

WORKING TOWARD A JUST WORLD:

VISIONS, EXPERIENCES AND CHALLENGES

Pamela Roby, Editor

Community Research and Development-Conflict, Social Action, and Change
Crime and Juvenile Delinquency-Drinking and Drugs
Educational Problems-Environment and Technology-Family
Health, Health Policy and Health Services-Labor Studies
Law and Society-Poverty, Class and Inequality
Psychiatric Sociology-Racial and Ethnic Minorities
Sexual Behavior, Politics and Communities-Social Problems Theory
Sociology and Social Welfare-Youth, Aging and The Life Course

Society for the Study of Social Problems

Founded in 1951, the Society for the Study of Social Problems (SSSP) is an interdisciplinary community of scholars, practitioners, advocates, and students engaged in the application of critical, scientific, and humanistic perspectives to the study of vital social problems. Many members are social scientists who teach in colleges and universities, and/or work in applied research, advocacy and policy settings.

SSSP's mission is "scholarship in pursuit of a just society." Seventeen SSSP Special Problems Divisions focus on members' particular interests. Each Division develops and runs its own program at the Annual Meeting, elects its own Chairperson and officers, and publishes a newsletter. The SSSP's Annual Meeting gives members an opportunity to present their research, discuss their teaching and activism, and exhibit important videos, movies, and photographs in a lively forum. SSSP committees on publications, awards, and financial resources plan for the future of social problems scholarship and advocacy, and help promote the practical realization of research and policy development.

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INTRODUCTION

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The Society for the Study of Social Problems' mission is scholarship in pursuit of a just society. In this booklet, chairs and other members of the SSSP's seventeen Divisions address four questions in relation to their division's focus and the creation of a just world:

1. What is your vision of a just world in relation to your division's mission?
2. What are one or two demonstration projects, nations or states that have most effectively addressed your division's mission at any time in history and what are/were their important features?
3. What are the key difficulties that you and others working toward your division's mission face in your work toward a better world?
4. What are five to ten key articles or books you would recommend to SSSP colleagues and their students who work outside of your Division's area but want to learn more about it?

This booklet is intended for SSSP members, their colleagues and their students who want to learn more about one or more areas of study and activism that are the foci of the SSSP Divisions. It is meant to provide those of us who are members of SSSP with a fuller understanding of the visions and work of our own and other divisions. It is also intended to offer colleagues who have as yet to join SSSP with a better idea of what we do within each of our divisions.

I am pleased with the enthusiasm with which the Divisions responded to this call and their thought-provoking statements which follow. I thank Dean Knudsen of Purdue University, Chair of the SSSP Divisional Chairs; Mary Lou Wylie of James Madison University, Chair-Elect of the SSSP Divisional Chairs; Thomas Hood of the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, SSSP Executive Officer; Michele Smith Koontz, SSSP Administrative Officer; and all the division chairs, authors and division members who contributed to the publication of *WORKING TOWARD A JUST WORLD: VISIONS, EXPERIENCES AND CHALLENGES*.

No work is fully comprehensive, and the membership and perspectives of all SSSP divisions are dynamic. Also, although several Divisions either discussed their statements during their Division's 1996 business meeting or developed and approved them through the Division's newsletter and email, most did not. Their pieces are either solely or jointly authored by the division's chair or other active divisional leaders. Therefore, no statement should be considered definitive. Perhaps the statements will be most useful if they stimulate further discussion, reading and action, and if they inspire readers to think further about their own goals for and what they have learned from working toward a just world.

** President, Society for the Study of Social Problems, 1996-97.*

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## COMMUNITY RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

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A Just World for the Division of Community Research and Development would be a place where every person has access to safe, affordable housing, an opportunity for a meaningful contribution to her community and freedom to obtain her goals with no limits due to a lack of health-care, nutrition or education. The Division of Community Research and Development's mission is to provide opportunities for people to discuss and envision a just world by integrating the theory and practice of researchers and grassroots activists. The Division of Community Research and Development encourages participants to expose and report on practices of discrimination based on race, gender, age, sexual orientation, and family status, in any area of community development. The Division of Community Research and Development highlights the importance of community-based action research stressing the importance of community members involvement.

*Demonstration Projects:* Dudley Street Neighborhood, has successfully rebuilt a sense of community and neighborhood in a deteriorated section of Boston's south side. The Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative is the only community based organization to have been granted the authority of eminent domain. The story of the Dudley Street Neighborhood is told in the book, *Streets of Hope*, written by Peter Medoff and Holly Sklar and the film *Holding Ground: The Rebirth of Dudley Street* by Leah Mahan and Mark Lipman. (New Day films 1996.)

Centros Sor Isolina Ferre, Ponce, Puerto Rico, is a community based organization committed to the development of the human being by carrying out the revitalization and restoration of the community, stressing grassroots participation. According to their mission statement, their goal is "to foster revitalization of the community through the solution of its own problems." One of their mottoes is: "A community regains life when it re-educates, revitalizes and rediscovers itself."

McAuley Institute, Silver Springs, Maryland--supports non-profit organizations that feature homes and strengthen communities and works to increase low-income housing by way of the McAuley Revolving Loan fund and technical assistance services to community-based affordable housing organization. "McAuley Institute Housing Gazette" published quarterly describes the Institute's activities, includes legislative updates, describes exemplary local programs and other important information on low-income housing and community building. "Jane's Anthology" is in honor of Jane Addams, is a regular feature in the newsletter and highlights stories and successes of women in community development activities. McAuley Institute has provided over 100 loans to projects that embody McAuley's values of empowering women to rebuild their lives and communities.

*Key Difficulties:* Although there is an increase in urban problems and a continuation of discrimination in all forms in housing, education and economic institutions, there is also a decrease in available funding and research on these problems which inhibits research on these important issues. The national ideology of individual responsibility for social problems hinders the development of community-wide solutions to local problems; furthermore, the lack of commitment by national and state governments of financial resources and policy reform to address issues of affordable housing is probably the most detrimental factor in the decline of urban neighborhoods and communities.

*Recommended Readings:*

Ann Bookman and Sandra Morgan (eds.), *Women and the Politics of Empowerment: Perspectives from Communities and Workplaces*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988.

Rachel G. Bratt, Chester Hartman, and Ann Meyerson, *Critical Perspectives on Housing*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986.

John Emmeus Davis, (1991) *Contested Ground: Collective Action and the Urban Neighborhood*, Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1991.

Dolores Hayden, *The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History*, Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1995.

Alex Kotlowitz, *There Are No Children Here*, New York: Doubleday, 1991.

Peter Medoff and Holly Sklar, *Streets of Hope: The Fall and Rise of an Urban Neighborhood*, Boston: South End Press, 1994.

Constance Perin, *Belonging In America*, Madison, Wisconsin: Wisconsin University Press, 1988.

Carol Stack, *Call to Home: African Americans Reclaim the Rural South*, New York: Basic Books, 1996.

Randy Stoecker, *Defending Community*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994.

Michael E. Stone, *Shelter Poverty: New Ideas on Housing Affordability*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993.

Bonnie Winfield, *Creating A Place To Call Home: The Story of an Urban Land Trust*, forthcoming.

Journals: *Neighborhood Works*, *Women and Environments*, *Shelterforce*.

\* *Chair, Community Research and Development Division, 1994-1997.*

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CONFLICT, SOCIAL ACTION, AND CHANGE

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With the change in name from the division on “International Conflict and Cooperation” to our present designation, this division is broadly concerned with processes of social change as well as social action and conflict. We retain a commitment to explore these processes internationally but have added a perspective that highlights local level community activism, community and university politics, and the development and challenges faced by social movement organizations in varying contexts.

Our vision of a just world is one in which traditional conceptualizations of government, the state, and power and politics are challenged to include the efforts of ordinary people and organized citizen efforts. Within a just world, public life would be expanded to include the activist roles we take in our workplaces, in our educational institutions, and in our communities. The social science literature generally disregards and devalues community-based struggles of people to gain control over their lives, struggles in which women and low income people have traditionally played major roles. We contend that an understanding of these everyday acts of resistance, and of the conditions that foster such actions and those that obstruct them, is necessary to make visible the nature of political action at the grassroots level.

Second, the concept of citizenship needs to be invigorated and the definition of social movements needs to be expanded to include smaller scale organizing efforts in communities. An appreciation for these bottom-up efforts, or the “localized social movement,” provides insights into the roots of social change and the underpinnings of larger and more comprehensive social movement efforts. These often place-based collective actions are increasingly relevant today when shrinking resources and new political conflicts heighten the importance of the neighborhood setting that low income families depend on for the necessities of daily life.

Third, community-based social change efforts are all too limited when placed up against the structures of inequality that shape the wider political and economic environment. Global processes of economic restructuring are undermining unionization, wages, job security, and the welfare state, as well as the viability of many rural communities and former industrial cities. Yet, community actions on behalf of progressive agendas remain salient features of local encounters with the state, with corporations, with employers, and with racist, sexist, and homophobic forces pervading many spheres of social life.

Fourth, as researchers, we are interested in supporting and engaging in a participatory research approach that brings together universities and community organizations as partners to address immediate social problems (e.g., homelessness, environmental racism, deindustrialization) issues that have social policy implications. The participatory research model challenges the classic research paradigm with its emphasis on value-neutrality, objectivity, and researcher control over the research process. Instead participatory researchers seek to develop understandings of social relations and social change by fostering dialogue and social respect between the researcher and those researched and recognizing and building upon the knowledge of the people they are studying. This methodological approach necessitates the use of research findings to uncover and improve inequitable societal conditions.

Finally, as educators, we support pedagogy and curriculum development that effectively bridges the university, the community, and the larger society. For example, service learning is a type of experiential learning that can be seen as a university response to severe local, national, and international social problems. At its best, “service learning provides an opportunity for institutionalizing activism committed to social justice on college campuses” (Marullo, 1996:3). Also, sociology courses can incorporate and require social action projects in order to encourage students to pursue research projects that are responsive to community needs.

Demonstration Projects: In general, our division supports projects that bring the university and the community together to jointly address specific or interrelated social issues. PRAG, the Policy Research Action Group--a collaboration involving Chicago-based academics and community activists--and the Leadership Council for Metropolitan Open Communities--a comprehensive fair housing organization serving the Chicago area--worked together to complete a set of interrelated studies. These studies were designed to identify interventions and public policies that are needed to develop and sustain viable and inclusive, diverse, and stable urban communities. This research was done in conjunction with a range of community organizations in Chicago neighborhoods. While some new data was collected in the course of this research, the primary focus was on bringing together existing information that relates to developing effective policies supportive of urban community diversity.

Key Difficulties: Our division needs to continue to support the action research that highlights the global conflicts from Chiapas to Bosnia to Rwanda to Northern Ireland. Yet, it is challenging to retain the international aspect of the division due to obstacles such as funding limits on travel, and the political constraints placed on activists in many of these countries.

Key Articles and Books:

Lisa Albrecht and Rose M. Brewer (eds.), *Bridges of Power: Women's Multicultural Alliances*, Philadelphia, PA: New Society Publishers, 1990.

Edna Bonavich, Paul Ong, and Lucie Cheng, *The New Asian Immigration in Los Angeles and Global Restructuring*, Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1994.

Ann Bookman and Sandra Morgen (eds.), *Women and the Politics of Empowerment*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1988.

Harry Boyte, *The Backyard Revolution: Understanding the New Citizen Movement*, Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1980.

Manuel Castells, 1983. *The City and the Grassroots*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983.

Sara M. Evans and Harry C. Boyte, *Free Spaces: The Sources of Democratic Change in America*. New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1986.

Rick Fantasia, *Cultures of Solidarity: Consciousness, Action, and Contemporary American Workers*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988.

Robert Fisher, *Let the People Decide: Neighborhood Organizing in America*, New York, NY: Twayne, 1984.

Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, New York: Herder and Herder, 1972.

John Gaventa, *Power and Powerlessness: Quiescence and Rebellion in an Appalachian Valley*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1980.

Heidi Gottfried (ed.) *Feminism and Social Change: Bridging Theory and Practice*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1996.

Terry Haywoode, "Working Class Feminism: Creating a Politics of Community, Connection, and Concern," Ph.D. dissertation, The City University of New York, 1991.

Ira Katznelson, *City Trenches: Urban Politics and the Patterning of Class in the United States*, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1981.

Joseph M. Kling and Prudence S. Posner (eds.), *Dilemmas of Activism: Class, Community, and the Politics of Local Mobilization*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990.

Frances Moore Lappe and Paul Martin DuBois, *The Quickening of America*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc., 1994.

Sam Marullo, "Sociology's Contribution to the Service Learning Movement," in Morten G. Ender, Brenda Marstealer Kowalewski, David A. Cotter, Lee Martin and JoAnn DeFiore (eds.), *Service-Learning and Undergraduate Sociology: Syllabi and Instructional Materials*, Washington DC: ASA Teaching Resource Center, 1996, pp. 1-13.

Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Ann Russo and Lourdes Torres (eds.), *Third World Women and Politics and Feminism*, Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1991.

Aldon D. Morris and Carol McClurg Mueller (eds.) *Frontiers in Social Movement Theory*, New Haven: Yale, 1992.

Nancy A. Naples, *Community Activism and Feminist Politics: Organizing Across Race, Class, and Gender*, New York: Routledge, 1997.

National Society for Experiential Education, *Combining Service and Learning: A Resource Book for Community and Public Service*, Vol. 1.

Phillip Nyden, "Social Action Research," in Carla B. Howery, Novella Perrin, John Seem, and Robert Bendiksen (eds.), *Teaching Sociological Practice: A Resource Book*, Washington, DC: ASA Teaching Resource Center, 1993.

Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States from the 1960s to the 1980s*, New York: Routledge, 1986.

Peter Park, "The Discovery of Participatory Research as a New Scientific Paradigm: Personal and Intellectual Accounts," *The American Sociologist*, Vol. 23, No. 4, Winter, 29-42, 1992.

Dianne Rocheleau, Barbara Thomas-Slayter, and Esther Wangari (eds.), *Feminist Political Ecology: Global Issues and Local Experiences*, New York : Routledge, 1996.

Beth A. Rubin, *Shifts in the Social contract: Understanding Change in American Society*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press, 1996.

George Rude. *Ideology and Popular Protest*, New York: Pantheon, 1980.

Randy Stoecker, "Community, Movement, Organization: The Problem of Identity Convergence in Collective Action," *The Sociological Quarterly*, Vol. 36, No. 1, 1995, 111-130.

Linda Stout, *Bridging the Class Divide and Other Lessons for Grassroots Organizing*, Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1990.

Guida West and Rhoda Lois Blumberg, *Women and Social Protest*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1990.

Whyte, William Foote (ed.) *Participatory Action Research*, Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1991.

* *Chair, Conflict, Social Action, and Change Division, 1996-1998.*

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CRIME AND JUVENILE DELINQUENCY

*Nancy A. Matthews**
Northeastern Illinois University

The Crime and Juvenile Delinquency Division is concerned with the relations between society and the criminal and juvenile justice systems, the institutions that regulate and address crime. Our division's vision of a just world starts with the notion that this system should be fair and just. People should not be targeted for excessive social control by agents of the Crime and Justice System (CJS) based on their membership in a group that is constructed as dangerous or especially criminal. In other words we envision a CJS that would promote justice and avoid classism, racism, and sexism, rather than being a significant site for producing these unequal social relations.

Second, harms by the powerful against the less powerful in society should be recognized as crimes and acted on by the CJS; e.g. violence against women, hate crimes, corporate crime that harms consumers, employees, and citizens.

Third, we envision a society in which young people are not targeted for police and other criminal justice attention based mainly on their race, class, or age; such social control practices have extremely detrimental effects on young people and their communities. We advocate our juvenile justice systems returning to a rehabilitative rather than punitive project, supported by broader social policies that give young people access to the social resources and experiences that enable them to become full participants in a just society.

Fourth, our expenditure of social resources should be focused on creating the conditions that are known to lessen crime: adequate employment, support for families and communities, educational and recreational access--rather than enlarging the prison-industrial complex.

Demonstration Projects: In general, projects that involve close local community involvement in addressing crime problems and alternatives to the current criminal and civil legal systems offer the most promise as demonstration projects. The use of dispute mediation services for problem-solving is one such model that is increasingly used in many communities. One example of this is the Family Conference Model created in New Zealand as a means to solve problems of child abuse and neglect. Rather than a punitive system, this model brings a broadly defined kinship network into play and facilitates their planning and implementing a care plan for children who have been or are now at risk of being abused or neglected. Variations on this model have been implemented in Illinois.

Another model exemplifies cooperation between social change activists and the criminal justice system. In the Minnesota Domestic Abuse Intervention Project (DAIP), begun in Duluth and replicated in more than 20 other communities, the battered women's movement and police and courts cooperate to provide advocacy to victims from their first contact with the police. Some of the innovations include: Advocates at the battered women's shelter have access to police records of domestic violence and contact victims to offer advocacy; arrested batterers are often ordered to participate in DAIP counseling and education programs; and courts accept input from DAIP advocates about the safety needs of victims. This program has increased the number of prosecutions for domestic violence and reduced the incidence of repeat violence by batterers in the program.

Corrections is an important area to look for promising models of just systems. Despite the massive resources poured into corrections in the U.S., few scholars would hold our system up as a model. Scandinavian countries, particularly Sweden and Norway, offer models of relatively humane systems. In addition to decriminalizing and depenalizing certain offenses, Sweden, for example, limits the use of imprisonment to only the most serious crimes. Sentences are considerably shorter than is typical in the U.S. and institutions are small--the largest houses about 200 inmates. The purpose of incarceration is "to promote the adjustment of the inmate in society and to counteract the detrimental effects of deprivation of liberty" (Act on Correctional Treatment in Institutions 1974 quoted in Terrill 1990). Keeping inmates close to family, housing in clean individual cells, offering educational and work-release opportunities, and remuneration for such activities are some of the hallmarks of this system.

Key Difficulties: One of the key difficulties we face in working toward our mission is the current political climate. Sociologists see the criminal justice system and the crime problem as embedded in larger social structures and relations. Solutions require broader changes, including more democratic and community involvement, but this conflicts with the trend toward corporatization and privatization of all areas of social life. Social investment in communities, education, health care, and adequate employment opportunities is not politically popular. The quest for a more egalitarian society is under attack. Accompanying this resistance to measures that are more likely to prevent crime are popular attitudes shaped by political leaders and the media that are extremely punitive, promoting the dehumanization of those labeled criminals. In addition, the popularity of bio-social explanations of behavior render rehabilitative programs unpopular.

Key Books:

Eve and Carl Buzawa, *Domestic Violence: The Changing Criminal Justice Response*, Westport, CT: Auburn House, 1992.

William Chambliss and Marjorie Zatz (eds.), *Making Law: The State, the Law, and Structural Contradictions*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993.

Meda Chesney-Lind and R. G. Sheldon, *Girls, Delinquency, and the Juvenile Justice System*, Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole, 1992.

Robert Emerson, *Judging Delinquents: Context and Process in Juvenile Justice*, Aldine, Chicago, 1969.

Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, New York: Vintage, 1979 (1975).

Coramae Richey Mann, *Unequal Justice: A Question of Color*, Bloomington, IN: University of Indiana Press, 1988.

Susan E. Martin and Nancy C. Jurik, *Doing Justice, Doing Gender*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1996.

Mari Matsuda, Charles R. Lawrence III, Richard Delgado, and Kimberle Williams Crenshaw, *Words That Wound: Critical Race Theory, Assaultive Speech, and the First Amendment*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1993.

James Messerschmidt, *Crime as Structured Action: Gender, Race, Class, and Crime in the Making*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1997.

Stephen Pfohl, *Images of Deviance and Social Control: A Sociological History*, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1994.

Richard Quinney, *Criminology: Analysis and Critique of Crime in America*, Little, Brown, Boston, 1975.

Jeffrey Reiman, *The Rich Get Richer and the Poor Get Prison*, 4th ed., Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1995.

Diana Scully, *Understanding Sexual Assault*. New York: Routledge, 1994.

Michael Tonry, *Malign Neglect: Race, Crime, and Punishment in America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.

**Chair of Nominating Committee, Crime and Juvenile Delinquency Division, 1996-97.*

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## DRINKING AND DRUGS

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Our division's vision for a just world is one in which all citizens have the right to be protected from laws against the use of drugs that unjustly punish people of color, minorities, and the downwardly mobile. In essence, in a just society classism and racism would not be major factors determining who is criminally punished for drug use or abuse. The application and enforcement of drug laws would be socially responsible, unbiased and democratically based rather than coercive, repressive, and unjust. Further, in a just society, no stigma would be attached to drug use. The society would focus on the underlying causes of drug abuse without the burdens currently created by its social definition. Drug laws would be based on an understanding that the use of both licit and illicit drugs, especially chronic use is often a result of personal choice, social, political, or economic conditions, or medical and not a moral or legal problems. In a just society it would be understood that drug abuse is often a manifestation or a symptom of social, psychological, economic, or political problems.

*Possible steps toward our vision for a just world include:*

1. Build a national then an international network of drug researchers including both scholars and activists who are dedicated to examining and then discussing, sharing, and disseminating information on all licit and illicit drug use. An examination of the current licit drugs -- alcohol and tobacco must also be included because these two types of drugs are widely used and abused. Furthermore, special emphasis must be placed on the effects of alcohol and tobacco use and abuse because these two drugs account for more medical illnesses and deaths than all illicit drugs combined.
2. Promote responsible professional scholarship about the use of licit and illicit drugs and provide forums for academic and social activism.
3. Increase involvement, discussion, debate, and striving for consensus among drug policy associations, foundations, and government officials and researchers aimed at sharing drug use or abuse information.
4. Create major public forums that involve citizens from across the United States in critically discussing and debating the current criminal approach to drug use in our society, and in ultimately completely reformulating our current drug laws. Include both national and international perspectives, and decriminalization and legalization approaches to drug use in the forums. They must also give major attention to the empirical studies on drug use that are generally either disregarded or selectively used by politicians and legislators. Finally they must address the injustice of current drug laws under which alcohol and tobacco, two of the most destructive drugs, are legal and readily available throughout our society.
5. Once adequate discussion has occurred, hold a referendum in which all citizens vote on completely reformulating our drug enforcement policy. This would be an important step toward a just world in which legislative action represents the interests and opinions of all citizens in the United States, not just non-users or those ideologically against either licit or illicit drug use.
6. Protect civil liberties regarding responsible drug use for all citizens in our society.

7. Increase cross-cultural sharing of information concerning approaches to drug use. Carefully examine and discuss with government officials the outcomes of drug policies in socially liberal-, moderate-, and conservative-type countries such as the Netherlands (Amsterdam), the United Kingdom, and Middle Eastern nations. Such information sharing would better inform the goal of reformulating our drug policies regarding what is and is not feasible for citizens of the U.S.
8. Continue to recognize and act on the critical importance of good teaching and responsible research about drug use. Our students in college and university classrooms across the U.S. represent important populations of people who are entitled to learn the latest knowledge about licit and illicit drug use or abuse in order to understand and render their opinions about our current and future approaches to drugs.

#### *Model Centers:*

Today the Lindesmith Center and the National Development and Research Institutes, Inc., are important institutions that sponsor research and provide information on how contemporary American drug policy needs major revisions to halt unjust application of laws that not only violate civil liberties but perpetuate classism and racism. Located in New York City, these centers' documented research continually proves the failure of the "War on Drugs" approach that uses the punitive model for controlling drug use.

#### *Challenges:*

Our biggest challenge in working toward reformulating U.S. drug policy is the current lack of commitment of and collaboration with government officials, policy makers, legislators, and politicians. Lack of agreement --conflicting ideologies and perspectives -- strongly affects U.S. drug policy-making. Beginning with public forums on the use or abuse of drugs, more collaboration, discussion and debate with often segmented institutions in our society (such as the criminal justice system and the medical establishment) is sorely needed. Top government officials need to set priorities regarding the importance of establishing more collaboration with drug research foundations that are not politically biased against responsible drug users. Separate public forums on decriminalization and legalization should be created with the goal of achieving maximum participation by all U.S. citizens.

As scholars and activists dedicated to the pursuit of drug use knowledge, the members of this division can learn from each other as we continually confront the schism between academics and those outside academia regarding drug use. Often, those outside academia view illicit drug use as ethically and morally wrong, while overlooking the effects of alcohol and tobacco. Those inside academia are aware of the fact that a segment of our population views or experiences licit or illicit drug use as either a part of a recreational lifestyle or a temporary situation. They begin by viewing addiction to drugs as a separate problem.

To become more effective scholars and activists we must continually confront both supportive and conflicting views about responsible drug use and champion the goal of creating a society where adult drug use reflects personal choice, responsibility, and conscious decision-making free of moral and ideological biases that continually contradict the high number of licit and illicit drug users in our society.

#### *Key books:*

Erich Goode, *Drugs in American Society*, Fourth Edition, New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1993.

Erich Goode, *Between Politics and Reason: The Drug Legalization Debate*, New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 1997.

David Lenson, *On Drugs*, Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1995.

David Hanson and Peter J. Venturelli, *Drugs and Society*, Fifth Edition, Sudbury MA: Jones and Bartlett Publishers, 1998.

Ed Knipe, *Culture, Society and Drugs*, Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, Inc., 1995.

George F. Rengert, *The Geography of Illegal Drugs*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996.

Karin Swisher (ed.), *Legalizing Drugs*, San Diego, CA: Greenhaven Press, Inc., 1996.

Peter J. Venturelli, *Drug Use in America: Social, Cultural, and Political Perspectives*, Sudbury, MA: Jones and Bartlett Publishers, 1994.

\*Chair, Drinking and Drugs Division, 1997-99.

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## EDUCATIONAL PROBLEMS

*Pamela Quiroz\**  
*University of Massachusetts*

A just world is a world where opportunities-to-learn are given to all students, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual preference, and social class. In addition, these educational experiences should provide students with the necessary tools (i.e., skills) to take advantage of opportunities in other sectors of our society. A just world should prepare students for full participation in a technologically complex and global economy.

Our division seeks the realization of this vision through scholarship, research, and activism as well as through teaching about the past, present, and future political and social structures relating to educational systems in the world.

Two examples of projects addressing the Educational Problems Division's Mission:

- a). Head Start: begun over thirty years ago and one of the few clear cut victories from the War on Poverty, this program has been hailed as one of the most important social and educational experiments of the second half of the twentieth century. This early childhood program works to create a just world by ensuring that schools benefit all children.
- b). While there are many programs currently addressing the issues of equality of opportunity-to-learn, we would like to point to a potential change which has yet to be implemented, a change focusing on higher education: The proposed change in tax structure to reduce the burden of college attendance by allowing both a deduction for college costs and a direct tax write-off, could help to increase access to higher education. Such a change would not only assist working class and middle class families who want to send their children to college, it would also assist those wishing to return to college (e.g.s, divorced mothers).

*Difficulties:* Social science research can illuminate problems in the educational system. However, it is often less difficult to devise programs than to implement programs that would help to change current inequities. Similar to other institutions, change in educational institutions occurs slowly. Moreover, resistance to change is found in all aspects of the educational system. Parents, school leaders, teachers, students, community members, and political leaders must all work together if change is to be implemented, effective, and lasting.

*Suggested Readings:* These include journals, "classics," and current works that have challenged and modified our views of education: Among the journals are *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, *Harvard Educational Review*, *Teachers College Record*, and *Urban Education*.

Michael Apple, *Education and Power: Reproduction and Contradiction in Education*, Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982.

Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis, *Schooling in Capitalist America: Educational Reform and the Contradictions of Economic Life*, New York: Basic Books, 1976.

James S. Coleman, "The Concept of Equality of Educational Opportunity," *Harvard Educational Review*, 38, 1, 1968.

\_\_\_\_\_, *The Adolescent Society: The Social Life of the Teenager and Its Impact on Education*, New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1961.

Ann Diller, Barbara Houston, Kathryn Pauly Morgan, and Maryann Ayim, *The Gender Question in Education: Theory, Pedagogy, and Politics*, Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1996.

Lisa Delpit, *Other People's Children: Cultural Conflict in the Classroom*, New York: New Press distributed by W. W. Norton, 1995.

Emile Durkheim, *Moral Education: A Study in the Theory and Application of the Sociology of Education*, Translated by Everett K. Wilson and Herman Schnurer, New York: Free Press, 1961.

Paulo Friere, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Translated by Myra Bergman Ramos, New York: Herder and Herder, 1972.

John Ogbu, *Minority Education and Caste: The American System In Cross-Cultural Perspective*, New York: Academic Press, 1978.

Myra and David Sadker, *Failing At Fairness: How America's Schools Cheat Girls*, New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1994.

Barrie Thorne, *Gender Play: Girls and Boys in School*, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1994.

Willard Waller, *The Sociology of Teaching*, New York: Russell and Russell, 1961.

Paul Willis, *Learning to Labor: How Working Class Kids Get Working Class Jobs*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1977.

\* *Chair, Educational Problems Division, 1994-97.*

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ENVIRONMENT AND TECHNOLOGY

*T. Jean Blocker**
University of Tulsa

A just world would be one in which all people had the right to be protected from environmental degradation. Equal environmental protection would not be a privilege, but a right. A world in which environmental justice prevailed would provide environmental, human rights, and public health regulations and laws which were equally enforced for all groups; would not differentially expose some populations to harmful toxins in the home, school, workplace, and neighborhood; would not allow discriminatory practices in zoning, land use, sanitation services, industrial planning, and health care; and would abolish exclusionary practices that limit less powerful groups from participation in decision making. A just world would recognize that total reliance on “scientific expertise” in environmental decision making often masks unequal power relations and oppression. In a just world, the burden of proof of harmful practices would be shifted from the harmed groups to those groups responsible for the harm.

Members of the Environment and Technology Division are involved in numerous projects dealing with issues of environmental justice. The projects go beyond data collection and reporting, as Division members become advocates for communities and groups who bring forth grievances of environmental injustice.

Examples of Projects Addressing the Missions of the Environment and Technology Division: Grassroots organizations across the U.S. are involved in movements focused on contaminated communities and waste siting conflicts. Sociologists are increasingly involved in these communities, not only as researchers, but as advocates for the citizen groups. Examples of such involvement are found in the work of Professors Bullard, Edelstein, Erikson, and Picou found under the suggested readings below. In addition, the Environmental Protection Agency recently created the Office of Environmental Equity. In 1994 the EPA established the National Environmental Justice Advisory Council whose 25 members established six subcommittees representing dimensions of environmental justice: health and research, public participation and accountability, native and indigenous issues, international issues, waste and facility siting, and enforcement. In February 1994, President Clinton signed Executive Order 12,898, “Federal Actions to Address Environment Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations.” Whether equal environmental protection becomes a right of all citizens remains to be seen.

Key Difficulties: Environmental injustice is part of the larger structure of economic and political oppression. Modern systems of production and technology have created environmental degradation through extraction and contamination. The costs of environmental degradation are “externalized,” and thus borne by citizens. Minority and low-income citizens pay disproportionate costs as victims of economic growth. Regulation and reform oriented toward environmental justice have not been priorities of political systems whose functions include legitimation and accumulation. Grassroots groups involved in environmental struggles confront a legal and regulatory system which privileges certain types of knowledge and expertise. Minority and low-income populations typically lack the economic resources to secure “experts” who will successfully challenge corporate and/or state powers.

Suggested Readings:

Bunyan Bryant and Paul Mohai, *Race and the Incidence of Environmental Quality*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1992.

Robert Bullard, *Dumping in Dixie: Race, Class and Environmental Quality*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1990.

Robert Bullard, (ed), *Confronting Environmental Racism: Voices from the Grassroots*, Boston, MA: South End Press, 1993.

Sherry Cable and Charles Cable, *Environmental Problems Grassroots Solutions*, NY: St. Martin's Press, 1995.

Stephen R. Couch, and J. Stephen Kroll-Smith (eds), *Communities at Risk: Collective Responses to Technological Hazards*, New York: Peter Lang, 1991.

Michael Edelstein, *Contaminated Communities: The Social and Psychological Impacts of Residential Toxic Exposure*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1988.

Kai Erikson, *Everything in Its Path*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1976.

Kai Erikson, *A New Species of Trouble: Explorations in Disaster, Trauma, and Community*. NY: W. W. Norton, 1994.

Adeline Levine, *Love Canal: Science, People and Politics*, Lexington, KY: Heath, 1982.

J. Steven Picou, et al., "Stress and Disruption in an Alaskan Fishing Community: Initial and Continuing Impacts of the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill," *Industrial Crisis Quarterly*, 6, 1992, 235-257.

J. Steven Picou and Duane A. Gill, "The Exxon Valdez Oil Spill and Chronic Psychological Stress," *American Fisheries Society Symposium*, 18, 1996, 879-93.

Allan Schnaiberg, and Kenneth Gould, *Environment and Society: The Enduring Conflict*, NY: St. Martin's Press, 1994.

Social Problems. Vol. 40, No. 1: February 1993 -- *Special Issue on Environmental Justice*.

* *Chair, Environment and Technology Division, 1996-1998.*

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## FAMILY

*Mary Lou Wylie\**  
*James Madison University*

In a just world, all families would have their basic needs met and live in safety and security. All families would have the resources to allow members to spend time together and develop to their fullest potential. There would be support for healthy relationships and there would be equality between the genders. We would not have to face problems of homeless families, starving families, family violence, and children with no caretaker. We would not have an economic system that forces women and men who would prefer to remain at home caring for their children to choose between caring for their children and earning their livelihood. Families of children and adults with disabilities would receive the supports needed to care for their family member at home as long as they choose to do so. In a just world, women, as wives, mothers, daughters, daughters-in-law, or sisters, would not be coerced into feeling guilty when they choose not to care for an elderly parent or sibling. In a just world, women and men who choose to be caregivers would be adequately compensated, have respite readily available, and a support system of kin, nonkin, or fictive kin that would offer appreciation and encouragement. We would not hold as an ideal only one model of a family and treat all others as inferior and defective.

One nation that has instituted a policy directly addressing family issues is Sweden. In 1974, Sweden enacted a program of paid parental leave. Under this system, parents are entitled to one year of parental leave at 90% pay. This leave can be taken entirely by one parent or it can be divided between the two parents. In addition, fathers can take off ten days at 90% pay at childbirth to help. Also, a parent can take up to 60 days off to visit the child's school or day care or if the child is sick, and there is a possibility of reducing the workday to six hours or the workweek to four days to care for children.

Those people working toward justice for families in the U.S. face the difficulty of being in a society that gives lip service but little actual support to families. The tremendous inequality in this society makes it difficult for all families to meet their basic needs. Since our policies are enacted by elite members of society, the policies rarely serve well the needs of those families who are poor, are minority, or just do not fit the ideal model. We face the difficulty of developing and enacting policies that are responsive to, and supportive of, all families in society.

*Key articles and books that we would recommend to others wanting to learn more about the area of family include:*

Richard J. Gelles and Donileen R. Loseke (eds.), *Current Controversies on Family Violence*, Newbury Park, CA: SAGE Publications, 1993.

Arlie Hochschild, *Second Shift: Working Parents and the Revolution at Home*, New York: Viking, 1989.

Jane Hood, *Men, Work, and Family*, Newbury Park, CA: SAGE Publications, 1993.

*Journal of Marriage and the Family*, Decade Review: The current one is Vol. 52, No. 4, November 1990.

Lillian Rubin, *Families on the Fault Line: America's Working Class Speaks About The Family, The Economy, Race and Ethnicity*, New York: Harper Collins, 1994.

Arlene Skolnick, *Embattled Paradise: The American Family in an Age of Uncertainty*, New York: Basic Books, 1991.

Eleanor Palo Stroller and Rose Campbell Gibson, *Worlds of Difference: Inequality in the Aging Experience*, Thousand Oakes, CA: Pine Forge Press, 1994.

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\* *Chair, Family Division, 1995-1997.*

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HEALTH, HEALTH POLICY, AND HEALTH SERVICES

*Arthur L. Greil, Alfred University,
Jeanne Calabro, Brandeis University
and Jean Elson, Brandeis University**

The Division of Health, Health Policy, and Health Services is dedicated to the critical study of all aspects of health care delivery in our society. Our concerns include, but are not limited to:

1. The study of the social sources of disease and disability in industrial and developing societies: Members of the Division are especially interested in the effects of race, class, and gender on the distribution of health, illness, and disability. Members are also interested in the ways in which social structural features of society (e.g.: the organization of work, the distribution of income, the operation of social welfare institutions, environmental policy, etc.) may affect the health of populations.
2. The study of social definitions of health and illness, both within and outside the health professions: Members of the Division are especially interested in the power of the medical profession to define the meaning of health and illness and in the efforts of clients and patients to enhance their own self-determination. Members are also involved in the study of the experience of health, illness, and disability and in the ways in which that experience is shaped by social structural arrangements.
3. The study of the delivery of health care at the level of patient/provider interaction as well as at the institutional level: Members of the Division are concerned with the composition and practices of the various health care professions and with the structure and operation of health care delivery institutions, such as hospitals, clinics, nursing homes, manufacturers and marketers of medical products, etc.
4. The comparative study of health care delivery systems and health care policies: Division members are occupied with understanding the ways in which macro-level structures and policies affect individual lives and with exploring the possibilities for the reform and reconstruction of health care systems.

The Division of Health, Health Policy, and Health Services includes a number of scholars and activists with diverse points of view. Although it is hazardous to generalize about the views or vision of the Division as a whole, for most members, a just world in relation to health issues would be one in which the preservation and restoration of health would be seen as a basic human right. Justice in health would mean that all people would have adequate resources for preserving health and adequate access to health care regardless of gender, race, class, sexual orientation, disability or region. Justice in health would also mean that all people would have access to the informational and material resources that would enable them to maximize their control over all decisions which directly and indirectly affect their health.

While few members of the Division would see any other nation as having a “perfect” health care system or as providing a model which could be replicated in the United States without modification, most members would probably agree that most other “Western” industrialized societies have come closer to realizing the conception of health care as a basic human right. On a smaller scale, many members of the Division might look toward certain types of free-standing clinics and mutual help groups as sources for ideas for new models of health care. Perhaps the greatest obstacles to the reform of health care in the United States are the sheer magnitude of social inequality, a health care system that is based on conceptualizing health as a commodity, and a “medical” model of health that obscures and discounts the importance of the experience of patients and clients.

Some resources that might help those who work outside the medical sociology field gain an appreciation of critical perspectives on health and illness include:

Laurie Kaye Abraham, *Mama Might Be Better Off Dead: The Failure of Health Care in America*, Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1993.

Renee Anspach, *Deciding Who Lives: Fateful Choices in the Intensive Care Nursery*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993.

Phil Brown (ed.), *Perspectives in Medical Sociology*, Second Edition, Prospect Heights, Illinois: Waveland, 1996 [an introductory reader].

Kathy Charmaz, *Good Days, Bad Days: The Self in Chronic Illness and Time*, New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1991.

Peter Conrad (ed.), *The Sociology of Health and Illness: Critical Perspectives*, Fifth Edition. New York: St. Martins Press [an introductory reader], 1997.

Peter Conrad and Joseph Schneider, *Deviance and Medicalization: From Badness to Sickness*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992.

Rene Dubos, *Mirage of Health*, New York: Harper and Brothers, 1959.

Eliot Friedson, *Profession of Medicine: A Study of the Sociology of Applied Knowledge*, New York: Dodd, Mead, 1970.

Ivan Illich, *Medical Nemesis: The Expropriation of Health*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1976.

Emily Martin, *The Woman in the Body*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1992.

Elliot Mischler, *The Discourse of Medicine*, Norwood, NJ: Ablex, 1984.

Joseph Shapiro, *No Pity: People With Disabilities Forging A New Civil Rights Movement*, New York: Times Books, 1993.

Paul Starr, *The Social Transformation of American Medicine*. New York: Basic Books, 1982.

Rose Weitz, *The Sociology of Health, Illness, and Health Care: A Critical Approach*, Belmont, CA: Wadsworth [an introductory text], 1996.

Irving Kenneth Zola, *Missing Pieces: A Chronicle of Living With a Disability*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1982.

* *Arthur L. Greil, Jeanne Calabro and Jean Elson served as Co-Chairs, of the Health, Health Policy and Health Services Division from 1994-1996, 1994-1997, and 1997-1999 respectively.*

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## LABOR STUDIES

*Vicki Smith\**

*University of California, Davis*

Questions of justice and inequality are at the very heart of the Labor Studies Division's mission. Our Division members are concerned about the structural and social transformations in the national and global economy that systematically disadvantage some groups over others, and that currently are creating new forms of and new bases for inequality. Whether looking at new technologies, the transformation of the labor movement, new organizational forms, new employment relationships such as temporary and contracted work, new forms of racial and gendered stratification at work, many members' research is devoted to uncovering their implications for stratification and power at work. In a just world, decisions about the organization of the labor process, about investments in new plants and regions, and about wages and the standard of living would be made in a democratic fashion and with a concern for their social consequences.

One project that has recently emerged that well expresses the mission of the Labor Studies Division is the AFL-CIO's Organizing Institute and its agenda to engage young people nationally in the effort to organize workers who don't fit the historical profile of the unionized worker. The Organizing Institute has developed a broad definition of its constituency, reaching out to previously unorganized workers, often white women, men and women of color, and white men in low-wage jobs. Last year's organizing summer created much excitement and energy, and called national attention to the plight of workers who are trapped in low-wage jobs. A second project, bridging the gap between the union movement and the academic world, the Sociology Labor Network Directory is devoted to building a national network of scholars and activists, to enable individuals in both domains to use the unique resources of each other. Both of these endeavors embody the critical and progressive aims of the Labor Studies Division.

The major difficulties facing us are the outrageous privileges exercised by corporations in American society, particularly their "right" to move capital and factories away from American communities, and the fact that these privileges are strengthened by a political regime that is primarily concerned to protect the rights of capital.

*A few books that we would recommend to SSSP colleagues:*

Eileen Appelbaum and Rosemary Batt, *The New American Workplace: Transforming Work Systems in the United States*, Ithaca, NY: ILR Press, 1994.

Stanley Aronowitz and William DiFazio, *The Jobless Future: Sci-Tech and the Dogma of Work*, Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1994.

Harry Braverman, *Labor and Monopoly Capital: The Degradation of Work in the 20th Century*, NY: Monthly Review Press, 1975.

Dorothy Sue Cobble (ed.), *Women and Unions: Forging a Partnership*, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993.

Alice H. Cook, Val L. Lorwin and Arlene Kaplan Daniels, *The Most Difficult Revolution: Women and Trade Unions*, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992.

David M. Gordon, *Fat and Mean: The Corporate Squeeze of Working Americans and the Myth of Managerial Downsizing*, NY: Martin Kessler Books, 1996.

Bennett Harrison, *Lean and Mean: The Changing Landscape of Corporate Power in the Age of Flexibility*, NY: Basic Books, 1994.

Katherine Newman, *Falling From Grace: The Experiences of Downward Mobility in the American Middle Class*, NY: Free Press, 1988.

Juliet Schor, *The Overworked American: The Unexpected Decline of Leisure*, NY: Basic Books, 1991.

Robert Thomas, *What Machines Can't Do: Politics and Technology in the Industrial Enterprise*, Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1994.

David T. Wellman, *The Union Makes Us Strong: Radical Unionism on the San Francisco Waterfront*, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

William Julius Wilson, *The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, The Underclass, and Public Policy*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987.

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\* *Chair, Labor Studies Division, 1995-97*. A draft of this statement was discussed in the Labor Studies Division's 1996 business meeting and published for comment in the Divisions' Fall 1996 Newsletter.

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LAW AND SOCIETY

*John F. Galliher, **
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*and JoAnn Miller, **
Purdue University

A Just World and the Law and Society Division's Mission: A just world would be one where laws that are passed represent the interests of all citizens of the world, not just the elites. Once laws are enacted they should be administered with equity and fairness for all. The Law and Society Division of SSSP seeks to promote knowledge of the origins and administration of law with the hope of promoting a more just society. The war on drugs in the US, focused as it is on people of color, is a prime example of law unjustly administered. The same applies to death penalty legislation that this society reserves for the poorest of our citizens. Marriage laws, adoption laws, and legislation controlling divorce and the distribution of property are examples of how elites maintain gender inequalities. The Law and Society division hopes to use its resources to show how legal initiatives such as these are racist, sexist, and irrational in pursuit of a just world.

Three Examples of Projects Addressing the Law and Society Division's Mission: The Lindesmith Center in New York was created to sponsor research and distribute information that shows how irrational and unjust contemporary American drug policy really is. Iceland is a modern nation that values highly equality and fairness for all its citizens. In this small nation there is almost a tribal feeling of obligation to care for all citizens. Interdisciplinary graduate education programs in law and society, at Berkeley and New York University, for example, strive to understand how the law can help achieve a just world.

Difficulties: Social science and sociolegal research findings are not often taken seriously by political leaders. Few academic researchers believe the death penalty is fair or effective but political leaders from both major parties ignore the body of research findings. Sociolegal research findings do not promote the welfare reform underway across the states and the federal government. No research findings show utility for mandatory arrest policies in domestic violence cases or mandatory minimum sentencing practices for drug offenders -- practices found in nearly all the states. Disregarding empirical studies to support political agendas can only make the world more unjust.

Suggested Readings on the Origins and Administration of Law:

(A) Articles in *Social Problems*.

(B) A sampling of recent but classic books that challenge conventional views of law and society: Freda Adler, *Sisters In Crime*, New York: Mc Graw Hill, 1975.

Howard S. Becker, *Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance*, New York: The Free Press, 1963.

Richard Collier, *Masculinity, Law and the Family*, London and New York: Routledge, 1995.

Ralf Dahrendorf, *Law and Order*, Boulder, Colo.: West View Press, 1985.

Kathleen Daly, *Gender, Crime and Punishment*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994.

Cynthia Fuchs Epstein, *Women in Law*, Second Edition, Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1993.

Kai T. Erikson, *Wauward Puritans: A Study in the Sociology of Deviance*, New York: Wiley, 1966.

Mary Ann Glendon, *Abortion and Divorce in Western Law*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987.

Stuart Henry, *Private Justice: Towards Integrating Theorizing in the Sociology of Law*, New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1983.

Richard Kluger, *Simple Justice: The History of Brown V. Board of Education and Black America's Struggle for Equality*, New York: Knopf/Vintage, 1975.

Anthony Lewis, *Gideon's Trumpet*, New York: Random House/Vintage, 1964.

Susan Ehrlich Martin and Nancy C. Jurik, *Doing Justice, Doing Gender: Women in Law and Criminal Justice Occupations*, Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 1996.

James C. Morh, *Abortion in America*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1978.

Richard Quinney, *Critique of Legal Order: Crime Control in Capitalist Society*, Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1974.

* *John F. Galliher is a founding member of the Law and Society Division; JoAnn Miller served as Chair of the Division from 1996-98.*

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## POVERTY, CLASS AND INEQUALITY

*Alan Spector\**  
*Purdue University, Calumet*

A just world is a world where all people are allowed to contribute to the fullest extent of their abilities while goods and services are distributed to people according to their needs. The word “communism” doesn’t scare me, and I don’t think we should allow either the architects and foot soldiers of class oppression, racism, fascism and genocide or the charlatans who would use the language of marxism for their personal agendas to force us to defensively adopt ideas and language that are watered down. Ask most rank-and-file people to describe what they think “heaven” would be like, and they describe a world where material needs are taken care of, destructive competition is non-existent, and people are allowed to flower physically, mentally, culturally, and socially.

Contrary to the pro-capitalist view which claims that the realistic view of human nature is that personal material rewards are the main way to achieve a productive society, many of us would assert that it is realistic to believe that most people do want to be productive and are enthusiastic about working for a better world for humankind. Furthermore, many of us would assert that it is unrealistic to hope that so-called market economies--capitalism--can create truly productive societies. Bribery can accomplish spectacular accomplishments in the short run, but in the long run, such systems collapse into a heap of waste and destruction. And the long run is not necessarily a very long time.

Traditionally, the Poverty, Class and Inequality division has helped to expose not just the reality of poverty, but the specific ways that class systems structurally create the misery and injustices. Micro-studies are, of course, useful. But more needed is controversy. Real learning takes place in a cauldron of conflicting ideas, debate, and controversy. The PCI division is one of the largest, most popular, yet perhaps taken most for granted because of the common agreement within SSSP that “poverty is bad.” But if we believe that class domination, rather than psychological determinist mental “structures,” is at the root of oppression, then exposing those structural dynamics is an important part of this division’s mission. Social changes are happening at a quickening pace, from the dismantling of social welfare safety nets to attacks on affirmative action and immigrants, to mass imprisonment of minority youth, to ethnic wars around the world that are killing millions of people that capitalism can no longer sustain. Analyzing these processes structurally and exposing their roots, rather than merely expressing moral outrage is an important mission.

The PCI division should also explore attempts by people to combat class domination. This can be done by further exploring the successes and failures of the revolutions of the USSR and China as well as by examining the daily struggles of people all over the world in opposition to class domination. In general, then, the PCI divisions can play an important role within SSSP in helping stoke the fires of exploration and controversy about some of the bigger processes that underlie social problems.

*Demonstration Projects:* Many people are skeptical of the idea that social transformation will happen piecemeal. Some of us believe that structural dynamics will inevitably lead to increasing misery for the majority of the world's people and that those in power have, and will resort to mass terror (some type of fascism) if their domination is threatened. Hence demonstration projects are only valuable insofar as they create unity and organization against racism, nationalism, sexism, religious discrimination and especially cynicism about pro-capitalist views of human nature. Most of the demonstration models come from crumbs that capitalist institutions take away from one section of the working class and give to another section that is rebellious. Racism and imperialism create important surpluses that allow some sections of the capitalist class to trickle some resources back down to some selected sections of the working class. The social welfare programs of the US, Canada, and Western Europe, including the much vaunted Scandinavian states are created from the surplus profits from imperialism, including massive sales of military hardware to the highest bidders. Certainly people should fight for a better life, but with the cautions that: 1) the struggle should never be at the expense of other oppressed people, and 2) that some reforms are not "half a loaf" but in fact are "Trojan Horses" that create illusions and disarm people for the struggles to come.

*Difficulties:* The third biggest difficulty is illusion. Many people still believe that the dominant capitalist institutions can be made humane. The second biggest difficulty is fear; many people have shed their illusions but are frightened at the prospect of confronting the centers of power. This is especially true of those people who consider themselves "middle class" and sometimes consider themselves the center of the world and other times fear their powerlessness and isolation from the rich and from the working class. So they hold their breaths and try to hang onto their illusions. The biggest difficulty is cynicism. Many people are infected with the idea that other oppressed people are too selfish or too weak to mount an effective struggle for a just world. The cynical ideas may come from various religions, including secular fatalistic theologies such as biological determinism, and the cynical ideas may come from culture and from having a short-sighted approach to combating these problems. Overcoming the cynicism, fear, and illusions will not come about mainly from great lectures or books. People, including academics who seek a just world, need real ties, flesh and blood ties with working class people outside the university, based on common struggles against oppression. It is the life experience that is the greatest teacher, while developing analyses and theories can play the crucial role in sifting, winnowing, and clarifying those experiences.

*Suggested Readings:* It would be relatively easy to list a series of books and articles that powerfully describe the oppressive nature of poverty, inequality, and other aspects of class oppression. Most members of SSSP are probably quite familiar with the works of William Ryan, or Jonathan Kozol, or a host of others. I would therefore recommend some unexpected works--some which will provoke analyses in other ways. First, a physics book: *Causality and Chance in Modern Physics* by David Bohm. Why? Because in his quite readable exposition on quantum mechanics, he lays out an analysis that at once combines the best of "science" with the best of "critical analysis," not by pasting them together in an eclectic way, but rather by convincingly explaining the bubbling, dynamic nature of the "material world" in a way that allows one to maintain a critical analysis without having to embrace metaphysics. It is a wonderful antidote to the naive optimism of the modernists and the cynicism of the post-modernists and will exercise your mind in constructive ways. Next, *Before the Mayflower* by Lerone Bennett, an excellent history of black people in North America. More important than his facts is his way of explaining the interaction of social processes.

Next, two marxist works: *The Communist Manifesto*, and Engels' *The Part Played by Labour in the Transition from Ape to Man*. Both have many assumptions that have been proven inaccurate, but both use the critical method of analysis that social scientists need to develop. An obscure book, *Fascism and Social Revolution* by R. Palme Dutt, was written as Nazism was developing in Germany. While again, we can find parts to disagree with, the way the interplay between economic crisis and political dictatorship is explored is very valuable, and some parts are chillingly relevant to today. Next, *Fanshen* by William Hinton, a diary of life in a Chinese village after the revolution. I can quibble with parts of Howard Zinn's *People's History of the United States*, but there is much there which is useful. The writings of Frances Moore Lappe are important as they explore how a seemingly "natural" problem, world hunger, is the result of contrived capitalist relationships. There are many important popular-oriented works and a number of valuable textbooks on stratification, all of which have useful information (although I might argue with parts of their analyses). These include Harold Kerbo's *Social Stratification and Inequality*, Frank Levy's *Dollars and Dreams*, Szymanski's *Class Structure*, Berch Berberoglu's *The Legacy of Empire: Economic Decline and Class Polarization in the United States* and others. Finally, I might put in a plug for my co-authored (with Peter Knapp) *Crisis and Change: Basic Questions of Marxist Sociology*, not so much because it is particularly ground-breaking, but rather because it also strives to dissolve the false dichotomy between the materialist conservatism of traditional scientific materialism and the idealist radical conservatism of moralistic wishing. Please do be advised that others in the PCI division would probably have a different list; this was designed mainly to provoke rather than mainly provide information about class inequality.

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\* *Co-Chair, Poverty, Class and Inequality Division, 1996-98.*

An important caveat: My answers to these questions are mine; the division (PCI) was not polled, and I was unable to reach co-chair, Frank Harold Wilson. Doubtless there are many in the division who might not agree with me. Take these views as just one set of perspectives within PCI.

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PSYCHIATRIC SOCIOLOGY

*Sarah Rosenfield**
Rutgers University, New Brunswick

Visions of a Just World: The classic studies in psychiatric sociology that first surveyed community populations found that mental illnesses were distributed in clear social patterns. Strong differences exist, for example, between social classes and between the sexes. We have come a long way in understanding how conditions of social life generate these patterns. For example, the differential nature of childhood experiences, of social relationships, and of occupational conditions contribute to the concentration of psychopathology in lower social classes. Similarly, the differences between men and women in economic resources, social relations, the nature of work, and childhood history have profound consequences for the kinds of psychological suffering they endure.

These social factors are often conceptualized in terms of a stress process. This model holds that stressful events or chronic conditions produce psychological problems. However, the nature and degree of this effect depends on a variety of factors. For example, it depends on the type of stress: whereas losses produce depressive reactions, threats tend to produce anxiety in response. It rests on the implications of the stressor for our cherished ideals and identity, the parts of our lives or roles we hold most dear. It depends on how we faced and resolved such stressors in the past: a sense of resolution bodes well for weathering present difficulties.

The nature of our and others' responses to difficulties also shapes their effects. To the extent that stressors deplete personal resources such as self-esteem and sense of control over the world, they generate distress. The coping technique we use to minimize difficulties also matters. Generally, active forms of coping are effective; however, any reaction that keeps persons engaged is best for interpersonal problems while disengagement helps ease occupational problems. Others' reactions are also formative. For example, support from others is beneficial for mental health. On the other hand, negative interactions are as much or more detrimental to psychological well-being as positive interactions are advantageous.

Some have used these elements to explain social patterns of mental disorders. For example, groups with lower power or status are exposed to more stressors, including life events such as job loss and chronic difficulties such as economic strain. Certain kinds of coping techniques to deal with occupational problems, such as focusing on the intrinsic rewards of the job in the face of income decline, are relatively less available to those in lower occupational levels. Certain kinds of social relations, such as the close relationships that are more typical of women, result in greater negative interactions as well as greater support.

Other work centers on the consequences of mental illness. The stigma attached to mental illness results in attributions of labeled persons as less than others in a wide variety of attributes unrelated to the disorder itself. Those who seek treatment for psychological problems earn less, are employed less, and are more socially isolated than those with similar problems but without the stigma of treatment. Related to this, the current state of treatment for serious mental illness is dismal, leaving those with the most severe psychological problems reliant mostly on their families for care. This neglect is reflected in the burden of caretaking on families and the worry among parents about who will take over when they cannot. Finally, the neglect is reflected in the repeated returns to hospitals, the absence of care in the community, and the prevalence of homelessness among those with serious mental illness.

Clearly, the social inequalities that characterize our culture have powerful consequences for the well-being of its members. Ultimately, a vision of a just world in terms of psychological suffering must include changes in these inequalities. These changes also have implications for treatment, as disadvantage in rates of pathology is reproduced in access to care. In addition, a just world would erase the stigma attached to mental illness, leaving the considerable burden of dealing with the problems per se without the burdens created by its social definition.

Demonstration projects: People with mental illness are treated with more respect and responsibility in a few types of programs in this country. For example, the Training in Community Living program and the Clubhouse model programs are community-based programs that keep ongoing contact with clients and provide a wide range of services, including housing and other basic needs as well as rehabilitation and psychiatric treatment. These programs also attempt to destigmatize mental illness by empowering clients in relationships with staff. These programs have been successful in lowering hospitalizations and in raising quality of life, improving living conditions, earnings, social contacts, and satisfaction with life. They demonstrate that humane and effective care in community settings is possible, and hold out a portrait of what could be done if the barriers could be identified and removed.

Difficulties: Some of the larger difficulties in realizing this vision involve cultural assumptions. Psychological disorders are seen as personal, not social problems. Given the cultural view that everyone has equal access to success if they put in enough effort, such personal problems are seen as a moral failure suggesting a collapse of will and self-control. Psychological suffering is defined as an indulgence. As a result, we stigmatize psychological pain, with the result that people are reluctant to seek help or act to make it better, and we neglect those who have it to a serious degree.

Some overview articles:

Carol S. Anashensel, Carolyn M. Rutter, and Peter A. Lachenbruch, "Social Structure, Stress, and Mental Health: Competing Conceptual and Analytic Models," *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 56, 1991, 166-178.

Bruce Link, "Understanding Labeling Effects in the Area of Mental Disorders: An Assessment the Effects of Expectations of Rejection," *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 52, 1987, 96-112.

Leonard I. Pearlin, Morton A. Lieberman, Elizabeth G. Menaghan, and Joseph T. Mullan, "The Stress Process," *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, Vol. 22, 1981, 337-56.

Leonard I. Pearlin, "The Sociological Study of Stress," *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, Vol. 30, 1989, 241-56.

Leonard I. Stein and Mary Ann Test (eds.), *The Training In Community Living Model: A Decade of Experience*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1985.

Peggy Thoits, "Stress, Coping, and Social Support Processes: Where are We? What Next?," *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, Extra Issue, 1995, 53-79.

R. Jay Turner and Franco Marino, "Social Support and Social Structure: A Descriptive Epidemiology," *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, Vol. 35, 1994, 193-212.

* *Chair, Psychiatric Sociology Division, 1995-97.*

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## RACIAL AND ETHNIC MINORITIES

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Our division's vision of a just society is surely one in which there is no racial and ethnic oppression. It is a vision of a society--and a world--in which racist and nationalist hatreds have been eradicated. No longer would genocidal conflicts within or between nations destroy millions of lives and reduce millions more to living in refugee camps. No longer would governments, media, or fascist movements be able to invent scapegoats and incite racist violence against them. No longer would any racial, ethnic, or national group experience poverty or economic exploitation.

Members of the Racial and Ethnic Minorities Division embrace different models that embody this vision of a just society. Some of us embrace a vision of a reformed capitalism with a "level playing field" upon which all can compete as equals. Some of us embrace diverse models of social democracy or socialism, in which either governmental institutions or decentralized workers' organizations ensure racial and ethnic equality and a more equal distribution of societal resources. Some of us embrace Karl Marx's model of an egalitarian society, in which not only racism and nationalism, but class exploitation, classes, imperialism, and nation-states have been abolished.

The difficulties in reaching a just society appear at present to far outweigh the opportunities. Those difficulties include (1) the aggressive global advance of "free market" capitalism, and the growing economic inequalities which accompany that advance; (2) the upsurge of racism, nationalism, ethnic fragmentation, and "identity politics" throughout the world, often embodied in openly fascist political formations; and (3) the decay and collapse of socialism in Russia, China, and other societies, and the consequent demoralization of progressive forces throughout the world.

On the other hand, these same trends open up new opportunities to strive for a just society. Because they put in jeopardy the lives and futures of most of the world's people, they compel us to renew our commitment to struggle for a different and better world. They compel us to overcome the divisions that imprison us in this declining system and to build upon the achievements and correct the errors of movements that have gone before us. They compel us to try to make our work as sociologists serve the effort to struggle for a just world.

*Recommended Readings:* It is difficult to reach agreement on a list of books or articles that can educate students and colleagues about a vision of a world without racism and nationalism. Such a list might include recent works of anti-racist scholarship such as James Loewen's *Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything Your American History Textbook Got Wrong*, and Stephen Steinberg's *Turning Back: The Retreat From Racial Justice in American Thought and Policy*. The former contains chapters about racism and anti-racism in U.S. history that are particularly compelling. The latter courageously criticizes those in our own profession who have lent their voices to the chorus that has promoted and legitimized increasingly racist public policies.

The list should also include classics from the 1960s, such as William Ryan's *Blaming the Victim*, and Frances Fox Piven and Richard Cloward's *Regulating the Poor* (in its new 1990s edition), which still serve well the cause of anti-racism. I would also still recommend Karl Marx's *The Communist Manifesto* and the main communist critique of fascism, *Fascism and Social Revolution*, written by R. Dutt in 1934. The latter's analysis of the rise of fascism/nazism in Italy and Germany offers many parallels to events taking place today in the U.S. and throughout the world.

Among the works identified by *Contemporary Sociology* in its May, 1996, discussion of "Ten Most Influential Books of the Past 25 Years," two deal fairly directly with racism. They are William J. Wilson's *The Declining Significance of Race* and Edward Said's *Orientalism*. The former undoubtedly enjoys a mixed reputation among members of the Racial and Ethnic Minorities Division. Wilson is a social democrat whose work has, as Steinberg persuasively argues, provided a "left" cover for the "retreat from racial justice." Said's work was of ground-breaking significance in the struggle to overcome Eurocentrism, a continental version of racism, that has accompanied the rise of imperialism. Said and Wallerstein (*The Modern World System*, also on the *Contemporary Sociology* list of ten) point us toward the kind of international perspective we must adopt in order to struggle against racism and nationalism all over the world.

#### *Suggested Readings:*

Tomas Almaguer, *Racial Fault Lines: The Historical Origins of White Supremacy in California*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994.

Esther Ngan-Ling Chow, Doris Wilkinson and Maxine Baca Zinn (eds.), *Race, Class, & Gender: Common Bonds, Different Voices*, Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 1996.

Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*, NY: Routledge, 1990.

Adela De La Torre and Beatriz M. Pesquera (eds.), *Building With Our Hands: New Directions in Chicana Studies*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993.

Rajani Palme Dutt, *Fascism and Social Revolution: A Study of the Economics and Politics of the Extreme Stages of Capitalism in Decay*, New York: International Publishers, 1934.

James W. Loewen, *Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything Your American History Textbook Got Wrong*, Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1995.

Karl Marx and Frederich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, New York: The Monthly Review Press, 1964.

Frances Fox Piven and Richard Cloward, *Regulating the Poor: The Functions of Public Welfare*, updated edition, New York: Vintage, 1993.

Jill Quadagno, *The Color of Welfare: How Racism Undermined the War on Poverty*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1994.

William Ryan, *Blaming the Victim*, NY: Vintage Books, 1976.

Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, New York: Pantheon Books, 1978.

Stephen Steinberg, *Turning Back: The Retreat From Racial Justice in American Thought and Policy*, Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1995.

Immanuel M. Wallerstein, *The Modern World System*, New York: Academic Press, 1974.

William J. Wilson, *The Declining Significance of Race: Blacks and Changing American Institutions*, second edition, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980.

Maxine Baca Zinn and Bonnie Thornton Dill (eds.), *Women of Color in U.S. Society*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994.

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\* *Chair, Racial and Ethnic Minority Division, 1996-98.*

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SEXUAL BEHAVIOR, POLITICS AND COMMUNITIES

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As members of the Sexual Behavior, Politics, and Communities Division, we see our division as being a “forum with a philosophy” rather than as having a “mission” per se. We seek to be a particular type of network for our members rather than to accomplish a particular goal. We do, however, have a visionary goal for society in general, and that is the attainment of civil liberties regarding freedom of sexual expression and sexual being for people of all sexual orientations, genders, races, and classes. As a SSSP Division, our role in attaining this goal is the production of responsible professional scholarship about sexuality, and the provision of a forum for the meeting of academia and social activism. Academia and activism meet in the form of persons whenever academics and activists, both SSSP members and community activists working in the city hosting our annual meeting, share a panel organized by the Division. They also meet in the work Division members do, because many of us are both academics and social activists whose social activism informs our academic work, and vice versa. For many of our members, scholarship flows from our sexual self identities. Because the work of such scholars is often disparaged as “biased,” as if all social scientific teaching and research were not influenced by the personal politics of the scholar, we seek to give special support to those who are honest about the influence their own life experiences with sexuality has had on their scholarship, and about their hopes that their scholarship will have political influence. The Division seeks to provide an accessible and open forum for the discussion of sexuality, a supportive atmosphere for those doing scholarship in sexuality including activist scholars who often lack support from other sources, mentorship for young scholars, networking for both activists and scholars.

We do not believe that the society we envision, in which all individuals have freedom of sexual expression and freedom from sexual violence, has ever existed. There are particular places that might have accomplished specific aspects of this vision, e.g., in Denmark same-sex couples may marry--but cannot adopt children. Our vision remains a fantasy, and has been depicted only in representations of the imagination.

Difficulties: Because sexuality is socially constructed as shameful and privatized yet fascinating, our scholarship tends to be simultaneously trivialized and sensationalized both inside and outside academia. We encounter difficulties when we seek to have our work taken seriously and to advance in our careers. Funding for sexuality research, especially government funding, is difficult to find. Those of us who study stigmatized forms of sexuality often suffer from the contagion of stigma, a special problem for those of us who in fact share the stigmatized sexual self-identities or sexual statuses with our research subjects. Young scholars in the area of sexuality often have trouble finding mentors, sometimes because of a lack of support for their interest in the topic and sometimes because of the lack of a faculty member with knowledge of the topic. Because the field is relatively new (or rather, newly recognized as a serious scholarly area in the social sciences) the previous generations of scholars who would normally provide mentorship are small. They have been depleted even further by AIDS deaths.

Some classics and some new important books and articles in the area of sexuality are:

Richard Elkins and Dave King (eds.), *Blending Genders*, New York: Routledge, 1996.

Cynthia Epstein, *Deceptive Distinctions: Sex, Gender, and the Social Order*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1988.

Laud Humphreys, *Tearoom Trade: Impersonal Sex in Public Places* (Enlarged edition), Chicago: Aldine, 1975.

Carole Joffe, *The Regulation of Sexuality*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986.

Suzane J. Kessler and Wendy McKenna, *Gender: An Ethnomethodological Approach*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985.

Don Kulick and Margaret Willson (eds.), *Taboo: Sex, Identity and Erotic Subjectivity in Anthropological Fieldwork*, New York: Routledge, 1995.

Edward O. Laumann, et al, *The Social Organization of Sexuality: Sexual Practices in the United States*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994.

Stephen O. Murray, *American Gay*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996.

William A. Rushing, *The AIDS Epidemic: Social Dimensions of an Infectious Disease*, Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1995.

Michael Schwalbe, *Unlocking the Iron Cage: The Men's Movement, Gender Politics, and American Culture*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1996.

Charles Winick and Paul M. Kinsie, *The Lively Commerce*, New York: New American Library, 1971.

* *Chair, Sexual Behavior, Politics and Communities Division, 1994-96.*

** *Chair, Sexual Behavior, Politics and Communities Division, 1996-98.*

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## SOCIAL PROBLEMS THEORY

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James Holstein,\*\*  
Marquette University  
and Donileen Loseke,  
University of South Florida*

The Theory Division promotes the empirical study of social problems and the development of theoretical understandings of these problems. The special focus of the theory division is on the interconnections and commonalities among social problems. For example, social problems theorists might examine how unemployment or family problems help explain substance abuse or how material and symbolic resources are used by social control and human service agents to process their clients. Social problems theory problematizes commonly held or “common sense” understandings of social problems. For example, the “constructionist” perspective shifted attention from a singular focus on the magnitude and correlates of problems to a concern to how conditions come to be defined as problems.

A just world would be one in which material and social resources are available to all citizens, irrespective of gender, age, race or economic status. At its best, the work of social problems theorists represents a knowledge base relevant for policy makers and advocates who work toward the equitable distribution of resources. More importantly, social problems theory can provide a voice to those who challenge the status quo. It can level the political and social playing field by critically examining claims made by the powerful. In so doing, social problems theory can empower individuals and groups to take control of their own lives.

An important project addressing the mission of the Division is the daily work done in the classrooms of college and universities. In its best form, teaching provides students with examples of how to critically examine the world they confront. As critical thinking is reinforced throughout the curriculum, it can inform individuals’ participation in their social, political, and economic worlds. While justice can be affected through policy and law, it can also be brought about through the seemingly minor influences that individuals affect as they raise their children, make decisions to hire, fire and promote, write letters to editors, or debate social issues over coffee.

*Difficulties in Pursuing the Division’s Mission:* One difficulty is establishing a dialogue between academics and those outside academia. Those outside academic often view theory as irrelevant to what is seen as the more pressing and practical concerns of dealing with social problems on the “front lines.” Thus, we often hear “theory is no good because you can’t use it.” Alternatively, academics sometimes ignore the understandings of “street level bureaucrats” in favor of what they see as their own more “sophisticated” understandings published in academic journals. This indifferent stance toward the practical activities of social problems practitioners is an important element of the constructionist perspective that often dominates social problems discourse, allowing the analyst to see the constructed character of problems and structures. However, this indifference can limit the grounds for practical political and social activity by making it more difficult to take things as “given” or “naturally correct.” By challenging the claims of the powerful, social problems theory can also be used to question the claims made by those who challenge the status quo.

*Suggested readings on social problems theory:*

Robert M. Emerson and Sheldon Messinger, “The Micro-Politics of Trouble,” *Social Problems*, Vol. 25, No. 2, December 1977, pp. 121-134.

Kai T. Erikson, *Wayward Puritans: A Study in the Sociology of Deviance*, New York: Wiley, 1966.

Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in The Age of Reason*, translated by Richard Howard, New York: Pantheon Books, 1965.

Erving Goffman, *Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates*, Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1961.

James A. Holstein and Gale Miller (eds.), *Reconsidering Social Constructionism: Issues in Social Problems Theory*, New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1993.

John I. Kitsuse and Aaron Cicourel, "A Note on the Official Use of Statistics," *Social Problems*, Vol. 11, No. 2, Fall 1963, pp. 131-138.

Doug Maynard, "Language, Interaction and Social Problems," *Social Problems*, Vol. 35, No. 4, October 1988, pp. 311-334.

Richard Quinney, *Class, State and Crime: On the Theory and Practice of Criminal Justice*, New York: D. McKay, 1977.

Malcolm Spector and John I. Kitsuse, *Constructing Social Problems*, New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1987.

Stephen Spitzer, "Toward and Marxian Theory of Deviance," *Social Problems*, Vol. 22, No. 5, June 1975, 1975, pp. 638-651.

David Sudnow, "Normal Crimes: Sociological Features of the Penal Code in a Public Defenders Office," *Social Problems*, Vol.12, No. 3, Winter 1965, pp. 255-275.

Thomas Szasz, *The Myth of Mental Illness: Foundations of a Theory of Personal Conduct*, New York: Hoeber Harper, 1961.

Steve Woolgar and Dorothy Pawluch, "Ontological Gerrymandering: The Anatomy of Social Problems Explanations," *Social Problems*, Vol. 35, No. 3, February 1985, pp. 214-227.

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\* Chair, *Social Problems Theory Division*, 1996-98.

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SOCIOLOGY AND SOCIAL WELFARE

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A just society would be one that focuses on economic and racial justice and educational opportunity for all.

I used to think that Sweden was heading in the direction of becoming a just society, but now I question whether this was ever actually true.

Scholar activists working toward social welfare and social justice for all confront the overwhelming resistance that is being put forth by power elites in the society to maintain the status quo. Justice does not come easy. You have to pay for it. There are some within our society who have obtained wealth through unjust means, and they are having trouble moving away from it. They are not voluntarily moving away from it.

While we may aspire to a just society, our behavior has left us far short of that reality. Active forces still operate to remind us of how far we have yet to journey in our search. For example, in many states, including California, conservative forces are at work trying to convince the public that racism, sexism and other forms of discrimination are relics of the past. Last November, California voters approved Proposition 209, a cleverly worded proposition that ends most affirmative action programs in the state.

A special set of circumstances coalesced to bring Californians to take such action. A downturn in the economy, global competition in business, escalating automation, and the persistence of racism and sexism all operate to constrict and constrain us all. As if this were not enough, we have allowed the rhetoric of our ideals to delude us into a state of “genesis amnesia.” For whatever reason, whether it be greed, ignorance or denial, we are all too willing to overlook the impact of historical and current day racism and sexism as we extol the values of hard work and merit. Instead of attacking the real and complex issues facing our society, a growing number of political leaders fail us by looking for simplistic quick fix solutions. They place affirmative action in black face and practice the age old game of wedge politics. In good times and bad Black people make good scapegoats. Connect Blacks to affirmative action and the Western world’s greatest scapegoat has been created.

If there is any hope to achieve the just society, we must turn this mean spirited attack against affirmative action around. After all, affirmative action is but a conservative and incremental mechanism for facing in the direction of a just society. If we cannot measure up to this minimal challenge, there is no chance of a truly great society in our future.

Suggested Readings:

Derrick Bell, *Faces At The Bottom Of The Well: The Permanence of Racism*, New York: Basic Books, 1992.

Jonoathan Kozol, *Savage Inequalities: Children in America's Schools*, New York: Crown Publishers, 1991.

Jeremy Rifkin, *The End of Work: The Decline of the Global Labor Force and the Dawn of the Post-Market Era*, New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1995.

Cornel West, *Race Matters*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1993.

William Julius Wilson, *When Work Disappears: The World of the New Urban Poor*, New York: Knopf, 1996.

* *Chair, Sociology and Social Welfare Division, 1996-98.*

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## YOUTH, AGING AND THE LIFE COURSE

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*A Just World and the Youth, Aging and Life Course Division's Mission:* The search for a just world can begin by reflecting inward to SSSP and the Division itself -- by reflecting on the methods that guide the practice of our craft. The Division, like the discipline generally, is exploring some radical new methods and methodologies. Since the dawn of feminism and postmodernism, the researcher has become openly implicated in the research. So, for example, gender, race, class, nation, sexuality -- these embodied dimensions of human activity are being acknowledged for both researcher and researched. Through these lenses, we see more clearly the oppression that some older and younger people experience in the society. There is a surge of interest in doing research that preserves the context in which people are situated, and a new scepticism of positivist methods that perpetuate abstract categories like children and the elderly. Our members try to carry on the SSSP mission of critical inquiry into the root causes of oppression. Many of us are optimistic that these recent developments in methods and ways of thinking and writing sociologically will enhance the mission and, in turn, the quest for a just world.

*Projects that address the Mission:* One can look inside the U.S. and beyond its borders for projects that take up the mission. Exemplary within the U.S. is the Gray Panthers. Founded by Maggie Kuhn, this activist group continues to advocate organizational forms, like housing and caretaking, that are multigenerational and that address gender, class, race and age discrimination. Worldwide, we can look to many countries, perhaps especially those of Scandinavia, that base social policy in comprehensive "cradle to grave" programs. This approach cuts through the intergenerational conflicts that are fed by age-differentiated access to benefits and services, such as pervade U.S. health and welfare policies.

*Challenges:* Difficulties encountered in pursuit of the mission include the increasing corporatization of university life, with consequent restriction on critical thought. This development echoes the increasing suppression of oppositional discourse in U.S. society generally. The exciting part, however, is that opposition to this restriction and suppression is growing, and it is challenging for our Division and Society members to design ways of hearing, studying and nurturing it.

Literature in the field is vast. In reading the edited collections one would come into contact with an array of researchers who have contributed to the intellectual inquiry described above, while also having been active in forming and fortifying the Youth, Aging and Life Course Division of SSSP.

Emily Abel and Margaret Nelson (eds.), *Circles of Care: Women and Identity in Caring Work*, New York: SUNY Press, 1990.

Anne Marie Ambert, "Sociology of Sociology: The Place of Children in North American Sociology," Patricia A. Adler and Peter Adler (eds.), *Sociological Studies of Child Development*, Vol. 1, Greenwich, Conn.: JAI Press, 1986, pp. 11-31.

Phillipe Aries, *Centuries of Childhood*, New York: Vintage, 1962.

Bronwyn Davies, *Frogs and Snails and Feminist Tales: Preschool Children and Gender*, Boston: Allen and Unwin, 1989.

Penelope Eckert, *Jocks and Burnouts: Social Categories and Identity in the High School*. New York: Teachers College Press, 1989.

Carroll Estes and James Swan et al. (eds.) *The Long-Term Care Crisis: Elders Trapped in the No-Care Zone*, Newbury Park, CA: SAGE Publications, 1993.

Derek Gill and Stan Ingman (eds.), *Elder Care, Distributive Justice and the Welfare State*, New York: SUNY Press, 1994.

Jill Quadagno and Debra Street (eds.), *Aging in the Twenty-first Century*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996.

Barrie Thorne, *Gender Play: Girls and Boys in School*, New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1994

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\* *Chair, Youth, Aging and the Life Course Division, 1996-98.*

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SCHOLARSHIP IN PURSUIT OF A JUST SOCIETY: QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER THOUGHT

*Pamela Roby
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The wealth of SSSP members' thought and action about our mission, "scholarship in pursuit of a just society," is reflected in the preceding pages. As SSSP members, we are individually and collectively doing work which is important to the creation of a just and workable diverse world. We provide new vision and leadership through our research, writing, teaching, service, consulting, and advocacy. At our SSSP meetings in addition to sharing our research and teaching, we can learn from each other's activism -- our leadership of organizations and programs on our campuses and in the broader world; our testifying, organizing and writing for legislation; our serving as expert witnesses in court; our building bridges between the academy and community; and more.

As we move into the twenty-first century, I invite you to take time with colleagues at SSSP meetings to acknowledge your successes as a scholar-activist and strategize ways you can most effectively pursue and attain your goals. Step back and think about the bigger picture and your leadership in it. Drawing on your dreams as well as knowledge gained from your research and activism, join with others to consider four sets of questions.

First, what are your visions for a just world?

Second, in what arenas are you working toward these visions? What have you achieved? What have you learned through this work that might be of use to other scholar activists?

Third, what are your goals as a scholar activist for the next year?

Fourth, what challenges or difficulties might you confront as you work toward these goals? How might you address them? What assistance could you seek from others?

We can learn from each other and become more effective scholar-activists by thinking with one another about these important questions.

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## SOCIAL PROBLEMS

*Social Problems* provides a unique forum committed to publishing work that is relevant to our times. Whatever your field -- sociology, political science, economics, social work, criminology or law -- *Social Problems* can help you keep abreast of theoretical innovations that offer critical perspectives on contemporary social issues. The journal encourages the submission of interdisciplinary articles that speak to social activists and community organizers as well as senior scholars. Every issue gives you 160 pages of timely articles, and the fourth issue of each volume features an index of all the articles published over the past year. SSSP members receive a subscription to this important journal as part of their membership, and discounts on back issues.

