

## **Sabbatical Report**

### **Robert K. Merton: The Pursuit of Social Justice and the Production of Knowledge Larry Stern, Department of Sociology Spring, 2017**

As laid out in my proposal, I requested a sabbatical leave so that I could, without distraction, immerse myself into the life and professional career of Robert K. Merton (hereafter RKM), widely considered to be one of the most important figures ever to work in the discipline of sociology. More specifically, I wrote:

“The research I intend to conduct during my sabbatical semester has three main objectives. First, and more generally, it will contribute to my continuing efforts to produce an intellectual biography of RKM. By focusing on RKM’s public and behind-the-scenes work with regard to issues of social justice – i.e., dominant – subordinate group relations, prejudice toward and discrimination against Blacks, Jews, women, and the poor – I will provide an analysis that will correct some and supplement others’ efforts to examine RKM’s life work. At the same time, this focus will also fulfill my second objective, which is to learn more about the various social and cognitive contexts that have in the past – and currently still do – shape social science research on issues of social justice. My third objective – particularly relevant today – is to examine the general issues surrounding the relationship between sociologists and policymakers and the role of values – and potential bias – in the production of knowledge, its reception by policymakers, and how it is presented to the public.”

In my proposal I made it clear that my sabbatical work would contribute to a much larger ongoing research effort, begun some time ago, to produce an intellectual biography of RKM that places his life and work within a broader social and cultural context. At present, although there are a number of books that critically discuss RKM’s work, a full-fledged biography that encompasses his entire career has not appeared. Nor has RKM produced an autobiography although, remarkably, during his later years, he published twenty papers that amounted to 645 pages of text that either briefly discussed his private life, traced the continuing development of his ideas through time, or recounted reminiscences about his working relationships with close colleagues.

Over the years, prior to the sabbatical period, I have assembled more than 2,500 documents – including personal correspondence, lecture notes, unpublished manuscripts, funded and unfunded grant proposals, the minutes to various organization meetings – from visits to three archives: (1) the Robert K. Merton Papers, 1928-2002, and (2) the papers of the Bureau of Applied Social Research (BASR), where Merton served as Assistant Director, each housed at Columbia University’s Rare Book and Manuscript Library, and (3) the papers of the American Jewish Committee (AJC), where Merton served as consultant to the Committee of Scientific Research, 1945-1946. These documents, for the most part, focused on RKM’s early years, and they allowed me to follow the development of his ideas over time and to see how significant others had, through private correspondence as well as direct interaction, played a role in shaping those ideas. Most important, the information contained in these private papers clearly indicates that the

information that appears in RKM's autobiographical writings, merely scratch the surface of his remarkable career.

During the sabbatical period it was my intention to focus primarily, as stated above, on (1) RKM's public and behind-the-scenes work with regard to issues of social justice and (2) his analysis of the symbiotic relationship between sociologists, who as "experts" are called upon to produce sound knowledge, and policymakers, who either use, abuse, or ignore the recommendations based on social science research. Using the published "finding aids" of the three archives, I was able to identify hundreds of folders that contained information germane to these concerns. Based on these leads, during the sabbatical period that ran from mid-January to mid-May, I collected an additional 3,394 pages of documents.

Merely obtaining these documents – through the tedious process of sifting through thousands of documents, choosing which ones were relevant, photographing them, uploading them to "Drop Box" and last, downloading them to my computer – was of course the easy part. Transcribing the relevant portions of the cache of 3,394 pages of documents and incorporating them into a "Chronological Timeline" – a Timeline that now amounts to 730 pages of typed notes – though incredibly rewarding, was (and still is as the work continues) far more difficult.

The specifics of what I have learned – scattered in these 730 pages of notes – will appear in the papers I am presenting at conferences and submitting for publication, as well as appearing in the finished intellectual biography currently in progress. But perhaps a partial listing of the types and subject-matter of documents reviewed and analyzed to date will suffice. The information contained in these materials has never been published and thus does not appear in any analyses of RKM's career to date (see Appendix A for a full listing of these materials and their location in the archives).

Materials that I have assembled, transcribed, and analyzed during the sabbatical period that are relevant to RKM's work on issues of social justice include:

- RKM's personal correspondence with dozens of leading scholars and activists concerned with issues of social justice such as Catherine Bauer Wurster, Ralph Bunche, E. Franklin Frazier, Gordon Allport, Richard Cloward, Harold Laski, and Kenneth Clark;
- RKM's lecture notes dating from the 1930s up through the early 2000s on race relations, juvenile delinquency, and inequality that document his developing ideas;
- RKM's unpublished manuscripts such as "The Caucasian Problem in the U. S." (1947), "Social Fictions and Social Facts: The Dynamics of Race Relations in Hilltown" (1949), "The Jewish Problem in Crafttown" (1949), "A Theory of Racial Epithets" (1971), and "Blacks in Sports: Changing Opportunity Structures" (1994);
- RKM's unpublished study of the first federal interracial housing project in the U.S., funded by the Lavanburg Foundation (1947);

- RKM's leading role in the Institute of Community Relations which led to the creation of the Sydenham Hospital, the first interracial hospital in New York (1947) and research on the epidemiology of hypertension among Negroes and the efficacy of an educational program focused on the reduction of venereal disease;
- RKM's participation in a radio series "What Do We Know About Prejudice" sponsored by the University of Chicago Round Table (1948);
- RKM's pivotal role in the efforts of social scientists to weigh in on *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, 1954-1956. Many know that he was one of the signatories of "The Effects of Segregation and the Consequences of Desegregation: A Social Science Statement," which is typically attributed to Kenneth Clark. In fact, Clark lived across the street from RKM and the social science statement was fully edited by RKM in his backyard;
- RKM's continued involvement as a consultant for a Proposed Community Action Research to Further Harmonious Desegregation;
- RKM's role as a member of the following commissions and committees: (1) NY State Commission on Discrimination in Housing, 1949, (2) U.S. Commission on Race and Housing, 1956-1957, (3) American Academy of Arts and Sciences Committee on "The Negro in America Today," 1965, (4) American Association for the Advancement of Science, Committee on Institutions for the Application of Science to Society's Problems Project, 1972-1973, (5) National Academy of Sciences Committee on Human Rights, 1972, and (6) Advisory Committee for Ethnic Studies, 1973;
- RKM's role as consultant for the Harlem Youth Opportunities Unlimited, Inc., the Stern Fund, which supported Negro voter registration in the South and created New Orleans' first subdivision for Negroes, the United Negro Fund, and The American Nurses' Association;
- Unpublished research conducted at the Bureau of Applied Social Research under RKM's direction, including a study to test the response of Negro citizens to a pamphlet *The Negro and World War II*, and tests designed to see whether a comic book, *There Are No Master Races*, and a series of cartoons depicting a character named *Mr. Biggott*, reduced the prejudicial attitudes of readers;
- Minutes of monthly meetings of both the Department of Scientific Research and of the Advisory Committee of the American Jewish Committee, on which RKM served during 1945-1946. These minutes document discussions related to dozens of proposed research projects whose goal was to modify prejudicial attitudes in general and anti-Semitism in particular;
- In the wake of McCarthyism and widespread censorship, RKM coauthored a defense and analysis of the freedom to read;

- RKM's commencement addresses, such as "Thoughts on Our Present Discontents" delivered at Kalamazoo College and Tulane University during the early 1970s;

Materials that I have assembled, transcribed and analyzed during the sabbatical period that are relevant to RKM's work on the role of experts and the relationship between social scientists and policy-makers include:

- RKM's keynote address at the Conference on the 'Expert' and Applied Social Science, 1948;
- RKM's unpublished "Some Factors Affecting the Initiation of Applied Social Research," circa 1940s, "The Expert in Applied Social Science," 1943-1948, "The Expert and Research in Applied Social Science," 1947, "Some Social Responsibilities of Technologists," 1947, "The Role of Applied Social Science in the Formation of Policy," 1948-1949, "Utilization of Applied Social Research," 1949, and "Applied Social Research and Business Decisions: A Preliminary Case Report," 1951;
- RKM's unpublished "The Role of Social Research in Business Administration: A Case Study Based Primarily Upon the 1930-1949 Experience of the Opinion Research Section of the Chief Statistician's Division of AT&T (with E. CV. Devereux, Jr.), 2 vols., BASR, 1956
- RKM's consultant work for the Carnegie, Ford, Rockefeller, Russell Sage and Sloan Foundations, the Social Science Research Council, the Rand Corporation, and the Salk Institute;
- RKM's Lecture Notes, "Social Theory Applied to Social Research" (Course #213-214), 1943-1953
- RKM's role as consultant for the United States Commission on Civil Rights and reviewer of a proposed "Design for a National Longitudinal Study of School Desegregation," 1974.

As listed in my proposal, I had five tangible long-term and short-term goals: (1) professional development, in the sense that I would continue my long-standing research for a sociologically informed biography of RKM; (2) writing papers that will be presented at professional conferences and/or be submitted for publication in the reputable journals in the discipline; (3) the development of a much improved Social Problems (SOC1306) course by incorporating knowledge gained throughout the sabbatical period; (4) talks with colleagues that would lead to the creation of a Learning Community melding a HIST1302 class with my improved SOC1306; and (5) I proposed to organize a program, open to the public, that focuses on the production of knowledge and the symbiotic relationship between social scientists and policymakers. I shall discuss each in turn.

## **1. Professional Development**

It seems clear that the objectives of my sabbatical that pertain to my professional development have been amply met. The information that I gained from examining 3,394 pages of documents from the archives at Columbia University and the American Jewish Committee concerning (1) RKM's public and behind-the-scenes work with regard to issues of social justice, as well as (2) the information gained that is germane to the various social and cognitive contexts that have in the past – and currently still do – shape social science research on issues of social justice will most definitely contribute to my continuing efforts to produce a sociologically informed intellectual biography of RKM. Moreover, by examining RKM's work that centered on the symbiotic relationship between social scientists and policy-makers that were based not only on his theoretical concerns in sociology but also on his first-hand experiences, I have come to a better understanding of the general issues surrounding the relationship between sociologists and policymakers. Since previous scholars who have examined RKM's career rarely mention – much less thoroughly analyze – his life-long abiding concern with issues of social justice and the relationship between sociologists and policymakers, this work will fill a void in Mertonian scholarship.

Note: As is typically the case in large-scale research projects, the best laid plans often go awry. Seldom does everything fall neatly into place – and so it is here. It was my intention to conduct an in depth joint interview with two of my former professors at Columbia University, who closely collaborated with RKM during the last forty years of his career (1962 – 2002): Dr. Harriet A. Zuckerman, currently the Senior Vice President of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and Professor Emerita of Columbia University, and Dr. Jonathan R. Cole, currently John Mitchell Mason Professor of Sociology at Columbia University and former Provost and Dean of Faculties of Columbia University. Zuckerman was closest to RKM – they were married – and I was her research assistant during my graduate studies. Cole was also a member of the “inner circle.” Each would have been a fount of information about RKM's experiences with policymakers and no doubt would have been able to fill in missing pieces of incidents of which I am already aware, as well as lead me to additional materials. As it happened, the logistics could not be worked out. Circumstances were such that a convenient time to meet, either individually or jointly, was simply not available. As it turns out, this lapse is not serious. I have more than enough documents that still need to be transcribed and I will be able to catch up with them in the not-to-distant-future.

## **2. Conference Presentations and Publications**

As previously mentioned, the intellectual biography I have undertaken is a (massive) work in progress, to be completed, no doubt, once I am no longer subject to the interruptions of organizational life here at the college and am able to engage in the type of relaxed concentration needed to complete such a task. In the interim, of course, I press ahead. Three papers are in various stages of completion, with others still on the drawing board. Each of these, of course, will eventually be incorporated into the biography as separate chapters. The first, “Robert K. Merton as Sociologist, Public Intellectual, Social Critic, and Concerned Citizen,” has been accepted and will be presented at the 50<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of Cheiron: The International Society for the History of Behavioral and Social Sciences, scheduled for June 21 to June 24, 2018. The abstract for this paper may be found in Appendix B. This paper will eventually be submitted to *The Journal for the History of the Behavioral Sciences*. The second and third papers, “Robert K.

Merton and Double-Ledger Bookkeeping: Intertwining the Subjective and Objective Components of Social Action,” and “Robert K. Merton’s Obsession: The Unanticipated Consequences of Action,” will be submitted to and likely appear in either *The American Sociologist* or some other journal devoted to the history of sociology.

### **3. Re-vamping of my Social Problems course (SOC11306)**

The main goal of my Social Problems classes (as well as my Introduction to Sociology classes) is to get students to realize that a sociological perspective has relevance to their daily lives and that it can also deepen their understanding of the larger issues of the day. During the summer of 2017, after the sabbatical period had ended, I thoroughly revamped my Social Problems class in two ways. First, by drawing upon RKM’s behind the scenes work throughout the 1940s – 1960s, I introduced a historical perspective that made our class discussions more incisive when it came to issues of social justice, including current debates on race and ethnic relations, immigration, and sexual assault. Second, I included an entire unit on the relationship between social scientists and policy makers, using not only historical materials, but also current information on the role of so-called “think tanks” in society, some leaning to the left of the political spectrum, like the Brookings Institution, the Center for American Progress, the Guttmacher Institute, the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, and the Urban Institute, some leaning to the right of the political spectrum, like the Heritage Foundation, the American Enterprise Institute, the Manhattan Institute for Policy Research, the Cato Institute, and the Hoover Institution, and others claiming an independent or centrist stance, such as the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Kaiser Family Foundation, the Council on Foreign Relations, the Center for Immigration Studies, and the National Bureau of Economic Research. Each of these, of course, compete for the attention of government policymakers.

Since all of my classes can be characterized as “works in progress,” I will no doubt continue to incorporate newly found knowledge into Social Problems, as well as into my Introduction to Sociology course. This past year, for example, I have introduced a new unit on “anti-intellectual strains in American culture” that most certainly affects the role of social scientific research in the political decision-making context.

### **4. Discussions Concerning the Development of a new Learning Community Course**

As originally conceived, my plan was to cajole, wheedle, or bamboozle one (or more) of my colleagues in the history department to develop a new learning community course that would meld my Social Problems course with their History 1302 offering.

This new course, in my view, by incorporating unpublished archival materials and taking the students “behind the scenes,” would provide a deeper and richer account and understanding than most courses that presently offer only key events in American history that center on issues of social justice. Equally, if not more important, the learning community course would focus on the role that historians and sociologists have played in the investigation of these issues through their research, participation as members of local and national committees and commissions, and as consultants working with policymakers to forge programs designed to ameliorate many of the social problems that have marked our society. Here, the relationship between social scientists

and policymakers, often quite contentious, would be highlighted. By examining both successful programs *and* those that either failed to get off the ground or were derailed by political events, students would attain a better appreciation of the constraints involved in “getting things done.” Last, as I envision it, this new course would stress historical and sociological methodology – how we go about our business of defining research problems, collecting relevant data, and interpreting what we find. Each student would conduct a case study that focuses upon efforts to provide solutions to social problems – for example, on the failure of our nation’s “war on poverty” – that involves archival research. As the writer and critic H. L. Mencken was fond of saying, “For every human problem, there is a neat, simple solution – and it is wrong.”

Thus far, I have enticed one colleague to take my proposal seriously, and talks continue intermittently.

## **5. Conference on the relationship between social scientists and policymakers**

Back on December 8, 2015, in the pre-Trump era, I included the following in my sabbatical proposal:

“Since we apparently live in a time when knowledge has become “politicized” to the extent that opposing views become polarized and caricatured beyond recognition, it is not surprising that there is increasing hostility toward and mistrust of social science findings. This has serious implications for a democratic process where the careful assessment of “facts” informs citizens’ decisions. Students – and many in the larger community – are not oblivious of this dangerous trend. As a result, after the sabbatical semester, I propose to organize a program, open to the public, that focuses on the production of knowledge and the symbiotic relationship between social scientists and policymakers.”

Today, our students and members of the larger community are confronted with such notions as “truthiness,” which is defined as an emotional quality of a particular statement – it just “feels” true in your gut – without regard to logic, factual evidence, or close examination. Or they are confronted with the trilogy of “post-truth,” “post-factual,” and “alternative facts” which refer to a political culture in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief. Or, last, they are bombarded with charges of “fake news” whenever the alleged “news” uncovers something that the President prefers to “wish away.” It is no easy task to navigate through the morass of conflicting claims and counterclaims that appear on news and social media.

All this is to say that the need for a conference that focuses upon the production and role of knowledge in the political decision-making process and, more particularly, the relationship between social scientists who as “experts” are called upon to produce sound knowledge, and policymakers, who either use, abuse, or ignore recommendations based on this knowledge, is perhaps more acute than when it was originally proposed some two years ago. The issue, however, is the scale and scope of such a conference and the extent to which College resources would be made available. A proposal that outlines variations on such a conference, based on available resources, is included in Appendix C.

## Appendix A: Archival Documents

### 1. Robert K. Merton Papers, 1928-2002, Columbia University's Rare Book and Manuscript Library

The Merton Archives is 220 linear feet and contains 475 manuscript boxes. The "finding aid" is posted online and can be accessed at [http://findingaids.cul.columbia.edu/ead/nnc-rb/ldpd\\_6911309/dsc](http://findingaids.cul.columbia.edu/ead/nnc-rb/ldpd_6911309/dsc)

#### A. Unpublished Manuscripts:

- "E.A. Hooton: Cassandra or Sibyl?," Box 315, Folder 6
- "The Caucasian Problem and How it Grows," 1947, Box 414, Folder 5
- "What do we know about Prejudice," Box 302, Folder 20
- "Social Fictions and Social Facts: The Dynamics of Race Relations in Hilltown," Box 215, Folders 6-7
- "The Jewish Problem in Crafttown," Box 215, Folder 1
- "Patterns of Social Life: Explorations in the Sociology of Housing," successive drafts, Boxes 210-215
- "Comments on Design for a Nat'l Longitudinal Study of School Desegregation," Box 315, Folder 12
- "Ethnic Epithets: A Study in Language as a Means of Social Control," Box 123, Folder 11; Box 393, Folder 12
- "Thoughts on Our Present Discontents," Commencement Address, Kalamazoo College, 1970
- "Blaming the Victim" and "The Joys of Victimhood," 1989, Box 392, Folder 5
- "Blacks in Sports: Access to Opportunity Structure, 1990-1993, Box 275, Folders 2-3

#### B. Early Drafts of Published Manuscripts and Correspondence

- "Intermarriage and the Social Structure: Fact and Theory," 1941-1953, Box 300, Folders 17-18
- "The Self-fulfilling Prophecy," successive drafts, Box 302, Folder 302
- "Discrimination and the American Creed," early drafts and correspondence, Box 302, Folders 9-10
- "A Typology of Ethnic Discrimination and Prejudice," draft; Box 315, Folder 17
- "The Freedom to Read: Perspective and Program," draft, correspondence, reviews, 1957, Box 319, Folders 13-14
- "Insiders and Outsiders" – early drafts & Correspondence, Box 308, Folder 16; Box 309, Folders 1-5
- "The Blackism Doctrine," Box 269, Folders 11-13

#### C. Interracial Housing Study:

Lavanburg Foundation Housing Proposal and notes (Interracial Housing Study), Boxes 207 and 208

Lavanburg Foundation Housing Study Correspondence, 1944-1961, Box 209, Folders 8-10

**D. Correspondence with Scholars and Activists Concerned with Issues of Social Justice and/or the Relationship Between Social Scientists and Policymakers:**

Gordon Allport, 1939-1945, Box 353, Folder 13  
Bernard Berelson, 1945-1958, Box 8, Folder 3  
Ralph Bunche, 1949-1950, Box 251, Folder 2  
Kenneth Clark, 1965-1995, 1975-1988, Box 355, Folders 6-7  
Richard Cloward, 1966-1977, Box 14, Folder 4  
Alfred Cohn, 1942-1949, 1963, Box 14, Folder 11  
Kingsley Davis, 1937-1948, Box 251, Folders 3, 17; Box 19, Folders 4-7  
E. Franklin Frazier, 1960-1963, Box 251, Folder 5  
Al Gouldner, 1943-1980, Box 33, Folders 8-9; Box 34, Folders 1-7  
Granville Hicks, 1939-1949, 1982, Box 38, Folders 9-10  
Marie Jahoda, 1947-2002, Box 43, Folder 5  
Abram Kardiner, 1943-1953, Box 357, Folder 8  
Harold Laski, 1942-1963, 1984-1992, Box 69, Folder 7  
Harold Laswell, 1944-1968, Box 358, Folder 5  
Alain Locke, 1931-1932, 1980, Box 358, Folder 15  
Leo Lowenthal, 1943-1958, Box 54, Folder 7; 1953-1955, 1973-1993, Box 358, Folder 17  
Robert Lynd, 1943-1980, Box 54, Folders 9-10  
Robert McIver, 1939-1971, Box 358, Folder 19  
Margaret Mead, Box 359, Folder 1  
C. Wright Mills, 1939-1953, Box 359, Folder 3  
Ashley Montagu, 1938-1954, 1975-1984, Box 59, Folders 4-5  
Wilbert E. Moore, 1940-1951, 1983, Box 59, Folder 6  
Daniel Patrick Moynihan, 1992-1998, Box 59, Folder 10  
Edwin R. Murrow, 1942-1963, 1984-1992, Box 69, Folder 7  
Talcott Parsons, 1936-1976, Box 65, Folders 1-5, Box 148, Folders 3-5, Box 359, Folder 15  
David Reisman 1947-1961, Box 148, Folder 9  
George E. Simpson, 1936-1954, 1971-1999, Box 82, Folders 8-9  
Bernhard J. Stern, 1944-1957, Box 370, Folder 16  
Louis Wirth, 1945-1949, Box 363, Folder 13

**E. Foundation Work:**

Carnegie Foundation, 1948-1953, Box 204, Folders 5-6;  
Ford Foundation, 1942, 1953, Box 154, Folder 5; 1966-1970, Box 158, Folder 6  
Ford Foundation, 1949-1980, Box 162, Folders 3-11; Box 369, Folder 3  
Lavanburg Foundation Housing Proposal (Interracial Housing Study), Box 208  
Rand Corporation, 1949, 1954, 1973, Box 71, Folder 2  
Rockefeller Foundation, 1943-1956, Box 172, Folders 9-10

Russell sage Foundation, 1967-1998, Box 172, Folders 12-13, Box 173, Folders 1-12,  
Box 174, Folders 1-3  
Salk Institute, Box 174, Folders 4-6  
Sloan Foundation, 1976-1996, Box 174, Folder 7  
Social Science Research Council, 1947, Box 207, Folder 3  
Social Science Research Council, 1946-1970, Box 174, Folders 8-13

#### **F. Applied Sociology and the Role of Experts in Business and Government:**

Conference on the Expert and Applied Social Science, 1948 Box 204, Folder 7  
"Some Factors Affecting the Initiation of Applied Social Research," circa 1940s, Box  
202, Folder 10  
"Applied Social Research and Business decisions: A Preliminary Case Report," 1951,  
Box 201, Folder 13  
"The Expert in Applied Social Science," 1943-1948. Box 204 Folder 16-18, Box 205  
Folder 1  
"Utilization of Applied Social Research, 1949 Box 207, Folder 5  
"The Expert and Research in Applied Social Science," 1947, Box 302, Folder 5  
"Some Social Responsibilities of Technologists," 1947, Box 302, Folder 6  
"The Role of Applied Social Science in the Formation of Policy," 1948-1949 (2 Folders)  
Box 303 Folder 4-5

#### **G. Committees, Commissions, Non-Profit Organizations: Advisor/Consultant**

Citizens' Housing Council of New York, Inc, 1946-1950, Box 207, Folder 14  
Commission on Race and Housing, 1956-1957, Box 207, Folder 15  
NAACP-LDEF Social Science Committee, *Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka*,  
1954-1956, Box 10, Folders 7-9  
United States Commission on Civil Rights, 1974, undated, Box 176, Folder 11  
American Academy of Arts and Sciences; Committees: The Negro in America Today,  
1965, Box 156, Folder 16  
American Association for the Advancement of Science: Institutions for the Application  
of Science to Society's Problems Project, 1972-1973, Box 156, Folder 20  
Advisory Committee for Ethnic Studies, 1973, Box 181, Folder 5  
National Academy of Sciences, Committee on Human Rights, 1972-1996, Box 61, Folder  
1  
National Urban League, 1975-1979, Box, 62, Folder 1  
United Negro College Fund, 1964-1965, Box 93, Folder 9  
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural organization (UNESCO), 1948-1976,  
Box 93, Folder 8

#### **H. Non-Profit Organizations: Consultant**

Sydenham Hospital--Institute of Community Relations, 1947-1948, Box 176, Folder 2  
Harlem Youth Opportunities Unlimited, Inc.--Consultant, 1962  
Edgar Stern Family Fund, 1959-1961, Box 86, Folder 6; Box 160, Folder 11

## **2. Archives of the Bureau of Applied Social Research Records (BASR), 1944-1976, Columbia University's Rare Book and Manuscript Library**

The Bureau Archives contains 103 manuscript boxes. The "finding aid" is posted online and can be accessed at [http://findingaids.cul.columbia.edu/ead/mnc-rb/ldpd\\_5012632/dsc](http://findingaids.cul.columbia.edu/ead/mnc-rb/ldpd_5012632/dsc)

### **A. Research Reports conducted at the Bureau under RKM's supervision (in chronological order) that addressed issues of race relations, prejudice and discrimination, labor, and homelessness:**

Herta Herzog, "Minority Groups and the 1941 Mayoralty Election, 1941," Box 2, Folder B-0125

Herta Herzog "The Negro and the War"-Test of an OWI Pamphlet," 1943, Box 6, Folder B-0192

Goodwin Watson, "A Critical Analysis of the Pictures in 'There Are No Master Races'" – Study #1, 1945, Box 7, Folder B-0212-1

Goodwin Watson, "The Effects of 'There Are No Master Races' Upon Knowledge and Attitude of Readers" – Study #2, 1945, Box 7, Folder B0212-2

Bernard Berelson, "The Story of Labor – A Study of Readership," 1945, Box 7, Folder B-0213

Bernard Berelson, "The Ghosts Go West," 1945, Box 7, Folder B-0214

Bernard Berelson and Patricia Salter, "Analysis of the depiction of American minorities in magazines, daytime serials, newsreels, and advertisements," 1944, Box 7, Folder B-0215

Bernard Berelson, "Experiment in Serial Reproduction: Six chains of three men were used to discover how much of the original contents were communicated and what additions and distortions introduced in each retelling of a cartoon about minority groups within the labor movement," 1946, Box 10, Folder 0244

Patricia Kendall and Katherine Wolf, "The Personification of Prejudice as a Device in Educational Propaganda:

An Experiment in Product Improvement," 1946 (150 men were interviewed as to their understanding of three "Mr. Biggott" cartoons), Box 11, Folder 0250-1

Patricia Kendall and Katherine Wolf, "The Women Meet Mr. Biggott," 1946 (692 women were interviewed as to their understanding of three "Mr. Biggott" cartoons), Box 11, Folder 0250-2

Patricia Kendall and Katherine Wolf, "Testing Cartoon Comprehension: A Comparison of Two Different

Methods," 1946, Box 11, Folder 0250-3

C. Wright Mills, "Report of a Pilot Study of Puerto Rican Migration to New York," Box 14, Folder B-0303

Leo Srole and Robert Bower, "Voting Behavior of American Ethnic Groups, Box 16, Box B-0334

Leo Srole, Charles Glock and Babette Kass, "Impact of Public Service Advertising: A Controlled Study of Anti-Discrimination Car Cards," 1952, Box 26, Folder B-0394

Robert K. Merton and Edward C. Devereux, Jr., "Situational Contexts of the Demand for Social Research," 1955, Box 49, Folder F-0544-1

Robert K. Merton and Edward C. Devereux, Jr., "Some Invisible Competitors of Social Research," 1955, Box 49, Folder F-0544-2

Robert K. Merton and Edward C. Devereux, Jr., "Functions of Social Research in the Detection of Policy Problems," 1955, Box 49, Folder F-0544-3

Robert K. Merton and Edward C. Devereux, Jr., "The Use of Research in the Solution of a Business Problem: A Case Study," 1955, Box 49, Folder F-0544-4

Yole G. Sills, "Problems of Negro Migrant Agricultural Workers: Views of the Migrant Ministry," 1955, Box 49, Folder B-0549

Julian H. Nixon, "The Negro Consumer," 1962, Box 64, Folder B-0814

William Glaser and Robert Hill, "Some Problems confronting the Rebuilding of Harlem," 1964, Box 65, Folder B-0931

Bahr, Caplow, Henshaw, Langfur and Wallace, "Homelessness: Etiology, Patterns, and Consequences (Bowery Study of Homeless Men), 1964, Boxes 78 and 79, Folders, B - 1024-1 through 9

Bernard Levenson, "Employment Opportunities of Negro and White Youth," 1967-1973, Box 89, Folder B-1064

Robert Fogelson and Robert B. Hill, "Who Riots? A Study of Participation in the 1967 Riots," 1968, Box 132, Folder B-1084-1

Robert Fogelson and Robert B. Hill, "A Study of Arrest Patterns in the 1960s Riots," 1968, Box 132, Folder B-1084-2

Carolyn O. Atkinson, "Attitudes of Selected Small Samples of Negroes Toward Jews and Other Ethnic Groups," 1968, Box 132, Folder B-1086

David Caplovitz, Lois Sanders, Bernard Levenson and Joan Wilson, "The Merchants of Harlem: A Study of Small Business in a Black Community," 1969, Box 132, Folder B-1089

Gerald R. Garrett and Dinah Hirschfeld Volk, "Homeless Women in New York City: Observations at the Emergency Assistance Unit and Women's Shelter," 1970, Box 132, Folder B-1096

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### **3. Archives of the American Jewish Committee (AJC), 165 East 56th Street, New York.**

The American Jewish Committee has digitalized and placed on-line thousands of documents, including the minutes of the monthly meetings of their Executive Committee, Scientific Research Committee, Advisory Council to the Department of Scientific Research (on which RKM served from 1945-1946), as well as research and progress reports, and literature reviews. The AJC sought to spread anti-prejudice messages through radio, film, television, pamphlets, posters, billboards, comic books, cartoons, print advertising, and other media of mass communication. The main objectives of this propaganda crusade were to combat negative stereotypes of minority groups, to demonstrate the deleterious consequences of prejudice, and to emphasize the importance of intergroup harmony to the advancement of American interests at home and abroad. As a result, the AJC reached out to social scientists to design and test their

educational materials. The following materials have been downloaded from the AJC Archives web site, <http://www.ajcarchives.org/main.php>

#### **A. AJC Minutes:**

Minutes of the monthly meetings of the Advisory Council to the Scientific Research Department, January 1945 through December 1945

Minutes of the monthly meetings of the Committee on Scientific Research, January 1945 through 1951

#### **B. Conference Reports:**

“Some Questions of Interest to a Pragmatic Approach on Combatting Anti-Semitism,” Conference on Research in the Field of Anti-Semitism, May 20 and 21, 1944, Biltmore Hotel, New York City.

Conference on Research in the Field of Anti-Semitism: Summary of Proceedings and Suggestions for a Program, March, 1945. Invited participants included psychologists Theodore Adorno (Institute of Social Research), Gordon Allport (Harvard University), Max Horkheimer (Director, Institute of Social Research), John Dollard (Yale University), Kurt Lewin (University of Iowa), Goodwin Watson (Columbia University), and sociologists Charles Johnson (Fisk University), Paul Lazarsfeld (Columbia University), Alfred McClung Lee (Wayne University), Talcott Parsons (Harvard University), and Lloyd Warner (University of Chicago).

#### **C. Presentations:**

Slawson, John, “Scientific Research on Anti-Semitism, paper delivered to the National Community Relations Advisory Council, September 11, 1944

Rothschild, Richard C., “Attack on Anti-Semitism,” 1945

Slawson, John, Address at Executive Committee Meeting of the American Jewish Committee, May 10, 1947 [discusses Crossfire]

#### **D. Department of Scientific Research Memorandum and Progress Reports**

Rothschild, Richard C., “Combatting Anti-Semitism in a War Atmosphere,” undated  
“Progress Report of the Scientific Department,” June 22, 1945

Max Horkheimer, “Report on the Department of Scientific Research,” 1945

“Frame of Reference for the Department of Scientific Research and Program Evaluation: Plan of Work for 1946,” March 4, 1946

Memorandum: “New lines of Testing,” April 11, 1946

“Current Research Projects of the Department of Scientific research of the American Jewish Committee,” September 20, 1946

Max Horkheimer, “Report on the Department of Scientific Research,” December 28, 1946

Flowerman, Samuel H. and Jahoda, Marie, "Public Opinion Polls on Anti-Semitism: A Critical Note," 1947  
"Report of the Department of Scientific research and Program Evaluation, AJC,"  
December 5, 1947  
Rothschild, Richard C., "Examination of Assumptions Underlying the Objectives and Program of AJC," July, 1949  
Rothschild, Richard C., "The Use of Mass Media in Combatting Anti-Semitism," 1949  
"Report of the Radio and Television Division – AJC," 1949  
"Assessing Techniques for Change: Mass Media, Group Process and Intergroup Contact," December 30, 1953

## Appendix B

**“Robert K. Merton as Sociologist, Public Intellectual, Social Critic, & Concerned Citizen”  
Paper to be presented at the 50<sup>th</sup> Annual Meetings of Cheiron: The International Society  
for the History of the Behavioral Sciences, June, 2018  
Larry Stern, Department of Sociology  
Collin College**

Robert K. Merton (hereafter RKM) was among the most influential sociologists of the twentieth century. The author, co-author and editor of more than 20 books and 200 scholarly articles over a career that spanned seven decades (1930s – 2000), RKM is one of the most cited scholars of the 20<sup>th</sup> century – his classic *Social Theory and Social Structure* has been cited more than 5,000 times. Moreover, RKM was one of the first sociologists elected to the National Academy of Sciences, the first American sociologist to be elected a foreign member of the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, the first sociologist to be named a MacArthur Fellow (1983–88), and, in 1994, the recipient of the U.S. National Medal of Science for his contributions to the field.

Best known for developing and applying a functionalist approach to the study of social structures, RKM placed considerable emphasis on the diverse consequences of social actions for individuals and groups located in different positions in society. Over the years, RKM applied this perspective to such substantive areas as deviance, mass media and propaganda, bureaucracy, prejudice and discrimination, inequalities of all types, the sociology of knowledge, the behavior of scientists, and, more generally, the analysis of social problems.

There is no doubt, then, that RKM has secured a place in the history of the social and behavioral sciences. And yet, despite the accolades listed above, precisely how prominent this place should be seems to be a matter of some dispute.

As is often the case – and as it should be – the works of scholars that attain stature in their field are periodically reassessed and “contextualized.” This typically involves situating the work in its cognitive, social, historical, and political settings. With RKM, this process began in the 1960s and 1970s when a new cohort of younger, radical and left-leaning sociologists leveled political charges against him that, in their view, compromised his work. Some, comparing RKM with the likes of C. Wright Mills and Alvin Gouldner, saw him simply as a conservative member of the “old guard.” The old charges that RKM’s brand of functional analysis was inherently conservative re-emerged. More to the point, many of these critics argued that RKM was more concerned with living up to the professional norms of the discipline and the proper role of the detached, objective analyst that remains removed from the fray. Others, interestingly enough, labeled RKM as a social-democratic liberal, in the pejorative sense of the term memorialized in Phil Ochs’ “Love Me, I’m a Liberal.”

The issue of RKM’s orientation toward the social and political issues of the times has also been taken up by recent analysts. Robert Bierstadt, a graduate student at Columbia in the 1940s (and participant in the irregularly scheduled poker games with RKM and others in the

department) stresses RKM's professional distance from politics. In a chapter wholly devoted to RKM's work, Bierstadt writes,

“Merton is not engaged in a ‘critique of society,’ major or minor . . . Merton is a sociologist, not a moralist. The ‘function’ of the functional analyst is not to criticize society but only to understand it” (Bierstadt, 1981: 466-467).

Craig Calhoun, a close colleague of RKM during his later years, sees the matter somewhat differently. He touches on RKM's penchant for becoming involved in social issues, noting, for example, that RKM did major research on topics of public interest, and did, on occasion, engage in public discussions on such issues as race relations and censorship if he thought it could be properly informed by solid scholarly work. But he nevertheless maintains that RKM did not link his politics directly to his sociology (Calhoun, 2010).

Peter Simonson goes a bit further – but not much, when, in his analysis of RKM's *Mass Persuasion*, he writes, “We can hear Merton's politics, but we have to listen carefully. His critical moments are restrained, understated, and in the final pages tempered by loyalty” (Simonson, 2004: xxxvii).

It's of some interest, then, that few works that center on an analysis of RKM's work focus on what I will argue has surely been his life-long overarching and abiding concern with issues of social justice and inequalities of every type. This is not to say, of course, that there are no public traces of RKM's concerns. After all, his early work on how Negroes' access to legitimate opportunities for advancement are blocked by the very society that encourages them to aspire to success (Merton, 1938), his administration of “opinionnaires” to assess the opinions of southern and northern college students toward Negroes (Merton, 1940a), his scathing review of E.A. Hooton's work linking crime and race (Merton, 1940b), his analysis of racial intermarriage, conducted at a time when the practice was illegal in thirty states and taboo in all forty-eight (Merton, 1941), his insightful and consequential analysis of how the self-fulfilling prophecy operates to explain the dynamics of ethnic and racial conflicts, as well as anti-Semitism of the day (1948), along with his incisive analysis of discrimination and the American creed (Merton, 1949) were available for all to see. But these works all appeared under the cloak of “scientific objectivity” rather than “advocacy” since RKM was always mindful of the fact that that sociologists' credibility as experts was predicated on their being perceived as presenting objective scientific evidence.

Here, I intend to examine RKM's political values and indicate how they influenced his choice of substantive problems to address as well as the specific examples he used as either “strategic research sites” to elucidate and extend his theoretical conceptions in sociology or as illustrations of more general points. By focusing on RKM's public and behind-the-scenes work with regard to such issues of social justice as dominant – subordinate group relations, prejudice toward and discrimination against Blacks, Jews, women, and the poor, I will provide an analysis that will correct some and supplement others' efforts to examine RKM's life work. I will argue that RKM embraced what both Weber and Mannheim referred to as an “ethic of responsibility,” whereby the discovery of the sources of social problems and the attempt to control them becomes a moral obligation.

To address these concerns, I shall rely upon both published and, most important, archival materials that are housed in three archives, each located in New York City: (1) the Robert K. Merton Papers, 1928-2002, and (2) the papers of the Bureau of Applied Social Research (BASR), where Merton served as Assistant Director, each housed at Columbia University's Rare Book and Manuscript Library, and (3) the papers of the American Jewish Committee (AJC), where Merton served as consultant to the Committee of Scientific Research, 1945-1946.

In particular, my analysis will draw upon (1) unpublished lecture notes dating from the 1930s through the late 1990s on race relations, processes of racial and ethnic tensions, and the "haunting presence of functionally irrelevant statuses" that underlies discrimination, (2) unpublished manuscripts such as "The Caucasian Problem in the U. S." (1947), "Social Fictions and Social Facts: The Dynamics of Race Relations in Hilltown (1949), "A Theory of Racial Epithets" (1971), and "Blacks in Sports: Changing Opportunity Structures" (1994), (3) unpublished grant proposals and research reports on the first federal interracial housing project in the U.S., funded by the Lavanburg Foundation (1947), (4) and private correspondence with dozens of the leading scholars and activists involved with issues of social justice, such as Catherine Bauer Wurster, Ralph Bunche, E. Franklin Frazier, and Kenneth Clark.

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## Appendix C

### Conference Proposal Social Science and Public Policy: An Essential Tension

#### Introduction

It's quite clear that we live in a time when knowledge has become "politicized" to the extent that opposing views often become polarized, caricatured beyond recognition, or simply regarded as "fake news." One by-product of this state of affairs is that the credibility of social science research – research that bears significantly on the conceptualization, creation, implementation, and evaluation of public policies directed toward some of society's most pressing problems – is treated with increasing suspicion and distrust. This has serious implications for a democratic process where the careful assessment of "facts" informs both policymakers' and citizens' decisions. Our students – and many in the larger community – are not oblivious of this dangerous trend. They are confronted with such notions as "truthiness," which is defined as an emotional quality of a particular statement – it just "feels" true in your gut – without regard to logic, factual evidence, or close examination. Or the trilogy of "post-truth," "post-factual," and "alternative facts" which refer to a political culture in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief. It is no easy task to navigate through the morass of conflicting claims and counterclaims that appear on news and social media.

Nor does it bode well for our participatory democracy when a single exaggerated story about a "surfer dude" in California, who games the system by using food stamps to buy shrimp, steak, and lobster, is deemed to be representative of millions of food stamp recipients, and the story, endlessly repeated on certain network news outlets, outweighs hundreds of reports written by policy analysts with PhDs that systematically investigate food stamp and welfare programs. How shall we confront a situation where, increasingly, extreme partisanship is such that tribalism trumps honest discourse?

Of the three objectives stated in my sabbatical proposal, one was to "examine the general issues surrounding the relationship between sociologists and policymakers and the role of values – and potential bias – in the production of knowledge, its reception by policymakers, and how it is presented to the public. The following questions guided my readings: What is the appropriate role of "scholar-experts" in the process of policymaking? Can such experts produce objective "value-free" knowledge or is bias unavoidable? How are conflicts between experts and policymakers resolved? To what extent do politicians "spin" the knowledge produced in the public arena to fit their preferred position, and, perhaps most important, to what effect?"

It was also proposed that, upon completion of the sabbatical period, I would organize a program, specifically for students and colleagues but also open to the public, devoted to the examination of these and other related issues. Initially, I proposed to invite social scientists affiliated with the Society for the Study of Social Problems and the Society for the

Psychological Study of Social Issues, colleagues, and local politicians to serve on a panel to discuss their experiences in such matters.

After a great deal of reading, research, and careful thought, I decided that the importance and seriousness of these issues dictated that a somewhat more ambitious effort be undertaken – that widely acknowledged experts be brought in to serve on a panel devoted to several key questions.

In what follows, then, I shall propose several alternative programs. The scope and scale of the program will of course depend upon the extent to which resources are made available by the college. I shall provide a sketch of a “best case scenario” that is broadest in scope and requiring, at a minimum, \$10,000 in college funds that would be drawn and pieced together from various sources (i.e., the “Distinguished Speaker Series,” “The Psychology Excellence Fund” under the direction of Dean Cameron Neal, and President Matkin’s discretionary funds). Should such an ambitious undertaking be out-of-reach, smaller pieces of the larger whole as well as other options would then be considered.

It would seem best to provide an outline of the possible issues and key questions that might be addressed by our speakers and/or panelists (depending upon the scale of the program). I have discussed this with various members of the history and government departments. It was gratifying to find that each person agreed with the outline that I presented. Nevertheless, should Collin agree to move forward with this conference, I fully expect that additional feedback will be introduced and incorporated into the final version.

### **Social Science and Public Policy: An Essential Tension**

In its most grandiose incantation, the program would consist of four experts drawn from a variety of disciplines and sectors, including History, Government/Political Science, Psychology, and Public Policy who would participate in three separate panel discussions during the course of a half-day (or evening) conference.

All four of the invited experts would participate in each of the three panel discussions. During the first two sessions, which, as seen below, would focus on specific topics, two of the invited experts would make a full 20-minute presentation while the remaining two experts would act as “discussants.” All four, then, would participate in the final session where each could express and discuss their vision of the future.

In what follows, I shall sketch out the proposed sessions and suggest potential speakers. The most costly aspect of the conference would be travel costs for the speakers, so after listing first-choice experts that are located throughout the U.S., I have tried to identify alternates that are closer at hand, located at University of Texas at Dallas, Southern Methodist University, and University of Texas at Austin. Other speakers, of course, could be considered as well.

### **Session 1: The Relationship Between Science and Public Policy: Historical Review and a Survey of the Contemporary Landscape**

This first session, designed to “set the stage,” would be devoted to two broad topics.

**1A.** The first speaker would provide an historical overview of the the relationship between social scientists and policy-makers that began during the first decade of the twentieth century and trace the key moments in the often contentious and evolving relationship. Social science and public policy have always been connected, with varying degrees of success. Although the interaction has often been strained, in the past, the argument that science was a valid means of rescuing policy from short-sighted influence peddling and power politics carried some weight. According to one scholar, “The view that science can be a counterweight to self-interestedness in politics and thereby ensure that policy reflects the public interest has a distinguished tradition, dating to the American progressive movement.” What social and historical circumstances contributed to the solicitation and use of social science research to inform policymakers? What is known about how scientific knowledge is used in public policy and how can it be more effectively used?

Suggested Speaker:

Alice O'Connor, the author of *Social Science For What? Philanthropy and the Social Question in a World Turned Rightside Up*, is an Associate Professor of History at the University of Santa Barbara. Before joining the UCSB faculty in 1996, she was a program officer at the Ford Foundation and the Social Science Research Council in New York. She presently gives lectures nationwide through the Organization of American Historians Distinguished Speaker Program.

Alternate Speaker:

Mark Solovey, of the Institute for History and Philosophy of Science and Technology at the University of Toronto, focuses on the history of private and public patronage for social research, and the public policy implications of social science expertise.

**1B.** The second speaker in this session would be asked to present a survey of the contemporary landscape of policy analysis, focusing on interface of science and policy. Which private Foundations are involved in the process, what role do they play, and to what extent do they influence policy decisions? The same questions apply to so-called “Think Tanks,” some leaning to the left, others to the right, while others strive to maintain their bipartisan stance. Has there been an increase in the creation of academic programs (such as those created at University of Texas-Dallas and Southern Methodist University) and disciplinary organizations (such as the Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management (APPAM))? To what extent has the federal government expressed an interest in improving the quality of information made available to be used as guides in the policy decision-making process? The U.S. Commission on Evidence-Based Policymaking, for example, has recently issued a report supporting the notion that rigorous evidence can be created efficiently as a routine part of government operations and that, in turn, this evidence can be used to construct effective policy.

### Suggested Speaker:

Nick Hart is the director of The Bipartisan Policy Center's new Evidence-Based Policymaking Initiative. He served as the policy and research director for the U.S. Commission on Evidence-Based Policymaking, overseeing the Commission's policy and research support team and leading the drafting process of "The Promise of Evidence-Based Policymaking" report and recommendations presented to the Congress and the President in September 2017. He earned a doctorate from The George Washington University's Trachtenberg School of Public Policy and Public Administration, specializing in program evaluation.

### Alternate Speakers:

Angela Evans is presently Dean, Fellow of J. J. "Jake" Pickle Regents Chair in Public Affairs and Clinical Professor of Public Policy Practice. A past-President of the Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management (APPAM), Evans joined the LBJ School as a clinical professor of the practice of public policy after serving for 40 years in public service to the U.S. Congress.

Daniel W. Drezner is professor of international politics at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy and a nonresident senior fellow at the Brookings Institution. His latest book is *The Ideas Industry: How Pessimists, Partisans, and Plutocrats are Transforming the Marketplace of Ideas*. Here, he argues that the traditional think tank is withering, with bankers and private consultants from the private sector taking over policymaking.

### **Session 2: Contemporary Analyses: The Collision of Two Cultures and Case Studies Drawn From Psychology and Public Policy**

This second session will focus on the inherent difficulties that arise when two different communities, each with their somewhat unique cultural beliefs, attitudes, values, customs and traditions, converge on important issues. As one expert puts it, "The vast majority of policymakers are not trained as scientists. As a result, they have varying degrees of understanding about how the social and behavioral sciences can help them do their jobs. Likewise, the vast majority of researchers have little to no policymaking experience. As a result, researchers often approach policymakers in ways that policymakers find unhelpful." To what extent, in what ways, and under what conditions, can social research be useful to policymakers? What is the proper role of social science researchers, to educate or to advocate? What are the obstacles to the effective utilization of applied social science? For which types of practical problems is the introduction of applied social science presently pointless and for which is it prerequisite to the formation of intelligent policy? Both speakers chosen to spearhead this session would report their first-hand experiences with the interplay of social science research and the policy-making and legislative processes.

**2A.** The first speaker would outline the "two culture" argument, discussing such issues as the credibility gap between social scientists and policymakers, their distinctively different approaches to social issues, and the difficulties in translating research data into concrete

actions. How can the gap between research, policy, and practice be bridged? Science is not the only source of knowledge used in policy argument—beliefs, experience, trial and error, reasoning by analogy, and personal or political values are also used in policy argument. How, then, does social science research interact with nonscientific reasons given for public policies? What do we know about the especially complicated but inevitable interaction of politics, values, and science?

Suggested Speaker:

Brian Baird is the Past President of Antioch University Seattle and a former member of the U.S. House of Representatives from Washington's Third Congressional District. While there, he served on the House Science and Technology committee - chairing the Energy and Environment, and Research and Education subcommittees. He is now a public speaker and President of 4Pir2 Communication.

Alternate Speakers:

Don Wolfensberger is a Bipartisan Policy Center fellow and congressional scholar at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. He served as a staff member in the U.S. House of Representatives for 28 years.

Scott Lilly is a Senior Fellow, Center for American Progress at the LBJ School of the University of Texas at Austin. Lilly spent 31 years serving the U.S. Congress in positions ranging from staff director of the House Appropriations Committee, to executive director of the House Democratic Study Group and executive director of the Joint Economic Committee. He was recently honored by the congressional newspaper, *Roll Call* for being one of the most influential Congressional Staffers over the past four decades. He has been published in the *Washington Post*, *U.S. News and World Report*, *Time Magazine*, and the *New Republic*. He has appeared as a guest on various networks including CNN, CBS, BBC, CNBC, MSNBC, PBS and NPR.

Victoria A. Farrar-Myers is a Senior Fellow in the Tower Center at Southern Methodist University. A former U.S. Congressional Fellow, she worked in the U.S. House of Representatives for the lead House sponsor of legislation that would eventually become the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act. Based on this experience, she published two books, *Legislative Labyrinth* (CQ Press, 2001) and *Limits and Loopholes* (CQ Press, 2007), which are often touted for their highly accessible analysis of the legislative and public policy processes.

## **2B. Case Studies: Psychology and Public Policy**

The American Psychological Association has, for many years, brought psychological research to both the legislative process and the courts through its *Amicus Curiae* Program. This, in turn, has affected public policy. A description and analysis of this case would provide clear examples of the interaction of psychologists and policymakers.

### Suggested Speaker:

Either Ellen Greenberg Garrison or Patrick H. DeLeon of the American Psychological Association or Brian D. Smedley from the National Collaborative for Health Equity would be appropriate to discuss the role of psychological research in the public policy arena. Their article, "Psychology, Public Policy, and Advocacy: Past, Present, and Future," recently published in the *American Psychologist*, has already been hailed as a classic statement and illustration of the issues surrounding the interaction of the two cultures of academia and policy-making.

### Alternate Speakers:

Both Nathalie Gilfoyle of the American Psychological Association and Joel A. Dvorkin of the University of Arizona have carefully analyzed APA's ongoing *Amicus Curiae* Program.

Richard Scotch, a sociologist at the University of Texas at Dallas, has been active in the local health and human service community in North Texas since the mid-1980s, working with numerous local government and nonprofit agencies. Funded by Texas Pride Impact Funds, a Houston-based nonprofit that supports organizations and projects serving LGBT+ communities throughout the state, he is presently conducting an in-depth study to identify the needs and concerns of LGBT+ communities across the state.

### **Session 3: Prospects for the Future: The Politicization of Knowledge**

This last session, with each invited guest participating, would focus on the prospects for the future and the apparent politicization of knowledge that seems to characterize the current process more so than any time in the past few decades.

For most of U.S. history, the political system has successfully embraced and managed differences in ways that have moved the country in new and promising directions. And it seems rather clear that policymakers need good information on which to base decisions in order to meet the demands of the American people for a government that operates effectively and tackles the problems that face the country. Today, however, it seems that we live in an environment of growing partisanship in the country. Instead of assigning blame, can we locate unavoidable tensions in the process and work together to make the process more efficient? Or, given today's virulent strain of partisanship, would those interested in doing so be on a fool's errand?

Is it possible for academic scholars to be even-handed when they stray into the policy-making arena? To what extent do social scientists – on both sides of the aisle – use their expert knowledge to advance their own ideas and values? To what extent are much-touted objective scientific conclusions of evaluations found to be based on hidden political and social value judgments? How should the public react when one finds competing interest-groups attacking and counterattacking one another with their own "social science researches." This is not merely a problem of "who shall decide when doctors disagree?" Since they are ostensibly based on carefully conducted and sound research, the

disagreements may activate a disbelief in the objectivity of applied social research in general. Moreover, as the U.S. moves from a more technocratic to a more populist administration, how is the role of policy analysis likely to shift? What, then, should the proper relationship between “expert scholars” and policymakers be when addressing the urgent problems of our day?

## **Conclusion**

It is not as if the aforementioned problems that characterize the relations between social scientists and policymakers, as well as the politicization of knowledge, are not recognized by politicians, policymakers and social scientists alike. Indeed, the tension that exists is “built-into” and fundamental to the process and perhaps essential to the entire enterprise. Nevertheless, in an environment of growing partisanship in the country, it is notable that standing government committees and commissions have been created to study these problems and legislation has been embraced by key players on both sides of the aisle and enacted without dissent.

In 2005, for example, the Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education (DBASSE) of the National Research Council (NRC) established a standing committee to consider questions of how to strengthen the quality and use of social science research and to lay a foundation for the continuous improvement in the conduct of social science research and its applications to public policy. Then, in 2009, the NRC set up the Committee on the Use of Social Science Knowledge in Public Policy, publishing its report in 2012. Social scientists have also realized that much remains to be done on their end. For example, in 2014 The Sociology Program at the National Science Foundation (NSF) sponsored a workshop, “A Relational Model for Understanding Research in the Policy Process,” which brought together a group of knowledgeable social scientists involved with public policymaking, who represented the academy, government agencies, and non-profit organizations. Participants advised against researchers taking a specific policy position, agreeing that social science research should “inform policy, but not push policy” and there was broad agreement that research will never trump politics.

Most recently, as further evidence of bi-partisan support, in March 2016 Speaker of the House Paul Ryan (R-Wisc.) and Senator Patty Murray (D-WA) introduced legislation that established the new Commission on Evidence-Based Policymaking. Signed by President Barack Obama on March 30, 2016, the legislation established a 15-member commission whose charge was to analyze how federal data is being used and how it can be better used to improve the effectiveness of federal programs. Among other aims, the Commission envisioned a future in which rigorous evidence is created efficiently, as a routine part of government operations, and used to construct effective public policy.

Although contemporary debate in the U.S. has raised concerns about “alternative facts” and decision making in a “post-truth” era, few people with actual policy-making responsibility would argue that decisions should not be informed by the best possible information. A half-day conference devoted to these issues will certainly inform our students, colleagues, and

the community-at-large about the problems involved and also indicate that they are not insurmountable.