

Sociology and Social Welfare Division Newsletter

Spring 2007

Special points of interest:

- **Student paper competition deadline approaching!**
- **Call for Papers on Social Welfare announced!**
- **Nominations for prestigious SSSP Award due soon!**
- **Annual Meeting information included!**
- **Resources for teaching revealed!**

Message from the Chair

Greetings to members and friends of the Sociology and Social Welfare Division! Online registration for the 57th SSSP Annual Meeting to be held in New York City will open up soon. Log on to <http://www.sssp1.org/index.cfm/m/277> in a few weeks.

The main item I would like to remind Division members about is the annual student paper competition. The deadline is approaching – April 2, 2007 – and I have not received any submissions to date. Students should send their papers to me at Sociology Department, ZU 806, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL 60115. Feel free to email me with questions at doakley@niu.edu.

Sincerely,

Deirdre Oakley

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S&SW Student Paper Competition

Deadline: **Monday, April 2, 2007**

Papers should focus on social activism, social justice, empowerment, policy or any welfare-related issues. Qualitative and quantitative empirical analyses and theoretical papers are welcome. To be eligible for submission, papers must be: 1) written between January 2006 and April 2007 and not published or submitted for scholarly review; 2) authored by one or more students and not coauthored by faculty or a colleague who is not a student; 3) 25 pages or fewer, including references and tables; 3) accompanied by a letter from a faculty member at the student's university nominating the paper for the competition. Send two copies of the paper along with the letter of support to Deirdre Oakley, Department of Sociology, Northern Illinois University, De Kalb, IL 60115 (doakley@niu.edu). The SSWD competition winner receives a cash prize of \$150 plus 2007 SSSP conference and banquet registration. Two additional students will receive honorable mentions.

SSSP Social Action Award

Nominations are now open for the 2007 Social Action Award. Members of the Society are urged to submit names of organizations as nominees for this award.

The Social Action Award, established in 1991, is awarded to a not-for-profit organization in the city/area hosting the annual meeting and carries with it a stipend of \$1,000.

The award is a fitting expression of the overall purpose of the Society for the Study of Social Problems, which is concerned with applying scientific methods and theories to the study of social problems. SSSP aims to bring together scholars, practitioners and advocates to examine and understand social problems in order to further solutions and develop social policy based on knowledge.

When this award was established, SSSP described its purpose as follows:

The organization selected for this recognition should have a history of challenging social inequalities, promoting social change, and/or working toward the empowerment of marginalized peoples. Its work must demonstrate sensitivity to and respect for cultural diversity.

Preference is given to small, local agencies in the New York, NY area rather than large organizations or chapters of nationally based organizations. The main criterion is the extent to which the organization reaches out to the disadvantaged in the community and uses innovative means for dealing with local social conditions.

The award will be presented on August 11, 2007 at the SSSP Awards Banquet in New York, NY. Deadline for nominations is **April 1, 2007**.

2007 Social Action Award Nomination

(Please include the following information when making a nomination/s.)

- Your name, address, phone number, and email address
- The name of the organization you wish to nominate
- The name, address, phone number and email address of the organizational contact person
- Give an overview of the organization's work.
- Indicate why you believe that the nominee merits the award.
- Please submit any supportive materials you believe would be helpful to the committee.

Marjorie DeVault

Department of Sociology, 302 Maxwell Hall

Syracuse University

Syracuse, NY 13244-1090

W: 315-443-4030; F: 315-443-4597

Email: mdevault@syr.edu

Book Review

Why America Lost the War on Poverty, and How to Win It

Forthcoming (2007) University of North Carolina Press

By Frank Stricker, Professor of History and Interdisciplinary Studies

California State University, Dominguez Hills, CA 90747

This book provides a comprehensive critical history of America's multiple wars on poverty from 1950 to 2006. Stricker argues that neither vocational training programs nor economic growth have been successful at eliminating poverty. Throughout the 20th century, the U.S. almost always has had a shortage of jobs and a good deal of hidden unemployment. Vocational training programs may be useful but do not create jobs. Economic growth never continues long enough to fulfill to significantly reduce poverty. In fact, since the early 70s, poverty rates have not gone below 11%.

Stricker's book urges all sides to be honest: if we do not want to cure poverty, we should say so. If we want to cut it, we need to expand decent jobs and government income programs. And we must direct national resources away from the rich and toward lower and middle income Americans.

Likely audiences for the book include: (1) graduate students in academic disciplines such as sociology, politics, labor studies, history, economics, human resources, and public policy; (2) citizen activists, organizers and unionists; (3) policy-makers and scholars. Feel free to contact Professor Stricker at: frnkstricker@aol.com.

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Part I: The Golden Age of Laissez Faire? The 50s

Chapter 1. The 1950s: Limited Government, Limited Affluence

Part II: Wars on Poverty: The 60s

Chapter 2. Planning the War on Poverty: Fixing the Poor or Fixing the Economy?

Chapter 3. Evaluating the War on Poverty: The Conservatism of Liberalism

Chapter 4. Moynihan, The Dissenters, and the Racialization of Poverty: A Liberal Turning Point That Did Not Turn

Chapter 5. Interlude: Statistics and Theory of Unemployment and Poverty: Lessons from the 60s and the Post-War Era

Part III: Toward a War on the Poor: The 70s and 80s

Chapter 6. The Politics of Poverty and Welfare in the 70s: From Nixon to Carter

Chapter 7. Too Much Work Ethic: One Reason Poverty Rates Stopped Falling in the 70s, and the Stories That Were Told About It

Chapter 8. Cutting Poverty or Cutting Welfare: Conservatives Attack Liberalism

Chapter 9. Reagan, Reaganomics, and the American Poor, 1980-1992

Part IV: The Poor You Will Always Have With You-If You Don't Do the Right Thing: 1993-Present

Chapter 10. Staying Poor in the Clinton Boom: Welfare Reform, the Nearby Labor Force, and the Limits of the Work Ethic

Chapter 11. Bush and Beyond: On Solving and Not Solving Poverty Bibliographical Essay: Important Works of History for the Student of Poverty in Post War America

Book Review

Jobs Aren't Enough: Toward a New Economic Mobility for Low-Income Families

Published (2006) by Temple University Press

By Roberta Rehner Iversen, Associate Professor in the School of Social Policy & Practice at the University of Pennsylvania and Annie Laurie Armstrong, founder of Business Government Community Connections, a research and evaluation firm in Seattle

This ethnographic examination of economic mobility among low-income families illuminates the fact that, nationally, more than one in four working parents today is unable to support his or her family through employment, even with a full-time year-round job. *Jobs Aren't Enough* is based on a five-city, five-year, grant-funded study of low-income families who are trying to move up through job training and work. The research cities are Philadelphia, New Orleans, Milwaukee, St. Louis, and Seattle. The five-year study period, 1998 through mid-2003, spanned economic boom and bust. The authors argue that prevailing ideas about the roles of opportunity, merit, and “bootstraps” initiative in economic mobility are outdated. They use theory from a strand of economic sociology to move toward new premises, based in part on findings that multiple social institutions (family, education, labor market, and public policy) intersect to influence economic mobility. Moreover, the direction of institutional influence is simultaneously vertical and horizontal. As such, new premises involve the notion of collaboration and mutuality across social institutions, the recognition that mobility is a dynamic process that requires human and social capital, and the realization that employment choices, at both individual and firm levels, involve cognitive and relationally-embedded decision processes. In their conclusion, the authors argue that it is necessary to revitalize the foundational American “public will,” toward greater equity and productivity for all players in the mobility matrix. Reviewers note the book’s relevance for courses in sociology, social welfare, urban studies, labor studies, and policy study. Feel free to contact Professor Iversen at: riversen@sp2.upenn.edu for questions about course use.

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- Chapter 1: Are jobs enough for economic mobility?
- Chapter 2: From the old to the new economic mobility
- Chapter 3: The parents : their backgrounds, lives, and locations
- Chapter 4: The children : their lives and worlds
- Chapter 5: Workforce development : systems and networks
- Chapter 6: Yesterday's firms and today's families : connects and disconnects
- Chapter 7: Children's schools, parents' work, and policy : alignment and misalignment
- Chapter 8: Jobs aren't enough : toward an agenda for family economic mobility
- Afterword : what lies ahead for the New Orleans families after Hurricane Katrina?
- App. A: Frequently asked questions about the research in this book : research design
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- App. C: Resident family compositions and family story references

Call for Papers

Deadline: **September 30, 2007**

Recent or Contemporary History of Social Welfare

Edited by Richard Caputo

We are interested in manuscripts dealing with changes in social welfare policy that have occurred in the past quarter century, beginning with the 1980 election of Ronald Reagan through the G. W. Bush administration. A previous issue of *The Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare* covered the history of the early Reagan years. Our aim is to complement and update that issue.

We seek topics relating to changes in the processes, products, or performances of social welfare policies and programs. In addition to the more obvious topics as the morphing of AFDC to TANF, the addition of prescription drug benefits to Medicare, the expansion of the Earned Income Tax Credit, other suggested subjects might include:

- Tax Policy
- Child Welfare
- Mental Health
- Housing
- Criminal Justice
- Budgetary Politics
- Immigration
- the Social Security "Crisis"
- Disabilities and SSI
- Republican Control of Congress
- Supreme Court Cases: Federalism, Abortion, Gun Control

Please send Microsoft Word copies of completed manuscripts limited to 25-30 pages of text to the Special Editor, Richard Caputo, caputo@yu.edu. All manuscripts will be peer reviewed. Please include a title page with author name, affiliation, address, email address, phone and FAX numbers. A second page without the author's name should include the title and an abstract of 150 words or less.

Research in Brief

Do Video Games Kill?

Published in 2007 *Contexts* 6(1): p.13-17

By Karen Sternheimer

In 2000 the FBI issued a report on school rampage shootings, finding that their rarity prohibits the construction of a useful profile of a "typical" shooter. In the absence of a simple explanation, the public symbolically linked these rare and complex events to the shooters' alleged interest in video games, finding in them a catchall explanation for what seemed unexplainable—the white, middle-class school shooter. However, the concern about video games is out of proportion to their actual threat...

For more information, please visit: http://www.contextsmagazine.org/content_sample_v6-1.php.

Movie Spotlight

Prison Pups

By Alice Dungan Bouvrie

color, 58 min, 2006

produced in association with WGBH

Prison Pups follows four inmates as they raise and train service dogs for the handicapped and hearing impaired. At Concord Farm, a minimum-security facility in Massachusetts, these inmates learn to take on the responsibility of a puppy and find in themselves not only a sense of confidence but also a capacity for nurturing and affection. The experience is profound as they become empowered by their role as trainers.

Visit the filmmaker's website, www.mineralkingproductions.com for more information.



Teaching Resources

Kids Count in the Classroom

Under a grant from the Annie Casey Foundation the Social Science Data Analysis Network (SSDAN) is now providing KIDS COUNT data in a user-friendly format great for undergraduate social sciences courses. KIDS COUNT is a national and state-by-state effort of the Casey Foundation to track the status of children in the United States on an annual basis. Sociologist William H. Frey, University of Michigan, is the director of this project.

From more information, free course modules and data tools, log on to <http://www.ssdan.net/kidscount/index.shtml>

Division Chair Contact Information

Deirdre Oakley
Zulauf Hall, 806
Department of Sociology,
Northern Illinois University
DeKalb, IL 60115-2854
815.753.6429

SSSP Annual Meeting

Be sure to join us for the annual meeting!

SSSP 57th Annual Meeting

RESEARCH MATTERS:
CREATING KNOWLEDGE, POLICY, AND JUSTICE

August 10-12, 2007

The Roosevelt Hotel
Madison Avenue at 45th
New York, NY

Web: <http://www.theroosevelthotel.com/>

Newsletter Editor Contact Information

Antwan Jones
205 Williams Hall
Department of Sociology,
Bowling Green State University
Bowling Green, OH 43403
419.372.2294
419.372.8306 (f)
antwanj@bgsu.edu

From the Editor

I wanted to use this space to call for future submissions to the Sociology and Social Welfare Division newsletter. Particularly, I wanted to ask for submissions for the Summer edition. I will accept submissions until June 1, 2007. Submissions have a wide range, from new publications to pertinent division information, awards, job openings, etc. You may send any material directly to me. My contact information is on the right hand side of this page.

Thank you in advance for your submissions and I look forward to serving this division. For more information about my research and scholarship, I direct you to my website, <http://personal.bgsu.edu/~antwanj>.