

SOCIETY FOR THE STUDY OF SOCIAL PROBLEMS – Fall 2019, Issue Two  
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Hello Sociology & Social Welfare Division Members,

The U.S. President is being charged with abuse of power in the House of Representatives. In this environment, SSSP President, Heather M. Dalmage, calls on us to explore why we are doing sociology in particular ways and to mobilize our sociological imaginations toward Dreaming Transformation. Submissions for the 2020 Annual Meeting in San Francisco are due January 31. Below you will find a list of Sociology and Social Welfare Division Sessions. Please, submit and encourage your colleagues with related interests to submit their work.

### CO-CHAIR ELECTION: Results

Congratulations Arturo Baiocchi for being elected Co-Chair for the Division. The main duty of the new co-chair position will be to work with the chair at the annual meeting to select annual conference sessions and coordinate with division members.

A special thank you to division member, Jen Scott, Assistant Professor, School of Social Work, Louisiana State University who stood for election.

### CHANGES TO THE MISSION STATEMENT

Our current mission statement says:

*Our division's mission is to develop and promote an understanding of and knowledge about the social institutions, structures and processes that create and perpetuate inequality, exclusion and oppression...[we] support the dissemination of research and conversations that assist in the creation and development of public policies, affirmative actions and social services through the application of social science knowledge, perspectives, methods and technology.*

At our division meeting in August we discussed condensing and updating it. Below is a suggested replacement to our current mission that includes a VISION and MISSION

statement. Please send your thoughts, suggestions, revisions, re-articulations to me to inform a revised mission statement.

**VISION:** The Sociology and Social Welfare Division supports a vision of a just society.

**MISSION:** Our division promotes theory informed, applied scholarship about social institutions, structures, and processes to foster understanding, and also speed remedy of inequality, exclusion and oppression.

#### **DIVISION BOOK REVIEW PROJECT: Call for book recommendations**

The Sociology and Social Welfare (S&SW) division releases a newsletter three times annually with a section is dedicated to review a book published by an author who is an active member of our division (or review of a book held in high regard by one or more active members of the division). This newsletter features a review of "Surviving Poverty: Creating Sustainable Ties among the Poor" by Joan Maya Mazelis (NYU, 2017).

#### **BOOK REVIEW:**

"Exiled in America: Life on the Margins in a Residential Hotel" by Christopher P. Dum (Columbia University Press, 2016).

#### **Overview**

The author of this book provided an account of Boardwalk Motel, a single-room occupancy (SRO) dwelling occupied by socially and financially marginalized people with few housing alternatives. The author first provided readers with an historical timeline of hotels and motels in the United States as they existed in a post-World War II environment. He wrote that increased mobility with the affordability of automobiles, increased prosperity, and the growth of chain hotels resulted in the demise of people staying at small motels. A consequence of this was deterioration in quality of these SROs and new clientele starting to move into these motels. These SROs also started to gain a reputation of being havens for alcoholics, drug addicts, homeless, the mentally ill, and prostitutes. A variety of state agencies began to use SROs as a last-resort housing populations and owners of these motels saw this arrangement as a secure income source.

The author of this book focuses on the stigma associated with people, such as the residents of Boardwalk Motel. The author provided real-world accounts of residents at this motel who experienced discrimination for living in this motel. The author of this book also shared his own personal encounters with discrimination for interacting with full-time residents who lived full-time at the motel (and for taking up part-time residence at the motel).

The author of this book used an open systems and closed systems approach to understand Boardwalk Motel as an alternative community that exists within the workings of a larger community (i.e., Dutchland). The author observed that the residents of this motel constructed a highly structured subcommunity that is governed every day by formal and informal rules and regulations. The author also delineated and explored the interrelations that exist between motel residents, local government officials, and members of Dutchland.

#### **Contribution**

The author of this book provides a comprehensive first-hand account of what it is like to live in a low-budget SRO housing those marginalized in society (i.e., alcoholics, drug addicts, felons, the mentally ill, and homeless populations). The author is able to move beyond anecdotal accounts of living conditions that would come from scholars who have only interviewed people who lived in an SRO or who only spent a brief period of time with the people. The author of this book was also able to pose an important contemporary question: was community created by the members of this residential motel since marginalized groups of people are coming together from different walks of life?

### Strengths

The author provided a concise account of his experience at this residential motel in only 224 pages. The author showed great skill in presenting the data he collected as an observer and interviewer during his time as a resident of Boardwalk Motel. He presented this narrative in a way that forces readers to think about groups that are traditionally marginalized in a new way. The author brought clarity to the stigma associated with this marginalized population and complex problems it creates.

### Limitations

The limitations of this book are associated with those common in any ethnography. The author selected the Boardwalk Motel to study and was only able to observe a small percentage of residents who lived there. The author knew little about other SROs and focused specifically on the case used for this study.

The ethnographic approach to conducting research is laborious and detailed in the collection of data. The findings from ethnography are rather subjective and are not very generalizable to other populations. The author of this book was only a part-time resident of this SRO and may not have been able to see everything that occurred at this motel. The author was also an outsider who has never been involved with the type of activities the full-time residents took part in. The author was also only able to interview a few of the residents at this motel. There were many residents who chose not to be interviewed/observed and others who chose to isolate themselves from the public.

### Summary

The author delivered on the promise in the title by providing a detailed explanation of his experiences as a resident of Boardwalk Motel. In his narrative he provides a scenic understanding of his regular encounters with socially and financially disadvantaged residents who are living their life on the margins. This book would serve valuable for multiple audiences - the undergraduate student who is interested in ethnography or learning more about groups that are disadvantaged in society, and the advanced undergraduate student, graduate student, or scholar who has reason to gain greater insight and is encouraged to learn more about the challenges of marginalized groups as they attempt to reintegrate back into a community. This book could easily be required reading for students at the undergraduate or graduate level and for current professionals.

### BOOK REVIEW SUBMISSION

The S&SW newsletter is seeking one more title to review for the 2019-2020 academic year. Please email your recommendations to book review Chair, Michael O. Johnston, PhD.,

assistant professor, Division of Social and Behavioral Sciences, William Penn University. [johnstonmo@wmpenn.edu](mailto:johnstonmo@wmpenn.edu). We are also seeking a member to serve as co-chair for book review team. If interested, please email Michael.

#### 2020 ANNUAL MEETING SESSIONS

Submit your work for the San Francisco meeting by January 31, 2020 at

<https://www.sssp1.org/index.cfm/m/788/>

- 31 Parity and Equity in Health and Disability
- 34 Inclusivity: Hope and Potential for Universal Design
- 70 Hopeful Interventions in Families
- 86 There is Hope: Advances in Research, Intervention, and Policy regarding Social Determinants of Health
- 93 CRITICAL DIALOGUE: Small Wins: Institutional Ethnography, Social Work, and Social Welfare
- 108 End Inequality: Transformations in Disparities Research and Interventions
- 120 Revisiting the Sociological Imagination: Theory and Practice
- 125 CRITICAL DIALOGUE: New Worlds and Utopian Visions: Strategies to Subvert Neoliberalism
- 126 CRITICAL DIALOGUE: Sociology and Social Work: Embedded Tensions
- 127 New Work in Social Welfare: Theory and Practice

#### NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTIONS INVITED

We encourage members to submit news such as publications, new appointments, and other professional accomplishments for inclusion in a future newsletter. Suggestions and inquiries about less conventional content are also welcome— consider editorials, book reviews, teaching notes, department/program profiles, calls for contributions to journals and edited books, obituaries... Please direct inquiries or submissions to the current Division Chair, Ethan J. Evans at [ethan.evans@csus.edu](mailto:ethan.evans@csus.edu), or Monica Linhthasack at [m linhthasack@csus.edu](mailto:m linhthasack@csus.edu).

#### PUBLICATIONS:

The following publications have recently been released by S&SW Division members

- Cabin, William. 2019. "Home Care Nurses Claim Medicare Ignores Social Determinants of Health." *Home Health Care Management and Practice*. 31(4).
- Cabin, William. 2019. "'Less Is Better' Philosophy Decrease Home Health Aide Utilization to Increase Reimbursement in Medicare Home Health." *Home Health Care Management and Practice*. 31(4).
- Hourigan, Kristen Lee. 2019. "'The gentleman who killed my daughter': Exploring the effects of cultural proximity on forgiveness after an extreme offense." *Journal of Ethnographic and Qualitative Research*. 13, 212-230.

Hourigan, Kristen Lee. 2019 "Narrative Victimology: Speaker, Audience, Timing." In *The Emerald Handbook of Narrative Criminology*. Edited by Jennifer Fleetwood, Lois Presser, Sveinung Sandberg, and Thomas Ugelvik.

Evans, Ethan and Thompson, Matthew. 2019. "Questions and Answers from Research Centers on Gun Violence." *Health & Social Work*. 44(4):221-23.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

William Cabin, Assistant Professor of Social Work at the College of Public Health at Temple, was chosen by his alma mater, the University of Michigan School of Social Work (UMSSW), as a Distinguished Alumnus for 2019. This award is made to distinguished alumni who have made an exceptional impact on the profession of social work, on their community(ies) and/or on social work education. To read more about Bill and this honor, please visit <https://ssw.umich.edu/news/articles/2019/10/30/60419-three-alumni-honored-with-ssw-distinguished-alumni-awards>.

"The Social Construction of the Medicare Home Health Benefit to Exclude Vulnerable Elderly," (107551) has been accepted to the Research Committees session "Social and Life-Course Determinants of Late Life Health" (15328) at the IV ISA Forum of Sociology (July 14-18, 2020) to be held in Porto Alegre, Brazil.

*Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare*. I highly recommend that you submit your work to this journal for potential publication (See [www.scholarworks.wmich.edu/jssw](http://www.scholarworks.wmich.edu/jssw)).