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# The History of Clinical Sociology

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*Jan M. Fritz*

The origins of sociology are found in many times and places. Sociologists typically write that their field developed in Western Europe during the mid-1800s. They mention the early sociologists' interest in understanding society and making the world better and then they cite the same names—Auguste Comte, Emile Durkheim and Max Weber. Most mention the contribution of Karl Marx although the amount and kind of coverage generally clearly indicates the sociologist's (usually unstated) theoretical view. Quickly, then, a sociologist moves on to a rather lengthy discussion of whether sociology is a science. The conclusion is always in the affirmative.

There are other histories, however. These views of the field are not yet researched very thoroughly or so widely known but they take nothing away from the view of sociology as a science. Instead, they add to this picture by showing there are other threads running through the general history of the discipline. The threads to be discussed here are humanistic, multidisciplinary and clinical and emphasize some of the contributions of women and black clinical sociologists.<sup>1</sup>

## **The Roots of Clinical Sociology**

Clinical sociologists create systems and intervene in existing ones to assist with assessment and change. Clinical sociologists are scientists who are humanistic and multidisciplinary in approach. They engage in planned social change efforts by focusing on one system level (e.g., interpersonal, community, international) but integrate levels of focus in their work and do so from a sociological frame of reference. Clinical sociologists may be involved in sociological practice in a variety of ways including teaching and action research.

The history of this broad field begins with individuals who combine a scientific approach to social life with an involvement in intervention work. We

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This article is a revised version of "Making Tracks: The History of Clinical Sociology" which appeared in *The Clinical Sociology Handbook* (New York: Garland, 1985.) Copyright 1988 Jan Fritz.

begin here, as Alfred McClung Lee (1979:487) has done, with the Arab historian and statesperson *Abd-al-Rahman ibn Khaldun* (1332–1406).

Ibn Khaldun has been described as a “thinker and doer” (Rosenthal, 1958:lxvi). In his *Muqaddimah*, he provided numerous clinical observations based on his various work experiences. In addition to being a scholar and professor, Ibn Khaldun also was Secretary of State to the ruler of Morocco, Prime Minister and a statesperson who headed political missions. As Chief Judge of Egypt, he was known as a reformer.

It has been said (Rosenthal, 1958:lxvii) that many of the ideas discussed in the European West long after Ibn Khaldun’s death were known “in their rudiments at least, to (Ibn Khaldun), the northwest African of the fourteenth century who founded a ‘new science’ in his *Muqaddimah*.” Ibn Khaldun has been mentioned (see Schimmel, 1951:xvii) as the forerunner of many Western scholars—including Machiavelli, Vico, Montesquieu, Condorcet, Tarde and Comte.

The history of sociology often begins with *Auguste Comte* (1798–1857), the French scholar who coined the term “sociology.” Comte’s life began in turbulent times; he was raised in the aftermath of the French and Industrial Revolutions. Comte, like the other founders of sociology, grappled with the problem of how to change the society to meet the demands of the Industrial Age. As he strongly believed that the scientific study of societies would provide the basis for social action, we certainly would want to include him in a history of clinical sociology.

So too would we include *Emile Durkheim* (1858–1917) and *Karl Marx* (1818–1883.) Durkheim’s groundbreaking work on the relation between levels of influence, e.g., social compared to individual factors, led Alvin Gouldner (1965:19) to say that “more than any other classical sociologist (he) used a clinical model.” Marx’s work is based on archival research but his writing came alive with a “grasp of human affairs only possible through extensive involvement in praxis, in social action, in agitation and in social organization.” Along with Engels, Marx’s work affected conservative as well as revolutionary thinking (Lee, 1979:488) and his theory is basic to the work of many practitioners.

### **Early American Sociology**

American sociology developed in the late 1800s<sup>2</sup> as a response to the industrialization and urbanization of the post-Civil War era. The courses that emerged—such as pauperism, charity, unemployment, migratory labor, child labor, women wage-earners, insanity, illness, crime, temperance and race relations—focused on social problems.

Many of the well-known sociologists prior to 1920 came from religious and rural backgrounds or had studied in divinity schools; they were concerned with

ethical issues and social reform.<sup>3</sup> At the University of Chicago, the prominent center of sociological thought, most social thinkers rejected Herbert Spencer's "laissez-faire attitude" toward social development (Rosenberg, 1982:36-7.) Most of the sociologists had read Auguste Comte's work and "followed Comte's view of progress as susceptible of acceleration by purposive, rational intervention in society (Hinkle and Hinkle, 1954:7.)

At the University of Chicago in 1896, *Albion Small* (1854-1926), Chair of the Graduate Department of Sociology, founding Editor of *The American Journal of Sociology* and one of the first Presidents of the American Sociological Society (1912-13), published his article "Scholarship and Social Agitation." Small thought the primary reason for the existence of sociology was its "practical application to the improvement of social life" (Timasheff and Theodorson, 1976:2). The following passage from Small's (1896:564) article shows his interest in sociological practice:

Let us go about our business with the understanding that within the scope of scholarship there is first science, and second something better than science. That something better is first prevision by means of science, and second intelligent direction of endeavor to realize visions.

I would have American scholars, especially in the social sciences, declare their independence of do-nothing traditions. I would have them repeal the law of custom which bars marriage of thought with action. I would have them become more profoundly and sympathetically scholarly by enriching the wisdom which comes from knowing with the larger wisdom which comes from doing.

Small (1896:581-2) thought it was a "betrayal of . . . social trust . . . for the sociological scholar to withdraw from affairs, and attempt to grow wise by rearranging the contents of (one's own) personal consciousness." He said he had found that "action not speculation was the supreme teacher."

According to Small (1896:582), every sociologist should be involved in two kinds of "concrete work:"

work which the thoughtful and careful prosecute for the benefit of the thoughtless and careless . . . (and) work which the enterprising and efficient organize for the better security of their own social interests.

Small (1896:582) thought this concrete work should be a central interest for a professional social science organization. As he noted, sometimes the intent did not match the reality:

(I refer) to the career of a certain reputable society of which many teachers of the social sciences are members. The declared object of the association is commendable, viz., the improvement of city governments in the United States. The programme into which the society has gravitated is discussion rather than action. Its accomplishments up to date very naturally amount to ocular proof of the futility of talk. A scientific label for this respectable body would read: A National Association for the Propagation and Enjoyment of Melancholy over the Misdoings of the Municipalities.

The first of five editions of the *Outline of Practical Sociology* by sociologist *Carroll Wright* (1840–1909) appeared in 1898. Wright was a member of the Massachusetts senate, a U.S. Commissioner of Labor and President of Clark College. Wright chaired the Presidential Commission appointed in 1894 to investigate the Pullman strike in Chicago and was a member of a similar commission appointed by President Roosevelt to investigate and then arbitrate the anthracite coal strike of 1902.

Wright (1899) wrote that “practical” sociology deals with actual, pressing social questions.” He went on to say that the sociologist:

may advocate reforms, he may insist upon changes in legislation, upon the adoption of new systems of finance or commerce, but he does all this because to his mind the ascertained facts lead to his conclusions.

While Wright stressed the role of the scientist throughout his book, he didn’t preclude roles in government or private enterprise and that is particularly evident when one looks at Wright’s own career in government and educational administration.

In 1906, *Lester Ward* (1841–1913), the first President of the American Sociological Society, published *Applied Sociology: A Treatise on the Conscious Improvement of Society by Society*. In his book, Ward (1906:8) clearly indicated that applied science is not the same as art . . . because “if it is art it is not science.” Ward (1906:8) stresses the importance of field work but only for the practice of applying “principles directly to nature.” He said this “is almost always done in miniature, or on a small scale, for practice only, and without expectation of any practical result.” Again he brought home his point (1906:9–10):

Applied sociology is not government or politics, nor civic or social reform. It does not itself apply sociological principles; it seeks only to show how they may be applied. It is a science not an art.<sup>4</sup>

But there were sociologists in Europe and within the American Chicago school—or, more accurately, the Chicago network—who combined science and art. They were concerned with social problems, they used their skills as scientists to collect and analyze pertinent information and they developed the skills, a combination of science and art, that were needed to practice as clinical sociologists.

### **Clinical Sociologists at the Turn of the Century**

In England, *Beatrice Webb* (1858–1943) and her husband Sidney Webb were working as activist social scientists. Beatrice Webb's education and work experiences clearly qualify her as a clinical sociologist.

Beatrice Webb's comfortable family status had been such that eminent visitors frequently were at her childhood home. Among the guests—Herbert Spencer. As Beatrice was given little formal schooling, she was taught primarily through her own interests and by Spencer. As a result she “learned no mathematics but read a great deal of stiff and serious work.” Like Spencer, and primarily because of him, she developed “a passion for ascertaining facts and discovering their relevance to theories of society and of human and animal behavior” (Cole, 1946:13–14).

Beatrice Webb worked as a social investigator for several years with Charles Booth. The conservative Booth was an “amateur” social scientist, a ship-owner and businessperson who became skilled in the scientific study of social conditions. Booth “wanted to give some definite quantitative meaning to the term ‘starving millions’” (Bulmer, 1982:11) and did so through his 20 years of research on poverty and work in England. Booth, who introduced the idea of a “poverty line,” published his lengthy studies in seventeen volumes between 1899 and 1903.

Beatrice Webb and Sidney Webb “had formidable influence upon twentieth-century British social policy” in part because of their historical analysis of policy but primarily because of their work “as politically engaged social scientists, institutional innovators, members of (official) committees and (in Sidney's case . . . ) as politician and minister.” They were founders of the Fabian Society and instrumental in founding the London School of Economics and Political Science. Beatrice Webb and Sidney Webb “blended social science and political action” (Bulmer, 1982:17,21).

Beatrice Webb learned her sociology through Spencer, Booth and her independent study; she was not formally trained as a sociologist. However, it is very difficult to talk about formal training or active employment as a sociologist during her formative years. According to Bulmer (1982:22), “those who did research typically worked in a non-academic setting, often doing research in their spare time and with their own money.” There were no positions labeled

“social scientist,” sociology was not taught within the university and no one used the label “sociologist.”

In the United States, the Chicago network was developing during the late 1880s. Included among its members were faculty at the University of Chicago such as George Herbert Mead, W. I. Thomas and Marion Talbot. Also central to this network were activist-scholars like Jane Addams.

*George Herbert Mead* (1863–1931) and *W. I. Thomas* (1863–1947), teachers at the University of Chicago, are part of the history of clinical sociology. Mead, a pioneer of the symbolic interactionist approach, joined the Department of Philosophy at the University of Chicago in 1894 and remained there until his death in 1931.

According to Deegan and Burger (1978:362), Mead’s writings and his work on social reform issues generally are not well known. For instance, scholars usually don’t mention that in 1910, when 40,000 garment workers in Chicago went on strike, Mead headed a citizen’s committee investigating conditions and workers’ grievances. Mead, working with others, was able to bring the workers’ interests to arbitration.

Mead was a supporter of women’s equality. He spoke at a suffrage meeting in 1912 and around 1918 he marched for women’s suffrage along with John Dewey, Jane Addams and other prominent Chicago citizens. In 1920 he was President of the Chicago City Club and took part in the civic organization’s committees which were attempting to eliminate corruption in the city.

*W. I. Thomas* received one of the first doctorates awarded by the University of Chicago and taught there in the Department of Sociology until 1918. Thomas, a President of the American Sociological Society, was a major influence on American sociology and well known as the co-author of *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America* (Thomas and Znaniecki, 1951).

Thomas wrote about the need for applying social science to daily life in his “Methodological Note” in *The Polish Peasants*. This “concern with the practical aims of science is found in most of Thomas’ writings (though) his (work) on social reform and his active participation in the progressive movement have been ignored” (Deegan and Burger, 1981:116,114).

Thomas had close personal and professional ties to Jane Addams and her colleagues at Hull House. He lectured there and his work on juvenile delinquency and on Polish peasants was due, in large part, to his connections with Hull House (Deegan, 1987).

Thomas was a member of the Chicago Vice Commission and, along with George Herbert Mead and others, he participated in the Rudowitz Conference to affirm the idea of political asylum. As Deegan and Burger (1981:122) concluded, Thomas “was committed to improving society and acted on his concern.”

In 1892 *Marion Talbot* (1858–1948) left Boston to become Dean of Women

for the Colleges and Assistant Professor in the Sociology Department<sup>5</sup> at a new school—the University of Chicago. Working with her mother, Emily Talbot, and a few other women, she already had helped found the Association of Collegiate Alumnae (ACA), the forerunner of the American Association of University Women, to encourage women to go to college and to open opportunities for women graduates (Storr, 1971:423).

Talbot was promoted to Dean of Women in 1899 and in 1905 was appointed full professor in the new university Department of Household Administration. She held these positions until her retirement in 1925. During her tenure at the University of Chicago, Talbot also was, for over twenty years, an Associate Editor of *The American Journal of Sociology*.

Talbot became a central figure in Chicago's growing community of scholars and activists. She directed many students to work in Chicago's urban laboratory—Hull House—and through her the women in the university and the scholar-practitioners working in the reform movement maintained close contact. According to Rosalind Rosenberg (1982:34), Talbot became "a kind of chief of employment for Chicago's women students and academic dean for Chicago's reformers."

In 1889, three years before the Department of Sociology was founded at the University of Chicago, sociologist *Jane Addams* (1860–1935) and her good friend Ellen Starr established a settlement house in the decaying Hull Mansion in Chicago. Hull House had many aims not the least of which was to allow privileged, educated young people contact with the real life of the majority of the population. The core of Hull House members were well educated women who were bound together by their involvements such as the labor movement, the National Consumers League and the suffrage movement (Fish, 1981:30–36). During the next 45 years Jane Addams would travel widely but "Hull House remained her home and the reflection of her thought and personality" (Scott, 1971:22).

During the founding years of sociology in the United States from 1892–1920, Jane Addams was the "foremost female sociologist."<sup>6</sup> She headed a network of women, including clinical sociologists Sophonisba Breckinridge and Edith Abbott, working in reform activities and influenced "all of the men in the Department of Sociology at the University of Chicago as well as John Dewey, George Herbert Mead and the other American pragmatists" (Deegan, 1981:18.)

Jane Addams' involvement in the major issues of the city of Chicago (e.g., factory inspection, child labor laws, improvements in welfare procedures, recognition of labor unions, compulsory school attendance and her work as an arbitrator in labor disputes) catapulted her to national prominence. Intellectuals from around the world, including Beatrice and Sidney Webb, came to Chicago to meet her and her colleagues.

Jane Addams considered herself a sociologist (Deegan, 1981:19) and has



been referred to as “a virtual adjunct professor in sociology at Chicago.” In documenting the relationship between the university and the settlement house, Rosenberg (1982:32–4) has written:

Most of the Chicago social scientists participated in some way in the work of Hull House, leading seminars, giving lectures or just having dinner with the exciting group of people who always gathered there . . . Hull House became a laboratory for sociologists, psychologists, and economists, who helped to transform it from a home for moral uplifting of impoverished immigrants to a center for systematic social investigation and an agency of political and economic reform.

In 1895 *Hull House Maps and Papers* was published. This pioneer study dealt with tenement conditions, sweatshops and child labor. It was the “first systematic attempt to describe the immigrant communities in an American city” and it was patterned in some ways after Charles Booth’s 1899 publication *Life and Labour of the People of London* (Fish, 1981a:28–29).

Addams was definitely an organization development specialist. Within five years of the establishment of Hull House, some forty clubs were based there,<sup>7</sup> eleven kinds of community activities were connected with the settlement and over 2,000 people came into the facility each week. Hull House (Addams, 1893), for example, hosted meetings of four women’s unions, offered social clubs to immigrants, held economic conferences to bring together businessmen and workers and ran a coffee house. The Working People’s Social Science Club held weekly meetings there beginning in 1890 and the College Extension course, as it was known, offered courses and lectures in the evenings to two hundred neighborhood residents. Two university extension courses were held there in connection with the University of Chicago and the Chicago Public Library established a branch reading room in Hull House.

Addams was a well-known lecturer and her articles, on a variety of important topics, were widely read. Her most successful book was her moving autobiography, *Twenty Years at Hull House* (1910.) Addams years of work and writing in the interest of peace earned her the Nobel Peace Prize in 1931.<sup>8</sup> This amazing woman’s central role in founding American sociology is documented in Mary Jo Deegan’s (1987) book on Jane Addams and the men of the Chicago School. There are, unfortunately, a number of reasons why Addams has not been remembered as a sociologist. Emily Balch (1935:200) mentioned one such reason in a tribute written shortly after Addams died—“I think her greatness has been veiled by her goodness.”

There were also American scholar-practitioners operating outside of the Chicago network who are an important part of the history of clinical sociology.

Among them—Emily Greene Balch, Jessie Taft and W. E. B. Du Bois. They were all affected in some way by the activities and interests of individuals in the Chicago network.

Clinical sociologist *Emily Balch* (1867–1961) is one of two American women who have been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. She received the award in 1946. The head of the Nobel Committee introduced her that year by saying that her name was probably unfamiliar to many in the audience and that there were probably few in Europe who knew her. Unfortunately, she also is generally unknown today among sociologists.

Balch wrote over 100 articles on labor, social settlements and women as well as a number of books. Her *Public Assistance of the Poor in France* (1893) is one of the “earliest sociological studies of care for the poor and disabled” and her *Our Slavic Fellow Citizen* (1910) is the “first major sociological book on immigration” (Deegan, 1983:102, 104).

Balch was not part of the Chicago network but there are connections. Balch’s close friendship with Jane Addams began when both attended the 1892 Summer School of Applied Ethics, held in Massachusetts. Balch later studied for one quarter at the University of Chicago and, while there, visited Hull House.

Balch was a member of the Wellesley faculty from 1897 until 1918 and was the second Chair of the Department of Economics and Sociology. In 1892 Balch had been one of the founders of Boston’s Dennison House, one of the first settlement houses. While at Wellesley she became a charter member of the College Settlement Association, a group organizing settlement houses across the United States.

In 1915 Balch and Addams were delegates to the International Congress of Women at the Hague. Gray (1976:201) has described Balch’s prominent role at the Congress:

founding . . . the Women’s International Committee for Permanent Peace, later named the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom; preparing peace proposals for consideration by the belligerent nations; and serving on a delegation to Russian and Scandinavian countries to urge their governments to initiate mediation offers.

From 1915 until her death in 1961, Balch’s primary concern was her work for international peace. After returning from the 1915 Congress, “she campaigned actively against America’s entry into the war . . . worked on the liberal weekly, *The Nation* . . . and wrote a successful pacifist book, *Approaches to the Great Settlement* (Gray, 1976:201).

In 1919, when Addams became President of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, Balch became International Secretary-Treasurer.

Balch worked closely with the League of Nations on many projects—such as disarmament and drug control—and with its successor, the United Nations. In reviewing Addams' and Balch's lives, Deegan (1983:107) has written that they stand "as heroic standards far outdistancing the achievement of other early, American sociologists."

*Jessie Taft* (1882–1960) received a Ph.D. in philosophy from the University of Chicago in 1931. She, like her advisor George Herbert Mead, was interested in psychology and sociology and had begun her work in Chicago with sociologists W. I. Thomas.

Taft held a variety of positions before joining, in 1934, the faculty of the Pennsylvania School of Social Work (which later became the University of Pennsylvania School of Social Work.) She was Assistant Superintendent of the New York State Reformatory for Women in 1913 and then Director of the Social Services Department of the New York State Charities Aid Association's Mental Hygiene Committee.

In 1918 Taft moved to Philadelphia as Director of the new Department of Child Study at the Seybert Institution, a shelter for children awaiting placement. While connected with Seybert, she became well known as a therapist and mental hygiene consultant.

In 1924 Jessie Taft met psychologist Otto Rank, who, like Mead, became a major influence on her work. Taft is known for her functional casework, an approach which places the client at the center of a growth process which is fostered by a therapist. In her writing, Taft "combined the concepts of G. H. Mead and Otto Rank into a powerful theoretical framework for interpreting problems in daily living" (Deegan, 1986:35).

There has been very little examination of Taft's theoretical work on the part of sociologists and yet Taft's writings certainly provide a theoretical basis for the work of many clinical sociologists, particularly those involved in counseling and therapy or who undertake role analysis in other settings.

When *W. E. B. Du Bois* (1868–1963) was at Harvard, sociology was not a separate discipline. He received a Ph.D. in history but had taken many courses in the social sciences. Du Bois credited his Harvard advisor, Albert Bushnell Hart, for directing him "to the social sciences as the field for gathering and interpreting that body of fact which would apply to my program for the Negro" (Du Bois, 1968:148). In reviewing his own background, Du Bois has written that his "course of study would have been called sociology" (Du Bois, 1940:39), and he is considered one of the pioneers of clinical sociology.

In a ten-year period from 1895–1905, his book, *The Philadelphia Negro*, the subsequent Atlanta University publications and his study of rural Negroes in Farmville, Virginia, provided the first reliable information about Negroes in America based on empirical sociological research" (Broderick, 1974:3).

Du Bois was familiar with Booth's (1899–1903) study of poverty and work

in London and with *Hull House Maps and Papers* (Addams, 1895.) Du Bois and his sponsor, reformers in the Philadelphia settlement house movement, wanted a similar empirical study to document the situation of Philadelphia's Negroes. In addition to the expected empirical work, Du Bois gave specific suggestions for the advancement of Blacks. As Rudwick (1974:28) has said, "Du Bois enthusiastically played the dual role of social scientist and social reformer."

Like many of the early women sociologists in the Chicago network, Du Bois' work was given little attention by the white, male sociology establishment. He had established a successful research base at Atlanta University where he published monographs and held annual conferences to discuss the relevance of the Atlanta University papers to the advancement of the Negro. He was disappointed that he was unable to develop connections for his research base with the eminent, established universities. Du Bois became very discouraged with his primary work as social scientist/teacher and, as lynchings "called—shrieked—for action," (Du Bois, 1920:21–2) he left the academic world.

Du Bois was a founder of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and became an internationally known spokesperson as the Editor, from 1910–1934, of the NAACP publication, *The Crisis*.

### **The Appearance of the Label "Clinical Sociology"**

A discussion of "clinical sociology" or the "clinical" approach appeared in the literature at least every few years between 1931 and 1969. The term "clinical sociology" generally has been used to refer to sociologists doing intervention work in a variety of settings.

The first linking of the words "clinical" and "sociology" in an important journal occurred in 1931. Louis Wirth's (1897–1952) article "Clinical Sociology" appeared in *The American Journal of Sociology*, the most prestigious sociology journal of its day. Wirth, writing about sociologists working in child guidance clinics, made a strong case for the role "sociologists can and did play in the study, diagnosis and treatment of personality disorders because of their expertise about the varying effects of socio-cultural influences on behavior." Wirth thought that roles of practitioners and researchers were "equally valid and envisioned that both researchers and practitioners would benefit from the emergence of clinical sociology" (Glass and Fritz, 1982:3.)

In 1934, Saul Alinsky, a staff sociologist and member of the classification board of the Illinois State Penitentiary, published his article, "A Sociological Technique in Clinical Criminology" in the *Proceedings of the Sixty-Fourth Annual Congress of the American Prison Association*. Here he discussed an interviewing technique that he developed for working with prison inmates. Alinsky, a clinical sociologist, became well known in the 1960s for his work

in community organizing. His early work in corrections “led to a focus on community as the unit for investigating crime and on community organizations as a means of crime prevention” (Reitzes and Reitzes, 1982:48.)

In 1941 Walter Webster Argow’s article “The Practical Application of Sociology” appeared in the *American Sociological Review*. Argow (1941:38) noted that Giddings, Wirth and Fairchild had offered “a program of an ‘applied’ or ‘clinical’ sociology.”

In 1944 the first formal definition of clinical sociology appeared in H. P. Fairchild’s *Dictionary of Sociology*. Alfred McClung Lee (1944:303), known as one of the founders of the Society for the Study of Social Problems, the Association for Humanist Sociology and the Sociological Practice Association, defined the term as follows:

sociology, clinical. That division of practical or applied sociology that reports and synthesizes the experiences of (a) social psychiatrists with functional problems of individual adaptation and (b) societal technicians with functional problems of institutional adjustment. Chiefly in the first group, at least in emphasis, is the experience of social workers, personnel managers, psychiatrists, career guidance experts, etc., and chiefly in the second group is that of public relations counselors, professional politicians, sentiment and opinion analysts, propagandists, advertisers, etc.. Clinical sociology thus stresses the development of effective manipulative and therapeutic techniques and of accurate functional information concerning society and social relationships.

In the following years, Lee used the word “clinical” in the title of two articles—his 1945 “Analysis of Propaganda: A Clinical Summary” and his 1955 “The Clinical Study of Society.”

Also appearing in 1944 was an article in *Sociology and Social Research* called “An Approach to Clinical Sociology.” The author, Edward C. McDonagh (1944:382), knew Lee’s definition of clinical sociology but had not read Wirth’s 1931 article.<sup>9</sup> McDonagh (1944:379–80) proposed that sociology departments establish social research clinics. He thought the clinics should be “composed of representatives from the social sciences with a person trained in sociology serving as director.” Among the topics McDonagh thought the clinic might deal with:

regional housing standards and conditions, probable post-war employment, juvenile delinquency and health indices . . . (concerns of) draft boards . . . (and) constructive public works.

McDonagh (1944:376–7) said “the clinical approach as a means of sociological research is essentially a group way of studying and solving problems.” After mentioning the “intellectual eclecticism” of sociology, McDonagh said he was puzzled as to why sociology had “not adopted and incorporated the advantages of clinical thinking.”

In 1946 George Edmund Haynes’ “Clinical Methods in Interracial and Intercultural Relations” appeared in *The Journal of Educational Sociology*<sup>10</sup> Haynes, the first black to receive a Ph.D. from Columbia University, was a co-founder of the National Urban League (1910) and the first black to hold a sub-cabinet post (Director of the Bureau of Negro Economics, U.S. Department of Labor, 1918–21). His 1946 article was written while he was Executive Secretary of the Department of Race Relations of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America and discusses the Department’s urban clinics which were set up to deal with interracial tensions and conflicts by developing limited, concrete programs of action.

The July, 1949 issue of the journal *Philosophy of Science* included a symposium on applied social research in policy formation. E. A. Shils (1949:225), in his article “Social Science and Social Policy,” briefly mentioned that some social scientists were policy-makers although his examples were economists with the exception of one political scientist.

The symposium also included an article by David Ulrich (1949:247) entitled “A Clinical Method in Applied Social Science.” Robert Merton (1949:163), in the lead symposium article, had said that “all applied social science involves advice (recommendations for policy).” Ulrich responded that “advice-giving” may, at times, be an “inadequate frame of reference for applied social science.” He suggested a “combined research-consulting operation of seeking out management and employee interests and stimulating their participation in the development of a plan which will fit their needs and which they can regard as their own.” Ulrich said this practical consulting would be useful to an organization “whether it be business, government or some other form.”

In 1956 Alvin Gouldner’s “Explorations in Applied Social Science” appeared in *Social Problems*.<sup>11</sup> In this paper he examined the differences between engineering and clinical sociology. Gouldner was interested in the development of a clinical sociology in which clinicians made “their own independent identification of (a) group’s problems.” The clinician also wouldn’t take the client’s values as given and would work with the client in re-examining values in light of the client’s problems.

In 1957 Marie Kargman’s “The Clinical Use of Social System Theory in Marriage Counseling” appeared in the August issue of the journal *Marriage and Family Living*.<sup>12</sup> Kargman stated that marriage counseling was practiced by individuals in many disciplines—including sociology. She used a case presentation

and discussion to show the "effective clinical use of social system theory for marriage counseling."

In December 1957 James Schellenberg discussed clinical sociology in his article "Divisions of General Sociology" in the *American Sociological Review*. According to Schellenberg (1957:661), "clinical or concrete sociology deals . . . with a total situation within restricted limits of time and space." He said that the term clinical meant "a general and diagnostic mode of analysis" which "does not necessarily imply . . . solving social problems." Schellenberg thought that clinical or concrete sociology was one of three divisions of the subject matter of sociology. The other two were (1) historical and cultural sociology and (2) logico-experimental sociology.

In 1963 James Taylor and William Catton, Jr. published "Problems of Interpretation in Clinical Sociology" in *Sociological Inquiry*. The authors concerned themselves with the issues confronting the clinical sociologist who works as a consultant to organizations. Taylor and Catton (1963:44) noted that clinical sociology "has not as yet a crystallized set of occupational norms" but went on to advocate a consultant role as part of the "role repertoire of the sociologist."

Also appearing in 1963 was another article on work in clinical sociology. This piece, published in a French journal, discussed contracts, ethics, the object and methodology of socioanalytic art and the norms of that art (van Bockstaele, van Bockstaele, Barrots and Magny, 1963).

In 1964 Marshall Clinard's book *Anomie and Deviant Behavior* appeared. H. Warren Dunham (1964) had written a chapter on anomie and mental disorder for that book and one section of that chapter was "Clinical Sociology and Personality Vulnerability." In this section Dunham said that to develop adequate explanations of deviancy, we must develop the field of clinical sociology. Dunham (1964:155) also mentioned that the field of clinical sociology had "been most startlingly neglected during the past two decades."

In 1965 Frederick Lighthall and Richard Diedrich published "The Social Psychologist, the Teacher, and Research" in *Psychology in the Schools*. The authors discussed the school psychologist's research as an example of "what can only be called clinical sociology."

In 1966 Julia Mayo's "What is the 'Social' in Social Psychiatry?" appeared in the *Archives of General Psychiatry*. The final section of her article was on the transition from psychiatric caseworker to clinical sociologist. Mayo believed that the social work practitioner no longer had restricted functioning but had developed into a clinical sociologist having distinctive diagnostic skills.

Finally, *Patterns in Human Interaction: An Introduction to Clinical Sociology* written by Henry Lennard and Arnold Bernstein, was published in 1969. The book was about how social contexts influence social behavior. In the

introduction, "Clinical Sociology: A New Focus," Lennard and Bernstein (1969:3) stated that their "application of research methodology and sociology theory to the data of the 'clinical' situation and to subject matter traditionally falling within the fields of psychiatry and clinical psychology seemed to us to deserve a new characterization, to which the term clinical sociology seems ideally suited.

### **Heightened Interest in Clinical Sociology**

Presentations about the field of clinical sociology—labeled as such—began to appear at professional sociology meetings during the early 1970s. By the late 1970s, presentations and training sessions, as well as publications appeared with some regularity. These publications began to document the earliest contributions in the field as well as encourage contemporary work.

In 1978 Hugh Gardner published an article about clinical sociology in the magazine *Human Behavior* and in 1979 a special issue of the *American Behavioral Scientist* (Straus, 1979) was devoted to clinical sociology. The book *Clinical Sociology*, by Barry Glassner and Jonathan Freedman (1979), also was published that year. Numerous articles were now appearing including ones by Charlotte Schwartz (1978) on teaching, Billy Franklin (1979) on the history of the field, Estelle Disch (1979) on sociological psychotherapy, Alex Swan (1980) on the emergence of the field, Drukker and VerHaaren (1980) on consulting and Black and Enos (1980) on counseling.

This activity was spurred on in large part by the establishment of the Clinical Sociology Association (now the Sociological Practice Association) in 1978. Clinicians now belonged to a network of sociological practitioners and the organization began to develop forums and publication projects for its members. In 1982 the Association published the first issue of its annual journal, the *Clinical Sociology Review*, and in 1985 sponsored the volume *Using Sociology: An Introduction from the Clinical Perspective*, edited by Roger Straus. In cooperation with the American Sociological Association, two volumes (Fritz and Clark, 1986; Clark and Fritz, 1984) were published on courses and programs in clinical sociology.

The interests and activities of Sociological Practice Association members, acting individually or on behalf of the Association, have been major factors in the development and acceptance of publications about clinical sociology. Iowa State University Press, for example, published Harry Cohen's (1981) book on theory and clinical sociology, Schenkman published Alex Swan's *The Practice of Clinical Sociology and Socioterapy* in 1984 and in 1985 Garland published Fritz's *The Clinical Sociology Handbook*. The journal *Free Inquiry in Creative Sociology* sponsored a series of articles on clinical sociology and in 1987 the



American Sociological Association announced plans to establish a sociological practice journal which should cover both clinical and applied sociology.

## Conclusion

It has taken a long time for the history of clinical sociology to begin to be pieced together. The reasons for this include the following:

- The early work often is not identified as “clinical sociology” and so it’s difficult for contemporary writers to locate that information and analyze it.
- Some chroniclers and reviewers consciously or unconsciously have rejected information about the intervention role of sociologists even when the information was provided.
- Information about clinical activities often was published in places not usually read or catalogued by contemporary sociologists.
- The earliest American clinical sociologists didn’t publish much about how they may have integrated practice with teaching.

Numerous examples might be given of clinical work that generally has been overlooked. In addition to the earliest sociologists mentioned throughout this paper, I would point to some of the early work of William Foote Whyte and the contributions of Charles Gomillion. Neither of these men identified their work as “clinical.”

William Foote Whyte wrote a little known article called “Solving the Hotel’s Human Problems” which appeared in a 1947 issue of *The Human Monthly*.<sup>13</sup> Here Whyte described his work as a consultant both to the staff members in human relations research at a Minneapolis hotel and to the hotel’s executives who were working on change initiatives. The editor of *The Hotel Monthly* (1947:37) indicated at the time Whyte’s article appeared “that the policies and practices instituted through the human relations activities headed by Professor Whyte (are) largely responsible for reducing labor turnover by 66%.” The editor said this was an “impressive demonstration of the value of the work.”

Another clinical sociologist whose work generally has been neglected is Charles Gomillion.<sup>14</sup> Gomillion was an educator community-activist affiliated with Tuskegee Institute who “organized the Tuskegee Civic Association in 1947 and launched a program of political activism in the town and surrounding rural areas” (Hunter and Abraham, 1987:xxv.) In 1960 the *Gomillion v. Lightfoot* case came before the U.S. Supreme Court. Gomillion’s successful suit stopped the local gerrymandering which had excluded all but about ten blacks from voting in town elections (Smith and Killian, 1974:205; Gomillion, 1987.)

We should make the effort to learn the history of our field. As part of this initiative, we need to identify those women and men who have been scholar-practitioners in economically developed as well as developing countries and research thoroughly their contributions. If we do this, we will have a more accurate picture of the history of the entire field of sociology and be in a better position to discuss some of the historical currents that have encouraged sociologists to value clinical sociology at some periods while tolerating or denying it in others.<sup>15</sup>

This is a period of sustained interest in clinical sociology. During this time we will continue to write the field's history and discuss the strengths of and barriers to sociological practice. If national and international events encourage the development of the field and if a strong organizational structure for the field can be put in place, clinical sociology will blossom.<sup>16</sup> At that point this humanistic, multidisciplinary field—so much a part of the history of the discipline—finally will be recognized as a mainstream area of professional competence and as an important consideration in projects involving planned social change.

## Notes

1. Little has been written about the history of the field of clinical sociology. Like histories of the general field of sociology, what has been written does not do an adequate job of covering the contributions of women and people of color. Also like histories of the general field, this history does not adequately reflect contributions of those outside of Western Europe and the United States.

2. It is difficult to establish an exact date for the beginning of sociology in the United States. We could start, for instance, with the 1880s when publications on sociology first appeared, with the 1890s when sociology courses were given in academic institutions or in 1905 with the establishment of the American Sociological Society.

3. According to Diner (1980:199), eleven of the fifteen members of the University of Chicago's Sociology and Anthropology Department, over 73%, were involved in reform activity. Diner was assessing faculty involvement for the years 1892 through 1919.

4. This point also is central to Robert MacIver's 1931 volume *The Contribution of Sociology to Social Work*. He sees sociology as science and social work as art.

5. Talbot (1936:4) described her position as Assistant Professor of Sanitary Science while Rosenberg (1982) says she was Assistant Professor of Sociology. Departments were interdisciplinary at this time. Sanitary Science (Public Health) was in the Sociology Department until 1904 when a separate Department of Household Administration was established.

6. The 1930 issue of *The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography* identifies Jane Addams as a sociologist. In White's *Conspectus of American Biography* (1937), Jane Addams is listed under sociology and is not listed under social work. As late as 1948 Harry Barnes said the largest group of sociologists were "social economists" or "practical sociologists." He included Addams in this group.

*The American Journal of Sociology* gave a great deal of coverage to Addams' ideas and activities. In addition to her articles (e.g., 1896, 1899, 1912, 1914), there were solicited comments (1908), reviews of her books (e.g., Mead, 1907) and an article on a day at Hull House (Moore, 1897.) Thomas (1910:550) began her review of Addams' "The Spirit of Youth and the City Streets" in

*The American Journal of Sociology* by saying "One lays down (the book) with the feeling that sociology has published a classic."

7. The Chicago branch of the Association of Collegiate Alumnae was among those holding meetings at Hull House. Marion Talbot and Sophonisba Breckinridge were very active in this group (Talbot and Rosenberry, 1931.)

8. Julius Rosenwald, a wealthy Chicago business leader, was an active Hull House trustee and supporter of Jane Addams' work. It was not surprising that the President of the Julius Rosenwald Fund wrote to several prominent individuals to ask them to support Jane Addams' nomination for the Nobel Peace Prize. Yale University President James Angell (1928) responded to the invitation by saying in part: "I find your request extremely difficult to deal with. I have known Miss Addams for nearly forty years and have in many ways the greatest admiration for her character and accomplishments. I am frank to say, however, that I could not understand, and I find it even difficult wholly to forgive, her attitude during the early part of our entry into the war. She was, from my point of view, so altogether irrationally pro-German, veiling her actual procedure under the guise of her Tolstoian pacifism that, in common with many of her other life-long friends, I found myself deeply hurt and alienated. I doubt whether I could write the type of letter which would really be helpful in connection with the Nobel Prize, assuming that any weight attached to the letter at all, and I think that, under these circumstances, perhaps I had better not make the effort."

9. Information about Edward McDonagh can be found in the introduction to his article which was reprinted in the 1986 *Clinical Sociology Review* (Fritz, 1986).

10. I am indebted to Herbert Hunter for calling this article to my attention.

11. Gouldner's article is reprinted in his 1965 volume *Applied Sociology*. The first section of Gouldner's book was entitled "A Clinical Approach" and the second was "Practitioners and Clients."

12. Kargman's article is reprinted in the 1986 issue of the *Clinical Sociology Review*. The introductory article (Fritz, 1986, 11-13) gives information about Kargman's work.

13. Whyte's 1947 article is reprinted in the 1987 issue of the *Clinical Sociology Review*. The introductory article (Fritz, 1987) gives information about Whyte's clinical work.

14. Gomillion's work is discussed in Smith and Killian's (1974) "Black Sociologists and Social Protest" and in Butler Jones' (1974) "The Tradition of Sociology Teaching in Black Colleges."

15. Billy Franklin, in his 1979 article in *Psychology*, identified the following historical currents: depressions and unemployment, war or the threat of war, status seeking and revolutions (in thought, act or technology).

16. It is important—because of size, resources and historical role—to have the active support of the American Sociological Association. It is also important for sociology departments at established universities to offer clinical sociology programs or concentrations. These programs, when reviewed as a whole, need to cover the range of intervention levels and be well distributed geographically.

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