



THE FELLOW

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The official peer-reviewed newsletter of doctoral students at the School of Social Policy & Practice at the University of Pennsylvania

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A Successful Year for Students and Faculty

As the first year of the publication of the *The Fellow* comes to a close, there are a few significant milestones we would like to acknowledge. First, the year has been one of high productivity not only for the faculty, but for the doctoral students as well. Our program ranked second in the Faculty Scholarly Productivity Index, as reported in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* in January, 2007. And as seen in the publication list of this newsletter, the PhD students have worked diligently to publish with faculty, their peers, and on their own.

Additionally, many doctoral students graduating this May have accepted faculty positions and others are choosing between a few offers. This is a tribute to their diligence and the reputations they have established as researchers and scholars.

And finally, as the year comes to an end, it is time to transition to the new Co-Chairs of DSSC and the Colloquium. DSSC elections will be held later this month, but the current co-chairs of DSSC, Joel Caplan and Karen Zurlo, and the current Co-Chairs of the Colloquium, Sara Wiesel Cullen and Kristie Thomas, would like to formally thank all students and faculty for their support this past year. Our work would have been far more challenging and less enjoyable without your individual and combined support.

The Fellow will continue to be published this coming Academic Year. So stay tuned for more news from your peers and colleagues.

Sincerely,
The Fellow Editorial Board

PEER REVIEW

We all work hard writing papers for class, and many papers are worthy of more than just a letter grade. *The Fellow* provides an outlet to share unpublished manuscripts, essays, book reviews and editorials with colleagues in an effort to distribute ideas, spark debates, obtain feedback, encourage journal submissions, and support interdisciplinary collaborations. Full references are available upon request to the authors.

On the Nexus Between the Environment, Health and Poverty

by Itay Greenspan | itay@sp2.upenn.edu

This is a revised and excerpted version of a paper written for SW 968: Social Welfare and Social Economics taught by Professor Handy, Fall 2006

It is a well-known fact, as Szasz and Meuser contend, “that poor minorities are generally in poorer health – because of poor nutrition, lack of access to health care, high social stress and other factors related to poverty” [1]. But, as the scientific research advances, ample evidence is gathered to support the claim that hazardous environmental conditions have both direct and indirect negative health consequences: geographical proximity to polluting facilities leads to higher levels of exposure to pollutants, and exposure to pollutants increases health problems and disease [2]. Since the poor and minorities experience disproportionately higher levels of proximity to polluting facilities by virtue of where they work and where they live, they are far more likely to be exposed to such hazardous environmental conditions and disease [3]. Yet, environmental factors are oftentimes overlooked in discussion over the roots of poverty.

Several explanations can be made as to why poor people suffer disproportionately from adverse environmental conditions. One view contends that the disadvantageous situation of the poor vis-à-vis the environment reflects *income* and *information* effects. The *income effect* implies that the demand for environmental quality increases with income: wealthier people are less likely to accept environmental exploitation, whereas poor people associate polluting facilities with better job opportunities and they are more willing to tolerate pollution. The *information effect* maintains that low-income populations are, by and large, less educated and have less access to information thus are less aware of the adverse effects of exposure to pollution. In addition, years of disillusionment lead them to distrust those providing the information [4].

From the perspective of a polluting company, facility location is a function of the *marketplace*: lower property costs, less stringent environmental regulations, and cheaper labor result in unequal distribution of hazardous facilities in or near low-income urban and rural areas. *Political considerations* are another factor: affluent communities are likely to express stronger objection for such facilities to be located in their vicinity, while residents in poorer areas are likely to resist less because of lack of awareness, marginal political mobilization, and little access to decision-making hubs [5]. In the literature, *NIMBY* – an acronym for Not in My Back Yard – is the term used to describe situations where residents oppose a

development as inappropriate for their local area, but by implication do not oppose such development in other locations. Clearly, this reflects asymmetrical power balance of rich and poor, of the politically-connected and the politically-deprived. The NIMBY phenomenon reflects an *egoistic* pro-environmental behavior [6] of individuals who express concern about the environment only to avoid negative health or financial consequences for themselves.

Finally, considering the correlation between race and class, it is clear that environmental hazards inevitably and disproportionately impact racial minorities. But whether this disproportionate exposure is the result of intentional racial discrimination has been an issue of debate. On the one hand, claims of *environmental racism* – a term used to describe disparities in environmental policies that impact communities inhabited mainly by racial minorities and indigenous peoples – dominate the literature on environmental justice [7]. On the other hand, other studies, such as those of Anderton and colleagues or Yandle and Burton [8], questioned the discriminatory nature of environmental inequalities and inference about intentional racial discrimination as they found no racial bias in the initial siting of hazardous waste facilities.

The disproportionate environmental burden on minorities and the poor, and their low rates of participation in environmental activism might raise the question whether they are indifferent to and unconcerned by environmental issues that impact their lives. However, rather than apathy or disinterest, the disengagement in environmental issues suggests other more practical reasons. First, despite concerns about the environment, lack of time and focus on daily survival prevent poor people from involvement in environmental activism. Second, this lack of participation is more likely a reflection of the elitism and exclusiveness of mainstream environmental organizations which is rooted in stereotypes of what minorities and poor people are concerned with. The American environmental movement has long been described as an upper-middle class enterprise with mostly white educated male members [9]. Issues traditionally dealt with by environmental organizations are perceived as extraneous or irrelevant to the poor. Finally, because poor people frame environmental issues differently, and because their firsthand experience with the environment has to do mostly with pollution and environmental degradation, it is more likely to find them expressing *worries or concerns* about such issues, but these are often not addressed by mainstream environmentalists [10]. Evidence for higher participation rates of poor and minorities in environmental justice organizations attest to the fact that when issues are framed differently, focusing on experiences of the poor and articulation of their concerns in ways that resonate with them, they will more easily identify with those issues and take action [11].

To conclude, there is agreement in the literature that minorities and the poor are those most affected by degrading environments and human-made pollution. Difference of opinion, however, lies in searching for explanations or causes of the vicious cycle of poverty and environment. Uncovering causal links between environmental pollution and poverty is challenging yet not unattainable. However, as long as the socio-economic status of the poor is not improved and their political power is not concrete, the chances of avoiding or dismantling such disadvantageous links are questionable.

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Submit print-ready papers to: DSSC@sp2.upenn.edu
Papers under 600 words will be published on a first-come-first-serve basis and will be edited only to conform to newsletter styles and formats.

Significantly Statistical

by Tae Kuen Kim* | kimtk@sp2.upenn.edu

Is your verbal score better than your math score?

Kim took the Graduate Record Examination some time back. He got 69 points in the verbal section and 67 points in the math section. In which section did he score better? We may say “he got a better score in verbal section because verbal score is higher than his math score.” However, this answer is more or less unreasonable. We don’t know which section was more difficult; so it is not very useful to directly compare raw scores of two sections. Suppose that the average score (mean) for the verbal section is 60 and for the math section is 62 respectively. In addition, both scores have a normal distribution. If so, can we still say that Kim got a better score in the verbal section? Well, this seems more reasonable. In comparison to the average (this also means “considering the degree of difficulty”), he got a 9-point higher score in the verbal section, while he only got a 5-point higher score in the math section. Statisticians call the difference between a raw score and mean (raw score - mean) as *deviance*, or *average deviation*. That is, we can say that Kim’s deviance for the verbal score is +9 and for the math score is +5 and therefore he has a better score in the verbal section. Is it enough to compare deviances when deciding which section is better? Deviances let us know how high or low the raw score is compared to the mean. However, this does not tell us the exact location of the raw score in the entire distribution.

If we can check the location of Kim’s verbal and math scores in each normal distribution, we may be able to compare the two scores more exactly. So, how can we know the location of a raw score in the entire normal distribution? Now, let’s think about standard deviation (SD). As you know, SD refers to the “degree of dispersion” of individual observations from the group “mean”. Moreover, in a normal distribution, 68% of observations fall within ± 1 SD, 95% within ± 2 SD, and 99% within ± 3 SD respectively. Suppose that the SD of the verbal section was 10 and that of the math section was 4. This means that 68% of examinees fall within the range of 50 (60-10) to 70 (60+10) in the verbal section and the same percentage of examinees fall within the range of 58 (62-4) to 66 (62+4) in the math section. Hence, we know that while Kim’s verbal score is within +1 SD from the verbal mean; his math score is located out of +1 SD from the math mean. That is, considering the degree of difficulty in both sections and the dispersion of all examinees, Kim actually did a better job in the math section than the verbal section.

	Verbal	Math
Raw score	69	67
Average (SD)	60 (10)	62 (4)
Deviance	+9 (=69-60)	+5 (=67-62)
Z-score	0.9 (=9/10)	1.25 (=5/4)

Statisticians call this procedure, in which deviance is divided by SD ($[\text{raw score} - \text{mean}]/\text{SD}$) as *standardization* and this standardized value as a *Z-score*. However, there are two problems in our example. First, we assumed that we know the mean and SD of the entire population (in our case, all examinees). Sometimes, it is possible. Yet, in most cases, we don’t know the mean and SD of our entire target “population.” Rather, we have to estimate them from our “sample.” Second, we assumed that verbal and math score have

normal distributions (symmetric, unimodal, and bell-shaped curve). However, a number of variables that social scientists work with such as income and education levels are not normally distributed in the real world. Then, how can we overcome these problems? The answers are *t-score* (*t-value*) and *sampling procedure*. We can calculate standardized value with “sample mean” and “sample SD,” and statisticians call this value as a *t-score*. Moreover, even though the distribution of population is not normal, *sampling procedure* guarantees normal distribution. Next time, we will talk about these two concepts, the foundation of every statistical method.

*Kim is a 3rd year Ph.D. student & author of "Applied regression: Data analysis for social science," a book recently published in Korean.

Opportunities for Teaching Assistantships

All doctoral student teaching assistantships in SP² have to be arranged through consultation with the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. The Associate Dean solicits letters of interest and CVs among eligible students and assignments are made in consultation with faculty sequence chairs and the Director of the Doctoral Program.

The procedure follows these guidelines:

- First year students are not eligible for teaching assistantships.
- Second year students are generally not considered for teaching assistant positions. However, they may petition the Associate Dean to request an assignment.
- Third year students are eligible for teaching assistant or instructor positions. Compensation for these positions is considered part of the student’s stipend. Compensation is given for summer teaching at the part-time faculty rate.
- Students in their 4th year or beyond are eligible for teaching assistant or instructor positions and receive priority in teaching assignments. They are compensated at the part-time faculty rate.

You Should Join...

As doctoral students with diverse areas of interest, we each belong to various organizations and Listservs. And, we’re probably over-loaded with email announcements and discussions. There are some resources, however, that are key for all of us. If you haven’t done so already, you should consider signing up (no cost, no obligation, no “spam”) for the two services below to keep up to date on relevant research-related opportunities, information, and events.

Institute for the Advancement of Social Work Research (IASWR) www.iaswresearch.org

The IASWR Listserv is a free service that provides useful announcements, weekly funding opportunities, conferences and trainings, calls for papers, news and notices, awards, and important research findings. This is the primary resource for social work researchers with an interdisciplinary nature (includes public health, sociology, criminology, criminal justice, mental health, etc.). The IASWR Listserv is free and well-edited.

Conference Alerts www.conferencealerts.com

The Conference Alerts resource maintains a database of academic conferences worldwide and offers a monthly email announcement of upcoming conferences tailored to your specific interests based on keywords you select (e.g., child maltreatment, social work, women, criminology, race, teaching, HIV/AIDS, etc.). The fascinating conferences in exotic places provide motivation to get working and get out there (to have trips covered at more than \$350/year).

PEER CITES

PUBLICATIONS

- Caplan, J. M.** (2006). Parole system anomie: Conflicting models of casework and surveillance. *Federal Probation*, 70(3), 32-36.
- Metraux, S., **Caplan, J. M.**, Klugman, D. and Hadley, T. R. (2007). Assessing residential segregation among Medicaid recipients with psychiatric disability in Philadelphia. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 35, 239-255.
- Fantuzzo, J.W., & **Fusco, R.A.** (in press). A population-based study of children's direct sensory exposure to types of substantiated domestic violence crimes. *Journal of Family Violence*, XX-XX.
- Volpp, K. V., Stone, R., Lave, J., Jha, A. K., Pauly, M. V., Chen, H., **Klusaritz, H.**, & Polsky, D. P. (2007). Is Thirty-Day Hospital Mortality Really Lower for Black Veterans Compared with White Veterans? *Health Services Research*, 42(2), XX-XX.
- Sturmer, T., **Joshi, M.**, Glynn, R. J., Avorn, J., Rothman, K.J., & Schneeweiss, S. (2006). A review of the application of propensity score methods yielded increasing use, advantages in specific settings, but not substantially different estimates compared with conventional multivariable methods. *Journal of Clinical Epidemiology*, 59, 437.e1-437.e24.
- Fantuzzo, J., Bulotsky-Shearer, R., McDermott, P.A., McWayne, C.M., Frye, D., & **Perlman, S.** (2007). Investigation of dimensions of social-emotional classroom behavior and school readiness for low-income preschool children. *School Psychology Review*, 36, 44-62.
- Stanhope, V.** & Solomon, P. (in press). Getting to the heart of recovery: Research methods for recovery oriented practice and their implications for evidence based practice. *British Journal of Social Work*.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS & INVITED SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS (Thru May 2007)

- Cederbaum, J. A.**, College of Physicians Public Health Poster Session, May 1, 2007, Philadelphia. Parent-Child Communication about Abstinence and Safer Sex: The Experience of Parochial School Families.
- Dichter, M. E.**, Kolansky, S., & Rhodes, K. V., Society for Academic Emergency Medicine (SAEM) Annual Meeting, May 16-19 2007, Chicago. Use of the 911 System as a Risk Indicator for Intimate Partner Violence in the Emergency Department.
- Fusco, R.A.** (2007, January). A population-based study of children's direct sensory exposure to domestic violence. Paper presented to the Society for Social Work and Research, 11th Annual Conference, San Francisco, CA.
- Fusco, R.A.** (2007, March). Children's direct sensory exposure to domestic violence and associated risk characteristics: A population-based study. Poster presented to the Society for Research on Child Development, 2007 Biennial Meeting, Boston, MA.
- Klusaritz, H. A.** Invited speaker. March 3, 2007. Johnson & Johnson Black History Month Lecture Series: Health Care Access in the Black American Community.
- Sproul, F., **Perlman, S.**, & Fantuzzo, J. (2007, March). The Role of the School Psychologist in Addressing Child Maltreatment. Poster presentation at the conference for the National Association of School Psychology, New York, NY.
- Perlman, S.**, & Fantuzzo, J. (2007, May). The Unique Impact of Out-of-Home Placement and the Mediating Effects of Child Maltreatment and Homelessness on Early School Success. Poster presented at the Society for Prevention Research, Washington, D.C.
- Sproul, F., **Perlman, S.** & Fantuzzo, J. (2007, May). The Impact of Child Maltreatment on Early Educational Well-Being. Presentation at the Cross-University Mentoring Conference. New York, NY.
- Perlman, S.** & Fantuzzo, J. (May, 2007). A Population-Based Study of the Timing of Social Risks and Their Impact on Educational Well-Being. Presentation at the One Child - Many Hands Conference, Philadelphia, PA.
- Stanhope, V.**, 5th International Conference on Social Work in Health and Mental Health, Hong Kong, China, December 2006, Exploring Client-Provider Relationships within a Team Case Management Model.
- Stanhope, V.**, 5th International Conference on Social Work in Health and Mental Health, Hong Kong, China, December 2006, Expanding the Evidence Base: Including Process Measures in Intervention Research.
- Thomas, K.**, & **Joshi, M.**, National Coalition against Domestic Violence's 12th National Domestic Violence Conference, "Organizing for Collective Power", July 2006, Atlanta. Quality of life among women exposed to intimate partner violence: In their own words.

AWARDS

Joel Caplan received the Hal Levin Award for Outstanding Ph.D. Student

JOBS/POST-DOCS

- Amy Blank** accepted a NIMH post doctoral fellowship at the Institute for Health, Health Care Policy and Aging, with a secondary appointment at the University of Pennsylvania Center for Mental Health Policy and Services Research.
- Cay Bradley** accepted a position with Abt Associates in Bethesda, MD in the Social and Economic Policy Division. She will begin her position as a Senior Analyst in June.
- Mary Cavanaugh** accepted a position at the University of California at Berkeley.
- Rachel Fusco** accepted an Assistant Professor position at the University of Pittsburgh in their School of Social Work.
- Victoria Stanhope** accepted an Assistant Professor position at New York University in their School of Social Work.

LIST OF GRADUATES (WINTER 2006, SPRING & SUMMER 2007)

Amy Blank · Cay Bradley (joint degree with Education) ·
Mary Cavanaugh · Rachel Fusco · Sunguen Lee ·
Victoria Stanhope · Staci Perelman

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES!

DataWeb and DataFerrett

The DataWeb and DataFerrett are the products of a collaboration between the U.S. Census Bureau and the Centers for Disease Control that allow searching, extracting and tabulating data across heterogeneous statistical data sources. The DataWeb provides access across the Internet to datasets that are housed in different systems in different agencies and organizations. The DataWeb is the infrastructure for browsing and accessing data across the Internet via the DataFerrett.

DataFerrett is a data mining and extraction tool that allows you to select a data basket of variables and then recode those variables as you need. The tool also allows you to develop and customize tables, charts, and graphs. DataFerrett helps you locate and retrieve the data you need across the Internet to your desktop or system, regardless of where the data resides.

DataFerrett's data analysis and visualization tools let you: receive data in the form in which you need it (ASCII, SAS, SPSS, Excel/Access file); move between query, analysis, and visualization of data; and share data and manage it online. Data sets available through DataWeb using DataFerrett include:

- § American Community Survey (ACS)
- § American Housing Survey (AHS)
- § Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS)
- § Consumer Expenditure Survey (CES)
- § Current Population Survey (CPS)
- § Decennial Census of Population and Housing (Census2000)
- § Decennial Census of Population and Housing (Census- 1990)
- § National Ambulatory Medical Care Survey (NAMCS)
- § National Center for Health Statistics Mortality-Underlying Cause-of-Death (MORT)
- § National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES)
- § National Health Interview Survey (NHIS)
- § National Hospital Ambulatory Medical Care Survey (NHAMCS)
- § National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation (FHWAR)
- § Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP)
- § Survey of Program Dynamics (SPD)

From: <http://dataferrett.census.gov>