

Greetings All,

Last month I mentioned the email debates that were going on between members of the American Sociological Association. It all started from an email early asking whether retired sociologists were occupying their time in a sociologically productive way. From the response to this came further exploration of what retired sociologists might do, part of this discussion splintered off on the question of volunteer teaching in university departments and more generally mentoring students. Then Judith Blau, Professor of sociology at the University of North Carolina, then brought in the idea of developing a group based on the 'Elders':

The Elders are a group of international leaders who in retirement speak out on matters of concern to the global community (say on matters of human freedom, climate change, or racism). Their mandate is global. <http://theelders.org/>

Are we not the elders in the sociological community? We probably have mature and nuanced views about, say high incarceration rates in the U.S., high poverty levels in America, the U.S.'s punitive policies regarding migrants.

Which got taken up by a large number of people. It also got quite a few people asking to be removed from the ASA's Retirees mailing list. This then brought suggestions for a book about the work being done by retired sociologists, session for retirees at the Annual Meeting, ASA regional groups for retirees to look at issues in their particular area, and so on. The debate continues.

What Judith asks of the U.S. could just as easily be asked of Australia. I know the Applied Sociology Group, is not all retirees, but some will be getting ever closer. What will you do?

Last week I was also concerned at the small number of people that google groups registered as having looked at my May contact email. For a long time only one person only was recorded, today it stand at only six. I don't know if you can read it without getting registered, but with the small response I wonder if the Contact email is worth the effort.

The popular opinion is that social media has the power to transform. Therefore do my efforts serve any useful purpose? If they do, am I using the right medium? If only six out of the eighty odd members of the Applied Sociology group will even read this month's effort, will that signify that I am wasting my time.

On that cheery note, I will leave it. If you do get this far. Please give an opinion, even if it's only an email with Yes or No.

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