“To be or not to be...”

by Dr. David Hartmann

It is an exciting but also a humbling time for our department as we move into our new building. Exciting in that our physical environment will be dramatically better and I sincerely believe this will positively affect so much of what we do. But humbling also because it makes obvious the trust and investment that is being made in our work. As professional people and as sociologists we recognize our responsibilities to so many who make our work possible and who can and should benefit from that work. It is that last notion – of responsibility – that forms the theme for this particular column.

To be or not to be …
a public sociologist.

Public sociology is an application of sociological research - the data, methods and understandings of sociology - to discussions of importance in the wider community. But since both sociological research and the public discussions to which they must attend are value laden and political – there is a moral dimension and challenge to such work. Hamlet’s question reminds us that “to be” is to choose and to accept responsibility for those choices - and in the face of moral ambiguity, reflexive choice is hard. Mature actions are, in other words, moral as well as instrumentally rational choices - for sociologists no less than for others. Traditional protections in the claims to methodological objectivity and value freedom are less available to contemporary social scientists generally and are particularly difficult to construct or maintain in the explicitly political realms of much of public sociology. So we can reasonably ask what passes or should pass as a basis for responsible action on the part of the practitioners of public sociology.

Part of the problem is that sociologists address the problems of society through social theory – even if that theory is incomplete or poorly applied. Indeed, what distinguishes the sensitive journalist (for example) from the sociologist is that the latter does not engage simply in critique but in theoretically informed critique. But there is a very strong tendency that the more theoretically driven the critique the farther it moves from the particulars of human life and interaction to the essentials of type or group or class. There is, I think, a moral dimension to this distinction. Think of Howard Becker’s famous dictum on choosing sides.

When Becker asked, “Whose side are we on?” it was ostensibly meant to provide him an opportunity to offer methodological advice. But side-taking has moral implications as well as methodological. For many contemporary sociologists, it offers a moral clarification and therefore a simplifying principle for action. It is in short a form of principled reasoning suggesting that, among the presumably many guides to action, supporting the subordinate, the oppressed, the have-nots in a system is ceteris paribus preferable – at least in the short-run. It even goes beyond that claim and says that in this actual world of non-ceteris conditions, this principle may still reliably guide our allegiances and, more to the point, our research. From a practical point of view, I think this is good advice. But it is a thorny moral position because it is at least possible that the very act of essentializing persons as class members is objectionable. It may be useful as a transitional state – to allow redress along previously abused dimensions of hierarchy - race, class and gender to take the most pervasive or at least the best developed theoretically. But in spite of the theoretical and practical power of these distinctions, I am always more and less than whatever the category makes of me and to be treated without that recognition is very close to what we mean by dehumanizing.

Continued on page 7
33rd Annual Undergraduate Honors Reception

April 11, 2012

We are proud of our undergraduate students and their outstanding performance in the classroom and service to the community.

Presidential Scholar..........................Jessica Pence

Sociology Scholar..............................Ali Markowitz

Criminal Justice Scholar.......................Amber Ruocco

Leonard C. Kercher Award....................Andrew Hazelton

Alpha Phi Sigma, The National Criminal Justice Honor Society:

LT to RT: Nicole Tymchuk, April Miner, Dr. Charles Crawford, Faculty Advisor, Kristin Cox, Geoffrey Campbell, not pictured: Stephanie Robertson.

Lanny Wilde Scholarships:
Kelsen Gettel  Robert Hahn
Garrett Moore  Tyler Stuef

Stanley S. and Helenan S. Robin Scholarship............Ariel Arnold

Lloyd Braithwaite Scholarship............................Craig Overbeek

Member of the WMU Boys and Men Healing Film Planning Committee
Presented by Dr. Angie Moe:
Scotty Lambert  Stephanie Iovan  April Miner

Alpha Kappa Delta, International Sociology Honor Society, Presented by Dr. Ron Kramer:
Ariel Arnold  Kristen Leigh Cox  Megan Leah Cronkhite  Stephanie Robertson

Dr. Kramer presenting Amber Ruocco with the CJ Scholar Award.

Dr. Kramer and Ariel Arnold, recipient of the Stanley S. and Helenan Robin Scholarship.
Whitney Gunter

**Publications:**


**Presentation:**


Angie Moe


**Presentation:** June 2012 - “You Show, You Go: The Trajectory of Intimate Partner Violence Pre- and Post-Partum,” with Catherine L. Kothari. Law & Society Association, June 5-8, Honolulu, HI.

Zoann Snyder

**Presentation:** “Service Learning and Social Justice: Where Town and Gown Meet” with Jean Karlen at the 2012 SSSP Annual Meeting in Denver, CO.

Yuan-Kang Wang

**Journal article:** Managing Regional Hegemony in Historical Asia: The Case of Early Ming China, Chinese Journal of International Politics, Vol. 5, No. 2 (Summer 2012).


**Award:** Timothy Light Center for Chinese Studies Research Grant, Western Michigan University, 2012, $3,000.
2012 Graduate Honors Reception
March 24, 2012 - Kalamazoo Institute of Arts

Awards Presented by GSA
Outstanding Student Mentor, M.A. - John Chew
Outstanding Student Mentor, Ph.D. - Lisa Kruse
Outstanding Instructor - Codie Wedge
Outstanding Student Researcher, M.A. - Marc Kittleson
Outstanding Student Researcher, Ph.D. - Elizabeth Bradshaw
Outstanding Faculty Mentor - Dr. Angie Moe

Department Awards Presented by
Dr. David Hartmann & Dr. Angie Moe:

All-University Teaching Effectiveness Award Ph.D.—David Barry
Department Teaching Effectiveness Award Ph.D.—Rachel Schroeder
All-University Graduate Research Award, Ph.D.—Elizabeth Bradshaw
Department Graduate Research Award, Ph.D.—Cynthia Visscher

Special Recognitions by Dr. Angie Moe
Graduate Assistant for the Graduate Program—Lisa Kruse
Film Planning Committee—Jessica Church

M.A. Graduates:
Marc Kittleson  Karolina Staros  Mirandu Wu

Ph.D. Graduates

Awards for Outstanding Graduate Teachers:
Joseph Abbott  Jacob Armstrong  David Barry
Tim Bauer  Darrick Brake  John Chew
Lori DeVries  Jacquelynn Doyon  Matthew Klepac
Lisa Kruse  Zhenia Leontyeva  Melinda McCormick
Lisa Sanders  Rachel Schroeder  Amanda Smith
Jessica Sullivan  Cody Wedge

Awards for Outstanding Graduate Scholars:
Tim Bauer  Elizabeth Bradshaw  Darrick Brake
Lori DeVries  Jacquelynn Doyon  Kelly Faust
Traci Joseph  Matthew Klepac  Lisa Kruse
Zhenia Leontyeva  Ladel Lewis  Amanda Meyer
Lisa Sanders  Rachel Schroeder  Karolina Staros
Jessica Sullivan  Tasha Turner  Andrew Verheek
Cindy Visscher  Cody Wedge  Miranda Wu

GSA Board Members: Andy Evans, Karolina Staros, Cody Stone, Jessica Sullivan

Dr. Angie Moe and Miranda Wu

Outstanding Graduate Teachers
Film Sheds Light on Male Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse

In observance of April as both Sexual Assault Awareness Month and Child Abuse Awareness Month, on Tuesday, April 3 and Wednesday, April 12 WMU hosted screenings of the Boys and Men Healing, a documentary about male survivors of child sexual abuse at the Little Theatre on East Campus. The showings, which were free and open to the public, were spearheaded by WMU Trustee Mary Asmonga-Knapp, who is manager of the Family Advocacy Program for the Department of Defense’s Defense Logistics Agency at the Hart Dole Inouye Federal Center in Battle Creek. They were organized by Angela Moe, Associate Professor and Director of Graduate Studies in Sociology, in coordination with Trustee Asmonga-Knapp and Dr. Diane Anderson, Vice President for Student Affairs at WMU. Several other members of the university community assisted in organizing the events: Sue Coker, Administrative Assistant in Student Affairs; Jessica Church, graduate student in Sociology; Maria Newhouse, graduate student in Educational Leadership; April Miner, undergraduate student in Criminal Justice; Scotty Lambert, undergraduate student in Criminal Justice; and Stephanie Iovan, undergraduate student in Global and International Studies.

In a generous outpouring of support, an array of university and community entities signed on as co-sponsors. At WMU, these included the Board of Trustees, Office of the President, Office of the Provost, Office of Vice President for Student Affairs, College of Arts and Sciences, Department of Sociology, Criminal Justice Student Association, Holistic Health Care Program, Gender and Women’s Studies Program, and Sindecuse Health Center. In the community, co-sponsors included the Kalamazoo County Office of Prosecuting Attorney, Voices Against Sexual Assault, Kalamazoo County Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Council, and Kalamazoo Community Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services.

Boys and Men Healing highlights the impact male child sexual abuse has on both the individual and society. It focuses on the importance of healing and the meaningfulness of being able to safely speak out about such victimization. The film, from director and producer Kathy Barbini and co-producer Simon Weinberg of Big Voice Pictures (www.bigvoicepictures.com), features the stories of non-offending men who are recovering from the effects of abuse. The film highlights the effects of boyhood sexual abuse and how it can lead to shame, intimacy problems, sexual identity confusion, post-traumatic stress, substance abuse or rage that leads to violence. The stories recount the experiences of men who, despite such devastating effects, ultimately chose the arduous task of healing. Through counseling, support groups and taking action toward prevention, each man is an example of hope and the ability for survivors to thrive. The film is receiving a lot of publicity on the heels of recent sexual abuse scandals within various universities and organizations, such as Penn State and Syracuse University. In recent months it has been shown on such campuses as Brown, Harvard, Penn State, Ohio State, Indiana State and Utah State universities, as well as University of Toledo and University of Southern Indiana. Locally, Kellogg Community College and Kalamazoo Community College have also hosted screenings.

These screenings were aimed at informing people about the issue and connecting survivors to helpful resources. To this end, each attendee at WMU was given a folder with lists of resources, information, and tips for self-care. Onsite counselors (from the YWCA, Sindecuse Health Center, St. Thomas More Catholic Student Parish, and Kalamazoo Community Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services) were also available each night of the screenings to assist anyone needing to talk about or process the film’s content. Moreover, each screening was immediately followed by a Q&A panel discussion with survivors and professionals in our community. The panelists included Vicki Vanas, therapist with the Children’s Advocacy Center; Fr. Ken Schmidt of St. Thomas More Catholic Student Parish; Karen Hayter of the Office of Prosecuting Attorney in Kalamazoo County; David Artley, Coordinator of Housing and Neighborhoods for Kalamazoo County and a survivor of child sexual abuse; Terri Thomas, Executive Director of the Kalamazoo Deacon’s Conference and a survivor of sexual exploitation; Dr. Jim Henry of the Children’s Trauma and Assessment Clinic (CTAC); David Jones, sexual assault prevention educator; and Dr. Michael Liepman, nationally respected physician with expertise in familial trauma and addiction.

As a result of the film, two efforts are under way to organize support groups for male survivors, several area counselors have sought additional education about how to assist survivors among their clientele, and Trustee Asmonga-Knapp and Dr. Moe will be working toward systematic training of all university staff about mandatory reporting of suspected child abuse.

by Dr. Angie Moe
Where are they now? Alumni Updates

Julie Ann Schneider, Sociology, 2008 is living in Los Angeles, CA and is maintaining a 4.0 as she is working on her Master’s of Social Work at the University of Southern California. She is interning at a middle school in South Central, LA, as a Psychiatric School Work Intern and plans to obtain the school of social work credential prior to graduating with her MSW, in Spring 2013.

Amy Hassenger, a 2010 graduate of WMU in Sociology, earned a Masters Degree in Forensic Psychology from Marymount University in May 2012. She is currently employed with the Department of Justice.

Heather Krestik, a 2011 graduate of WMU in Criminal Justice, has received a Master of Science in Criminal Justice at Bowling Green State University. She is currently employed.

Dr. Ladel Lewis, 2011 won the Paper Competition at the National Black Graduate Student Association Conference (NBGSA) in March. She won a certificate and a cash prize for her presentation titled-“A Comparative Study: The Portrayal of African American Females in Hip Hop Videos”.

Dr. Lewis is also the featured blogger on HBCUConnect at http://hbcuconnect.com/content/228603/the-mentoring-dilemma.


Dr. Carrie Buist, 2011, is presented her wedge from the Department of Sociology by alumni, Dr. Kristen Devall at the University of North Carolina-Wilmington where Carrie is an Assistant Professor of Sociology and Kristen is also an Assistant Professor there.

Dr. Adrienne Trier-Bieniek, 2010, has her own radio show called “Presence of Pop” and will be on Tuesday nights at 8 pm. You can find out how to listen here: www.internetvoicesradio.com/at_bieniek. The link also contains archives of previous shows, one of which featured Dr. Angie Moe’s program on Belly Dancing.
In this sense, by debating whose side we should take we necessarily contrast generalized rather than particular others. There is no public language of responsibility to the particular other, only hints and intimations in the felt response to poetic and religious/mystical language perhaps. Bauman and Levinas felt this responsibility and tried to talk about it and Derrida may have a similar problem in mind when he references the “différance” – the gap between what is and what might have been – in his discussion of rules and justice. They convincingly see the rationalizing monopoly of modernism as appropriating morality and see living for the particular other as what is lost and, indeed, not even describable in reasoned terms. Recognition of the inadequacy and even inhumanity of the modern path is what Bauman calls the postmodern stance. He says that the disenchantment of rationalism and other universals leads to a neotribalism where claims for attention cannot be justified – since justification is a squarely reasoned exercise.

The point is not that “we should help the poor” is dangerous advice. It is practically sound because the “poor” generally need more help than the “non-poor”. But it is not moral advice. In fact, it obviates moral considerations precisely because one need no longer deal with the person present now, but rather with the abstracted class of persons defined as relevant for the instrumental task at hand. This is a technological rational approach rather than a moral one. One might object that if classes of people are helped so too are particular people and so we have therefore done the right thing. My response is that we may well have ameliorated a problem (though perhaps not, particularly if our moral or political allegiances trump our theory and methods) but we have not done so morally but only instrumentally, as a cost-benefit decision. Further, embracing that logic of instrumental rationality can and has and will lead to quite undesirable consequences as well as quite desirable ones. Ends rather than means are supreme in such logics and the summum bonum – always decided by experts for the masses, the result. That has always been the rationale for the systems that have simultaneously produced both the outrages of modern life and its advantages.

The rationalization of the tyranny and eventual cruelty of planned states is one result – so too is the rationalization of the depredations of inequality in libertarian ones. Both are rational pursuits of the greatest good for the greatest number rather than a reflection of felt and infinite responsibility for each person I encounter. It may be that there can be no moral (in this sense) basis for social systems. Another way of seeing that the two approaches are not distinct in their reliance on class-based instrumental rationality is to take seriously the injunction to be on the side of the “poor”. As soon as one replaces the placeholder “poor” with the more inclusive “oppressed” one realizes that it is hard to prioritize among those classes that may be available for attention. Coalitions and compromises can be worked – but it is the nature of such negotiations that some are left out.

Bauman’s rhetoric is telling: “…each voice is a voice of reason, each recipe is rational, it is always one rationality against the other, and reasoned argument would help little. Each recipe has good reasons to be accepted, and so at the end of the day only the pitch of voice and the size of chorus offer a guarantee of being in the right.” The neotribal cogito becomes, I shout therefore I am. In a postmodern world then, a re-invigorated politics is indeed possible and necessary. By recognizing no universal claims we are obligated to negotiate and evaluate localized ones. I sense this is positive in addressing some (not necessarily the worst) inequalities of recent battles but I do not sense it sets things right in any moral sense – it merely sets us up for the next fight.

So, we may continue to have to pick sides, perhaps now more than ever. But since we chose our side instrumentally, to achieve an end rather than morally, out of love, when there is a lull in the battle and the smoke clears just a little, we may not find much to prefer in those with whom we find ourselves aligned.
Highlighting Recent PhD Grads

Dr. Michael D. Gillespie
Assistant Professor of Sociology
Department of Sociology and Anthropology
Women’s Studies Program Allied Faculty
Adviser, Sociology / Anthropology Club
Eastern Illinois University

**EDUCATION:**
- Ph.D. (Western Michigan University)
- M.S.W. (University of Michigan)
- B.A. (University of Michigan-Dearborn)

**FORTHCOMING PUBLICATIONS**

Dr. Ladel Lewis

**EDUCATION:**
- PhD conferred April 2012
- Dissertation: “Stop Snitching: Hip Hops Influence on Crime Reporting in the Inner City”
- M.A. 2005 Western Michigan University
- B.A. 2001 University of Michigan

**AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION:** Applied Sociology/Evaluation Research, Race & Ethnicity.

**AWARDS AND HONORS:** Thurgood Marshall Fellowship, King Chavez Parks Fellowship, Silver Level “Honoring Excellence in Evaluation Award” for the category of Data Use and Dissemination.

**PUBLICATIONS:**


Alumni Information Update
We want to hear from you!

Our strong suit is our alumni. In each issue, we will focus on YOU, so PLEASE consider yourself selected for upcoming issues. We enjoy receiving your announcements: marriages, job changes, presentations, promotions, advanced degrees, etc. All you need to do is fill out any portion of the form below (with a picture, if possible) and send to ann.browning@wmich.edu, or mail to Newsletter Editor, Department of Sociology, 3233-A Sangren Hall, 1903 West Michigan Ave., Kalamazoo, MI 49008-5257.

Name __________________________________________             Email ________________________________
Home address  _______________________________________________________ City__________________
State _______ Zip ___________________ Home phone ____________________________________________
Employer ____________________________ Job title ______________________________________________
If alumni, degree and year:  ___________________________________________________________________
Tell us more about yourself, and/or what you would like to see in future newsletters:
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________

Official WMU Alumni Update here: www.wmich.edu/friends/

Dr. Curtis Hosier
Continuing Lecturer of Sociology, Indiana University-Purdue University Ft. Wayne, Indiana.

EDUCATION:
Ph.D. (Western Michigan University)
MS (Ball State University), B.A.(Ball State University)

ONGOING RESEARCH:
Income Distribution and Health Status: An International Analyses. Curtis D. Hosier, Indiana University – Purdue University Ft. Wayne.

Dr. Kelly Faust, 2012,
Assistant Professor
Department of Sociology and Anthropology
Ohio University in Athens, Ohio.

EDUCATION:
Ph.D. (Western Michigan University)
MS (University of Michigan), B.A. (University of Michigan-Dearborn)

PUBLICATIONS:


Dr. Susan Carlson and Dr. Kelly Faust
PhD Graduates
Photos of the New Sangren

Typical Classroom

Dr. Zoann Snyder’s Office

Department Lobby

Part Time / Grad Student Instructors’ Office

Jacquelyn Doyon, ABD, is currently a tenure track Assistant Professorship at Grand Valley State University, Allendale, MI.

Elizabeth Bradshaw, ABD, presented a paper at the North Central Sociological Association conference titled “What the Frack is going on in Michigan? Hydraulic Fracturing and the Future of Michigan’s Great Lakes.”

Dr. Ron Kramer and Elizabeth Bradshaw, ABD co-authored a chapter titled “State-Corporate Crime” in the Encyclopedia of Crime and Criminal Justice.

Lisa Kruse, ABD attended NCSA and presented with Jessie Sullivan (first author) “I am gold coast royalty and my daughter will be too: The Social Construction of Beauty and Mothering on Toddlers & Tiaras.

Lisa Kruse, AB and Codie Wedge (Lisa first author) presented “Turning the Tables?: An Examination into The Bachelorette and the Quest for a Fairy Tale Romance” at NCSA.

Marie Sheneman, is a full time Social Sciences faculty member at Marshalltown Community College, Marshalltown, IA and a PhD student at Iowa State University.

Yes, I want to support the WMU Department of Sociology!

As our student numbers continue to grow, and in a time when state funding is increasingly restricted, the support we receive from friends and alumni is vitally important. Such funds are used to take advantage of new or unbudgeted opportunities in order to enhance the teaching or the research of the department.

Thank you for considering a gift to the WMU Department of Sociology.

The WMU Foundation processes all gifts that come to the University and turns them over to the department. Michigan residents: Remember that 50 percent of your gift to a Michigan University is returned to you as a tax credit on your state income tax (up to $200 for a single filer; $400 for joint filers).

I support the Department of Sociology with the following gift: ___$1,000 ___$500 ___$250 ___$100 ___$50 ___$25

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