The Institute on Social Exclusion (ISE) has been a part of the Adler School since 2005. Since its inception, the ISE has served a prism that highlights structures that are always present in society – but which casual observers seldom discern. The ISE illuminates these structures – laws, policies, values, and attitudes – and shows how they can and often do adversely affect social participation. By presenting our work in novel ways that are understandable and useful to academics and members of the general public alike, the ISE seeks to catalyze socially responsible action to address the social marginalization experienced by some groups in American society. The ISE implements three transdisciplinary programs to illuminate the structural forces that lead to social exclusion: research, education, and outreach.

Research
In recent years, the concept of social exclusion has emerged as a useful frame for understanding contemporary forms of social disadvantage. In order to assess the effectiveness of legislation, policies and programs designed to address exclusion, it is necessary to develop indicators of social exclusion that can be benchmarked, measured, and monitored for evidence of social progress.

Over the course of the last year, the principle research activity of the ISE has been the Social Exclusion Indicators (SEI) project. The project has involved the identification and tracking of a uniquely American set of indicators by a team of Adler School students and ISE faculty. The results of the SEI project have been documented in a piece entitled “Social Exclusion Indicators for United States” will be published in the Winter 2009 edition of the Journal of Individual Psychology.

In doing this work, the ISE’s intentions are twofold: to help initiate a national discussion about the utility of social exclusion as a conceptual frame for better understanding the root causes of social disadvantage; and to address disadvantage through structural interventions aimed at the integration of excluded populations by aligning their social experiences with prevailing norms and expectations.

The selected indicators fall into four categories – Health, Justice, Shelter and Technology. The indicators that have been reviewed to date:

Health
- Access to health care insurance
- Access to primary health care services as measured by annual physician visits
- Amenable mortality
- Food insecurity

Justice
- Juveniles sentenced to life without parole
- Supermaximum-security confinement

Shelter
- Homeownership

Technology
- Internet usage
- Computer access

Social Exclusion Indicators contributors (from left to right) Sherrod Taylor, Emily Burt, Lynn Todman, Kerry Cochrane
In subsequent work on this project, the structural origins of social exclusion – laws, policies, institutional behaviors, popular conventions and attitudes – will be highlighted with the intention of helping to re-orient public discourse, policy initiatives, and programmatic interventions so that they address the underlying structural causes of exclusion. This structural orientation actualizes the Adlerian principles of the importance of social context and belonging. According to Adler, social context plays a central role in conditioning human well-being. He asserted that understanding individuals – their experiences and circumstances – requires understanding the social milieu in which they are situated.

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Education

Currently, the ISE’s educational activities focus upon presenting its Social Exclusion Re-entry Simulation (SES) to a host of diverse audiences. Simulations are an especially effective means for communicating and understanding the myriad problems related to exclusion.

The SES illustrates the ways in which many of the systems that organize our society interact with one another to create the structural barriers that formerly incarcerated women encounter in their efforts to re-enter society. These structures include (but are not limited to) education, health, and social welfare systems; employment and housing legislation and policy; as well as transportation and public safety systems. The SES immerses participants in the experiences of female ex-offenders trying to re-enter society after a felony conviction, including their efforts to secure housing, employment, health care, while endeavoring to comply with parole regulations.

Participants typically start out feeling optimistic about their ability to complete the mandated activities necessary to “win the game.” However, after experiencing long lines, extensive paperwork, confusing instructions, diminishing transportation options, and many seemingly “no-win” situations, they begin to question their assumption of control, their ability to assume “personal responsibility” for their life outcomes, and to “pull themselves up by their bootstraps.”

The role-playing aspect of this SES is particularly effective in generating empathy, examining and clarifying values, relating abstract concepts to actual consequences, and illuminating social structures that rarely rise to consciousness. The process facilitates new learning and affects meaningful changes in beliefs, values, and attitudes, and ultimately behaviors among participants. Past participants have commented in that SES has had a profound impact upon their values and attitudes and has caused them to change the roles they play in their communities.

Other components of the educational activities conducted by the ISE over the course of the last year are the Annual ISE Conference; the ISE Speaker Series and American Dream Series, which dealt with a variety of controversial and “under the radar screen” issues; advocacy training, and short films and discussion on social justice issues in acknowledgment of the UN’s first World Day of Social Justice.

Outreach

Dr. Lynn Todman, director of the ISE, recently presented at a meeting entitled Social inclusion: Life on the Margins to Life in the Community. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) of the US Department of Health and Human Services hosted the meeting in Washington, DC, on March 30 - 31. It was the first formal effort by SAMHSA to bring together experts to consider how to employ the concept of social inclusion in the field of mental health. Attendees sought to define what the concept of social inclusion means in the United States, examine successful innovations, and develop action steps to promote social inclusion policies to address the high rates of unemployment, homelessness, poverty, social isolation, discrimination, poor health, and early mortality among people with mental health problems.

Using the social exclusion framework, Dr. Todman advanced two important ideas in her presentation: first, that the point of intervention for social inclusion lies not exclusively with the individual with mental illness, but instead with the social, political, and economic context in which that individual is situated; and second, that a transdisciplinary approach to the social inclusion of people with mental illness is essential given the multidimensionality and dynamics of exclusionary processes. She concluded her presentation with two recommendations: to develop a Social Inclusion Impact Assessment tool that can be used to evaluate and monitor the likely exclusionary/inclusionary effects of any kind of proposed legislation, public policy, or program on people with mental illness; and, to develop a definition of social exclusion/inclusion that can be integrated into the United States Code and the Code of Federal Regulations would legitimize the exclusion/inclusion concept as a framework for thinking about mental health policy, programs, and practices in America.

For more information about past events and upcoming programs please visit www.adler.edu/about/ISE.asp.
Social exclusion is a complex, multidimensional phenomenon. Therefore, efforts to address it must be informed by a wide range of perspectives. For instance, they must be informed by what is known about exclusionary processes and structures in the fields of sociology, political science, economics, law, urban planning, medicine, public health, psychology, linguistics, environmental sciences, theology, philosophy, theater and the fine arts, to name a few.

One of the barriers to transdisciplinary approaches to addressing exclusion is language. In our analysis of the literature, we have noted innumerable references to exclusionary processes and structurally-induced social disadvantage. We have also noted that the language used to refer to these phenomena varies across professions and perspectives, often obscuring common themes and potential points of collaboration, synergy and coalition building. As part of our effort to encourage a more transdisciplinary approach to addressing social exclusion, we have developed this graphic that highlights the language used in various disciplines and professions with the aim of helping to forge ideological linkages that can serve as the basis of coalition building around efforts to address the problem of social exclusion.
Recently Dr. S. Abdul Thaha and his colleague Dr. S. Jaikishan, who reside in India, visited the Institute on Social Exclusion (ISE). Dr. Thaha is the Assistant Director of the Centre for the Study of Social Exclusion and Inclusive Policy (CSSEIP). The Centre is part of the Maulana Azad National Urdu University, located in Gachibowli, Hyderabad. Established in 2007, the Centre aims to address social exclusion through teaching, research, and action programming. CSSEIP plays a key role in suggesting policy overtures designed to alleviate discrimination and to protect the rights of socially excluded groups. Having already begun to address matters involving inequality and deprivation, the Centre now focuses most of its attention upon the policy implications of its work.

Dr. Thaha earned his PhD in regional studies from the University of Hyderabad in 2000. A historian by training, his interdisciplinary research interests involve various civil society organizations in his native country and other nations, as well. He is the author of Forest Policy and Ecological Change: Hyderabad State in Colonial India, published by Cambridge University Press. Thaha came to Chicago to address The Association for Asian Studies Annual Meeting on forestry management issues.

In the future, Dr. Thaha plans to establish a closer relationship with Adler School’s ISE in order to foster wider dissemination of ideas about social exclusion and to promote inclusive growth worldwide.

In early February, Lynn Todman, PhD, director of the Institute on Social Exclusion, traveled to the African countries of Rwanda, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Hosted by the Heartland Alliance for Human Needs and Human Rights, the intent of the trip was to see Heartland’s programming with the victims of gender-based violence, child soldiers and members of LGBT rights groups. Upon her return Lynn held a brown bag lunch presentation during which she described highlights of her trip and showed pictures to members of the Adler community and other academic institutions.

Child Soldier Re-entry Project in the Congo
“American Indians and the American Dream” with John Low

John Low is a member of the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians and Executive Director of the Mitchell Museum of the American Indian in Evanston, Illinois. In his presentation at the Adler School on January 22nd he discussed the ways in which the federal government, through purposeful action and benign neglect, created a system that resulted in the oppression of American Indians throughout the history of this nation. In his lecture titled “On the Great Turtle’s Back – the American Indian Experience,” Mr. Low detailed the ways in which ethnocide and genocide were met with resistance and strategic accommodation as well as cultural continuity and persistence. In the end, American Indians have had to negotiate their own versions of the “American Dream.”

A fluent story-teller on Native American history, Low left the audience with a clear understanding of the exclusion and hardship this population has faced. He spoke about particular issues faced by contemporary American Indian communities. Particularly, he spoke about economic and legal implications of the U.S. government and how it has systematically created problems for today’s American Indian. The event concluded with a candid question and answer discussion in which the audience gained a better understanding of the issues faced. Mr. Low also brought along some pieces of art from the Mitchell Museum collection which hold special significance to American Indians in the region.

“Reconstructing Identity: The Price of the American Dream” with Natalie Moore

On October 23rd Natalie Moore, who is a reporter for Chicago Public Radio covering news and issues in the Englewood neighborhood on Chicago’s South Side, spoke to students at the Adler School. In her presentation to students, faculty and guests she provided an on-the-ground report of the housing and urban development issues these communities are now facing. Natalie played audio clips of news stories that she had previously covered on the relocation of Chicago Public Housing residents who are being moved to mixed income communities.

Following the presentation audience members engaged in an in-depth dialogue that focused on questions which remain unanswered:

- Is it necessary for ethnic minorities to shed their distinct cultural attributes and elements of their identity to gain access to the “American Dream”?
- To what degree does access to the “Dream” require changes in dress, language, hairstyle, comportment, affect?
- Does loyalty to non-white cultural identities heighten the risk of exclusion?

The discussion focused on racism and how many of the developed communities of the Chicago Public Housing movement represent forced assimilation. Main focuses of the dialogue centered around who dictates the rules of assimilation and at what point do these rules dominate a person’s individual freedoms.
Neglected Infections of Poverty with Peter Hotez

On Thursday, March 19th, Peter Hotez, MD, PhD, President of the Vaccine Institute and Distinguished Research Professor and Chair of the Microbiology, Immunology, and Tropical Medicine at the George Washington University presented “Lifting the Bottom Billion the Control of the Neglected Tropical Diseases”. In his presentation, Dr. Hotez described how, in the United States, there is a largely hidden public health burden caused by chronic and debilitating parasitic, bacterial, and congenital infections known as the “neglected infections of poverty.” He noted that these diseases disproportionately affect impoverished populations, notably people of color living in the Mississippi Delta and other parts of the South, urban areas throughout the country, along the US-Mexico borderlands, as well as in certain immigrant populations and disadvantaged white populations living in Appalachia. They cause a wide range of health issues, affect tens of thousands poor Americans, and represent an area of health disparity in the United States. According to Dr. Hotez, these neglected tropical diseases are “…chronic and disfiguring, disabling, and stigmatizing. They impact childhood development and promote poverty.” Dr. Hotez’s presentation highlighted how poverty predisposes poor communities to these neglected infections and diseases, and how, once infected, the cognitive and intellectual development of children is compromised thereby undermining their educational outcomes and their ability to lift themselves out of poverty later in life.

Joe Bageant Comes to Adler

On Thursday, April 2nd, Joe Bageant, who is a social commentator and author of Deer Hunting with Jesus: Dispatches from America’s Class War, in which he discusses the lives of poor rural Whites in the United States, paid a visit to the Adler School. Joe, as he prefers to be called, presented his ideas on the creation and perpetuation of the “underclass” through the creation of the “American Hologram”. He also spoke about our collective vulnerability to the messages conveyed by mainstream media and our need to be more critical in our consumption of the news. For more information, see http://www.joebageant.com/joe/2009/04/escape-from-the-zombie-food-court.html

On the Saturday, following Joe’s presentation, Dr. Janna Henning organized a “Jam Session” at The Hidden Cove, a local north side establishment in Chicago. Joe, along with Adler students, staff, and faculty, played instruments, danced and sang for hours. It was a fun evening and we promised to repeat it for those of you who couldn’t attend. Thank you Dr. Henning for a wonderful evening!!
In this book chapter, ISE Faculty Fellow Sherrod Taylor, JD, a former plaintiff’s trial lawyer who is now a member of the Adler School’s Core Faculty, reviews the subject of “malingering” within the context of traumatic brain injury (TBI) litigation.

In the section devoted to the concerns of plaintiffs and their attorneys, Taylor describes how lawyers go about selecting their personal injury cases and contradicts the popular notion that attorneys frequently file so-called “frivolous lawsuits” on behalf of unworthy clients by pointing out that trial lawyers—who are paid on a contingent fee basis and who advance the costs of litigation—“lack incentives to represent persons who are likely to be found to be malingering because juries probably will not award substantial monetary compensation to those individuals.” In this portion of his chapter, the author also discusses the field of jurisprudence called neurolaw, which constitutes a “synthesis of medicine, rehabilitation and law” dealing with the trial and appeal of neurological injury cases.

Next, Taylor examines how forensic neuropsychologists undertake the task of determining whether malingering is present or absent in particular civil actions. Recommending that clinicians use caution when employing the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) in instances of suspected malingering, he urges evaluators to “explore whether any signs of symptom magnification revealed on tests are related to anxiety disorder or some other psychological/psychiatric disorder.” After noting that appellate courts tend to scrutinize carefully the opinions of expert witnesses who rely solely upon the results of single tests to diagnose malingering, the author suggests that practitioners utilize at least two reputable methods for assessing a litigant’s effort level before rendering a professional opinion on malingering.

While analyzing typical defense approaches to neurolitigation, Taylor observes that the word “malingering” may be employed by defendants as both a term of division and a term of diversion: “As a term of division, it (1) drives a wedge between juries and plaintiffs by denying that claimants are injured at all or as seriously as they contend, (2) separates juries from plaintiff lawyers by calling into question their motivations for filing lawsuits, and (3) decomposes the legitimacy of legal actions by suggesting that cases may be frivolous or even fraudulent. As a term of diversion, ‘malingering’ affords defense attorneys opportunities to refocus lawsuits, by shifting emphasis away from defendants’ blameworthiness and toward plaintiffs’ unworthiness.”

In the final section of this chapter, the author offers the appellate opinion in Ostrowski v. Cape Transport Corp. (2004) as a “classic” example of the various methods used by defendants to defeat a TBI plaintiff’s legal claim in court. In that New Jersey case, the defense employed multiple tactics to suggest that the plaintiff was a malingering—apparently to no avail, since the jury returned a verdict totaling more than $1.5 million.

The book in which this chapter appears is part of the American Academy of Clinical Neuropsychology/Psychology Press Continuing Education Series—which publishes “volumes containing a blend of cutting-edge primary research and practical/professional material for clinicians, researchers, and students of clinical neuropsychology and clinical psychology.” Offering a wide range of instructive real world examples and a plethora of expert guidance, this casebook collects the work of more than 50 prominent scholars.

A copy of the book chapter can be found at http://www.adler.edu/about/ISESuggestedReadings.asp.
“The New Politics of Race and Science”

On Thursday, May 21st Dorothy Roberts will give a presentation at the Adler School. Dorothy Roberts is Kirkland Ellis Professor, Northwestern Law School, and Professor, Department of African-American Studies and Sociology, and Faculty Fellow, Institute for Policy Research, at Northwestern University. This presentation focuses on the uses of race as a category in science, law, and social policy. It demonstrates how different political approaches to racial equality influence scientific debates on medicine, biotechnology, and bioethics. Most significantly, perhaps, this lecture helps policy makers, students, academics, and members of the broader public to develop new understandings about the social implications of race in the post-modern world.

Professor Roberts earned her B.A. from Yale University and her J.D. from the Harvard Law School. A prolific writer and social critic, she is the author of Shattered Bonds: The Color of Child Welfare (Basic Books, 2002) and Killing the Black Body: Race, Reproduction, and the Meaning of Liberty (Pantheon Books, 1997). She has also published more than fifty articles and essays in books, scholarly journals and popular periodicals.

For information about ISE events, contact: TheInstitute@adler.edu.

“UCAN Presents: What Does a Community Psychologist Do?”

Please join us for a panel presentation with representatives from the Uhlich Children’s Advantage Network (UCAN) on what a community psychologist does. How is it different from traditional psychology? Why you are going to have to practice in a way that is different from traditional method? And why that makes you more marketable. Additionally, we will have a UCAN service provider panel that describes the kinds of issues, challenges, and rewards of actual practice in the field.
About the Institute on Social Exclusion at The Adler School

The mission of the Adler Institute on Social Exclusion (ISE) is to advance social justice. We do this by working to integrate the concept of “social exclusion” into U.S. popular and public policy discourse; by helping to contextualize social disadvantage; and by advancing the idea that the point of intervention for addressing social disadvantage is its social, political, and economic context.

Social exclusion refers to the ways individuals and groups are denied access to rights, opportunities, and resources that are commonly available to most people. Adler School’s ISE is a catalyst for dialogue and action, helping to remove the often unseen barriers that undermine the ability of individuals to participate in mainstream American life.

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