Clinical and Applied Sociology

Quinton Egson

Omega Graduate School

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Professor

Dr. Joshua Reichard

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Assignment #2 – Developmental Readings

1. Create Developmental Readings from seminal sources and scholarly peer-reviewed

journal articles. Review instructions for Assignment #3, the course essential elements,

and course readings to identify selections of books and journals to create entries.

**Source 1**: De Gaulejac, V. (2021). On the origins of clinical sociology in France: Some milestones.

*International Journal of Clinical Sociology*, 77-99.

Doi: 10.1007/978-3-030-54584-0\_5

**Comment 1**

**Quote/Paraphrase**: “Clinical sociology is a creative, humanistic, and multidisciplinary specialization that seeks to improve life situations for individuals and communities. Clinical sociologists work with client systems to assess situations and avoid, reduce, or eliminate problems through a combination of analysis and intervention”. (de Gauleja, 2021, p. 79).

**Essential Element**: This comment is associated with Clinical Sociology.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** The above quote is additive to my research, understanding, and professional experience. According to my research and experiences, clinical sociologists work to help improve group situations, perhaps not limited to but primarily in business settings.

**Contextualization**: During my tenure as a Boys & Girls Clubs of America National Training Associate/Consultant, I have worked with various organizations to assess their operations, develop a plan to improve them, and finally help them implement that plan. In my experience, the key to success (of the client) is embracing a procedure and putting in thehard/uncomfortable work to see it through. Figuring out whatadjustments need to be made is one thing; implementing them is another.

**Source 2**: Reichard, J. (2024). Applied and Clinical Sociology: A Christian Perspective. *Routledge*

*International Handbook of Sociology and Christianity*, 369-379.

Doi: 10.4324/9781003277743-40

**Comment 2**

**Quote/Paraphrase**: As is stated by Reichard, “Clinical sociology is the implementation and evaluation of interventions for groups, organizations, and communities using sociological theories and methods” (Reichard, 2024, p. 369).

**Essential Element:** This statement is affiliated with Clinical Sociology.

**Additive/Varian Analysis**: This author’s quote is additive to my research. According to various other researchers, Clinical sociology deals with assessing systems (through a sociological approach) followed by devising and implementing a plan to make them more efficient and effective.

**Contextualization**: Each June, a group of professionals from “The Professional Association” (TPA) come together to put on a training for about 100 attendees. After each conference, the group gathers to evaluate the overall experiences shared by those who attended and facilitated training during the conference sessions. The next meeting is usually the most crucial; based on the information received, the facilitator walks the group through a process to plan for the next conference to make it better based on feedback. After embracing this process for several years, we have steadily improved our conference by implementing the plans developed.

**Source 3:** Ormerod, R. (2020). The history and ideas of sociological functionalism: Talcott

Parsons's modern sociological theory and its relevance for OR. *Journal of the*

*Operational Research Society, 71(12),* 1873-1899.

Doi*:* 10.1080/01605682.2019.1640590

**Comment 3:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “As developed by Talcott Parsons (1902–1979), functionalism provided a bridge between classical and modern sociology. One can visualize functionalism as the neck of an hourglass: above the neck are several partial theories, always insightful, sometimes contradictory, always incomplete; below the neck are a proliferation of social theories derived from or in critical reaction to functionalism” (Ormerod. 2020, p.2).

**Essential Element**: This quote is relative to Applied Sociology and social practices.

**Additive/Variant Analysis**: This quote enhances my research and comprehension of sociology. According to my findings, functionalism is a sociological theory that views society as a complex system of interrelated parts, each serving a specific function to maintain stability and order. Based on the previous comment, I concur with the author’s perspective that functionalism bridges classical/traditional and modern sociology.

**Contextualization**: As stated (in summation) in a previous lesson plan lecture by Dr. Reichard, The entire academic discipline of sociology rests on three main theoretical foundations (camps) in the sociological field. Those three fields representing sociology's “soft science” are functionalism, conflict/critical theory, and symbolic interactionism. In synopsis, functionalism is a sociological theory that views society as a complex system of interrelated parts, each serving a specific function to maintain stability and order. In my experience with people listed under the banner of being a functionalist, they often struggle with holding on to yesterday while knowing that society is constantly evolving. Their conservative nature longs to keep things in their conservative, somewhat stationary order, which works in contrast to conflict critical theorists.

**Source 4**: Smith, R. C. (2022, December). Advancing Publicly Engaged Sociology 1.

*Sociological Forum* 37 (4), 926-950.

Doi: 10.1111/socf.12851

**Comment 4**

**Quote/ Paraphrase**: “In Institutionally Engaged Sociology, sociologists work with or within larger institutions to affect structures or policies that can reduce inequality or make the world better. A first example is sociologists working in non-academic institutions or government, including at the American Sociological Association (ASA) or in departments of education, labor, defense, or non-profit “(Smith. 2022, p. 931).

**Essential Element**: This statement relates to the Application of Sociological Research.

**Additive/Variant Analysis**: The above statement adds to my research regarding applicable sociology. Sociologists depend on credible research to understand past, current and projected social norms. With that research, they can impact society by recommending policies and procedures to address societal inequalities.

**Contextualization:** While working with a major collaborative, we relied heavily on research from Cal State San Bernardino and the University of California Riverside to develop viable options to address a laundry list of societal ills.

Without adequate research, we would not have been able to build a compelling case for funding to level the playing field in our underserved community. With their help, we secured a sizable grant, which afforded us the resources to address several social inequalities.

**Source: 5****:** Berard, A., & Ravelli, B. (2021). In their words: What undergraduate sociology

students say about community-engaged learning. *Journal of Applied Social*

*Science*, 15(2), 197-210. Doi: 10.1177/1936724420975460

**Comment 5**:

**Quote/Paraphrase**: Research suggests a clear relationship between Community Engagement Learning (CEL), sociology, and the benefits of connecting undergraduate curriculum with community partnerships. Community-based learning has the potential to have students apply sociological theories and methods to hands-on, lived experiences. For example, Stolley, Hotaling, and Kiser (2008) found that interacting with a homeless population allowed sociology students to more fully engage with ideas around individual agency, mental health, and structural inequality (p.3-4).

**Essential Element**: This statement is associated with applications for sociological research.

**Additive/Variant Analysis**: The above statement adds to my research, understanding, education, and life experience. Several college students conducting undergraduate and graduate-level research have partnered with my organization to engage the community to get a boots-on-the-ground read on the increasing homeless population in our community. Combining classroom/research and on-the-ground experiences gives a more in-depth understanding of the subject matter.

**Contextualization:** There are three homeless shelters in my city of only 90,000 residents. Many homeless people migrate to our area because of the agreeable weather and services they can receive to help get them back on track. Along with the massive population of homeless people comes an opportunity to research and study the worldwide epidemic firsthand right here in my community. It has been my experience in shadowing law enforcement, counselors, and other social workers that there are a myriad of factors contributing to the homelessness crises. Furthermore, therefore, it will take a massive collective effort to eradicate (or at least reduce the) homeless population.

**Source 6:** Fussey, P., & Roth, S. (2020). Digitizing sociology: Continuity and change in the

internet era. *Sociology*, 54(4), 659-674 Doi: 10.1177/0038038520918562

**Comment 6:**

**Quote/ Paraphrase**: “While recent years have seen ‘digital sociology’ gain increasing form and attention, sociological analysis of all things digital engages the enduring concerns of the discipline, generating questions of social action, social order, social mobility, and mobilization, social change, and social inequalities” (introduction).

**Essential Element:** The quote is affiliated withapplications for sociological research.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is additive to my research and understanding. Digital Sociology, the study of human behavior, societal relationships, and culture influenced by media, has been studied by sociologists since the mid-1980s. Nowadays, a sociologist would be remiss not to study digital communities because their reach and impact on society are substantial. For better or worse, the digital society is alive and operating on all cylinders**.**

**Contextualization**: In working with youth since the early 1980s, I have witnessed a grocery list of changes that have taken place over the last 10-20 years, with the impact of social media probably being the most profound. Our motto is to meet kids where they are; lately, that has been on social media platforms like TikTok. I have also noticed that various clicks, cultures, and electronic societies have developed into their communities containing their values and communication methods/language. Digital sociology and digital sociologists are needed to stay in touch with our ever-evolving digital society.

**Source 7:** Fussey, P., & Roth, S. (2020). Digitizing sociology: Continuity and change in the internet era. *Sociology*, 54(4), 659-674. Doi: 10.1177/0038038520918562

**Comment 7**

**Quote/Paraphrase: “**Digital technologies penetrate every aspect of social life, whether it is families and relationships (finding or betraying partners through dating websites or maintaining relationships through texts, phone calls, videoconference or social media), the workplace (which increasingly is transformed through ICT, as evinced by the rise of the gig economy), governance and political participation (e-governance, online mobilization of political parties and social movements). Digital technologies also generate new forms of community formation (including transnational or diaspora communities) and simultaneously bring new threats to well-being such as surveillance and cyber-crime” (introduction).

**Essential Element:** The statement is associated with sociological interventions.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** The statement above adds to my understanding in that it captures the profound point that digital sociology is deeply woven into the fabric of our current society. To that end, it is hard to fathom our society without a robust digital influence. The digital world is alive and growing, and sociologists need to embrace it and attempt to steer it constructively to benefit humankind**.**

**Contextualization:** According to Deborah Lupan, digital sociology “ is the study of human behavior, society relationships, and culture influenced by media " and is here to stay**.** I cannot think of any aspect of my world, whether it be religion, personal/family, or work, that is not intensely impacted by technology and**/**or digital societal norms. Having said that, it is imperative that sociologists work to understand and constructively influence this modern societal norm.

**Source 8**: Fussey, P., & Roth, S. (2020). Digitizing sociology: Continuity and change in the

internet era. *Sociology*, 54(4), 659-674. Doi: 10.1177/0038038520918562

**Comment 8:**

**Quote/Paraphrase**: Moreover, there is increasing awareness of how digital technologies perpetuate inequalities; analyses of the digital divide have become more sophisticated, distinguishing different aspects of digital inequality; and, separately, attention has increasingly focused on the role of computational decision-making in reinforcing disadvantage. Furthermore, debates around artificial intelligence take note of the oppressive and discriminatory consequences of biased algorithms such as racial profiling” (Introduction).

**Essential Element:** Applied Sociology and Sociological Practice

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This statement adds to my understanding and research. Digital Sociology is perhaps the most modern sociological method that should be studied because it impacts nearly all of humankind. Applied Sociology and Sociological Practice are huge tents containing various sociological methods/categories. One of the most understudied and yet perhaps the most influential is digital sociology**.**

**Contextualization:** In working with underserved youth and their families. I have witnessed firsthand the benefits and detriments associated with the digital divide. Although most people I deal with have access to technology, some do not. Moreover, those with access frequently possess a limited understanding of the pitfalls, and misinformation shared on frequent platforms can help shape and, at times, distort their worldview. Furthermore, if their social life is predicated on things they receive from the internet gathered from sources that are not credible, it could affect their moral compass and position on critical societal issues. Digital sociology is a strong force that has and willwork like a broadbrush to paint people's ideas of their social norms; therefore, an increase of digital social scientists must emerge promptly.

**Source 9**: Faber, J. W. (2020). We built this: Consequences of New Deal era intervention in

America’s racial geography. *American Sociological Review*, 85(5), 739-775.

Doi: 10.1177/0003122420948464

**Comment 9:**

**Quote/Paraphrase**: “Clearly, massive government interventions work. If the goal is to reduce segregation over time, policies with that aim can be designed and implemented. The federal government's culpability in creating and reifying the color line is directly connected to ongoing public and scholarly conversations regarding what is necessary to achieve racial equality” (Faber, 2020, p.767).

**Essential Element:** This statement is affiliated with sociological interventions**.**

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This adds to my research, understanding, and work-life experience. The author is accurate in stating that massive government interventions are effective. “Affirmative Action” helped people of color get accepted to specific colleges they would not have access to otherwise. Voting acts allowed marginalized people to have a voice via voting, and the list continues. Government interventions have directly impacted the creation of a pathway for the marginalized to access a better quality of life.

**Contextualization:** Living adjacent to Indian Wells, a city that contains one of, if not the highest number of millionaires (per capita) globally, while providing services in Mecca, roughly thirty miles away from Indian Wells and one of the most impoverished communities in the nation. I have witnessed the need for governmental intervention so poor people, such as those in Mecca, can get by.

The discouraging part about vacillating back and forth between the people's worldview in Indian Wells and those who reside in Mecca is quite stark**.** Many (not all) of those who have done well or inherited wealth believe that the people in need have created dire circumstances of their own.

They are oblivious to societal systems that were (and in some cases still) in place to prohibit the average person who benefits from governmental programs from reaching their full potential. Although governmental interventions are not always the solution, they are certainly needed.

**Source 10:** Rebach, H & Bruhn, J (2001). *Handbook of clinical sociology*, Springer Science +

Business Media.

**Comment 10:**

**Quote/Paraphrase: “**As social change agents, clinical sociologists use theory and previous findings to inform and direct their problem-solving. We discover what works and what does not through systematic, repeated application. Practice includes ongoing evaluation of intervention, which soon reveals the validity and explanatory power and the limitations of existing research and theory. This can provide additional material for theory development and fertile avenues for further research”(location 864).

**Essential Element:** This quote is affiliated with clinical sociology.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This statement adds to my research and understanding. Clinical sociologists use various research methods to identify cultural/societal problems. To get to the root of the problem, coming up with possible solutions requires a method and/or methods to move beyond the symptoms of the situation to get the actual cause. As social change agents, clinical sociologists are equipped to embark on the process of not only getting to the root of problems but coming up with some solutions.

**Contextualization:** As a practicing social change agent who has often gone out on assignment. I am taking the time to accurately access organizations, their culture, structure, policies, protocols, communication channels, etc. I know firsthand the need to dig deep enough to get to the root of the problem so that a strategy can be developed to address it. My method is based on best practices, research, and experience (both mind and the experiences of others).

**Source 11**: Smelser, N. J. (2023). *Problematics of sociology: the Georg Simmel lectures, 1995*.

Univ of California Press.

**Comment 11:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** We usually refer to Sociology as a social science without hesitating. That is a misleading, simple destination. Sociology, created out of and in the context of already-established humanistic traditions (especially history and philosophy), scientific traditions (both physical and life sciences), and aesthetic traditions, has never been able to decide whether it is primarily scientific, humanistic, or artistic in orientation (Smelser, 2023, p. 3).

**Essential Element**: Applied Sociology and sociological practices

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This statement is a variant of my research and understanding. Although the author makes valid points, the comment after the opening statement contradicts what I have been learning/researching.

Again, the author has valid points in the body of the statement, and perhaps, upon further review, my position may change. However, as of now, the statement remains contrary to my research and understanding.

**Contextualization:** My somewhat limited understanding leads me to believe that Sociology is, first and foremost, a social science. My perspective has been developed through various readings, lectures, and research. However, if the author states that sociology is more than a social science, perhaps I should conduct further research to fully understand the author's viewpoint. Again, my understanding of Sociology is that it is a social science.

**Source 12:**  Ariely, D (2008), *Predictability Irrational*. Harper Collins.

**Comment 12:**

**Quote/ Paraphrase:** The author, Dan Ariely, pens, “My further observation is that we are not only irrational but predictably irrational – that our irrationality happens the same way, repeatedly. Whether we are acting as consumers, businesspeople, or policymakers, understanding how we are predictably irrational provides a starting point for improving our decision-making and changing the way we live for the better” (location 181).

**Essential Element:** The statement is associated with applied sociology and sociological practice.

**Additive/variant analysis**: The author’s quote is additive to my research and understanding of sociology and sociological practice. Human behavior is predictable and, at the same time, unpredictable. Moreover, I concur with the author’s statement, which suggests that, for the most part, we are predictably irrational at times, which may cloud our decision-making. According to my research, the bottom line is that human behavior is messy, and the more we can understand it, the better we can make decisions that impact our lives for the better!

**Contextualization:** While facilitating youth development group sessions on success, decision-making is usually the focal point of the discussion. I find it rewarding and time well spent when the participants realize that decisions they make today can and generally do impact their quality of life in the future.

One student, for example, told the group that the best way to deal with a bad habit is not to start it all. I thought that was well said for a high school senior.

**References**

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