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Section: Contemporary Explorations

Sociological Practice Editors

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Contemporary Explorations

The four articles in this section were selected because they contain a great deal of information on different areas of importance—e.g., current practice issues, models—and because they have stimulated further thinking in these areas. The first article is "Sociology, Social Work and Social Problems" by David Kallen, Dorothy Miller and Arlene Daniels. Published in 1968, the article suggests a coming "rapprochement" between sociology and social work.

At almost every professional meeting on sociological practice, some sociologists will ask about the relationship between sociology and social work. Someone will want to know why the early women scholar-practitioners are remembered as social workers while the male university professors are remembered as scientists and sociologists. Others will want to address contemporary issues such as overlap of interests, differences in theoretical orientations, differences in training requirements and the effect of credentialling by these fields.

This article only begins to address a few of these issues but does provide insight about the ways in which the fields have "avoided a social change responsibility" and information about their potential contributions to solving social problems.

The second article is James Laue's "Sociology as Advocacy: There are No Neutrals," an excerpt from his 1978 chapter "Advocacy and Sociology." Laue, known particularly for his work on ethics and on conflict intervention, has written what might be called a primer for sociologists. Here Laue explains that "doing sociology in all its forms is social intervention, and that all intervention is advocacy of one of three types—of party, outcome or process."

The third article in this section, Roger Straus' "Changing the Definition of the Situation: Toward a Theory of Sociological Intervention," is one of the more important contemporary articles in the field of clinical sociology. In his 1984 paper, Straus presents a taxonomy of sociological intervention that pays special attention to varying levels of participation and relates these to intervention targets.

The final article is Joseph DeMartini's "Basic and Applied Sociological Work," which is excerpted from a longer article by that name which appeared in 1982. In this article DeMartini defines applied sociology and presents a typology of basic and applied sociological work.

Sociology, Social Work and Social Problems

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Both sociology and social work have contributions to make to the solution of social problems. It seems probable that as social science becomes less academic and more involved in the real world, and as social work becomes less psychiatrically oriented, there will be an increasing need for the two fields to cooperate in the solution of social problems. It, therefore, seems appropriate to discuss the present stance of each discipline with respect to social problems. In order to do this, we must first define social problems (Lee and Lee, 1949; Frank, 1949; Rose, 1964) and define various ways in which they can be solved.[1]

For present purposes, we define a social problem as a dislocation or dysfunction in the social system which is regarded by the society as requiring intervention by its designated agents. In this view, there are three requirements for a given social condition to be regarded as a social problem:

1) it must be social in origin
2) it must be regarded by the society as a problem
3) it must require some form of social intervention

Currently, social problems are seen in such conditions as: socially created inequalities in the distribution of income, rights, or education, and in the growing chaos of our major cities. Crime, juvenile delinquency, care of the mentally

ill, sexual deviance and other related consequences of these conditions are also defined as social problems. But if events are not defined as problems by the society, no social problem exists. For example, changing standards of individual sexual behavior among middle class persons are not really a social problem. Although public concern is expressed about such matters, no effort is made by the society to sanction and regulate sexual activity in this group. However, the production of illegitimate children among women of low income where the society must make provision for the support of the infants, is defined as a social problem. And so society enforces negative sanctions on sexual activity by these women. The emergence of the "hippy" culture, and the use of psychedelic drugs, particularly by young people, appears to be emerging as a new social problem. Significant segments of the society, particularly those with formal social control responsibilities are urging and enforcing negative sanctions for use (and possession) of psychedelic drugs. At the same time, there are considerable segments of opinion, particularly young, that support this concern with inner experience as legitimate. Thus, what one part of society defines as a social problem another part does not. In fact, the social problem may be more in the conflicting definitions of legitimacy than in the use of these substances per se.

There are at least four separate ways in which a society can respond to a recognized social problem:

1) Efforts can be made to ameliorate the negative outcomes or symptoms without affecting the underlying causes.

2) Attempts can be made at prevention by modifying the single social institution seen as the source of the problem.

3) Revolutionary restructuring of the society involving major modifications in the structure and relationship of an interdependent system of social institutions may be attempted.

4) Symptom exacerbation may occur when no clear solution is visible; but there is a concerted effort by one or more subgroups in the society to exert pressure. This pressure (Eglinton, 1964:40) is exerted on the theory that any change is preferable to a continuation of the status quo.[2]

Each of these response patterns arise from different structural situations, and each draws social agents from different subspecialties or subgroups within society. These four patterns can be seen as arising from two different social processes: prevention and amelioration responses arise from social planning within established institutional patterns; revolutionary responses and symptom exacerbations arise from social movements and are patterns of elementary collective behavior (Case, 1964:11).[3] The agents of social change vary correspondingly. In the first type of social process, they may come from within the central structure of the society, being appointed, in effect, by the system, to deal with

the problems created by the dysfunctional situation. In the second type of social process, they may be self-selected, coming essentially from outside the established system. Accordingly, amelioration and prevention responses will tend to be the result of actions by the designated agents of the social system. Revolutionary responses and symptom exacerbation will be instituted by agents who "emerge as natural leaders" from social movements.

Thus, for example, our public welfare system is a form of amelioration which is handled essentially by designated agents of the social system. Public assistance programs are seen as one form of social insurance and are written into the broader Social Security Act. Social engineers designed public assistance programs to ameliorate economic distress rather than to attack the inherent flaws within the economic system. As Franklin D. Roosevelt said (Cohen *et al.*, 1948:101) in 1934:

> We are compelled to employ the active interest of the nation as a
> whole through government in order to encourage a greater security
> for each individual who composes it.

Such a social plan did not seem to require any basic structural change in either the social or economic system which was in existence in the United States during the depression years. This program could be operated with technicians; e.g., intelligent college graduates who could determine legal eligibility and administer the financial payments. Currently, however, welfare recipients are anything but financially or personally secure. Substandard levels of assistance are provided through a system which has actually developed in a manner which perpetuates a negative self-image and stifles individual initiative. Such a system was originally intended to be a solution to the dysfunctions arising from the inequalities in the distribution of income but it has created another kind of social problem. Although the negative consequences of absence of income are somewhat ameliorated, the basic causes of poverty are left unchanged or have even been exacerbated.

While social planning may be devised as an economic or political strategy, it is often administered by persons who work, not only to administer a law but also to change the distressed individual, i.e., to change not the system but the self. Social welfare planning, for example, led to the design of a "law to flatten out the peaks and valleys of deflation and of inflation—in other words, a law that will take care of human needs and at the same time provide for the United States an economic structure of vastly greater soundness (Roosevelt, 1935)."[4]

But the administration of that law rapidly developed in two divergent paths. One, the social insurance sections of the Social Security Act, was administered by government clerks in the private insurance patterns (efficient, rational, impersonal, and equitable). The other, the public assistance section (Galbraith,

1958:252–253), was administered by professional social workers, who began to seek for the "causes" of economic distress within individuals. These staffing patterns of a twin program designed to ameliorate a social problem have had far reaching consequences.[5] Chief among these has been the separation of the poor into the "deserving" and the "undeserving." The "deserving" poor have had at least limited success in the labor market, and are, therefore, eligible for earned insurance benefits through Social Security, a system applied universalistically for all who meet the eligibility requirements. The "undeserving" poor are dependent on public charity through Public Welfare systems which varies in eligibility requirements and size of payment from state to state. It should be noted that the public welfare provisions were originally designed as much to keep females out of the labor force as to provide support, while presently, at least in some states, efforts are made to return persons on welfare to the labor force.

The ameliorative approach to social problems often rests upon the assumption that the individual's psychological responses need to be restructured. In this view (Furie, 1960; Lubove, 1965), the possibility that social problems arise from the social system is minimized. Hence, attempts at restructuring the individual personality may represent an effort to adjust the individual to a dysfunctional social situation. The ameliorative approach, then may beg the question of the underlying difficulty and avoid consideration of more revolutionary and far reaching solutions to social problems.[6]

Methods for the resolution of social problems through prevention (Fried, 1963:151–171) follow public health models. In the public health model, once a disease has been identified and its carriers specified, massive intervention programs are mounted. Such programs push to vaccinate the population against the disease or to persuade individuals to modify their behaviors so as to eliminate the disease carriers. However, in the field of social problems, the preventative approach appears to generate as many new problems as it solves. The preventative approach attempts to change only a given institution; it ignores the systematic interrelationships of institutions within the social structure. Thus, one reason for the development of public housing programs, combined with massive slum clearance programs, was to provide sanitary housing and other advantages which would then eliminate crime in the slums. This effort did not take into consideration the dysfunctional effects of the destruction of existing neighborhood social organizations.[7] Nor did it consider the possible deleterious effects of the new social organization (Beyer, 1965; Wilner et al., 1962; Jacobs, 1961), creating a great density of unrelated populations. The difficulty of adequate social controls which characterize the social and physical conditions of the great, high rise, public housing projects created a whole new complex of social problems which have not been solved.[8]

The revolutionary response to social problem has been defined as a

restructuring of interdependent institutions. The successful American labor movement represents one example of this type of response. The success of the labor movement resulted not only in a new relationship between labor and management; but even more important, it created a new form of social mobility. In the past, social mobility had essentially been a movement of an individual through the social system. The labor movement created upward mobility on the part of entire groups as these groups were able to achieve greater share of the goods and services of the society, and a greater degree of economic security (Hardman, 1962:431–436). This restructuring of the form and means of social mobility (Foster, 1956; Hill, 1957; LaBarre, 1951; Wilensky, 1959; Yinger, 1966), along with other changes in the economic organization of the society, had repercussions for the education system and the structure, organization, and function of the family.

The civil rights movement has many of the characteristics of a revolutionary movement (U.S. Department of Labor, 1965). It appears to be effecting changes in some of the structures of society.[9] However, the civil rights movement also has many characteristics of the exacerbation response. In many ways, it represents an attempt to achieve change for its own sake without a clear program or goal. Thus, events such as the Watts' and other riots, tend to exacerbate the racial tensions. These riots can be seen as events which keep things stirred up without creating a clear purpose or program.[10]

In the perspective presented here, social problems have their genesis in the structure of the social system. And so a concern with their definitions and solutions may well be the proper concern of sociology. Unfortunately, in recent years, sociology has avoided this concern, preferring to join with the rest of society in delegating this task to legislatures, pressure groups, formal agents of social control, and the profession of social work. For an example of the sociologist's view, Talcott Parsons (1959) reports that sociology is "universally conceived as a scientific discipline which is clearly primarily dedicated to the advancement and transmission of empirical knowledge in its field and secondarily to the communication of such knowledge to non-members and its utilization in practical affairs." Parsons clearly feels that the primary role of sociology is in research and university teaching. Edgar Borgatta (1959) puts the case even more strongly, reporting that, "Not only can the use of graduate school resources for training practitioners be extremely wasteful, it can also lower the standards necessary for training research personnel." Borgatta implies the desirability of setting up first and second class citizens in sociology: first class citizens will obtain their degrees in graduate schools and make careers in university research and teaching; second class citizens will obtain their degrees in professional schools and end up in some applied field.[11]

In one recent publication (Mack, 1964:25), the (ideal) social scientist is described as a "man alienated from his society.... As citizen, a sociologist

may have democratic concepts of justice and deplore the ways in which poverty and racial discrimination cause his society to fall short of its own ideals. But at work. . . the sociologist must invest his work time in analyzing the effectiveness of special interest groups, not in cheerleading. . . . Political leaders, educators, businessmen, church administrators are making policy decisions based upon data gathered by social scientists. The growing acceptance of science as a frame of reference can encourage belief that decision makers may come to feel more at home with science as a frame of mind."

Although science implies prediction and control, few social scientists feel comfortable about making predictions or recommendations for programs designed to create social change. The decision makers often distrust the so called scientific "data" offered by "social scientists" who do not, themselves, seem to see much of genuine scientific worth arising from their work. For example, a quarter of a century of research in race relations has not led to the development of effective corrective or remedial social programs for the American Negro. He has come to know that whatever gain he will make will arise out of political power, not out of "scientific studies."[12]

Perhaps the reluctance of many sociologists to enter the social planning area can be traced to their sense of impotence in the face of the enormous social problems arising out of our social structure.

There are some positive trends visible in the sociological world, however. Two new sociological readers, *Applied Sociology* (Ross, 1965)[13] and *Social Welfare Institutions* reflect this trend. Zald (1965), for example, states " . . . But just as it seems to some observers that social work in its drive toward professionalization, deserted the poor, so, too, sociology, in its pursuit of scientific status, deserted the value-laden problems of social welfare." Almost in a "reaction formation, social problems and welfare problems become taboo topics for sociology . . . the study was not quite intellectually respectable."[14]

If sociology has avoided a social change responsibility, the profession of social work has done little better. One consequence of the ameliorative approach in social work has been the focus on what can be called the *quality* of life of the client rather than the *conditions* of life affecting the clients. The quality of life refers to internal psychological motivations and to personal characteristics of individuals. The conditions of life refer to the consequences of social structures and institutions which affect the individuals' opportunities (Matza, 1964; Cloward and Ohlin, 1960). While current trends may focus on personality problems, the great, early research of social work was concerned with a description of social conditions. Thus, the work of such pioneers as John Howard (1784) in his investigation of English prison[15] or Charles Booth (1904) in his studies of London poor pitched social reform to the gathering of information about the nature of relevant social institutions, as well as life qualities. This type of work

was also an attempt to locate the social causes of the unacceptable individual behavior which created social problems.

But the work of these early pioneers came at a time when private fortunes could support most of the work, and the social system was still simple enough so that the efforts of one individual could beget the possibility of significant social change. For example, Dorothea Dix came close to revolutionizing the care of the mental patients through a combination of persistence, indignation and observation.

These surveys and studies reflected the search for causes and carriers of problems and focused on the preventive approach. The consequences of this approach can be seen in such social reform movements as prohibition. For the supporters of the prohibition movement, the hope was that abolition of alcohol would cure the ills of the immigrant, i.e., poverty, ignorance and disease. When such attempts proved fruitless—eventually generating more problems than they solved—the social reform movement fell into disrepute.

The social reformers went on to such issues as the feminist movement. But the system of social reform had already created government and private agency structures which led quickly to the professionalization of the helping function. And these professionals, the social workers, soon became devotees of the personal approach to the solution of social problems. One of the best examples of the pattern that developed is Mary E. Richmond's *Social Diagnosis* (1917) which provided the rationale for the casework method. The mental hygiene movement added the psychoanalytical and dynamic mystique to the individualist social approach to problematic persons. The completed product was an ideology and a rationale for locating all social problems within the individual (Davis, 1935:55–65).

As the social system became more complex, and as the possibility of effective individual action lessened, the change in social work from reform to amelioration became understandable (Eckland, 1967). The great impetus for this change was twofold: the shift of income maintenance from a private to a public function and the coincident professionalization of the casework function. If social work no longer has a significant social change function (in part because of the complexities of the social system and the increasing difficulty in instituting planned social change) then the focus on the quality of life becomes a legitimate area of concern. The profession no longer has the right or the responsibility to differentiate between the deserving and the undeserving poor. This distinction of the deserving poor is now fulfilled by the provision of social insurance through the Social Security programs. The undeserving poor receive charity through the Public Welfare program. The distinction between the deserving and undeserving rests on their work history. But different criteria are implicit in social work. In the development of social work philosophy, the unde-

serving poor do not fulfill the expectations that society has on its members. This inability can be attributed to the quality of poor people rather than to their conditions.[16] Social work practice thus becomes a mechanism for the maintenance of the status quo, despite the generally egalitarian values of the social workers. Attention is directed away from the idea that life conditions should be changed. But if the conditions of life cannot be changed, the quality of individual lives can be—at least in theory—to reduce the discontent and to provide more individual satisfactions. If the person is unable to find a job, egalitarian values and the American dream makes it imperative to focus on that individual's failure rather than economic dislocation or poor preparation for the labor market. Hence, the social worker attempts to manipulate the accessible individual rather than to restructure the inaccessible institutional bases of his participation—or lack of it—in the labor market.

Under these conditions, it is not surprising that social workers and their clients do not agree on the problems which the client has, particularly when the client is lower class. Thus, according to Beck (1962), many lower class clients were seen by caseworkers in family service society agencies to have problems different from those presented by the client. Miller (1965) found that on admission to the mental hospital, patients and their families reported quite different problems from those perceived by the social workers. If what the client needs is adjustment to a dysfunctional social system, it is not surprising that he and the worker do not agree on the problem. Mary MacDonald (1960) has claimed that the social worker is "the keeper of the community's conscience." The idea of a social conscience, which the social worker should represent, ignores the significance of different life styles and their relation to place in society and to the values which are held. These styles and the related values result from the division of labor, the existence of a social stratification system and consequent differential opportunities. The values of the social worker and her client are thus radically different. However, the social worker has greater social power than the client (Landy, 1960:127–144). And so her notions of values and how they should be given priorities outweigh those of the client. She can attempt to impose her values on the client. Thus, the social work view of the community consciences, derived from middle class training and experience, upholds the *status quo*. A more pluralistic view of values and a greater understanding of the socially determined nature of behavior might lead to a greater emphasis on revolutionary changes rather than amelioration for the solution of social problems.

It is here that there may be a *rapprochement* between sociology and social work. The sociologist, by training, is concerned with the nature and interrelationships of the social system. But there is current disinterest from sociologists in the practical use of their knowledge and skills for the solution of social problems. In addition, those sociologists who have shown an interest have been

disillusioned (Radman and Kolodny, 1965:93–112). Applied sociologists have complained at length about how they are treated when they intervene in social issues. Nevertheless, the knowledge and skill of sociologists might help to create a social accountability system which would in turrn help social work to understand and help to change the life conditions of those about whom society is legitimately concerned. If social work has so far been guilty of acting without conceptualizing, sociology has been guilty of conceptualizing without acting.

The solutions to social problems can strengthen a society as it evolves or they can tear it apart. The successful solution of a social problem must be revolutionary in some form; ameliorative and preventative solutions would seem not to work in the long run, and the exacerbation of symptoms is not a solution. It seems to us that there must be a joint effort to translate sociological knowledge into social action. The skills of the sociologist as a social theoretician and a research investigator, and the skills of the social workers as a designated agent of social change in the society can be used for the solution of social problems.

There is some reason to believe that social work is making greater efforts in this direction than is sociology. Some doctoral programs in social work appear to be providing training that integrates the skills of social science and social work. The importance of this integration of skill and understanding cannot be underestimated. It is to be hoped that social science, in general, and sociology in particular, will also develop such integrated programs for the development of new agents of social change.

The increasing attention that decision makers are paying to social science indicates that social scientists will increasingly be called upon to utilize their skills in areas of social relevance. In meeting these social concerns—in seeking ways to solve rather than rearrange social problems there may be a rapprochement between social work and sociology as both disciplines bring their best thinking to bear on these issues.

Notes

1. Frank (1949) defines a social problem as any difficulty or misbehavior of a fairly large number of persons which we wish to remove or correct.

2. Eglinton (1964) argues that there is perhaps one other way of "solving" a social problem: to legalize actions heretofore labeled "illegal," "deviant," or "sinful." One example of such a solution might be seen in the repeal of the 18th Amendment, another in Parliament's move to legalize homosexuality in England. This is a technique of solving social problems by revising the sanction system of a society. The argument that legalizing ancient Greek patterns of homosexual love between a patron and an adolescent boy would solve a social problem by reducing alienations of the adolescent from the adult world, i.e. juvenile delinquency. By legalizing homosexuality, Eglinton argues, one would resolve two social problems, homosexuality and juvenile delinquency—an interesting, but hardly respectable idea, at this time.

3. Case (1964) discusses social problems as results of social processes, themselves part of social change.

4. Roosevelt (1935) statement upon signing of the Social Security Act, August 14, 1935.

5. Galbraith (1958) discusses two forms of poverty in the United States, i.e., "case poverty" and "insular poverty." One is located in some defect in the individual, the other is some type of social dislocation. What may ameliorate one type will only confuse the other.

6. Furie (1966) discusses the adverse reaction to social planning by persons who must undergo the "psychological-motivational" assessments of professional social workers in order to benefit from a social plan. See also Lubove's (1965) discussion of the development of social casework as an alternative to social reform.

7. Fried (1963) discusses the effects of forced urban relocation.

8. Beyer (1965), Wilner *et al* (1962), Jacobs (1961) report, for example, a recent study of persons living under slum conditions which does not show large differences between the groups in regard to more adequate or health life styles.

9. United States Department of Labor (1965) in a recent publication of the Office of Policy Planning and Research, The Negro Family, reviewed the crises in race relations and argued that the solution to the social problem created by the emerging Negro movement called for a new approach: "A national effort is required that will give a unity of purpose to the many activities of the Federal government, in this area, directed to a new kind of national goal: *the establishment of a stable Negro family structure*" (emphasis ours). This is an interesting answer to a large minority group's claim to social justice—i.e., full citizenship and social justice can be granted only to persons with middle class nuclear family backgrounds! While the present power structure of the country may be in the hands of persons who seem to have such family backgrounds (with certain notable exceptions) it does not seem to follow that full participation of Negroes in the economic and political life requires a stable family structure. Some might argue that the present middle class family structure creates as many problems as it is reputed to solve. The divorce rate, the neurosis rate, and the suburban gang, reveal that middle class family life may, in fact, drive its members into sterile, power-laden, conformist actions which constitute a great barrier to the basic tenets of democracy. Thus, while the civil rights movement calls for social justice, the suggested solution in this report calls for personal and family changes not clearly related to the claim for economic and political freedom. Also see, Rovere (1966) for an account of some of the furor such middle class oriented recommendations made among the various spokesmen of the civil rights movement. Also see, Rainwater and Yancey (1966). They point out that the report itself attributes the breakdown of the Negro family to social and economic conditions. However, because of the way the material was released to the public, the demand for the strengthening and restructuring of the Negro family was perceived, and reacted to, as the major message. In this instance, then, the major social response was to the perceived content, and not necessarily the actual content, of the report. However, the insistence that the Negro family emulate the white family in organization, structure, and motivation, is part of the report, and represents an interesting displacement of a social problem from social conditions to individual characteristics of the problem group!

10. Although, this was true when this was first written during the summer of 1966, it is even more true today, when what are perceived as excesses by civil rights militants exacerbate problems without providing solutions. The actions of groups opposed to military involvement in Vietnam also have many characteristics of exacabatory responses, particularly since their call for unilateral de-escalation of the conflict or total withdrawal is not seen as a viable alternative by most of the population, not to mention the primary decision-makers. Nor do they appear to have given thoughtful consideration to the consequences of an unilateral decision to withdraw, any more than the proponents of further escalation appear to have considered—at least publically—the consequences of continued escalation. So far, the "peace groups" have been able to do nothing but protest, without, apparently, effecting

policy. Hence, symptom exacerbation results. On the other hand, it is certainly not clear that any other action is open to them at this point in time.

11. Kallen (1966) states that the recent distribution of a questionnaire on Scientific Manpower Resources by the American Sociological Association tends to perpetuate this distinction: sociologists were given the choice of self-identifications as "applied" or "theoretical."

12. Supreme Court (1954) recognized that the decision desegregating public schools was based, in part, on social science evidence that separate schools were inherently unequal. But since that time, little use has been made of social science in the solution of a series of racial crises.

13. Ross (1965) calls upon the scientific associations to "design the means by which social problems which science can help are brought to the attention of scientists, and whatever in science is relevant to those problems is brought to the attention of the appropriate laymen."

14. Bendix (1945–46) comments on the interesting formulation of the scientist-social actor conflict. He stated: "This ambivalence in the role of the social scientific indicates that in our culture the inherent radicalism of the scientific approach is either neutralized by turning social scientists into professional employees or that it is emasculated by confining them to the academic preserve."

15. Howard (1784) reported on the state of prisons in England and Wales, with preliminary observations and an account of some foreign prisons and hospitals.

16. Eckland (1967) feels that recent theorizing suggests that there may be some truth to this assertion, although for reasons different than those suggested by the social workers attribution of personal quality. Eckland, for example, makes a strong case for the differences in the genetic pool of different social classes, with the lower class having less genetic potential.

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Sociology as Advocacy: There are No Neutrals

James H. Laue

I have tried to indicate that sociology's dominant conception of both "the just society" and of intervention approaches to achieve justice are grounded in doctrines of persons and society which stress human fulfillment as the ultimate goal, and rational, data-based social decision processes as the appropriate means.

Now we come to an analysis of sociology's conception of advocacy, which must begin with the assertion that all human social action (including the doing of sociology) is (a) value-laden and (b) political. That is, all action (a) requires choice among alternatives (whether conscious or not, with not deciding being as value-laden as deciding) and (b) exercises power and affects the power configuration of the social systems involved.

I shall argue in this and subsequent sections that doing sociology in all its forms is social intervention, and that all intervention is advocacy of one of three types—of party, outcome or process. Given these conditions, there are no neutrals in terms of their impact on given power configurations, and any sociologist claiming to be "neutral" in anything other than the strictest technical sense is naive, misinformed, and/or devious. The conceptions of intervention and advocacy developed here are intended to be applicable to all forms of discipline-based and professional action.

Social Problems: The Root of Sociological Advocacy

The concept of social problems is at the basis of virtually every contemporary conception of sociological advocacy. "Social problems" is the most firmly established sub-field of sociology, as evidenced by the 25-year existence (and

contemporary strength) of the Society for the Study of Social Problems, and its journal, *Social Problems*. Most of the 24 recognized specialities and sections within the American Sociological Association deal with issues or institutional systems that are considered to be problematic for one reason or another—medicine, education, aging, deviance and world conflicts, for example.

The viability of the sub-field of social problems is visible in the comprehensive and useful issue of *Social Problems* devoted to "SSSP as a Social Movement" (Colvard 1976). Hundreds of persons, most of them sociologists, worked in task forces and other research arrangements to analyze the field, the Society, and the journal *Social Problems*. A thorough review of the issue leaves one with a feeling of the vitality of social problems theories, networks and research efforts.

Definitions of social problems abound as textbooks and articles continue to proliferate. While the definitions differ, it is clear that most sociologists agree that there does exist a class of phenomena which may be appropriately labeled "social problems." With Kohn (1976:94) in the *Social Problems* special issue, my preference is for "a broad definition . . . that includes any social phenomena that have a seriously negative impact on the lives of sizable segments of the population."

Different approaches to the etiology of social problems may provide at least implicit guidelines for meliorative attempts by sociologists and other problem-definers. Rubington and Weinberg (1971) analyze five different sociological perspectives on social problems, each with its own practice implications: social pathology, social disorganization, value conflicts, deviant behavior and labelling.

"Social problems," then, is the label for the cluster of ideologies and conceptions that is at the root of sociological efforts at advocacy. two other traditionally valued orientations in sociology provide the vehicle and conception-of-outcomes for responding to social problems (in some rubrics, "solving" them)—social policy and social change.

Social Policy and Social Change: The Pursuit of Justice

There seems to be an emerging consensus in the field that social policy is the most appropriate vehicle for applying sociological understandings to the amelioration of social problems (Freeman and Sherwood, 1970; Etizioni, 1973; Rainwater, 1974; Horowitz and Katz, 1975; Lee, 1976). Social policy research is critical, comprehensive, reality-testing, alternatives-generating, and appropriate for small demonstration or quasi-experimental field projects. Sociologists are among numerous social scientists currently benefiting from the need of governmental agencies to know, to plan, to evaluate and to traffic in expertise.

Freeman and Sherwood's view of the "key role of the social-policy

scientist'' is precisely what would follow from the human fulfillment criterion for justice noted in the first part of this paper:

> The social-policy scientist seeks to mold a social order that is more consistent with human needs and human dignity. He searches for the causes of social problems and attempts to specify the conditions which will achieve a better state of affairs. He views any particular social arrangement as only one of many. Thus, he often challenges the status quo. Perhaps most important, he asks what institutions and what course of action are most likely to meet the needs and enhance the dignity and self-fulfillment of man (1970:22).

Social policy, adequately researched and planned by the sociologist-reformer, is believed to create new social arrangements and to redistribute resources—which, therefore, ''solves social problems,'' i.e., moves the system toward justice. This is social change—the third cornerstone of sociology's predominant conception of its advocacy role.

But sociologies' conceptions of social change still suffer, for the most part, from an Enlightenment hangover. ''Social change'' has a generally positive ring to the sociologist: Bash argues (1977) that in its earliest conception, social change ''was almost unanimously construed as 'progress'.'' Students prepare for careers in social change; agencies promote social change. But social change means the continually shifting patterns (sometimes dramatically so) of distribution of power and resources, and those redistributions may take a variety of forms, ranging from revolution to consciousness-raising and institutional reform on the left, to increased social control, status quo-ante conditions, or political repression on the right.

This is the scenario of advocacy (often implicit) on which sociologists base their activities: research on social problems which interest them, which is expected to influence the development of social policies which will produce desired social change. The uni-directional scenario becomes a loop, of course, when social changes engender new social problems—usually unintentionally—to which policy solutions must be addressed.

Modalities for Sociological Advocacy

Numerous specific activities have been undertaken by sociologists in their advocacy of truth and specific policies. It is important to record at least some of them to indicate the range and diversity of the discipline's practice approaches beyond the traditional teaching, research and publication. They include community organizing, training, passing resolutions, picketing and other

forms of direct action, formation of radical and ascription-based caucuses in professional associations, other internal political action within professional associations (the write-in victory of Alfred McClung Lee for the Presidency of the ASA in 1975 is the best example), signing petitions, making videotapes rather than publishing findings (for greater accessibility to "the people"), conscious institution-building, networking (see Duhl and Volkman, 1970), and lobbying and litigation.

It is clear, then, that sociology is "practiced" in a variety of ways and settings (i.e., the members of the discipline advocate, at the minimum, their ways of viewing social phenomena as "better" or "more truthful"), with wide-ranging conceptions of appropriate outcomes for the host systems. The dominant ways may be summarized as truth-finding (research) and truth-telling (teaching, consultation, testimony and various forms of policy advice). The dominant settings are the university, the professional journal, the private or public agency program, the legislative hearing, and the popular media. The dominant desired outcomes are, in Kelman's (1968:9–10) terms, "the advancement of human welfare, the rationality of social decisions, and the achievement of constructive social change."

How is it possible to organize and understand the wide range of methods and forums utilized by sociologists in expressing their advocacies? We approach the problem in two ways: first, through examining several formulations of the social roles and functions of sociologists and other social scientists, and, second through an analysis of the three types of advocacy—party, outcome, and process.

Social Roles and Functions of Sociologists. Herbert Kelman (1968), 1976–77 chairperson of the Social Psychology Section of the American Sociological Association and a major spokesman for a systematic ethics of social science, proposes three analytically distinct roles in which the social scientist "practices:"

— Producer of social forces (through research findings and other activities that may affect social policy);
— Experimenter and social thinker (the classical scientist/scholar role); and
— Participant in social action ("a role defined in nonprofessional terms, but to which his standing and knowledge as a social scientist have obvious relevance.")

Most sociologists see their "practice" as centering in the first or second roles, whether in the classroom, in publication or in the field.

In another formulation, Gans (1967: 443–448), noting "that the sociologist ought to be more than a detached researcher and that he should participate more

directly in social-action programs,'' delineates the ''role of sociology in planning against poverty'' into four categories that can apply to sociological (or other social science) advocacy regarding any problem:

— Developing a theoretical scheme to guide planning;
— Determining appropriate and feasible goals;
— Program development;
— Evaluation of action programs.

This scheme accurately describes the major roles of the sociologist-practitioner in a program agency, I believe, and is discussed in connection with an analysis of types of advocacy later in this section.

Howard Becker answers the question of what social scientists can contribute to dealing with social problems with the following list of five activities—all of them squarely within the truth-finding/telling modality:

— Sorting out the deferring definitions of the problem:
— Analyzing the assumptions made by the interested parties about the problem;
— Testing various assumptions about the problem against empirical reality;
— Discovering strategic points of intervention in the social structures and processes that produce the problem;
— Suggesting alternative moral points of view from which the problem can be assessed (in Rainwater, 1974: 10–11).

Becker's 1966 S.S.S.P. Presidential Address clearly framed sociology as an advocate for the subordinate and less powerful members of the social systems in which sociologists work (Becker, 1967). His argument may be summarized as a plea for ''evening up the odds,'' especially between client underdogs and service agency overdogs (who, in Becker's words, ''usually have to lie'' because they are responsible for services which ''are seldom as they ought to be''). By explicating the points of view of subordinates, minorities, or deviants, sociologists help move them up the ''hierarchy of credibility.'' With perhaps unintentional symmetry, sociology thus reflects its own underdog status among the disciplines in its practice roles and orientations.

Alvin Gouldner has contributed a wide range of insights to understanding the place and purposes of sociology, notably through *The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology* (1970) and *For Sociology* (1973). He joins the argument with Becker by questioning ''blind advocacy'' for underdogs, and in essence accuses Becker of being a lower-level reformer aiming at the managers of service—providing institutions which are structurally corrupt by nature. Gouldner wants the sights of sociological advocates set on the real overdogs who maintain

the traditional liberal's welfare state for their own interests—corporate financiers and policy-makers. His own SSSP Presidential Address in 1962 argued against the tradition of objectivity, "charging the value-free researcher with being socially irresponsible" (Freeman and Sherwood, 1970:21), and calling for professionalized disrespect of the existing order and for advocacy of change.

Sociology as Intervention: Three Types of Advocacy. Each of these formulations is useful in categorizing the advocacy positions and activities of sociologists. What is needed now, I believe, is a more general theory of social advocacy which can help explain the nature and impact of the practice of sociology (as well as other disciplines) on the clients, colleagues, administrators, politicians, and other publics it touches.

I began by asserting that all activities of sociologists are a form of social intervention. Intervention may be defined as follows:

1. A deliberate and systematic entering into a social setting or situation (often a conflict situation)—
    (a) By an outside or semi-outside party or parties;
    (b) With varying degrees of legitimation conferred by the first and second parties;
    *(c) With the aim of influencing the course of events toward outcomes which the intervenor defines as positive.
*2. Every act of intervention alters the power configuration in the social systems in which it takes place and, therefore:
*3. Every intervenor is an advocate—for party, for outcome and/or for process.

The last three elements of the definition deserve elaboration.

*1(c) Intervenors aim to influence the course of events in theintervention setting in a direction which they define as positive. Each intervenor has tolerance limits for acceptable outcomes; just any outcome will not do. Family therapists, architects, lawyers, and college professors, for example, operate from different world views, but each "knows" the range of conditions within which outcomes of intervention must fall to be acceptable—whether the coinage is family dynamics, buildings, litigated settlements, or concepts. All intervention is thus value-directed; there are no "neutral" intervenors.
*2. Human social life is the process and product of decision. Social decisions allocate scarce resources among persons and groups. Power is the control of decisions. Every act of intervention affects the configuration of negotiable power in a given social system, increasing the power of some parties, decreasing that of others. Therefore, every

act of intervention—and especially the activities of conscious, goal-directed professionals—is an exercise of power, with positive consequences for some in their pursuit of their interests.

*3.   Every intervenor, therefore, is an advocate, despite self-perceptions or public claims of ''neutrality.'' Most intervenors advocate particular outcomes or advocate the case of one of the parties (typically their client). The third type of advocacy is for a particular kind of process to be followed in arriving at the outcome (see Laue, 1975b).

Analysis of the three ideal-types of advocacy proposed here can provide an organizing framework for the various activities of practicing (i.e., all) sociologists. But first definitions and qualifications regarding advocacy are in order.

Advocacy and advocates have received considerable treatment in the nonsociological literature in the last ten years. Among the elements which have been defined as crucial to the role of advocate are:

— Alignment with the interests of disadvantaged subgroups who heretofore have not been in a position to articulate their needs in the process of community decision-making, with the objective of effecting a redistribution of public resources from the most advantaged sectors of the community (Davidoff, 1965).
— Provision of leadership and resources directed toward eliciting information, challenging the stance of service institutions, and arguing issues in behalf of disadvantaged clients (Grosser, 1973).
— Utilization of the expertise of professionals to defend the interests of low-income community groups in the policy process. . . . Assisting the poor, black and Third World minorities to compete successfully in the influence process as a way of compensating for ''an imperfect pluralism (Guskin and Ross, 1974).''

But a much broader conception of advocacy is required if the concept is to have utility beyond the limited settings described in the preceding definitions. For, in fact, every act of intervention by every professional affects the power configuration in the target system—whether that system is a classroom, agency, legislative body, neighborhood, courtroom, or intergroup conflict. Modern dictionaries offer derivations and definitions that cast the analysis of advocacy in the comprehensive terms that are most productive for our purposes. Here advocacy means ''to speak or write in favor of,'' ''to plead or argue for something,'' ''support,'' and ''active espousal,'' in addition to the term's technical application to lawyers in litigation:

> Advocacy, as utilized in this paper, means acting in support of a
> particular party, outcome and/or process in a social situation.

Acting encompasses writing, talking, and other forms of overt human social
action. Support may take the form of any of the activities engaged in by practic-
ing sociologists. A social situation may include social systems or processes of
any size, structure, duration and dynamic.

The central focus of the analysis contained in this paper is on the three types
of advocacy—party, outcome, process. Every act of sociological practice repre-
sents one or a combination of these three advocacies. Dimensions of the three
types of advocacy are summarized in the accompanying Table 1.

Table 1 attempts to systematize some of the characteristics and activities I
have observed and practiced as a sociologist. It is intended to delineate some
of the categories for a general theory of advocacy for social scientists—not only
for sociologists. Sociology is no different than the other social sciences in its
approach to advocacy: the practitioners' worldviews and the subject matter may
vary, but the structural characteristics of intervention situations and the range
of loyalties available to the advocate for party, outcome or process are similar.

So, structural characteristics rather than self-conscious choice are the major
determinant of the impact and, therefore, the type of advocacy employed in any
intervention situation.

We start with the assumption that there are elements of all the three types
of advocacy in every interventive act; one cannot choose to limit his or her
impact to only one of the three areas. The table focuses attention on the pre-
dominant mode of advocacy employed by the practitioner, and proposes correla-
tive conditions and characteristics. We also assume that most sociologists—
especially those in the truth-telling mode—generally are unaware of their work
as advocacy, for their professional training imparts values to the contrary.

Most of the cells in the chart are derived in response to questions about the
actual impact of social science intervention on actors, outcomes and processes
in the target systems. Regarding "Goals (A)'and "Targets (B)," for example,
activities which improve the perceived or actual advantage of a client or target
group may be labeled "party advocacy." The production of a considerable
volume of research findings by sociologists regarding the negative impacts of
racial discrimination have been a form of party advocacy—for blacks and other
minorities.

Perhaps the most typical form of advocacy represented in the research
activities of sociologists conducted outside the academy is "outcome advo-
cacy." Here the target is social policies and the goal is to influence them in a
direction that squares with the values of the researcher.

Table 1. A Typology of Social Advocacy Goals, Targets and Practice Characteristics

		Predominant Mode of Advocacy	
	PARTY	OUTCOME	PROCESS
A. GOAL	Improve the perceived or actual advantage of a client or target group—individual or class.	Achieve a decision or policy the advocate defines as positive.	Institute and/or follow a process meeting important value criteria of the advocate in achieving an outcome.
B. TARGET FOR INTERVENTION	Clients and/or their opponents.	Social policies	Social systems [a]
C. PRACTICE CHARACTERISTICS			
1 Truth Orientation			
a. Predominant Practice Setting:	Academic Institution, Professional Journal		
b. Predominant Roles:	Advocate researcher.	Policy researcher; summative evaluator.	Pure researcher.
c. Major Practice Approach:	Research, writing and teaching.	Research, writing and teaching.	Research, writing and teaching.
d. Primary Product(s):	Position paper; opponent analysis.	Position paper; research report, evaluation report.	Article or book.
e. Effectiveness Criterion:	Client acceptance.	Colleague acceptance.	Colleague acceptance.
2. Change Orientation			
a. Predominant Practing Setting:	Public or Private Agency, Popular Media.[b]		
b. Predominant Role(s)	Community organizer; trainer; agency field worker.	Policy-maker; administrator.	Mediator; advocate mediator; program developer; formative evaluator; action researcher; trainer.
c. Major Practice Approach:	Political action.	Legislative or administrative action.	Third-party action.
d. Primary Product(s):	Client empowerment.	Laws; budget allocations, administrative guidelines or regulations.	Action memorandum; evaluation report; programs; consultation.
e. Effectiveness Criterion:	Client gets bigger share of power, resources.	Policy influence.	Win-win, jointly-determined, rational outcomes (i.e., the result of "good process").

[a] All the parties, intervenors, structures, processes and outcomes in the social systems affected.
[b] And, on rare occasion, elected office.

The focus of process advocacy is on the totality of interaction in a system, with the sociologist always holding values about the most productive ways of viewing the system and its processes, and often, in addition, about the process of procedure that should be followed in ongoing decision-making and problemsolving in the system. While in the first case the major impact of the intervention ultimately falls on a party or parties (i.e., actors) in a social system, and in the second case the impact is on social policies, in the case of process advocacy the impact is on the way in which parties achieve outcomes—namely, the entire range of social interaction.

The most important distinction made in the table is between the "Truth Orientation (1)" and the "Change Orientation (2)" under "Practice Character- istics (C)." After examining the role formulations of Kelman and others, I concluded that virtually all distinctions in practice approaches in sociology are best understood by first determining whether the practitioner is primarily ori- ented to truth-finding and truth-telling or to promoting social change. Kelman's three role types may be condensed into these two: Friedrichs' "priestly" and "prophetic" paradigms represent the same distinction.

Applying this distinction does not imply that truth-oriented practitioners are uninterested in doing change—only that they see their roles as predominantly involving discovering and communicating social reality, usually coupled with the unexamined assumption that truth somehow directly translates into good policy. Similarly, the change-oriented sociologist is not disinterested in finding and telling truth; indeed, his skills in doing so usually are at the base of his ability to be an effective change-agent. But the ultimate professional and per- sonal reward for him is more likely to be found in particular client, policy and process outcomes (see C.2.e.) than in the professional approbation which is the lifeblood of all who see truth rather than change as their predominant mission (C.1.e.).

The predominant practice settings are consistent within two orientations: truth-tellers are most at home in academic institutions and in the pages of professional journals (C.1.a.); and change-doers are more likely to gravitate to the public or private agency, to the popular media, and, on rare occasion, to elected office (C.2.a.).

The predominant roles associated with the two orientations (C.1.b. and C.2.b.) vary within advocacy types in this scheme. In each case for the truth orientation, the role is related to research, whether as advocate, policy and pure researcher. The range of roles is greater for the change orientation. Typical client advocate roles include community organizer, trainer and field worker, and the sociologist who chooses to direct his work toward actively influencing change in favor of a given group will inevitably find himself assuming these types of roles. The sociologist predominantly committed to policy change would find high administrative or policy positions the most cordial practice setting.

The most innovative and potentially influential roles for the sociologist/ change-agent cluster around process advocacy, where the commitment is to promoting a process of social interaction that reflects such values as win-win social exchanges, rationality, and democratic decision making. The mediator assists in negotiations between disputing parties. The advocate mediator uses his skills and base to empower the less powerful in preparation for fuller participation in the process. A variety of agency and social movement-related roles attract process-oriented change agents with sociological training: program developer (the activities of sociologists in poverty, population, crime, and delinquency program development is noteworthy), formative evaluator, action researcher and trainer, for example.

Regarding the major practice approach of advocates, the distinctions again are more complex for the change-oriented in contrast to the truth-oriented practitioner. Research, writing, and teaching is the basic modality for all truth-telling (A.1.c.). The different requirements for effective advocacy in the change-oriented mode (C.2.c.) call for different kinds of approaches, skills, and risks. Party advocacy requires political (i.e., power-related) action if the relative advantage of groups is to be altered. Policy changes require legislative and/or administrative action. And the most effective way of promoting "good process" is through the types of third-party activities listed in C.2.b.—mediation, action research, training and the like.

Primary products of sociologists in the truth-telling mode (C.1.d.) are written materials. Again, the requirements for effective advocacy are more complex for the change-oriented roles (C.2.d.); for the practitioner is committed to real-world outcomes in contrast to writing or talking about real-world outcomes. Hence, client empowerment is the primary product of the change-oriented party advocate, and various forms of policy statements (laws, budget allocations, administrative guidelines and regulations) are the principal intended products of change-oriented outcome advocates. The primary products of change-oriented process advocates include various forms of action and evaluation documents, programs and consultation activities.

Summing Up: Sociological Advocacy

In structure and impact, then, sociological advocacy is much the same as other advocacies. The worldviews and the content may differ, but the practice modalities and impacts cover the same range of alternatives. All sociological activity is advocacy—whether for an intellectual viewpoint on social reality, for the rights of a given set of actors, for a desired policy outcome, or for a specific set of social process.

From the early days of the field—especially in the United States—the subject matter of sociology and the values of sociologists have kept sociological

"practice" (of even the most isolated/scholarly type) closely related to the ongoing issues and problems of the host social system. So the history of sociology is a history of advocacy: at the minimum, advocacy for certain ways of viewing society and its "problems," often in sharp contrast to the views of politicians, ecclesiastics, secular humanists, agency bureaucrats, journalists and the electorate.

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Changing the Definition of the Situation: Toward a Theory of Sociological Intervention

Roger A. Straus

ABSTRACT

The sociological intervention is identified as (1) directed at the operational definition of the situation and (2) taking into account the multiple, interacting layers of social participation framing human predicaments and their resolution. These are further differentiated, employing case examples, in terms of mode of attack—direct, indirect, or cooperative—and level of social context at which the intervention is directed—the personal, group, organizational, or social world being described here as "quantum" levels of interest. While others may conduct such interventions, the sociological intervention is characterized as the special domain of the clinical sociologist.

Sociology, unlike medicine or psychology, has never sought to maintain the strong disciplinary boundaries typical of "a specialty." Rather, in its historical posture of a generalizing social science encompassing the subject areas of the other social/behavioral disciplines, sociology has freely disseminated to others its findings, concepts, and methods while maintaining only a marginal interest in "applied" work. Consequently, while our subterranean tradition of clinical sociology reemerged around 1978, we have found it difficult to specify exactly the special contribution or expertise of the sociological practitioner.

To limit the domain of clinical sociology to what self-identified clinical sociologists do or have done would, if anything, be counterproductive, as Lee (1973) and others have argued. As one who has been intimately concerned with the problem of defining our field for some years now, I believe we are ready to move beyond presentation of the variety of roles enacted by clinical sociologists

(cf. Straus 1979a) to tease out the underlying logic of approach characterizing the specifically *sociological intervention.*

In this paper, then, I shall state my findings that, on the basis of analyzing the published and unpublished literature of the field, the sociological intervention may be characterized as (1) directed at the operational definition of the situation, in such a way as to (2) take into account the multiple, interacting layers of social participation framing human problems and predicaments and their resolution.

Contemporary practitioners of clinical sociology almost universally characterize themselves as *humanists* in Lee's sense of the term (1973). While extrinsic to my general definition, this value orientation is useful when differentiating clinical sociological practice from more conventional "applied social science" (Lee 1978). Our interventions are aimed at empowering clients instead of simply adjusting them to the "realities of life." Rather than adopt the expert's role of prescribing a better or more appropriate reality for the client, we strive to minimize interference with the client's worlds and values; rather than serve the needs of "the system," we attempt to serve the needs of the human beings comprising the social unit or system in question (Straus 1982).

Operational Definition of the Situation

Translation of social theory, concept, and method into practice necessitates both theoretical eclecticism and some reworking of our usual formulations. Thomas's "definition of the situation" (1931) is usually understood phenomenologically to mean that whatever a person or group believes or accepts to be so is real in its consequences. While it is important to deal with socially constructed realities at this intrapersonal level, since they form the basis upon which conduct will be constructed by human actors (Blumer 1969), redefinition of internalized meanings and cognitive maps is mainly a concern of sociological counselors working with individuals and primary groups (Straus 1982). Most sociological interventions are more concerned with the manifestation of these "realities" in patterns of conduct and joint conduct being enacted by the individuals, groups, and/or systems under scrutiny.

Thomas's statement of the principle was somewhat ambiguous about the nature of the definition of the situation, but was clear about the dialectical relationship between the individual's definition and the definition of the situation *presented[a] by others. These concepts are neatly summarized in Sarbin's (1976) characterization of the dramaturgical perspective holding that*

> actors not only respond to situations, but also mold and create them. . . . The interactions of participants define the situation. The

units of interest are not individuals, nor organisms, not assemblages of traits, but *interacting persons* in identifiable contexts.

It is the pattern of these interactions that corresponds to the operational definition of the situation and that is the target of sociological invtervention.

Levels of Social Context

Both the original statement of definition of the situation and its dramaturgical operationalization are clear about the situated nature of conduct. They are not so clear about the complex and many-tiered nature of social ecologies and about how human behavior is situationally organized with respect to a subject's concrete location within that *total* social context. However, clinical sociologists are sensitive to the implications of how "social systems" at every level influence ongoing action. This sensitivity is then translated into practical actions designed to mitigate negative interlevel influences and/or to use these dynamics strategically to guide and stabilize positive change. As Freedman and Rosenfeld have put it (1983), the clinical sociologist uses a paradigm of "the integration of levels of focus" incorporating both "macro" and "micro" viewpoints. Thus, the characteristic sociological intervention combines multiple foci: "the group member, the groups to which the person belongs or desires to belong or not belong, organizations, committees, subcultures, culture, and society."

In this paper it is necessary to adopt a typology of the various levels of social context; clearly, how one slices the social continuum represents a pragmatic choice relative to one's purpose. For example, Parsons (1951) selected a scheme appropriate to his theory of social action, while Lofland (1976) utilized an entirely different model of "human systems." As my purpose here is to describe sociological intervention generically, we will look at just four "quantum levels" of social participation: persons, groups, organizations, and worlds.

The first two of these correspond to general usage. *Persons* are social actors defining themselves in conduct; for our purposes, they *are* their acts. The routinized patterns of conduct colloquially referred to as "one's act" are framed by (that is, organized in terms of) the culture of the worlds in which persons participate and the roles they play in the various groups in which they are involved.

Each level of social structure is viewed as the emergent pattern of routinized conduct representing a dialectical synthesis between the next "higher" and "lower" levels. *Groups,* then, would be conceptualized as persons with more or less routinized social relations or *roles*. The actual role structure of the group operationally defines that group. As groups necessarily establish at least tacit patterns of relationship with other groups, they inevitably become tied into any number of formal or informal organizations.

A special usage of *organizations* is employed here: this level of organized, identifiable intergroup relations is most often termed that of "social systems" (Znaniecki 1934). However, since any interacting set of persons can be considered to form a "social system," and their relations can be analyzed in terms of systems theory (von Bertalanffy 1968), it seems best to employ another term for this structural level. *Organizations,* then, may range up through wider and wider scales of intergroup relations from "formal organizations," corporations, and associations to communities and governments. The operational definition of organizations consists of their *institutions,* meaning the routinized patterns of social relations often simply referred to as their "organization."

The highest level of social context in this typology is the *social world.* This usage is adapted and expanded from Lofland's definition: "Complexly interrelated sets of encounters, roles, groups, and organizations seen by participants as forming a larger whole are often and properly thought of as 'worlds,' as in the phrases 'the business world,' 'the academic world,' 'the sports world'" (1976:29). In the sense employed here, a world is operationally defined by its culture, primarily the nonmaterial culture of norms, values, folkways, mores, language, and technology differentiating its participants from members of other social worlds. Those who share a subculture by definition share a world; larger-scale worlds might include the entire society, the civilization of which it is a part, and, possibly, Spaceship Earth itself.

The Sociological Intervention

If we identify the operational definition with the target of intervention, this scheme generates the following taxonomy of sociological intervention:[1]

Level of Participation	Target of Intervention
Persons	Conduct
Groups	Role Structure
Organizations	Institutions
Worlds	Culture

The intervention itself will, in one way or another, involve a strategy of redefining the situation. At the personal level, for example, sociological counseling might involve reconstruction of the client's assumptive realities and/or social-behavioral tactics specifically designed to change his or her conduct in everyday life (Straus 1979b). Unlike more conventional "psychological" or "psychosocial" counseling, only minimal attention would be placed upon intrapsychic constructs such as defense mechanisms or personality traits. On the other hand, integration of levels of focus leads the sociologist to approach a

person's difficulties at this personal level as *social problems* intimately tied to cultural and subcultural factors, location in history and society, reference groups, family dynamics, and the social construction of reality. Straus (1979b) has shown how, for example, obesity can be managed through a specifically sociological intervention.

Modes of Intervention

Interventions may be organized in terms of three different modes: the direct, indirect, and cooperative. These represent different strategies for attacking a problem. In real life, interventions generally combine one or more modes, but it remains valuable to consider them as ideal types when thinking about and planning change projects.

By "direct mode" I refer to the commonsensical approach of attacking a problem head-on. One might assess a troubled organization, devise a strategy of intervention, and then guide management in implementing the suggested changes. Since this requires the change agent to take the role of expert or "doctor," it tends to conflict with humanist values and is therefore more typical of the social engineering approach than sociological intervention. On the other hand, while the direct mode can provoke resistance and socialize clients to rely upon external authority and "expert" guidance, it remains an invaluable tool in the sociologist's kitbag. In fact, it is often expedient or even necessary to take an initially authoritarian role prior to weaning the client to a position of self-management (Straus 1977).

Indirect interventions enable one to avoid problems of resistance and dependency by employing tactics of indirection and/or indirect attack. The former was pioneered by noted hypnotherapist Milton V. Erickson (1980), who developed the strategy of "indirect suggestion." The approach has been popularized in consulting circles as "neurolinguistic programming" and has been adapted to social science-based interventions by those affiliated with the Mental Research Institute in Palo Alto (Watzlawick, Weakland, and Fisch 1967). In family therapy, for example, indirect tactics might involve getting family members to cooperate with the identified problem behavior of a child, so as to get the parents to stop doing whatever they have been "doing about it," thus blocking perpetuation of an operational definition aggravating or maintaining the family system's problem (Fisch, Weakland, and Segal 1982).

Indirect attack is more typical of sociological intervention as practiced by clinical sociologists; the problem is resolved by directing redefinition efforts at higher and/or lower levels of social participation than that at which the identified problem lies. Cheek and Baker (1977) found that subject resistance and ethical problems associated with resocialization programs for prison inmates could be avoided by organizing "self-control training" programs for inmates. This

created the latent function of reducing recidivism—the identified problem—
which occurs at the organizational level of the criminal justice system.

Cooperative intervention tends to be favored in principle by clinical sociolo-
gists. In this mode the client's active participation in the change process be-
comes the key feature of the intervention (Lippitt and Lippitt 1978). Those who
will be affected by the intervention are helped to participate in or even take
primary responsibility for making decisions about and implementing the redefi-
nition process; the role of the sociologist becomes, more than anything else,
that of a facilitator (Glass 1981).

The cooperative mode may also be employed in social research to increase
the study's clinical value (Leitko and Peterson 1982). Jaques's "social analy-
sis" techniques (1982) might typify the "pure" cooperative intervention. How-
ever, in many cases (as when the situation is highly politicized and marked by
considerable power differentials) the facilitator role may prove too cumbersome
or simply impractical. A pure cooperative approach may also not fit the sociolo-
gist's personal strengths or style; in such cases, a mixed-mode approach will
be followed.

In practice, the principle of eclecticism extends beyond theory to mode.
Cases of actual sociological intervention generally display considerable theoreti-
cal eclecticism, an admixture of modal strategies, and elements of indirect
approach designed to take advantage of the integration of levels of focus. In any
case, the change agent can only benefit from clarifying the modes of interven-
tion being employed.

The Personal Level

I will now flesh out these principles by discussing a variety of sociological
interventions that show how these practices relate to the taxonomy. Direct
intervention at the personal level, while the logical beginning point, is the most
difficult to differentiate from the conventional practices of psychotherapy and
counseling, but subtle—and highly significant—differences can be seen.

Even though most practitioners working at this level are associated with the
microsociological paradigm of the Chicago School, they focus upon the person
as member of society and not just as "an individual" with private problems.
They employ a social perspective in analysis and design of intervention that
focuses upon (1) the client's actual conduct in everyday life; (2) the internalized
sociocultural realities that frame and organize that conduct; and (3) the relation-
ship between these realities, the person's conduct, and his or her situation in
terms of the various levels of social context (Powers 1979a, b; Straus 1979b).
Sociological interventions, whether direct or indirect, may often take clearly
social forms, as in directing clients to appropriate community support networks
to reinforce their definitions of the situation, or to peer self-help groups to help

them reconstruct their realities outside of a therapy framework (Glassner and Freedman 1979; Straus 1982).

Indirect approaches more clearly illustrate the special features of a sociological approach at this level. Coombs (1980) describes a drug and alcohol abuse prevention program offering a dramatic alternative to conventional asocial models which seek to scare youths away from experimentation or to treat identified users on the presumption that only sick, deviant, or deficient personalities become abusers. His approach is aimed at individuals who are in a marginal position and are likely to adopt substance-abusing identities—generally those of junior-high-school age. Coombs intervenes by working with the family groups of identified marginal youth so as to enhance family solidarity, keep the family as the youth's primary reference group (rather than drug-abusing peers), and remedy deficits in family skills such as communication, doing things together, or working as a group. Thus, the goal of defining the subject's conduct in a prosocial direction is accomplished indirectly, through what Coombs calls "family strengthening." In this kind of program, the indirect attack becomes the sociologist's primary tactic. Minimal attention is given to substance abuse itself or to correcting antisocial behavior; these are dealt with through indirect intervention at the group level.

The Group Level

Interventions at the group level are primarily directed at role structure, taking into account such factors as authority relationships, consensus regarding roles and their boundaries, degree of involvement in roles, role strain or conflict, informal versus formal realities, and the degree to which the operational definition of the group facilitates or hinders attainment of its collective purposes (see Capelle 1979). A nonsocial approach at this level can certainly be found in the practice of many marital therapists or business consultants, but such an approach becomes difficult to justify given the manifestly systemic nature of the social group, in which the whole is conspicuously more than the sum of its individual parts.

A direct sociological intervention might be exemplified by William Foote Whyte's solution to a restaurant chain's problems of inefficiency, worker dissatisfaction, and high turnover. He found that there were problems in the role structure of these restaurants. Waitresses, who were women, were placed in a position of giving orders to the higher-status cooks, who were male: those of relatively lower status were giving orders to their nominal superiors, a problem compounded by a violation of gender roles then current in American culture. Whyte's solution was to resolve role strain by a simple mechanical expedient: employment of rotating metal bands with clips on them—known as "spindles"—which allowed waitresses to post their orders in systematic fashion

without having to convey them verbally to the male cooks. The changes incurred by this intervention were so dramatic that something of the sort has become standard throughout the industry. Note how this intervention related the role structure of the group to the broader norms governing conduct in the general society.

Cooperative intervention at this level is illustrated by Kleymeyer's organization of the "Program for Humanization of Health Care in the University Hospital" at Cali, Colombia (1979). The sociologist was initially recruited as part of a quantitatively oriented research team investigating the causes behind disuse of outpatient services. He trained some of their native interviewers to conduct field observations of service delivery in their spare time. Evaluating their reports, he found that the public considered services dehumanizing, anxiety provoking, and alienating. He was then invited by the hospital's leadership to devise strategies to mitigate this situation.

Recognizing the potential problems for an outsider in trying to impose change from above, Kleymeyer chose to adopt the role of costrategist, instigator, and facilitator of change. He allowed the political savvy head of human relations for the hospital to do the actual moving and shaking. In selecting, designing, evaluating, and fine tuning innovations, he drew upon key hospital personnel, client interviews, professionals on the scene, and workers' forums that had been developed early in the change project, so that intervention was permitted to take a locally generated and self-directing course. These innovations included courses in human relations and first aid for hospital staff, workers' forums, creation of an in-house position of "patients' representative," material incentives for humane and competent treatment, and other changes involving training personnel in necessary role skills, redefining existing roles, or developing new patterns of social relations. By this strategy, Kleymeyer sought to establish a permanent, self-perpetuating, participatory institutional structure that would outlive his contractually limited tenure in the hospital setting.

The Organizational Level

Strategies at the organizational level represent, for the most part, an elaboration of group-level tactics. However, redefinition is primarily aimed at the institutionalized patterns of relations *between* groups rather than role relations within the group.

Direct tactics, although often too straightforward, can be effective. For example, Trist (1981) describes an intervention in the Norwegian shipping industry. Onboard facilities were redesigned to promote a sense of community among the various crew and officer groups who must live together under isolated conditions twenty-four hours a day over extended periods of time. Redefinition

of the shipboard environment to facilitate this new pattern of social relations
included creating common recreation rooms and dining halls where all ranks and
ratings could mingle (normally each group ate and socialized independently in
status-graded facilities); integrating deck and engine room crew; and reducing
status differentials between officers and crew.

An example of indirect approach has been described by Freedman and
Rosenfeld (1983), who were invited by the New Jersey Division of Mental
Health and Hospitals to assist in the implementation of mandated changes aimed
at humanization of services and expediting the release of clients to their local
communities. Their initial assignment involved implementing a new standard-
ized record-keeping system for the six state hospitals. It soon became obvious,
however, that there was no real agreement, even among leadership, as to pre-
cisely what was desired or how to go about doing it. Furthermore, true im-
plementation of the new policies would require significant redefinition of roles,
relations between various groups within the hospital system, and even meanings
of basic terms such as *case management* or *team approach.*

To forestall conflict and yet implement these major redefinitions, they
devised an indirect strategy centered on the introduction of the new form. As is
usual in such organizations, a training program was instituted concerning the
use of this form. In this case, however, both the design of the form itself and
that of the training program were deliberately organized to have the latent
function of redefining roles, institutions, and the culture of this system. Thus,
an ostensibly limited and innocuous innovation—a new record-keeping technol-
ogy—was used as an indirect strategy for organization-scale change.

Cooperative strategies at this level have long been a staple of sociological
practice (Shostak 1966; Jaques 1982). However, this kind of approach has only
recently been extended to areas such as the management of social impacts from
government or industrial development projects. ''Social Impact Management''
(Preister and Kent 1984), for example, brings members of communities to be
affected by large-scale projects into the process of negotiating and working out
a mutually acceptable plan to deal with issues and manage potential impacts
that will be compatible with or actually benefit those affected by the proposed
development. Special care is taken to identify and involve community networks
and to mitigate impacts at all levels of the local context so as to maintain the
integrity of community life and organization.

The World Level

At the highest scale we are considering, that of social worlds, sociological
interventions can take even more complex forms. For Lee (1979) the direct
approach at this most macrosocial level is identified with humanistically framed,
change-oriented research; he views the sociological clinician as seeking to

understand through first-hand materials how socially organized situations actually function and how they can be influenced; he then suggests practical strategies for modifying or coping with problematic social realities, trends, and developments. His work has included the study of propaganda in our society with the goal of sensitizing the broad public to the problem and generating the necessary consciousness to defend them from this kind of manipulation. Significantly, his major work on the subject was published in 1952, during the rise of the cold war mentality and rapid expansion of the advertising profession. Clearly his intent was to generate cultural defenses against the manipulation of society by elites.

California's "Friends Can Be Good Medicine" campaign is a good example of a world-scale intervention combining both indirect and cooperative modes. By devoting a small fraction of its annual mental health budget to this preventive intervention, the state hoped to combat rising demands upon its health and mental health systems. Its strategy was based upon the copious recent literature documenting the inverse relationship between involvement in primary groups and the rates of incidence of mental and physical health problems (see Hunter 1982 for a summary of the literature). Its plan was to bring about a change in culture by raising the general consciousness regarding the direct personal benefits of developing and maintaining social support networks (Hunter 1982). This strategy therefore incorporated both indirect and direct attack.

Delivery utilized a cooperative approach. The consulting firm hired for the campaign developed printed training and information materials, audiovisual training films, and a series of radio and television spots stressing the message that "friends can be good medicine." Ten paid coordinators then recruited volunteer regional coordinators (I was one) from county agencies and networks. After a trainers' workshop, these volunteers then recruited and trained community-level leaders from education, the churches, business, government, and other local networks to deliver workshops and set up local events during the month of June 1982. The entire state was to be saturated by community-based consciousness-raising events supported by a media blitz—all at minimal cost to the state. This was the first statewide mental health prevention program to date.

This campaign, designed exclusively by psychologists and "applied behavioral scientists," illustrates as well some of the pitfalls stemming from exclusion of sociologists from organizing and implementing sociological intervention. In this case, the "cultural approach" historically associated with clinical sociology (Wirth 1931) would have had dramatic impact. Instead, the beautifully designed and printed workbooks stressed the interests of "hip" humanistic psychologists—alternative life styles, consciousness-raising groups, and new games. They were also written so as to require a high level of literacy and intellectual orientation. In effect, they might have been designed to be rejected by rural,

working-class, and poor people; businessmen; and conservatives: most of the population, in fact. The materials also evidenced no awareness on the part of their producers of the long-term macrosocial changes underlying the disruption of traditional support networks and primary group structures, leaving the impression that alienation from significant others was a purely individual matter, entirely correctable by personal action.

Between-Levels Intervention

It is important to point out that the model presented here can also be used to typify interventions targeted at interpersonal, intergroup, interorganization, and interworld problems. In essence, between-level interventions operate at the next level upscale. An interpersonal problem would be treated as a blockage, misalignment, or other difficulty at the group level. In solving such a problem, one helps those concerned to work out joint definitions of the situation by clarifying their respective roles and statuses. Intervention might involve improving communications, resolving contradictions in participants' definitions of the situation, or creating entirely new, mutually acceptable definitions, including recognition of their de facto status as a group. Except that our model typifies interworld collectives simply as higher-scale social worlds, the same logic is followed at the higher levels of between-levels intervention.

Conclusion

It has been my concern in this paper to tease out the generic logic and structure of sociological interventions. By presenting this within a taxonomic framework, I have sought to sensitize the practitioner to the special features of the sociological approach and also to move a discussion of the substance of clinical sociology up to a more concrete and hence manageable level.

Implicit in the foregoing is the premise that many or most problems encountered in social life, from the personal to the societal levels, can best be understood and dealt with as *social problems*. They cry out for sociological intervention, which is defined here as reconstructing the operational definition of the situation with reference to the multiple, interacting layers of social context framing any particular case.

Clinical sociology is not identical with sociological intervention, for both sociologists and nonsociologists can and do engage in this form of work. However, it becomes apparent that the clinical sociologist is best qualified to practice sociological intervention because the approach lies squarely in the domain carved out by sociological training, sociological tradition, and the special sensitivities inculcated only by immersion in a specifically sociological perspective.

Notes

1. Those specializing in sociological counseling or therapy at the personal level might wish to discriminate a still more micro-scale intervention: the *intrapersonal*. Here, the client's phenomenological definitions of the situation as manifested in cognitive, psychomotor, and/or psychosomatic self-interactions become the target for change (Straus 1983). However, these are still analyzed within the context of a social problem framed by culture and group participation and managed similarly to intervention at the molar "personal" level.

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Basic and Applied Sociological Work

Joseph R. DeMartini

Definition and Typology

For the purposes of this paper, applied sociology is the use of sociological theories and/or methods to address issues of practical concern identified by a client for which this use is intended. The crucial part of this definition of the last phrase: ". . . identified by a client for which this use is intended." Applied work is not focused upon the needs of the discipline as a social science; it is designed to meet the needs of persons or groups who desire to employ information and knowledge for a specific end. I use the phrases "client oriented" to describe the focus of applied work and "discipline oriented" to describe the focus of academic or basic sociology.

These foci are compared in Figure 1 on three dimensions: goals, working norms, and reference groups. Figure 1 is an ideal, typical statement. It identifies the rationale and justification for basic and applied work without citing individual accommodations made by persons engaged in either work on a daily basis.

The goal of basic sociology, as in all basic science, is the construction of valid and generalized knowledge statements. Hypothesis testing, theory building, and heuristic/exploratory research are incremental steps in building a body of knowledge about the social world. While sociologists may fall short of achieving this goal, working toward it is both a definition and justification of the discipline as well as a measure of individual success and consequent prestige.

Working norms that guide knowledge production embody the scientific method and corresponding rules for determining the validity and reliability of empirical measurement. The rules that guide basic research emphasize the importance of withholding judgment until all available information is in as well

	Discipline Oriented Basic Sociology	Client Oriented Applied Sociology
Goals	Knowledge Production	Problem Solving
Working Norms	Careful Testing of Hypotheses and Qualification of Conclusions	Persuasive Use of Available Information
Reference Groups	Fellow Professionals	Political Interest Groups

Figure 1. Comparison of Basic and Applied Sociology in Terms of Goals, Working Norms, and Reference Groups

as a willingness to live with considerable doubt that may never be resolved fully. To ensure the integrity of knowledge produced through scientific research, conclusions are often tentative and stated in terms of probability with recognized margins of error.

Basic sociology is conducted with a specific audience in mind: the researcher's professional peers. This is the audience that will read and judge the results of basic research. Even within a multiparadigm discipline like sociology, a considerable body of knowledge is shared and taken for granted that helps establish priorities and the terms by which research products will be recognized as contributions toward the goal of knowledge production.

The goals of client-oriented applied work center on the use rather than production of knowledge. Most often this use is of a singular nature: i.e., specific problems arise calling for specific solutions. Directed by these goals, applied sociologists channel their efforts to provide information that usefully bears on the problem(s) at hand. Efforts to produce useful findings frequently are irrelevant to the goal of increasing the discipline's body of knowledge.

Problem solving and policy setting take place in political arenas. Within these arenas the political process determines whose interests will be served, not whose arguments and supporting data are more correct when judged by some objective standard of validity. The adversarial nature of this process and the rules that govern it directly impinge on the working norms that govern applied sociology. Information is desired that will be persuasive over and against other interest groups. Presenting research conclusions in a tentative light that recognizes possible sources of error and calls for further research is less useful than presenting findings with an aura of certainty. The rules governing applied work call for products that will be as effective as possible for the client who commissions them. Conflict between the demand for certainty and the norms of scientific research is probable (Levine, 1974).

Applied work has at least two audiences—the person or group for whom a final report is intended, and, at the next level, those populations to whom the final report will then be reinterpreted and disseminated. Research findings must be intelligible to persons not familiar with the research process and made clearly relevant to the concerns of those who commission the work. The results of applied work are seldom directed toward other sociologists.

I have associated basic and applied sociology with discipline-and client-oriented work and compared them on three dimensions: goals, working norms, and reference groups. These distinctions highlight differences and suggest great difficulty in merging the two types of work. A clarification and qualification are necessary at this point.

Varieties of applied work

The definition of applied sociology as client oriented cannot and is not intended to describe fully the variety of activities known today as applied work/ research.[1] Both basic and applied sociology are more accurately presented as points on a continuum with "discipline oriented" and "client oriented" denoting polar extremes. Figure 2 illustrates such a continuum. The six examples of basic and applied work in this figure are not exhaustive, nor are they considered equally important by members of the discipline. Over time, emphasis may shift from one type of work to another, and new forms may emerge while existing

Basic Sociology					Applied Sociology
Theory Construction/ Hypothesis Testing	Causal Analysis of Social Trends and Problems	Translating personal problems into social issues. Identifying contradictions and inequities in social life.	Social Impact Assessment	Policy Analysis	Needs Assessments/ Program Evaluation

More discipline oriented   More client oriented

Less client oriented   Less discipline oriented

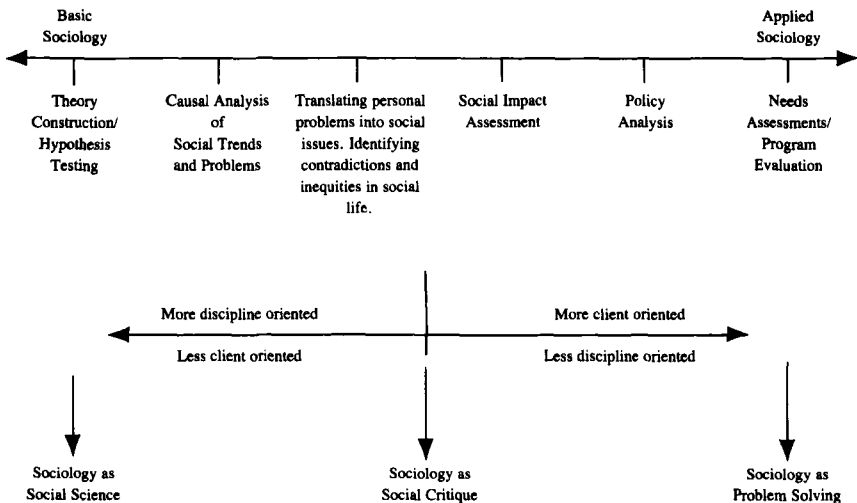| Sociology as Social Science	Sociology as Social Critique	Sociology as Problem Solving

Figure 2. A Typology of Sociological Work from Basic to Applied

types blend, combine, or fade away.[2] The significant factor about the continuum is the pull exerted at each pole.

As in Figure 1, these extremes are best viewed as Weberian ideal types. Seen from this perspective, sociological endeavors that fall at the center of the continuum represent situations in which there is much dissension over appropriate goals, procedures, and measures of success. This viewpoint counters the position that work at the center of the continuum is a smooth integration of differing perspectives. Other common labels applied to this continuum are (from left to right): sociology as social science, sociology as social critique, and sociology as problem solving.

This continuum hints at the difficulty in making distinctions between sociologies. Basic sociology or sociology as social science is not a unified discipline. Debates over the lack of a single paradigm within the discipline reflect the diversity of work taking place. A full presentation of basic sociology requires a three-dimensional figure specifying the many criteria by which sociological research can be defined: e.g., differing theoretical schools of thought, methodological techniques, and underlying epistemologies.

Similarly, applied sociology encompasses a variety of activities that can be grouped by several criteria—few of which are used to distinguish types of basic work. Who is the client and/or potential user of applied work: national government, regional or local government, private industry, the judicial system? What is the intended purpose of this use: implementing government policy, resisting proposed programs, effecting organizational change? Are the users of applied work within or outside of existing centers of power? These and other related questions influence the nature and form of applied sociology as well as the probability and type of impact this work will have upon clients and target populations.

In addition, the variety of applied work goals and settings raises professional and ethical questions regarding the use of sociological skills for client use. Who can afford to purchase the often expensive array of social science research skills? What are the consequences of unequal opportunity to pay for these skills? To what extent are the products of applied work as much the result of economic and political realities as they are functions of intellectual and professional goals and standards? The nature of ethical issues along with variety in the settings and forms of applied work bear directly upon the relationship between basic and applied sociology. The next section explores this relationship in some depth. While the diversity of applied work qualifies the generality of conclusions that follow, I argue that connections between basic and applied work are limited and points of contradiction exist, especially for policy analysis and social problem-solving research.

Linkages Between Basic and Applied Sociology

I shall explore the connection between basic and applied work. . . .

I. What relevance do the *products* of basic research have for applied work?. . . .

Answers to (this) question are available in the literature on sociology's impact upon social problem solving and policy decision making as well as in the reflections of sociologists who have done applied work. . . .

Products

The growing literature on applied work is skewed toward research done for the public sector at the federal level. Only a small portion of this literature addresses the first question I pose here: i.e., what relevance do the products of basic research have for applied work? In addition, materials on the use of basic research (theory, method, or findings) for the conduct of applied work at regional and local levels or by persons attempting to effect social change are extremely limited. As a result, the conclusions drawn in this section are restricted to the impact of sociological research upon policy decision making at the national level.[3]

Policy makers and problem solvers do make use of sociological research findings, but this use is often difficult to identify and seldom as direct and influential as social researchers would like. Surveys of decision makers at various levels within Austrian federal and municipal government agencies found the use of applied and basic social science knowledge to be "indirect," "diffuse," and "difficult to localize" (Knorr, 1977). Rich (1977) describes the use of national public opinion data by seven United States federal service agencies as "conceptual," i.e. ". . . influencing a policymaker's thinking about an issue without putting information to any specific, documentable use" (p. 200). Patton et. al. (1977) characterize the impact of federal health program evaluations as contributing to a general clarification of relevant issues thereby stimulating the "evolutionary process" out of which decisions and policy finally emerge. Again, a direct impact upon the content and outcome of specific policies and decisions was not evident.

The experience of sociologists on presidential commissions leads to similar conclusions regarding the role played by sociological theory, method, and data in the conduct and impact of national policy research. Komarovsky (1975) has assembled detailed analyses by sociologists who served on presidential commissions between 1965 and 1972.

Empirical research in the classic social science tradition did not yield clear

policy alternatives that could be incorporated into committee recommendations (Larsen, 1975). Available social science literature lacked specific action alternatives that could be translated into policy recommendations (Short, 1975). When social scientists did provide recommendations, these were more frequently influenced by "personal ideological conviction" than by sociological research and analysis. "The greatest strength of the social science contribution lay in providing sensitizing concepts and theories which oriented the search for solutions. . . ." (Ohlin, 1975, p. 108). The inability of social scientists to identify the policy consequences of research findings and literature is a unifying theme in these accounts of the commissions' work.

Two studies that focus on the characteristics of *usable* social science research are helpful in clarifying the relationship between applied and basic work. Their findings suggest that these characteristics are at odds with those that describe traditional, scholarly research products. Caplan examined the use of empirically based social science knowledge—excepting standard economic research—by upper level United States government officials as part of policy-related, decision-making processes. He identified over 500 self-reported instances of such use. What was used did not resemble typical scholarly research.

> Hard knowledge (research based, quantitative, and couched in scientific language) was usually only of some instrumental importance, and the final decision—whether or not to proceed with a particular policy—was more likely to depend upon an appraisal of "soft" knowledge (nonresearch based, qualitative, and couched in lay language). (Caplan, 1977, p. 188)

Van de Vall and Bolas (1980) reinforce Caplan's findings in their study of social policy research and applied social research in the Netherlands. This research examined the use of social science knowledge in the areas of industrial and labor relations, regional and urban planning, and social welfare and public health. Two findings are of interest to us here: (1) the utility of formal sociological theory and concepts, and (2) the utility of research conducted in accord with traditional disciplinary standards of methodological rigor. On both accounts, discipline-oriented (basic) research procedures had lower utility or impact scores than procedures less characteristic of basic research. Projects that employed formal theoretical concepts were utilized by decision makers less often than research that employed grounded concepts of "low abstraction and simple construction." Applied research, which rated highly in terms of methodological sophistication, correlated negatively with measures of utility or impact in all three sectors of social/policy decision making.[4] The authors conclude that:

These findings suggest a number of theoretical, methodological, and normative differences between the traditional academic paradigm of social science discipline research and an emerging professional paradigm of social policy research. (van de Vall & Bolas, 1980. p. 135)

Does this brief literature review suggest any conclusions about the relevance of basic sociology for the variety of applied work treated here? I offer two:

1. Sociology functions to expand the outlook of decision makers. It offers alternative perspectives and questions standard myths. It does not provide specific solutions or courses of action that might be taken on the basis of sociological research. Nor does applied work provide insight into social problem solving *because* of its resemblance to basic research in the use of theory or method.

2. A change of perspective is most likely to occur when the policy needs and alternatives of decision makers are made an integral part of the research process. Such an approach may undermine the research product's contribution to sociological theory, but it is mandatory if this product is to be of use to decision makers.

These conclusions are consistent with the "enlightenment" hypothesis, which dates back at least 15 years to Gouldner's (1965) treatment of applied work.[5] They do not, however, simply confirm the accuracy of this hypothesis. They significantly alter it by introducing the need to anticipate how research findings and subsequent policy recommendations will be incorporated into the decision-making process. Good social science does not automatically illuminate aspects of a social problem for persons who must cope with that problem and its consequences (Aaron, 1978). Alternative interpretations of why the problem emerged and how it might be solved do not naturally flow from the conclusions of applied research to the consciousness of those involved in policy making and problem solving.

Applied researchers must plan for the careful interpretation and dissemination of research findings long before the research is completed. At the least, this requires that researchers advocate to their clients the serious consideration of interpretations supported by research data even when these interpretations contradict ideological preferences and political expediency. Maximizing the possibility that social problem solvers will seriously consider the results of applied research requires role activity not common to that of impartial scientific inquiry. . . .

Notes

1. Nor do I suggest that one can meet the demands of applied work by drawing upon a single discipline. The interdisciplinary character of the applied or policy sciences has been well documented. This paper focuses upon sociology because it is an area in which the problems of adapting basic research to applied work are most apparent.

2. Several times on this continuum have experienced periods of increased popularity. An attempt to explain the causes of social problems was most typical of applied efforts in the discipline prior to World War I. Translating personal problems into social issues was championed by C. Wright Mills in the late 1950s and became a foundation for activist sociology in the 1960s. Needs assessments and program evaluations increased in the 1970s. Social impact assessment will probably grow during the 1980s as an offshoot of environmental impact assessment.

3. For examples of applied work at regional and local levels, see Alkin et al., 1979. The need for social scientists to take an active role in promoting social change is often recognized, but very little documentation of persons acting in this role is available. One notable exception is Shostak's anthology, *Putting Sociology to Work* (1974). I have omitted from this review of literature any reference to the use of social science by the courts. Rosen (1977) and Collins (1978) provide a full listing of the extent to which social science is increasingly introduced into judicial hearings. They agree, however, on the absence of data that might verify the impact of such testimony. Overall, social science testimony appears to support (i.e., legitimate) court decisions rather than determine their outcome.

4. Weiss and Bucuvalas (1980) report an opposite finding; however, their research measured the *expected* use of applied research findings while van de Vall et al., measured actual use.

5. I am indebted to an anonymous *JABS* reviewer for pointing out the elitist implications of the "enlightenment" hypothesis. Social scientists who view their perspectives as intrinsically better than the everyday understandings of policy makers harbor a narrow and counterproductive world view. Such perspectives, however, very frequently are different from these understandings. This difference expands the variety of analyses available to decision makers and is the essential contribution social science offers under the unfortunate title of enlightenment.

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