



# THE FELLOW

## REFLECTIONS

As we begin the spring semester and second decade of the new millennium we wish everyone continued success in scholarly pursuits as well as good health and happiness in your personal lives. With the sudden passing of our school's dear friend and colleague, Joe McBride, we are reminded just how precious and important our work/life balance is and how critical it is to pause and express gratitude for all the important people in our lives.

On behalf of DSSC we would like to thank our event organizers and members of our academic community who have been willing to give their time and expertise so generously. This past fall, our colloquia co-chairs, Katy Kaplan and Michelle Evans-Chase organized two great colloquium events with Dr. Jeffrey Draine & Dr. Roberta Iversen. We also appreciated a very helpful and informative presentation from Dr. Joretha Bourjolly on teaching assistantship and opportunities for Ph.D students. Thanks to the tireless leadership efforts of Casey Bohrman and to all of you, the 5th annual Winter Essentials Drive was a great success. Finally, thanks to Dr. Mark Stern and your expressed interest, we have been in touch with the Mural Arts program to coordinate a spring Ford Foundation/Ph.D. bus tour of murals here in Philadelphia.

All the best for a terrific and productive spring of 2011!  
Samira Ali and Julie Tennille, DSSC Co-Chairs

## MEET OUR STUDENTS!

The following is a partial list of SP2's Ph.D. students, their research interests and email addresses. If you share a research interest with one of our students – they would love to hear from you!

- Samira Ali: HIV/AIDS Education, Mental Health, Community Collaborative Work, Sex Workers and Adolescents, South Asia ([samali@sp2.upenn.edu](mailto:samali@sp2.upenn.edu))
- Tom Byrne: Homelessness, Administrative Data Analysis, GIS ([byrnet@sp2.upenn.edu](mailto:byrnet@sp2.upenn.edu))
- Stacey L. Barringer: Intersection of Mental Health Services for Persons with Serious Mental Illness and the Criminal Justice System; Organizational Influence ([sbarre@sp2.upenn.edu](mailto:sbarre@sp2.upenn.edu))
- Joanna Bisgaier: Health Policy Research, Pediatric Health Care Access, Hospital-Based Social Work, Children with Special Health Care Needs ([bisgaier@sp2.upenn.edu](mailto:bisgaier@sp2.upenn.edu))
- Sara Wiesel Cullen: Parents with Serious Mental Illness (SMI), Mental Health Services, Maternal and Child Health, Community-based Interventions ([swiesel@sp2.upenn.edu](mailto:swiesel@sp2.upenn.edu))
- Daniel Curtis: Faith-based Organizations ([dacu@sp2.upenn.edu](mailto:dacu@sp2.upenn.edu))
- Michelle Evans-Chase: Policies and Interventions for Juvenile Justice Involved and Incarcerated Youth ([meva@sp2.upenn.edu](mailto:meva@sp2.upenn.edu))
- Itay Greenspan: Nonprofit organizations, Philanthropic Foundations, Advocacy NGOs, Israeli Civil Society and Environmental Movement ([itay@sp2.upenn.edu](mailto:itay@sp2.upenn.edu))
- Manisha Joshi: Nonfatal Strangulation, Intersection of Criminal Justice & IPV, Health Effects of IPV, Violence Against Women & Children in the Developing World ([manishaj@sp2.upenn.edu](mailto:manishaj@sp2.upenn.edu))
- Katy Kaplan: Parents with Mental Illness & Community Inclusion ([katykap@mail.med.upenn.edu](mailto:katykap@mail.med.upenn.edu))
- Sungkyu Lee: Mental Health Interventions for People with Severe Mental Illness, Social Support & Social Networks, Disparities in Health/Mental Health Services Use ([sungkyu@sp2.upenn.edu](mailto:sungkyu@sp2.upenn.edu))
- Maayan Schori: Substance Abuse, HIV, Risk Behaviors, Treatment and Harm Reduction, Social Work Research Methods ([mschori@sp2.upenn.edu](mailto:mschori@sp2.upenn.edu))
- Michael Shier: Direct Service Non-Profit Organizations ([mshier@sp2.upenn.edu](mailto:mshier@sp2.upenn.edu))
- Julie Tennille: Teaching clinical social workers EBP, Developing HIV Prevention Interventions for Adults with SMI ([tennille@mail.med.upenn.edu](mailto:tennille@mail.med.upenn.edu))
- Kristie Thomas: Intimate Partner Violence (IPV); IPV and Housing Instability, Shelter Use & Homelessness; IPV in Adolescence; IPV and Women's Quality of Life ([kristiet@sp2.upenn.edu](mailto:kristiet@sp2.upenn.edu))
- Marlene Walk: Nonprofit Economics, especially Human Resources Management ([marlwalk@sp2.upenn.edu](mailto:marlwalk@sp2.upenn.edu))
- Mary Huiquan Zhou: Social policy and nonprofit organizations, community development, service provision to at risk and marginalized groups ([zhouhuiq@sp2.upenn.edu](mailto:zhouhuiq@sp2.upenn.edu))

## EDITORIAL BOARD

Samira Ali  
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The Fellow is the official peer-reviewed publication of the Ph.D. students at the School of Social Policy & Practice at the University of Pennsylvania

## PEER REVIEW

We all work hard writing papers for classes, 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.

### Research Afield: Data Collection in International Settings

by Francis Barchi | [fbarchi@mail.med.upenn.edu](mailto:fbarchi@mail.med.upenn.edu)

My research on women uses data collected in August 2009 in collaboration with Women Against Rape (WAR), a grassroots NGO in Maun, Botswana. Although Maun is the gateway to the Okavanga Delta, a popular and lucrative destination for safaris, the local community is largely poor and unemployed. Highly patriarchal social norms marginalize women and support the use of violence as a male prerogative. Understanding how women's autonomy, health, and violence are inter-related may suggest new opportunities in the future for WAR to intervene positively in their clients' lives.

WAR was able to dedicate physical space and administrative support for a one-month data collection effort, requiring that a field staff be mobilized and a large number of interviews conducted within a short period of time. To accomplish this, we recruited and trained a field staff of eight local women to work under the supervision of a coordinator, Danielle Dougherty, a former Peace Corps volunteer in Maun to whom both the community and the language were already familiar. Our assumption that the team's knowledge of the language and the customs of Maun would enhance recruitment and the interview process. Following an intensive four-day training program, the team conducted interviews with 469 women, completing this task in only 15 days.

Despite this success, much of which is owed to the diligence and energy of the team (pictured here with Study tote bags on their first day in the field), we discovered that data collection by a local team introduces its own challenges. Local interviewers may accept a response as perfectly logical that to someone from another culture will seem inconsistent or the result of coding error. One example of this was the recurrent problem of women who reported having young children subsequently responding "no" to the question, "How many children do you have living at home under the age of 15?" Because child fosterage by relatives is common in their community, it did not occur to field staff to double-check these responses. With little grounding in 'why' we wanted to know if there were children at home, interviewers continued on to elicit responses from the women about who made decisions in their home about the children's meals, activities, and schooling, further compounding the potential error when women identified themselves as the decision-maker. These and similar problems were eventually resolved, but only after a return trip to Maun to review the data with field staff, a costly and time-consuming process.

Experience with the Maun Women's Study points to a number of strategies to improve data collection in international settings. Fielding a coordinator who is conversant with both the language and the local culture is essential to ensure that interview processes remain true to the study protocol, that procedures are reinforced on an ongoing basis, and that local staff has ready access to guidance and support. Training, both formal and

informal, should be ongoing. Major messages can get lost in pre-training sessions that are too long or complex. Adopting a schedule of shorter training sessions that take place episodically throughout field work affords the opportunity to reinforce key lessons, head off problems before they affect data quality, and enhance problem-solving skills using real-time situations. Content of training programs should include opportunities to discuss theoretical as well as practical aspects of the study. If field staff appreciate why a question is being asked they may be more likely to catch inconsistencies and to probe further when richer detail might clarify a response.

Regular opportunities for team building, feedback, and data review are important. These can be provided not only through formal training but also through informal occasions when field staff can share their experiences. In the Maun Women's Study, for example, the field coordinator joined the group periodically during each day at tea and lunchtime to monitor progress, trouble-shoot problems encountered during the day, and provide encouragement. Working with local field staff is essential if researchers are to interact successfully with communities in which they would otherwise be seen as 'foreign' – a perception that can result in information being withheld or re-shaped to reflect what respondents perceive to be the 'correct' answer. Careful attention to the training, communication and monitoring of field staff can minimize the likelihood of inconsistent or inaccurate data, and enhance the quality of study findings.



#### Research Opportunity

Prof. Ghose has 2 datasets ( $n \approx 250$  each) that need to be analyzed for factors associated with voting (and other measures of civil society engagement) among homeless people living with HIV. For the second dataset, prof. Ghose is: 1) validating instruments measuring mental health, sexual risk, substance use, homelessness and adherence among homeless people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA), administered by case managers as part of a clinical assessment (one issue to be examined is the validity of measures used in clinical settings as opposed to research settings), and 2) examining the correlates of antiretroviral adherence and sexual risk among homeless PLWHA (specifically, how mental illness, substance use, homelessness and food security are associated with adherence and sexual risk). For more details please contact prof. Ghose at [toorjo@sp2.upenn.edu](mailto:toorjo@sp2.upenn.edu).

# ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

## Joel Caplan, Ph.D. (SP2 '08)

Assistant Professor, School of Criminal Justice, Rutgers University

### **Tell us about your work and how it relates to your research at Penn.**

Broadly speaking, I am still in the field of criminal justice. More specifically, my dissertation at Penn focused on the effects of victim input on parole release decisions, which touched on issues of offender risk assessment, decision-making, and resource allocation. I am still studying all of these issues, but with a principal focus on spatial risk assessment for use by a variety of public safety practitioners. I developed a technique called Risk Terrain Modeling (RTM) that utilizes geographic information systems (GIS) to attribute qualities of the real world to places within a digitized map and then combines multiple map layers together to produce a single composite map where the newly derived value of each place throughout the landscape represents the compounded criminogenic risk of those places. RTM paints a picture, so-to-speak, of environmental contexts at micro-level places (e.g., 100ftx100ft) that are conducive for crime events. I've been busy publishing and presenting to show how RTM has predictive validity and practical utility for a variety of disciplines including criminal justice and public health. RTM-related books, articles, and tools are available for free online, so it is now being used by researchers and crime analysts around the world to forecast likely locations of hazardous events and to plan and allocate resources accordingly. The United Nations recently adopted RTM as a data analysis tool for the Global Pulse initiative.

### **What experiences at Penn have been the most valuable for you?**

There are two things. The first was a focus on rigorous research methods. It really makes your work stand out when you do everything within reason to maximize the validity and reliability of your methods. This was an invaluable lesson learned at Penn. The second was direct and implicit support and encouragement for interdisciplinary and collaborative research. As students at SP2, we were permitted to take classes in other programs throughout the University, and we saw daily examples of how peers and faculty at SP2 and elsewhere were collaborating across disciplines on projects of mutual interest. I enjoy collaborative research because it is, by its very nature, less solitary, but also because it tends to yield more innovative and productive projects. I try to replicate these experiences from SP2 in my own work at Rutgers.

### **What has been your biggest challenge as you have transitioned from being a graduate student to your current position?**

One of the things I always felt at SP2 was respectful collaborations between faculty and students. The faculty were trusted mentors, but they also valued our unique skills and often treated us as equal research collaborators, not just students. So, when I started my career as a faculty member at Rutgers, the transition from student to faculty colleague was not too difficult. However, I would say that the drastic change from being a mentee to a mentor for undergrads and graduates was more

challenging. The shock of the newfound responsibility for other students was at least unanticipated if not overlooked. When you are a student, you can always turn to a faculty member for guidance. As a newly-minted Ph.D. and Assistant Professor, you suddenly become that faculty member. You can potentially have a tremendous influence on students that seek your advice—and I didn't take that responsibility lightly. I certainly had knowledge, opinions, and experiences to share, but, as I talked to students the first few weeks of being hired, I couldn't help but think about the fine line between me as a recent graduate and 4th or 5th year doctoral students who were soon to receive a diploma. These and other students act on the advice you give them, so you don't want to give any bad advice. My guiding philosophy in those early days was "WWPD": What Would Phyllis Do? That always worked!

### **Do you have any advice for current SP2 Ph.D. students vis-à-vis the job market and their career prospects and options?**

Your dissertation does not have to be your life's work. But, for better or worse, it communicates a lot about who you are as a scholar and job applicant. It is often assumed by faculty search committees that your choice of dissertation topic was a conscious one that justifiably deserved your primary attention instead of other personal or professional interests. When embarking on a dissertation, select a topic that arguably fits into your broader research interests and that is attuned to your career goals. These are likely to be lines of inquiry as you interview for jobs, so prepare for insightful answers early.

### **Is there anything else you think current Ph.D. students should know?**

Sometimes in academia, you feel like you need to know a lot about everything. In fact, you don't have to be an expert in everything—that's what collaboration is for. What you might want to do, though, is to prioritize your scholarly skills and requisite research endeavors in order of how you want peers to think of you as an academician. A solid grasp of research methods is a must. But beyond that, do you want to be thought of as, for example, an "expert statistician with an interest in policing" or an "expert policing scholar with a solid grasp of statistics"? It's difficult to be both equally well. So, thinking about what you want to be and how you want to be perceived by others can help to propel your career along that course without being slowed down by ambiguity. It helps to allocate your time proportionately. Using your Ph.D. for rigorous research and thoughtful teaching is an ongoing endeavor—the "inbox" is rarely empty. Just be sure to add a few non academic-related things to your to-do list so that the processes of work and life are both fun and motivating.



## Publications

**Bisgaier, J.** & Rhodes, K.V. (in press). An examination of the association between cumulative adverse financial circumstances and patient health status and behaviors. *Health & Social Work*.

Sinha, J., **Greenspan, I.**, & Handy, F. (in press). Volunteering and civic participation among immigrant members of ethnic congregations: Complementary not competitive. *Journal of Civil Society*.

**Schori, M.** (in press). Valuation of drug abuse: A Review of current methodologies and implications for policy making. *Research on Social Work Practice*.

Schiff, M., Levit, S., **Schori, M.**, & Lawental, E. (in press). Anxiety symptoms of Israeli methadone patients during the War in Gaza: Exploring gender differences. *Journal of Loss & Trauma*.

**Shier, M.L.**, Jones, M.E., & Graham, J.R. (2010). Perspectives of self and situation of employed people experiencing homelessness: Challenging socially constructed perceptions and stereotypes. *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare*, 37(4), 13-37.

**Shier, M.L.**, Graham, J.R. & Jones, M.E. (2010). Social capital for vulnerable groups: Insight from employed people experiencing homelessness. *Journal of Social Distress and the Homeless*, 19(3/4), 132-155.

Graham, J.R., & **Shier, M.L.** (2010). Social work practitioners and subjective well-being: Personal factors that contribute to high levels of subjective well-being. *International Social Work*, 53(6), 757-772.

## Presentations

**Greenspan, I.** (2010, November). Between winners and dreamers: A research agenda and conceptual typology of foundation-grantee relationship. Paper presented at the 39th annual conference of the Association for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Action (ARNOVA). Alexandria, VA.

**Joshi, M.** (2010, November). Attitudes towards wife-beating among women in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan: An empirical examination using Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Public Health Association, Denver, CO.

**Joshi, M.**, & Sorenson, S. B. (2010, November). "Do you know what it feels like to drown?": Women's experience of strangulation in intimate relationships. Poster presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Public Health Association, Denver, CO.

Sorenson, S. B., **Joshi, M. J.**, & **Thomas, K. A.** (2010, November). A look at college students' personal knowledge of and attributions of blame in sexual assault. Paper presented at the 138th Meeting of the American Public Health Association (APHA), Denver, CO.

Dixon-Román, E., Visaria, A., Whren, H., & **Kim, M.** (2010 November). Intergenerational inequality and the educational consequences of health disparities. Poster presented at 138th American Public Health Association (APHA) Annual Meeting & Exposition, Denver, CO

**Lee, S.** (2010, November). Racial differences in the onset of Major Depressive Disorder (MDD). Poster presented at the 138th American Public Health Association (APHA) annual meeting & exposition. Denver, CO.

**Thomas, K. A.**, Dichter, M. E., & Matejkowski, J. C. (2010, November). Intimate vs. non-intimate partner murder: Differences in legal, situational, clinical, and personal characteristics based on a representative statewide sample. Paper presented at the 138th Meeting of the American Public Health Association (APHA), Denver, CO.

## Awards/Funding/Jobs

**Francis Barchi** is the Co-PI on a grant from the National Institutes of Health Fogarty International Center to establish a collaborative network of US institutions - including Penn, Harvard, Baylor and the CDC - and the Botswana Ministry of Health, to facilitate the ethics review of international research protocols in Botswana.

**Francis Barchi** is part of a team at the Penn Center for Bioethics that recently received a grant from the Johnson and Johnson Foundation to develop a curriculum in clinical ethics for nurses in Botswana focused on ethical challenges they encounter in HIV and TB care.

**Itay Greenspan** received the Goldfein Research Award from the Jewish Studies Program at the University of Pennsylvania.

**Sungkyu Lee** accepted an Assistant Professor (tenure track) position in the College of Social Work at the University of Tennessee.

## Sources & Tips

### **Publishing without Printing: Useful Information about Online Journals**

At a recent DSCC Colloquium, Dr. Roberta Iversen offered students a description of the general landscape of online journals and an overview of the current discourse regarding their use. Here is a brief synopsis.

#### **Types of online journals:**

- A. Online equivalent of a printed journal (same as hard-copy journal, peer-reviewed, has subscribers).
- B. Electronic-only journals (no hard-copy, peer-reviewed, has subscribers)
- C. Open-access journals (no hard-copy, peer-reviewed, no subscribers)
- D. Personal web-pages/repositories (no hard-copy, no peer review, no subscribers)

#### **Current debates found in the literature:**

##### **I. Hard-copy peer-reviewed journals (A) vs. peer-reviewed journals without hard-copies (B and C)**

- Advantages of journal types B and C are their potential to avoid the insularity of conventional hard-copy journals and provide quicker dissemination of publications.
  - There are concerns about the so-called "quality" and "reputation" of journal types B and C and there is little evaluation of these journals.
  - Professional acceptability of B and C (i.e. faculty acceptance of these journals as valid sources of publications for tenure track advancement) is yet to be determined
- ##### **II. Peer-reviewed journals with no hard copies that have subscribers (B) vs. no subscribers (C)**

- Open-access journals (C) minimize costs of subscription fees for libraries and open access to publications beyond academics. This provides greater equity of dissemination (particularly to lower resource countries).
- Open-access journals (C) sometimes have fewer embargos and restrictions on sharing the findings pre-publication because they do not need to preserve subscriptions.
- Disadvantages of open-access journals are that authors may be required to pay submission/publication fees and it is unclear whether there are regulations prohibiting duplicate submissions.

**General tip for Ph.D. students:** Gauge the professional acceptability of online journals in your own sphere. Specifically, when you are interviewing for academic jobs, ask about the institution's position on peer-reviewed electronic journal articles.

**References and suggestions for useful open-access resources are available upon request by contacting Dr. Roberta Iversen at [riversen@sp2.upenn.edu](mailto:riversen@sp2.upenn.edu) or Joanna Bisgaier at [Bisgaier@sp2.upenn.edu](mailto:Bisgaier@sp2.upenn.edu).**