

Professional Associations Workshop

With Dr. David A. Snow and Dr. Francesca Cancian
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Here are some tips from the workshop...

- **Set up appointments** with people you'd like to meet before the meeting by contacting them via telephone or email and asking them to have lunch, dinner or drinks with you one of the days of the conference.
- **Attend business meetings** for the sections you're interested in and **volunteer** to do stuff. Helps you meet people and helps others remember who you are.
- **National meetings** are higher prestige than **regional meetings**. Regional meetings are a great place to start out and are still a good way to meet people and build your network.
- Remember, when you're meeting people and you have that awkward feeling that you may be "butt kissing" that you probably are not. What you are doing is "**Doing Career**" and it is acceptable and expected at professional meetings.
- Attend **section gatherings** and mingle with the people there. Do not just go and have a drink with people you already know. Meet some new people. These are all people who have similar interests to yours so at least you know you'll have one thing you can talk about.
- **Roundtables** are not necessarily just for "lesser" papers. Many times when organizers are putting together panels they keep the papers that fit best together on the panel and relegate the others to roundtables regardless of their scholarly merit. Also, roundtables are a great place to network, build collaborations, and get great one-on-one feedback on your paper.
- When talking to people you don't know try to **think about what they need** and get them talking about themselves. Then you can just listen. It's an easy way to take the pressure off yourself.
- Remember that you don't just have to meet the big named sociologists. You can also **develop excellent relations with people at your stage or just above**. These relationships can last a lifetime.

- One way of **approaching a scholar** whose work you've read is to say *"I've read this piece of yours _____, and I have a question that relates your idea to my current work. I was wondering if you have a moment to discuss it with me?"*
- The **book display** is also a great place to talk to people and it's less intense. The people are in there to look at books so if you catch a nametag or two out of the corner of your eye and say hello it appears less about networking and more about just being polite. A further conversation could spawn from there.
- The **job locator service** at ASA is pretty worthless if you're interested in getting a job at a Research 1 level university. It is OK if you're looking for jobs at smaller, State, or liberal arts colleges. It's also a good place for anyone to get practice answering interview questions.
- When thinking about what to **dress** choose an outfit that is in line with the norms of what other people are wearing at the conferences. Try to blend in. Remember, you want your outfit to be the least memorable thing about you. It's about your ideas...not your clothes!
- When **giving a paper presentation** here are some quick tips...
 - Get the story-line out right away
 - Give a very, very quick literature review just to place your work in the literature, not to tell them how much you know
 - Make 1 or 2 points and explain them very well with lots of examples
 - PowerPoint is probably not best b/c you want the focus to be on you, not your slides. Better to use just a few overheads.
 - If you use tables, use only 1 or 2 and make the font big enough to see. Highlight only the data you'll discuss.
 - Think about what the audience wants to hear and tell them that. Don't bore them.
 - Try not to read from a paper. Rather, use an outline. In fact, it may be best to leave your paper at home so you won't be tempted to read it. We often believe what we've written is better than what we'll say but in fact the written word doesn't sound near as good when read orally. Try to just talk to the audience; communicate *with* them not *at* them.
- To **follow-up** after a meeting it is OK to email people you've met if you have a purpose. You can ask them for extra copies of a paper, remind them to send you a paper if you've discussed that, etc. It is not OK to send schmooze email.