

BERNICE A. PESCOSOLIDO: Welcome to our plenary session, Speaking to Publics: Limits and Possibilities. This is a companion session plenary from the point of view of the program committee to the earlier plenary on Speaking to Powers. Although it's quite clear that these two communities are not mutually exclusive. My name is Bernice Pescosolido and I will simply introduce the speakers briefly. They are so notable that I think the time is much better spent hearing them than hearing about them. But first, it's my pleasure to introduce ASA's recipient of the first Annual Decade of Behavior Research Award. Among the questions that have been raised or that will be raised in this session today are; what publics can sociologists address? What ways are we addressing them? Why should we bother to address them? ASA works to ensure that sociologists are recognized for their scholarly efforts that have important policy implications. One such sociologist is David R. Williams whom ASA nominated to receive the inaugural Decade of Behavior Research Award. In 2004, the Decade of Behavior National Advisory Committee named David Williams as one of two recipients of this prestigious recognition for research in health. We are delighted that ASA's nominee has been honored by the Decade of Behavior. Let me give you a little background about this. The Decade of Behavior which in case you are not aware of it is 2000 to 2010 is a multidisciplinary initiative of about 60 endorsing organizations including the ASA that are committed to focusing the talents, energy, and creativity of the behavioral and social sciences on meeting many of society's most significant challenges. The Decade of Behavior in part was a response to an earlier initiative called the Decade of the Brain.

[Laughter]

We wanted our fair time. Behavioral and social scientists are encouraged to bring their research results forward to help them inform the public and policy process about the Decade's five major thematic domains: improving health, increasing safety, improving education, increasing prosperity, and promoting democracy. There is no question about David Williams' excellence in doing so. David Williams is a senior research scientist in Harold W. Cruse Collegiate Professor of Sociology. He is also a professor of epidemiology. He was selected to receive this first ever Decade of Behavior Research Award because he has an outstanding, because as an outstanding scholar and effective public social scientist, he has made extraordinary contributions. His research for example has made seminal contributions to enhancing our understanding of why higher rates of disease, disability, and death persist for economically disadvantaged persons in general and in particular for racial and ethnic minority populations in the United States. His research has also provided theoretically informed descriptions and empirical illustrations of the ways in which multiple and dynamic dimensions of socioeconomic status can affect the incidence, prevalence and course of disease. With clarity and great sensitivity to the complex issues related to social class, race, and health, David Williams has made classic contributions to our understanding of the complex ways in which race, racism and socioeconomic status can affect the patterning of health over the life course. His research has operationalized theoretically derived

measures of major episodic experiences of discrimination as well as minor and reoccurring day-to-day experiences of unfair treatment and empirically verified their association with physical and mental health status. David has been on several policymaking committees. For example, he was a member of the committee that developed the Institute of Medicines on equal treatment confronting racial and ethnic disparities in healthcare, a report, and he has been a member of the Center for Scientific Review Advisory Committee. He was also an advisor to President Clinton's taskforce on healthcare reform and is an elected member of the Institute of Medicine. In addition to receiving a plaque honoring his achievements, David will present his research findings in Capitol Hill during a congressional briefing sponsored by the Decade of Behavior. David, would you come forward to receive your award.

[Applause]

It is my pleasure also to introduce our speakers today. There will be a change in the ordering at the request of the panelists. The first speaker will be Barbara Ehrenreich. She will speak followed by Frances Fox Piven, William Julius Wilson, and Eric Wanner. Again, this panel is addressing a series of questions about how, when, why, how and to what purpose should sociologists speak to publics. So we begin with Barbara Ehrenreich who has a Ph.D. in Biology. But I think for us she is better known as a political essayist, a writer and a social commentator. She has written dozens of books, magazines, articles. She is a recipient of numerous grants and fellowships and I as mentioned I'm gonna keep this brief so we can hear from her. One of the things I did wanna mention is that in an interview, I believe, with the University of Oregon, at least that's the website that I got this from. She said that her work is sparked by feelings of both anger and curiosity. A feeling I think not unknown to many sociologists as they approach the topics of their work. So, we would like to her from her first on her thoughts about how we could speak to publics.

[Applause]

BARBARA EHRENREICH: Thank you, thank you very much. I am not a sociologist as you've just heard though I can impersonate one sometimes. What I really am is a consumer. I am a consumer of what you do. And remember that whatever you're doing, you know, I think of you all off in your cubicles working, waiting for my email or phone call with my irritating questions. So, my, what I wanna do today is speak as a consumer of social science and register some complaints I have as a consumer and suggest ways that you can serve me better and the world, and the world. I'm not going to limit my--I'm not gonna be totally selfish. My general frustration is this. You are not out there enough. We don't hear you enough. You were not easy enough to find when I need you or we need you. You are not often visible enough and you are not always doing the things I want you to be doing. So and let me exempt right away many,

many people from these criticisms. Some of the people on this panel, for example, who fearlessly intervene in public debates all the time. But I want to illustrate, to start by illustrating my frustration. A recent experience I had as a, just now, I'm just speaking as journalist here. I wanted to respond to Bill Cosby when he began, he has issued a couple of rants recently on poor black youth and how bad they are and how they let him down. He said they use bad words. They are escalating rates of crime from them, ever higher rates of teenage pregnancy, both of which by the way are absolutely not true, the opposite of true. They don't study enough which is true of I guess all youth from the point of view of all grownups and they eat too much pound cake and they give, the African-Americans, they give their kids weird names that will paralyze them in later life. Well, I did what came to my mind right away which is my job to do and that is satire. I was writing--I had a chance to be a substitute for Thomas Friedman in the New York Times for a month and - I don't know. Are you all fans of Thomas Friedman? Is that why--

For the New York Times yeah and so, I started by--I likened Cosby's attacks on black youth to attacks on welfare recipients that had occurred in the '80s and early '90s, you know, again, you know, based on nothing but you know that they were just baby making machines trying to get more money by producing baby after baby so, and then I said, why don't we just pick a new pariah group. Let's go after old white people and you know, and I cited such things as the rash of Grandpa Bandits in the Midwest, you know, geezers who are rubbing banks. One guy was over 90 in fact and pulled off a bank robbery and you know, went on to, you know, even the law abiding ones lead this idol, dissolute lives of card playing and sitting around all the time. I pointed out that that menace posed by the elderly can only get worse as evermore than our sinking in to debt, which is true and of course, what's eating up their funds, drugs. Yeah.

And you know, speculated that soon the streets would be ruled by geezer gangs mugging people to support their insulin and beta blocker habits. So, that was all fun but what I was saying in the meantime is hey, where are the sociologists, you know. I want some backup here. I need some help. I did not know who to turn from but at then, I remembered, I used to keep a file on youth bashing. I just, it was not about race, not about class, it was about youth bashing and I--in it I had some articles by a guy named Michael Males who is at UC Santa Cruz, I found out, and he written in these times, now you may think, that's where I read him and you may think, well that's not a place you'd like to publish but that's where I found him. Anyway, I called up Mike Males and it's a little trick sometimes to find out where someone is based academically if they move around. So I had a good talk with him, ascertain that Cosby was dead wrong on some you know, key actual points and so forth and I quoted Mike Males but I said, Mike, why aren't you writing something, why aren't you writing a big piece on this. And at this point, I was also getting interested in a sort of midway in the discussion because I was getting pelted with hate, my article came out and I was wanted, you know, mainly from whites who you know. Oh well. Never mind and I was getting interested on the one under the class divisions in the black community that the whole thing represented and at this point, some notable African-American like Henry Louis Gates were weighing in on Cosby's side even though, you know factually, as I said, he is wrong about a lot of it except for the funny names. Now, I had one ally in this debate I could find although I don't know her, never communicated with her which--a woman named Ta-Nehisi Coates who writes for the Village Voice was doing great stuff on deconstructing Cosby's attacks. Ta-Nehisi, I point out, shows that a creative African-American name does not condemn you to slackerdom. So, out of this experience comes my first

suggestion. I want the ASA to set up some kind of service for working journalists so we can find the sociologists we need to talk to. Now, I think you can do this. I want, you know, you could be like an internet service or you know, you could--something people would subscribe to so that the issue--on the issues of the day, we get an email, it says here are some people who will talk to you about this issue and save us the trouble of digging up their email addresses and so on, give it to us. I don't think that would be too hard to do. Did you do it? Okay. Now, of course, the sociologists won't always the same things. There will not be one line when it's an analytical point. That's fine. We can deal with that, journalists, we can handle that. Now, my second challenge to you or prod to you is please do more writing yourself. This is what I was telling Mike Males to do and sometimes, what I hear from academics is well, you know I don't know how, you know we're trained to be bad writers, we're you know. Many of your campuses have a journalism school. Go over there. See if there is a course on writing opinion pieces enough and take the course. Audit it, you know. Or there are ways to solve this problem and to there are academics right here, sitting here who of course write up regularly. Then use of university press department to help you place what you write. Let me give you in another example of a recent case where I really missed the voices of social scientists. The Senate Intelligence Committee, it was at the end of June, beginning of July, came out with a study of why we went to war with Iraq. One of the great mysteries of our times and they blamed the war on group. Now group think is a concept that comes out of social psychology. That's where I first read about it. So where were the social scientists and there were all kinds of things to say at this moment. One of them was, see you need us social scientists. We have ways of understanding how human beings operate together and how those dynamics can go seriously wrong as in the case of group think or maybe they want to point out that group think was just an excuse. You know, that they were wrongly using a social scientific concept that in fact where it's been going on was a kind of totality on everybody to come to the same conclusion which is that Iraq had been behind 9/11 and was about to kill us all with nuclear weapons. So here was a case where, you know, where were you then? Get out there, write, make yourselves available. Now I wanna also say that I don't just want you to be good first responders or second responders. I do want you to get out there ahead on the important issues of our time. I want--there are more things I want you to find. Yesterday, I was wondering around the book exhibit and run into Michael Burawoy and I said, Mike, I need some books on this and that and the other thing, where are they? Who's doing the work? He said well, nobody's doing it right now, why don't you just ask for people to do it. So, this is like ordering out what I'm about to do. Here is some things I need, I want done, and that maybe you could squeeze into your schedules a little bit. I have three questions. One has to do with the fate of the post-welfare poor in this country. We have some excellent work on this. My favorite book, one of my favorite books on it is by Sharon Hays who is sitting on the floor right there and called Flat Broke with Children. She follows welfare recipients as their time limits come up where they're pushed into work. But we need other kinds of work too. We need to know more about the faith of those women who find jobs but find and--but you know many are finding them but typically, they find jobs that pay 7 dollars an hour. Now, with my book, Nickel and Dimed, I tried to find out a little bit about living on 7 dollars an hour but now we need to know about families who live on that for real, in their real lives, not just visiting journalists. We need, there is much work to be done there. We need to know more about those women who might have turned to welfare 10 years ago because they have a sick child and therefore lose the job because they missed days work and so on but now never even bothered to enter the system because they know they will get no help there or just be told to go out and

get a job. So we need all kinds of more work on that and we need it urgently because the reauthorization of welfare will come up in September, I think, in September? In September?

>> Yes.

>> In congress. Okay, second, my second item here that I want. I want something more on corporate culture in the United States.

>> In the 1950s, sociologists, the towering giants of sociology like C. Wright Mills and William H. White floored white collar corporate culture in detail. Today, I don't know. I mean, I have come across a couple of titles but there is hardly anything and there is so much we need to understand that I think is gonna have to come from social scientists here. One is about this jobless recovery that we've been having for years. It's a longest recovery we have ever seen, I guess. What's going on with that? And I'm talking here now in particular about a group that I've not considered myself with so much before but white collar workers. My speculation, my hypothesis, is that American corporations decided to be permanently lean. That there is a corporate culture in which you get ahead by destroying someone else's job, that is by pointing out why that job doesn't need to be performed in some way. That it has become a sort of primordial Darwinian pool in these cultures even--you know more and more workers have been-- become contingent in a way that they will be laid off when they're not immediately wanted and then brought that on and on, over and over again. Even CEOs in some cases are becoming contingent workers. I don't understand this. What kind of an institution are we talking about with the American corporation? I also wanna know more about the psychology by American corporations. There--I've been looking at corporate culture a little bit and as far as the psychology go on one hand you're supposed to be this brilliant, innovative entrepreneurial-minded person. On the other hand, everybody has to be a "team player." I don't understand that. This is the kind of thing that White and Riesman, for example, really did so well on in another generation. Have we created a culture of conformity? Finally, I want more sociology about the university. So, as an employer for example I just learned the fifth largest employer in the bay area is UC Berkeley. It's an enormous employer in the industrialization all over the industrialized America and it's an employer often of very low waged people, workers, food service, maintenance, custodial workers. Not to mentioned adjunct professors. Any adjunct professors here?

[Applause]

>> Adjuncts, okay. We will pass a hat for the adjunct before I am done because this is a scandal. I had talked in the recent months to adjunct professors who are on food stamps. I read about an adjunct

professor living in a shelter and commuting to his teaching job from that. At the university there's also I think a question mark in my mind as increasingly a credentialing institution. More and more jobs take college degrees, why? I don't know, to prove that you can sit still for longer periods of time. What's happening? As a real state empire, all of these things. An example would be work, for example, that GSU, the Graduate Student Union at Yale does and they--anybody from Yale? Yeah, they are great. They are the conscience of that university, GSU is, and they--I'm pretty sure that they do Yale watch. You know, they do a website and they monitor the evil things that Yale routinely does in the community. Why shouldn't every sociology department have a university watch function for their own university and take it upon themselves to keep up with it. I would have to say, I was a--could you pass me the--I left my place of Berkeley betrayal book so I can wave that around. I worked with some graduate students at Berkeley a couple of years ago who just put--came out with this publication Berkeley's Betrayal which is a study of working conditions and wages on the famed Liberal Berkeley Campus and the phrase, the word betrayal comes from the workers themselves. But it's interesting to me that when this group of graduate students, so I sort of advised for a while, wanted to know how the university itself functions and I said well, go to the sociology department, they'll tell you, right? This is their department. Well the sociology professors didn't know. They could not tell us things about how the money flow operates, who makes the real decisions, any of that. So I think that's something the sociologists should know. Well, you may think I am asking you to do too much. I am asking you to do serious new in-depth work on important subjects. I am also asking you to be aware of, ready to comment on or write about just about everything that comes up in the news. Is it possible to do all this? Well, I would say finally, that you know, call it being a public intellectual or just call it being a sociologist, I see it as a responsibility of any one, you know who has had the privilege of higher education to do all these. That any body who has sometime built into their lives to study and think to do all these things and finally, the responsibility of anybody who is intellectually and morally alive. Thank you.

[Applause]

BERNICE A. PESCOLIDIO: Now Barbara, I don't know if you were at Michael's talked last night but indeed he claimed you if not ordained you as a sociologist so I'm afraid you have now joined our ranks. We are glad. I don't know how you feel about that. Next, I'd like to introduce someone who, of course, you know is a sociologist, Professor Frances Fox Piven who is a distinguished professor of the graduate center at CUNY. My introduction on this, although I've never actually met her until a few minutes ago is more personal in the sense that I mentioned to her before the session started that her book *Regulating the Poor* that came out in 1972 reissued in 1993, [applause] I think is the reason, one of two reasons why I'm here and why I'm sure a lot of people in my cohort are here. It really stimulated our sociological imaginations and brought us into this--of course, she--this is not her only contribution. She has many books. She's won incredible number of awards and she has been credited with producing historical landmark, theoretical empirical analysis of the role of welfare policy in the United States. I'm just gonna turn it over to her, Frances Fox Piven.

[Applause]

FRANCES FOX PIVEN: This year's call for public sociologists is in a way a return to our roots as theologians. After all we emerged as a discipline steep in concern really for public problems for the disturbances of modernizing, industrializing and urbanizing societies. In the United States of early sociological work on problems of urbanization, immigration, deviance, and even as the discipline grew and its aspirations grew, as it matured, and it began to seek status, place in the universities and therefore needed European forbearers. It found those forbearers, you know, in the famous trilogy, Marx, Weber and Durkheim. But in thinkers who were preoccupied precisely with the problems, transformations associated with modernization, industrialization and urbanization, Durkheim, for example, who was very influential among the trio in setting the directions for sociology, Durkheim accomplished what was a kind of brilliant stroke for the 19th century. He asserted the existence of society as a palpable influence on human behavior and his very insight and Weber's and Marx's insight was provoked by the tumultuous changes that the society in which he lived was undergoing. These were public sociologists as well. I think our public sociology or our public role for sociology continued in the years afterwards at least for part of our discipline.

We were always concerned with social problems and with social policy. We even developed something called policy science. Many of us, not all of us were preoccupied with identifying, measuring or describing problematic social conditions in our societies and also with identifying the process of those conditions and evaluating the ways in which government could intervene to change those conditions. Our public as this work continued and developed, our public sometimes imagined but often real was government, the polity, epitomized by government. Well, in this pursuit we didn't see a lot of problems in this pursuit. We tended to think that if there were problems, the problems were largely technical or mythological. We we're preoccupied with the complexities of producing verifiable data for example regarding the cause and effect of public policies and in a complicated world, right. How did we know what caused what and we developed very complex methodologies. We used very intricate multivariate analyses and what we were trying to grapple with was the complexity of the real world and especially the translation of the real world into the causes and effects that would be applicable to the shaping of public policy so that we could make policy recommendations. That was the sense in which sociology continued to be a public sociology. But preoccupied with these methodological problems, I don't think we have a grappled with other problems, very serious problems in developing public sociologies. These were problems having to do with our position, our role, our relationship in the intuitional world with the way in which the search for money, money to do research, money to fund our salaries, the search for position, the search for standing the way in which our social environment influence the work that we did. We also were creatures of the Durkheimian insight that society has the palpable influence on human behavior. So sociologists also responded to the incentives, the pressures of the institutions

within which they worked. The institutions that reward us, pay for our search, pay for our ever larger, more elaborate research endeavors and pay for us. We were in a way for hire. We were for hire. We are for hire by government and by foundations. They're our patrons. Inevitably, you know we're influenced by our patrons. We're influenced by their understandings of the social world, by the understandings they wish to cultivate in the society at large. They have ideas or etiologies regarding why there are social problems in our country, why is there crime, why is there poverty, why do families now func--and we're useful to them because we were-- we are and we were because we were so preoccupied with methodology, we had accepted a kind of Weberian injunction which said that we were not doing the politics, we were producing the verifiable information about the causes and effects of government policies and the problems that they are presumably intended to solve. So we worked for government, we worked for foundations, we worked for the think tanks. We investigate casual relations that are formulated in a way that is dictated by ideology, by interpretation, by the story line of our patrons, government and foundations. So we investigate and did investigate and still investigate questions about crime, about the causes of crime, of poverty, of unemployment, of out of wedlock babies, and we identify hypothetical causes and the characteristics of communities and the characteristics of families or patterns of socialization and we don't identify the hypothetical causes in the big institutional arrangements, in the corporate world and in the role of government and government policies regarding taxes and subsidies and social welfare and helping to shape what corporations do which in turns shapes the labor markets, which shape patterns of poverty and unemployment and ultimately, patterns of crime and even of out of wedlock births. Or even more perniciously I think. We found ourselves because of who are patrons were, where we turn for money and prestige. We found ourselves investigating. Just look back over the last 20 years, the perverse effects of policies of the past formed, shaped by a different politics then dominates the country today. We found ourselves investigating the perverse effects of too generous, too kind, too lenient policy interventions and how those policy interventions were actually the cause of poverty, or broken families, or out of wedlock babies, or whatever. The consequences, I mean we often didn't found that the questions posed by our patrons had to be answered in the negative. There was not much of an effect, for example, welfare system on family formation but the consequences were very serious even though our findings sometimes did not confirm the dominant hypothesis. Because by even asking the questions and doing the research and narrowing the investigation to the causal relations that were identified by our patrons, we reiterated, we underlined the dominant storyline and ultimately provided scientific legitimation for it even when we found--

[Applause]

for example that the effects of welfare on work effort were so minimal as not to really be relevant for policy but after all it was the statistical significant findings, the statistically finding so therefore it became part of the political discourse. So what should we do? I mean if we are serious now about public sociologist si think we need to try to reconstruct our relationship to the public or the publics. We need

to try to break out of the pattern in which we have lacked ourselves, a patron-client relations with government that is not a democratic government and we have to find ways as Barbara of speaking directly to a larger public, to a democratic public. But we have to do that in a society, in a political community that is now very politically--very polarized. It's a polarized world, we live in a polarized country, a country which makes use of social science, use of social science that is very problematic so we have to decide who in this polarized conflict-ridden society is our public. There isn't one public. There isn't one public sociology, says theology. Michael is right about that but there is not one public either. There are many publics. Which of those publics is going to be our public, our new patron? I hope that many of us, it's never all of us, will choose as our patron the people at the bottom of the hierarchies that define American life, of the class hierarchies, the racial hierarchies, the gender hierarchies, now the citizenship hierarchies.

I hope that we will include among as our patron the people who are really the down and out and the marginalized. That after all was what was great about the American sociological tradition in the past and we ought to revive it with joy and with passion. We ought to consider as our patron, also as our constituency, the people who are the taming multitudes of the world whose traditional livelihoods are being destroyed by the depredations of international capitalism and particularly by American capitalism.

[Applause]

Now, you're applauding now but you're gonna walk out, go down the hall and you're gonna say oh, that was romanticism. There is no money. This patron that I'm proposing or these patrons that I'm proposing, they can't support our research. They can't give us career awards. They can't even write letters of recommendation for tenure. That's true, but let's consider more soberly the possibilities for sustaining a dissident sociology, which is what I would like to see thrive. First, many of us, most of us work at colleges and universities, right. Well, you know, colleges and universities, we tend to imagine as somehow peripheral institutions. They're not, they're huge. There are more people in universities and colleges than there are in the manufacturing sector. We are positioned there. We have a public right there and we have a lot of influence on the universities and the colleges which structure what we can do vis-a-vis that public and we should use it. Moreover, think about this, 30 years ago, when the organized corporate funded right in the United States began its march through the--its long march through the institutions, we thought we were gonna do that. They did it and that included the churches, it included the voluntary organizations, it included town councils, state legislatures. They also took off after the universities. They wanted to penetrate and influence and dominate the universities after all that's where the protests of the 1960s were nurtured, wasn't it, and they try to do that. They've created think tanks, they've created research institutes, they've created grants for the universities, special professorships, they've created new journals but you know, they never took over, took over the Lutheran church but they didn't take over the universities. Now, I don't exactly know why that so, why they failed, maybe it's to our credit. Maybe because it really isn't insulated Ivory Tower but whatever the reasons, the universities are still institutions in which dissident sociologists and other kinds of social scientists can flourish and can speak to millions of young people every day in the course of our work so we have the universities, that's the first thing. The second thing is we ought to say about more seriously in creating our own environment. You know, you can do something to change the organization of incentives and

rewards and sanctions that are institutionalized and influence sociological practice overtime. This conference is the way of doing that because you know, this is the American Sociological Association. It's a professional association. One of the sources of energy that keeps it happening every year is that it allows people to present papers, it gives awards, it's a source of professional recognition isn't it, of course. You see your friends, you say--huddle in the hallway and you say what are you working on, what are you working on. This is what happens here. Well, to the extent that the papers presented here, the awards given here, the buzz in the hallways here are papers, awards, and a buzz that talks about a dissident critical sociology identified with the bottom half of the world that will change the kind of work we do. Now, but we should do more than that. We should--there are, we should promote alternative journals 'cause we all--we know we all have to get published, right. That's the name of the game and so if we create alternative journals we will get alternative critical dissident sociologists published more and that would be a good thing too and I'm always in favor of friends. We ought to really cultivate the comrades, the friendship networks that encourage people who stand up, speak truth to power, and identify with the down and up. Consistent with creating our own environment, our own institutional structure of sanctions and rewards, we ought to seek out alternative constituencies to the government and the foundations. We ought to cultivate relations with unions, we ought to be doing the kind of research--we ought to be doing the kind of research that unions need and want. We ought to be seeking out and making, developing relations with advocacy organizations, with community groups. They're not gonna have big money for research but those ties will help direct us, will help tell us how to be, how to do a sociology which treats us its patron, the people at the bottom of society, and then we ought to also explore. Some people are doing this, more participatory research methods rather research methods in which the subjects of our research of the people we survey and interview are included in the design of the research. I know that some people are beginning to experiment with that but I think that's a good idea. Let's make the subjects the partners and then finally, I think we ought to reevaluate the philosophical basis of our endeavors. Over the decades, since the founding years of sociology, we've cultivated a kind of simple-minded version of the Weberian ideal, the injunction of science. We wanted to be social science. It was much, we're much too simple-minded in the relationship that we assume between fact, scientifically reliable fact and values. We ought to begin to consider and discuss and write about a sociology, the recovery of a sociology that is inspired by moral and political concerns.

[Applause]

Not everyone has to do this but there's room in the discipline for such--and it always was the leaders of sociological thought through the centuries really. They were always the people whose work was fueled by their deep moral passion. Thank you.

[Applause]

BERNICE A. PESCOLIDLO: William Julius Wilson, the Lewis P and Linda L. Geyser University Professor at Harvard University is our next speaker. Bill Wilson is someone I have had the good fortune to know since 1980 and in 1980 or since 1980 and at that time there were things I did know about him.

>> I knew that he was or he is the past, one of the past presidents of the American Sociological Association. I knew that in--that I know now that in 1996, he was selected by Time Magazine as one of America's 25 most influential people. I know that in 1998, he received the National Medal of Science and why not? The declining significance of race the truly disadvantaged, when work disappears, what would you expect or how could you expect otherwise. But there are things though that I didn't know about Bill Wilson that I think are important especially on the context of these meetings. I didn't know that Harvard had only 18 university professorships and that he holds one of those and I think most importantly, given our ceremony yesterday, I didn't know that in 1966, he received his Ph.D. from Washington State University. Let me introduce you to Bill Wilson.

[Applause]

WILLIAM JULIUS WILSON: Thank you very much, Bernice. It's really an honor to be a participant in one of the plenary sessions on this year's exciting program and I would like to take this opportunity to thank Michael Burawoy and the program committee for providing real leadership as our discipline confronts the challenges of the 21st century and hopefully, plays a greater role in contributing to the public's awareness and understanding of social events. According to Carol Weiss of Harvard University, although high-quality data are useful and establish credibility, of equal importance is a sociological perspective on processes, entities and events. Participants in the policy arena can benefit from an understanding of the forces and conditions that shape actions, and from the structures of meaning derived from sociological research and theories. In other words, sociologists can provide what the late Morris Janowitz called enlightenment. Nonetheless, Ms. Weiss argues. We are often not aware of or overlook ways in which social scientists have effectively engaged the public. Indeed, the public discourse on the issues such as persistent poverty, urban planning, political control, and criminal justice has changed because of thought-provoking ideas from the social sciences. Theories of class conflict and mobility have influenced government policies and education, social services and community development. Concept such as participatory democracy or decision making, labeling and concentration effects have been incorporated on policy discussions concerning criminal justice, mental health and poverty. Weiss reminds us that sociological conceptions more than discreet datasets have influenced the way actors in the policy arena think about social issues. The social sciences provide fresh prospect---policymakers, journalists and the public at large. Advanced new insights on causes and effects and challenges assumptions that are widely held and taken for granted. Likewise, although social scientists can produce excellent documentation on

the incidence, frequency and intensity of a condition, they are also able to demonstrate that the world works in ways that might not be considered by public opinion leaders. In other words, social scientists knowledge of the way the world works enables them to make better cause and effect connections than can other observers. However, some of the best sociological insights never reached the general public because sociologists seldom take advantage of useful mechanisms to get their ideas out. Most academic journals are not accessible to the general public. As the late James Coleman pointed out in an article in News Week, it is "extremely important for sociology to demonstrate its utility to society if it's going to be viable in the long run." And as Herbert Gans has argued "sociology's support from the general public depends insignificant part on how informative that public finds sociology and what uses it can make of the discipline's work." Nonetheless, some sociologists argue that it is good that our research draws very little attention from the media and policymakers because it insulates the discipline from outside pressures to pursue certain research topics. There is some merit to this argument. However, if sociologists are concerned about the present and future state of the discipline, this argument is shortsighted. Why? Simply because the more sociology is ignored by the media and policymakers, the less attention it receives as an academic discipline and therefore the more removed it is from the decision-making arena, the fewer students it attracts and the more difficult it has in obtaining funding for research from private foundations and government agencies. Accordingly, from my point of view, the issue is not whether we should be concerned about receiving attention from the media and policymakers, the issue is how to get such attention. The discipline of economics has certainly not suffered from all the media attention it has received over the years and from the efforts of internationally know economists who engaged the public including Nobel Prize winners such as Gary Becker, Robert Solow, Joseph Stiglitz, and the late James Tobin. Examples of other prominent economists who make an effort to--explicit effort to reach or make their work accessible to the public include the Princeton economist, Paul Krugman, even before he became a New York Times columnist; Alan Krueger, another outstanding Princeton economist; Laura Tyson, formerly of the University of California, Berkeley, and now dean of the University of London School of Business; Richard Freeman of Harvard; and John Galbraith of the University of Texas. And as we think about ways to spread our message and insights to our broader general audience, we ought to keep in mind the success of these economies in engaging the public. Their writings and insights have ranged from regular columns in magazines such as Business Week and the Economist to occasional columns and to op-ed articles in the New York Times, the Wall Street Journal, the Washington Post, the Los Angeles Times, and other influential newspapers. Indeed, I feel that a very important mechanism to bring sociological insights into the public arena is through op-ed articles. A medium used successfully by some outstanding sociologists including Christopher Jencks, Orlando Patterson, and Theda Skocpol of Harvard; Alan Wolfe of Boston College; Todd Gitlin of New York University; Andrew Cherlin of Johns Hopkins; and Seymour Martin Lipset of the Hoover Institute in George Mason University. Now, it would not be fair to simply refer to this group as public intellectuals because they are all outstanding scholars in their own right. And the sociological insights are compelling enough to interest the media. But aside from being first-rate scholars, these sociologists have another thing in common, they know how to write and do not rely on academic jargon to get their ideas across. Stilted, ponderous, jargon-laden language will all but ensure that one's writings will not penetrate beyond narrow academic field of specialization but that's the way we push our graduate students away.

[Applause]

You know, it amuses me to hear someone dismiss a book written by a social scientist as journalistic simply or solely because it is accessible to the general public. Also--

Also, it is commonly and falsely assumed in the academic world that if a book is accessible to the broad audience, including the media, it is likely to be ignored by academics. And this is a concern voiced frequently by scholars, especially younger, nontenured scholars who would like to reach a wider audience with their writings but feel that their peers or higher level professors would censure them. Now, I think this is a legitimate concern that ought to be a topic of any serious discussion on the social organization of the discipline. And I would suggest that we begin that discussion by noting that some of the most important and influential books in our discipline are among those that are accessible to the general public. I have in mind books such as David Riesman's *The Lonely Crowd*, Herbert Gans' *The Urban Villagers*, Gerald Suttles' *The Social Order of the Slums*, Robert Bellah's *Habits of the Heart*, Daniel Bell, *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society*, Richard Sennett's *The Hidden Injuries of Class*, and Arlie Hochschild's *The Second Shift*. All of these books were among the 53 titles that Herbert Gans in a 1997 *Contemporary Sociology* article identified as bestsellers by sociologists. That is books, excluding textbooks, which have sold at least 50,000 copies. For the purposes of his study, Gans defines sociologist, "as authors with graduate degrees or teaching affiliations in sociology, or social scientists from a related disciplines parti--pology whose books have been adopted as sociological because their concepts and methods are often cited or widely read by sociologists and their student." As Gans notes the books on his bestseller list tend to be among the "most readable." They have not only been discussed wildly by academics, they have drawn the attention of educated lay readers in the general public as well. I think that one can draw a major conclusion from a careful reading of these out--namely, that clear, intellectually rigorous, thought-provoking, and creative arguments will draw a wide readership--academia, especially if such arguments focus on issues that are high on the public agenda. It is important to remember in this connection that the media are constantly looking for fresh ideas, creatively developed and thoughtfully presented. If such ideas receive attention in the academic community, they are even more likely to attract media attention. Indeed, as a general principle, I think it is fair to say that scholars whose work is ignored by the academic world will receive little attention in the media. The real challenge, therefore, is to produce works that seriously engage both the academic and nonacademic communities. On one hand, if the work is too technical and not accessible, however creative, it is unlikely to be discussed in the media. On the other hand, if it is accessible but not thoughtful or intellectually rigorous, it will be ignored in the academic community. In short, cogent arguments that resonate with both a lay audience and the academic community are more apt to draw media attention. Herbert Gans' comments are appropriate in this regard. He states, "Finally, that I could find only 53 books that have sold over 50,000 since the 1940s suggests that the discipline still has a long way to go before it makes a significant impression on the general public. How it can best do so is a subject of another article, but it should not do so by attempting to publish bestsellers. Sociologist ought

to publish intellectually and otherwise useful, empirical and theoretical works that add to our own and the public's understanding of the society." If the record attendance at this year's annual meeting on public sociologies is any indication, Gans' comments no doubt resonate with many members of our discipline. Thank you.

[Applause]

BERNICE A. PESCOLIDIO: Our final speaker is Eric Wanner, president of the Russell Sage Foundation. For those of us in this room like myself who are not in and in no way attached to the foundation world, let me tell you a little bit about the Russell Sage Foundation. It is the principal American foundation devoted exclusively to research in the social sciences. It was established with a founding goal of the improvement of social and living conditions in the United States. The foundation dedicates itself exclusively to strengthening the methods, the data, and the theoretical core of the social sciences as a means of improving social policies. It is located in New York City, it is a research center, a funding source for the studies by scholars at other academic research institutions, and one of the things I was most impressed with in terms of their own description of their organization is they see themselves as an active member of and part of the nation's social science community. I don't know Eric Wanner, but I know I have heard a lot about him from colleagues in sociology who across the board expressed admiration and respect for both the mind and the man, Eric Wanner.

[Applause]

ERIC WANNER: Thanks very much. I'm going to end on sort of a practical note, but I'm going to try to confront, I think the same kind of gap that Bill and Barbara, I think, were talking about. Namely, it seems to me, has always seemed to me that there's enormous power in the results of social science, enormous potential power. Enormous potential power for changing the way people think, changing the way they behave in society, changing their political stands. But somehow, this potential energy, this potential power in social science, doesn't quite get unlocked. And Barbara, on her side, is a consumer who's saying, and I thought she had some lovely ideas, here are the kind of institutions we need to sort of close this gap a little bit so that I, as a journalist, can get a little bit closer to what's going even--and even push the agenda of social science in a way that's more socially relevant. That resonated with me because one of the things that the Russell Sage Foundation has been telling itself ever since it was founded in--is that we're in favor of the more--of supporting a more socially relevant social science kind of research which may or may not have strong theoretical leverage, but has potential, strong potential social impact. So my question is how do we close this gap? Barbara can work on it from her side a little bit. Certain foundations, certainly, Russell Sage, Rockefeller, Ford, Carnegie that we've all worked with,

are working on the other side to see whether or not they can exploit some of the power in social research and get journalists to pay attention. And I want to talk a little bit about one example that we've worked through recently and sort of what kinds of results and what kind of effort is required. First, let me double back and make this point about this enormous potential power of social research. It seems to me good descriptive work, not getting fancy before we do anything multivariate. Just good descriptive work can itself move mountains, at least potentially. So for example, we know that measured family income in this country has gone up steadily over the last 25 years. And we know a good deal about why and we're now beginning to know something about the consequences. That is well, something about how the people who've fallen behind economically have fallen behind in other ways, and we have I think a very good case to make that inequality of outcomes, which America has always tolerated in its ideology, is beginning to threaten to leak through and undermine inequality of opportunity.

And we can make that case pretty powerfully. The question is how do we get people to attend to that? Inequality is this long, slow, tectonic change. You can't see the income distribution. You can see certain things. You can see the changes in the size of houses or cars, you can see homeless people and so forth, but you can't see the whole distribution. How do we get journalists to pay attention to this long, slow episode which is reshaping our country? If you don't think it's reshaping our country, here's a fact for you. The Gini coefficient, which some or many of you will know is a nice little mathematical way of measuring inequality has gone up from 0.4 to 0.46. That doesn't sound like a big deal. That's since about 1979. Well, it's not a big deal until you start to look at some of the comparative data. And if you look at Gini coefficients of other countries, you'd see that what's happened since 1979 is basically our income distribution has changed from the income distribution characteristic of Australia. It's now Argentina. We're not Brazil, we're Argentina. Brazil is up in the 60's, somewhere in the Gini coefficient, and Sweden and Norway and so forth, they're in the 20's. Well, that's a story we need to learn how to tell. Take another. I often think of ethnography as a way of making what's invisible to us. So if you take Barbara's wonderful work in Nickle and Dimed, or Katherine's work on--Kathy Newman's McDonald's workers. What you'll learn is what it's like to be somebody else, what it's like to be somebody at the bottom of the labor market, what it's like to be a welfare mother, and you learn things. You learn things that completely overturn this--the ideology of the day. So welfare dependency was a big explanation of why welfare created certain unattended consequences and pathologies. In fact, we based all of welfare reform in the notion of--that had created dependency. But if you look at Kathy's work, you saw very clearly that the use of welfare was a rational choice by low education women whose chances of earning a livable wage in the US labor market were nil. Therefore, welfare plus off-the-books work was a much better choice for their families than trying to work in a low-wage shop. Win that argument, of course, we didn't win that argument. The legislation was based really on a tissue of wishes and misrepresentations. And I think what we have to realize is that there isn't a simple transmission bill. I often look back to the progressives who started the foundation that I work for and they had a lovely, but very naive idea. We would create a better science and social life that people would recognize the implications of that science social life, and if there would be a kind of extra political source of information about social design. Well, we know now, however, many 80 years later, that it's much more

complicated than that, and that the policy today is really an incredible wrestling match between people with lots of priors that are only partially moved, budged by good social research. That it's not the--it's not a simple matter of seeing the light. It's a matter of wrestling for what the light really is. And the question I think we ought to be asking ourselves is how do we do a better job of waging that, of engaging in that kind of contention to try to determine what the real nature of welfare use is. We lost that one, why we should go back and think. Why? And we should be prepared not to lose the next one. Well, then you mentioned a little bit about the next one and something that the foundation is trying to do now as an example of closing this gap. Along with the Rockefeller Foundation, we've been running for about 10 years, a project that we pretentiously call the Future of Work. But really, what it's focused on is what happened at the bottom, particularly at the bottom of the US labor market in the last 25 years. Why is it that wages of workers with less--with a high school education or less, fell through the floor in the last 25 years recovered a little bit at the end of the '90s and seem to be stagnating again? We did a lot of work or supported a lot of work. As someone pointed out, we're the patron. We frame the issues that we're interested in. We supported a lot of work, statistical work on why this may have been the case. And we got back a lot of answers that you're probably pretty familiar with, things like computerization, globalization, increasing immigration, declining real value of the minimum wage, antiunion, weakening of unions, deregulation, and so forth. That is all, I think, very useful. Although we want to remind ourselves that it can't just be a matter of computerization and globalization. Those things are going on in all the advanced democracies, all the market economies and yet, we've had the biggest rise in inequality. We've had the biggest decline in the outcomes for low-education work. For example, of a little comparative fact sitting right there, which ought to be the focus of a lot more social, a lot more policy attention that it is. Why is it that the US and the UK lead the world in the increase in inequality over the last 25 years? It can't be totally across the board international forces since our run up in inequality has been so much high. It must be impart the effect of institutions, and institutions of course are politically conditioned and controlled. Anyway, back to Russell Sage and Rockefeller, and our project on low-wage work. Having supported a lot of statistical work, we wanted to find out more about what was happening more in detail. And we commissioned a series of case studies of US industries. There were 25 industries in all. There was something like 13 different projects. They covered, I think, something like interviews or surveys with--on the order of, well over 10,000 workers in 500 establishments. It's a big, big study, and it ended up in a big, big book, which I will hold up since I'm also a publisher.

[Laughter]

You could find this book [whispering], and it's thick, and it's heavy, and it's detailed. But if you boil down all these details, what you will find is that almost across the board in all these industries, there were tremendous pressures, squeezes on corporation, having to do and sometimes with foreign competition, sometimes with new technology, sometimes with different sources of capital. Many of these companies went public. There was more pressure on the bottom line and so forth. For a variety of reasons, there

were profit squeezes. And these profit squeezes often ended up squeezing low-wage workers. Why? Because the labor market was pretty slack. US labor up until the end of the '90s was quite slack. So it was the easiest way to hold down costs, was to hold the line on wages, reduce benefits, intensify work. I read Barbara's book on the way out in the plane again, and I noticed that she did 19 hotel rooms, I think, when she--in your single day as a hotel maid, isn't that right? I thought that was pretty good because our data suggested on average in the hotel industry, maids were asked to do something like--had been asked to do 14 or 15 a day, and the average we got, it went up to 17 or 18. So you were above the -- yeah, right.

[Laughter]

But that kind of work intensification was entirely characteristic across these industries. Okay. So having learned that, the question is, what can we do--and that's--I want to mention one other thing. That wasn't the only lesson from the study, there was another good lesson which is that although these trends [inaudible] the board in all industries, they were not ubiquitous. In every industry, there were some companies who could do better by their workers. And when you looked at why they did better by their workers, it was often because they weren't say, for example, in a tight--labor market, and they had to do better by their workers. Or they were in a high union density city, and unions took wages off the table, wage competition off the table, so there was more of an effort to retain workers, figure out how to make those workers more productive, and be able to pay them--those workers, a wage that was--did not reduce profits to--that made the firm uncompetitive. So the--what we learned was that although these trends had been pretty well across the board, there were examples of firms in every industry where it was possible for the firm to compete successfully without squeezing its workers, a high road so to speak.

What we wanted to do then was to get this information out and we tried to go, we have gone public with it. We've spent, and this is from an organization that never spent any money--except research. We spent about 250,000 dollars for public education campaign and Rockefeller spent I think another 100,000 dollars or so maybe more. And this is generated last count. This is starting in September. We published it on Labor Day 2003, published something like 75 newspaper articles, TV and radio segments, op-ed pieces, culminating some--with me 'cause I thought it was pretty good, the cover story on the working poor in no less than Business Week. So, you can get some attention. Now, what's going to happen now that we did all this work? By the way, I should say a little bit because Barbara has talked about how social science could come closer to journalists. Journalists need to get closer to social scientists too. It's a lot of work it turns out to get the ordinary work of a journalist to pay attention to. You damn near have to write their story for them and then you have to do a lot of simplification in what I would think of as personification that is that we had a story about the system. That is, we didn't necessarily have the story about poor people. We had a story about the system that was making them poor and we had a story that said the system isn't perfectly close. That is there are some opportunities illustrated by some firms which can do better by low-wage workers and we wanted to talk about those firms. It turned out to be very, very, very difficult to get reporters to understand that this was a story

about the system not a story about people. There is a tendency to kind of personify and then of course, there is the natural tendency to want things simple and I think if you're Bill Wilson or Sandy Jencks you know how to simplify without throwing the baby out with a bath but it is very, very difficult. We have done an awful lot of that work for some of our grantees working with public relations people who know how to make things simple but may miss the essence so we've been working hard to try to see if we can preserve some of the essence and when we get stories it's often by means of, this took six months to get the story at the cover of Business Week, and it's a lot of work. Now is it a lot of work that's worthwhile? Is it a lot of work that you could do? Foundations are this sort of mediating institutions. In part they've been patrons. In part they've made mistakes, so the kind that Frances talked about. In part they have presumed more than they should perhaps and in their serving their masters in various ways, no doubt. But the question is what kind of dialog could they be involved in with you in order to try to make this transmission of information from the research in all its beautiful detail which you become enamored of when you do research and you can't quite throw away any and that's why we got a book that's this big. And the question is how do we know that getting just the important message with just the right supporting material to make it have a social impact, so we won't again run into terrible disaster we did before about welfare reform when we had pretty good social science showing that welfare dependency was a very, very small effect but somehow that good social science was ignored when it came time to make policy. I don't know the answers. I can really only pose the questions. I can really only get our foundation to try to organized itself to continue to make this kind of effort to get good research paid attention to in the national conversation. I can only say this, whether or not we're successful, I think we absolutely have to try. Let me say this as non-threateningly as I can. I think capitalism in its current state has, at the very least, some serious design flaws.

[Laughter]

[Applause]

I'm not sure where else I would get applause for that. Certainly, not back in New York. But if we want to benefit from creativity of the market, the efficiency of the market, the incredible ability of the market to innovate, we have to figure out how to minimize the social cost to protect people whose lives are otherwise uprooted, disturbed, ruined by market changes, and that's something we really haven't taken very seriously and it's information like this hammered out again and again and again which I think is are eventually our only chance to get our own society to take seriously this project. Thanks very much.

[Applause]

BERNICE A. PESCOLIDIO: We bring up the lights, please. We have about 15 minutes for questions.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: [Inaudible Remarks]

BERNICE A. PESCOLIDIO: Loud, as loud as you can.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: [Inaudible Remark]

BERNICE A. PESCOLIDIO: Okay, the question was a question that we often hear from graduate students. They come into sociology Ph.D. programs with an interest in publishing outside of academic journals. They come in with interest of what they are told will get them tenure and she is wondering, our colleague is wondering how do you deal with that dilemma. Is that fair? Okay. So does anybody on the panel would like to respond to that? Bill?

WILLIAM JULIUS WILSON: I have a very great response, wait until you get tenure. [Laughter] I'm sorry. You know, we have not, when we change a social organization of the discipline and come up with some new norms and ways to train and evaluate students, until we do that I think that you shouldn't take a chance. Just get--when you get tenure then become a public intellectual as well as a scholar. I know. I'm sorry. This is one of my students so I'm just telling.

[Laughter]

BERNICE A. PESCOLIDIO: That's where she heard it.

[Laughter]

That's where she heard it. Now, wait, wait. I do want to, I would like to say one thing to that and I'll turn it over to Frances. I think it's very interesting to think about institutional social change within higher education. What you've said is something also that people have traditionally heard about teaching and scholarship of teaching and learning. It seems to me if you look at the discipline and higher education of the last 10 years, you graduate students have done something because the standards for quality teaching really have changed in higher education and in the Ph.D. granting institutions and so, I don't

really know how to do it but I think there is more power in being a graduate student than sometimes you are led to believe. But I think Bill is right. You do have to change the system somehow if we're going to make this not a road that will come back to hurt you. But I think it's possible. I guess I'm the Pollyanna but...

FRANCES FOX PIVEN: Well, a lot of the people here could change the system.

[Applause]

But you know I teach in a graduate program at the City University of New York and in my program we have all of these workshops really about how to be a grownup social scientist and succeed. And I always wince a little bit when my colleagues give graduate students advice because it's so narrowly focused. You know, you have to do this and this and this and this and publish on this sort of journal and so on. And I always tell my students that, you know, you only need one job. You don't have to appeal to the whole field after all. You don't have to bid for a job or for tenure everywhere in the country and there is enough diversity in the field, enough variety to--which we should encourage, and nourish, and allow to blossom that I think you can give a much more balanced advice to graduate students.

Of course, they have to pay attention to getting publications in those refereed journals but some of the refereed journals are refereed by people who are sympathetic to a public sociology for one thing, for another--thing that they have to do. So, I think we have to worry a lot about instructing students to just worry about their career taking the most narrow and dismal view of what it takes to have a career because that really [applause], it snuffs out. It really snuffs their fashion and their pleasure and their potential as public sociologists.

[Applause]

AUDIENCE MEMBER: [Inaudible Remark]

BERNICE A. PESCOLIDIO: Okay, I didn't hear the last part but it was how can public sociology be more effective with regard to the elections?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: [Inaudible Remark]

BERNICE A. PESCOLIDIO: Okay, when public elections are privately financed? Here she comes--

[Pause]

FRANCES FOX PIVEN: Well, at public elections, I've always been privately financed in the United States. When we look around us and we say, sort of wow, it's me. Look at all of this money, pouring into the election, drowning us in propaganda in Swift Boat veterans who [inaudible] is not a hero after all, and things like that. But it's always been this way in the United States and we haven't lost every election for a couple of hundred years. There are things that we do or we try to do to counter the influence of money. It's partly the public sociology that we do. It's also the work of social movements and of the movement like electoral organizations that have sprung up in the last couple of years, so that, of course money is a terrible problem and now we have black box voting and that makes the problem a little ominous but that's the system we inherit and it's within those institutional arrangements that we have to try to trounce the Bush regime and if we don't it will be very, very serious but we may and once we do that, maybe we can go on and do better things.

[Applause]

BERNICE A. PESCOLIDIO: Yeah, I don't want to ignore this side of the room.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: [Inaudible Remark]

[Applause]

BERNICE A. PESCOLIDIO: Have you made that suggestion to anyone on the publication's committee or will you be attending the business meeting at 7 a.m. tomorrow morning? I know you'll all be there in the same kind of attendance that you have for this panel but I would suggest that you pass that on. Yes.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Thank you so much, this has been just wonderful. I want to affirm what Frances said a moment ago is suggesting as a public philosopher rather than sociologist that the work that you

do builds your character and so the kinds of things that you're likely to say, what your imagination is likely to put forward as a worthy project as an aspiration for your own future life depends upon, throughout your life, the kind of work that you do. So that if you aspire to be a public sociologist, I would encourage you to do public sociology as a way to actually become the people who can do that work. I want to ask you as a panel to comment on this question that has come up for us in philosophy as well. How can we, as institutions of varying powers, everything from the highly visible institutions like Harvard to the semi-visible institutions like my own order to the relatively small and underfunded institutions help one another to speak more, what should we say, in a more egalitarian fashion on the issues of the day, so that to become a public intellectual, one need not aspire to participate in the most privileged and visible institutions in our society but instead can aspire and be affective in working at institutions that serve a much broader range of the citizens of our society.

BERNICE A. PESCOLIDIO: It's one of our colleagues from philosophy who first thanked the panel for their insightful comments but also asked or also commented that the work that you do shapes your character. So maybe you don't want to start thinking about this being public where you stand in relation to public sociology later in your career. But the question that she asked was how do we, is there any way to confront the access to venues for public sociology that, as I understand what you're saying, seem to be slanted toward higher prestige institutions. How do we have more equality across institutional types with regard to access to public venues?

BARBARA EHRENREICH: I'm not sure about this, but I don't think that the status of the institution in say the US News and World Report ranking is that determinative of the attention research gets. I think it's more likely to be the topic. I really do and maybe that, you know, initially something that becomes tagged from Princeton will get a little more attention but it's not I think how most journalists are thinking about it. I want to mention one of my four graduates who gave--

Aimee, I use this, my position to get you to say something.

BERNICE A. PESCOLIDIO: it's called network influence. Go ahead ask your--

AUDIENCE MEMBER: [Inaudible Remark]

BERNICE A. PESCOLIDIO: Aimee has copies of the Berkeley report. There are few so they're gonna be hot and going and to make another plea for thinking about the possibilities of different pathways of careers that--

AUDIENCE MEMBER: [Inaudible Remark]

BERNICE A. PESCOSOLIDO: Okay.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: [Inaudible Remark]

BERNICE A. PESCOSOLIDO: Okay, so the short version of the question is what happens when Fox News starts paying attention to our research?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: [Inaudible Remark]

BERNICE A. PESCOSOLIDO: Berkleyreport.org for copies. Berkeleybetrayal.org for--the whole report can be downloaded. Eric?

ERIC WANNER: My quick answer is you--if--when Fox News pounces on you, you pounce back and do more and better sociology than Fox News can do. Way back in the middle '80s when we were doing early work on just proving that income inequality had gone up. The Dallas Federal Reserve Bank commissioned a study which came out and said yes, there has been arising inequality but it's been neutralized by an increase in mobility, right? So the tip [laughter], right. So, does it matter if that one little slice in time, there was a great deal of inequality because people were--in the bottom were going to move up and they and so we look quickly at the study and we commissioned a counter study because it was very obvious that they had fudged the data and the way they did it was to define inequality not over families but over individuals and then start counting individuals who were 50 old. So of course, you get a great deal of mobility for people who are 15 or 16 who in the next 10 years turn out to go to medical school or whatever they do, okay? Or better yet, business school. So, a lot of this is shabby. Some of these fights that we get in are fights with people who do some pretty shabby social science and if you work hard at it, you can expose it.

[Applause]

BERNICE A. PESCOLIDIO: Okay, we have time for one or two questions. I think I had pointed--I'd pointed it to you earlier 'cause I don't want to get out of order wherever I was but let's--we don't have time for too many more questions. So let's go here and then I want to sure we go into the back for people in the back. I don't want them ignored. So, go ahead. Yeah.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: [Inaudible Remark]

BERNICE A. PESCOLIDIO: Okay, wow. That's like sociology redox but let's--does anybody want to take on the question of how do you define capitalism now? I think Eric really does have to do this since he made the comment.

ERIC WANNER: I'm guilty. I used the word. I'm going to dock your question but I hope dock it in an interesting way. The way we think about the market system now, we think mainly about maximizing the interest of owners. So, the way in which Fran was--I'm sorry Barbara was talking about corporate culture and one big change in corporate culture in the '80s due to the--well, due for many reasons but one was the market for corporate control, the corporate raiders and so forth was that managers were put unnoticed that they had to focus a lot more as they run the corporation on the bottom line on earnings per share and so forth. What I think we've forgotten is that most of us, if we're lucky are not just owners of a little something rather but we're also consumers and we're also workers. We have all three roles and a humane system it seems to me has to try to consider optimizing the results not for just one role but for all three roles.

[Applause]

BERNICE A. PESCOLIDIO: Last question in the back.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: [Inaudible Remark]

[Laughter]

[Applause]

BERNICE A. PESCOLIDIO: Okay, the question focused on the courage of the individuals on the panel in terms of taking the stance in their work that they have. The question surrounded how does one do this in the face of negative responses even by close friends and colleagues? Is that a fair—OK.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: [Inaudible Remark]

BERNICE A. PESCOLIDIO: Okay. We have multiple responses.

[Laughter]

WILLIAM JULIUS WILSON: Tonight, I think about what George Bernard Shaw once said. It's better to be misunderstood and criticized than to be ignored. So, with that in mind, I say, okay, I have tough skin and I accept the criticisms because it means that they're taking the work seriously. By the way, speaking about the right-wing Fox News, do you think I did the wrong thing when I was invited to appear on the O'Reilly Show and I said "no" because I didn't want to dignify the show by showing up?

[Cheering]

[Applause]

Apparently, yes.

FRANCES FOX PIVEN: Well, you know, it's not like that at all. It's not, I mean, I don't feel as though I'm shunned by my friends. I feel—lots of friends and more and more friends and I think that doing a political social science makes for a great life. It also gives me access to people who I otherwise in the ordinary course of routines living on the upper west side of Manhattan, I wouldn't have access to people who would not otherwise be my friends. So, it's invigorating. Listen, the political life is really a good life and everybody is making a mistake. A mistake for you, for your own self-interest when they tell you to worry about tenure all the time.

[Applause]

BERNICE A. PESCOLIDIO: Thank you. Let's have one more round of applause for our panelists and thank you for coming.