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Submission Date:

April 18th, 2023

**20 Day Exercise Submission**

1. For each of the following prompts, write a thorough response (2-3 well-developed paragraphs each with 3 to 4 sentences minimum per paragraph) and cite at least one scholarly source (per prompt) to support your answer. Answer the questions in the context of your own professional life, goals, and research interest.

a. Which form of sociological practice appeals to you most: clinical or applied sociology?

b. How does it best relate to your current professional context?

c. How would you use it to advance social change?

2. Using the Subject Matter Reference Material document (found in DIAL Resources) or other appropriate resources, answer two of the following questions in complete sentences and paragraphs. Where the Reference Material document is cited for answers, provide page/s: (p. # / pp. #); use APA 7 guidelines for citing other references. Submit a one to two-page response each to two of the following four choices.

a. How can a “rights-based” approach to sociological intervention align with a Christian perspective of both human worth (made in the image of God) and human sinfulness?

b. Why might a sociological approach -- how human beings behave in or as groups -- to changing human behavior be more helpful in some cases than individual counseling?

c. Explain some of the ethical challenges of implementing sociological interventions in families, organizations, or communities.

d. What considerations must be taken to ensure the sociological practice is ethically sound?

3. Structure (Assignment evaluation includes the following structure below).

a. Download the “OGS APA Course Assignments Template 7th Ed 2021” template from the General Helps folder in the AA-101 The Gathering Place Course on DIAL. Using the template create the following pages.

b. Title Page (not included in page count).

c. Copy and paste the assignment instructions from the syllabus starting on a new page after the title page, adhering to APA 7th edition style (APA 7 Workshop, Formatting, and Style Guide, APA 7 Quick Guide).

d. Start the assignment on a new page after the copied assignment instructions.

e. Document all sources in APA style, 7th edition (APA 7 Reference Example, APA 7 Quick Guide)

f. Include a separate Works Cited page, formatted according to APA style, 7th edition (not included in page count).

4. Submit through DIAL to the professor.

# Questions: Section 1

## a. Which form of sociological practice appeals to you most: clinical or applied sociology?

Before identifying which sociological practice appeals most to my work, we must identify the difference between applied and clinical sociology. While there is some overlap in definitions, generally speaking, applied sociology is “the use of… theories, concepts, and methods… with the primary purpose of translating findings to improve the understanding of non-academic audiences” (Association for Applied and Clinical Sociology [AACS], 2022). In other words, applied sociology seeks to identify and discuss sociological patterns to address current social issues (Trimikliniotis, 2020).

The term “clinical sociology” is accredited to Jan Fritz. (2008) and refers to:

A creative, humanistic, and multidisciplinary specialization that seeks to improve life situations for individuals and collectivities. Clinical sociologists work with client systems to assess situations and avoid, reduce, or eliminate problems through a combination of analysis and intervention. Clinical analysis is the critical assessment of beliefs, policies, or practices, with an interest in improving the situation. (p. 9)

In clinical sociology, there is a focus on diagnosing a problem and implementing a solution to that problem. It takes lessons learned from applied sociology and builds upon them by implementing interventions in the clinical arena. As noted by AACS (2022), clinical sociology has the same primary purpose of translating findings “but also design[s], implement[s], and evaluate[s] interventions meant to improve outcomes and respond to challenges.”

While it might appear that applied sociology would be more suited for me as a pastoral counselor and prayer minister, I believe the Lord is calling me to think diagnostically and clinically to further society. I have two personal guiding passages of scripture: Isaiah 61:1-2 and Ephesians 4:11-13. The former tends to be more personal and one-on-one in nature, while the latter builds up the global church. As such, I cannot effectively fulfill my calling without working on broad-spectrum solutions which the entire church can utilize. While I will need the tools and understanding of applied sociology, I will ultimately seek solutions for larger population groups. Only a systemic solution can help the bride of Christ become who she was intended to be. If we seek a healthier society, the church has to start thinking about societal solutions, not just individualized counseling.

## b. How does it best relate to your current professional context?

Understanding sociology helps me recognize the larger environmental and societal problems impacting my counseling clients and the ministries I serve. Unlike my Bible degree, which focused on the individual, sociology forces me to broaden my scope. Clinical sociology continues that expansion by identifying societal problems and researching and implementing solutions. Swan (1981, as cited in Rocha, 2022) notes that clinical sociology goes beyond research and social analysis by “taking concrete steps in addressing issues” (p.3).

As a counselor, it is easy to get pulled into looking at just the individual; however, sociology recognizes that no person is an island. Sociology notes that every member is a part of various systems, starting with the family and the close relationships surrounding the person. As I study sociology, I realize that our problems are rarely caused by one thing. Frequently it is a series of breakdowns for an individual that result in a negative outcome. Therefore, it is helpful to “zoom out” and consider what is happening around the people we serve and look for patterns that might keep them stuck.

Furthermore, an interdisciplinary approach can be helpful. Fritz(2021, as cited in Rocha, 2022) notes that a multidisciplinary approach can help improve people’s lives through various forms of intervention. For the counselee, we must consider their physical and spiritual health in addition to their emotional health. If this individual is a teenager or college student, it can also be helpful to look at the culture in which they are living. People don’t exist in a vacuum, and there is “nothing new under the sun.” Therefore, looking at studies other researchers have conducted is helpful as you will likely see patterns emerge (New American Standard Bible [NASB], 1960/2020, Ecclesiastes 1:9).

## c. How would you use it to advance social change?

I believe that the best way to evangelize society is for the church herself to be healthy. As the church grows healthier, we can truly “make disciples” in “Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (NASB, 2020, Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 1:8). In light of my guiding scriptures, God has equipped me to grow the church toward maturity by using sociological research. In doing so, I will identify key areas that need growth and develop training solutions to remediate those areas. My action research project will begin this work and, hopefully, become a tool that I can implement across various portions of the body of Christ.

Learning sociological theories makes me more adept at identifying societal problem patterns. Adding my faith perspective also helps me see where we fall short of God’s ideals (DeSanto et al., 1992). Sociological research asks critical questions about the current needs of society, like what roles gender, culture, or power play (Kalekin-Fishman & Denis, 2012). Understanding society as a whole helps me know how the church can best meet needs and bring about positive cultural change.

# Questions: Section 2

## a. How can a “rights-based” approach to sociological intervention align with a Christian perspective of both human worth (made in the image of God) and human sinfulness?

Biblical values align with many facets of the “rights-based” sociological approach. According to Johnson and Forsyth (2002, as cited by Fritz, 2008), a rights-based approach promotes and maintains the well-being of all people. In other words, rights-based approaches give people what they should naturally have because of their intrinsic human worth and value. The United States Declaration of Independence states this well, saying,

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. (Jefferson, 1776, para 2)

Similarly, the first ten amendments United States Constitution contain what is commonly referred to as the Bill of Rights. These outline humane practices and rights that all people have as designated by God, not the government. The United States has agreed upon these fundamental human rights for all living within our country’s borders, but in recent years have come under attack and question.

Scripture affirms the intrinsic value and worth of man. Man’s inherent value provides dignity and honor while simultaneously making them worthy love (NASB, 2020, Gen 1:26; Gal 3:28; Col 3:11; Romans 5:8; 1 John 4:7; 1 Peter 4:8). This value also necessitates justice when it comes to evil and wrongdoing (NASB, 2020, Prov 31:8-9; Micah 6:8). God expects equality without partiality (NASB, 2020, Lev 19:15). God also intends that his people are particularly concerned with those who are less fortunate than themselves (NASB, 2020, James 1:27; Luke 14:13-14; Lev 19:33-34). As Christians, we have a higher standard of human rights than the secular world, as we are to give of ourselves to support those in need and care for others in the same way we love ourselves (NASB, 2020, Matt 22:39).

At the same time, we live in a fallen world (NASB, 2020, Romans 5:12; Rev 21:4; James 4:1-2). All men are sinful and have rebelled against God (NASB, 2020, Romans 3:23; Ezekiel 20:8; Romans 6:23; Romans 8:7). As such; all men need redemption and correction (NASB, 2020, Ephesians 1:7; Gal 1:4,13; 1 Tim 5:20; 2 Tim 3:16-17). Sociological research helps identify problem areas within our culture in a similar way that the truth of God’s word convicts and condemns certain behaviors.

Breskaya & Giordan (2019) make a poignant observation that religious freedoms have often been associated with human rights violations, at least in the secular eye (pp. 1-2). Christian Sociologists have an opportunity to counter that narrative by bringing the Biblical idea of “loving your neighbor” into the forefront of our culture. To do this, we will need to be well-versed in the language and practice of social research.

## b. Why might a sociological approach -- how human beings behave in or as groups -- to changing human behavior be more helpful in some cases than individual counseling?

According to Osowski (2005), different theoretical perspectives relate to varying levels of analysis: micro, mezzo, and macro (p. 1). These different theoretical perspectives have distinct advantages and disadvantages. Fritz (2008) notes that a sociologist will naturally move between these different levels, from individual counseling to working with communities, to “analyze or intervene” (p. 17). While counseling can be effective for the individual, it is unlikely that counseling alone will remedy a societal problem.

Horton, Leslie, and Larson (1991, as cited in Desanto et al., 1992) claim that social problems are those that impact a significant number of people in a considerable way and that only through “collective social action” can a remedy be found (p. 4). Instead of attempting to counsel thousands of people to remediate a societal issue, a sociologist would likely consider a theoretical framework to implement a solution, such as Structural Functionalism (Osowski, 2005, p. 1). Structural Functionalism views society as a collection of structures or systems, each having a function. Identifying structures that are non-functional or contributing to the societal problem can pinpoint where the sociologist should invest their time.

In addition to working through sociological frameworks, a sociologist can impact society by raising awareness. Kornblum and Julian (1989, as cited by DeSanto et al., 1992) note that society can identify and define the conditions that make up a social problem. For example, the anti-trafficking movement has successfully articulated the atrocity of human trafficking. As such, many Americans are now advocating for removing the conditions that give way to human trafficking. Similarly, if sociologists can identify and support, through research, claims about societal problems, these areas can be systematically defined as problem areas. Once that has occurred, society will be more receptive to investing time, money, and materials into fixing the root issues, hopefully, themselves.

While it would be impossible to solve human trafficking simply by rescuing one victim at a time, preventative measures and wide-sweeping solutions can be implemented by communities with the help of social research. If you can help change the communal perspective of a group, you have a greater ability to steer the group toward common goals. Individual counseling and coaching will still be required, but for societal issues, the focus begins with cultural perspective changes and then trickles down to individuals. Consider how many private conversations likely occurred up after Jesus’ sermon on the mount. One public discussion led to many individuals’ lives changing.

# WORKS CITED

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U.S. Const. amend. I, XIII