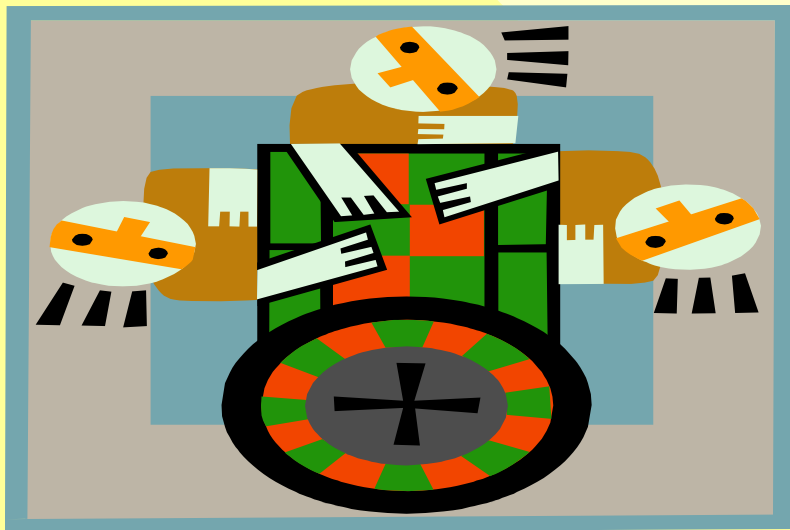


# Community (Macro) Perspectives: A Sociology of Problem Gambling



Bo J. Bernhard, Ph.D.  
Assistant Professor  
Departments of Sociology  
and Hotel Management  
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

# Outline

- Introduction
- Sociological Yesterdays
- Sociological Todays
- Sociological Tomorrows
- Conclusions

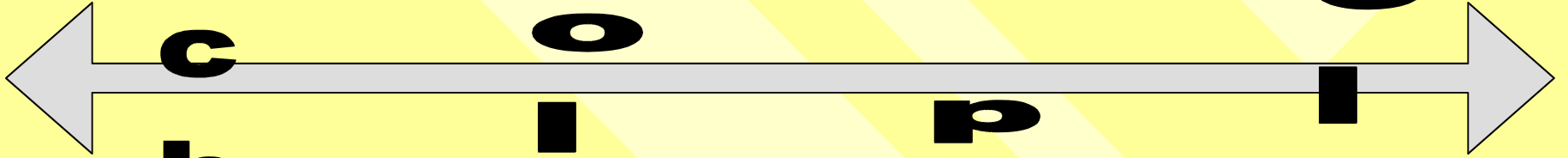
A “human spectrum” – of causes and effects

**b**  
**i**  
**o**  
**/**  
**c**  
**h**  
**e**  
**m**

**p**  
**s**  
**y**  
**c**  
**h**  
**o**  
**-**  
**o**  
**g**  
**y**

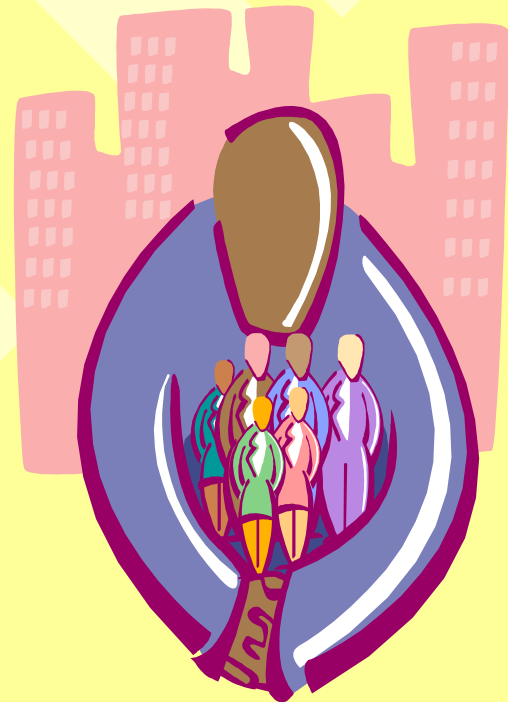
**s**  
**o**  
**o**  
**-**  
**a**  
**-**  
**p**  
**s**  
**y**  
**c**  
**o**  
**s**

**s**  
**o**  
**o**  
**i**  
**o**  
**-**  
**o**  
**g**  
**y**



# What is Sociology? Mills' The Sociological Imagination

- C. Wright Mills' The Sociological Imagination
- This is “The Promise” of Sociology



# Sociological Yesterdays

A Sociological History of Those with  
Gambling Problems

# Sociological Yesterdays: Imagine...

- “Let the gambler suffer this persecution. Lay upon him the biting lash of public odium. Let him be conscious that... he must bear the superadded curse of unrestrained abhorrence; that whatever else may be tolerated, there can be *no* tolerance and no courtesy for a vice so foul as his” (Hopkins 1835:15).
- “Let the gambler know that he is watched, and marked; and that... he is loathed. Let the man who dares to furnish a resort for the gambler know that he is counted a traitor to his duty, a murderer of all that is fair, and precious, and beloved among us. Let the voice of united, incensed remonstrance be *heard* – heard till the ears of the guilty tingle” (1835:17-18).

# The “so what?” question!

- Why should clinicians care?
- **1. Because twenty years or so of medical voices has not somehow magically erased the impact of hundreds of years of moral voices on these very same matters**
  - PG patient’s question: if this is a *medical* problem, then why am I treated like a moral one?
    - » There are sociological reasons “why”...
- **2. Because it should force us to contemplate our own power and perspectives on the “Truth” about PG**
  - They were no less convinced than we that their model was accurate, true, and noble.

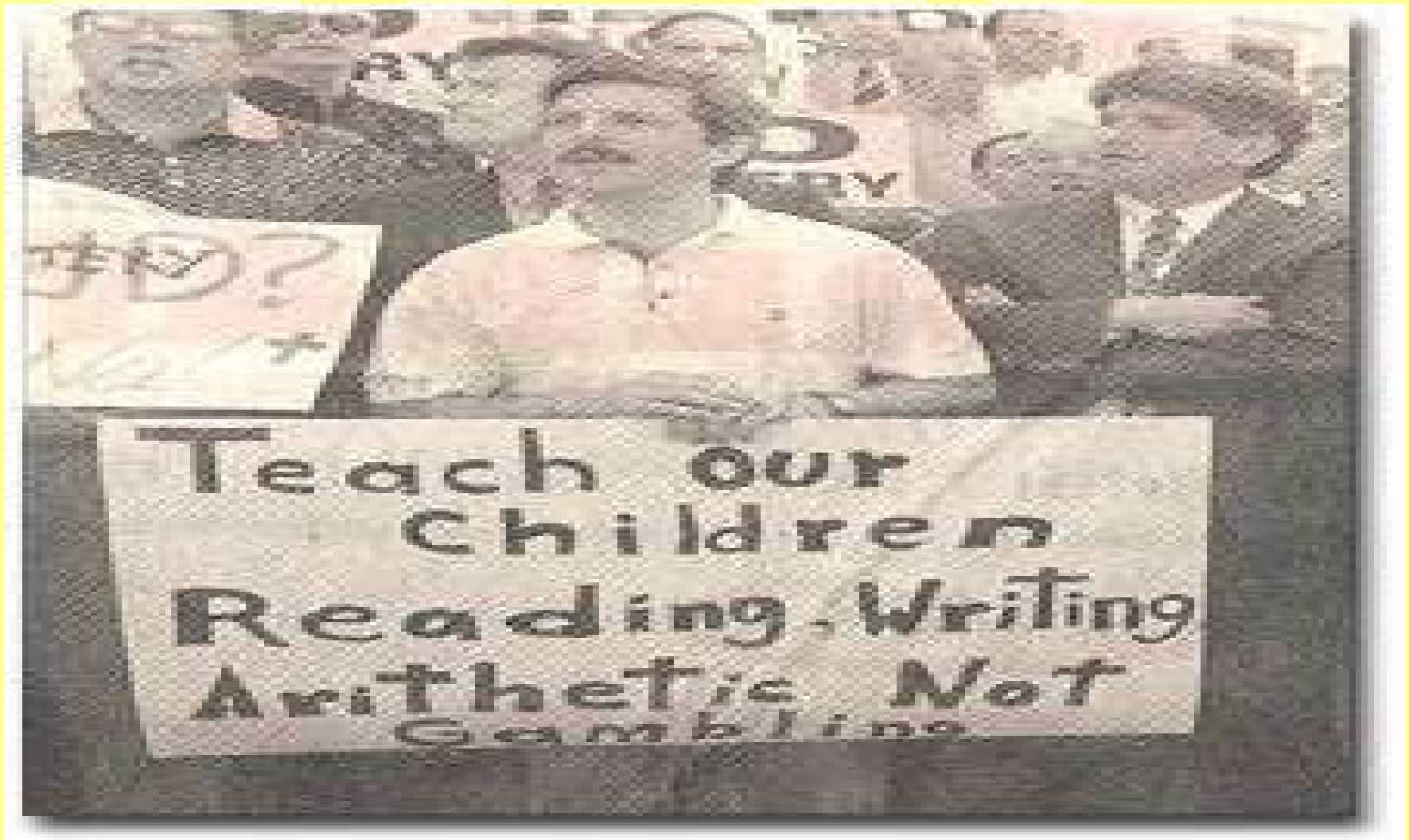
# Sociological Todays

Some Sociology Tools and  
Perspectives

# Sociological Todays: More Useful Perspectives

- Tannen's The Argument Culture
  - George W. Bush approach to PG
- Putnam's Bowling Alone
  - Gambling Alone, Healing Together?
- Klinenberg's Heat Wave
  - Dying Alone

# Tannen's The Argument Culture



# Sociological Todays: More Useful Perspectives

- Tannen's The Argument Culture
  - George W. Bush approach to PG
- Putnam's Bowling Alone
  - Gambling Alone, Healing Together?
- Klinenberg's Heat Wave
  - Dying Alone

# Sociological Todays (cont.): Community Matters

- Unlike studies of alcoholism and alcohol-oriented behavior, access is a variable with a profound and sizable *range*
- If we were to all go “out drinking” in our hometowns, we would encounter relatively similar drinking environs and options – not so with gambling!
- On community matters: Communities *matter*
  - When a field “medicalizes:” should we more actively resist the temptation to universalize?

# Sociological Tomorrows

What next? What to do?

# Sociological Tomorrows

- Sociologies of Tomorrow:
- Postman's Amusing Ourselves To Death
- Pinsky's Cracked: A Clinical Sociology in Practice



# “Clinical Sociology”: The Sociological Imagination in Clinical Practice

- Helping those who are hurting understand the problems large and small that affect their well-being
- Helping those who are hurting link personal troubles with sociology
  - Remember: location, location, location.
  - A modest proposal: add sociology to the “tool chest”

Please stay in touch!

Bo Bernhard

[bo.bernhard@ccmail.nevada.edu](mailto:bo.bernhard@ccmail.nevada.edu)

(702) 895-2935