The

Sociologist

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On the Cover: Public Health Service medical examinations of newly arrived immigrants 1890-1910. Source: United States Citizenship and Immigration Services History Office and Library.

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Campus Sexual Assault and Male Peer Support

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Sexual assault has for 30 years been a fascinating field of study, both in terms of academic inquiry and campus politics. The field began almost 60 years ago when Clifford Kirkpatrick and Eugene Kanin (1957) argued that as many as 20 percent of college women experienced attempted or completed rape during just one academic year. This finding was of course ignored. Nearer to 40 years ago, one could still write an exhaustive bibliography on a couple of index cards, but we have now been treated to an explosion of studies published in journals and books.

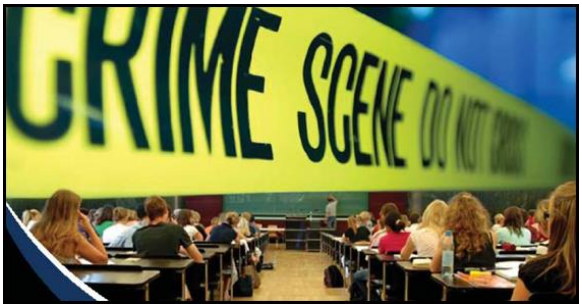
By the mid-1980s, researchers were exposing and getting extensive publicity for studies showing high levels of what was then called "date rape." While this energized many feminist communities, it was disregarded in mainstream academia and often drowned out by backlash politics – mainly by people who had no data but who got top space for claiming that academic researchers were "biased." This drumbeat continues today.

We have often found that studies asking about criminal acts uncover smaller amounts of such assaults, while those done by health authorities asking about specific behavior turn up higher numbers.

Prevalence and Incidence

Meanwhile, the explosion of data continues. For example, Kate Carey et al., in the June, 2015 issue of the *Journal of Adolescent Health* report on a health study of first-year college women. More than one in seven women reported being the victim of attempted or completed incapacitation rape (committed while under the influence of drugs or alcohol and unable to resist), and one in ten reported surviving attempted or completed forcible penetration.

This was a careful study of only the first 12 months of a traditional college. When pre-college experience is added, from the age of 14 through the beginning of the sophomore year, 37 percent of these women had experienced attempted or completed incapacitation or forcible rape. We have often found that studies asking about criminal acts uncover smaller amounts of such assaults, while those done by health authorities asking about specific behavior turn up higher numbers.



Source: U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigations https://www.fbi.gov/stats-services/publications/campus-attacks.

None of this is news to college leaders. *Inside Higher Education* (in conjunction with Gallup pollsters) reported on a survey where the majority of 647 responding presidents of American colleges and universities conveyed a concern over the high frequency of sexual assault at U.S. colleges and universities. Only 28 percent disagreed with the statement that sexual

assault is prevalent at American colleges and universities. Luckily for their students, however, this widespread incidence of sexual assault was only taking place on *other* campuses. Seventy-eight percent of these same campus leaders disagreed that their *own* campus had this problem. It's everyone but us.

Many who have worked in this field for years might be tempted to suggest that the denial is more purposive.

Given the numerous and repeated survey results and extensive attention to this issue, how is it that most college presidents can believe that they don't have a problem? One explanation could be based on the analysis of Washington Trinity's President Patricia McGuire: "They're kidding themselves" (Lederman, 2015).

Many who have worked in this field for years might be tempted to suggest that the denial is more purposive. Others, more generous, argue that the job of the president is to be a cheerleader for their own campus, seeing everything through rose-colored glasses. What, me worry?

Normative Violence

My personal experience has led me to the cynical position of suspecting widespread purposive denial. A news bureau chief on his last day on the job told me that he had been under orders never to publicize articles studying campus sexual assault, because the administration felt that if parents knew that sexual assault was taking place on the campus they would withdraw their daughters. I have lectured or taught or researched in a number of states and countries around the globe, and never fail to be amazed at how many people have denied to me that this is a problem, or explained to me that "women commonly lie about sexual assault. That can't happen at *our* school. *Our* police would never brush off a victim."

"After all, no rape victim has ever gone out and gotten drunk after being raped."

"I'm friends with the student affairs dean, and it is impossible that he would treat a victim like that…She was tagged on Facebook with a picture of herself at a party only a week after the alleged rape, which rape victims *never* do."

The last was told to me by the faculty representative on a panel that dismissed charges against a young man because "the Facebook picture proved that the report was a lie. After all, no rape victim has ever gone out and gotten drunk after being raped."

My writing partner, Walter DeKeseredy and I have keynoted conferences and commonly have found men's rights advocates eager to explain to us that the real criminals in domestic violence cases are the females that we thought were victims.

Personally I don't like the practice of claiming that there is an epidemic today of sexual assault on American college campuses. What is going on today isn't at all an epidemic. It is normative violence that has been and continues to be ignored by some. All that is different today is that a slightly larger proportion of men and women are concerned about the problem, and a slightly larger percentage of survivors are speaking out or making complaints.

There is no evidence to suggest that sexual assault is more prevalent today than before (partially because there is no solid

base line data), and reason to believe that their grandmothers and great-grandmothers faced the same problems if they went to college.

What is new about current claims are the number of women willing to go public with stories about how they reported a sexual assault and were ignored, or compelled not to press charges, or treated badly or paternalistically, or even threatened.

For many years, we have acted as if the official Clery Reports had some relation to empirical reality, when we knew that they are underreported; even today, one-third of all colleges report absolutely no sexual assault on their campus. (The Clery Reports are submitted by colleges to the federal government to report the number of sexual assaults on campus.)

Just as one example, at a time when one campus was reporting consistently about 4 sexual assaults per year (on a campus with 20,000 students), I did a victimization study of 388 undergraduate women (out of perhaps 8,500 on that campus) and uncovered 65 who reported that they had experienced sexual aggression that would be defined by state law as felony forcible rape.

Just like Kilpatrick and Kanin's respondents from the 1950s, none had reported the event to authorities. Almost all reported serious psychological and emotional repercussions, but again just like the 1950s, women accepted partial or full blame for the attacks, for not being better gatekeepers (Schwartz & Leggett, 1999).

Most Helpful Person

All of which leaves us with questions. Why do women often take the blame for men's bad behavior? Why do men engage in sexual aggression against women? Why do men and women excuse this behavior, hide it, or ignore it?

As a sociologist, I would be remiss if I didn't mention the pressures of society at large, and the people around us in particular. While there has been quite a lot of attention to the notions of a rape culture, or a paternalistic state, there has been relatively less attention to the role of the people we know well, who surround us.

One example of the effect of friends and family was shown in a study of self-blame. After identifying a group of women, all of whom reported that they had experienced aggression that fit the description of felony rape, we asked them to tell us who was the most helpful person afterwards, and what they said. Some were told it wasn't their fault; that it would have happened to anyone in that time and place.

In other words, women who have been told by their peers or parents that they are at fault are…less likely to seek counseling or other forms of help.

The rest were told they were to blame (e.g., being on the wrong street, no escort, etc.) but that they were loved and supported. Recall, these were the *most* helpful people. When asked at another part of the survey if they had ever been raped, every single person who had been told it wasn't their fault, without exception, said yes, they had been raped. Every single person, without exception, who had been told it was their fault, said that they had never been raped. In other words, women who have been told by their peers or parents that they are at fault for not preventing their own victimization are less likely to categorize their experience as rape and therefore less likely to seek counseling or other forms of help.

This not only reinforces a societal norm that women are responsible for the bad behavior of men, but as we said at the time, "it even takes away their right to be angry about it" (Schwartz & Pitts, 1993: 396).

Male Peer Support

That leaves us with the question of why men are sexually aggressive. This has been the subject of my work with Walter DeKeseredy over the past 25 years, (DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 2013). Male Peer Support Theory suggests that much of the impetus to violence against women is social.

We have found that a powerful medium of transmission of these values has been peers, and particularly male peers among youth.

Since we began these studies in the 1980s, we have defined male peer support as attachments to male peers and the resources these men provide that encourage and legitimate woman abuse.

This theory firmly situates male aggression within society itself. Of course, inside a structure that has often been called a "rape culture," there are numerous media, political, religious and familial threads that support, protect or ignore violence against women.

We have found that a powerful medium of transmission of these values has been peers, and particularly male peers among youth. For example, our largest study was the Canadian National Survey funded by Health Canada that used a representative sample of 3,142 undergraduates from 43 colleges and universities from coast to coast. Among many other items, we asked men if they had ever committed several behaviors, one of which was a description of forcible rape.

We asked a series of questions to develop an index of the extent to which a man's friends supported the emotional abuse of women, and a second set to develop an index of how much friends supported the physical abuse of women.

Finally, we asked about the man's use of alcohol. What we found was that men who went out drinking two or more times a week, and had friends who supported both emotional and physical abuse, were 9.6 times as likely to admit to forcible rape as men who had none of the above (Schwartz & DeKeseredy, 1997). Since that time, we have repeatedly found, as have other sociologists, that these factors tell us which men will be sexually aggressive toward women.

Other factors include membership in men's organizations, such as sports teams, fraternities, residence halls or other groups, some of which foster the sexual objectification of women and promote a narrow conception of masculinity ("a real man is one who is athletic, has money, is sexually successful, exhibits machismo, and can hold his alcohol well.")

None of these characteristics are unknown on the typical college or university campus among all-male groups. Another factor was the absence of deterrence or punishment for male aggressors.

Women don't need the protection of men as much as they need men to work to change the culture of other men.

Proposed Solutions

Interestingly, most proposed solutions to those problems involve women.

Popular "solutions" include blue light phones for women to use, self-defense classes, escort services, lectures on awareness, staying relatively sober, and avoiding evening classes, library events, or unmonitored drinks. In other words, the typical response to the possibility of attack from friends and acquaintances is to provide protection from strangers. These strategies have not been effective enough.

Much more important is that because the problem is male friends and acquaintances, the solution will have to come from men. Women don't need the protection of men as much as they need men to work to change the culture of other men. Groups like Men Can Stop Rape, MenEngage, and the White Ribbon Campaign have begun the process of changing male peer support norms, speaking out as men to other men. They give out the message that sexual harassment, rape, misogynist jokes, date rape and other forms of sexual aggression are not humorous expressions of boys will be boys, but rather are criminal aggressions against women and other men, and that it will not be tolerated.

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What Applied Sociologists Do

DCSS Panel Discussion

Thursday, October 15, 2015

6:30-8:30pm

George Washington University

Phillips Hall

801 22nd Street, Room 411

Event is free and
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At the Intersection of Mental Health Services and Guns

A discussion with Ron Manderscheid

On August 4, 2015, The Sociologist (TS) interviewed Ron Manderscheid about mental health services delivery and gun violence in the U.S. He is the Executive Director of the National Association of County Behavioral Health and Developmental Disability Directors. He is Adjunct Professor at the Department of Mental Health, Bloomberg School of Public Health, Johns Hopkins University. He is the recipient of DCSS's Lifetime Achievement Award. Below we have reproduced excerpts from the interview.

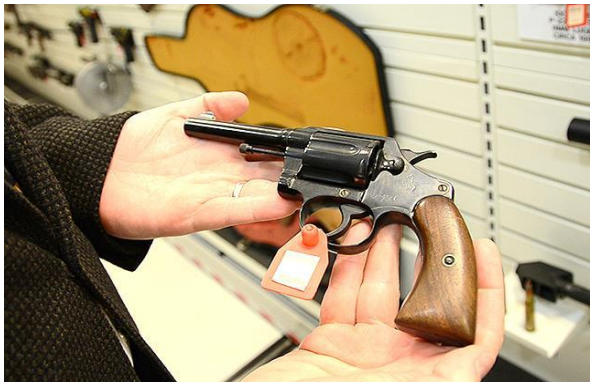
TS: How do gun violence and mental health intersect?

Ron Manderscheid: The broadest sweep of the issue here is people dying by gun violence. A subset of this issue is mentally ill people committing this gun violence. By the same token, there are a number of mentally ill people who have been killed by the police per the article carried in the *Washington Post* on June 15, 2015. And I was interviewed for that report. In my opinion, in the broadest statement of the issue, I do not believe that you can simply solve the problem by mental health legislation. If you want to solve the problem at the intersection of mental health and gun violence, you have to do a number of things. You probably have to improve our U.S. mental health service delivery system. But, most clearly, you have to take on the problem of gun violence.

Gun Violence

TS: But, gun violence is not going to end anytime soon.

Ron Manderscheid: I understand that. I know it is a tall climb, but it absolutely needs to be stated that you must do something about gun violence if we are going to have an impact on this problem. I want to cite Australia. In the 1990s, Australia was developing gun problems similar to our problems: there were more and more cases where multiple people were being killed by gun violence. So, what did they do? They controlled guns.



Source: The Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI). reference firearms collection contains more than 7,000 guns – just about every make and model https://www.fbi.gov/news/galleries/2013-photo-gallery.

This is one of the big ticket items we need to address. I have to agree with you; it is exceptionally difficult to do, because of the Second Amendment to the Constitution. However, I have to ask: "If you're a hunter, hunting squirrels or ducks, or even deer, do you need a military-style assault rifle to do hunting?

And unfortunately…legislation that would have addressed mental health issues was lost because it was attached as an amendment to the draft gun legislation.

Support for Gun Legislation

TS: After the Sandy Hook shooting occurred, there was groundswell of support for some kind of gun control.

Ron Manderscheid: Yes, there was, and I organized a coalition in the mental health community and we communicated with the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House, the President of the United States. I went to a work-group in the White House. We said in our initiative, we need gun control legislation. And there was a groundswell for that. Then what happened?

The gun lobby intervened and within 6 months, all the groundswell to do something about guns just disappeared. So, by June of that year (2013), the groundswell to actually do gun control was gone. And unfortunately, some excellent legislation that would have addressed mental health issues was lost because it was attached as an amendment to the draft gun legislation.

A key example…tonight there are going to be 750,000 people in the county jails... Of this number, 25 percent are people with mental illness, 50 percent are people with substance use conditions… there is huge overlap between the two.

So, no matter what we say about mental health, to be honest, we need gun control legislation. The issue is: does our society have the will to do that right now? This is the biggest context here.

Mental Health Service Delivery

And within that context, I would also be the first to say we absolutely need to improve the delivery of mental health services in the United States. A key example is this: tonight there are going to be 750,000 people in the county jails of the United States. Of this number, 25 percent are people with mental illness, 50 percent are people with substance use conditions, and there is huge overlap between the two. So, three-quarters of the people in the jails tonight have these conditions. Most of these people are in our jails inappropriately; they never should have been there in the first place. So, how did they get there inappropriately?

They got there because they were homeless and they were out in the street, and the police came and swept them up into jail. They are there because they were mentally ill and they were having an episode and someone called 911, the police came and picked them up, there was no place to take them but the county jail. Others were high on drugs and the police came along and picked them up.

What's wrong with this picture is several things: we have not trained our police in large-scale to deal with these circumstances. And because we have not trained the police, you get exactly what the *Washington Post* is reporting about: police shooting the mentally ill.

In some cases, the police are frightened of them and they shoot because they don't know what to do and don't know how to react to the situation. So, there is a huge need for Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) for police.

All the police officers know how the Restoration Center operates. They have moved on beyond this. The next issue: is the Restoration Center enough?

Training and Restoration Centers

TS: So, where do we begin to solve these problems?

Ron Manderscheid: We begin with a proposal by Senator Dick Durbin and Senator Ted Cruz that all police in the United States should have CIT; they propose federal legislation to provide the resources to do this. So, it is not a pie-in-the-sky concept, there's actually potential practical action here. But that's only one step. Another step that is absolutely critical is the trained police need a place to take persons with mental illness or drug conditions. And we have that program too; it is called the Restoration Center. We have model Restoration Centers in the United States. The best is in San Antonio, Texas (Bexar County).

Every single police officer in Bexar County has had CIT and the county supports an excellent Restoration Center. They don't have adverse instances anymore, because the police don't take the people to jail; the police take the people to the Restoration Center. All the police officers know how the Restoration Center operates. They have moved on beyond this. The next issue: is the Restoration Center enough?

Of course not; you need a continuum of crisis services and these services would begin with 'warm lines,' warm telephone lines run by people who have been mental health service consumers themselves. We call them peer supporters. When I am having a crisis, I can dial the 800 number and call that person who understands my issue and can empathize with me.

We need these community systems of care but they have to have key characteristics of care delivery.

Peer supporters are important in the delivery system. The 911 capacity includes police who are trained in CIT, and systems with Restoration Centers. So, what do you do after the person has been to the Restoration Center?

You need to get them engaged in the county behavioral health system with a care coordinator or a case manager; who might also be a peer supporter. So the person gets engaged in ongoing care for whatever their issue is. Here's a real case from San Antonio -- this is absolutely a true story -- the police pick up a person on the RiverWalk; the person was inebriated; they took the person to the Restoration Center. The person had been out on the streets of San Antonio drinking off and on for 8 or 9 months. The Restoration Center worked with that person. The person got engaged in ongoing substance use care. It turns out the person was a professor from a university.

And so the next step was, we need to get this person restored to their role, so the people in the substance use system contacted a local university. That person is now teaching in San Antonio. That's the kind of success you can have if you have a system in place. We need these community systems of care but they have to have key characteristics of care delivery.

The assumption now is: we can give you care, you can recover…

Key Characteristics of Care

The care must be Trauma Informed Care, which is delivered with the clear recognition that most mental illness and substance use problems come from previous trauma. So, we would say, about 75 percent of all mental illness is caused by trauma. If that's the case, you need trauma informed care. Another important characteristic of

care is that it must be recovery-oriented, which is designed to help you regain your life. This is the kind of care that helped the professor regain his role as a university instructor and reengaged him in the community, so he has a place to live; he has social support and a mentor, and he has a job, and if he needs it, he has job support. This is what recovery is about.

Source: National Institute of Mental Health, National Institutes of Health, Department of Health and Human Services. https://www.nimh.nih.gov/news/image-library/index.shtml.

Recovery is very much the new message in mental health. I have worked in the mental health field for 40 years. When I first worked at the National Institute of Mental Health, the assumption was: if you were once with us for care, you were always going to be with us. That is not the assumption anymore. The assumption now is: we can give you care, you can recover, you can regain your life in the community, and through self-management, and in some cases through various types of drug therapies you can have a full life in the community. You don't need to come back to us anymore.

The Community Mental Health System

TS: There is a narrative about the de-institutionalization of the mentally ill under President Reagan; that the gaps in mental health services delivery were exacerbated during that period?

Ron Manderscheid: How did we come to have all these gaps? I lived through that period, and I know the statistics. In 1963, President Kennedy signed the Community Mental Centers Health Act and it called for 1,500 community mental health centers in the United States – each of which would serve 75,000 to 150,000 people and all together would cover the entire United States. That was the vision.

By the time Ronald Reagan became President, we had built 804 of the 1,500. When President Ronald Reagan moved into Office, the program was defunded. So, the rest of the country never got these centers to begin with. President Reagan reallocated 25 percent of the federal money that went into building these centers and gave the remaining 75 percent to the states in the form of block grants.

During the 1980s and 1990s, we had deficiencies in our system -- we were not serving enough people who were homeless and were mentally ill. They came out of the state hospitals and there were no community mental health services for them in many places.

Some of them went to nursing homes and the door was closed to them after a while. The latest iteration is that large numbers of them are going into county jails. This is the symptom of failed community services. With the recession of 2008 we hit a stone wall when an additional $4 to $5 billion was taken out of the mental health system. We really were in crisis.

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85 percent of counties have either no mental health services or inadequate mental health services.

What has helped us in the last few years is the passage of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and the money that is going to the states in the form of State Medicaid expansions; 30 states have done this and 20 states have not.

The picture is not what it ought to be, but it is better than it was a few years ago because we have the ACA.

Another important issue is: people who have serious mental illness and use the public mental health system die 25 years earlier than other people.

System Inadequacies and Fixes

There are over 3,000 counties in the United States and 85 percent of those counties have either no mental health services or inadequate mental health services.

These are usually the smaller counties with minimal resources, so if you live in one of these counties and you have mental illness, you have great difficulty getting any care because there's no care to get. Because of this, we think there's need for mental health reform legislation and right now, there is a bill in the House introduced by Representative Tim Murphy and Representative Eddie Bernice Johnson.

There's a parallel bill in the Senate introduced by Senator Bill Cassidy and Senator Christopher Murphy. The question is: do these bills do the things that need to be done as I talked about?

Another important issue is: people who have serious mental illness and use the public mental health system die 25 years earlier than other people.

If we move the care to…medical homes, it would be the behavioral health professional in the medical home team who would screen for mental health condition.

I made this discovery through my research which was published in 2006. This is happening because the people may receive care from the mental health system, but they did not get needed primary care.

Therefore, issues like high blood pressure are not caught which may lead to a stroke or heart attack. And so in the future system, we need mental health and substance abuse care linked with primary care. This is a huge advantage of the ACA.

TS: How do we evaluate a person for mental health in a primary care setting?

Ron Manderscheid: We have tools to evaluate a person in the primary health setting to screen for mental health and substance abuse conditions such as the PHQ9 (Patient Health Questionnaire) which picks up depression or anxiety.

There are tools to pick up substance use problems as well such as the SBIRT (Screening Brief Intervention and Referral to Treatment).

If we move the care to an integrated delivery system, what are called 'medical homes,' it would be the behavioral health professional in the medical home team who would screen for mental health condition. This new system is just starting. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) are giving states funding to implement medical and health homes.

Farewell to a Legacy

Michelle Chatman
University of the District of Columbia

As summer draws to a close, the University of the District of Columbia (UDC) Sociology Program will not be among the programs to welcome new students this Fall semester. The program, along with several others, was terminated by Board Resolution effective March 2014. Thus, I along with several other faculty, will not be returning as full-time faculty this academic year. Some faculty transitioned into other programs or positions. Others did not.

I offer these reflective thoughts as homage to the academic program that is almost singularly responsible for my scholarly development, and to offer my thoughts on the current state of higher education that would allow a core liberal arts course of study at the city's only public university to close.

One of my most memorable experiences as an undergraduate is when our department received funding from the Social Science Research Council...

When I was a student at UDC in the 1990s, the Sociology/Anthropology Program (as it was then called) was thriving. We had an active student club whose members were engaged in social science research. The department was nurturing.

As an undergraduate student at UDC I was challenged, intrigued, and prepared for the world beyond my campus. My teachers taught me how to engage with the work of Carol Stack, Elliot Liebow, William Julius Wilson, Melville Herskovits, Johnetta Cole, Niara Sudarkasa, and Zora Neale Hurston. I fell in love with the big questions and the intellectual journey inherent in the discovery of their answers. One of my most memorable experiences as an undergraduate is when our department received funding from the Social Science Research Council (SSRC) to allow undergraduate students to conduct social science research.

After I graduated, I sojourned to The Gambia, West Africa for six months initially and again for a year. This real classroom gave me an opportunity to practice what I learned in class and through my student activism. My annual sojourns to The Gambia ran parallel with my graduate studies, and when I completed my Master's degree, Dr. Walter Redmond asked if I would consider teaching a summer course. I tried it and another love affair had begun. I worked as an adjunct professor for several years until I realized that a career in academia was calling. Dr. Audrey Brown urged me to pursue a doctorate.

Much later, it was Dr. Leslie Richards who welcomed me as a visiting professor in 2011. By then, Anthropology had been dropped from the program's focus and Dr. Richards was the only full time faculty member in the program. Still, our students were deeply engaged with questions of identity, diversity, inequality and justice, and how the world worked.

The majority of our students were from Washington, DC and other regions of the country, others hailed from regions farther away such as South Korea, Bangladesh, Nepal, St. Thomas, and Ghana. For some of our majors, Sociology was not their first choice.

Yet, as one of my Trinidadian elders says, "*What the devil send, God bless*," meaning that a questionable beginning can still have a good outcome. Our program had a good outcome for many students who

could only dream of earning an undergraduate degree but who later went on to pursue careers, graduate or professional studies and on the way, obtained salient understanding of society and our world. I ran into my students at a shopping center, the post office, or grocery store and these everyday encounters are metaphoric reminders that education must be attainable for everyone who desires it.

Image from the website of the Sociology/Anthropology Department.Source:http://www.udc.edu/programs/sociology_anthropology_bachelors_degree.

With an emphasis on assessment, student learning outcomes, and return on investment, liberal arts education is under ideological assault. Black and publicly funded schools are even more vulnerable , as we have to argue for our relevance in the 21st Century. We face an era where many are questioning whether the social sciences and humanities are still relevant. This, while numerous studies remind us that employers value the skills that the social science and humanities foster: oral and written communication skills, creativity and critical thinking, problem solving, and the ability to work effectively across cultural differences. The dissolution of the Sociology program is evidence of a short-sighted view that is trending in higher education. This view gives more weight to the STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) fields versus the social sciences, rather than seeing how they work in tandem to expand our capacity for humanity, justice, and quality of life.

In a city where the income and employment gap continues to widen, alongside stark inequities in housing, education, health, and quality of life, it's nearly unconscionable that academic programs that promote real social inquiry at the *only* public four year institution have been lost.

Thankfully, several Sociology courses have been incorporated into the Social Work and Human Development degree programs.

What does this say about our commitment to free thinking within and beyond our diamond? There have been times when our existence was threatened by some of our City Council members; an instability further fueled by an odd and competitive tension between the flagship Campus and the Community College. Although Washington, DC is home to several prestigious, exemplary institutions of higher education, their mission is not the same as ours. They do not share the moral and social justice imperative that is germane to our founding and our mission of providing quality, affordable, comprehensive higher education to the residents of the District of Columbia.

Introductory Sociology courses are still being offered at the UDC Community College. The Sociology program is currently in Teach-Out status, and currently enrolled students are able to complete their required courses until 2018. I've heard that efforts to create an Interdisciplinary Social Sciences program have begun, though I've seen no concrete evidence of this.

As for me, I will work as an adjunct professor as my availability permits. Thankfully, several Sociology courses have been incorporated into the Social Work and Human Development degree programs. It was at UDC that I became an activist, an inquirer, a scholar. Regardless of where the next leg of my journey takes me, UDC will always be home.

Where Status takes Place

Zach Richer
University of Maryland

At the 2013 Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association, then President Cecilia Ridgeway addressed the convention with a call to arms. The theme for that year's conference was *Interrogating Inequality*, and Ridgeway was concerned that her colleagues had left by the wayside one important measure by which society is stratified: status.[1]

That sociologists have begun to ignore status is dismaying, but it is also surprising. The idea that status differences constitute important forms of social inequality dates back to the founding of the discipline; Max Weber famously set the agenda in a canonical essay from 1920, "Class, Status, Party."[2] Weber's aim was to sort out three bases of stratification that dominated different arenas of social life. For Weber, 'Class' structures the field of economics—of production, the market, and private holdings. Likewise, party is concerned with allegiances and the wielding of political power by allied interest groups. Status as a form of inequality is more amorphous and imprecise.

We gain or lose status when the people around us recognize our actions as worthy of esteem or respect—not necessarily *their* esteem or respect...

Unlike class position, which could be tied to one's access to productive resources, or party, in which power emanated from one's government office or organizational position, Weber argued that status "depends on a specific positive or negative social assessment of honor."[3]

Although institutions such as prestigious schools, respected workplaces, and private clubs can play large roles in establishing an individual's status, much of what goes into constructing status hierarchies takes place in everyday interactions and practices. That is, class and party positions are acquired through material wealth and political power, respectively, and status positions are secured through *social judgments.*

The cultural foundations of status inequalities have been of particular interest to sociologists ever since Weber (and in the case of turn-of-the-century American sociologist Thorstein Veblen[4], even before Weber). Ridgeway's own work in status construction theory rests on the same premise that 'honor' is a distinction accorded to people through broad social assessments rather than our individual values.

We gain or lose status when the people around us recognize our actions as worthy of esteem or respect—not necessarily *their* esteem or respect, but those that are commonly assumed to be the natural standards for awarding or withholding status, however unnatural those standards may be. Ridgeway calls these standards 'frames'—or the pre-given set of characteristics we unconsciously use to interpret social actions.

One frame of particular interest to Ridgeway is gender.[5] She argues that, whether we aim to or not, our conduct in interactions with other people is shaped by prevailing social judgments regarding the gender of the parties involved (including assumptions about our own gender that may be held by our interlocutor).

The goal of the sociologist, then, is to understand the social conditions—what

she refers to as the "setting" or the "local context"—in which these frames are more or less salient.

This elision of place is prevalent within sociological studies of status-bearing practices.

Another approach to understanding status inequalities comes from the cultural sociology of Pierre Bourdieu.[6] For Bourdieu, individuals are located in several different fields of social activity, each with its own standards for success—perhaps our salary and residential address if we are investment bankers, or our citation index score and academic affiliation if we are scholars.

What secures an individual's status within these fields is a combination of pursuing the kinds of actions that are likely to accrue these specific resources for ourselves and knowing how to appropriate those resources in a way that reveals our familiarity and comfort with them. What's more, the relationship between our status positions and personal choices is mutually reinforcing: the material comfort that comes along with academic life tends to allow the mind to wander into abstraction; such a disposition, in turn, allows the scholar to put forth the kinds of sociological theories that catch the eyes of his or her colleagues.[7]

In both Ridgeway and Bourdieu, we see how culture matters for status judgments, and we see how it varies across different "local contexts", on the one hand, and "fields" on the other. But as foundational as these approaches have been, their references to space are largely metaphorical. This elision of place is prevalent within sociological studies of status-bearing practices.

In order to see whether and how space mattered for status judgments, I researched a place that was widely associated with elites.

Take consumption. Sociologists have shown us that our choice in consumer items matters for status judgments (*"Don't order the wrong thing!"*) as does the style and manners of our behavior (*"Don't order the thing wrong!"*) I went to the shopping mall to investigate if *where* we engage in everyday practices makes a difference in *how* those actions are judged.

If this was indeed the case, I hypothesized, then by understanding where status takes place—and by analyzing the places that lend status to the individuals and groups who assemble there—sociologists could learn something about how status hierarchies are shaped, and also see how status is unequally distributed throughout the physical spaces in which we live, work, and shop.

Locating Status at Istinye Park

In order to see whether and how space mattered for status judgments, I researched a place that was widely associated with elites. As it happened, a new shopping center had just opened in my sometime-home of Istanbul, Turkey, which, in its opulence and exclusivity, surpassed any mall I had seen in the United States. That such a structure was built in Istanbul is no accident: a fast-growing but polarized economy, coupled with rapid rural-to-urban migration, created an environment ripe for status-signifying practices. What, how, and (I supposed) *where* residents of Istanbul consumed would go a long way in

determining the legitimacy of their claims to belonging in the city.

Istinye Park stakes its claim as Istanbul's premier shopping destination and therefore an ideal location for observing how status hierarchies take shape. I spent the summer of 2011 at the mall, recruiting customers and patrons to participate in open-ended semi-structured interviews regarding their shopping practices and choice of shopping venues. All told, I and an assistant conducted interviews with 40 participants in the study.[8] What I found was that people are highly attuned to how space and place determine their shopping practices.

When we conjure an image of status inequalities, we are likely to think of a hierarchy.

They spoke openly about the features of Istinye Park that made it an attractive destination, and also with frequent and unprompted reference to *other* shopping venues they deemed inferior and unattractive. Whenever my respondents justified their presence at Istinye Park in contrast to another shopping destination and its surrounding areas, I made a note.

Istinye Park, Istanbul. Source: Zach Richer.

At the end of my study, I got an idea of how different places measured up to the status profile of Istinye Park, and how judgments about the status of *places* corresponded with the assumptions of my respondents about the people who shopped there.

The result produced something of an unconventional map, what I have called a *social topography*[9], detailing where status inequalities take place around the city, and how those places themselves are instrumental in constructing those same imbalances.

Status as Spatial Practice

When we conjure an image of status inequalities, we are likely to think of a hierarchy. Perhaps more than other forms of inequality, status seems to lend itself to the idea of rank—the top-to-bottom vertical listing of positions from "high" status to "low" status individuals. But in talking to customers at Istinye Park, it became evident that status has a *lateral* distribution too, shaping the contours of the city according to the differently-valued social practices that take place at the various locations. Part of this story is related to the placement of Istinye Park. Unlike most other shopping malls in Istanbul, which are situated in dense retail environments along the metro line, Istinye Park was constructed away from the main public transit arteries, just north of the stock exchange and the ring road linking the European and Anatolian sides of the city.

"People who come here have cars."

This logic is not lost on Istinye Park shoppers, as explained by Cavit, a pseudonymously-named restauranteur, "This place was consciously chosen from the start. It attracts the elite strata…at their point of intersection." Mobility plays a big role in the

story by facilitating the arrival of certain kinds of customers while making it hard to reach for others.

Coşkun, who had driven to Istinye Park from a neighborhood near the center of the city, told me that "coming to Istinye Park without a car is nearly impossible. [Public] transportation here is pretty tough. At best, you'd ride the metro and go from there to here, [but] even that is a world of distance walking under the sun. People who come here have cars."

In a dense city where private ownership is fewer than 13 per hundred, the built environment serves as a silent accomplice to status hierarchies by granting access to *some* kinds of consumers while excluding others. Shoppers at Istinye Park have the means to go there, increasing its allure as a destination.

Part of this work is accomplished through segregation, but part of it operates through the imagination.

But cities are wont to change, and when the shape of a city changes, so does the status associated with certain shopping centers. Take the example of Alp, a jovial graphic designer who recently began shopping at Istinye Park after he gave up on the erstwhile elite mall, Akmerkez: "You know what ruined the atmosphere at Akmerkez? Kids from [the working class neighborhoods of] Gültepe and Kağıthane came and ruined the atmosphere."

As important as infrastructure is, it would be a simplification to chalk up status hierarchies to the physical form of the landscape alone. Place isn't fate, much as some of Istinye Park's elite shoppers would like it to be, and some people are willing to brave "a world of distance under the sun" to participate in the spectacle. But it isn't just access that constructs status imbalances, it's also atmosphere.

Bülent, a recent transplant from a city outside Istanbul, tells me that he feels uncomfortable going to Istinye Park because of how other customers make a "character analysis" of him based on his clothes. He tries to keep his distance from the courtyard "because the way they look at you, sometimes it can really affect you. Normally, I go out there to smoke. On foot, that is, not sitting down."

These symbolic practices aid in the work of segregation where the geographic location of the building falls short, sending cues to shoppers like Bülent to go back inside the building to a space more suited to their status. Customers at Istinye Park work hard to maintain their mall as a space exclusive to people who occupy similar status positions among the Istanbul elite. Part of this work is accomplished through segregation, but part of it operates through the imagination.

In other words, Istinye Park functions as an elite space not only for its own unique features, but in an actively expressed contrast to specific places in their city where *other people* shop.

Calling out by name the places where people of low and middle status level live and shop completes a social topography…

By naming places of lower status, and imagining the motives of the people who shop there, the elite shoppers enlist these areas in a status hierarchy that stretches across the city. Thus, an Istinye Park shopper is someone who exercises taste and discretion in choosing a mall, in contrast

to people who shop in the middle class neighborhood of Bakırköy, who are "just people with homes nearby or those who've got business to do there." Calling out by name the places where people of low and middle status level live and shop completes a social topography of Istanbul that positions Istinye Park as its peak. Like a relief map showing the highs and lows of a physical landscape, charting how people classify their city gives us an idea about how status, too, is distributed across space.

This is no static map. Places rise and fall in status according to how (and by whom) they're *used*. Likewise, no individual resident or habitué of a given location can be guaranteed the same status just by staying in place—places maintain their character only through fostering certain kinds of practices, and excluding others.

Notes

1. Ridgeway, Claudia. (2014). "Why Status Matters for Inequality." *American Sociological Review* 79(1): 1-16.
2. A newer translation changes the title of Talcott Parsons' original translation into English. See Weber, Max. (1920/2010). "The Distribution of Power within the Community: Classes, Stände, Parties" *Journal of Classical Sociology* 10(2): 137-152.
3. Ibid., p 142.
4. Veblen, Thorstein. (1899/2009). *The Theory of the Leisure Class*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
5. Ridgeway, Claudia. (2011). *Framed by Gender: How Gender Inequality Persists in the Modern World*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
6. See in particular Bourdieu, Pierre. (1984). *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
7. Bourdieu, Pierre. (1990). The Scholastic Point of View." *Cultural Anthropology* 5(4): 380–391.
8. For more methodological details on this study, see Richer, Zach. (2015)."Toward a Social Topography: Status as a Spatial Practice." *Sociological Theory*, Forthcoming.
9. Ibid.

DCSS

Housing Panel Discussion

November 2015

6:30-8:30pm

Location: TBA

Event is free and

Open to the public.

Sociology on My Mind

Johanna Bockman
George Mason University

At the beginning of September, I traveled to Budapest, Hungary to give a talk in a conference organized by a working group of young social scientists called "Helyzet Műhely" (their name in English is "Situation" Working Group for Public Sociology). Through this trip to Budapest, not only did I come into contact with sociologists and other social scientists, I also came into contact with events of great sociological interest. Traveling sociologically brought me face to face with the Syrian refugees moving through Budapest and face to face with global gentrification.

I am not the best traveler. I often find myself bored by extremely nice vacations. For example, a vacation brought me to a tropical locale, but soon I was bored with the endless exotic animals and with the resort world.

After days of monkeys, dolphins, and so on, the tour guide in passing mentioned that he and his father had recently marched in a communist parade. Soon after this, outside looking at the star-filled sky, a restaurateur told me the details of the region's new Free Trade Agreement, focusing on the dairy quotas.

At the same time, we should recognize that we have helped to create the problems – refugee crises or global gentrification – that we observe as sociologists.

Now, this is the kind of travel I like – traveling sociologically! Maybe some of you also like such travels. A disturbing corollary of traveling sociologically is disaster tourism, such as tours of the 9th ward in New Orleans.

While I fully accept the criticisms of such tours, I also think that traveling sociologically is much broader, including such strange activities as visiting factories, joining protests, and going to local community meetings. All these activities provide a view of events or phenomenon that cannot be gained from newspaper articles or from internet sources.

These activities also potentially tie us to others around the world in connections of solidarity. At the same time, we should recognize that we have helped to create the problems – refugee crises or global gentrification – that we observe as sociologists.

There were refugees in a park about a block from the train station…

Travelling sociologically might just be part of living sociologically. I found myself in Budapest during the refugee situation - the people fleeing Syria and other war-torn or economically impoverished countries are trying to make their way through Macedonia, Greece, Serbia, and Hungary to get to Austria, Germany, and other countries perceived as having more resources and being more welcoming than Eastern Europe. The Hungarian government refused to help the refugees and suggested that they might put the refugees in severe danger.

My first observation as I drove through a large swath of the city and then

walked around the city was that the city was not overrun by refugees, as the media suggests. In fact, residents and tourists seemed to be going about their usual activities on a beautiful late summer day and evening.

Taking photographs was strongly discouraged by my colleagues.

The restaurants were packed; the streets were filled with cars and bright lights; and there were various festivals. A couple of people from the "Situation" working group took me over to the Keleti train station. We first bought many large bottles of water at the grocery store to bring to the Migration Aid station, the group of volunteers helping the refugees. There were refugees in a park about a block from the train station, reclining in small groups on the grass. We walked through the park and then went to the area in front of the station and delivered the water, then we walked out a different way.

Here is how I described what I saw:
I walked with some colleagues through the Keleti train station today. It seemed overwhelming that all these people have to live such public lives in such small spaces.

I saw children drawing pictures with crayons, a man painting a picture of a flag, a woman nursing her baby, kids fixing each other's hair, many people talking endlessly in groups sitting in their small spaces.

They appear to have endless sources of patience, unimaginable patience to sit and wait in such a precarious situation and in hot/muggy weather, though in the very short time I was there I saw a child cry out of what seemed like utter frustration and a young man being comforted by what looked like friends or family.

The Hungarian government is discussing very inhumane laws in the name of being overrun, while the city continues on with life as if nothing was happening in this little section of town, the normal life of these beautiful late summer days. Taking photographs was strongly discouraged by my colleagues. There were many professional-looking photographers in the train station area, creating the photographs that we see in the media, but also invading the minimal privacy the refugees have. Yet, seeing the train station in the broader context of Budapest brought me new understanding of the situation. After having lunch with some colleagues the following day, I was walking back to my hotel and was surprised to see a group of refugees.

I was going into the subway and was stopped by two professional-looking photographers and a crowd of maybe 150 refugees making their way on foot to Austria.

They were walking briskly and keeping close together. They said Join Us! I went back outside and was about to join them after I took this picture:

Refugees walking through downtown Budapest to the Austrian border. Source: Johanna Bockman.

While taking this picture, I was approached by a very angry pensioner and her grandson. She wanted to know where I was from and why I was in Budapest. We ended up talking for about an hour.

Her fear made her see refugees everywhere, shutting down the city. But I

said that I had been all around the city and they weren't. She was so filled with anger and fear, but at times her fear would dissolve and she seemed surprised. I saw this similar fear appear when my father would recount things he heard on talk radio and Fox News.

Might places at the margins…provide knowledge unattainable at the center?

I asked my colleagues: "What can we do to help the refugees?" Providing donations to refugee non-profits is one set of answers. Yet, there is another set of answers, such as that provided by one of the "Situation" working group members:

"I would also add that posts blaming Hungary and Hungarians do not help relieve the structural tension accumulated here. Yes we have angry poor Hungarians, and even poorer migrants. We have both. Not to set them against each other is one sort of help international commentators can give."

How can we see the situation of the poor in Hungary and transnationally? How are elites pitting the poor against each other? How is the European Union benefiting from the actions of the Hungarian government?

The conference took place at the Gólya (Stork) Community Center and co-operative bar in the inner city area of Budapest.

The conference explored how knowledge – such as economic knowledge or highly technical knowledge – is produced in the specific location of Eastern Europe as the semi-periphery in the capitalist world system. Is Eastern Europe only receiving knowledge developed in the core capitalist countries, which has subordinated Eastern Europe? Or is there scientific and technical knowledge produced in this semi-periphery that might not encourage the subordination? Might places at the margins or at the periphery provide knowledge unattainable at the center?

Gólya Community Center sits at the margins, at the border of global gentrification. Gentrification is the replacement of lower-income residents and businesses with higher-income residents and businesses. Global gentrification is this process happening around the world with global financial resources.

In the photo below, Gólya sits in a one-story building that has been a restaurant for about one hundred years. Next door, the new headquarters of Nokia is being constructed.

Across a parking lot with high-end cars is a large, new shopping mall surrounded by luxury condos and high-end restaurants, including bars, grills, gated restaurant with doormen with whisper mikes and playgrounds inside.

Gólya provides a location for those in the community to learn about urban sociology and urban geography developed around the world and to discuss what to do about this global gentrification in front of them. They also create new knowledge about how global gentrification works in their part of the world and how communities have confronted it.

Gólya Community Center, Budapest. Source: Johanna Bockman.

What's next?

DCSS

President's Invitational Panel

New professors will briefly present their work, answer questions and have informal discussions

Nicole Angotti, *American University*
Ernesto Castaneda, *American University*
Jordanna Matlon, *American University*
Yuki Kato, *Georgetown University*
Elizangela Storelli, *George Mason University*

Friday, September 25, 2015

Hosted by the Department of Sociology and Anthropology
George Mason University
Arlington Campus
Founders Hall, Room 111

Event is free and
Open to the public.