

## Contact Email for January 2015

The American Sociological Association, under the banner of their equivalent to our Applied Sociology, have a penchant for on line email debates about sociology in all its various aspects. Currently they are debating underemployment and unemployment, government employment, the discipline of sociology, and retirement.

Extracts from one contributor, Dr Hans Bakker, points to Rural Sociology as a regular employer of sociologist despite academic sociologists regard it as of no importance.

*"Many rural sociologists have been employed outside of academia in practical settings, both in their own countries and abroad. Many U.S. rural sociologists have worked all over the world. I feel that general sociology often has an urban and even metropolitan bias. Many rural sociologists know a great deal about general sociology but few general sociologists know all that much about rural sociology.*

*I know that for some general sociologists, mainstream or heterodox, the notion of "applied sociology" can mean either a kind of Neo-Marxian "public sociology" (political economic health) or a kind of Neo-Freudian "therapeutic sociology" (mental health). Then there is applied sociology related to demographic research (e.g. The Census)."*

In answer to the above Dr. Tom Scheff points to his article:

*In the American Sociologist article below, I propose that our discipline is badly in need of fundamental reform. Like most other disciplines, it is ruled by an out of date doctrine.*

<http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s12108-014-9241-x>

Dr Elinore Lurie suggests: *I think we're engaging, on behalf of the discipline, self-correction and adaptation to contemporary times and conditions. Disciplines and organizations that don't do these things lose their relevance and begin to be outmoded. Certain types of change are necessary for survival.*

If you join ASA you can get all the contributions to these debates. What I get out of it is how close we are to the same situations. Limited interest by academics to the sociology that is being done beyond their borders. Kudos for the academic comes from having published refereed papers, and book. Both of which have little or no value for the applied sociologist.

What enhances the Applied Sociologist's reputation is the usefulness, accuracy and cost effectiveness of the material he provides for his employer. Much of which is not publishable in the academic sense, because of copyright, commercial in confidence, or its format is different to that which a publisher is looking for.

Academic and Applied sociologists are both sociologists they work in different environments; the Applied sociologist in many different environments. They need to appreciate each other's work, as being equal in applying

From my personal perspective one impediment is that ASA views itself as a disciplinary rather than a professional organization. The American

Harry Perlstadt comments that the *Psychological Association and American Economic Association are both disciplinary and professionally oriented with sections/divisions for non-academics and support for those inside and outside academia.* The same is true for TASA.