

gineer are not the product of scientific endeavors even though they may be in part based upon them. That is, existential and instrumental judgments derived from sociological research may play a part in the choice of the values or goals espoused by the sociologist in the role of social engineer; but the values or goals are not a product of the methods of science.

All this does not mean that the sociologist must remain a social, economic, or politically neutered person. The sociologist is not a scientist in all roles. When called upon to serve as a social engineer, the sociologist is required to adopt value judgments and to decide upon goals. But this is not the only realm in which the sociologist explicitly identifies with values and goals. The sociologist is also a citizen, a husband or wife, a father or mother among multiple roles. And in all roles other than that of scientist, the sociologist, of course, is obliged to make

value judgments and to act upon them. But sociologists delude themselves as well as others if they hold that their value judgments are the product of scientific endeavors.

I predict that the trend towards Weber's conception of science as a vocation will continue, and that by the Centennial Anniversary of the American Sociological Association, the concerns of the Association's President and President-Elect will be quite different.

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SEVENTY-FIVE YEARS OF IT*

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When the Editor invited me to contribute to this issue of *The American Sociologist*, commemorating the Diamond Jubilee of organized sociology in the United States, my first thought was to review my credentials for such a task. I first joined the American Sociological Society (ASS), as it was then named, in 1946. For almost 20 years thereafter I, like most members, paid little attention to the organizational aspects of sociology. I paid my dues, received the *American Sociological Review*, voted for officers (sometimes), and attended the Annual

Meetings. After I had acquired a modest reputation in the field, I often was asked to organize and chair sessions at the meetings, but that was about it. Certainly I was not an "active" person in either the political or organizational affairs of the ASS.

Then, in 1965, through a variety of circumstances I will not detail here, I became the second full-time, salaried Executive Officer of the now renamed American Sociological Association (ASA), with offices in Washington, D. C. This lasted until 1970, the longest term in that office, I believe, since it was established in 1963. Also, I will not dwell on the experiences in office ("They were the best of years, they were the worst of years," to paraphrase Dickens), for that would require a much different, and much longer

* With apologies to E. A. Ross, who titled his autobiography *Seventy Years of It*, and who was elected twice as President of the American Sociological Association. [Address communication to: Edmund H. Volkart, Department of Sociology, University of Hawaii at Manoa, Honolulu HI 96822.]

paper than is possible here. So much for credentials.

Next, I examined the list of possible topics suggested by the Editor, so that some focus could be achieved. Two of them seemed particularly relevant to my own experience and knowledge: (1) "provide insight into the development of ASA as we now know it;" and (2) "assess particular ways that ASA (responds/does not respond) to professional and disciplinary needs." In my judgment the two are highly interrelated; they also require some historical perspective which I hope to study.

In retrospect it seems highly improbable that an organization of American sociologists could have happened at all, and that it could have lasted for 75 years. But it did happen, and despite a variety of internal dissensions and struggles over the years it has survived through a series of personal and organizational adaptations.

In 1905 a small group of strong-willed, somewhat antagonistic sociologists banded together to form the ASS. For example, Lester Frank Ward (who would be the first President) was openly critical of the views of William Graham Sumner on economic and political affairs (*Folkways* had not yet been published). The hostility was so deep that more than 30 years later, Sumner's disciple, A. G. Keller, was remarking that as a sociologist, Ward was a good paleobotanist—referring to Ward's primary government career before appointment in sociology at Brown University. It also is reported that Albion W. Small was "shocked" when Sumner's name was proposed as President of the ASS (he was elected in 1907), and later Small wrote that Sumner was not "within my field of vision as even nominally a sociologist." Legend, if not history, has it that the site of the 1905 meeting, Baltimore, Maryland, was chosen because it was "neutral territory," i.e., to prevent the founding of the Society from being contaminated by identification with any specific university or school of thought. So, the ASS was born in the midst of interpersonal dissension and intellectual differences—but the founders seemed willing to put aside such matters in the interest of a larger cause.

The seeds of further dissension were sown when the *American Journal of Sociology*, published at the University of Chicago, was selected to be the official publication of ASS. Small, by virtue of editorship of the AJS, and his work on ASS committees, became a dominant influence; later, Herbert Blumer, then at Chicago, spent some years as Secretary-Treasurer. Perception of undue influence by one department on ASS affairs began to spread, coming to a head in the early and mid 1930s when, after several years of skirmishing, ASS members voted to establish its own journal, the *American Sociological Review*. It began publication in 1936. (The details of this battle are admirably recorded by Professor Lengermann, 1979.)¹

For some years after World War II, intellectual and scientific controversies seem to have dominated the scene. It was a time when the ascendance of Parsonian theory was being challenged from two directions: by the large-scale, empirical, quantitative orientation of people like Professor Samuel A. Stouffer on one hand, and by the newly emerging orientation of symbolic interactionism, led by Professor Herbert Blumer, on the other. How many of the annual meetings during the late 1940s and early 1950s were enlivened by the tart exchanges between Parsonians, quantitative specialists, and those representing the "third force" of symbolic interactionism! It was a period of intellectual ferment, concerned primarily with the nature of sociological science, its theoretical and methodological emphases, and its basic assumptions and goals. Even so, persons of different persuasions

¹ Recent issues of *Footnotes* have contained some brief articles on the history of ASA. Useful as they are, more needs to be done, I think. Since the ASA is obtaining outside support for various enterprises, I suggest that funds be sought from NEH, ACLS, or SSRC to commission some scholar to write a definitive history of organized sociology in the United States. The publication also should include pictures and brief biographical sketches of Presidents of ASS and ASA, editors of the major journals of ASA, and the ASA Constitution. Published in loose-leaf format, it could be updated periodically, and if modestly priced, many members, I believe, would purchase it as an addition to their professional library.

joined hands in attempting, unsuccessfully, to have sociology included in the original legislation establishing the National Science Foundation.

Then, in the late 1950s and the 1960s—and into the 1970s—a variety of new forces, internal and external, appeared that would alter decisively, I think, the future course and structure of organized sociology in the United States. As a new, and numerous, generation of young sociologists became active members of the ASS, there was a growing concern with the role of sociology in the study and solution of social problems. Not that this was an entirely new development—after all, many sociologists had evidenced that concern over the years—but now it took on an organizational focus, as opposed to individual interests.

One index was the debate for several years about changing the name from the American Sociological *Society* to the American Sociological *Association*. The idea seemed to be (if I recall correctly) the the word “Society” was too constraining, connoting only a concern with the science of sociology; whereas the word “Association” suggested a broader mission including organized participation in matters of social and public policy. In any event, the change was made, converting the “asses” into the “asas,” in Everett Hughes’s remarks at the time, and the doors at least were partially opened to greater ideological involvement of the ASA than had previously occurred. Perhaps this move was spurred by the fact that earlier a number of members, disenchanted with the “scientific” content of the *ASR* and the general policies of ASA, formed an independent Society for the Study of Social Issues (thus reversing the terminology) and established the *Journal of Social Issues*. Finally, a number of members began to suspect again that a small group of “insiders” was trying to control the machinery of ASA in such a way as to favor the election, or selection, of favorites to key positions, e.g., the Presidency, membership on the Council, Editors of journals. Before long, in response to such internal pressures, ballots for elective office included the opportunity for write-in nominations (a mechanism that resulted in the

election to President of such persons as Donald Young, Pitirim Sorokin, and Alfred M. Lee) and the procedures for appointive positions also were “opened” for wider participation.

During the 1960s and into the early 1970s, a new series of internal pressures arose within the membership of ASA, partly, if not wholly, the result of external events: the growing opposition to the Vietnam war; the passage of civil rights legislation, and a rising concern with the fate of minorities and women in a democratic society; new questions about academic freedom and the ethics of sociologists who seemed to be selling their expertise to any bidder. Feelings ran high; various caucuses requested time and space at the Annual Meetings to forge resolutions to be presented at the business meetings; the business meetings themselves moved from poorly attended, rather ritualistic exercises to crowded rooms and extended agendas. One year in the late 1960s, tensions were so high at the Annual Meeting, that a group of volunteers provided a bodyguard for the President of ASA, whisking him along the back corridors and elevators of the hotel so as to avoid a confrontation. Even the site of the Presidential address that year had to be moved, when the scheduled room was “occupied” by a group of dissidents. It was a time of conflict, unmatched in intensity so far as I know in any previous period of organized sociology.

Why the ASA itself became such a focal point of discontent is still unclear. Apart from a contract with the National Science Foundation to try to improve the teaching of sociology in secondary schools, the ASA had no connection with governmental policies or controversial research, e.g., the ill-fated Camelot Project; it had little if any political clout. I can only speculate that there always has been a significant split among American sociologists (dating perhaps from the very founding of ASS), between those who view sociology as a vehicle of social change and public policy; and those who view sociology as a discipline that aspires to be a “value free” science. The many converging external events of the 1960s simply exacerbated these long term di-

visions, with the result that the Annual Meetings of the ASA, and its governing body, became the most immediate, visible, and available forum.

In any event, the ASA survived the turmoil of the times, primarily because of the patient, sympathetic efforts of the Council. While some of the more extreme caucus resolutions were rejected by the Council, many others were acted upon, particularly by expanding the number of ASA committees that would be concerned with the issues raised. That is why one now sees such committees as those on Freedom of Research and Teaching, Minority Fellowships, Professional Ethics, Regulation of Research, Status of Racial and Ethnic Minorities in Sociology, Status of Women in Sociology, Professional Opportunities in Applied Sociology, and the Task Group on Homosexuality. They all are attempts to respond to deeply felt concerns of one or another segment of the membership.

So far as the discipline is concerned, the ASA has moved on many fronts. Liaison with regional associations has been improved. The achievements of many outstanding sociologists have been recognized and supported through such forms as the Rose Monograph Series, and the Selection Committees for the Dubois-Johnson-Frazier Award, Jessie Bernard Award, Abt Award, Distinguished Contribution to Scholarship Award, Teaching Award, and Career of Distinguished Scholarship Award. Sections, representing the diverse intellectual and scientific specializations within the discipline, have been encouraged, with modest dues and much assistance from the Executive Office.

But most importantly, the ASA has contributed to the discipline by its publication policies. Only a few decades ago, its sole publication was the *American Sociological Review*. Then it assumed responsibility for the *Sociology of Education*, *Sociometry* (now *Social Psychology Quarterly*) and the *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*. It initiated publication of *The American Sociologist*, as a forum for professional matters; *Contemporary Sociology*, as a means of keeping up with the literature; and *Footnotes*, to keep members informed of what is happening within the ASA. In my judgment we, as members of ASA, cannot be too appreciative of the dedicated efforts of the Council, the Editors of our journals, the chairs and members of all the committees, the Executive Office staff, and of Mr. Henry Quellmalz who for so many years has seen to it that our publications maintain the highest quality of printing and format.

So, in highly compressed form, there is "Seventy Five Years of It," warts and all. Barring some global catastrophe, I suspect that *The American Sociologist* will be publishing a Double Diamond Jubilee issue in the year 2055, and that the intervening years will reveal some of the same kinds of dilemmas and controversies that have marked the first 75. As I like to tell my classes, "Sociologists are much more human than otherwise."

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