**SR 950-32**

**Clinical and Applied Sociology**

Russ Bergeman

Omega Graduate School

December 19, 2024

Professor

Dr. Joshua Reichard

**Assignment**

### *Developmental Readings*

Review Assignment #3, the course essential elements, assigned readings, and recommended readings to identify selections of books and scholarly articles to identify and select developmental reading sources and entries.

* Refer to the “[Student Guide to Developmental Readings](https://drive.google.com/file/d/161V_FaYR2BnNGCSFUlWPjUSIQzcH04Hq/view?usp=share_link)” for updated information on sample comments, rubrics, and key definitions related to developmental readings.

**Developmental Readings**

**Source One:** Thibodeaux, J. (2015). Production as social change: Policy sociology as a public good. Sociological Spectrum, 35(6), 543–555. https://doi.org/10.1080/02732173.2015.1102666

**Comment 1:**

**Quote/Paraphrase: “**Policy sociology often takes place informally, typically when the sociologists feels their existing work (or work related to their existing work) can be applied to help some client achieve some goal. However, policy sociology takes its most formal form in the field of applied sociology. “The field of applied sociology began to form around the 1960s and 1970 and took shape with the rise of the Society of Applied sociology in 1978 ... The purpose of the (applied sociology) model ... is applying sociology to solve problems and make social improvements” (Finkelstein 2009:94; also see Barton 1979; Uggen and Inderbitzin 2010). Unlike the public sociologist, the goal of the policy sociologist is not to work with the public to decipher which goals to achieve; rather, policy sociologists apply sociological knowledge to decipher the best means actors (clients) can take to solve problems and make social improvements.” (Pg 1).

**Essential Element:** Thibodeaux argues that policy sociology—sociological research aimed at informing policy decisions—has the potential to address societal issues by providing insights that guide policymaking.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** Additive: He emphasizes the importance of sociologists engaging with policymakers, stakeholders, and the public to ensure that research findings are accessible and actionable. This is what Decriminalize Nature did in Oakland and other cities.

Additive: The article advocates for a collaborative approach in which sociologists collaborate with communities and policymakers to produce knowledge that addresses pressing social problems.

**Contextualization:** Policy change can be influenced by applied sociology, or public sociology, through collaboration with the community. However, the group seeking change must understand the community in which they operate. Interestingly, *Decriminalize Nature* started in communities like Oakland and Santa Cruz, CA. They certainly chose the low-hanging fruit to start their efforts with.

**Source Two:** Adu-Febiri, F., & Quinless, J. M. (2016). Social design, social practice & social change: Re-visioning applied sociology. The International Journal of Interdisciplinary Organizational Studies, 11(2), 15–26. https://doi.org/10.18848/2324-7649/CGP/v11i02/15-26

**Comment 1:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** The original perspective of applied sociology was based in a vision to transform the above conditions. It envisioned producing sociologists who were social transformation oriented and not entirely engrossed in their academic research and theorizing that would prevent them from connecting with realities outside of the confines of the academic discipline (Gollin 1989; Rodabough et al. 2007). The intention was to create a “community of practice” and to equip sociologists to work collaboratively with policy makers, community members, and individual members of society. The idea was based on a desire to educate and engage sociologists to connect their research and theoretical efforts to effect social change that would benefit knowledge production and at the same time show direct benefits to the social world by transforming social interaction/relationships. Applied sociology in this original context transforms knowledge and society simultaneously for a greater good. Social design programs that embrace the sociological imagination perspective connect to this original proactive root. It is at this intersection where we can revision and recreate applied sociology to maintain a balance between professionalizing the discipline and at the same time maintaining its academic rigor and ethical standards and practice. (Pg. 18)

**Essential Element:** This article criticizes contemporary applied sociology and its transformation into clinical sociology.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** Additive and Variant. The article critiques current sociological practices well and offers a new way of thinking and a revised model for the applied sociological approach.

**Contextualization:** This article explores the integration of social design and practice within applied sociology to effect meaningful social change. The authors argue that traditional applied sociology often fails to address complex societal issues due to its limited engagement with innovative design methodologies and lack of engagement with society. The authors highlight the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration and encourage merging sociological insights with new ways of design.

The authors advocate for revising applied sociology curricula to include social design and practice training. This would prepare future sociologists to facilitate social change more adeptly through innovative and collaborative methods. I am motivated to do more research into their vision and new design model.

**Comment 2:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** Social design as intentional social change practice has emerged in the design disciplines over the past two decades to improve the social impact of design services/products. The sociological imagination-based social design goes beyond the parameters of the design disciplines. It examines the ways in which applied practice transforms into social impact for positive change. (pg 21)

**Essential Element:** The authors argue for more intentionality in applied sociological efforts.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** Additive – The authors explain their approach to social design to initiate social change.

**Contextualization:** There is a deep pool of research that requires more investigation. However, I believe the model the authors describe offers something I can apply to this course and my DSL project in the model the authors describe.

**Source Three:** Shahidullah, S. M. (1998). Useful sociology: Can sociological knowledge be valuable in policy-making?*The International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy, 18*(1), 86-112.

**Comment 1:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “A society, in a general sense, is a knowledge containing system. The construction and the use of knowledge is at the core of human ability to conduct a meaningful social life. It is through the construction and use of knowledge of different kinds - common sense, experiential, transcendental, folk wisdom, and scientific - that we make our intersubjective social life possible, meaningful, and progressive. There is no realm of social reality and no domain of human actions which is exclusively based on scientific and professional knowledge. Every society is based on the construction and use of multiple knowledge structures and belief systems (Geertz, 1983).

**Essential Element:** The main point of this quote, and the foundation on which the rest of the article rests, is that society contains the knowledge necessary for proper policymaking. It is contingent upon the sociologist to pull that knowledge from the public and then apply it appropriately.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This article adopts a social constructionist viewpoint. However, it discusses the knowledge available to create social change and improve societal well-being.

**Contextualization:** Applied sociology must be willing to meet the public where they are to attain the knowledge necessary for efficacious public policymaking. It relies on pure sociological research and on living in the real world. Shahidullah recognizes pure science and research as sources of knowledge but equally recognizes “folk wisdom.” I think it is important to understand and be OK with learning from the PhD and the plumber.

**Comment 2:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “Since society is a knowledge-driven system, knowledge is continuously constructed and used for the conduct of social life… In America, for example, such talk show hosts as Dipak Chopra, Barbara De-Angeles, and Richard Simon attract millions of people who seek professional knowledge for personal advancement and emotional enrichment. There probably is not a society on earth where so many self-help books, videos, tapes, and media programs for personal enrichment exist, as it does in America.” (Pg 90)

**Essential Element:** This article, written in 1998, recognizes the importance of public figures in influencing public policy. At this point in history, self-help was the trend.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This quote, ignoring the specific trend in society, reinforces the idea that sociology (applied sociology) must listen to the public and society.

**Contextualization:** The author recognizes the importance of public figures and their reflection of society's priorities. I doubt Shahidullah had any inkling that in 2024 podcasts, TikTok and X would be the prominent reflection of society’s priorities. Many attribute the results of the last Presidential election to President Trump’s appearance on podcasts hosted by personalities like Joe Rogan. Applied sociologists should learn from this success and gain knowledge from all available sources, even those that seem the least academically rigorous.

**Comment 3:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “The world of policy-making is a process of social construction. There is hardly any policy decision which is solely based on objective scientific findings. The social and political interests of the policy-makers deeply delve into the process of policy-making. The use of scientific and professional knowledge in policy is one of many competing ingredients.” (Pg 92)

**Essential Element:** This quote is a clear example of the author’s commitment to the viewpoint of social constructionism. It recognizes that policymaking is a construct of not just knowledge but of the policymaker’s priorities as well.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** Social constructionism is alive and well in advocates of applied sociology.

**Contextualization:** Applied sociology must recognize that policymakers are not just sitting around waiting to be influenced by sociologists. I believe they will create their own knowledge to justify their desired policy. They may even ignore good data or good information in favor of their personal data or information. However, if applied sociologists can embed themselves inside the organism in which they intend to effect change, they will have a better chance of a positive outcome.

**Source Four:** Neeley, E. (2008). Doing Sociology: Applied Sociology for Justice System Policy Reform 1.*Sociological Origins, 5*(2), 39-44,47. https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/doing-sociology-applied-justice-system-policy/docview/204784688/se-2

**Comment 1:**

**Quote/Paraphrase: “**The sociological perspective teaches us to maintain objectivity. It teaches us to recognize the bias of our own value systems; it teaches us to critically evaluate and to look beyond historical or “official” explanations to social problems. Our discipline teaches us to use the sociological imagination, to question the status quo, and to “think outside the box”. The discipline of sociology teaches us to effectively use both quantitative and qualitative methods to investigate social problems and test hypotheses. Sociologists understand how systems of inequality are created and maintained, and we know how to give voice to historically marginalized groups.” (Pg 1)

**Essential Element:** This article is from the author's keynote address to fellow sociologists. She begins with a succinct yet deep explanation of the power of applied sociology.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This article has two additive takeaways. The first describes applied sociology and the author's optimistic outlook. The second summarizes an interdisciplinary, multi-methodological, and policy-oriented applied sociological project.

**Contextualization:** This article provides a framework for my future research and inquiry. The author combined quantitative and qualitative methodologies to promote public policy change, which was implemented at multiple levels of government, from legislative to judicial.

**Source Five:** Weinstein, J. (2003). Civics as Applied Sociology.*Social Justice, 30*(4), 21-39.

**Comment 1:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** To paraphrase the opening few paragraphs, Weinstein is introducing the observation that “civics” (as democracy) is deeply embedded in applied sociology.

**Essential Element:** Weinstein goes to great lengths to define democracy and examine its roots, especially in relation to sociology. He recognizes applied sociologists' potential to make a difference in society, especially by following ethical and socially responsible boundaries.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** I see this article as a neutral response to my inquiry into applied sociology, social constructionism, and influencing public policy.

**Contextualization:** Weinstein provides a deep and solid foundation for examining the theories of democracy (civics) and how they fit into the larger context of applied sociology. The author calls for action in sociology but within the framework of sociologies seminal contributors. I will use this article to identify key theories as they apply to sociology.

I’m very interested, when time permits, to read more of Weinstein’s works. They are dense reading and time-consuming. But I find his writing and “voice” to be very engaging.

**Source Six:** O'Neill, T. (2019). Chaos: Charles Manson, the CIA, and the secret history of the sixties. HarperCollins.

**Comment 1:**

**Quote/Paraphrase: “**The complexity of the 1960s counterculture has lasting implications today."

**Essential Element:** The intersection of the use of psychedelics and societal (1960s) counterculture combined with the narrative on the Manson murders created public policy that has endured for more than 50 years.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** O’Neill's simple yet profound observation establishes the foundation for examining current drug policy—particularly policies concerning psychedelics—through the perspective of social constructionism.

**Contextualization:** The book is replete with examples and linkages of how the Manson murders narrative was created and controlled by many public and private actors during thelate 1960s and early 1970s. There is evidence that Manson was linked to US Government spy and experimentation programs. Although the linkages are weak and difficult to prove, they exist, nonetheless. It is quite clear, even if the “conspiracy theories” surrounding projects like MK Ultra are untrue or exaggerated, that the narrative surrounding the connection of psychedelics and the murders was constructed, at least to some degree. This creates an opportunity to view these events as socially constructed.

**Comment 2:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** …the (Nixon) administration capitalized on public fears regarding drugs to galvanize support for the war on drugs.

**Essential Element:** By framing psychedelics as dangerous and chaotic, the government sought to dismantle the counterculture and regain control over a society it perceived as destabilizing. This political agenda contributed significantly to the narrative that vilified psychedelics, correlating them with societal collapse.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This further supports the idea that drug policy was socially constructed.

**Contextualization:**It should be noted that I am not making a value judgment on psychedelic drug use. I am merely observing the fact that psychedelics were broadly cast as villains in the 1960s. This villainization served a purpose: to discredit the antiwar and antigovernment movements that were gaining traction in society.

**Source Seven:**Griffiths, R. R., Richards, W. A., McCann, U., & Jesse, R. (2006). Psilocybin can occasion mystical-type experiences having substantial and sustained personal meaning and spiritual significance. Psychopharmacology, 187(3), 268–283.

**Comment 1:**

**Quote/Paraphrase: “**…the present study showed that, when administered to volunteers under supportive conditions, psilocybin occasioned experiences similar to spontaneously occurring mystical experiences…” (Pg 282)

**Essential Element:** This is a contemporary, seminal work on how psychedelics can create (occasion) mystical experiences.

**Additive/Variant Analysis: Additive—**William James (1902) was the first psychologist to write about mystical experiences. James even incited a personal mystical experience using nitrous oxide. The authors observed participants who received the psychedelic who experienced the same type of mystical experience.

**Contextualization:**  It would be a stretch to say, at least at this moment, that the mystical experience occasioned by psilocybin is a conduit to God. However, it is an interesting observation that requires further research. As a researcher, I must ask, "What are these people experiencing?” It appears, from the data, that the experience is more than just a hallucination. I would be interested to compare these results to those of people experiencing a mystical experience through meditation, prayer, etc.

**Comment 2:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “It is widely believed that expectancy plays a large role in the qualitative effects of hallucinogens” (Metner et al., 1965) (pg 270).

**Essential Element:** Expectancy is an element of experimentation that must be considered when designing and implementing testing. It must also be controlled for during an experiment.

**Additive/Variant Analysis: Additive -** In the case of testing with psychedelics, the research is full of examples where expectancy could have influenced the results of an experiment. This is controlled with placebos and how the participants are managed during the intake.

**Contextualization:**In the case of using psychedelics to treat mental illness, it is important to set expectations for the participants. Many times, participants of a study, especially when they are suffering from a mental illness, will hang unreasonable hopes on the efficacy of the treatment. Ethical issues may arise if the experiment results create more harm than the potential good. If a participant hopes to get better but doesn’t, it may drive that person into a deeper state of depression.

**Source Eight:**Mills, C. W., & Wolfe, A. (2000). The power elite: New edition. Oxford University Press.

**Comment 1:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “The power elite is composed of me whose positions enable them to transcend the ordinary environments of ordinary men and women; they are in position to make decisions having major consequences” (Pg 3).

**Essential Element:** Its as if Mills was writing this book in 2024. The same power structure he identified 60 years ago is still present today.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** Additive – The power structure that Mills is referring to has only expanded over the last six decades. This power structure – the power elite – is the one constructing reality today.

**Contextualization:** For a researcher to use applied sociological methods to influence organizational change, especially in public policy, he must understand the power structure. Applied sociology must understand and work within the power structure, especially through the lens of social constructionism. Does applied sociology have to exist *in* the world? If it exists *in* the world, does it have to be in the world of power as well?

**Comment 2:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** The overall focus of this book is on how to understand and sociologically examine the so-called “military-industrial complex”. (Chapter 1)

**Essential Element:** The element that needs further refinement is how much larger this “…industrial complex” has grown over the last 60 years.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** Additive and Variant – This is a topic/theory that is open for further research.

**Contextualization:**It would be interesting to lay Mills’ framework over the linkages of today’s industry-government power relationships. I suspect pharmaceuticals and technology would also be easily defined as power elites. These two additional centers of power are responsible for significantly influencing public policy. Enormous amounts of money are transferred within this power structure.

**Comment 3:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:**“The public is thus organized into associations and parties, each representing a set of viewpoints, each trying to acquire a place in the Congress, where the discussion continues. (Pg 298)

**Essential Element:** The power elite is somewhat controlled by the American public through elections of representatives.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:**Additive – This quote and the chapter itself, describe the stratification of American politics into “tribes.”

**Contextualization:** This further helps me understand that to operationalize applied sociology to influence public policy, I must recognize the stratification of American politics. The “associations” and “parties” have their own power structures that must be understood in relation to the overarching power elite. I can see how this also informs my theory of how public policy on psychedelics is/was socially constructed by “elites”.

**Source Nine:**Mills, C. Wright. (2002). The Sociological Imagination. 40th Anniversary Edition. Oxford University Press.

**Comment 1:**

**Quote/Paraphrase: “**When people cherish some set of values and do not feel any threat to them, they experience *well-being*. When they cherish values but *do* feel them to be threatened, they experience a crisis – either as a personal trouble or as a public issue. And if all their values seem involved, the feel the total threat of panic.” (Pg 11)

**Essential Element:** Values drive people to movement in society. This movement may range from mild to “panic”.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:**Additive – A social constructionist would see this idea as an opportunity to drive change, to create a reality that effects the desired change.

**Contextualization:** I have been reading both books by Mills cited in this assignment – The Power Elite and The Sociological Imagination. Together, they create quite a map for motivating and driving societal change. By understanding that people are driven by their values, the power elite can drive society’s priorities in the direction that continues to create power, wealth, influence, etc. I realize this is a pessimistic viewpoint, but it fits into my current research too well. I realize I must be cautious of bias when reading these developmental readings.

**Comment 2:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “Men are free to make history, but some men are much freer than others.” (Pg 180)

**Essential Element:** Although the sociological imagination is available to all, society has inequalities. These inequalities impact the “history” that is written and examined by sociologists (and others).

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** Additive –This statement hit me like a punch to the face. Inherently I know inequalities exist, but I needed to hear it in the context of sociology and the optimism of the sociological imagination.

**Contextualization:**The quote, “History is written by the victor,” came to mind as I read this statement and section of the book. Decision-making drives results, and results are what is recorded in history. Those who can drive the largest, most impactful (positive or negative) societal results will be remembered. They will, in turn, impact future decisions. Some will rise to the top of society’s strata, and some will be left behind.

**Comment 3:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** What we experience in various and specific milieux, I have noted, is often caused by structural changes. Accordingly, to understand the changes of many personal milieu we are required to go beyond them. And the number and variety of such structural changes increase as the institutions within which we live become more embracing and more intricately connected with one another. To be aware of the idea of social structure and to use it with sensibility is to be capable of tracing such linkages among great variety of milieux. To be able to do that is to possess the sociological imagination. (pgs. 10–11)

**Essential Element:** This quote from Mills highlights the foundational idea that sociology must have a deep understanding of not just the micro level of an entity but also the macro level of the entity being observed and the environment in which that entity exists.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** Additive: The issue I’m researching exists at many levels of society. The policy is national (drug laws), but much of the work on policy initiatives is at the state and local levels.

**Contextualization:** “To be aware of the… social structure… tracing linkages…” Mills is laying the groundwork for grassroots social activism and policy influence. It takes a savvy influencer to fully understand the “linkages” that exist in America’s modern, complex governmental/political “milieux.” I’m interested in learning more about how organizations like Decriminalize Nature have approached the complex world of national and localized drug policy.

**Comment 4:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “A man at work on problems of substance, he is among those who are quickly made impatient and weary by elaborate discussions of method-and-theory-in-general; so much of it interrupts his proper studies.” (page 195)

**Essential Element:** This quote from the Appendix is an excellent example of what would motivate a sociologist to transition from theory to application.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is definitely additive to this course. It is a great way to look at the theoretical vs the applied side of sociology.

**Contextualization:**This quote from this work jumped off the page at me. Although I enjoy learning theory, it is the “so what?” of the theory that motivates my work. Learning how something, even a social system, works is only the first step. Using that knowledge to effect change, especially for societal well-being, is important. In my relatively limited exposure to his work, Mills seems like a man of action. Someone who sees a problem and immediately starts formulating a solution.

I find that Mills’ work resonates with me, and I’m excited to dive a bit deeper.

**Source Ten:**Quillin, Amy (2003) "Through a Mirror Dimly: Social Constructionism Through the Lens of Faith," Growth: The Journal of the Association for Christians in Student Development: Vol. 3: No. 3, Article 6.

**Comment 1:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:**“The zeitgeist of current culture may best be reflected in postmodern thinking. If that is even moderately accurate, how then does a Christian college student—either in Christian or secular settings—respond?” (Pg 55)

**Essential Element:** This is an essential question that all students of OGS should be asking. How, indeed, are Christian scholars expected to respond if the zeitgeist of contemporary society is post-modernistic?

**Additive/Variant Analysis:**Additive – A wonderful survey of how social constructionism fits into the postmodern theory.

**Contextualization:**  This article uses the parable of the three blind men describing different parts of an elephant *as* the elephant. The subjective reality of postmodernism is everywhere in society. I would argue that it has always been present in society in the form of evil. Social constructionism rejects the truth of God’s existence and his revelation to us as savior. The author is able to use (optimistically) the social construction lens to critique Christianity and the Christian worldview. But this does not erase the fact that arrogance and pride that accompany people who truly believe they construct their own reality in spite of natural law and natural truths. Arrogance and pride are at the root of sin.

The author makes an important point when describing the amorphous term *spirituality*. She emphasizes that at the root of spirituality is relationship and connection. There is a similarity with social constructionist theory in that connection is also an important element of constructing a subjective reality. But this connection pales in comparison to the relationship Christians have with each other and, more importantly, God himself. Quillin points out that God initiates the relationship with his creation. This objective relationship is the foundation of a spiritual worldview.

On a separate but related to my research on psychedelics, this article is a catalyst for deeper thinking. I’m curious if my original proposition that the villainization of psychedelics as a social construct is too limited a view. Some objective reality exists when defining the dangers of unconstrained use of psychedelics. I don’t argue that point. What I do argue was the degree to which the dangers were reacted. I must ask myself if the reaction was right, but the overreaction was a social construct to serve the power elite’s purposes and, therefore, socially constructed.

**Source Eleven:**Reichard, J. D. (2023). Applied and clinical sociology: A Christian perspective. In R. Smith & P. Wexler (Eds.), *The Routledge International Handbook of Sociology and Christianity* (1st ed., pp. 369-379). Routledge.

**Comment 1:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:**“A focus on “change” is a distinguishing aspect of applied and clinical sociology (Kallen 1995:2). In fact, it may be argued that the key to succinctly defining clinical sociology is the concept of intervention – that is, the act of facilitating social change (Lehnerer 2003). Lester Frank Ward was perhaps the earliest sociologist to set applied sociology against “pure” sociology: “the problem of pure sociology is to explain the causes of unhappy marriages, while that of applied sociology is to show how they can be removed” (1903:409).” (pg. 370)

**Essential Element:** Clinical and applied sociology are focused on action and motivating change. This is different from “pure” sociology, which examines society through a particular sociological theory or lens.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:**This is additive to my research in solidifying the definition of applied and clinical sociology. It is sometimes difficult to find succinct definitions in the social sciences.

**Contextualization:** This paragraph sets the stage for the follow-on discussion on value judgment as applied to social observation. To effect change, a value judgment must be made. Identifying the worldview through which a researcher (especially a sociologist) analyzes a problem is important. A secular viewpoint will approach problems from a more utilitarian perspective. What is “good” or “bad” for a group will be based on different metrics than a Christian researcher might use.

**Comment 2:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “Unlike the tendency toward grievance and pessimism often associated with critical theory, applied and clinical sociologists have a history of focusing on, formulating, and implementing solutions to social problems.” (Pg. 371)

**Essential Element:** Although applied and clinical sociology tends toward optimism, I tend to be pessimistic when critiquing authors and their respective theories.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** While digesting this quote, I realized that I need to balance my optimism and pessimism when analyzing/critiquing articles.

**Contextualization:**I intend to attempt to analyze a similar theme in this article. There is always something to learn from others’ theories and analyses. This is one of the more enjoyable developmental reading assignments I’ve done in my time at OGS. I find myself having to be careful to not enter too many *rabbit* *holes*.

**Note:** I present this last developmental reading as the most challenging and my attempt to synthesize a couple of theories that have emerged during my research. First, my current area of research is in the efficacy of psychedelic medicines for use in mental health therapy. Second, imaginaries as a postmodern theory seem to be closely related to social constructionism, which I’ve employed in a recent research proposal. Finally, this article touches, although it does not explicitly refer to, the applied side of sociology. It is a multidisciplinary inquiry into a social issue and examines the potential for social change.

**Source Twelve:** Schwarz-Plaschg, C. (2022). Socio-psychedelic imaginaries: envisioning and building legal psychedelic worlds in the United States. *European Journal of Futures Research*.

**Comment 1:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “What is at stake among the broad variety of actors engaged in these negotiations—ranging from researchers, clinicians, therapists, people suffering from mental health issues, psychedelic underground experimenters, drug policy reform activists, religious communities, attorneys, to entrepreneurs and government representatives—is how to envision and steer the responsible societal reintegration of psychedelics. The article lays out the spectrum of visions and practices for building legal psychedelic worlds that are currently existing in the US. From a global perspective, the US can be understood as a test bed from which lessons might be drawn for how to best build a post-prohibitionist world for psychedelics.” (Pg 3)

**Essential Element:** For me, the key word in this long quote is “responsible,” as it refers to the reintegration of psychedelics as a legitimate therapeutic for mental health issues. This article examines more than just the therapeutic aspects of psychedelics; my interest lies in this realm.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:**This is an additive idea to my research and the overall focus of this course. Responsible reintegration of a substance requires an understanding of and operations in the complexities of a social and political environment.

**Contextualization:**  Schwartz-Plaschg succinctly identifies several stakeholders who reside in this ecology. Later in the article, she identifies these same stakeholders in socio-psychedelic imaginaries. This categorization helps contextualize the issues associated with reintegrating these medicines.

**Comment 2:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “I carve out the four socio-psychedelic imaginaries that make up the current US psychedelic ecosystem: the biomedicalization imaginary, decriminalization imaginary, legalization imaginary, and sacramental imaginary.” (Pg 3)

**Essential Element:** The author identifies the “imaginaries,” which she uses as a lens to examine the four major efforts for integrating/legitimizing psychedelics in society. She focuses on the United States and its associated social, legal, and ethical ideas.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This quote (section of the paper) offers some new insight into the areas of society the proponents of psychedelics are focusing on. The “imaginaries” are a way to view these societal elements, but that can be expanded outside the postmodern worldview.

**Contextualization:**It would be interesting to view these four sociological imaginaries through the lens of a Christian. Each of the imaginaries – biomedical, legalization, decriminalization, and sacramental – could be critiqued from a Christian perspective. I suspect the *sacramental* imaginary would either be the most challenging or the easiest critique. The connecting threads would most certainly be easily identified from the Christian worldview.

**Comment 3:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “Several study participants have admitted to me that they turned towards underground psychedelic practices once the studies had ended….” (Pg 6)

**Essential Element:** The quote is longer, but the bottom line is that some of the concerns of researchers in previous studies have come to fruition. Once the initial study is complete, there will be no follow-up for continued mental health care. This forces research participants who were helped to turn toward less legal methods for continuing treatment.

**Additive/Variant Analysis: This is the first time I’ve seen any reporting from past research participants and their post-treatment challenges.**

**Contextualization:** Robin Carhart-Harris, a notable researcher in psychedelic-assisted treatment, discussed this potential issue in a podcast with Andrew Huberman. He worried that there was insufficient funding and support to provide treatment beyond the initial research study. This also points out that the initial efficacy of psychedelic-assisted treatment may not be a one-time remedy and that follow-on treatment, with or without the medicine, is likely necessary. This is the first report I’ve seen that directly quotes past research participants and describes their post-treatment challenges.

**Works Cited**

Adu-Febiri, F., & Quinless, J. M. (2016). Social design, social practice & social change: Re-visioning applied sociology. The International Journal of Interdisciplinary Organizational Studies, 11(2), 15–26.

Griffiths, R. R., Richards, W. A., McCann, U., & Jesse, R. (2006). Psilocybin can occasion mystical-type experiences having substantial and sustained personal meaning and spiritual significance. Psychopharmacology, 187(3), 268–283.

Mills, C. W., & Wolfe, A. (2000). The power elite: New edition. Oxford University Press.

Mills, C. Wright. (2002). The Sociological Imagination. 40th Anniversary Edition. Oxford University Press.

Neeley, E. (2008). Doing Sociology: Applied Sociology for Justice System Policy Reform 1. Sociological Origins, 5(2), 39-44,47.

O'Neill, T. (2019). Chaos: Charles Manson, the CIA, and the secret history of the sixties. HarperCollins.

Quillin, Amy (2003) "Through a Mirror Dimly: Social Constructionism Through the Lens of Faith," Growth: The Journal of the Association for Christians in Student Development: Vol. 3: No. 3, Article 6.

Reichard, J. D. (2023). Applied and clinical sociology: A Christian perspective. In R. Smith & P. Wexler (Eds.), *The Routledge International Handbook of Sociology and Christianity* (1st ed., pp. 369-379). Routledge.

Schwarz-Plaschg, C. (2022). Socio-psychedelic imaginaries: envisioning and building legal psychedelic worlds in the United States. European Journal of Futures Research, 10(1).

Shahidullah, S. M. (1998). Useful sociology: Can sociological knowledge be valuable in policy-making?*The International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy, 18*(1), 86-112.

Thibodeaux, J. (2015). Production as social change: Policy sociology as a public good. *Sociological Spectrum, 35*(6), 543–555.

Weinstein, J. (2003). Civics as Applied Sociology.*Social Justice, 30*(4), 21-39.