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Department of Sociology, "The Socializer-Spring 2014" (2014). *The Socializer*. 10.
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The Socializer



WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
College of Arts and Sciences

Spring 2014, Department of Sociology



The "New" Sangren Hall

As Far As It Goes: Thoughts on Replication

Dr. David Hartmann, Chair



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There is a supposed to be a replication problem in sociology. The supposed problem is that, relative to the natural sciences and especially to medicine, we do not reproduce the important results of other sociologists. I will ignore the usual glib dismissals that "Well, we don't have any important (enough) results in the first place" and that, "Most sociology studies are so poorly designed or described that they cannot be reproduced." There is not, or rather there need not be much to either of these objections and I think, as far as it goes, that they amount to evasions of the more serious issue. That phrase, "as far as it goes" is at the heart of our problem. Willfully or not, out of laziness or practice, we are not very precise in our science. Put as a virtue, we are a humanistic science that recognizes the inherent complexity of human life and its irreducibility to simplifying descriptions. Less defensively, precision is not the only virtue, even in science and in some circumstances and for some purposes scientific claims may be too precise. Nevertheless, the

*“We are a humanistic science
that recognizes the inherent
complexity of human life...”*



imprecision of so much of our dialogue - our statements about our combinations of method, theory, result and implication - matters tremendously to our ability to use tools such as replication and sometimes to our credibility.

Mills and others scolded that this is a protean strategy – Proteus we remember, would change shapes to evade capture – literally to avoid being pinned down. Of course, it was in Proteus’ nature to act that way and perhaps it is in ours as well. I think our reliance on metaphors is indicative. Replication and triangulation in sociology, for example, are fundamentally tropes recruited to address the theme of precision and credibility. In a phrase, they are used figuratively though we pretend they are not. *Aside: is it clear that replication and triangulation in social science are tropes – that they have more or less known meanings in their native lands but are used heterogeneticly in ours?* Anyway, we heirs of the Greeks are a storytelling lot and it is useful to recall that scientists too are telling stories, always partial and always from a particular perspective (narrative omniscience is another trope). This is not cause for despair and, as far as it goes, we don’t worry much about these partialities.

The point is that there is no possibility of substituting the real for the story. The business of science is telling stories that meet our current standards of narrative construction and the products of science are those stories – technology and policy, for example, may be informed by but are not themselves science. What can replication mean under such a model? Can two people, even constrained by the rules of the method, ever write the same story (paint the same picture, give the same performance...)? If one takes seriously the idea that scientific inquiry is an interactive and constructivist endeavor, there are severe limits to the possibility of replication, even if the rules of method were more precise than they are and replication were more highly valued than it is. So here is the serious part, as far as it goes. Among the needs of hard, soft and semipermeable scientists is the desire to matter. To matter to others – more precisely to their conversations - in a way that survives the day and hour. Methodological standards are derivative of that need. For example, replication suggests that a thing - observed or explained along the description/prediction continuum - is better relied upon when it acts more or less as we expect it to. If you do something that we are currently willing to call research and I do something more or less as you did, it would be groovy if similar things similarly behaved came out of the clearing smoke. That’s it, that’s all we want. But how or how well can the likenesses

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Highlighting Faculty Excellence

Dr. Elena Gapova received the 2013 Association for Women in Slavic Studies Outstanding Achievement Award for her work in Slavic and East European Gender Studies and for mentoring young scholars in this field. Congratulations Dr. Gapova!



Abdel-Salam, Sami, and **Whitney D. Gunter**. (2014). Therapeutic Engagement as a Predictor of Retention in Adolescent TC Treatment. *Journal of Child & Adolescent Substance Abuse*, 23, 49-57.

Gunter, Whitney D. and Sami Abdel-Salam. (2014). Therapeutic Engagement and Post-Treatment Substance Use in Adolescent TC Clients: Direct and Indirect Effects. *Journal of Drug Issues*, 44, 22-36.

Gunter, Whitney D., and Kevin Daly. (2013). Health Behaviors and Standardized Test Scores: The Impact of School Health Climate on Performance. *International Journal of School & Educational Psychology*, 1, 166-175.

Visher, Christy A., Nicholas W. Bakken, and **Whitney D. Gunter**. (2013). Fatherhood, Community Reintegration, and Successful Outcomes. *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation*, 52, 451-469.

Book: **Gunter, Whitney D.** (2013). *File-Sharers and Copyright-Infringers: Threat or Menace?* El Paso, TX: LFB Scholarly Publishing LLC.

Presentations: Bakken, Nicholas W., **Whitney D. Gunter**, and Christy Visher. (2013, November). Reentry and Spirituality: The Impact of Belief on Drug Use Desistance. Presented at the 65th annual meeting of the American Society of Criminology, Atlanta, GA.

Gunter, Whitney D. and Sami Abdel-Salam. (2013, November). Prescription Drug Sentencing in American Federal Courts: Prevalence and Severity in a Decade of Change. Presented at the 65th annual meeting of the American Society of Criminology, Atlanta, GA.

Zaykowski, Heather. V. and **Whitney D. Gunter**. (2013, November). Gender Differences in Victimization Trajectories. Presented at the 65th annual meeting of the American Society of Criminology, Atlanta, GA.

Award: **Gunter, Whitney D.** (February, 2014). Discovery and Dissemination Award, College of Arts and Sciences, Western Michigan University.

Dr. Angie Moe published "Sequins, Sass and Sisterhood: An Exploration of Older Women's Belly Dancing" in the *Journal of Women and Aging* (2014, Vol. 44, Issue 2, pp. 201-233).

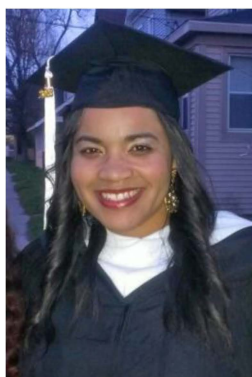
Dr. Zoann Snyder and Jean C. Karlen had a chapter published in the book *Service Sociology and Academic Engagement in Social Problems*, A. Javier Trevino and Karen Mc McCormack, Editors. Ashgate Publishing Company, 2014. The chapter was *The Power of Place: Community Partnerships and Student Experiences*.

Alumni Updates

Nathaniel Enyedi, from Akron, OH 44313 is currently employed at Oriana House, Inc. as a Caseworker. Oriana House is a residential institutional probation program. He graduated with his BA in June 2013.

Dr. Ladel Lewis (PhD, 2012) joined *Meaningful Evidence* as a Senior Research Strategist in the Spring of 2013. With nearly a decade of social science research experience, she creates, develops, and manages research projects designed to determine the merit, worth, and significance of organizations and programs. *Meaningful Evidence* is an agency that provides services such as grant writing, program evaluation, needs assessment and strategic research.

Hello, my name is **Cynthia Marie Smith**. I live in Detroit, Michigan. My Bachelor of Arts majoring in Social Psychology minoring in Social Work was conferred upon me by President Dieter Haniecke on April 26, 1997. I will graduate from Concordia University in Portland, Oregon December 14, 2013 with a Master Degree in Education of Educational Leadership! I could not do it without my upbringing and training from Western Michigan University as a BRONCO! Thank You & GOD BLESS AMERICA!
MISS CYNTHIA MARIE SMITH, B.A., Med



Tasha Turner (Freeman) (MA, 2013) is now a graduate research assistant at Roosevelt University and living in Schaumburg, IL. She got married this past year and is also expecting her second child any day now!

Dr. Adrienne Trier-Bieniek (PhD, 2011) and Patricia Leavy edited a book, *Gender & Pop Culture Sense Publishers, 2014*. This comprehensive, interdisciplinary text provides text-book style introductory and concluding chapters written by the editors, seven original contributor chapters on key topics and written in a variety of writing styles, discussion questions, additional resource and more.



Dr. Adrienne Trier-Bieniek

Dr. Trier-Bieniek has also recently received tenure at the Valencia College, Orlando, FL.



Congratulations Dr. Emily Lenning (PhD 2008) and Dr. Sarah Brightman (PhD, 2011)!

Dr. Lenning (left) was awarded the "Outstanding Faculty Member of the Year" award and Dr. Brightman

(right) won an award for being one of the top ten advisors at Fayetteville State University, North Carolina!

We are so proud of our alumnae!

2013-2014 Student Awards

Graduate Student Awards

Departmental Awards:

Departmental Level Graduate Teaching Effectiveness Award, and All-University Nominee: *Jennifer Marson*

Departmental Level Graduate Teaching Effectiveness Award, and All-University Honorable Mention: *Matthew Klepac*

Departmental Level Graduate Research & Creative Scholar Award, and All-University Nominee: *Amanda Smith*

Departmental Level Graduate Research and Creative Scholar Award, and All-University Honorable Mention: *Daniel Patten*

Departmental Level Graduate Research and Creative Scholar Awards, MA Level: *Matthew M. Reid*

MA Graduates: *Jessica A. Church, Tasha N. Freeman, Dennis R. Gagliardo, Traci D. Joseph, Simon J. Purdy, Brian W. Rossana*

PhD Graduate: *Dr. Lisa M. Kruse*

The Wally Post Award:

Matt Reid (rt) and Jessie Sullivan (lft)



Outstanding Graduate Teachers:

Timothy E. Bauer, John P. Chew, Matthew J. Klepac, Traci D. Joseph, Jennifer J. Marson, Daniel J. Patten, Simon J. Purdy, Brian Rossana, Lisa Sanders, Amanda M. Smith, Karolina Staros, Jessica Sullivan

Outstanding Graduate Scholars:

Cleran Hollancid, Traci D. Joseph, Jennifer J. Marson, Daniel J. Patten, Simon J. Purdy, Matthew M. Reid, Rachel Schroeder, Rebecca L. Sevin, Amanda M. Smith, Codie Stone, Jessica R. Sullivan, Andrew G. Verheek

Graduate Student Association Awards:

Outstanding Graduate Student Instructor:

Jennifer Marson

Outstanding Student Mentor, MA:

Matt Reid

Outstanding Student Mentor, PhD:

Jessie Sullivan

Outstanding Student Researcher, MA:

Rebecca Sevin

Outstanding Student Researcher, PhD:

Amanda Smith and Andrew Verheek

Outstanding Graduate Teaching Assistant:

Rebecca Sevin

Outstanding Faculty Mentor: *Dr. Greg Howard*

Undergraduate Student Awards

Presidential Scholar: *Sara DeRaud*

Criminal Justice Scholar: *Emma McLaren*

Sociology Scholar: *Nino Sujashvili*

Kercher Center Scholar: *Thea Sims*

Stanley and Helenan Robin Scholar:

Marilyn Bean

As Far As It Goes...

in method and theory and result be assured? They are all, as far as they go, interactively constructed parts of an indeterminate whole (so said William James, so said the Buddha) and are therefore only comparable in part – by functional analogy as it were – to those in another study. By analogy to Heisenberg it may well be that we pin down methods precision, for example, at the cost of theoretical generality.

This is the point where consideration of the related concept of triangulation may help. Like replication, triangulation was often thought of as a methods issue. Denzin and others showed that it was also a theory problem and for many purposes these aspects were inseparable. To triangulate is a measurement technique (in navigation and surveying and even in social science) but that measurement is, of course, of some thing distinguished from its background and therefore in service to what we generally call theoretical notions of demarcation, significance and so on. As far as it goes, this is solid ground (a metaphor if ever there were one). But the ground metaphor ineluctably calls up the idea of standing on one piece of turf as opposed to another which is both the basis of triangulation as a useful metaphor but is also the basis of its limitation. Social science triangulation, especially as we emphasize the theoretical side, fails when standpoints are incommensurable. And to complete the circle, commensurability itself is always a metaphor, an as far as it goes heuristic. Strict derivations of commensurable measurements may or may not be “good enough” for practical problems of measurement in navigation, surveying and even in social science. But they do not hold all the way down. That is a problem and an opportunity, as problems in the Deweyian sense always are, to push issues of conceptual and operational correspondence.

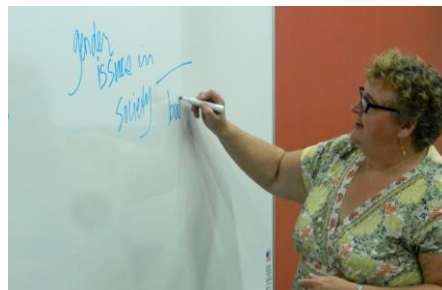
And push we must – I suppose the metaphor here is Sisyphus – though we do not expect to top the hill. Perhaps even less so than the humanities (even the supposedly post-canonic versions), science makes few claims to immortality and universality. That is the business of poets and priests and, with the infrequent exception that proves the rule we have few priests and prophets and demagogues in social science – though perhaps more than our share as Weber warned. We might have fewer still if we paid more attention to the limits of replication and triangulation and what counts as credible. But these gaps in commensurability, in clarity, in foregrounding and backgrounding and mattering (not even to mention the strained metaphor of causality – another time perhaps) are inherent in our perceptual and cognitive and communicative potentialities. We are engaged, as far as our professional lives go, in a quest for something we call certainty but what we mean by that is provisional and halting and only at best “good enough” while always also wrong.

Replication is worth pursuing, as far as it goes, but is not catchable. It is another reminder of the limitations of thought, scientific thought included. What we do is “representing without knowing” the object while at the same time “knowing” that there can be no such thing as an object apart from our creativity. And for better and for worse, our creativity is endless. Science and humane letters of the post-whatever variety may not be so far apart – both admit that they see as through a glass darkly and I suspect but cannot prove that both, in the deep heart’s core, think enlightenment may yet come.

Scholars at Work

The Department of Sociology has been awarded "The Sociologists for Women in Society's Seal of Approval for Faculty Gender Equity."

This award recognizes departments that excel in creating a climate that is welcoming to women and gender scholars.



John Chew at the Pacific Sociological Association, March 2014:

"Rethinking 'Retention' Practices: Connecting the Department to the Classroom for Student Success" **John Chew and Jacob Armstrong**.

"Political Consumption: Individual Action or Social Movement", **John Chew**.

Schroeder, Rachel and Vyacheslav Karpov. (Sept. 2013). "The Crimes and Punishments of the 'Enemies of the Church' and the Nature of Russia's Desecularizing Regime." Religion, State and Society. Vol. 41, Issue 3. Pp. 284-311.

Dr. Elena Gapova presented "Gender and Class Issues in the Pussy Riot Case" at Davis Center for Russian and East European Studies, Harvard University (March 6, 2014).

Ronald C. Kramer and **Amanda Marie Smith**, "Death Flies Down: The Bombing of Civilians and the Paradox of International Law." Pp. 110-130 in **Dawn L. Rothe** (PhD, 2006) and **David Kauzlarich** (PhD, 1994) (eds.), Towards A Victimology of State Crime. London: Routledge (2014).

Elizabeth Bradshaw (PhD, 2012) and **Ronald C. Kramer**, "State-Corporate Crime." Pp. 5043-5053 in Gerben Bruinsma and David Weisburd (eds.), Encyclopedia of Criminology and Criminal Justice. New York: Springer (2014).

Ronald C. Kramer, "Nuclear Weapons and State Crime." Pp. 3291-3299 in Gerben Bruinsma and David Weisburd (eds.), Encyclopedia of Criminology and Criminal Justice. New York: Springer (2014).

Raymond J. Michalowski and **Ronald C. Kramer**, "Transnational Environmental Crime." Pp. 189-212 in Philip Reichel and Jay Albanese (eds.), Handbook of Transnational Crime and Justice. Second Edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications (2014).

Joseph Abbott, Melinda McCormick, Amanda Smith, Jessie Sullivan, and Andy Verheek, became officially ABD in 2014! Congratulations!



*Western Michigan University represented at the
Midwest Sociological Society Annual Meeting 2014*

Conservation and Sustainability in Thought and Action. Organizers: Stu Shaver; Tim Bauer, WMU; Jennifer Dunn.

A Game of Skill: Video Game Enthusiasm and Confidence with Computers – Rebecca Sevin, WMU.

Consumption and People Power: A Case Study of a Proposed Ordinance on Urban Backyard Chicken Keeping – Traci D. Joseph, WMU.

Medicalization as Empowering? The Case of Fibromyalgia – Jessica R. Sullivan, WMU.

Women's Persistence in Undergraduate Astronomy: The Roles of Support, Interest, and Capital- Melinda M. McCormick, WMU; Ramon S. Barthelemy, WMU.

Service Learning and Social Justice: "Communiversities" in the classroom – Zoann K. Snyder, WMU.

Sexy Sociology: Research into the Intimate. Organizer: Matt Reid, WMU.

You Mean to Say that Neighborhood Context Matters? The Use of Social Disorganization Theory to Better Understand Jail Reentry. - Andrew G. Verheck, WMU.

This isn't Christian Mingle: Gay Men Dating Online – Matt Reid, WMU.



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