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### Newsletter Editor:

Karen R. Monaghan,  
University of  
Massachusetts, Boston

## Message from the Division Chair

Heather MacIndoe,  
University of Massachusetts, Boston



Greetings members and friends of the Sociology and Social Welfare Division of SSSP!

Thank you to everyone who participated in 2013 SSWD Division events at this summer's SSSP Annual Meeting in NYC. There were many engaging and thoughtful conversations. My hope is that you found useful connections and new energy. Let's make next year's gathering in San Francisco equally engaging. Please look at the listing of division sections on Page 2 and consider submitting your work.

In addition, please encourage your graduate students to enter our paper

competition and submit to the conference.

This newsletter highlights some key happenings in the division including conference sessions for next year's gathering. Thanks to those who contributed content for this edition.

Please email me with comments or suggestions for the spring/summer newsletter:

[Heather.MacIndoe@umb.edu](mailto:Heather.MacIndoe@umb.edu)

Enjoy the newsletter!

## 2014 Graduate Student Paper Competition

### Sociology and Social Welfare Division - PAPER DEADLINE: January 31, 2104

The Sociology and Social Welfare Division announces its 2014 Student Paper Competition for papers that advance our understanding of issues related to sociology and social welfare. Papers may explore and analyze any social welfare policy or institution along any dimension of interest. Qualitative and quantitative empirical analyses and theoretical papers are welcome. To be eligible for submission, papers must be: (1) written between January 1, 2013 and January 31, 2014; (2) not yet published or submitted for scholarly review; (3) authored by one or more students; (4) not co-authored by any faculty or non-student colleague; (5) total 25 pages or less, including references and tables; and (6) include a brief letter of nomination from each author's advisor, with some comments about the research.

To be considered for the award, the author must make a commitment to present the paper during SSSP annual meeting in August 2014 in San Francisco, CA. Thus it is also a requirement that an abstract is submitted through the annual meeting Call for Papers process to a Sociology and Social Welfare Division session by the January 31st deadline.

Send one copy of the paper with a cover letter and the faculty nomination letter to:

Richard K. Caputo, PhD  
Chair, SSWD Student Paper Competition  
Wurzweiler School of Social Work, Yeshiva University  
500 West 185<sup>th</sup> Street, New York, NY 10033  
[caputo@yu.edu](mailto:caputo@yu.edu)

The winner will receive a \$200 cash award at the SSSP 2014 Annual Meeting August 15-17, 2014 in San Francisco, CA, registration for the meetings, a ticket to the Awards Banquet and payment of their 2014 SSSP membership dues.

Committee Members: Richard Caputo (Chair), Sondra Fogel, University of South Florida and Keith Bentele, University of Massachusetts, Boston.

Please contact [Heather.MacIndoe@umb.edu](mailto:Heather.MacIndoe@umb.edu) with any questions.



## Sociology and Social Welfare Division

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We're on the Web!

See us at:

<http://www.sssp1.org>

## 2014 division conference sessions

Submit to the sessions here:

<http://www.sssp1.org/index.cfm/m/565/fuseaction/ssspsession2.publicView>

### Sole Sponsored Sociology & Social Welfare Division Sessions

**1. Privatization in the Human Services: A War on Poverty or a War on the Poor? (THEMATIC)** Organizer: Heather MacIndoe, University of Massachusetts Boston

**2. Institutional Logics and the Modern Welfare State: Examining Service, Accountability and Advocacy in the Public and Nonprofit Sectors (REGULAR PAPER)** Organizer: Emily Barman, Boston University

**3. Getting from Social Knowledge to Social Change: A Roundtable Exploration of Social Research (PAPERS IN THE ROUND)**

Organizer: Vibeke Nielsen, Aalborg University

\*\*Student paper competition winner to present in this session\*\*

\*\*One roundtable reserved for "Austerity and Stimulus" papers\*\*

### Co-Sponsored Division Sessions

**1. The Culture and Theory of Neoliberalism: Its Meaning and Effects (REGULAR PAPER)** Organizer: Jennifer Zelnick, Touro College

Co-sponsors: Labor Studies, Sociology & Social Welfare

**2. Shifting Gears in Poverty Programs: From Work 1st to Economic Security (REGULAR PAPER)** Organizer: Linda Houser, Widener University

Co-sponsors: Sociology & Social Welfare, Poverty Class and Inequality

**3. Consumer Credit, Debt and Breaking Barriers to Inequality (REGULAR PAPER)** Organizer: Keith Bentele, University of Massachusetts Boston

Co-sponsors: Sociology & Social Welfare, Poverty Class and Inequality

**4. Constructing Theories of Poverty, Inequality, and Policy: Potentials and Limitations (REGULAR PAPER)** Organizer: Nicole D'Anna, SUNY Albany

Co-sponsors: Conflict, Social Action, and Change, Social Problems Theory, Sociology and Social Welfare

**5. Comparative Approaches to Social Welfare and Well being (REGULAR PAPER)** Organizer: Matthew Eddy, Minot State

Co-sponsors: Global, Sociology & Social Welfare

**6. Community Coalitions and Collective Impacts to Address Poverty (THEMATIC)** Organizer: Frank Ridzi, LeMoyne College

Co-sponsors: Community Research and Development, Sociology & Social Welfare

**7. Are You Being Served?: Institutional Ethnographies of Social Services and Frontline Workers in an Age of Austerity (THEMATIC)**

Organizer: Matthew Strang York University

Co-sponsors: Institutional Ethnography, Labor Studies, Sociology & Social Welfare

**SUBMISSION DEADLINE: January 31, 2014**

## RESOURCES

## From the Blogosphere

*a selection of interesting finds*

### Social Shutter

<http://socialshutter.blogspot.com/p/about.html> "Social Shutter is a weekly blog capturing community life through a camera lens. Photo essays and single captioned photo submissions are welcome."

### orgtheory.net

<http://orgtheory.wordpress.com/> "A group blog written by Teppo Felin, Kieran Healy, Brayden King, Omar Lizardo and Fabio Rojas. We are b-school/sociology researchers whose work touches on org theory in some way. The blog is about organization theory and related areas such as sociology, economics, political science, and social theory. We also include humorous or entertaining posts, just to mix things up. There are also guest bloggers."

### Urban Affairs Review – RSS Feeds

<http://uar.sagepub.com/rss/> "Urban Affairs Review and many other journals published by Sage (i.e. Urban Studies, Action Research) have RSS feeds that can inform you of current and archived issues. RSS feeds provide web content, or summaries of web content, together with links to the full versions of the content. The RSS feeds allow you to bring together the latest tables of contents for your favourite SAGE journals into your web page or RSS reader. There is no limit to how many SAGE journal tables of contents you can receive via RSS feeds."

### Everyday Sociology

<http://nortonbooks.typepad.com/everydaysociology/> "Everyday Sociology deals with the pressing sociological issues faced by our culture. The blog addresses rising cultural issues such as violence, education, privacy, and marriage equality through the lens of sociology."

### Classroom to Capitol

<http://melindaklewis.com/> "A resource for social workers, instructors and students in the areas of community organizing, policy analysis and advocacy, and organizational development – a tool in your quest for social justice."

### The Sociological Eye

<http://sociological-eye.blogspot.com/> "The sociological eye means looking at things for what they are, as best we can given the blinders of interest and ideology, of cliché and ritualized belief. It is not an individual enterprise. Chaining our efforts together as a long-term network of theorists and researchers improves one's own sociological vision, provided we make the effort. The sociological eye holds up a periscope above the tides of political and intellectual partisanship, spying out the patterns of social life in every direction".

### The Political Social Worker

<http://www.politicalsocialworker.org/> "This blog, managed by Rachel L. West, MSW, LMSW, ptovdies news on public policy, politics, social justice and advocacy through the lens of social work."

### Work in Progress

<http://workinprogress.oowsection.org/>

"The Organizations, Occupations and Work blog exists to disseminate a sociological perspective on all things related to organizations, occupations and work, to highlight the ways in which sociological perspectives provide illuminating complements and alternatives to the dominant mainstream economic discourse."

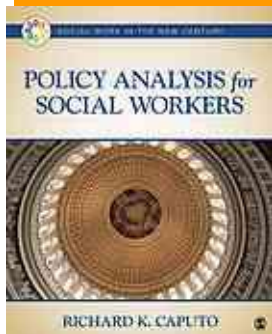


## Announcements and Member News

### **NEW BOOKS:**

**Richard Caputo's** (Wurzweiler School of Social Work, Yeshiva University) new book, **Policy Analysis for Social Workers**, is available from Sage Publications (\$60.00). A comprehensive step-by-step guide to understanding the process of policy development and analysis for effective advocacy. This book teaches the purpose of policy and its relation to social work values, discusses the field of policy studies and the various kinds of analysis, and highlights the necessary criteria (effectiveness, efficiency, equity, political feasibility, social acceptability, administrative, and technical feasibility) for evaluating public policy.

More info at: <http://www.sagepub.com/books/Book237282?siteId=sage-us&prodTypes=any&q=Caputo&fs=1>.



### **MEMBER NEWS:**

**Kelsie Chesnut**, graduate student in the Criminology, Law and Society program at UC Irvine, was awarded an NSF Graduate Research Fellowship in Law and Social Sciences. Her research focuses on for-profit and non-profit supervised visitation providers in California, as mechanisms of informal punishment. Once mandated to these services by family court judges, parents' future visitation rights to their children are held hostage by these unregulated, mostly privatized, social service agencies. Though family court is typically seen as distinct from the criminal justice system, it often reproduces the same punitive outcomes. This research seeks to examine the effects of privatization of public services outside of the prison context, as well as the extended reach of the punitive arm of law and the ways in which it is seeping into unintended spaces.

### **CALL FOR PAPERS:**

#### **16th Annual Chicago Ethnography Conference**

The Department of Sociology at Northwestern University is pleased to announce the 16th Annual Chicago Ethnography Conference. This annual graduate student conference is hosted on a rotating basis by one of several Chicago-area Sociology departments, including DePaul University, Illinois Institute of Technology, Loyola University, Northern Illinois University, Northwestern University, University of Notre Dame, the University of Chicago, and University of Illinois at Chicago. The conference provides an opportunity for graduate students to share their ethnographic scholarship with one another and get feedback from faculty and other graduate students based in the Chicago area and beyond. This year's conference will be held at Northwestern University in Evanston, IL on March 15th, 2014.

Graduate students in all academic disciplines are invited to present their original ethnographic research. While preference will be given to those who have conducted substantial fieldwork, interviewing methods are acceptable. Papers in all substantive areas are welcome. The theme of this year's conference is cultural production and reproduction. In addition to topics that relate to the theme, graduate students are welcome to submit work on topics including but not limited to: class, crime, education, ethnicity, gender, family, globalization, health and illness, immigration, medicine, methodology, performance ethnography, race, religion, sexualities, social movements, technology, urban poverty, and work and employment.

To submit an abstract, please complete the online submission form: <http://chicagoethnography.wordpress.com/>. The abstract should not exceed 250 words. The deadline for submissions is January 15th, 2014. All presenters will be notified of acceptance by February 1st. Participants will be asked to submit their full papers to the conference committee by March 1st.

## Best JSSW Article 2013



**WINNER**

**Karen H. Bancroft, University of Washington**

**Zones of Exclusion: Urban Spatial Policies,  
Social Justice, and Social Services**

Across the United States homeless persons, prostitutes, and drug and alcohol users are subject to policies that severely limit their freedom of movement. These new policies create spatial exclusion zones that deny these groups the right to inhabit or traverse large areas of their cities, particularly in the downtown cores, where treatment centers, shelters, food banks, soup kitchens, government services, and other social services are typically concentrated. In this paper, I examine these new spatial exclusionary policies (with a focus on Washington State's policies), present a brief historical account of socio-spatial practices, contextualize the current spatial laws, and end with the implications of current exclusionary laws for social work practice, policy, and research.

## 2013 Graduate Student Paper Competition

Congratulations to our winner of the 2013 SSW Graduate Student Paper Competition! See the announcement of the 2014 competition (page 1) and encourage your students to submit their research.



**WINNER**

**Nicole D'Anna, University at Albany, SUNY**

**Revising the Welfare Queen:  
Calling for a New Approach to Welfare Analysis**

Welfare discourse in the U.S. takes place almost wholly within a gendered-racist and class-based framework that is held in place and perpetuated by familiar and powerful public identities and controlling images (e.g., the "Welfare Queen"). By reorienting public thinking to include welfare participants and the poor as full citizens "deserving" of resources and support, the policy discourse can be revised to promote legislation and programs that aim to ameliorate poverty. In order to achieve this policy revision, the Welfare Queen myth and similar stigmatizations must be replaced with a nuanced understanding of poor individuals and their needs. The development of this understanding can and should be achieved through the adoption of an intersectional research paradigm. This paper begins to address two gaps in the literature by making a clear call for intersectional research and by explicitly discussing welfare participants as citizens. Welfare participants can be offered pathways out of poverty through formal education and job training; state welfare programs can conduct analyses to identify areas of regional labor market demand to help target opportunities. As a starting point, I discuss examples of education/training options available to welfare participants through several state welfare programs and conclude with suggested future research.



## BOOK REVIEW

## Floating City: A Rogue Sociologist Lost and Found in New York's Underground Economy

by Sudhir Venkatesh, Columbia University

Reviewed by Ryan M. Whalen, University of Massachusetts, Boston



It is not surprising that most social scientists will not become bestselling authors. As many of us know, social science literatures can be deeply theoretical or highly technical. At times, conceptual frameworks, large data sets and complex regression models can feel dizzying, even for the most trained reader. Offering a short reprieve from the formalities of academia, Sudhir Venkatesh's popular books are refreshingly gritty and approachable. In his first book, *Gang Leader for a Day*, Venkatesh opened the doors to the culture of drugs, violence and inequality that once defined Chicago's housing projects. His most recent work, *Floating City: A Rogue Sociologist Lost and Found in New York's Underground Economy*, again attempts to strike the unique balance between entertainment and scholarship. While less successful at finding the balance, when compared to *Gang Leader for a Day*, *Floating City* engages readers by providing a startling look at the impacts and implications of one city's vibrant underground economy.

*Floating City* moves out of the Chicago housing projects and into the streets, apartments, art galleries and porn shops of New York City. Following several different subjects as they navigate the sex and drug trades, Venkatesh challenges the conventional sociological theory that individuals' movements are restricted by social boundaries based on factors such as race, ethnicity or class. While his previous research in Chicago found individuals unable or unwilling to escape the housing project, *Floating City* follows subjects as they "float" across cultural, ethnic and geographic boundaries. To support the concept of "float", Venkatesh primarily traces three lives: a wealthy Ivy League graduate who supplements her trust fund working as a high end Madame, a Harlem street level crack dealer who is constantly fighting his way into the lucrative downtown cocaine market and an immigrant porn shop owner who gets in over his head when trying to make ends meet.

Venkatesh focuses on New York's positioning as a center for global commerce to help explain the concept of "float". That is, the speed and volume of commerce in New York instills the sense that in order to survive, you must "float". He explains, "because New York created connections at dizzying speed, but many of them didn't last-the key to success was the talent to use and lose improvised social ties" (p.270). Constantly attempting to identify new ways to prosper in the underground economy, Venkatesh's subjects moved in and out of established social groups and neighborhoods. Their successes and failures were characterized by their ability to re-invent themselves and their products to meet the evolving demands of New York's diverse clients.

While the subjects are inherently interesting and provide sufficient data to support informal theories and keep readers engaged, snowball-sampling efforts are largely unsuccessful and limit the generalizability of the findings. For example, while a group of prostitutes from the porn shop offer insightful data surrounding the underground sex trade, a group of Wall Street bankers who solicit paid sex fail to provide data of much substance.

*Floating City's* major strengths lie in Venkatesh's ability to engage a wide audience through candor and accessible prose. Venkatesh clearly describes his research limitations, as well as personal and professional struggles, providing readers with a firsthand view of the challenges that a social science researcher faces. While the long nights in bars and porn shops searching for subjects and data were certainly grueling, one of the most difficult challenges Venkatesh faced originates with his own peers.

Throughout his work, Venkatesh describes his attempts to pursue innovative research for wide audiences in the face of constant judgment from his peers in academia. While pursuing documentaries and popular books, Venkatesh continually faced criticism from traditionalist sociologists within his department. A senior colleague commented, "It will never take the place of real, deep sociology. Just don't be confused about that" (p.167) after viewing a documentary Venkatesh had produced to reach a wider audience. The author's clear and honest treatment of these challenges is particularly refreshing and engaging. As the title reflects, *Floating City* is as much about Venkatesh's journey as a "rogue sociologist" as it is about his research subjects. At times, his personal reflections are the most interesting portions of the work.

Despite its strengths, *Floating City* feels disjointed and may be reflective of the author's struggles to develop a strong unifying theme to explain the concept of "float". While he continually attempts to describe how his subjects have adopted a transient existence to survive in the underground economy, the theory is weakened by the limited amount of data collected. Furthermore, if the reader is not diligent to recall the theme of "float" and to remind themselves of how it challenges traditional sociological conceptions, the work can feel like a collection of interesting anecdotes.

Readers should remember that *Floating City* is a book positioned for a wide range of audiences and does not claim to respond to the rigors of academic research and writing. In this respect, the book is successful in its ability to engage the reader. Those looking for findings that will break down the walls of sociological theory should certainly look elsewhere.

## Division-Sponsored Resolutions

Each year, the SSSP membership proposes resolutions to publicly declare their sentiments on social justice issues, thereby creating a channel for greater visibility and more direct influence upon a variety of "publics," i.e., fellow activists, scholars, students, decision-makers, social action groups, voters, and others. This year, the SSWD Division sponsored two resolutions and is grateful to out-going SSWD Division Chair, Joyce Bialik, PhD, for her work on these important issues.

### **RESOLUTION: Racial Disparities in Drug Law Enforcement**

Division Sponsors: Sociology and Social Welfare Division and the Drinking and Drugs Division.

The resolution calls for policy makers to address racial disparities in drug law enforcement and resultant disparities in incarceration rates. The SSSP opposes the discriminatory application of "stop, question and frisk" which affects more than half a million New Yorkers each year and unfairly targets Black and Latino Youth. The SSSP supports the adoption of police reform legislation to end this discriminatory policy and bring accountability to the NYC Police Department.

The resolution was sent to the governor of New York, legislative leaders in Albany, the Mayor of NYC, District Attorneys of NYC and members of the NYC Council.

### **RESOLUTION: School to Prison Pipeline, Affecting Low Income Students of Color, Especially Black Males**

Division Sponsors: Sociology and Social Welfare Division; Educational Problems Division; Youth, Aging, and the Life Course Division; Racial and Ethnic Minorities Division; Disabilities Division; and the Sport, Leisure, and the Body Division.

The resolution calls for NYC leaders and legislators to implement policies that reduce suspensions and school-based arrests and reduce the number of students who enter the juvenile justice system. The SSSP supports the implementation of positive alternatives to protect students' human rights to education and dignity, particularly for young Black males. The SSSP calls for adequate resources within schools to promote the use of restorative practices, Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS), and peer mediation.

The resolution was sent to the Mayor, the New York City Department of Education, the New York State Education Department, and City and State legislators.

### **About the Sociology and Social Welfare Division:**

The SSWD Division's mission is to provide opportunities for scholars, researchers, students, activists, and others to share and discuss their scholarship and experiences in a supportive setting. In order to further the goal of a just world, the Division seeks to integrate theory, empirical findings, and practice of both researchers and grassroots activists.

### **Want to Get Involved with the Division?**

- Write a book review for our next newsletter
- Tell us about your dissertation project, new article or new grant.
- Write a brief paragraph publicizing your latest research
- Advertise a job opening or upcoming conference

Contact Heather MacIndoe at [Heather.MacIndoe@umb.edu](mailto:Heather.MacIndoe@umb.edu)

**Thanks to 2011-2013 Division Chair, Joyce Bialik, for spearheading two important policy resolutions that were confirmed at the 2013**