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Sociological practice has been a part of American sociology since the beginning of the discipline in the late 1800s. The "practical side" of the early 1900s is now referred to as "sociological practice." This general label includes two areas of specialization: clinical sociology and applied sociology.

In broadest terms, clinical sociology refers to sociological analysis and intervention, with emphasis on intervention. Applied sociology refers to applied social research using one or more of the methods of problem exploration, policy analysis, needs assessment, program evaluation, and social impact assessment. Though different, the two approaches, clinical and applied sociology, should be seen as complementary. Many practicing sociologists use both clinical and applied approaches, even when one of the methods is more central to their work.

The Sociological Practice Association began publishing *Sociological Practice* in 1989. It is intended as a basic resource for practitioners, faculty, graduate students, and upper-level undergraduate students in the social sciences. Published as an annual, each volume of *Sociological Practice* is devoted to one particular area of practice. Past volumes have covered The Development of Clinical and Applied Sociology (Volume 7, 1989); Community Development and Other Community Applications

(Volume 8, 1990); Health Sociology (Volume 9, 1991); and Conflict Processing (Volume 10, 1992). This volume (Volume 11, 1993-94) focuses on Social Gerontology.

Each issue of *Sociological Practice* includes a historical overview of the field and examples of sociological practice drawn from research, intervention, and teaching relevant to its particular theme. Abstracts of each contribution to the issue are provided.

Volume 11 begins with an overview of sociology's contribution to the study of aging in society—both past and future. Cox and Newtson review the historical development of social gerontology and identify significant sociological perspectives that have been applied to the study of aging. Also included in this section are two reprinted articles. The piece by Pollak has been abstracted from *Social Adjustment in Old Age: A Research Planning Report* (Social Science Research Council, 1948). It represents one of the earliest reports on the implications of the changing demographic structure of society in the United States. A sociological understanding of what aging may be like in the twenty-first century is provided by Riley in an abstracted reprint of her 1990 Boettner Lecture. In this lecture, she addresses the critical issue of how social structures will need to be changed to foster the growing numbers, strengths, and heterogeneity of older people as we move into the twenty-first century.

The next section, General Policy Issues, provides an analysis of some very significant issues that policymakers face regarding services for the elderly. Longino and Bradsher address the intergenerational equity debate—that is, the extent to which the elderly in our society receive a disproportionate share of societal benefits at the expense of the younger generations. Prohaska, Trites, and Scott provide an example of policy development and the role of the sociological practitioner as it relates to health promotion and illness prevention for older adults. Kowalewski and Peterson provide a methodological approach for identifying the central features of the everyday lives of the elderly, and discuss the implications of this knowledge for policy development. In the final article in this section, Bull and Bane identify a number of barriers or challenges to service delivery to the rural elderly and discuss how this information impacts on decisions regarding the efficient allocation of resources.

In the third section, Caregivers of the Elderly, a number of authors address one of the fastest growing concerns among social gerontologists: the needs of family caregivers, this topic has received a considerable amount of attention in recent years in light of the increasing numbers of frail elderly and concerns about health care cost containment. Keech, et al.,

describe and evaluate a Family Caregiver Support Program was imple-
mented to help alleviate the physical, emotional, and economic burdens on
family caregivers for the frail elderly. In an empirical assessment of the
satisfaction with medical encounters among caregivers of geriatric patients,
Clair, Ritchey, and Allman conclude that the stress of caregiving activities
is the most significant predictor of satisfaction—irrespective of the quality
of clinic services or physician communication style. Deimling and Looman
provide an analysis of factors that affect the use of respite services for
caregivers of Alzheimer's patients. Their findings suggest that practitioners
need to take racial and generational factors into account, in addition to tra-
ditional patient and caregiver needs, when formulating care plans.

The next section, Medical System and the Elderly, addresses two differ-
ent issues. In the first article, Clair explicates the role of medical sociolo-
gists within geriatric clinical practice and discusses the particular problems
faced by medical sociologists in gaining legitimacy in clinical practice.
Along a different line, Mignon utilizes a sociological perspective and
research methodology to examine the stigmatization of elderly alcoholics
and the extent to which they receive little attention from physicians.

The fifth section, Educational Issues, examines both the training of stu-
dents to work with the elderly and the educational role that elders can play
in our society in terms of technological advancements. In the first article,
Rosenberg describes a field experience that he uses with students in a
gerontology training program. This student-senior citizen community pro-
ject pairs students with seniors, and provides the students with an opportu-
nity to broaden their understanding of aging and to decide on the types of
careers for which they are best suited. In a thought-provoking piece,
Shostak proposes a role of "Technoguide" for the elderly in society. In this
capacity, the "technoguides" would evaluate new technologies that are of
particular relevance to older persons, and thereafter, to society-at-large.

The final section of this volume provides a compilation of resources
available to students and professionals who are working in the field of
aging. The network of social services for the aging in our society, profes-
sional/advocacy organizations, funding sources, national data bases, pre-
dominant journals, abstracting services, and handbooks are identified.

These articles, along with the resource listing, provide models and mate-
rials for incorporation into future curricula and for the practice of sociology
as it relates to social gerontology.