

Sociology News

SUMMER 2008

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Letter from the Chair

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

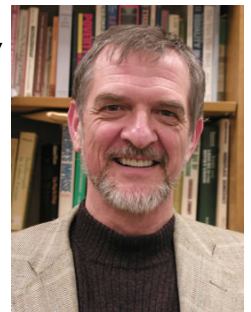
This past year has been a year of excitement and accomplishment for the Department of Sociology. Last fall, we welcomed three wonderful new colleagues, Professors Sandra Barnes, Jessica Kelley-Moore, and David Warner. Sandra, Jessica and David all "hit the ground running", immediately responding to student and program needs - developing and implementing new courses, meeting with and mentoring students and continuing to pursue their own research agendas. Stories about some of these are featured in this issue of the *Sociology News*.

This year, the Department of Sociology, in conjunction with the NSF Advance Academic Careers in Engineering and Sociology hosted two internationally preeminent sociologists, Professor Linda Waite, who is Lucy Flower Professor of Sociology the University of Chicago and Deputy Director of the Center on Aging at the National Opinion Research Center (NORC), and Linda Burton, the James B. Duke Professor of Sociology at Duke University. This issue includes reflections on their visits by both faculty and students.

The 2007-2008 academic year has marked a pivotal time for Case Western Reserve. In her first year, President Barbara Snyder has called upon the University community to participate in a broad-based and thorough process of strategic planning. While it is not uncommon for such processes to generate cautious and skeptical reactions, this process has engaged the entire faculty. Nowhere is this truer than in Sociology. Our faculty have served on several of the Strategic Planning Task Forces convened by Dean Cyrus Taylor. The task forces have now completed their work, and we are looking forward with interest to new university-wide developments deriving from the strategic planning process.

This has been another year of very significant accomplishment and recognition for both faculty

and students. Three faculty members, Susan Hinze, Jessica Kelley-Moore and Emilia McGucken, were nominated for three teaching awards, including the Carl F. Wittke Award, the Jackson Award and the Diekhoff Award. In the January issue of The *Journals of Gerontology: Social Sciences* an article on "Gerontology's Greatest Hits" was published identifying the most frequently cited social science articles in the Journal's history. Not one, but two of Gary Deimling's articles on caregiver burden made the top 10!



Professor Dale Dannefer

Doctoral student Robert Peterson was one of four students in the nation awarded the American Sociological Association's Predoctoral Minority Fellowship for 2008-2009. This fellowship will support Robert's dissertation work. The Fellowship is renewable for up to four years and provides a stipend and travel allowances and will allow Robert to focus his dissertation research on the implications of inequality on HIV/AIDS. Doctoral student Karie Feldman received the Zdanis Award given out each year by Graduate Studies, which provides \$5,000 in financial support to help PhD candidates complete work on their dissertations. Doctoral Student Robin Shura received a grant from the Eva L. Pancoast Memorial Fund to support travel for her dissertation research. Six undergraduate Sociology majors received special recognition for their commitment and excellence in the study of Sociology.

Of course, we always welcome hearing from alumni, and we wish you continued success in all of your endeavors. Please let us know of job openings you or your colleagues may have, as our talented graduate students may be just what you need. If you are on campus in the late summer or early fall, stop by to meet our new faculty and make them feel welcome.

Department of Sociology Hosts Linda Waite



Professor Linda Waite

The Department of Sociology received awards from the National Science Foundation Academic Careers in Engineering and Science (ACES) program to host two distinguished women scholars this past spring. The ADVANCE Distinguished Lectureship award provides funds to host an extended visit with a woman or an under-represented minority scientist that includes a public lecture, smaller specialized seminars, and informal social gatherings. The variety of events allows students, faculty, and staff many opportunities to interact intensely with our esteemed guest.

Activity, Sexual Function and Health at Older Ages. She demonstrated that the frequency and type of sexual activity among older couples is greatly influenced by age- and health-related problems with sex as well as general health status of both partners.

At another event, Professor Waite presented the study design of NSHAP to interested faculty and students. The data from the first wave of data collection are now publicly available and her research team is hosting a data workshop in January 2009 in Chicago. Several of our students and faculty submitted research proposals and have been selected to attend that workshop:

- Tanetta Andersson, Susan Hinze, and Brian Gran
“Applying a race/class/gender intersectional approach to the impact of social support on physical and mental health in older adults.”
- Scott Adams, Rachel Bryant, Melinda Laroco, and Emily Fleisher. “Age and Cohort Differences in Sexual Behavior among Older Adults.”
- David Warner and Jessica Kelley-Moore.
“Perceived Loneliness among Disabled Married

Our first guest, in early April, was Linda Waite, Lucy Flower Professor of Urban Sociology at the University of Chicago. Professor Waite is concurrently the co-director of two centers within the National Opinion Research Center (NORC): the Center on Demography and Economics of Aging and the Alfred P. Sloan Center on Parents, Children, and Work. In addition, she is co-principal investigator on the National Social Life, Health, and Aging Project (NSHAP). Professor Waite is known for her research on the beneficial effects of marriage on physical health, mental health, life satisfaction and goal attainment.

During her visit, Professor Waite presented results from the ongoing NSHAP study. Her well-attended public lecture was entitled, Sexual

Faculty

Perspective:

Jessica

Kelley-Moore

New Insights into the Sexuality of Older Adults

From the perspective of a student in the Department of Sociology at CWRU with a special interest in aging, I anticipated to gain insights into a new research agenda: sexuality in old age with Professor Waite's visit. Professor Waite presented a new dataset, the NSHAP, the National Social Life, Health and Aging project, representing data about sexuality, intimacy and sexual expressions of older persons. Ever more important, she offered first insights into analytic outcomes. Prof. Waite is particularly interested in the question whether health is produced socially, whereby sexuality is seen as an aspect of health. Sexuality in this context includes any mutual sexual activity within the past year - not just sexual intercourse. Respondent's health was self-rated.

same significant role in regards to a decline in sexuality. For both, men and women, levels of stress, anxiety and depression decrease sexual activity. And concerning self-reported reasoning of a decline in sexuality, Professor Waite stated that women often report a lack of interest in sex, whereas men report more on erectile dysfunction or being less able to have an orgasm. Overall, only 20% of women 85+ are sexually active, whereas between 20-40% of men are sexually active in this age category.

But most striking to Professor Waite was the result that past sexually transmitted diseases had a significant effect on reporting a lack of interest in sexuality in elderly women, contrary to men the same age. Professor Waite indicated that younger age groups have different attitudes about sexuality. From the perspective of a graduate student in aging and the life course these findings underline that historical context or social regimes seemingly play a role in shaping one's attitude.

Among many of her findings, physical health status appears to be a strong predictor of sexuality among men. However, physical health did not have the same impact on elderly women. But among women and men, the level of depressive symptoms as measured with the CES-D appears to play the

Student

Perspective:

Antje Daub



Professor Linda Burton

With the support of the ACES-NSF program, the Sociology Department welcomed Professor Linda Burton, James B. Duke Professor of Sociology of Duke University, to CWRU for a campus visit on April 30-May 2.

Professor Burton's research and publications are internationally recognized. She takes multi-methodological approaches to conduct

studies of the life course of Americans who have low incomes living in urban and rural communities. Her work has focused on intergenerational family structures and the context in which these structures matter to the daily lives of those families.

From the time she arrived in Cleveland, Linda's schedule was full of opportunities for CWRU faculty members and students. Shortly after arriving, she met with a group of Sociology doctoral students to discuss "To Build a Program of Research or Not? That is the Question." Prying Professor Burton away from this group proved difficult, but Department Chair Dale Dannefer persuaded her to join faculty members for a delightful and stimulating dinner.

Linda's next day started with a breakfast with faculty members whose research intersects with her work. Sociology faculty members were joined by colleagues from the law school, other social science departments including Anthropology and Political Science, History, and as well as the Mandel School. She also met with members of the University Center on Aging and Health (UCAH), where she

interacted with colleagues in the Schools of Nursing and Medicine, and other researchers who study issues at the intersection of aging and health. Following her UCAH visit, Linda had lunch with a group of undergraduate students who are members of Alpha Kappa Delta, the Sociology honor society. Lunch discussions focused on "Mentee/Mentor Relationships: Establishing Social Ties in Graduate School."

In the afternoon, Professor Burton gave a public lecture entitled, "'Journeys to the Altar: Intimate Relationships, Childbearing, and Marriage in Low Income Urban and Rural Families'". Following this well attended lecture was a reception where Linda enjoyed opportunities of meeting with members of the CWRU community. Discussions arising from the lecture and other parts of Linda's visit continued with faculty members through the evening.

Linda started her next day early with a breakfast in Little Italy with graduate students from various disciplines. The topic of the breakfast was, "Advice on academic careers." After breakfast, Linda gave a departmental seminar, "Big Science Ethnography and Exploring Life Course Health in Low Income Families."

After having lunch with Sociology graduate students, where the topic was, "So You Want to Study Poverty? A Cost/Benefits Analysis," Linda wound up her visit with one-on-one meetings with Sociology faculty members. All in all, Linda's visit was full of energy and sparked long-lasting discussions among many CWRU community members. We look forward to another visit from Professor Burton.



Faculty Perspective:
Brian Gran

Contemporary Family Structure Diversity

Linda Burton's visit to CWRU this May gave me an exciting opportunity to understand the diversity that exists in contemporary family structures. Presenting data from "A Three City Study," a research project that focuses on the well-being of low-income children and families in Boston, Chicago, and San Antonio, Professor Burton exemplified the point that the nuclear family arrangement of two biological parents and their offspring is not the norm in every family. In some cases, partners who decide to marry or live together bring along children from multiple relationships in the past, which often makes for complex kinship diagrams. Based on her ethnographic methodology, she was able to present the distinct voices of her participants, and this helped to paint a colorful story of her participants' social realities. Thus, the research that Linda Burton presented was fascinating and it opened my eyes to the real struggles and concerns of diverse families throughout the United States. Furthermore, I could tell that she was passionate about producing work that could have a practical impact on society, as illustrated by her dedication to working with policymakers.

In addition to her exciting research, I was impressed by Linda Burton's sincere interest in the graduate students' futures. Along with a number of graduate students in the sociology program, I had breakfast and lunch with our guest. During these meals she not only discussed her own professional research experiences in greater detail, but also asked us to share our experiences and express out aspirations. After listening to our questions and comments, Professor Burton gave us useful advice concerning the broad array of professional options that exist for sociology PhDs and thoughtfully affirmed that an individual's ultimate purpose in a graduate program in sociology is to become the best social scientist that he or she can be. Linda Burton's personal concern for the future social scientists in the sociology program at CWRU is deeply appreciated and I will always look back on her visit with gratitude.



Student Perspective:
Scott Adams

VISION QUEST: A STUDY OF EFFORTS, CHALLENGES AND NEEDS OF YOUTH MINISTRY LEADERS IN BLACK CONGREGATIONS

By: Professor
Sandra L. Barnes

“The project evolves from a belief that discovering the characteristics of Black youth leaders and key dimensions of their leadership and work can offer important direction for building effective programs on their behalf.”

A plethora of studies have addressed the challenges faced by impoverished urban youth, particularly young Black males. In *Race Matters*, Cornel West (1993) wrote of the nihilism and angst experienced by segments of this population as a result of leveled aspirations and chronic exposure to racism and classism in a society that feigns democracy and equal opportunity. The combination of negative systemic forces and imprudent personal decisions has undermined the life chances of many such Black youth. However, focus on a deficit model has resulted in the absence of culturally relative, comprehensive research on productive Black youth who, despite similar social influences, have chosen to make more positive decisions. Existing studies also minimize the indelible role of the historic Black Church in sponsoring spiritual and secular programs for children and youth. This project endeavors to respond to these limitations in existing literature.

“*Vision Quest: A Study of Efforts, Challenges, and Needs of Leaders of Black Youth in Black Congregations*” is a three-year mix-methods project to discover profiles of youth ministry leadership in Black congregations as a means of envisioning and developing best-practices that promote the positive development of Black youth. The \$550,000 project has been funded by the Lilly Endowment. The project Co-Principal Investigators are: Anne Streaty Wimberly, Professor at the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta and Professor Sandra Barnes. Findings will inform the following arenas: race, class, and gender inequality; Sociology of Religion; African American Studies; socio-psychology; urban sociology; stratification; and, social movements.

Research efforts will focus on roles and competencies of adults and youth who serve as leaders in church-sponsored youth ministries as well as youth workers who lead youth activities; recruitment; the nature of youth they serve; vision and expected outcomes of youth programs; preparation and support for leadership; challenges and needs; and, approaches to addressing challenges. The project evolves from a belief that discovering the characteristics of Black youth leaders and key dimensions of their leadership and work can offer important direction for building effective programs on their behalf. It is important to assess what constitutes effective youth leadership based on systematic

empirical study. In addition to informing academia, our goals are to develop a leadership model and best practices to be included in a product for use by congregations, judicatories, seminaries, and other institutions who prepare youth workers.

The endeavor will accomplish three objectives. The project will first identify a national sample of 2,400 Black churches and collect data from workers with youth in these churches through a telephone survey. Next, we will select a smaller subset of 120 churches for in-depth interviews with and participant observations of adult youth ministry leaders and youth who serve as peer leaders. The third goal is to form two shared learning groups, called “Vision Quest Clusters,” for the purpose of investigating manners and the extent in which peer teaching and learning result in increased insights on and the nature and implementation of effective youth ministry leadership.

Importantly, the concern of the study is not simply the crucial need for leadership, but to discover a thorough *profile* of present leaders. Research in the sociology of religion points to leaders of youth ministry who are affiliated with congregations and who carry out local church-sponsored or denominationally conceived programs. But, this material also suggests that there are youth workers from community-based organizations who either partner with congregations to offer a wide range of programs and services or engage in non-religious activities on church premises. Yet, the incidence of these types of leaders, the full extent of their responsibilities, how they entered into youth programming on church premises, and the impact of this relationship on church and community are not known. Much is yet to be discovered about youth leadership from which a promising vision of leadership and best practices for leadership emerge. This project will add to existing literature by examining what youth leaders do, what projects and processes appear to capture the attention of at-risk Black youth, and how young persons ultimately become equipped and empowered to make healthier choices and become better citizens.



By: Professor Gary Deimling

The Cancer Survivor Research Program is now in its 11th year studying the quality of life of older adult long-term cancer survivors. Historically, there has been little research on this group of cancer survivors because, survival among older adults was relatively rare. However, advances in cancer treatment along with more general increases in longevity mean that cancer survivorship among older adults will be a significant aspect of later life for more individuals.

Since our current funding (The Quality of Life of Older Adult Long-term Cancer Survivors) will be ending in 2009, Karen Bowman and Gary Deimling are already preparing an NIH research application to study the transition from cancer care to primary care and the challenges that older adult survivors face in that process. The focus will not only be on the survivor, but on family members as well. This research will incorporate an intervention to help older survivors and their families make this transition.

Our team, which includes research assistants Jackie Arendt and George Kypriotakis, continue to analyze data from the nearly 500 survivors in our NCI funded research findings. Our recent work takes advantage of the six waves of data we

have collected over the past ten years, examining the trajectories in quality of life outcomes as they are affected by the combined challenges of cancer and aging. Our recent findings have documented the important role that cancer-related factors play, over and above age related factors in the pain, fatigue, physical and social functioning of older survivors. Latent growth-curve analysis also documented that individual trajectories in cancer-related worries are significant predictors of depression trajectories.

As we prepare our final report on our current grant, we are beginning work on a book that will tie together all of our previous findings. The tentative title on this manuscript is *Cancer in Later Life: The Dual Challenges of Survivorship and Aging*, which we hope to complete in 2010.



Gary Deimling and Karen Bowman at the American Cancer Society Award Ceremony

Recent Publications

- Avis, N.E., Deimling, G.T. (in press). Cancer Survivorship and Aging. *Cancer*.
- Deimling, G.T., Arendt, J.A., Bowman, K.B., Kypriotakis, G. (in press). Functioning among Older, Long-term Survivors: The Role of Cancer and Co-morbidities. *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*.
- Deimling, G.T., Bowman, K.F., Wagner, L.J. (2007). The Effects of Cancer-Related Pain and Fatigue on Functioning of Older Adult, Long-term Cancer Survivors. *Cancer Nursing*.
- Deimling, G.T., Bowman, K.F., Wagner, L.J. (2007) Cancer Survivorship and Identity among Long-term Survivors. *Cancer Investigation*.
- Deimling, G.T., Sterns, S., Bowman, K.F., Kahana, B. (2007) Functioning and Activity Participation Restrictions among Older Adult, Long-term Cancer Survivors. *Cancer Investigation*.

Recent Presentations and Published Abstracts

2007- 2008

- Deimling, G.T., Arendt, J.A., Kypriotakis, G., Bowman, K.F. "The Quality of Life of Older Adult, Long-term Survivors: The Role of Cancer and Co-morbidities." Presented at the Geriatric Oncology: Advancing Partnership in Research and Practice, Case Comprehensive Cancer Center of Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland Ohio.
- Deimling, G.T., Arendt, J.A., Bowman, K.B., Kypriotakis, G. (2008) The Relative Impact of Cancer-related and Age-related actors on the Psycho-social Quality of Life of Older Adult, Long-term Survivors. *Psycho-Oncology* Vol 17. Presented at the 5th Annual Meeting of the American Psychosocial Oncology Society (APOS), February 28-March 2, 2008 in Irvine, California.
- Bowman, K. B., Arendt, J. A., Deimling, G. T, Kypriotakis, G, Rose, J. H. (2007) Health care utilization of older, longer cancer survivors. *The Gerontologist*, 47 (Special Issue 1), p. 605. Presented at the 60th Annual Meeting of the Gerontological Society of America (GSA), November 16-20, 2007 in San Francisco, California.
- Deimling, G. T., Kypriotakis, G., Bowman, K. F., Arendt, J. A. (2007) Trajectories in functioning and psychosocial outcomes among older, adult, long-term cancer survivors. *The Gerontologist*, 47 (Special Issue 1), p. 605. Presented at the 60th Annual Meeting of the Gerontological Society of America (GSA), November 16-20, 2007 in San Francisco, California.
- Deimling, GT, Bowman, K.F., Kypriotakis, G. "Cancer and Aging: The Quality of Life of Long Term Survivors." Presented at the Society of Behavioral Medicine's 28th Annual Meeting and Scientific Sessions from March 21-24, 2007 in Washington DC.
- Deimling, G.T., Bowman, K. B., Wagner L.J., Arendt, J. A. (2007) The Psychosocial Quality of Life of Older Adults, Long-term Cancer Survivors: Comparing African American and Caucasian Models. *Psycho-Oncology*. Vol 16. Presented at the 4th Annual Meeting of the American Psychosocial Oncology Society (APOS), March 1-4, 2007 in Austin, Texas.

A New SAGES Senior Capstone Experience Course

**By: Professor
Emilia McGucken**

“The Capstone Seminar will provide students an opportunity to develop their understanding of the explanatory power of sociology by applying their knowledge to the integration of theory, methods, and sociological substance on a particular topic.”

As part of the implementation of the university's SAGES program, the Department of Sociology will begin offering a senior capstone seminar (SOC1 392) this spring. The capstone seminar will provide students an opportunity to develop their understanding of the explanatory power of sociology by applying their knowledge to the integration of theory, methods, and sociological substance on a particular topic. This year, the Seminar will take up the issue of school bullying.

Although violence among American youth has been the subject of extensive research, public policy and media attention, school bullying and the attendant problems are infrequently addressed. Bullying is not random, and victims dread the possibility of future attacks. Recent research suggests that when bullying is ignored or downplayed, as it often is, harassed students suffer ongoing torment.

Forms of bullying identified in literature include threatening, taunting, teasing, name calling, spreading rumors, obscene gestures, manipulating friendships, isolating and excluding students from the group, sexual harassment where the intent is to demean, embarrass, and to humiliate. Physical bullying involves kicking, hitting, destroying property, and more. School bullying is viewed as a risk factor associated with antisocial and often delinquent behavior. As a result of bullying, victims may experience periods of stress, fear, anxiety, and depression.

School bullying is a pervasive problem. The past two decades have witnessed growing concerns about bullies and their victims. Many victims report missing school and being afraid of repeated bullying, and subjected to repeated social and academic trauma. A recent research study by Kathie Christie found that bullying among students ages 12-18 is considered to be the single most problematic discipline issue by 29% of schools. This evidence about the extensive amount of bullying is calling for more research that can provide the respondents' demographics and relevant information on the students' own experiences with bullying as a bully, as a victim, or both, and as a peer bystander. The role of peer bystanders deserves increased attention, since their behavior can and does affect the outcome of the bullying incident.

With the assistance of James M. Bader, the university's Director of the Center for Science and Mathematics Education, capstone project students and I will obtain access to five randomly

selected high schools in the greater Cleveland area, where we will administer an anonymous self-report survey.

This project will provide experience in preparing a literature review, gathering background materials, designing and implementing a social survey, collecting and analyzing data, integrating knowledge acquired throughout their undergraduate studies, and reflecting critically on the findings and the process. Students will demonstrate these skills in presenting their Sociology capstone project to the university community.

In the Capstone project, students will ask the respondents questions about their personal experience and their attitudes toward bullying, their opinions about what causes these behaviors, and their preferences of prevention and intervention programs and we will also attempt to obtain information related to reasons why some students engage in bullying while others do not. A separate brief anonymous survey will be administered to teachers and administrators at these schools.

Additionally, this project may provide more specific information on environmental and social influences on bullying behaviors such as what role does the media play? What role modeling by parents and teachers promotes bullying or healthy social interaction? What about exposure to family violence? Of particular importance would be addressing factors that might have lead to bullying.

The entire faculty is enthusiastic about the launch of the capstone seminar. The opportunity to be part of a project devoted to a timely and important topic and to participate in the full range of experiences that are part of the research process, from design through implementation to analysis and presentation, sets high expectations for future capstone senior Seminar experiences.



By: Professor Eva Kahana

Research projects at the Elderly Care Research Center (ECRC) have moved along at a fast clip during the past year. We are working on three research projects focusing on adaptation to stressors and successful aging, funded by National Institute on Aging, National Cancer Institute, and National Institute for Nursing Research. The NINR project on “Elders Marshalling Responsive Care and Enhancing Quality of Life in the Final Years” has been recently funded for a five year period. Eva Kahana, Boaz Kahana, May Wykle, and Jessica Kelley-Moore are faculty investigators on these projects. ECRC staff who are members of our research team, include Cathie King, Jane Brown and Seunghee Margevicius. Several graduate students have participated in training and apprenticeship experiences, including Diana Kulle, Rachel Hammel, and Scott Adams. We also continue to collaborate on research with three of our recent alumnae: Loren Lovegreen, Assistant Professor at Simon Fraser University; Gul Seckin, Assistant Professor at University of Maryland-Baltimore County; and Samantha Sterns, Postdoctoral Fellow at Brown University.

Several publications resulted from our prior studies on coping with stress, including two papers focused on our prior research on Holocaust survivors’ late life adaptation. One of these, “Dual Meanings of Collective Memory: Survivors’ and academics’ perspectives on genocide” appeared in Harvard International Review.

Our long term longitudinal study of successful aging is now in its 18th year. We are completing a five-year study of cancer prevention and cancer care funded by NCI with study participants. Of the original 1,000 older adults recruited to participate in this study, about 100 are still living independently and participating in our research. We are also following respondents in Cleveland, Ohio, Miami, and Celebration, Florida, who had joined our panel study more recently.

Relevant to our research on patient-clinician communication regarding cancer prevention and cancer care, we published a chapter in the *Handbook of Cancer Communication and Cancer Care* on patient proactivity.

In the Cancer Prevention Study, we explored the influence of patients’ health care consumerism, age, and co-morbidities, on physician recommendations of breast and colorectal cancer screening for the old-old. Data are based on interviews with 430 independent community dwelling old-old participants in a long-term panel study (Mean age 81.2; SD 7.6). Patient proactivity in asking for referrals resulted in higher rates of screening recommendations for both tests considered. Multivariate analyses indicated that, contrary to practice guidelines, patients with more chronic illnesses were given more screening recommendations for breast

cancer, with a similar trend for colorectal cancer. On the other hand, being free of functional limitations increased screening recommendations for breast cancer. We found significant concordance between physician recommendation and patient screening adherence. Elderly patient initiative and assertiveness can play a significant role in eliciting cancer screening recommendations from physicians. Such consumer initiatives can counteract current practices of using age, rather than life limiting illness, as the criterion for curtailing cancer screening.

In order to improve preventive care of the aged, increased attention to enhancing health literacy among the old-old holds distinct promise. Our findings add support to the recognition that medical practices do not currently conform to recommended guidelines for considering age in the context of life limiting illness. They also point to the value of proactive health care consumerism to reduce adverse effects of age based rationing of preventive health care.

In our Cancer Care Study, we completed qualitative data analyses on 100 in-depth interviews conducted with respondents who reported a past cancer diagnosis. Our data analyses focused on narratives of respondents related to self reported strategies for coping with their own cancer and the advice they would offer to others coping with a similar diagnosis.

When comparing personal coping strategies and advice given to others, we found overlap as well as divergence in themes. In regard to problem focused coping, the most striking difference relates to proactive coping efforts. Consumerism and health promotion/self care were seldom reported as personal coping strategies, but emerged as key coping approaches in narratives regarding advice given to others (6% vs. 29% and 5% vs. 12%, respectively). There was convergence in self reported coping and advice to others for cognitive reframing and normalizing life. In the category of obtaining social and spiritual support, elderly patients were almost twice as likely to report obtaining social support (22%) relative to recommending this approach to others (13%).

Although elderly patients have been described in the literature as disinterested and disempowered consumers, our data does not support this view. Rather, our findings point to elders’ proactive behavioral intentions by recommending advocacy to others.



A New Campus Drug? Research Notes on Video Game Addiction

**By: Professor
Susan Hinze**
(with Robert Peterson)



**Can students
really become
“addicted” to
online gaming?**

As professors, sometimes we think we’ve seen it all. But I recently came across a seemingly new behavioral phenomenon: video game addiction. During class one day, a student talked about belonging to a 12-Step program for online gaming addiction. I didn’t think much about it until a student in another class started skipping class, failed to turn in assignments and neglected personal hygiene. He ignored my expressions of professorial concern and I worried that perhaps the student was having drug or alcohol problems, or was experiencing depression. A very helpful dean in undergraduate studies met with us and zeroed in on the problem rather quickly: The student was up all night playing *World of Warcraft*. I was stunned. Despite our best efforts, we never managed to get this student back on track and he was subsequently separated from the university. In time, I found more students with video game “addiction” and spoke with others who confirmed this problematic social trend.

My sociological imagination sparking, I started asking questions. Can students really become addicted to online gaming? If so, which students were at risk? How big was this problem at Case, and for college students in general? Moreover, how was the medical profession framing this new addiction? Would it follow the path of alcoholism and pathological gambling and ultimately be viewed as a disease? Would physicians begin to treat it medically, like a brain disorder? What would the implications be for those who suffered from the “disease?”

Like a good sociologist, I turned to the literature. More accurately, I asked the graduate students working with me that year to review available literature. Thanks to the good sociological sleuthing of Michael Flatt, Christine Schneider and Robert Peterson, we learned a great deal about this new social phenomenon. We learned that the media loves to trumpet anecdotal evidence of this new cultural pathology, including stories with the following headlines: “Korean Drops Dead after 50-hour Gaming Marathon,” “Employee Divorces Husband over WoW” and “Infant Dies of Neglect.” We learned about the existence of several support groups, including “Gamers Anonymous,” “Mothers Against Video Game Addiction and Violence,” “VideoGameTrouble.org” and “Lost in WoW.” In addition, we learned that a growing number of researchers view internet and gaming overuse among college students as a disorder. Indeed, the burgeoning psychological and psychiatric literature on addiction has widened to include technological addiction. We found those marketing “addictive technologies” rely on the vulnerability of college students. Perhaps the most interesting finding from

a medical sociological perspective was the rapidity with which researchers working from psychological and psychiatric perspectives developed instrumentation to diagnose internet and/or gaming addiction. Indeed, the American Medical Association issued a report in 2006 documenting the emotional and behavioral effects, including the addictive potential, of video games. They concluded with a recommendation to include “Internet/video game addiction” as a formal diagnostic disorder in the upcoming revision of the DSM-IV.

Together, Robert Peterson, Michael Flatt and I conceived of a conceptual framework distinct from those that pathologize gaming behavior. Instead, we incorporate potential familial, social, institutional, structural and cultural dynamics that may explain the phenomenon. We frame Internet use, especially interactive gaming, as a potential “third place,” a virtual space outside of home and workplace that provides for informal sociability. Perhaps gamers do not “bowl alone,” but are fast establishing new forms of community and social interaction. In this view, gaming may be a new form of social capital for young people. We recently presented this conceptual paper at the Southern Sociological Society Conference in Richmond, Virginia.

Using this framework, we developed a research study to understand online gaming from the point of view of those who are engaged in it. We employ a symbolic interactionist (SI) perspective to understanding gaming behaviors through close examination of how reality is constructed by active and creative actors through their interactions with each other. Instead of using standardized instrumentation that incorporates emerging diagnostic criteria on “addiction,” we are in the process of gathering data through open-ended questions, dialogue and observations of student social worlds.

Our study is still in progress. Together with Emily Fleischer, we are conducting focus groups that have elicited new information about why gamers game, why some have trouble turning it off, as well as what social conditions feed internet and gaming overuse. Preliminary data do not suggest a new campus “drug” or disorder is on the horizon. If anything, our research thus far suggests scholars and clinicians might be addicted to the idea of addiction. Perhaps a new drug will soon be marketed (or an old drug re-packaged) to treat this new disorder, further expanding medical jurisdiction on college campuses. In the meantime, our research team will continue flexing our sociological imaginations to help us understand student gaming behaviors, the context in which they occur, and the promise and problems of a biomedical approach to gaming.

By: Professor Jessica Kelley-Moore

In 2004, National Institute on Aging launched an ambitious and timely study of health disparities called “Healthy Aging in Neighborhoods of Diversity across the Life Span” (HANDLS). The purpose of the study is to examine racial and socioeconomic disparities in health outcomes among Black and White adults. When completed, this will be one of the most comprehensive studies of health disparities among Black and White adults available. I am a co-investigator on the HANDLS study. My role on the project has been to design and conduct the neighborhood level of data collection.

This past year, several of our students at CWRU have traveled to Baltimore with me to conduct neighborhood and grocery store assessments. Melinda Laroco, Christine Schneider and Rachel Bryant went in November and again in May. Robert Peterson and George Kypriotakis joined them on the second trip. Each assessment team walked the neighborhoods, recording social and physical characteristics, inventory of businesses, and rating the quality of infrastructure (buildings, streets, sidewalks).

For me personally, the most interesting part of studying these urban environments is discovering just how limited Census data are for neighborhood research. By observing these urban living environments first hand, one can learn a tremendous amount about diversity of lived experience even in neighborhoods that look the same when using Census data. For example, two neighborhoods had a similar percentage of Black residents (89.2%; 87.2%), unemployment rates (23.3%; 24.6%) and income distribution (median income: \$33,500; \$35,700) yet these living environments looked completely different “on the ground.” One of the neighborhoods had visible indicators of social and physical disorder such as graffiti, trash, and homelessness. Many houses were in disrepair and the only food stores within walking distance had all of the food behind bullet proof glass. The other neighborhood was neat, quiet, and well cared for.



Robert Peterson, Christine Schneider, George Kypriotakis, Rachel Bryant, & Melinda Loroco from CWRU and Isreal Cross from University of Maryland, Baltimore County in Baltimore, Maryland.

Many residents had personalized their property. Two large supermarkets were located less than one mile from this neighborhood. Relying solely on Census data to characterize these neighborhoods would have missed vast differences in the social and physical environment. Researchers are increasingly interested in isolating which neighborhood characteristics influence health and this type of in-depth study advances our understanding of the causes of health disparities.

I am already collaborating with researchers and local public officials to conduct a similar study here in Cleveland. This will be one of the first multi-city studies of health disparities. Innovations in the Cleveland project are the inclusion of Hispanic Americans and European immigrants. In addition, I am particularly interested in studying the health effects of neighborhoods in economic transition. Little attention has been paid to the health consequences of collective scarcity, particularly living in a neighborhood with a high foreclosure rate, high unemployment and job loss, and skyrocketing living



Neighborhoods in Baltimore, Maryland

**By: Professor
Brian Gran**

Law's Intervention in Private Domains on Behalf of Minors

Why do governments intervene into the private domain of the family? Whose interests are they serving when they do so? One widely-accepted view is that governmental actions correspond to the interests of dominant societal actors supporting those actions. An interdisciplinary research project directed by Jessie Hill, Assistant Professor of Law and Associate Director of the Case Western Reserve University School of Law's Center for Social Justice, and Brian Gran, Associate Professor with a secondary appointment in the law school, questions this traditional wisdom. Indeed, Professors Hill and Gran observe that governments sometimes intervene on behalf of minors, giving them rights to bodily autonomy and protection, although they are a social group that enjoys neither political representation nor full citizenship rights.

Using an innovative technique known as fuzzy-set analysis, the research team is comparing laws of the 50 U.S. states regulating

corporal punishment of children and laws regulating minors' access to abortion. By categorizing these laws according to the degree to which the laws intervene in the family, they are able to test hypotheses that seek to explain why governments intervene to a greater or lesser extent on behalf of minors.

This project is unique in its empirical focus, which is largely lacking from the debate over the role of children vis-à-vis the government and the family. Funded by a CWRU Presidential Research Initiative grant, the project will ultimately result in a database of state laws categorized by the degree to which they intervene into the family domain. Ultimately, the database will be made available for teaching and research in the fields of children's rights, family law, sociology of the family, and the public/private distinction. Eventually, Professors Hill and Gran hope to expand their research to the international level, conducting a comparison across countries of laws that intervene in the private domain of the family, as well as semi-private domains such as foster care and schools, to grant minors certain rights of bodily autonomy.



Robert Peterson Awarded One of Four ASA Minority Fellowships

Robert Peterson, a third year graduate student in the Sociology Department, was one of four Sociology students in the nation to receive the American Sociological Association's (ASA) National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) Predoctoral Minority Fellowship for 2008-2009. This prestigious fellowship is renewable for up to four years and provides a stipend and travel allowances. Robert plans to focus his dissertation research on the implications of inequality on HIV/AIDS.

Robert's interests in sociology in general and medical sociology, in particular, developed after taking courses focusing on critical examinations of social interactions, the experiences of racial and ethnic groups, and how culture and social institutions influence beliefs and behavior. His interests in medical sociology developed as he became cognizant of the deleterious health outcomes and inequities among disenfranchised groups such as the poor as well as racial, ethnic, and sexual minorities. As he explored the discipline, he found himself more interested in and

intrigued about performing research about the HIV/AIDS pandemic in the African American community—work that could not only inform, but sensitize the larger society.

Through its Minority Fellowship Program, the ASA supports the development and training of sociologists of color in mental health and drug abuse research. Funded by a training grant sponsored by the NIMH and co-funded by the National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA), the Minority Fellowship Program seeks to attract talented doctoral students to ensure a diverse and highly trained workforce is available to assume leadership roles in research related to the nation's mental health and drug abuse research agendas.

Earlier this month, Robert and the three other fellowship recipients from across the United States were honored by a reception and other events at the American Sociological Association annual meeting held in Boston.

Teaching Award Nominations

The **Carl F. Wittke Award** was established in 1971 in honor of Carl Wittke, a former faculty member, dean, and vice president of Western Reserve University. The Wittke Award is presented each year to two Case Western Reserve University faculty members who have demonstrated excellence in undergraduate teaching.

- **Susan Hinze**
- **Emilia McGucken**

The **Jackson Award** recognizes outstanding advising and mentoring of undergraduate students at Case Western Reserve University. It was established by J. Bruce Jackson, Adelbert '52, in honor of Dean Carl F. Wittke. Dr. Wittke served as an advisor, mentor, and friend to Dr. Jackson when he was an undergraduate student at Western Reserve University.

- **Emilia McGucken**

The **Diekhoff Award** is presented annually to two full-time faculty members that have made exemplary contributions to the education of graduate students at Case Western Reserve through work in the classroom and as an advisor. Part of the prestige of this award is that the process by which winners are selected is run entirely by graduate students.

- **Susan Hinze**
- **Jessica Kelley-Moore**

Recognition

In the January 2008 issue of *The Journals of Gerontology: Social Sciences* the editor, Kenneth Ferraro, published an article "Gerontology's Greatest Hits". In that article he identified the most frequently cited social science articles in the Journal's history. Two of Gary Deimling's articles on caregiver burden were listed in the top 10. Together these two articles have been cited 563 times. These articles are:

Deimling, G. & Bass, D. (1986). Mental Status Among the Aged: Effects on Spouse and Adult-child Caregivers. *Journal of Gerontology*, 41. 778-784.

Poulshock, S.W. & Deimling, G. (1984). Families Caring for Elders in Residence: Issues in The Measurement of Burden. *Journal of Gerontology*, 39. 230-239.

Undergraduate Awards

The **Robert C. Davis Award** for demonstrating commitment to sociological studies

- **Ashley Solomon**
- **Lauren Yessenow**

The **Mark Lefton Award** for excellence in sociological studies

- **Neel Agarwal**
- **Benjamin Barnhart**

The **Stella Berkeley-Friedman Award** for a graduating senior for the highest academic achievement in the study of sociology

- **Melanie Stipp**

The **Schermerhorn Award** for an outstanding student in sociology

- **Lia Marie Chervenak**

Graduate Awards

Robert Peterson is the recipient of one of four Minority Fellowships awarded by the American Sociological Association. (See complete story on page 10)

Doctoral student, **Karie Feldman**, received the Zdanis Award, a fellowship fund in honor of Provost and University Vice President Emeritus and Professor Emeritus of Physics Richard A. Zdanis. The award provides \$5,000 to support Karie's dissertation work.



Karie Feldman and Charles Rozek, Dean of Graduate Studies



Robin Shura and Charles Rozek, Dean of Graduate Studies

For the second year, doctoral student **Robin Shura** received funding from the Eva L. Pancoast Memorial Fund, to support her travel to Scotland and Europe to conduct research for her dissertation. The Eva L. Pancoast Memorial Fund was established in order to support women in extending their education by foreign study or foreign travel.

Doctoral student, **Christine Schneider**, earned an honorable mention for the Beth Hess Memorial Scholarship from Sociologists for Women in Society.

2008 ASA Annual Meeting Presentations

Scott Adams

"What's in a Name? The Importance of Semantics in Health Care Policy."

Rachel Bryant

"Adding fuel to the fire: Where is culture in the structure-agency debate on health care?"

Dale Dannefer, Robin Shura (presenter)

"Experience, Social Structure and Later Life: Meaning and Old Age in an Aging Society."

Dale Dannefer, Angela O'Rand (co-organizers)

"The Future of Inequality, Health and Aging", Section on Aging and the Life Course Regular Session

Brian Gran

"Does Diversity Harm Children's Rights?"

Brian Gran

"Thematic Session. The Second Bill of Rights Revisited" (co-sponsored with Sociologists without Borders)

Rachel Hammel (presenter), David Warner

"Why do African American children stay in foster care? Understanding Racial Disparities in Final Placement."

Susan Hinze (presenter), Megan Leigh

"A (White Male) Life in Books: A News Periodical's Reproduction of Gender and Racial/Ethnic Inequality."

2008 BSA Annual Meeting Presentations

Sandra Barnes

Professional Development Panel: "On the Market: The Successful Job Seeker's Guide to a Successful Academic Search."

Sandra Barnes, Robert Peterson

"The Calling and the Corner: How Black Mega Churches are Responding to HIV/AIDS."

Tanetta Andersson

Student Roundtable: "Race, Class, Gender, and Quality of Life."

Sandra Barnes

Organizer: "Experiencing Religion and Sexualities in the Margins: Studies Among People of Color."

Susan Hinze (presenter), Robin Shura (presenter)

"The Birth of AIDS: The Socio-Medical Construction of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome."

Eva Kahana (presenter), Jessica Kelley-Moore, Boaz Kahana, Jane Brown

"Social Dimensions of Late Life Disability."

Jessica Kelley-Moore (presenter), Isreal Cross

"Community Size, Composition, or Inequality: What Explains Racial Disparities in Late-Life Physical Function?"

Marcie Lambrix (Presenter), Michael Flatt, Jennifer Fishman

"Extending the Human Lifespan: Achievements and Challenges of Genetic Research on Aging."

Christine Schneider

"The Demented Identity: Potential or Paradox?"

Rebecca Siders

"Care Work and the Emotional Dimension of Care."

David Warner (presenter), Mark Hayward, Melissa Hardy

"The Retirement Life Course in America at the Dawn of the 21st Century."

Noah Webster

"Medicare Managed Care and Racial/Ethnic Health Disparities."

2008 SSPS Annual Meeting Presentations

Sandra Barnes

"A Case Study of the Working Poor Single Mother Experience: An Analysis of the Structure versus Agency Discourse."

Sandra Barnes, Robert Peterson

"The Influence of Black Church Culture: How Black Church Leaders Frame the HIV/AIDS Discourse."



To see a complete list of presentations given by members of our department this past academic year please visit:
<http://www.case.edu/artsci/soci/>



This year 17 students were inducted into Alpha Kappa Delta, the national Sociology honor society. These inductees have maintained a high standard of excellence in their Sociology courses and who demonstrate serious interest in the academic field. The

lots of Ohio Chapter at Case is one of more than 500 AKD chapters throughout the United States and six other countries and they join over 80,000 students and faculty that have been inducted into the society since 1920.

During the ceremony, senior Lia Chervenak presented her honor's thesis titled, "The Press, The Chinese Exclusion Act, and its Repeal: A Quantitative Content Analysis of *The New York Times*, Published During the 1880's and the 1940's".

2008 Initiates

- Neel Agarwal
- Nida Aziz
- Megan Bender
- Piyali Bhattacharya
- Shannon Boyan
- Benjamin Chandhok
- Rebecca DiOrio
- Kathryn Duval
- Alanna Ginley
- Pierce Han
- David Harris
- Jacob Kornblatt
- Meera Menon
- Vanessa Penner
- Samara Santino
- Kristyn Smith
- Daisy Wei



Alumni and Student Updates

Undergraduate Alumni

- **Chase Baker**, President of the Sociology Club in 2006, received a master's degree at John Jay School of Criminal Justice and was hired by the East Hampton Police as a detective and forensics specialist.

The following students are studying hard at graduate school:

- **Lia Chervenak**: Ph.D. Sociology and Criminology program at the University of Akron
- **Anna Lukic**: Columbia University Sociomedical Department for Public Health
- **Swetha Suresh**: medical school at Wright State University
- **Pamela Risseew**: Suffolk Law School
- **Shannon Boyan** will pursue a Master's of Sociology and Criminology at the University of South Carolina
- **Shahdi Malakooti**: CWRU M.S. program in Applied Anatomy

Undergraduate Summer Internships:

- **Lauren Yessenow** has a summer internship at the Pentagon
- **Neel Agarwal** was accepted into a summer research program at the University of Texas, at Austin.

Doctoral Graduates

Congratulations !!

Adam Perzynski successfully defended his dissertation in March. His dissertation was entitled, "Between Facts and Voices: Medical and Lay Knowledge of the Spread of Hepatitis C". He has accepted a faculty position in the Center for Health Care Research and Policy at MetroHealth Medical Center. Adam and his wife, Maureen, are expecting a baby girl in December.

Lisa Martin's dissertation "Socio-Demographic, Clinical, and Social Influences on Health-Related Quality of Life in Individuals with Hepatitis C (HCV)" was successfully defended in May. She is continuing in her current position as Manager of Biostatistics & Epidemiology and Research Administrator for Cardiac Surgery Research at the Inova Heart & Vascular Institute in Falls Church, VA. Her interest in hepatitis C patients remains and she will continue to develop research on health-related quality of life in patients undergoing open-heart surgery. Lisa is enjoying being free of that nagging "I should be working on my dissertation" feeling that has been present for the past 11 years!



Our newest graduate students

Mary Ellen Stone (Ellie) graduated from Miami University with a B.A. in Gerontology and two years later with her M.A. in Gerontology. She is from Cincinnati, Ohio. Mary Ellen is a member of Sigma Phi Omega (National Honors Society in Gerontology) and has dedicated much of her time as chapter president at Miami University. Mary Ellen has two loving dogs named Elvira (Boxer/Lab mix) and Smunchkins (Chihuahua/Jack Russel mix). She lives with her boyfriend Chris and will soon be moving to Lakewood. Mary Ellen looks forward to becoming a part of the Sociology program at CWRU.

Jielu Lin studied in Fudan University in China and came to the United States after receiving her B.A. She has just graduated from Clemson University with her master's in Applied Sociology this May. Right now Jielu lives in Albany, NY with her husband who is a Ph.D. student in Mechanical Engineering. She is looking forward to her new life in Cleveland.



Sherri Brown is a native of Chicago, Illinois. Following her graduation from Western Illinois University, she graduated from Eastern Illinois University with a M.S. in Family and Consumer Sciences. Sherri is currently completing a master's thesis in Child Development and Family Sciences at Purdue University, upon which she will be awarded the M.S. degree. Beyond her degree pursuits, Sherri enjoys spending time with family and friends, traveling, movies, music, and walking. In her very limited spare time, she teaches herself the craft of bead jewelry making. She is eagerly looking forward to working with the students and faculty in the sociology department at CWRU.



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