if you want to understand people, you have to understand how society works. Many disciplines study one (people) or the other (institutions); Sociology essentially says that you cannot understand one without the other since each is dependent on the other.

I think the Sociological Imagination is a good “mission statement” of Sociology in that it describes our discipline, while also identifying a trait Sociologists have. To the latter point, the imagination can be developed, however if you find yourself critically examining yourself and your world – you may already have it!

As an undergraduate student, if you’re thinking about pursuing studies in Sociology, you probably already have the tools necessary to be successful.

Meaning, you probably have an inquisitive and critical nature – the base for a good Sociological Imagination. Many people go through their life and their world without questioning things, assuming there is only one world (theirs) and one way of looking at it (theirs).

Successful Sociologists are those individuals who possess a desire to figure things out, who refuse to go through life ignorant of what that life is. Many mechanical engineering students have a passion to figure out what makes a machine work, they want to pull it apart to understand it fully. Sociology students have a passion to figure out what makes people and society work, and they too want to pull it apart to understand it fully. If you have this passion, you have the necessary base to be successful in Sociology.

What does a 500 Pound Gorilla Eat? What does a Sociology Major do for a Job?

If you are thinking about studying Sociology, I would encourage you to pair it with another discipline. We have students who double-major or minor in areas such as Psychology, Communication, a Language, History, Philosophy, English, and even the physical sciences and fine arts. Some of these areas are natural partners for Sociology; Psychology and Communication are social sciences, Philosophy asks many of the same questions as Sociology, and studying literature and history are enhanced with a Sociology background.

An example for the physical sciences would students interested in crime scene investigations benefiting from Sociology paired with Biology or Chemistry. Regarding the fine arts, a student who wants to use art therapy for at-risk youth would benefit from pairing Sociology with Studio Art.

If the first question students ask about Sociology is “what is it?”, the next conversation I have with students is inevitably “I really like studying Sociology, but what can I do with it”? I have a colleague who responds to the question about careers in Sociology with the saying “What does a 500 pound gorilla eat? Anything he wants. What does a Sociology major do for a job? Anything s/he wants”.

Much like the “study of everything”, my colleague is being intentionally vague here to make the point that Sociology opens up many doors. Most every job involves working with people, and since Sociology is the study of people – Sociology majors find they are qualified and marketable for work in a variety of career fields. We place students in positions with the government, with

businesses, in health and social services, education and research, and in criminal justice and law.

In a recent graduating class we had majors take jobs in insurance, social work, sales, law enforcement, community development in places like Haiti and Zambia, and students who went to graduate school for social work, Sociology, and law. Our majors have very little trouble *finding* a job, the only trouble is *picking* a job – much like that gorilla has to decide what he wants to eat!

Graduate Study and “research” as a Career Path

Furthermore I would encourage students to consider graduate study. For many disciplines the economic market is becoming more and more competitive, and a graduate degree makes you more marketable. If it is feasible for you to attend graduate school, majoring in Sociology will prepare you for graduate study in Social Work, Business, Law, Criminology and Criminal Justice, Minority Studies, Counseling, Public Health, Community Development, and more. I even have a current student majoring in Sociology with a minor in Biology who will be attending medical school.

I mentioned “research” as a career path for Sociology majors, and there is a lot of research being done at Baker University. Our Sociology faculty have expertise in the areas of Social Inequality, Media, Political Sociology, Criminology and Criminal Justice, Social Psychology, and more. Personally my research has focused on Social Difference and Inequality, and Criminology. My current research has been focused on sexual identities in men, military crime and deviance, and tests of the General Strain Theory of crime. I recently submitted articles on homophobia among fathers with homosexual sons compared to homophobia among sons with homosexual fathers, and an article investigating the role of strain in prostitution. The latter article is actually the result of collaboration with a student. We encourage our students to do original research and the research scope was the student’s idea; I then worked with the student to develop the paper into a research article for an academic journal.

As with many disciplines, there is a line between academics and practitioners. For example in the area of Criminal Justice there is a feeling among academic researchers that practitioners do not know enough about crime and criminals, while practitioners feel that academic researchers do not know what “things are really like”. Despite that divide there is the real opportunity for Sociological research to have “real world” applications. My research on the

victimization of undocumented workers was used by a member of U.S. Congress to support a proposed bill. My research on sexual victimization was used by a college's Office of Student Life, and my research on military crime has been presented to military administration. These are only examples from my own research; imagine the possibilities for practitioners to use all the wonderful Sociological research that is being conducted.

Scholarship Opportunities and Resources for Students

Sociology at Baker University is a strong program thanks to the academic standards of Baker, the quality of faculty, and the quality of our majors. Baker University offers a variety of scholarships provided by the University as well as state and federal aid. More information on scholarships and aid can be found at <http://www.bakeru.edu/bc-admission/financial-aid> and <https://www.bakeru.edu/bc-admission/financial-aid/scholarships-a-awards>. Please note the contact information on these sites as other opportunities and resources may be available and you are encouraged to contact our great staff for that information.

In conclusion, congratulations on your decision to study Sociology. Your studies will allow you to better understand yourself and *your* world, better understand *the* world, and will prepare you for a career of your choice. Remember if you want to understand people, or you want to understand society, you have to understand them both – Sociology will provide you with that understanding. Best of luck!

Chapter 12: Sociological Imagination: The Ability to See the Personal Troubles and Social Issues - Kirsten Kramar, PhD



Kirsten Kramar, PhD

Chair & Associate Professor, Department of Sociology
University of Winnipeg

*Kirsten Kramar received her B.A. (Hons) in Sociology from the University of Winnipeg in 1992, her M.A. in Sociology from the University of Manitoba in 1993 and her PhD in Criminology from the University of Toronto in 2000. She has published in the areas of infanticide, obscenity/indecency law and police powers (with Dr. Richard Jochelson). She is currently working on a project entitled “The Disappearance of Infanticide” that investigates governmental claims making in both moral and expert discourses, and their broader effects, focusing on infanticide prosecutions in Canada since the turn of the 21st century. Her research (with Dr. Richard Jochelson) examines the illiberal rationalities used by the Supreme Court of Canada to justify the criminalization of obscenity and indecency as well as the developing logics that underpin justifications for enhanced police powers post 9/11. She has also worked to adapt *The Sociology Project: Introducing the Sociological Imagination* (Jeff Manza et al, Pearson Education Inc., 2013) for a Canadian audience. Dr. Kramar is the Chair of the Department of Sociology at the University of Winnipeg.*

I Got It!

I still remember the day when I had the aha sociological moment reading an academic journal article at the dining room table one afternoon while in my second year as a sociology major at the University of Winnipeg. Suddenly I got it!

I understood how a sociologist sees the world and wanted to help others do the same through teaching and research. C. Wright Mills called this the “sociological imagination” or the ability to see one's personal troubles and social issues in the context of a particular historical period. I had dropped out of high school because the curriculum was sexist and probably racist which frustrated me as the daughter of a politically engaged mother dedicated to gender equality and reproductive rights for women. Through sociology I came to understand that my personal experience was shaped by the social relations I found myself in during that time.

I completed my honours degree in sociology with an interest in the sociology of law, and then went on to do a Master's degree on the constitutionality of obscenity laws in Canada. The socio-legal research and writing skills I learned while doing both of these degrees laid the foundation for my PhD research that examined the prosecution of women who kill their babies at birth and who were often sentenced to death before the infanticide law was passed in Canada in 1948.

Understanding the Intersection between Law and Society

My own interests lay in understanding the intersection between law and society and the various ways in which law, or the people who administer the law and the contexts in which they do so, shape law and define society. My interests were connected to social justice and to shaping the world through university teaching as well as law reform. I am currently the Chair of the Department of Sociology at the University of Winnipeg, where I began my training in sociology as an undergraduate student. I teach in the broad area of socio-legal studies.

My research continues to examine questions related to constitutional law as it is interpreted and applied in relation to a variety of criminal laws (obscenity, indecency, police powers) in their evolving social and political contexts. I have done further research on the attempts to prosecute women who commit infanticide with the murder provision to understand the contemporary social

and economic conditions that lead women to kill their newly born babies and the associated attempts to address this issue through harsher punishment frameworks. This research helps us to understand the mitigation frameworks adopted into law to address the circumstances of motherhood and the changes to be made at a societal level to improve these conditions of mothering to prevent infanticide.

I also have done research on the wrongful convictions for child murder of women and other caregivers as a consequence of faulty forensic testimony. These findings assisted those who fight for the wrongfully convicted and ultimately to the reversal of the convictions.

Is Sociology is Simply “Common Sense”?

When I teach Introductory Sociology I often ask students to define the discipline of sociology. Students will usually reply that sociology is simply “common sense.” But is not quite accurate. Instead, it is more accurate to describe sociology, and the tools and reasoning used by sociologists, as helping us to understand how common sense comes to be common sense.

In other words, sociologists can tell us how and why certain ideas and the policies they give rise to are taken for granted and become popular and dominant during different social and economic time periods and places. For example, training in sociology can help you to understand why “austerity measures” have become a popular solution offered by international bankers as the magic bullet for what they perceive to be a problem of overspending by governments.

Sociologists by contrast would argue that the problem is deeper than the bankers suggest, and that dwindling government resources are connected to the problems associated with an unregulated global capitalist economy. Sociologists can tell you what has happened and can help you predict what will happen if and when the international bankers have their way and are able to impose austerity measures upon those countries that are indebted to banks.

Sociological findings explain for us why there is very little social mobility in Canada and the United States and help us to understand why real wages (or income) in North America has not risen very much in the last 40 years. Sociological research has far reaching impact because it is used to inform social policy, programs and laws. Sociologists frequently offer expertise to policy makers in government and non-governmental organizations in the community.

Majoring in Sociology: What can Undergraduate Students Learn?

Undergraduate sociology students learn a variety of research methods and theoretical models for explaining and understanding the dynamics of the social world. This may involve developing foundational skills in statistical reasoning, qualitative research methods and sociological theory. Sociology is often referred to as the queen of the social sciences because it uses history, philosophy, economics and numbers to help us understand social phenomena like crime rates or social inequality and poverty.

Sociology also helps us to explain how and why those things are connected our own political choices or social norms, practices and policies. Students of sociology are able to apply the skill set they gain from studying the sociological perspective in any workplace context or subject matter they encounter.

Majoring in sociology provides students with knowledge for knowledge's sake, but that knowledge is a practical asset that can be widely applied. Thus sociology is a scientific discipline that teaches students how to use empirical data collected and theoretical concepts to makes sense of the contemporary social world. As a graduate with a sociology degree, you will have the skills to think like a social scientist and learn where to go for reliable factual information about the social world to assist you in any context.

In today's "knowledge economy" you will discover that not all knowledge is factual and that the critical skills you learn studying sociology will enable you to assess arguments and conclusions. These are skills you will carry throughout the course of your life and career and will enable you to be an engaged citizen. By enabling you to unpack arguments and debates such as the ones I've described above, sociological training will provide you with an advantage when it comes to a variety of career paths including journalism, law, social work, small business owner, corporate executive, policy analyst because you will have developed the tools for making evidence based decisions.

Because a sociology degree offers students training to develop a broad set of cognitive skills required for parsing various different kinds of knowledge claims it is unlike a narrow technical skill. Technical skills are generally ones in which you might learn something very specific such as how to fix an engine, fill out a form for laying a criminal charge, cut and style hair, or plumb and wire a new bathroom. These are valuable, but specific technical skills different from

the cognitive or intellectual skills you will learn studying sociology and doing sociological research.

And, while technical skills may secure you an immediate job, they may not provide you with the necessary skills for engaged citizenship required in today's world. Research suggests that most people will have two to three different careers throughout their lifetime. The critical thinking skills offered by a degree in sociology enables its graduates to make the necessary and often desirable transitions from one life stage to the next and one job to another and to make sense of the changes taking place all around us as we navigate the global economy.

Regardless of your state of life, or career interests, an education in sociology can provide you with the quality of mind required for engaged citizenship in the 21st century.

Chapter 13: An Invitation to Improve the World - Benjamin James Waddell, Ph.D



By Benjamin James Waddell, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Sociology
Adams State University

Dr. Waddell is an Assistant Professor of Sociology at Adams State University, which is located in southern Colorado. He received his B.A. in International Affairs in 2005 from the University of Colorado-Boulder. During his time at CU he studied abroad in Managua, Nicaragua via the School for International Training. Upon graduating from CU he moved to Buenos Aires, Argentina, where he lived and studied at La Universidad de Buenos Aires for eight months before beginning an odyssey that took him—via bus, train, car, small plane and boat—from the Rio de Plata in Buenos Aires to the shores of the Rio Grande in Albuquerque, NM. Dr. Waddell began his graduate work at the University of New Mexico (UNM) shortly thereafter, graduating with an M.A. in Latin American Studies in December 2009. He received his Ph.D. in Sociology from UNM in May 2013. Dr. Waddell teaches a wide variety of courses, including: Introduction to Sociology; Latin American Culture and Society; Poverty and Inequality; Race, Culture and Ethnicity; Sociology of Education; Social Problems; Social Psychology; and Sustainable Development.

Power of the “Sociological Imagination” – A Story

Sociology is a fairly straightforward discipline. As social scientists we systematically study society as a means of improving social conditions. In this sense, Sociology is an invitation to improve the world we live in. As sociologists, this is both the hope and promise of our work. This is not, however, where I start each semester when I walk into my introduction to Sociology courses. Rather, I begin my course by telling my students the story of Pedro Ortiz, who, although unbeknownst to him, was the first person to push me to think sociologically about the world.

In the space that follows I relay this story to you as a means of revealing the power of the “sociological imagination” to help us understand the world we live in. As you read through my story I invite you to think of similar experiences that you have had in your lifetime.

Pedro and I worked together on construction sites near Telluride, Colorado between 2001 and 2005. Although Pedro and I were unable to communicate well, I recall finding myself strongly moved by what I was able to make out of his personal story. Through gestures and broken English he explained to me that he left his native Mexico for the first time in the 1980s to work in the southwestern United States. When I asked him where he was from he quickly rambled off a series of names that I could not make out. Noting my confusion, he responded “León, Guanajuato.”

I recall partially capturing the first word he pronounced and gathering very little of the second word due to the fact that I was unable to pronounce more than the first syllable! My face must have revealed my bewilderment because he promptly responded, “You know, like a lion,” which he followed up with a trained gesture in which he brought his hands above his head and let out a loud, “RAAAAAA!” With such primitive communication we would often go hours without uttering a word but through occasional hand motions and laborious conversations, we each got to know a little about one another.

Pedro began migrating to the United States as a teenager. Like many other young men his age he saw the United States, or El Norte as he colloquially referred to it, as the only means of getting ahead in life. Indeed, there were likely few people from his hometown who had made anything of themselves that had not done so by emigrating to the U.S. Like most rural towns across Mexico, emigration seemed like the only way to achieve ones dreams. In the early years Pedro would take trains across northern Mexico and walk through the desert to work in the zucchini and fruit fields of the Southwest.

Eventually he began working construction in Telluride, CO, where he ended up working for fifteen years with BONE Construction. He began working on the cleanup crew but he quickly moved into framing and finished carpentry. Over the years he worked on countless mega-mansions in and around Telluride. Today, as a Sociologist, I find it unsettling that Pedro spent his life constructing mansions for the uber-wealthy so that he could afford to build a small home for himself in his native Mexico. In any case, in the early 2000s Pedro was able to solicit permanent residency in the United States at which point he petitioned to bring his wife and six children to live with him in the small town of Nucla, Colorado. By this time Pedro and I had lost contact.

However, in the fall of 2006, while home on a break from my first semester of graduate school, I tracked down Pedro's number and gave him a call. By this time I spoke rather fluid Spanish, and as the reader might imagine, I was quite excited to talk with the man I had worked side by side with for so many hours without exchanging much more than an occasional phrase or pantomime.

Pedro's wife, Belem, answered the phone and after we exchanged several brief formalities, she passed me on to her husband. Pedro and I spoke for roughly half an hour, in which time he told me a bit more about himself. As it turned out, Pedro was from a small town named Rancho Viejo de Torres, which is located in Valle de Santiago, Guanajuato.

Coincidentally, my wife is also from Guanajuato. As a result, we had a great deal more in common than either of us expected. We began talking about the different places we had both visited in Guanajuato and before we hung up, Pedro invited me to visit him and his family the next time they were back home. Like many immigrants, Pedro had built a modest house in his hometown, which he went back to visit once or twice a year. Unfortunately, Pedro and I were never able to meet up in Mexico. A week after we talked on the phone he passed away suddenly from a cerebral hemorrhage. He died on January 3rd, 2008, four days shy of his 45th birthday.

My Ideas about Life were Informed by the Opinions of those I Chose to Surround myself with

The first time I met Pedro Ortiz I had just finished High School. At the time I was not even aware that the discipline of Sociology existed. However, I do recall having fairly cut and dry ideas of how the world worked, and at the ripe age of eighteen I honestly thought that I had most things figured out. At the time, for example, I was firmly against undocumented immigration. Like many

of my contemporaries, I thought that immigrants should simply “get in line” like everyone else had.

In retrospect I realize that my ideas about life were mainly informed by the opinions of those I chose to surround myself with. In many instances, the emotions I associated with these personal relationships blinded me from seeing the complex nuances of reality. As I got to know Pedro, however, I suddenly found myself asking questions that did not seem to have clear-cut answers. Why had Pedro left his hometown? How often did he go back? How did he cross the border? How much money did he send back each month? Were his family members better off because he had left? How did he feel about living in the U.S.? How did his fellow workers treat him? And just as importantly, what was the fate of the millions of other men and women like Pedro that crossed into the United States to work each year?

In time I found that Sociology provided me a means through which to answer these types of questions. As I advanced with my graduate studies I made it my goal to shed light on the legacy of men and women like Pedro. For me, my late friend’s life gave immigration a human component. By revealing his story to me Pedro pushed me to see emigration as a human struggle as oppose to a simple political debate.

Moreover, through Pedro I came to realize that immigration policies—and public policy in general—have a lasting effect on the lives of millions of people. Whether we choose to build walls on the border or grant amnesty to undocumented immigrants, what is certain is this: The decisions we make today will continue to define society well into the future.

Analyzing the Effect of Emigration on Development Outcomes

In my own work, for example, I analyze the effect of emigration on development outcomes in central Mexico. Indeed, Mexican immigration to the United States is unique in nature. Currently there are an estimated 40.4 million immigrants in the United States and 11.7 million are from Mexico. Among these individuals, somewhere around 12 million reside in the United States without proper documentation, and 56 percent of all undocumented immigrants in the United States are from Mexico (Pew Research Center 2012, and Britz and Batalova 2013).

Not surprisingly, in recent years politicians and citizens alike have called for an overhaul of the United States’ immigration system. Still, reform proposals have

focused almost exclusively on domestic policy—increasing border patrol agents, building walls along the border, deporting undocumented immigrants, etc.—as a means of controlling immigration. Far less attention is lent to the role of international factors in driving emigration in the first place.

Unfortunately, as my own research in central Mexico reveals, by failing to address the principal causes of emigration from migrant-sending countries—i.e., poverty, inequality, lack of access to education and healthcare, unemployment, internal strife, etc.—current immigration reform in the United States is unlikely to substantially reduce immigration flows.

Why Sociology is so Vital to our World?

As my work demonstrates, in order to effectively control immigration representatives must address the actual causes of mass emigration in migrant-sending societies. My findings indicate that the best way—and perhaps the only way—to “control” immigration into any country is by supporting meaningful development in migrant-sending states. To do otherwise is a clear disservice to taxpayers of all political stripes.

As this example demonstrates, how we choose to manage society matters a great deal, for the decisions we make today will impact future generations for years to come. In this sense, politics is a high stakes game, and in matters of such high stakes, the devil is in the details.

In my mind, this is why Sociology is so vital to our world. Using actual data to understand how society works gives us leverage in the political decisions that we make. Through the careful, systematic analysis of society we can arrive at better solutions for the most pressing issues of our times. This includes immigration but also applies to other social issues such as war, healthcare reform, education, fertility rates, inner-city gang violence, drug abuse, unemployment, etc.

In short, Sociology invites us to think carefully about the relationship between individual action and larger social trends. By doing so we can expand our understanding of the world we live in, and in time, improve it.

Chapter 14: Why Sociology? - Brian K. Obach, PhD



Brian Obach, PhD
Professor of Sociology
State University of New York at New Paltz

Brian Obach is a Professor of Sociology at the State University of New York at New Paltz. He specializes in the study of social movements and environmental sociology. He has published several articles in Teaching Sociology and he is the author of Labor and the Environmental Movement: The Quest for Common Ground (MIT Press 2004) and the forthcoming Organic Struggle: The Movement for Sustainable Agriculture in the United States (MIT Press).

Sociologists as “Doctors of Society”

I think of sociologists as “doctors of society.” Similar to how medical doctors seek to address physical ailments, sociologists seek to “cure” social ills. While the focus of medicine is to treat injury and prevent diseases of the body, sociologists seek to address social problems such as racism, violence, inequality, poverty and the oppression of women.

Like medical doctors, sociologists apply their expertise in a number of ways. Just as some medical professionals focus exclusively on research, studying how human biology and disease work, some sociologists are employed in areas where the main task is to gather data and analyze how society functions. After all, before we can cure a disease or solve a problem, we have to understand how the system works and where the trouble originates. Many sociologists are

employed by universities, government agencies, or private non-profit organizations that conduct research on things such as employment trends, alcohol and drug abuse, crime, health issues, race relations and other matters of social importance.

Other sociologists then use that knowledge to advance solutions to social problems. They may be involved with developing government policy or working for organizations that seek to educate the public or advocate for reform. Still others may work directly with people in need, providing care for the elderly or disabled or helping families cope with poverty or personal crises.

There is some overlap between sociology and social work, the field directly focused on providing personal support to those in need. Because of the relationship between understanding social problems and directly helping people experiencing those problems, at the undergraduate level, some social work programs are housed in sociology departments at universities. But whether one is directly working with people experiencing problems or conducting research and analysis on ways to prevent those problems from arising, a sociological approach is valuable at all levels.

To provide some insight into the different roles that sociologists play, let's consider the example of domestic violence, the all-too-common occurrence of (usually) women being abused by their male partners. How pervasive is this problem? Who is more vulnerable to abuse? How could such abuse be prevented? These are all questions for which sociological study is essential.

Some sociologists, usually working at universities, conduct research to try to answer these questions. They gather data from police reports or through interviews with women who have experienced domestic violence. Sociologists deploy a variety of scientific methods to identify factors that may contribute to the occurrence of domestic abuse, such as economic hardship, social isolation or a patriarchal culture that glorifies violence.

These researchers may simply provide analysis of the problem, but they or others can also use that understanding to develop solutions to the problem of domestic violence. Actions that could be taken to address this issue might include programs that provide economic support to families in need, the creation of a network of battered women's shelters that give victims a safe way to leave an abusive relationship, or educational programs that encourage gender equality, non-violence and respect for all people. Sociologists and others employed in government agencies or in the private non-profit sector

would be involved in developing specific programs based on the findings of this research and analysis.

Sociology is just for the 99.9% of us!

If you are interested in conducting research on social problems or working on policy solutions, you would probably need an advanced degree. Most university professors who conduct sociological research hold Ph.Ds. Those who work in the policy area for a government agency or a non-profit organization usually have Master's degrees. But sociological study is useful at every level. Even if you only intend to get a Bachelor's degree, the study of sociology will prove useful to you in your career and in your life. I always say, "sociology is not for everyone; it is just for the 99.9% of us who will work with and interact with other people!" If you are in that 99.9%, then studying sociology will be beneficial to you.

A bachelor's degree in sociology provides students with insights and skills that can be usefully deployed almost anywhere. To continue with the example above, you may not need an advanced degree to work as a staff member at a battered women's shelter. But all workers in such settings benefit from having a deep understanding of how social conditions shape and constrain people's lives. When working with people who have suffered such hardship, it is important to know that theirs is not a unique individual experience.

Rather, domestic violence is a product of a social system that, in complicated ways, allows or even facilitates that type of abuse. Sociologists recognize that social problems, like domestic abuse, are in fact social. They are not simply the expression of individual psychological issues. Those individuals exist in a society, and domestic violence is far too common to write it off as an exceptional problem rooted in aberrant individual traits.

At its best, sociology serves as a powerful tool used to address social ills. In the views of most sociologists, it is the only viable approach to understanding and ultimately solving social problems. But sociological understanding can be deployed in other areas as well. Sociology also has commercial application, and many are employed as researchers in the private sector. Some sociologists are involved in marketing and the study of consumer behavior. While perhaps a less lofty goal than solving social problems, those who want to sell products stand to benefit a great deal by understanding population change, cultural trends and purchasing patterns, all areas in which a sociological approach is necessary.

Why Sociology is an Excellent Field of Study to Pursue?

Sociology is useful for everything from addressing domestic violence to selling cars. The fact is that understanding how society works and being able to analyze social conditions is useful in any setting. This is why, even for those who only intend to get a Bachelor's degree, sociology is an excellent field of study to pursue. It has applications in almost any work setting.

Consider an office environment or any work site in which you will have to deal with customers or clients. Knowing how people's social conditions influence their behavior, understanding and expectations will enable you to better relate to people and to handle social situations. Those not educated in social issues often rely on so-called "common sense" in their understanding of people's behavior.

This really means that they simply adopt common cultural beliefs, which are often inaccurate. Without the ability to critically analyze society using sociological methods, people come to rely on stereotypes or broad generalizations that unfairly characterize people and groups. When acted upon in a work setting or any social situation, this can lead to problems, as when someone makes a racist remark, treats women as subservient, or denigrates people based on their socio-economic status. This can lead to conflict that is dysfunctional in any workplace. Those with a background in sociology have a deeper understanding of these issues allowing them to avoid or help address such problems. This is very valuable to employers because it prevents workplace disruption and allows for smooth functioning.

A major survey of employers in the United States found that they place a high value on employees who are able to work with diverse teams, who have knowledge of different cultures and who have knowledge about and are involved in social issues, all qualities that sociological study nurtures.

The Unexamined Society is not Worth Living in

Having a sociological understanding of the world even benefits people well beyond their careers and work lives. It also makes us better community members and citizens. Most people employ their formal expertise only when they are at work. Medical doctors are practicing only when they see patients. Accountants exercise their skill only when at their computers doing financial accounting.

But most of us are around people almost all the time, thus your expertise as a sociologist is always of use. And when assessing information about our world, be it from the news media or that espoused by government officials, your sociological insight will enable you to see through misinformation and propaganda. Hidden power relationships between individuals and groups will become clear to you as you learn to use a sociological perspective. You will have a more systematic understanding of what would benefit our society and its people. This is much better than bumbling through life relying on inaccurate generalizations, bogus “common sense,” and the self-interested claims of the powerful.

A sociological perspective enables us to understand society and our place in it in ways that are personally satisfying and which allow us to contribute to making a better world. The great philosopher Socrates said in regard to personal self reflection, “The unexamined life is not worth living.” As a sociologist, I offer an addendum to that: “The unexamined society is not worth living in.” So, study society, learn how it operates, identify its problems...then change it for the better.

Chapter 15: The Usefulness of Sociology – Professor Meir Amor, PhD



Meir Amor, PhD
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Dr Meir Amor (PhD, Sociology, University of Toronto) is an Associate Professor of Sociology in the Concordia University department of Sociology and Anthropology. Dr. Amor researches and teaches the interdependencies and interconnectedness of status equalization, politics of inclusion and exclusion and violence in a historical and a comparative frame of analysis. He argues that the contradictory tendencies created by citizenship and racialization processes played a crucial role in defining modernity, the modern state, nation and the nation-state. By focusing on the recurrent emergence of violent eruptions, a less conventional approach is suggested in which the dark sides of enlightenment ideas, modernity and democracy are highlighted. Amor's research is focused on the diverse and divergent paths on the way to modernity of societies such as 15th century Catholic Spain, Ottoman Turkey, United States of America, Third Republic France, Second and Third Reich Germany and Uganda. Middle East history and present realities and especially the Israeli Palestinian conflict are also centers of his interest and research.

What is Sociology Good for?

“Why study sociology?” and “What is sociology good for? These are challenging questions. Therefore, asking can sociologists provide non-obvious insights to

these frequently presented wonderments softens, but leaves the edges unscathed. Put directly, the question is: Can sociologists study sociology sociologically? In addition, can a single, simple and profound gem demonstrate the sociological perspective's merit and usefulness? I doubt the latter and challenged by the former.

As to the doubts I would argue that the sociological perspective can teach curious students at least one non-obvious and profound lesson. The lesson is: our rationality has an irrational source and genealogy (Collins 1992). This is a gem. Some sociologists would agree with Randall Collins. This intellectual gem is easily communicated. It is distinct, straightforward, and has simple content. It is hard to fathom and has multi-layered implications. In short, it is a good representation for the sociological perspective.

In order to explain it sociologically, I propose the articulation of the three followings intuitions. I will argue that the sociological perspective is insightful, productive, and reasonable. Together, these intuitions will constitute my sociological answer to the sociological challenge above. By sociologically illuminating current troubling issues I will also demonstrate the usefulness of the sociological perspective.

The claim that rational thought has an irrational source is not only a non-obvious claim but also a profound insight. This is a sociological gem and a productive example for the sociological perspective's meritorious nature. In addition, I will claim that the sociological perspective is a reasonable and reliable investigative method that has a penetrating logic. In short, I am defending the claim that sociology's uniqueness as a discipline can be demonstrated by articulating an explanation of this gem: the irrational basis of rationality.

Modern citizenship and its convoluted relations with human rights constitute simultaneously hotly debated theoretical and political matters. Many would agree that relations between citizenship and human rights constitute a significant modern problem. In regard to the sociological perspective usefulness, three aspects will be discussed: contractual and society formation theories, the emotional and religious roots of occidental citizenship and, modernity's failures to protect human rights. The sociological perspective has useful things to say about these intricate relations.

Enlightenment philosophers such as Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778), Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832), John Stuart Mill (1806 – 1873) or even Thomas

Hobbes (1588–1679) perceived citizenship as a by-product of social contractual theory. In such theories “society” is a product of some sort of social (enforceable), conscious, rational or even utilitarian agreement.

In contrast to these contractual theories, non-obvious sociology argues that society (or group membership) is rooted in emotional ties and religious rituals (Durkheim 1976; Collins 1992). Such an implicit emotional perception, I would argue, is also buried in Max Weber’s occidental citizenship theory (1946).

Last, the sociological perspective’s usefulness is discussed by turning to the issue of human rights and citizenship. Most perceive human rights to be a celebratory moral demand presented by modernity and derived from the effort to assert universal moral claims (Wasserstrom 2001 [1964]; Fein 1977). In contrast, non-obvious sociology argues that problematizing human rights highlights modernity’s failures – not its successes. The failure to (a) accommodate the social fact that the world is cohabitated by diverse people (b) to accept the constancy of viewpoints’ diversity, coupled with (c) the failure to recognize the inherent contradictions ushered in by modernity and the establishment of an international nation-states system. Whereas most would emphasize the continuity and convergence of citizenship and human rights, non-obvious sociology emphasizes the rupture, discrepancy and conflict between them (Arendt 1976; 1963; 1943; Parekh 2008; 2004; Butler 2011). These are major current day political issues; the sociological perspective has insightful, refreshing and useful ideas to say about them.

At the outset let me start by arguing that declaring rational thought has irrational origins is a perceptive hypothesis. It is a straightforward, simple and profound sociological gem. Indicating this hypothesis’ productivity would achieve at least two aims. It would establish the relevancy and uniqueness of the sociological imagination as a disciplined social science; and, it will manifest the sociological promise’s richness and indispensability (Mills 1959, 5) for understanding modernity.

In sum in this chapter I will demonstrate how private lives and troubles become ensnared in structural traps. For example, how people become refugees, stateless, homeless, and rightless people in a world that declaratively celebrates human rights. How the “private lives” and troubles of such people are the by-products of structural conditions emanating from unresolved modern antagonistic developments (Arendt 1943; Agamben 1995).

The Gem: The Irrational Basis of Rationality

Emile Durkheim (1976) argued that knowledge of the world, of oneself, and of one's group is intimately related to the cultivation of magic and spirits (omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent forces). That is, he argued that knowledge is intimately related to religion. Religion, according to Durkheim, depends on two crucial aspects: strict separation between sacred and profane realms and the existence of a "church" (a community). Put simply, religion depends on the existence of holy "things" and "places" for groups. In Durkheim's formulation, religion is the source of knowledge, technology (know-how) and science (logic).

For example, Durkheim argued that conceptualization of time derives from the regulated, recurrent and consecrated family, clan and tribe gathering occasions. So does the conceptualization of space, which is inversely related to the distance from the sacred being and its abode, its symbols or its representations. Therefore, he concluded that these fundamental concepts - time and space – which are necessary for thinking, are socially derived.

Though each society has its own "god" there are no false gods. Each religion has its own logic and therefore, it is not only "true" to its members, but it also creates the moral and material structure that transforms, through well-orchestrated rituals, unattached individuals into full-fledged members.

This emotionally based like-mindedness and emergent solidarities are social engines for group power. Group solidarity establishes what people perceive as "their" way of life; abrogation of which causes bursts of righteous anger, resentment and calls for action. In other words, group solidarity creates a moral and aesthetic order in which common ideas of group members are transformed into inalienable rights, identity titles, and aesthetic claims. Demotion, derogation or abrogation of these common and inalienable rights is considered harmful to self as well as to group identity. Such assaults demand retaliation; they compel action; and, people commit themselves to act upon restoration of these sentimental rights, titles and identity claims.

Rituals and social gatherings create, transmit and augment group solidarity and power; when group solidarity is established, it demands from its individual members sacrifice and the overcoming of self-interest. It creates strong emotional ties as well as formal foundations for devotion. In short, it creates a social entity that demands, compels and rewards actions and interpretations of the world in accordance with the group's knowledge, morals, aesthetics and

interests. This social entity demands obedience, control and devotion from insiders and presents a force to outsiders. This is the essential definition of power: to have your way even against the resistance of others. Social groups' power is present in groups' rules and logic; and, it is held in the minds and hands of its members, intellectual leaders and political rulers.

The Non-obvious Origins of Citizenship

Like-mindedness is the basis of group members' trust; they distrust others as a result of their divergent opinions and behaviors. Their "opinions" are taken for granted as their way of life and vested interests. Other peoples' opinion are perceived as a threat. Therefore, social conflicts emerge, among other things, from this difference between ways of life (Festinger 1954). In short, the group's way of life – which is nothing but the way in which the group does and calls things -- becomes the group's interest and its "inalienable rights" are usually formally articulated in its constituting acts and forms. Only on this basis can one establish the rule of reason. Reason is preconditioned by the emotions that sustain its operation.

Hence, social contracts are rooted in this trust creating process. It is an emotional pre-contractual basis from which reason and the notion of contract might emerge. One becomes a member of a specific universe in which some obligations hold as far as he or she takes part in that pre-contractual emotional bond. These moral bonds are the social forces, or to use a Durkheimian metaphor they are the "ropes" that hold that society together. One has trust in others who are like him or her, because they adhere to the same moral regulations, obligations and "oughts" of self and other. They constitute a specific "universe of obligation" (Fein Helen 1977: 1991) xi.

Rather than looking for citizenship's logic in a hypothesized or presumed "state of nature" non-obvious sociology tremendously benefits from engaging Weber's occidental citizenship theory. Max Weber argued that citizenship's cultural roots should be sought within the development of Judaism as a religion; and, its phenomenology within the medieval city (1961, 233-249; 1946, 269, 403-4; see also 1952, 421-2; and 1958, 37-8).

Within this historical and theological Judaic process Weber assigned crucial importance to two aspects. The first is what he called the God of the Israelite confederacy (the Israelites clans' confederacy) manifested in the covenant (B'rith or Berith) and the war on magic unleashed by the Jewish priesthood of the Levites and prophets.

The break away from ancestral worship and creating a god for political agreement among various clans, though not an invention of ancient Judaism, received a significant content in the case of the Israelite confederacy. "Weber" argued Fahey Tony "thus regarded the covenant as primarily a sociopolitical instrument for the maintenance of the external boundaries and internal structure of the confederacy" (Fahey 1982, 66). The Jewish god was a god of a confederacy of clans. It united the clans by political mainly for defensive, purposes. This political agreement had two significant characteristics. First, religious rituals consecrated it; and, it received the blessing of an authority higher than any clan's god. Second, the union was constituted on a covenant ("Berith") between the people at large and the confederacy's god. It was civic in nature. God and the people were the two sides of these unique contractual relations. "As Yahwe by berith was the contractual partner to the ritualistic and social order of the confederacy, Yahwe's reason for treating other as inferior depended simply on the fact that they didn't know his will or abide by his commandments" (Weber 1952, 120). The "covenant" idea became a distinguishing trait of the relations between Israelites and their god (ibid).

According to Weber only the Pauline breakthrough^{xii} enabled the universalization of Judaism's message. That is, the propagation of Christianity. It did so by transforming the world's population into God's potential chosen people. The exclusiveness of the Jewish 'chosen people' premise restricted the universalization of the message of the Judaic God. In order to break these ghetto walls, Paul (the Apostle) had to destroy the ethnic restriction, the dietary laws and ritual separateness of Jewish religiosity. Only then did he achieve "Christian freedom". Hence, the universalization of Christianity on the one hand, and the emergence of occidental citizenship - though a thousand years apart - on the other, were made possible only with the transcendence of Judaism. The democratization of God's grace was the theoretical foundations on which Weber built his theory of occidental citizenship (1946:403-4; see also 1952:421-2; 1958:37-8, See especially 1961:263). And the religious (emotional) root of occidental citizenship is a most significant point in my argument here.

Citizenship, Weber theorizes, is a western phenomenon that was either unlikely or completely impossible in cultural settings, which did not have these cultural foundations. The teachability and understandability of the law pulled the rug from underneath the claim for religious virtuosity of magicians and of magic, what Weber called "particularism of grace" (1946:287).

Weber also argues that different types of prophets and images of god provide the ground for status stratification. Ancient India is a conspicuous case in this regard. In Hinduism not everyone is “religiously musical” (1946:287). Those who are not, have to emulate the “religious virtuoso.” ‘Heroic’ or ‘virtuoso’ religiosity is opposed to mass religiosity. “By ‘mass’” says Weber, “we understand those who are religiously ‘unmusical’” (1946:287; see also Weber, 1963: 47-55). However, when God’s imperatives are pronounced by the emissary prophet in teachable and understandable forms concerning the rules of everyday behaviour, the religious experience is ‘democratized.’ Religion is transformed into a plebeian salvation in contrast to the aristocratic salvational religions of the East.

Demystification of religious “musicality” democratized God’s grace because the equalization of believers’ status was a religious premise and development. These were aspects introduced by monotheistic religion. Status equalization was an organic element of the religious argument; and, it became a social effect created by religious teaching.

Hence, in citizenship, maybe more than any other cultural trait of the Occident, the influence and power of the monotheistic approach is apparent. Religiosity inadvertently contributed to the creation of a secular and rational institution: citizenship. Status equalization as the democratization of God’s grace confirmed Weber’s observation on the unintended consequence of purposeful action and provided sociological foundations to his occidental citizenship theory.

The Non-obvious Origins of Human Rights

The late nationalism’s historian, Eric Hobsbawm argued, “...that the last two centuries of human history of planet Earth are incomprehensible without some understanding of the term ‘nation’ and the vocabulary derived from it” (1992:1). Charles Talyor (1996) echoes Hobsbawm’s claim regarding the modernity of nations and nation-states. Indeed, he adds, conversing with Ernest Renan, that the nation is a union of wills. It is true states Taylor that the nation is a modern entity that it is based on political will and belongs to the era of popular sovereignty. However, there is also an ironic paradox. In spite of the fact that “the nation” is claimed to rest on political will, and that that will existed already in the past, these claims are obviously incompatible with the newness of nations and nation-states.

This paradox highlights the specific way in which nationalist ideology treats history. It forgets as much as it remembers. This is an important characteristic of nationalistic identity and ideology, as Ernest Renan articulated in his seminal lecture^{xiii}. History thus becomes politicised history. Nationalists know that it is better to forget some facts about their history. Other historical incidents are repeatedly remembered, commemorated and glorified. Obviously, different histories entail different lines of politics and ideology.

However, not only “the nation” relations to history are problematic but also its relations to the present are complicated. A nation ipso facto recognises the existence of other nations, nationalists and nationalities. And they must be assumed to exist on equal ground. That is to say, the world must be composed of plurality nations for any single nation to exist. Accepting nations’ modernity and plurality implicitly means that the world is cohabitated. Cohabitation is a human condition. It is a social imperative, political given and it is a sociological reality. There is no way out of it. In addition, nations also explicitly mean citizens of states.

However, there are not enough states to accommodate all nations; and, states’ failures to protect their own citizens are an established historical fact. In many historical instances it was the national state that victimized its citizens (Rummel 1994). The history of personal complaints, public troubles and groups’ grievances surrounding citizenship regimes question the taken for granted nature of the rational contract on which states and nation-states are constituted. Indeed, its nature should be suspected. Clearly, national membership in nations and citizenship in states are responsive and inscribed by different political meanings.

The differences between the operational modes of “states” and “nations” and the effort to establish full congruency between these two principles point to potential contradictions and conflicts (Gellner 2006 [1983]). In many historical instances the “nation’s sons and daughters” have excluded the “state’s citizens”. This exclusion and opposition manifested itself in competitive struggles over resources (capital, power, knowledge and status) and over the definitional content of the “state”, the “nation” and the “nation-state”. In several historical cases, “nation’s sons and daughters” excluded “state’s citizens” from the universe of nation-state obligation. These exclusionary measures, included cultural as well as racialized definition of citizenship. In some instances genocidal means were used to achieve the coveted national purity. Such nation-states not only failed to protect their citizens in the name of national belongingness, in most such cases the nation-

state was the victimizer. The annals of the last two centuries are full of such victimizations. We have here an ample testimony of nation-states' abysmal failure to protect citizens. These are also the nation-states who victimize their former legal citizens.

Hence, the irrational source of rationality and the emotional bond from which social groups are made (literally and metaphorically), bring us to a modern crisis. Maybe it is the modern crisis. The crisis can be summarized, though in a crude manner, to issues of national belongingness, civic participation and citizenship in societies in which people of different "gods" or moral-cultural orders come to coexist and cohabit the world.

The notion of crisis can be defended in a double manner. First, there is a huge amount of empirical evidence that accuses states as the main culprit in violating human rights of their own citizens (Rummel 1994; Amor 1999). For example, modern genocides were state-sanctioned legitimized violation of citizens' human rights. Violence was perpetrated against those who were excluded from the nation-state's "universe of obligation."

Second, the echoes of crisis can be heard in less dramatic historical events; claims of abuse by the state are voiced, by poor people, women, minority or national groups, refugees, indigenous people, immigrants and people with sexual orientations that differ from the accepted and legitimized heterosexual manner and symbols. It seems that our modern rational creations – our states or nation-states and our citizenship regimes – are accused of perpetrating the gravest violence against some of their own citizens.

Though genocide cannot and should not be equated to national or minority discrimination and oppression, in both cases victims articulate claims regarding the abuse, misrecognition and violation of their human rights. This crisis can be seen as a conflict between ethnos practices of membership and demos needs for recognition.

It is a social reality that demands provision of answers to two different and interrelated sets of associations. First there are associations that claim recognition on the basis of their difference; that is, their adherence to a "different god." Second there are associations that demand recognition on the basis of "our" perceived humanity. The latter associations demand recognition on the basis of our universality. Our rational creations – states and citizenship regimes – are under internal and external crossfire. States and citizenship

regimes need to simultaneously develop a system that recognizes difference and universality. This is the epitome of the modern crisis.

Conclusion: New Frontiers

This chapter opened with questioning the usefulness of the sociological perspective. It suggested a sociological analysis of sociology. The test's bar had been positioned high. Not only a starting point that would demonstrate the unique approach of the sociological perspective as a mode of thinking, investigating and arguing but also required a clear demonstration of its ability to shed light on issues that seem to bedevil modern society.

The irrational origin or source of rationale though was suggested as the gem to demonstrate the sociological perspective's uniqueness. Part of that demonstration was to show the non-obvious genealogy of citizenship. In fact citizenship is presented as a unique development that is a by-product of along intellectual and social developments within an "unconnected" field of religion. The contradiction and conflict between group membership, national belongingness and citizenship rights is exemplified by the common too common abrogation and abuse of human rights by these very institutions. It seems that the defense of human rights presents a major challenge to modern or maybe post-modern politics and the sociological perspective might be the method with which one can provide ways to address it.

Chapter 16: Economists Put the 'Science' in Social Science – Professor Michael BenGad, PhD



Prof Michael Ben-Gad
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Michael Ben-Gad is a professor in the Department of Economics, School of Arts and Social Sciences, at City University London. From 2010 to 2013, he served as Head of the Department of Economics, from 2008 to 2010 as Deputy Head, and also served as an elected member of the University Senate from 2010-2013. He currently serves on the Academic Advisory Group of the Tax Administration Research Centre (TARC), an HM Revenue and Customs/HM Treasury/ESRC sponsored center jointly run by the Institute for Fiscal Studies and the University of Exeter, and is a member of a National Academy of Sciences panel studying the economic and fiscal impact of immigration in the United States. Prof. Ben-Gad's research focuses on dynamic macroeconomics with applications to taxation, public debt, the economic effects of immigration, optimal fiscal policy, as well as the emergence of multiple equilibria in models of economic growth. Prof. Ben-Gad has written numerous articles on immigration, fiscal policy and macroeconomic theory and his published work has appeared in such journals as: Economic Inquiry; Journal of Economic Dynamics and Control; Journal of Economic Theory; Journal of Macroeconomics; Research in Labor Economics and Review of Economic Dynamics. In recent years he has appeared on the BBC, CNBC, and in the Financial Times and Wall Street Journal discussing fiscal policy and the global financial crisis. He has a B.A. in economics from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in economics from the University of Chicago.

Let's Establish What we Mean by Economics?

Before we consider the question of why a young person should consider devoting years of his or her life to the study of economics, it is important first to establish what we mean by economics.

A conventional view is that economics is the (a) study of markets, where people buy and sell things, usually in exchange for currency; (b) of banks and financial institutions; and (c) of how countries differ in material wealth and national income. All of this is certainly valid indeed, it characterises the majority of the undergraduate and postgraduate curricula at City University London and other good universities.

There is, however, a more expansive, indeed some would say imperialist, perspective, which holds that the analysis of nearly any social interaction, whether between workers and managers in a factory, between members of the same family, between voters and politicians, or between leaders of different states, can benefit from applying the tools developed by economists.

In this view, economics is not restricted to a particular set of topics, but represents an approach to understanding all manner of social behaviour. What characterises its approach is the explicit formulation of initial assumptions, followed by the application of deductive reasoning and logic and then quantitative measurement. This process is part of what makes economics so compelling---we economists 'put the science' in social science in a way that few other disciplines do. A good economics education should not only teach you how markets work, but should train you to think analytically about the world around you in a consistent and logical manner.

The Proposal to Give Every Adult in the United States One Million Dollars!

Consider how much the public discourse you encounter on important topics is based on a variety of different logical fallacies. There is the proposal to give every adult in the United States one million dollars, and by doing so make everyone rich. This is the fallacy of composition, whereby people assume that what holds true for an individual in a group must hold true for the entire group (this also relates to the commonly-held 'money is wealth' fallacy).

Alternatively, the contention that as long as per-capita income is growing, everyone must be enjoying higher standards of living because 'a rising tide lifts

all boats' represents a fallacy of division---the faulty assumption that what holds for the group must hold for each of its individuals. Post-hoc fallacies assume that if one event happened before another, the first event must have caused the second.

Economics is Founded on the Building and Analysis of Models with Clearly Stated Assumptions

So if, for example, World War II followed the Great Depression, people conclude that it was the Great Depression that must have caused World War II.

Similarly, the prediction that another world war must follow any future depression, is an example of an other conditions fallacy. Economics, which is founded on the building and analysis of models with clearly stated assumptions, is a great remedy against this sort of confusion.

Indeed, it is often worse. Consider how often since the last financial crisis politicians, business leaders or journalists have (1) expressed the view that central banks need to lower the cost of borrowing to encourage businesses to invest (lower interest rates) while simultaneously ensuring that individuals' savings and thrift are adequately rewarded (raise interest rates), or (2) urged private banks to behave more prudently than in the past (lend less money) yet also help struggling households and businesses in order to help grow the economy (lend more money). Such confusion is the inevitable result when people try to analyse complicated questions without reference to an explicit model designed to explain how the world works.

Economic models are useful for other reasons. Beyond telling us how seemingly disparate and complicated phenomena might be related, they also give us the tools to quantify these relationships.

Take as an example the results of my own research on the macroeconomic effects of immigration (Ben-Gad (2008)). What I find is that increasing the number of immigrants has very different effects on the wages of native workers depending on whether they themselves are well educated or not. Considered together, and adding in the effects immigrants have on people who own their own businesses or derive income from investment portfolios, the overall effect of immigration is positive for the average native. How educated the immigrants are themselves matters a lot---the more immigrants who arrive with a university education, the greater the overall benefit to the society that absorbs them.

Moreover, by using a model designed around the US economy, I am able to predict roughly how much different types of immigrants are likely to change wages and the return on investment over time. Because of the way the economy adjusts as the new immigrants arrive, the overall impact of immigration, in terms of both its positive and negative good effects, is much smaller than most people imagine or the way these issues are usually discussed in the media.

To offer another example, increases in tax rates rarely generate as much additional revenue as politicians of the left usually promise, or harm long-term economic growth to the degree their counterparts on the right predict. The reason is that, again, investment and capital adjust in ways that are hard to understand unless viewed through the prism of economic models.

Economists Build Tools to Understand Today, to Forecast the Future, and to Interpret the Past

Economists build tools not only to understand today, and to forecast the future, but also to interpret the past. As the Nobel Laureate Robert E. Lucas, Jr., recalled in 1998:

I was getting more interested in economics and economic history as a history student. The work of Henri Pirenne, the Belgian historian, who stressed economic forces influenced me. When I was at Berkeley I started taking some economic history classes and even attended an economics course. That is when I first learned what a technical field economics is and how impossible it would be to pick it up as an amateur. I decided then that I wanted to switch to economics.

It is important to emphasise Lucas' point: economics is a technical field, and to understand it properly usually requires formal training. A good undergraduate course should include a strong core of microeconomics that includes the study of the behaviour of firms and consumers, as well as some basic understanding of strategic behaviour (game theory).

It should teach you macroeconomics with an emphasis on constructing models that explain national economies by carefully aggregating the individual behaviour of firms and consumers, then adding the actions of central banks and governments. There needs to be a strong emphasis on econometrics, the statistical analysis and testing of models. There needs to be a good grounding in mathematics and statistics as well.

Finally, I think a modern economics education is not complete without some training in modern finance, especially modern portfolio theory. Because of our proximity and strong relationship with the 'City' (the City of London is the financial district at the heart of metropolitan London from which City University London derives its name), our Department of Economics places a strong emphasis on the field of Financial Economics in both our research and teaching.

Why Employers Want to Hire People with Economics Degrees?

There are lots of interesting things to study at university. Some courses are largely vocational---they are meant to prepare you to do specific jobs in business, law or medicine. By contrast, most people who study courses devoted to ancient civilisations, art history, astrophysics, French literature, philosophy or zoology do so because they are fascinated by these subjects and not because they expect they will necessarily be able to build professional careers around them.

What about economics? The honest answer is that economics sits somewhere between these two extremes. On one hand, economics is typically more an academic, rather than an explicitly professional degree. Particularly at the undergraduate level. On the other hand, we are rather proud of the fact that employers, in both the private and public sectors, want to hire people with economics degrees because they value the skills, knowledge and training our students receive in our programmes.

Financial Economics, Health Economics, Behavioural Economics, and Macroeconomics

In our department we place great emphasis on ensuring that students not only are well versed in economic theory, but also have the quantitative tools and grounding in finance that employers expect from City graduates. Our department is a partner in two major EU-financed research projects that reflect our strength in Financial Economics: Forecasting Crisis (FOC) and CRISIS, Complexity Research Initiative for Systemic Instabilities.

Beyond Financial Economics, the department has traditionally been a leader in the UK in the fields of Health Economics and Competition and Regulation, and maintains two research centres; the City Health Economics Centre (CHEC) and the Centre for Competition and Regulatory Policy (CCRP), which foster strong

links with practitioners throughout the UK. Beyond that we have invested heavily in the last few years in building capacity in Behavioural Economics and in Macroeconomics---we now have four active researchers in the field of Macroeconomics and another in the related field of International Finance.

Every year we welcome about 150 undergraduate students, about half of them from outside the UK. We offer BSc programmes in Economics, Financial Economics and Economics and Accountancy. Another 150 students join our various postgraduate programmes, more than three quarters of them from abroad.

We offer MSc programmes in Business Economics, Development Economics, Economics, Economic Regulation and Competition, Economic Evaluation in Healthcare, Financial Economics, and Health Economics. We are also planning to offer a new MSc in Behavioural and Experimental Economics very soon.

The PhD programme now includes a taught component with bespoke modules in Microeconomics, Macroeconomics, Econometrics and Finance that are designed specifically for research students who have already completed an MSc. PhD students participate in the weekly Departmental Seminar and staff in related fields also meet with students in bi-weekly reading groups. We currently take about five to six PhD students per year, and that programme is expanding rapidly.

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Chapter 17: Criminology and Criminal Justice as a Social Science – Professor Jeffery Ulmer, PhD



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Dr. Ulmer is Associate Head of the Department. He teaches undergraduate courses such as Honors Criminology, Honors Social Psychology, and Introduction to Criminal Justice, and graduate courses such as Criminal Justice Organizations and Institutions, Criminological Theory, Sentencing and Corrections, and Symbolic Interactionism. Dr Ulmer's interests include criminology, social psychology, sociology of religion, organizations, and the integration of qualitative and quantitative methods. Dr Ulmer is the recipient of the 2012 Distinguished Scholar Award from the American Society of Criminology. He earned his PhD in Sociology in 1993 from the the Pennsylvania State University.

If you are reading this, you are probably a student who is curious about majoring in criminology and/or criminal justice. You probably have lots of questions about the field, what it is, what it offers, and whether it is right for you. That is quite common among students who first encounter the idea of criminology and criminal justice as a social science major. In my career as a professor, I have tried to give my best answers to questions like these countless times. I have been teaching classes on criminology and criminal justice for over 20 years, and I served as the Undergraduate Program Director and Honor

Program Advisor for our Criminology major here at Penn State University for many years. I am currently the Associate Head of the Department of Sociology and Criminology at Penn State. So, I'll draw on my experience and try my best with a few questions you might be wondering about.

What is the Academic Field of Criminal Justice/Criminology?

What is the academic field of Criminal Justice/Criminology? Are they the same thing? What are the career options and opportunities?

The academic field of criminology and criminal justice generally uses a social science approach to the study of crime and the criminal justice system. The field studies both the individual and group levels of crime and criminal justice. That means, for example, we study what makes individuals get involved in crime and why they desist, and also what explains variation in crime rates across neighborhoods, cities, or countries. We study why offenders released from prison might or might not commit crime again, and also why different courts, states, or countries put more people in prison than others. In most criminology/criminal justice majors in the U.S, and in ours at Penn State University, the curriculum conveys broad knowledge about crime and justice, and social science research methods related to understanding them. We also focus on how crime and justice are related to human behavior, social environments, and government policy.

Some people think of criminal justice and criminology as two separate but related fields. This is seen in the fact that there are many universities and colleges with degrees called Criminal Justice, and in the fact that there is an association called the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences (ACJS) based in the United States that caters to criminal justice and criminology scholars, and criminal justice practitioners interested in criminal justice research.

Others see criminology and criminal justice as one field with different sides or emphases. That is basically my own view, too. The approach we take here at Penn State University is that our Criminology program encompasses both the study of crime and of the behavior of the criminal justice system. Even in the curricula of criminal justice departments, criminology courses are taught and required, and the ACJS publishes lots of research on crime, and features such research often at its annual conferences. And, the main association for criminology in the US, the American Society of Criminology (ASC), features and publishes lots of criminal justice- oriented research and includes the study of criminal justice in its mission statement.

In fact, almost all the criminology and criminal justice scholars I know are members of both ACJS and ASC. Plus, the founder of American criminology, a sociologist named Edwin Sutherland, said “Criminology is the study of law making, law breaking, and social reaction to law breaking” in his first criminology textbook, published in 1939.

That said, it doesn't matter very much what you call our field, only that you study what is important in it! While students may be drawn to our field for individual reasons, the common factor which links them is a desire to better understand crime, criminals, and the decisions made in the criminal justice system.

Career Opportunities

In the U.S. at least, many people think that the purpose of a criminal justice or criminology degree is to prepare students for a career in law enforcement. However, a bachelor's degree in Criminology prepares students for a wide variety of careers related to the criminal justice system, crime prevention, rehabilitative services, and policy. Many criminology/criminal justice graduates find jobs in law firms, government and private research and planning organizations, prevention and treatment programs, and corporate security divisions. Students who supplement their major study in criminology/criminal justice with skills in another area, such as foreign languages, statistics and data analysis, accounting, or computer science, are especially likely to find success.

It has been said that the criminal justice practitioners and policy makers generally are less interested in taking advantage of academic research in criminal Justice/criminology. However, this is increasingly not the case, as a movement toward “evidence based” criminal justice policy and evaluation has expanded, especially in the area of sentencing, corrections, and offender rehabilitation. Therefore, there is a growing need for social science research and data analysis skills, and crime and justice policy evaluation. This is one reason we emphasize basic social science research training in our major here at Penn State, as do a number of other programs at other universities. A sampling of the areas of employment found among graduates of the Criminology program at Penn State (and likely of similar criminal justice and criminology programs) can be found at:

<http://sociology.la.psu.edu/undergraduate/career-and-professional-development/careers-in-crime-law-and-justice-1>.

Research Areas in Criminology and Criminal Justice

This list includes employment in not only law enforcement and investigation, but courts, probation, corrections, parole, rehabilitative and community crime prevention services, and government and policy research, planning, and evaluation. Finally, a Master's degree, law degree, or Doctorate is either required or highly beneficial for many upper-level jobs in the criminal justice system and related fields.

Research seems to be a big priority in the academic field of criminology and criminal justice. What are some of the main research areas that criminology/criminal justice scholars at Penn State pursue? What are my own research interests? What resources are there for domestic and international students at Penn State?

Like most professors at major universities, professors in the Criminology program at Penn State conduct a lot of research, much of it funded by national, state, and private funding agencies. We engage in research in a wide variety of topics, but our faculty has particular expertise and reputations in these research areas: crime and delinquency through the life course, peer networks and their influence in crime/delinquency, the social psychology of violent crime, crime victimization; communities and crime; social inequality and crime rates, courts and criminal punishment, and religion and crime. Many of our faculty are also internationally recognized as experts in quantitative research methods and statistics. Our Criminology Program professors are: Dr. Richard Felson, Dr. Corina Graif, Dr. Derek Kreager, Dr. John Kramer, Dr. Wayne Osgood, Dr. David Ramey, Dr. R. Barry Ruback, Dr. Eric Silver, Dr. Jeremy Staff, Dr. Darrell Steffensmeier, and myself, and lots of information about them and their research interests can be found at: <http://sociology.la.psu.edu/people>.

My own main research interests are in criminal courts and punishment, theories of criminal behavior and crime rates, the role of social inequality and culture in affecting crime rates, and the relationships between religion and crime at the individual and community levels. If I am well-known in the field for anything, it is probably for my books and articles on criminal courts and sentencing, especially the role of race/ethnicity in sentencing disparity (that is, people who are legally similar getting punishments that are different in severity), the impact of case processing decisions on sentencing, and the role of courts' surrounding social contexts in shaping how they punish offenders.

I am currently working on a study of racial/ethnic disparity in the death penalty in Pennsylvania with my colleague Dr. John Kramer, which is being funded by the Pennsylvania Commission on Gender, Racial and Ethnic Fairness and a private foundation. I am also working on a study of crime victimization of religious congregations of different kinds, with Dr. Chris Scheitle of St. John's University, funded by the US National Science Foundation.

Given this heavy emphasis on faculty research, there are opportunities for interested students with good academic skills to get involved in research with professors. There are a limited number of paid research assistant positions for undergraduates. More commonly, there are even more opportunities to earn course credit for working on research with professors. This can take the form of students working as assistants on professors' projects, or on projects of their own under the tutelage of a professor. In fact, the latter kind of project is a requirement for honors students in the Criminology Program.

Undergraduate Scholarships, and Assistantships and Fellowships for Graduate Students

The Penn State College of Liberal Arts (where the Department of Sociology and Criminology is housed) also offers a number of scholarships to qualified students. Scholarship recipients are selected primarily based on academic ability and financial need. Some scholarships reward participation in community affairs or evidence of leadership activities. The average award amount is \$3,000 per student, per year. Information is available at <http://laus.la.psu.edu/prospective-students/financial-aid-and-scholarships>.

Finally, undergraduate students are typically unaware of this, but there are opportunities to actually get one's way paid for going on to graduate study in criminology and criminal justice. This is a big contrast with law school, for which people usually incur a large amount of student loan debt. But universities with Master's or especially Doctorate degree programs in criminology/criminal justice typically offer assistantships and fellowships for graduate students, which typically pay for some or all of one's tuition, plus provide a stipend to live (modestly) on.

In return, graduate students typically work 20 hours a week as a research or teaching assistant. This makes it much more reasonable and possible to go on to earn a graduate degree in criminology and criminal justice. There are at

least 25 reputable Doctoral programs in criminology or criminal justice in the US, and many more Master's programs than that. Most graduate programs advertise how to apply, as well as important deadlines, on their websites. It is important to realize, however, that this kind of graduate funding is competitive—only students with strong academic abilities and accomplishments are usually offered it. Graduate study is not for everyone, but it might be for you!

Chapter 18: Why Policy Matters? – Professor Daniel P. Gitterman, PhD & Professor Benjamin Mason Meier, PhD



Daniel P. Gitterman, PhD
Chair of the Department of Public Policy
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Dr Daniel Gitterman holds the Thomas Willis Lambeth Distinguished Chair in Public Policy at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He serves as Chair of the Department of Public Policy, and Director of the Honors Carolina Burch Field Research Seminar in Domestic and International Affairs (Washington, DC). He has received the Tanner Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching and the John L. Sanders Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching and Service at Carolina. In 2013, Gitterman was inducted into The Order of the Long Leaf Pine, an award bestowed by the Governor to North Carolina citizens in recognition of a proven record of service to the state. Gitterman's research interests include: the American welfare state and politics of social policy, the American presidency and public policy, and the political economy of globalization and labor standards.



Benjamin Mason Meier
Assistant Professor of Public Policy
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Benjamin Mason Meier is an Assistant Professor of Public Policy at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Dr. Meier's interdisciplinary research--at the intersection of international law, public policy, and global health--examines human rights law as a basis for public health policy. Meier teaches courses on Global Health Policy, Health & Human Rights, and Justice in Public Policy. He received the 2011 William C. Friday Award for Excellence in Teaching and the 2013 Johnston Teaching Excellence Award for his undergraduate teaching.

What is Public Policy? Why Study Public Policy? Why does Policy Matter?

What is public policy? Why study public policy? Why does policy matter? It's a set of question that our professors must answer persuasively every semester—course by course—if we are to recruit students like you to major in our undergraduate Public Policy program. Our introductory (101) course—*Making Public Policy*—addresses each of these questions for students like you on the first day of their first semester at Carolina.

First, what is public policy? One formal definition, as presented by Guy Peters in *American Public Policy: Promise and Performance*, defines public policy “as [the] sum of government activities that have an influence on the lives of citizens.”¹ We define public policy more broadly as goal-oriented behavior taken by policymakers (inside and outside of government) to deal with domestic and global problems. The allocation of scarce resources, efficiency and equity in taxing and spending, and protection of rights and liberties is central to your understanding of the making of public policy.

¹ Peters, G. (2012). *American Public Policy: Promise and Performance*, 9th edition. Washington DC: CQ Press.

Second, why study public policy? We aim to expose students like you to the conceptual and analytical perspectives necessary for understanding and playing a direct role in policy making. Beyond understanding what public policy is, we address why policy matters to you. In our view, students like you want to study (and work in) public policy because public decisions have an impact on the lives of real world people in the United States and around the globe. Policy matters because it affects your families and communities and has the ability to improve lives. It is a career imbued and embedded with public service.

Background

UNC-Chapel Hill offers an undergraduate major and minor, and our students can graduate with a Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree in Public Policy. Public Policy is an interdisciplinary social science unit within our College of Arts and Sciences. Unlike many undergraduate public policy programs in the United States, which need to rely on the good will of affiliated faculty from other social sciences such as economics or political science, we have our own independent tenured and tenure-track faculty.

Our students are taught by an interdisciplinary faculty who hold degrees in a range of academic disciplines and professions, including economics, political science, public policy, philosophy, health policy, socio-medical sciences, law and city and regional planning. Our students apply this multidisciplinary training to advance public policy. According to a recent report on UNC graduates, Public Policy is one of three UNC undergraduate programs (along with elementary education and journalism and mass communication) whose graduates have had the highest percentage of full-time employment within one year of graduation.

How can the University Best Direct some of its Energies Toward Society's Problems?

The original Curriculum in Public Policy Analysis at Carolina was established in 1979 by Professor Duncan MacRae, Jr. It was one of the first undergraduate degree programs nationally in public policy (analysis) and a charter member of the Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management (APPAM). Professor MacRae, in the "The University and The Utility of Policy Analysis," posed our challenge and charge this way:

To do so, part of the academic community must explicitly justify its activities in terms of notions of societal welfare, rather than scientific discovery alone. And this part of the academic community must be so structured as to provide organized career rewards for practical activity, analogous to those provided by the sciences. This motivation and justification cannot easily be provided within existing academic disciplines.²

For Professor MacRae and our UNC colleague Professor Whittington, the study of public policy analysis required “the use of reason and evidence to choose the best policy among a number of alternatives.”³

In 1991, an interdisciplinary Ph.D. Curriculum in Public Policy Analysis was formed, and in 2001, the two curricula were combined to become the UNC Department of Public Policy. Unlike many of our peer departments or schools, we do not offer professional masters (MPP) degree in public policy. Our undergraduate and graduate (MA, Ph.D.) students learn how social science theory and methods can be used to improve our understanding of and to address domestic and global policy problems. Core courses are rooted in varied academic disciplines, including: policy analysis, economics, political science, philosophy and applied ethics, methods and statistics, and electives are offered in a range of substantive policy fields (education, social policy, environment, international development).

At the undergraduate level, a double major in Public Policy and a related social science or professional school is common and encouraged. Public Policy double majors include: Business Administration, Economics, Environment and Ecology, Global Studies, Journalism and Mass Communication, Peace, War, and Defense, and Political Science. We also offer a minor in public policy for students who have elected another major as their focus or who find public policy too late in their academic careers to complete the major requirements.

Roadmap

This chapter provides a brief overview of UNC Public Policy’s core undergraduate curriculum and highlights two courses in our major—*Making*

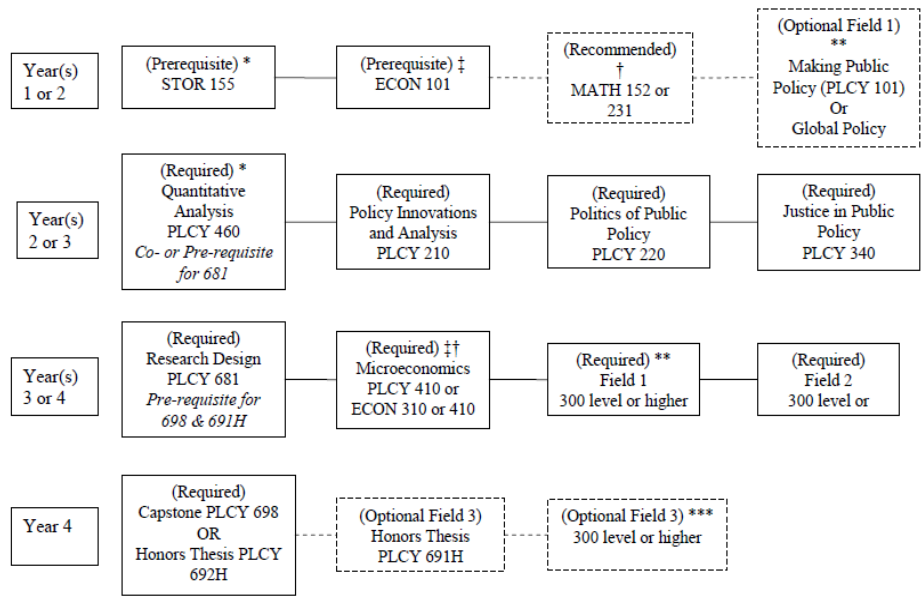
² MacRae, D. (1976). The University and The Utility of Policy Analysis, *Policy Studies Journal* Volume 4, Issue 3, pp. 286–288.

³ MacRae, D. and Whittington, D. (1997). *Expert Advice for Policy Choice* (Washington DC: Georgetown University Press).

Public Policy and *Justice in Public Policy*—as taught by the authors of this chapter. While each of the following sections address distinct goals and pedagogies for each of course, we aim to highlight how these courses (and the major rooted in an interdisciplinary liberal arts education) provide students like you with the knowledge, skills and experience for success in graduate school and careers in public policy.

To meet this imperative, public policy education is dependent upon certain universal foundations—pillars upon which the entire UNC curriculum rests. Beginning with an introductory course on the making of domestic and/or global policy, students then embark on a systematic journey through the conceptual and technical skills of policy analysis, economics and methods/statistics, the politics of policymaking, the normative foundations of public policy and a senior-year experience in a hands-on, client-centered capstone course or independent honor thesis (See Table 1).

Table 1 offers a snapshot of the courses and sequencing of our undergraduate major.



While our students will specialize in substantive areas or fields of public policy, the core courses provide a foundation for the elective courses and career possibilities to come. While our introductory course on policy analysis provides students with the skills needed to evaluate policy decisions and recommend future course of action, the overall goals of a major in public policy are broad and pedagogically specific. We aim to offer an undergraduate learning experience rooted in a College of Arts and Sciences in which students integrate theories and methods from multiple academic disciplines; learn to write

concisely and clearly; understand how to analyze data and produce evidence, and consider the ethical and normative implications of policy choices and outcomes.

An Introduction to *Making Public Policy*: Policy vs. Politics

Our introductory course, Public Policy 101, provides a general overview of the policymaking process and the substance of major (domestic and global) policy challenges and solutions. Beyond just acquiring new knowledge about the making of public policy, students practice and develop of a core set of writing, analytical and communication skills.

Specifically, our students practice and develop debate skills with up-to-date pro-con topics from Congressional Quarterly's (CQ) *Researcher Issues for Debate in American Public Policy*.

Our students work on writing and communications skills in a sequential process of a short writing assignment, an outline of and a final 10-page policy brief.

Students practice and develop public presentation skills with an oral policy briefing before their peers.

Our students, who wonder what to do with a degree in public policy, learn about the work of a think tank, policy research and/or policy advocacy organization each session, through a web link entitled "up close & in focus."

The first part of the introductory course focuses on the "making" of public policy—from the perspective of theories of the policymaking process as well as how politics shapes policy (and policy shapes politics). We pay particular attention to the role of policymakers and experts/analysts in the making of public policy. We explore the inherent tensions that emerge between good "policy" and "politics" in the making of public policy.

After analyzing the motivations and incentives of elected policymakers and exploring theories of policymaking, the second part of the course focuses on the "substance" of public policy. We begin with a background on U.S. economic, tax and labor market policy, the federal budget process and the budget deficit and move as a lightening pace through a range of other major policies, including: the social safety net and social policy; health policy; K-12

and higher education policy, immigration policy; energy and environmental policy; foreign policy, national and homeland security; and foreign aid and international development. Generations of students in *Making Public Policy* have expressed the view that it's that the 'substance' of different policies that matter and get them excited about studying and doing public policy.

The course also aims to create a space and place where "reasonable people can disagree reasonably." Prior to each lecture, we rely on Poll Everywhere— a web-based system that can create multiple-choice or open-answer polls—to gauge the distribution of student preferences and opinion on a range of controversial policy issues. In small weekly discussion sections, our students are afforded an opportunity to engage in a moderated debate session with their colleagues on these topics. In an age of hyper-partisanship, not all conversation produces deliberative decision making. However, our weekly (Friday) forums are designed to encourage deliberation and to promote active listening and the confrontation of trade-offs and tensions.

After teaching the introductory course (*Making Public Policy*) for almost a decade and a half at Carolina, students often ask one of us: "aren't you bored teaching the same introductory class over and over." Not really. Public policy changes constantly so there is new material in each and every semester. And perhaps, even more importantly, it's a reoccurring opportunity to answer the question: why study public policy. In sum, we tell them that decisions made (and not-made)—and their ability to influence these decisions as engaged citizens or direct participants in the making of public policy—matter big time in our lives and the lives of our fellow citizens.

The Normative Dimension of Public Policy: Just vs Unjust

Providing students with an ethical foundation for studying and practicing public policy, our applied philosophical course, Public Policy 340, examines normative frameworks and debates about justice in public policy. Normative policy analysis was long viewed as subsidiary—if not irrelevant—when compared with issues of politics and economics. At the start of university programs in public policy, academics noted immediately that normative analysis was viewed within the field as "at most irrelevant to, at worst a positive interference with, the sort of work that is likely to prove productive."⁴

⁴ Steinfels P. (1977) The Place of Ethics in Schools of Public Policy. A Report from the Hastings Center to the Ford Foundation.

Dismissed as unworthy of study, others noted that “the temptation is strong to regard ethical judgment as ‘soft’ and ‘subjective,’ likely to prove irrelevant when the explicit tradeoffs are calculated and the real choices are made.”⁵ Yet both academic analysts and policy practitioners have come to see the importance of normative analysis as a foundation of the public policy curriculum, asking students to consider the ends to which we ought to aim our policies.

Our course on *Justice Public Policy* teaches the normative frameworks that are necessary to engage in the policymaking process, and students in this course examine the ethical foundations of both the means and ends of policy choices. This course first focuses on the means used to implement policies. In the pursuit of public policy goals, is it legitimate for policymakers to use means that would otherwise be wrong – furthering public policy by violating the law, lying to adversaries, or carrying out violence? Beyond personal ethics, it is clear that simply having “ethical” individuals and “clean” processes will not lead automatically to just policies.

From this understanding of the individual ethics of policymakers, the course then explores the ends of policies. How are we to know whether a policy is just? Focusing on frameworks for efficiency, equity, and liberty, this course immerses students in the practice of normative policy analysis, gauging whether policies reach just ends for the public. Applying these frameworks to public policy, such a course allows necessary normative assessment of public policy and comports with our goal of creating a more just world.

This course seeks to reinforce abstract philosophical principles through their application. Beginning in background philosophical readings and an online discussion board, the students enter a fast-paced class, where they are presented with a dynamic multimedia presentation. To keep students engaged, the class never spends more than five consecutive minutes in the same type of activity, encouraging participation from students to further the debate. From concept to lecture, the course seeks to take normative principles—including, among other frameworks, rights, utility, equity, and liberty—and ask students to apply them to pressing issues of public policy.

Public policy case studies provide a means to apply normative frameworks in the classroom. These case studies are not always presented through readings,

⁵ Price, D.E. (1981) Assessing policy: conceptual points of departure. In Joel Fleishman et al. (eds) *Public Duties* 142-172 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press).

but can be accomplished through videos, interactive performances, and student presentations. With the case studies changing each semester to reflect contemporary public policy debates, our continuous updating of the syllabus brings students' classroom experiences into contact with the world they seek to influence. This participation expects students to think "on their feet," with the Socratic Method forcing students to arrive at an answer for every question in their careers.

Conclusion: Why a Major in Public Policy Matters?

With a major or double major in public policy, we aim to give students just like you the knowledge, skills and experience for future success as citizens engaged in public policy, as new entrants into a competitive labor market or as potential candidates for additional graduate or professional education. Here's what we view as the three central pillars of our undergraduate public policy education.

Knowledge: We aim to provide a public policy-based liberal arts education whereby students like you think and learn across disciplines from an interdisciplinary faculty who provide varied lenses on policymaking.

Skills: We aim to offer opportunities for students like you to think critically and independently and to write, reason, and communicate clearly, and develop research methods and quantitative analysis skills.

Experience: We aim to offer experiences to students just like you to apply knowledge and skills in real world policy environments, gaining experience through the senior capstone course, through internship placements, and through other experiential education opportunities such as a semester in Washington DC.

Our liberal arts based public policy education trains students to write, think, and argue inductively, while drawing upon evidence from a shared body of knowledge. We create the space to apply academic knowledge, skills, and expertise within context of real-life situations and experiences.

Our metric of success is based on whether our students have "learned how to learn" so that they will be able to answer questions that will come up years from now, questions that nobody could even have envisioned in 2014 or the future, much less taught them how to answer. And if they go on to play a direct role in public policy and make a difference in the lives of others; we've done our job back home on campus.

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Chapter 19: How to Avoid Becoming a Victim of a Sexual Assault? – Professor Carol Apt, PhD



Carol Apt, Ph.D.
Professor of Sociology
South Carolina State University

Dr. Apt received her Ph.D. in Sociology from Northeastern University in Boston Massachusetts (USA), her Master's Degree in Sociology from Boston University in Boston, Massachusetts (USA), and her Bachelor's Degree in Sociology from Indiana University in Indianapolis, Indiana (USA). She also has a Certificate of French Studies from Ecole Lemania in Lausanne, Switzerland. Dr. Apt is a Professor of Sociology and Coordinator of the Sociology Program at South Carolina State University in Orangeburg, South Carolina (USA), where she has been for 15 years. She teaches courses in Human Sexuality, Social Problems, Medical Sociology, and the Sociology of Genocide, and in 2011 she was honored as the South Carolina State University Professor of the Year. In addition to her experience as a newspaper and magazine columnist, Dr. Apt is the host of a live, call-in radio talk show titled "Talk to Me," which addresses issues of sexuality and relationships. As a member of several national and international editorial boards Dr. Apt reviews books and manuscripts from around the world; her numerous presentations and publications cover a variety of social science topics such as: sexuality and relationships and social factors in health and illness, among others. In addition to her academic work, Dr. Apt is an amateur photographer and three of her photographs were recently included in a museum exhibition.

Come on, Let's Face it, Sex is a Fascinating Topic

If you have decided to pursue one of the many career paths that the study of Sexology can open up for you, I say, "Congratulations!" You have chosen a fascinating, timely, and vitally important field that can lead to rewarding career opportunities in your home country and around the world. If you are unsure about what to study or don't know which career would be best for you, there are many reasons to choose Sexology, and as a Sexologist I'd like to explain some of them to you.

Come on, let's face it, sex is a fascinating topic. Who in their right mind isn't interested in talking about sex, or at least hearing about it? As a Sexologist, you will be in demand personally and professionally, as sex is almost always a hot topic of conversation. You will be in a position to answer people's questions, provide them with advice, and help them solve some of their problems. Since almost every human being has some kind of sexual encounter at some point, your knowledge will be helpful to millions of people around the world.

Needless to say, while almost everyone has sex at some time in their lives, there is still a lot of misinformation about many of the areas included in the study of Sexology. Just because someone is sexually active doesn't mean that they understand human anatomy, physiology, or human sexual responses. For example, there are still people who believe (very erroneously) that a female can't get pregnant the first time she has sex, or if she has sex standing up. As a Sexologist, you can clear up these and other myths and set people on the path to safe, responsible, and enjoyable sex.

While some countries around the world have information-based sex education programs in schools and in other locations many, like the United States, do not. The problem here is that America is so diverse, with so many different types of people representing a wide variety of values and behaviors that it's difficult to agree on what should be included in a sex education program, who should teach it, and at what age to convey what types of information. Finding teachers who are knowledgeable about sex and comfortable with.

Sexual topics is often a real challenge. As a Sexologist, you can provide educational systems, perhaps even entire countries, with information and guidelines about how to approach sexual topics. You might even be able to reduce the rates of some of the more negative outcomes of human sexuality

within a population, like teenage pregnancy or rates of sexually transmitted infections. You could serve as an advisor to a Ministry of Education, or to a President on such matters.

Sex is Everywhere, Sexology is Interdisciplinary

Sex is everywhere, especially in Western countries, but it's not always portrayed accurately. In the United States, for example, the female models used in advertisements for certain types of clothing like underwear, are usually young, way too thin, and White. Not every female who would like to purchase something 'sexy' is young, skinny, and White. If approximately two thirds of Americans are overweight, manufacturers of such garments are missing out on a lot of potential customers. It's conceivable that you could parlay your knowledge of human sexual behaviors into a lucrative business by providing the manufacturers and retailers of clothing with information about who would buy their products and who would not.

While sex can be a beautiful experience, it can harm people in many ways. Sex can be used to dominate, punish, declare possession, inflict physical damage, or to confirm one's own sense of masculinity or femininity. As a Sexologist you will understand the values, behaviors, and motivations that can lead an individual to want to hurt someone else and you can take a leading role in programs designed to eradicate such problems as domestic violence, sexual assault, or sexual trafficking. You can also provide the victims of such behaviors with greater understanding of themselves so that they can become more assertive and more functional.

Sexology is interdisciplinary and will provide you with a well-rounded education. By entering this field you will learn about the human experience from different perspectives. You'll gain knowledge in such disciplines as psychology, sociology, counseling, biology, anatomy and physiology, and chemistry, to name a few. Studying Sexology can also help you understand yourself. Our relationships are often reflections of who we are, or who we would like to think we are (Hock, 2012). Sometimes we 'try on' relationships like we try on different types of clothing – to see if a person fits into our lives or to see how we feel when we are with someone who is new or is different from the kinds of people we have been with in the past. If we have insight into who we are and why we do the things we do, we will come to understand how certain types of people or experiences can affect how we think and behave.

Studying Sexology can also make you more marketable in an increasingly globalized world. The field of Sexology will provide you with the knowledge of how sexual attitudes and behaviors can vary by race, ethnicity, educational level, and religion, from country to country or within the same country (Crooks & Baur, 2014). For example, did you know that in the United States, Americans of Asian descent have lower rates of premarital sex than Americans of Hispanic, African, or European origins (Benuto & Meana, 2008; Woo et al, 2011), or that residents of rural China usually remain virgins until age 20 (Parish et al., 2007), while the majority of Chinese people residing in Beijing have experienced sexual intercourse before marriage (Beech, 2005)? Sexology will teach you about culture, and culture matters. An individual's culture is a major determinant of his/her behaviors, beliefs, and life choices. With your future knowledge of many different cultures, your expertise will be one of your most valuable assets and you may be called upon to provide assistance to NGOs, governments, and to other organizations.

In sum, Sexology is a fascinating area of inquiry that can lead to rewarding lifelong careers. You will gain knowledge and expertise that can be of benefit to you personally and professionally, as well as to many types of people and groups around the world. If you have chosen Sexology as a career, you have chosen well.

How to Avoid Becoming a Victim of a Sexual Assault?

A career in Sexology will allow you to embark on a career path that is fascinating, potentially lucrative, and beneficial to people around the world. As a Sexologist you will learn a lot about human beings and how they think, respond, and behave in regard to sexual matters. As you learn about sexual assailants and their victims, you might be called upon to assist groups, organizations, or countries in their efforts to reduce the number of sexual assaults. You might be asked to focus on the perpetrators of sexual violence, on the victims, or on both. You might have thought of this, but as a Sexologist you can improve people's lives and have a positive impact on social conditions. One way you can do this is by teaching people how to avoid becoming a victim of a sexual assault.

For the purposes of this article, I'd like to consider one type of sexual assault – rape. I'll discuss how women can reduce their chances of being raped by a man, using data from the United States. Lest anyone think that I am being unfair to males; I am not, as rape is the most common type of sexual assault worldwide.

While there is no definition of rape that is accepted globally, the one that I use in my Human Sexuality class, culled from several sources, is that 'rape is an act of nonconsensual sexual penetration of the human body in which force was either used or implied' (Hock, 2012).

Accurate rape statistics are virtually impossible to come by, especially when one is studying different countries, for many reasons, some of which are:

Some societies don't make rape statistics available, so such numbers might be based on estimates or on information gathered haphazardly.

Definitions of what constitutes rape differ by country, or by region of the same country (Holmes & Holmes, 2002; Dussich, 2001; Heaven & Connors, 1998; Muir & Lonsway, 1996; Sanday, 1981).

Some reporting agencies do not consider an act a rape if the perpetrator failed to maintain his erection or penetrated a body orifice other than the vagina or anus.

In some locales there is a statute of limitations on the reporting of rapes, so assaults that occurred before a certain date might not be included in official statistics.

There is a myth that only forced sexual intercourse of a woman by a man constitutes rape. Contrary to popular wisdom, men can also be raped by men or by women.

In some parts of the world a married woman cannot charge her husband with rape (Holmes & Holmes, 2002), and in some countries a woman has no say over how or when she has sexual relations (Furtado, 2006).

Even though acquiring accurate statistics is made even more problematic by the variety of women who are raped and the absence of common characteristics (Holmes & Holmes, 2002), there are some factors that increase the likelihood of a woman becoming a victim of a sexual assault.

While the most likely victim is between 18 and 36 years old, one third of all rapes are committed against children under the age of 12 (Holmes & Holmes, 2002). Older women (what is considered 'older' differs widely from culture to culture) can also be rape victims, as some of the common

problems associating with aging, such as difficulty walking or decreased overall flexibility, might increase vulnerability to physical attacks.

Many believe that rapes typically occur in a public or in a semi-public place, but a woman is actually more vulnerable to sexual assault in her own home, as almost two thirds of all rapes occur in the victim's home or in the home of a relative or neighbor (Greenfield, 1997b).

While strangers do commit rapes, a woman might be more at risk for becoming a victim among her 'friends,' than among strangers. In almost three fourths of all rapes in the U.S. the victim and perpetrator know one another (Greenfield, 1997b).

Aside from perpetrators who prefer certain types of victims, a rapist is likely to choose a victim that he perceives to be vulnerable and available (Holmes & Holmes, 2002). With all of this in mind, what advice can you, as a Sexologist, offer to women to decrease their chances of becoming a rape victim? Here are some suggestions that could prove helpful in various settings:

Suggestions - When Driving

The potential excitement of learning to drive must be balanced by the realization that there are some risks inherent in this common practice. For example, one should never leave one's car unlocked when parking in a private garage, on a well-lit street not known for vandalism or break-ins, or even in an area that is patrolled regularly by members of law enforcement. It's almost too easy for a would-be rapist to use a simple item like a credit card to unlock a car and hide in the back seat until the female owner returns. Advise your client to always check the interior of her car, as well as the underside of the vehicle before getting in. (Hock, 2012).

Once she is inside and has determined that the car does not contain anything or anyone that was not there when she left, she should get in quickly, check her mirrors to see if there is anyone approaching, and lock the doors before she starts the engine (Hock, 2012). It's always a good idea to keep one's car in good working order to avoid the possibility of breaking down on a deserted highway. A woman alone in an incapacitated vehicle presents a picture of vulnerability and availability that might be enticing to a potential rapist. She should have her car keys in her hands before she reaches the vehicle so she won't waste time fumbling in her bag in an attempt to find her keys. Keeping a small flashlight on the same key ring as her car keys can help facilitate this.

It might also be a good idea to advise your client to keep a duplicate set of car keys in case she loses the original set. In so doing she will reduce the likelihood that she would have to ask a stranger or someone she doesn't know well for a ride. As a former resident of several big cities, I cringe whenever a parking attendant asks me for my keys so he (usually he) can park my car for me. There is no telling whether or not a copy of my car key or house key is being made while I am enjoying myself elsewhere.

While it might seem too obvious, women must be careful of whom they let into their cars, and except in a few cases never, they should never, but never, pick up a hitch-hiker.

Suggestions - When Going Out

Rapes are not committed only at night; they also occur during daylight hours. Advise your clients to be as cautious during the day as they are at night. If a female client is leaving her home for any reason she should leave lights on inside as well as outside the dwelling. If she has a dog or other animals that could make loud noises, she might consider leaving them outside when she is away as a deterrent to strangers who approach. Advise her not to tell too many people when she plans to leave, where she is going, or when she plans to return; such information should be given only to individuals she knows and trusts.

It's not uncommon for women in some countries to go places by themselves, but if at all possible, she should go with at least one other person she knows well; as it's risky to leave on an outing with a stranger. She should be careful of allowing someone she does not know well to choose the route to take, whether walking, driving, or taking public transportation. She should be aware at all times of her surroundings so that if a companion suggests taking a short cut that heads in the opposite direction to where she wants to go or that suddenly ends in a deserted or unfamiliar area, she can hopefully get away before it's too late.

While special events often require special attire, you might want to advise your female clients not to wear any footwear that could impair their ability to walk smoothly or to run (Hock, 2012). Shoes with high heels or those that raise the feet too high off the ground might keep orthopedists busy treating twisted ankles and misaligned bones, but make running or walking on uneven terrain very difficult. Females can wear sensible shoes with low or flat heels while

traveling to the party and can change into something more stylish once they arrive.

Suggestions - While at College or University

It is an unfortunate fact of life that rape is a serious problem on many college campuses in the United States (Hock, 2012). It is estimated that during their college years, more than half of all female students will be sexually assaulted and about one quarter will be raped (Fisher et al, 2000; Ottens, 2001). While the use of alcohol by individuals of college-age (roughly from the late teenage years to the early or mid-twenties in the U.S.) varies widely from culture to culture, American college students tend to drink more than members of American society as a whole (Hock, 2012). In the majority of college rapes, the rapist and/or the victim had consumed alcohol prior to the incident (Testa & Livingston, 2009). In many locations on or close to college campuses, alcohol is readily available and is typically consumed in situations and places where the emphasis is on relaxing or having fun, like parties or off-campus residences (Hock, 2012).

There is often pressure on males and on females to drink, and a female who is unaware of the effects that alcohol can have on her body or on her mind, or who is drinking more than she usually does in order to impress others becomes an easy target for a would-be rapist. Some college males believe that drinking alcohol is a sign of masculinity and that it actually enhances their sexual prowess (Hock, 2012). While both of these assumptions are without merit, it is well understood that not only are men usually more aggressive than women, but that alcohol increases the tendency toward aggression, particularly in men (Hock, 2012). Some college males with less than honorable intentions encourage female students to drink to excess, and actually monitor how much a female has drunk in order to gauge her vulnerability to a sexual assault (Hock, 2012).

Alcohol is also considered a date rape drug, as its sedative effects can render a female unable to verbally object to sexual behavior or physically unable to resist an assailant. Alcohol is ubiquitous on college campuses in the United States, but an awareness of how it can affect the body and the mind, as well as how it can be used for nefarious purposes, can help women to avoid sexual predators. As a Sexologist, you would be assisting your female clients in immeasurable ways by suggesting that:

Before females go to an event of any sort, they should let someone they trust know where they are going, who they are going with, and when they expect to return (Hock, 2012). Your female clients should always have their mobile phones with them at all times. Advise them to keep a friend's number in their phones so they don't have to rely on memory if they have to make a call. They should choose to rely only on those friends that will know what to do if they receive a call that a friend has been drugged or attacked.

When at a gathering where alcohol is served, females should only drink from containers that were opened in front of them or that they opened themselves. They must remember never to drink from a communal source, like a large bowl into which everyone is invited to dip a glass or a ladle (Hock, 2012).

Females should always keep their drinks with them at all times. If they put down a drink in order to go to the bathroom or to get onto the dance floor, they should never take even a sip from it again. It only takes a few seconds to put an incapacitating agent into a drink, and many such agents have no discernible taste or odor. Females should not let others, whether friends or not, hold onto their drinks while they go somewhere. A trusted friend might not tamper with one's drink, but he/she might not be aware that someone else has done just that in the blink of an eye (Hock, 2012).

Advise your clients that if anything they are eating or drinking doesn't taste or smell right, or suddenly has a different taste or odor, to immediately stop consuming the food or drink and to ask a trusted friend to stay with them. At low doses, some date rape drugs produce seemingly mild effects that can be mistaken for something else, like dizziness, headaches, or sleepiness, among others (Hock, 2012). In larger doses some date rape drugs can render a victim unconscious or unable to breathe, and some can bring on death (Hock, 2012).

The symptoms I've mentioned reflect only a few of the effects of various date rape drugs; advise your clients to read as much as they can on this topic. If one of your clients begins to experience any of the above symptoms while at an event where alcohol is served, she should not assume that it's 'nothing.' She or a trust friend should call an ambulance immediately.

Suggestions - When on the Internet

As of 2010 about a third of all the inhabitants of the planet, or roughly two billion people, were hooked up to the internet (Crooks & Baur, 2014); Internet World Stats, 2011), with millions more certain to follow in the coming years. The internet has a multiplicity of uses, one of which is to facilitate communication among people from around the world, as indicated by the large number of social networking sites and dating sites (Crooks & Baur, 2014). The concept of 'meeting' someone online has resulted in a spate of new vocabulary words for concepts that never existed before; such as: cybersex, sexting, or cyberstrippers (Crooks & Baur, 2014).

As a Sexologist you will probably get requests for advice on how to handle online encounters of all sorts. As technology often advances faster than our values about how to use it, don't be discouraged if you find yourself as befuddled as a client who asks a question like, "If you are married and are having cybersex with someone you have never met in person, are you really cheating on your spouse?" Even in the presence of uncertainty brought about by our every-advancing technology, there are some cautionary suggestions you can make to your female clients to sexual predators at bay as they 'surf the net.'

Tell your clients not to reveal too much personal information to a cyberfriend, as sexual predators can surmise a lot about a person based on very little information. Please emphasize to your clients that the anonymity afforded by the internet can entice certain kinds of people to lie, misrepresent, and manipulate. Please consider the following scenario:

Let's say, for example, that a potential rapist is chatting online with an unsuspecting woman named Mary. He has said that he is from the southeastern American state of Florida (he's actually located in the northwestern American state of Oregon), and has told her many times how much he loves the Florida sunshine, which she thinks is a sweet thing to say. She has seen a picture of him and thinks he's nice-looking, without suspecting that the picture is of someone else.

He makes sure to log on early in the morning so that they can chat while she is rushing around getting ready for work and is probably not too mindful of what she says to him. The potential rapist wants to know where Mary lives, but doesn't want to arouse suspicion, so he asks her casually at 7:00 on a weekday morning what the weather is like in her town.

She thinks she's being careful by not mentioning the name of the state or of the town in which she lives, but says that it's unusual for her area to have a

temperature in July of only 56 degrees Fahrenheit when yesterday it was 95 degrees Fahrenheit, with thunderstorms that produced a tornado that touched down only 3 miles from her house. With mocked concern, the predator says that he hopes her home wasn't damaged by the wind or rain, and she says that because it is a one-story brick house it withstood the weather.

She has already told him that she teaches 4th grade in a public school, and with disingenuous friendliness he reminds her that she has to leave soon, and wonders out loud if it will take her a long time to get to work. Mary laughs and says that it is exactly 1.2 miles from her house to her work, and that even though she has to take her 13 year old son to school, 'his school is connected to mine; it's all one long building.'

The predator wishes Mary a good day and begins to put together the pieces of the puzzle. First he goes to online weather maps of the United States and finds out where it is 56 degrees today and was 95 degrees yesterday, with thunderstorms strong enough to produce tornadoes. He gets information on where tornadoes touched down in that area and by looking at locations that are 3 miles away, he comes up with the name of a town. He finds out the location of a building that houses an elementary school and a junior high school, and from there he can calculate 1.2 miles. By using Google Earth or a similar site, he can locate one-story brick homes within 1.2 miles of the combined school building. Now he knows where she lives and where she works. In case he is also a pedophile, he knows where her 13 year old son goes to school.

Unsettling, isn't it? Tell your female clients, and anyone else within earshot, that they don't really know someone until they have met him/her in person. Meeting an internet friend for the first time face-to-face might not be revealing, as some predators are very good at presenting the image that their potential victims want or expect. Tell your clients that if they are going to meet someone it should be in a very public place and they should tell someone where they are going, who they are going to see, and any information they know about that person, including screen names and email addresses.

No matter how comfortable they may feel, there is still a lot about that person that they don't know. One can't really get to know others until they are seen in their natural habitat, going about their daily lives. Encourage your clients to meet their cyberfriends' families, co-workers, acquaintances, and neighbors. They should see how their cyberfriends behave in a variety of settings, stuck in traffic, in a grocery store, at a fancy restaurant, or dealing with the person who comes over to fix the leaky faucet in the kitchen. Caution your clients that

predators who use the internet to find victims often become adept at creating images designed to appeal to a particular individual.

Tell you clients not to send nude, or even suggestive, pictures of themselves over the internet. Such images can be doctored in any number of ways, and just because an email or an attachment is deleted doesn't mean it is gone. Nothing on the internet disappears forever, so your clients should never say, post, reveal, or send anything that they wouldn't mind seeing on the front page of their local newspaper.

As a Sexologist you will be in a uniquely qualified to offer the kinds of information and advice that can help people around the world to lead more productive, satisfying, and safe lives. Your choice of Sexology will provide you with many enviable and important opportunities to make a positive difference in the lives of people around the world.

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Chapter 20: Why Study Sociology? Exploring The Endless Social Horizon – Professor Göran Therborn, PhD



Göran Therborn, PhD
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Professor Göran Therborn is Swedish by birth and citizenship. After having worked in and on the five continents of the earth, and after officially retiring from a Professorship at the University of Cambridge, he is now living in his parental home in southeastern Sweden. He is still teaching part-time at Cambridge and is affiliated to the regional Linnaeus University. He has been Professor of Political Science in Nijmegen, Netherlands, 1981-87, Professor of Sociology at Gothenburg University, Sweden, 1987-1998, Co-Director of the Swedish Collegium for Advanced Study in the Social Sciences, 1996-2006, and Professor of Sociology at the University of Cambridge, 2006-10.

How do I know?

For anyone interested in societal understanding, in social issues, social problems, social history, and social change, sociology is the optimal field of study. How do I know?, an alert person may legitimately ask. I am no PR consultant, but someone who has been involved in social studies, teaching, and research for more than fifty years, on all five continents, with some multidisciplinary experience.

Apart from sociology, and holding Chairs in Sweden and the UK, I have studied economics and political science, in the 1980s I had a tenured chair of political science in the Netherlands, and from 1996 to 2006 I was Co-Director of the Swedish Collegium for Advanced Study in the Social Sciences. My research has included labour market economics, and social, political, intellectual, architectural, and demographic history.

The great advantage of sociology over any other social discipline is its unlimited range of interests, its multiple interfaces, from, say, medicine (e.g. inequality of life and health), to mass or high culture, and its openness to civic concerns and social movements, e.g., to Feminism, Queer studies, to all kinds of protests against oppression and exploitation. Furthermore, sociology is also the most global and internationally comparative of the social sciences. For me personally, this hospitality to all kinds of social interests and concerns was crucial.

It is a big and ambitious offer, which not all sociology teachers always live up to. Students have to work on their own intellectual horizons, not innately very wide, and to hold their teachers accountable for their living up to the potentials of their discipline. To me, it was also important that sociology where I studied (Lund University, Sweden, in the 1960s) offered the best scientific approach to what is happening in society.

Sociology is Intellectually Exciting

Sociology is intellectually exciting, without necessarily being very technical, but it can only thrive on a boundless curiosity, of students, teachers, and researchers, and on a permanent revolution of new learning. Sociology is an intellectual challenge.

Let me give you a few examples from my books so far in this century.

One of them, which landed me with a professorship at the University of Cambridge, was *Between Sex and Power. Family in the World, 1900-2000*. It required forays far beyond contemporary family sociology, for instance into the history of family law and of religious family norms, the major Islamic schools of law, traditional Hindu law, the laws of imperial China, the debates in the German Diet of the 1890s, the changes of Japanese law in the 1880s and in the late 1940s, the landmark 20th century decisions on family issues by the US Supreme Court, etc. As well as the development of Feminism, in Egypt,

Argentina, and other countries, the political background to the UN Conference on Women in 1974, and the history and the international politics of family planning, and many other things, including contemporary marriage ads in Indian newspapers. Great libraries, in Canberra, Washington D.C., London, Berlin, and other places were crucial.

From Marxism to Postmarxism? was an intellectual history of Marxist thought in Europe and North America and a survey and assessment of contemporary radical thought, Marxist or not. An empirical study of theorizations.

The World. A Beginner's Guide derived from my Cambridge Master course on Modern Society and Global Transformations. It was an attempt at grasping both the main lines of the historical processes which have laid the ground for our current world - the different civilizations, the distribution of the world religions, basic features of the different types of modern societies - and the issues, conflicts, and forces of today. I also try to lay out the contours of typical individual life-courses in the major regions of the world. That book draws on my previous works and worldwide experiences, and also on the vast electronic sources of information.

The Killing Fields of Inequality differs from mainstream studies and indignation by giving primary attention to inequalities of health and death (life expectancy), and by giving as much attention to inequalities of freedom and respect as of income and other resources. Empirically, this entailed learning from epidemiology and social medicine, and theoretically from philosophies of justice.

Sociology is Fun

Currently I am writing a book on Cities of Power, a topic I have been thinking of and occasionally publishing about for almost twenty years. It has given my travelling and my long walks in cities all over the world a special drive. Direct observation and experience are very important here, but again there are huge intellectual fields which have to be explored and understood, at least to some extent, urban planning, architecture, the history of public art, and, of course, city histories. Disciplines to which I add my sociological training and global experience, on mechanisms and problems of power, and on social relations, social forces, and social movements.

What will come out of it remains to be seen, hopefully in 2016. But working on it is great fun. Sociology is fun.

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Endnotes:

^{xi} In *Imperial Crime and Punishment*, Fein portrays the universe of obligation as "heightened consciousness of kind." She argues that "[T]he common conscience is then limited to one's own kind, members of one's own class, excluding the other class from the universe of obligation -- *the range of persons and groups toward whom basic rules or 'oughts' are binding*" (1977:7, 17 italics added).

^{xii} Weber says:

For the Christians it meant the origin of Christian 'freedom,' which Paul again and again celebrated triumphantly; for this freedom meant the universalism of Paul's mission, which cut across nations and status groups. The elimination of all ritual barriers of birth for the community of the eucharists, as realized in Antioch, was, in connection with the religious preconditions, the hour of conception for the Occidental 'citizenry.' This is the case even though its birth occurred more than a thousand years later in the revolutionary *conjurations* of the medieval cities. For without commensalism – in Christian terms, without the Lord's Supper in common – no oath-bound fraternity and no medieval urban citizenry would have been possible (1946, 403-404, see also 269). See also the discussion in *Ancient Judaism* pp. 421-424.

^{xiii} Introduced here by Charles Taylor. Renan Ernest. *Qu'est-ce Qu'une Une Nation?* What is A Nation? Introduction by Charles Taylor. Trans. Wanda Romer Taylor. Toronto: Tapir Press, 1996.