

PROFESSIONAL SOCIOLOGY AS THE BASIS OF SOCIETAL INTEGRATION: A STUDY OF PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESSES*

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This study examines the response of professional sociology to major problems in American society from the 1900s through the 1970s as reflected in the annual addresses of presidents of the American Sociological Society, later named the American Sociological Association. The analysis delineates the major social problems that professional sociology reacts to by conceptualizing these issues and attempting to demonstrate the discipline's potential relevance to their solution. Reacting to the effects of social change, conflict, sentimentalism, the threat to democracy, and problems within the profession, these speakers reveal a central concern over time: the scientific understanding of social structure as the basis of increased social cohesion, integration, and democracy. An attempt is made, thereby, to provide some "objective" basis for solving social problems by effecting greater social harmony through such "understanding." Since the values viewed as effecting such harmony are largely the speaker's own orientations, it is concluded that what may be labeled "scientific analysis" tends to represent normative projection.

Sociology's origins have been defined as the conservative reaction of Enlightenment intellectuals to the economic and political breakdown of traditional feudal society, legitimating social order based on the good of "the whole" (Bramson, 1961). This is accomplished through a positivistic and scientific imposition of the normative status quo (the "social system"). According to this view sociology emerged in reaction to the emergence of societal differentiation and new social problems, and attempted to deal with them by imposing normative unity on a scientific basis through the idea of "social structure."

American sociology also may be viewed as the conservative reaction of middle class liberals to the social heterogeneity of a society undergoing extraordinary levels of industrialization and urbanization (Bramson, 1961). In this context the study of "society" will reassert social stability through a scientific understanding of the relationship between individual motivation and social needs. The good of the whole is represented in the "right" (the functional) individual motives and type of social character. American sociology tends to focus on functional (liberal) social attitudes with social adjustment as a major

concern. Thus, both American and European sociology represented conservative reactions of middle class thinkers to the breakdown of traditional order and the emergence of increased social heterogeneity and social problems in the wake of industrialization and urbanization.

Twentieth century American history, furthermore, consists of a number of significant and ongoing social problems: dramatic normative change in the 1900s, the effects of war in the 1910s, continuing problems of war and beginnings of urbanization in the 1920s, dramatic effects of economic depression and social change in the 1930s, international conflict in the 1940s and post-war development difficulties, continuing post-war problems in the cold war of the 1950s, the social conflict of the 1960s, as well as the dynamic events and continuing problems of the 1970s. The need to deal with the social heterogeneity of a highly dynamic society and the ongoing problems within it is obviously central to the evolution of the social sciences in this society.

This paper attempts to examine how professional sociology responded to such problems by examining the views of ASS and ASA presidents as indicated in their annual addresses to these associations from the mid-1900s through the 1970s. This analysis delineates the major social problems which professional sociology

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reacts to by conceptualizing these issues and attempting to demonstrate sociology's potential relevance to their solution. Trends and similarities over time are analyzed and general conclusions are drawn regarding the functions of professional sociology as a whole.

METHODS

All published addresses delivered by presidents of the American Sociological Society and American Sociological Associations beginning in 1906 and proceeding to 1979 were selected for analysis. These are contained in the *American Journal of Sociology* (1906 through 1914), the *Publications of the American Sociological Society* (1915 through 1935), and the *American Sociological Review* (1936 through 1979). Each address was examined for the social problems identified with it, the sociologists' reaction to issues, and the perceived role of professional sociology in providing potential solutions. Focusing on such phenomena, the analysis proceeded by examining each presidential address from 1906 through 1979, delineating three major aspects of each: (1) the major social problem identified by the speaker to which they were reacting; (2) the major role attributed to sociology in dealing with that problem; and (3) the predicted effect such a role will have. The analysis then proceeded by classifying each speech by the major type of social problem to which it addressed itself as follows: (1) those focusing on the effects of social change including drastic change, corollary social problems, normative decline, and the emergence of individualism; (2) those focusing on conflict as the major problem, including the effects of war and internal clashes; (3) those concerned with the effects of sentimentalism such as "false" ideals, emotionalism, and despair; (4) those perceiving a decline in democracy with the increasing emergence of the state and social inequality; and, finally, (5) those most concerned with problems within the profession such as sociology's low status, unscientific methods, theoretical and methodological problems, and professional development. Each address was classified into one of these five types

according to the major social problem the speaker reacted to and each then analyzed according to the role defined for sociology in dealing with that problem and the predicted result. The problems, role of sociology, and predicted results then were recorded for their distribution over time for each five year period to examine their distribution and consistency over the 1906-1979 time span.

Such a study possesses a number of clear limitations: the data do not reflect the structure of American sociology as a whole; rather, they reflect the limited concerns of a restricted number of sociologists in leadership positions with particular backgrounds. Furthermore, presidential addresses represent an institutionalized ritual in which the speaker is expected to expound broadly on the present status and future prospects of sociology rather than providing a detailed analysis of the state of the discipline. Nevertheless, the extent to which these data provide insight into the major definitions of professional sociology over a significant period of time may provide useful indices of the "professional sociological perspective" as it operates in the context of evolving American society. Keeping such limitations in mind, we proceed to examine the addresses according to the major social problems with which they are concerned.

RESULTS: THE REACTION OF PROFESSIONAL SOCIOLOGY TO MAJOR SOCIAL PROBLEMS

The analysis to follow focuses on the role defined for sociology in reaction to perceived problems in the larger society.

(1) *Social Change as a Social Problem*

One of sociology's major concerns over the years is drastic social change, including the problems produced by change, the decline of traditional norms, and the emergence of individualism.

A number of speakers focus on the effects of urbanization: Vincent (1917), for example, is concerned with "adequate rural development" evolved on a cooperative basis in contrast to individual

capitalism. According to him, rural cooperatives will reduce racial, religious, and individual antagonisms, increasing personal character, community solidarity, as well as crops and cattle. Here, normative stability and integration are posed as solutions to the disrupting effect of social change. Thomas (1928) reveals a similar concern with an unstable society influenced by urbanization and rival definitions of the situation, producing high levels of social disorganization and personal demoralization. For him the "situational method" is extremely important in understanding the conditions surrounding social problems and dealing with them more effectively. Bogardus (1932) also is concerned with the dynamics of social change illustrated in the processes of invasion and succession on the Pacific Coast, leading to novel forms of cultural conflict and accommodation—factors that balance social change and anticipate future developments. Vance (1945), on the other hand, responds to the "state of incessant change" in contemporary society with concern that there are no valid estimates of "wasted social dynamics." Sociology needs to understand the emergence of general values to appreciate the underlying dynamics of such processes. Znaniecki (1954), responding to the increasing multiplicity and complexity of social phenomena both nationally and worldwide, highlights the comparative and historical study of social roles as a rational basis for social planning and integration. Yinger (1977) also is concerned with the "major transformation of civilization" consisting of rapid and drastic change. Sociology lacks understanding of society as a whole: for him a possible solution exists in the study of counter-cultures since they highlight, dramatize, and anticipate drastic social problems. Understanding counter-cultures as responses to social change will provide the basis for greater adjustment to social change as sociologists appreciate and understand the process better. Finally Hawley (1978), reacting to change in terms of the complexity and the decline of the evolutionary model, advocates reinforcement of the latter as a flexible and useful approach to social change. In gen-

eral, these sociologists respond to the dramatic effects of social change by emphasizing the importance of understanding social structure sociologically and applying the discipline to the understanding of such processes in order to appreciate their complexity and effect greater societal integration.

The kinds of social problems created by social change are the central concern of a number of speakers: Gillette (1929), for example, is concerned with the effects of cultural stimuli on human intelligence, particularly within the context of urban migration. Chapin (1936), on the other hand, is concerned with objective planning: rejecting normative theorizing as the "verbalism of emotion," he emphasizes the operational definitions of social concepts, critical examination of utopian ideologies, and use of expert opinion in the movement toward rapid and successful planning based on "sound social theory"—realistic thought rather than utopian ideology. For him "non-normative planned action" developed by sociology will provide solutions to the kinds of shock the American system of "stable social interdependence" recently has experienced. According to him problems caused by economic insecurity will be solved through objective empirical research as the basis of rational planning. Dorothy Thomas (1952) also emphasizes the importance of empiricism, highlighting inter-disciplinary research in problem areas such as delinquency, child-rearing, and the resettlement of aliens. Faris (1961), in a vein similar to Gillette, is concerned with the scarcity of ability as an obstacle to developing nations. With increasing levels of automation and need for skilled labor, the lack of technological ability is particularly crucial. Sociology can make a major contribution by understanding social influences which stimulate or limit aspirations and consequent achievement. Research into ability on the collective level, according to him, will help to expand the general "heritage of collective intelligence." The continuing relevance of scientific research to social problems also is emphasized by Lazarsfeld (1962) who advocates E.S.R. (Empirical Social Research) in its institu-

tional form, providing the basis of "creative reform." According to him, E.S.R. requires institutes as its organizational base, possesses methodological sensitivity, and broadens substantive work, just when increased training and professional opportunities for students are needed to obtain greater levels of "intermediate scientific truth." In general, then, the response by sociologists to social problems consists of understanding social structure through empirical research in order to understand their foundation and attempted solution.

Normative change or "decline" is a further problem: Sumner (1908-1909), for example, is concerned with the decline of the conservative family type and religious mores (1909-1910). For him it is particularly crucial that sociology understand the evolution of changing mores to provide greater family and religious stability and normative adjustment. Williams (1958), reacting to the problem of an "imperfect structure," stresses systematizing substantive theory to clarify world experience and enrich it generally. Finally, Becker (1960) is concerned with the need for "sustained dispassionate study" of what is happening in societies undergoing rapid secularization to deal with the problem of "normlessness" within them. Again, the sociological response to the decline of tradition involves an attempt to understand such changes in order to provide the basis of social adjustment and scientific understanding.

Finally, some speakers respond to the emergence of individualism: Giddings (1911-1912), for example, sees a major limitation of American society in the lack of collective achievement in a culture based on "untrammelled individualism." Greater "collective efficiency" is needed to bring about "true solidarity of mind and heart" with controlled emotion and individualism seen as basic to higher levels of rational solidarity. Small (1912-1913) advocates the use of sociology as the basis of "scientific, practical objectivity," the promotion of social well being, increased liberalism, and social justice, applying the "sociological imagination" to bring about greater levels of harmony and integration.

Responding to the dramatic effects of

drastic social change, social problems which ensue from them, changing norms and mores, and emerging individualism, sociologists throughout these decades emphasize the importance of understanding social structure scientifically and applying sociology to it in order to effect rational understanding of such problems and bring about social integration. Here the sociological reaction to social problems consists of imposing normative unity through the idea of social structure on a scientific basis.

(2) *Social Conflict*

Two kinds of social conflict are emphasized by sociologists throughout the century: war and intergroup strife. With respect to the former, Giddings (1910-1911) is concerned with the ongoing effects of conflict and expansion, emphasizing that sociology should be concerned with the "passions of man," attempting to contribute to "government by discussion," and "equalitarian distribution of wealth," bringing about the "parliament of man." Dealey (1921), on the other hand, sees science threatening the progress of civilization, requiring control of human energy. In response he poses Eudemics—the science of national or general welfare concerned with progress through evolution, adaptation and readjustment, and control of immigration, with reduced economic misery and increased legal, economic, and social justice as a result. Gillin (1927) also reacts to the effects of civil war and is impressed with sociology as the satisfaction of understanding human relations in order to build a better world society. Odum (1930) is concerned with the absence of adequate understanding of modern conflict and war. In response he stresses the analysis of folk and regional conflict in order to appreciate the characteristics of the "modern transitional society," thereby increasing social harmony through the provision of scientific facts and interpretation of social evolution. Ellsworth Faris (1938) also reacts to the problems of war as well as industrial strife, racial conflict, personal anxiety, individual inefficiency, family discord, and personal bewilderment, defining

sociology's role as assisting the forces of human nature in satisfying the "wants of mankind." This can be accomplished only through hard thinking, disinterested search, and cooperative effort. MacIver (1941) sees war testing the limits of social cohesion while sociology neglects the problems of loyalty, nationalism, and response to crises. Consequently, it is vital to increase scientific knowledge regarding personal and group relations so as to increase social cohesion in the face of international conflict. Wirth (1948) is particularly concerned with the threat to worldwide consensus and potential "suicide of civilization" with the advent of the atomic bomb. For him sociology needs to understand the process by which consensus is formed to deal with problems of racial, cultural, industrial, and international relations and to produce cohesion on a worldwide scale. Loomis (1967) also is concerned with conflict and its resolution. Bemoaning its neglect until recently, his concern is with understanding the elements of "systemic linkage" and "boundary maintenance" in particular conflict situations as they contribute to the emergence of higher levels of "collective conscience." For him conflict resolution through increasing the mutual dependence of actors in the conflict situation is crucial. Finally, Goode (1972) is concerned with the "place of force in human society." Sociology, with its humanistic bias, has neglected this topic and needs to understand social consensus in order to apply the least amount of physical force and highest levels of justice. Again a central theme is evident in these discussions: reacting to war, sociologists advocate the scientific understanding and control of social structure in order to bring about higher levels of social cohesion and integration.

Turning to intergroup conflict, we find a number of speakers concerned with similar roles for the discipline: Small (1912-1913), for example, is concerned with social justice, with sociology as the basis of "scientific, practical objectivity," the promotion of social well being, increased liberalism, and social justice. He also comments on how American capitalism creates inefficiency and national debts. In

a utopian vein he attempts to specify the societal factors necessary for greater harmony between the individual and the process of human development, with social efficiency and rational progress provided by the science of sociology. Reacting to intolerance, on the other hand, Ellwood (1925) is concerned with science as the basis of an open-minded, tolerant, fearless point of view which will help solve public problems in the spirit of goodwill and broad intellectual life. Intolerance is seen as leading to war while institutionalized repression produces revolution; in contrast the scientific attitude produces openminded tolerance as the basis of goodwill and harmony. Park (1926) also is concerned with "moral order" viewed from the ecological point of view. According to him, social competition is part of the structure of spatial relations which, as with the plant species, requires greater moral and scientific understanding. Sutherland (1940), on the other hand, is concerned with the sociological understanding of white collar crime in order to control it more effectively and to reduce correlated levels of distrust and social disorganization. Frazier (1949) is concerned with the emerging "racial problem" in the face of economic depression, and worldwide war, again requiring understanding of consensus as the basis of collective life. For him sociology has a particular contribution to make in appreciating the effects of group membership on racial attitudes, bringing about greater interracial understanding. Hughes (1963) also is concerned with the complex racial problem in an era of unrest, turmoil, economic change, and general loss of confidence. Understanding a "variety of human situations" using a flexible creative approach is important in order to appreciate and predict future developments. Moore (1966) also is concerned with sociology fulfilling human hopes. Focusing on the "utility of utopias" he rejects the evolutionary model of change, focusing instead on the characteristics of individual and collective aspirations for the future. Understanding such "common goals" will contribute to fulfillment of common hopes and prevent self-destruction. Hauser (1969) reacts to what he terms the "chaotic

society"—an anachronistic situation containing high levels of dissonance, discord, and the threat of collective suicide. Focusing on cultural lag and what he terms "strata dissonance" in modern society, he sees sociology providing insight into the "social morphological revolution," in particular the processes of population explosion, implosion, and diversification. Such understanding will help eliminate chaos and the ideological problems that come with it, moving society toward greater levels of order and integration. Finally, Turner (1969) is concerned with public perception and stereotyping of social protest; according to him sociology can provide greater insight into such public reactions creating greater potential for favorable interpretations and social reform rather than conflict and disorder.

Responding to the traumatic effects of war and intergroup conflict, then, sociologists advocate the scientific understanding and control of social structure to bring about social cohesion and order. Again major emphasis is placed upon the objective understanding of social structure to effect higher levels of social integration.

(3) *Sentimentalism*

A major problem for sociologists, particularly in earlier decades, involves sentimental attitudes including false ideals, emotional attitudes, and general despair. Howard (1918), for example, grapples with the degree to which war wrecks and distorts idealism as well as social relations. False ideals such as nationalism, the state, militarism, racial values, and American democracy are viewed as basic to extant social problems. In contrast, sociology will create a basis for the control of world society by embodying the ideals of international morality, the brotherhood of man, and the idea of society as the foundation of worthy leadership. Cooley (1919) also aspires to develop "primary culture for democracy." In contrast to a vague, ineffectual, humane, Christian, democratic spirit, he aims to increase the clarity and power of culture through a liberal education in humane

ideals, emphasizing the importance of group life and participation in the "divine whole" and "larger life." Here a holistic culture is seen as the foundation of democracy and stability. Blackmar (1920) focuses on false ideas that view democracy as applicable to government only, unrepresentative and autocratic, while socialism is seen as democratic. In response, he emphasizes that sociology represents generalizations concerning normal social life and social improvement, and that with controlled emotionalism and increased consensus concerning the ideals of government and social order, a more progressive and harmonious democracy will ensue. Here again sociology is portrayed as the understanding of social structure and culture, which brings about higher levels of democracy.

Emotionalism also is seen as barrier to objective planning: Burgess (1935), for example, is concerned with objective, scientific planning in contrast to sentimental stereotypes. For him it is important to plan within the tradition of American mores and "new individualism," moving the society toward democratic solutions of its crucial problems. Again the emphasis is on sociology as the "science of democracy." Hankins (1939) also is concerned with "social science and social action." Rejecting dogmatic, emotional beliefs that produce destructive causes, and a decline in the faith of democratic institutions, he sees sociology as attempting to understand the conditions that produce optimism and corollary technological and material benefits. For this the profession requires successful planning through the formulation of goals, scientific knowledge of causes, and control of causal processes. Major benefits include preservation of the "democratic mode of life" and reduction in dogmatism.

A third type of sentimentalism is despair and skepticism: Weatherly (1924) is concerned with increased skepticism generally, along with "pluralistic loyalties" that threaten national solidarity. According to him, sociology will provide a basis for the scientific control and harmony of different groups in society, bringing about a "new synthesis." Bendix (1970) is concerned with what he terms the "distrust of

reason." With academic upheaval, increased questioning of scholarly freedom, and apparent increase in the ethic of "social despair," radical subjectivism and romantic sensibility have increased. In response he argues that social issues can be examined with both passionate concern and scholarly detachment, contributing to the control of nature and creative learning.

Responding to sentimental attitudes such as false ideals, emotionalism, and despair, sociologists advocate the understanding and control of social structure to bring about higher levels of democracy and social integration—values which reflect establishment viewpoints.

(4) *The Decline of Democracy*

Democracy is viewed as threatened by two major developments: the increase of the state and general social inequality. With regard to the former, Kimball Young (1946) is concerned with the increasing visibility and dominance of the state, aggravating the problem of "keeping democratic values alive." Consequently, studying the state under both totalitarian and democratic value systems is crucial to understanding how stable social orders operate on the individual and maintain democracy. Cottrell (1951) also reacts to the dangers of state intervention in the process of social progress, underlining the need to understand it in depth in order to deal with the complexity of social change.

Increased social inequality represents a second dimension of this issue: Sanderson (1943), for example, is concerned with the Nazi racist challenge to the validity of democracy. In response, sociology needs to be organized effectively to promote the "democratic process" through the understanding of nature and societal processes and to increase the general desire for "real democracy." Sewell (1971), on the other hand, demonstrates concern with inequality in higher education. He analyzes the structure of such inequality through detailed empirical research, developing practical suggestions for reducing it and contributing to what he calls "well-functioning democracy." Blau (1974) is particularly concerned with understanding

what he terms "parameters of social structure" to deal with an apparent increase in power consolidation in contemporary society. Outlining major dimensions of social structure and their interrelations, he emphasizes the relevance of such an analysis to the understanding of social structure in order to reduce the danger of such elitism. Professional sociology thus responds to threatened democracy by advocating scientific understanding of the social system, and expects to effect greater levels of social stability and democracy.

(5) *Professional Problems*

A wide range of professional problems within sociology is perceived: its low status, unscientific methods, theoretical limitations, and methodological issues, as well as disunity and irrelevance.

Sociology's low status is a continuing problem: Ward (1906–1907), for example, stresses that sociology's recognition tends to be lower than that of other sciences and needs to achieve far higher levels of status as a science through activities such as guidance of social energy, predictions of the future, and understanding the human race. Donald Young (1955) also bewails sociology's low status in the social science hierarchy—a function of its perceived lack of utility. By collaborating with practical professions such as social work, law, and health services, he sees the development of experts in "applied sociology" who will produce greater understanding of society; also applying sociological knowledge to societal problems will gain greater scientific prestige and status for sociologists.

Unscientific thought also is criticized; nevertheless Ogburn (1930) sees the discipline becoming more scientific and less emotional as its methods and training become more formal and concerned with quantitative, objective proof. Lundburg (1944), responding to the problems of war and "requirements of an enduring peace," feels these can be achieved through increasing the professional credentials of sociologists and focusing on social prediction, quantification, and the sociological understanding of institutions. Sorokin (1965) also bewails the high level of

pseudo-scientific ignorance in sociology based on sham-truth and error. In contrast, he feels sociology needs to understand the multi-dimensional characteristics of socio-cultural reality, its super-organic traits, and the general complexity of socio-cultural phenomena viewed from a more holistic approach. This will produce greater levels of scientific truth and creative growth of sociology generally.

Conceptual models of society that are lacking or considered inaccurate represent a number of theoretical problems in the discipline: Ward (1907–1908), for example, is concerned with what he terms “false views of social classes” emphasizing “artificial” rather than “natural” inequality. In contrast, he highlights “natural differences in mental characteristics” as the basis of the “true nature of social classes” and increased efficiency of mankind. Fairchild (1937), on the other hand, bewails sociology’s low concern with the business world in contrast to the relative obsession of economists, and emphasizes the importance of sociology to the completion and stabilization of economic theory in order to make it more useful to the “needs of the contemporary world.” Later, Parsons (1950) is concerned with the weakness of American sociological theory compared with its European counterpart. For him the development of “general theory” with its emphasis on motivation, structural change, systematic comparative analysis, specification of empirical problem areas, and the close correlation of theory and research will aid the emergence of scientific sociology—perceived as the major solution to social problems of the society at large. Blumer (1956) also is concerned with facilitating sociology’s practical value through a particular theoretical perspective—“the interpretative understanding of experience and consequent action.” For him it is crucial to understand the actual complexes of activity and interaction, the lines of definition and moving structures as perceived by the participants involved. Davis (1959) ends this particular decade with an attack on functional analysis as a special method in the social sciences. He considers the functional label a myth in so far as it is

supposed to designate a distinct mode of analysis, equating functional analysis with scientific sociological analysis, and concluding that there is a need to abandon this myth to produce generally greater clarity and efficiency in sociology. Homans (1964), on the other hand, critiques Structure-Functionalism for obstructing understanding; he advocates instead a more psychological approach to the analysis of social structure, defending it as more deductive and therefore a more scientific form of explanation, offering greater unity with other social sciences and reducing “intellectual hypocrisy.” Finally, Komarovsky (1973) defends the perspective of “role analysis” against charges that it neglects individualism, over-emphasizes conformity, and represents normative determinism. In contrast she emphasizes the potential interplay between role analysis and sociological factors, and the insight this viewpoint can provide into problems of “malintegration” and social change.

Methodological problems also are discussed over the years: Hayes (1922), for example, reacting to the proliferation of research, is concerned with promoting human knowledge through the scientific understanding of social structure as a whole, thereby providing greater levels of societal guidance. Bernard (1933), on the other hand, highlights the ethics of social research, emphasizing the importance of a broad, well-informed outlook among sincere, objective researchers who are concerned with accurate knowledge and interpretation of modern events in contrast to the political opportunism of unscrupulous research. Such positive research, in his opinion, contributes to the reconstruction and moral guidance of the social order based on scientific methods. Taylor (1947) is more concerned with making sociology more practical: compared with the physical sciences there is much misunderstanding of the social sciences; for him the solution consists of combining the rigid techniques of science with common-sense knowledge to produce practical, useful insight and predictions of social behavior. Finally, Stouffer (1953) discusses measurement problems such as experimental design, laboratory difficulties, and

control of crucial variables. For him operationalization and formalization are vital to integrating theory and research and developing sociology as a science.

We turn finally to the problems of relevance and professional development: Queen (1942), concerned with the problem of world war, perceives an apparent sociological "flight from reality." This produced a great deal of verbalization, grant research, and library work with little application to the problem of war. Consequently, research should be more relevant to problems such as army morale, race relations, and civil liberty in order to make a useful contribution to present difficulties. Coser (1975), on the other hand, is concerned with what he perceives to be a lack of understanding of social structures in contemporary sociology, reflected in its narrow, sect-like activities that produce fatigue within the discipline. Using ethnomethodology and path analysis as examples, he argues for broader institutional and latent structure analysis to develop greater understanding of social structure, thereby revitalizing the discipline. Lee (1976) is concerned with the professional domination of sociology as a science. Rather than focusing on the human condition and offering service to humanity, sociology is becoming an institutionalized discipline concerned with serving a particular elite. Instead he argues for a broader based discipline concerned with human service and social problems. Finally, Blalock (1979) focuses on measurement and conceptualization problems in an attempt to integrate the two. Given a variety of complex methodological problems and definitions of basic concepts, confusion abounds in attempts to develop explanations. To advance sociology he advocates greater consensus concerning concepts and increased appreciation of the complexity of social phenomena. Theoretical clarification and methodological explication play major roles for him in the advancement of scientific sociology.

Generally, then, reacting to problems within professional sociology such as low status, lack of scientific knowledge, theoretical and methodological problems, as well as fatigue and disunity, these

presidential addresses reflect a concern with increasing sociological understanding, scientific research and theory, and applied sociology in order to increase scientific knowledge and to deal adequately with social problems.

CONCLUSION

In this study, I have examined how presidents of the American Sociological Association (Society) have perceived the relation of professional sociology to problems in American society from the 1900s through the 1970s. A persistent theme is that sociology is concerned primarily with social problems in society at large, and should attempt to provide some "objective" basis for solving social problems, thereby effecting greater social unity. I attempted to delineate the major social problems the presidents react to, the role they define for sociology in response to such problems, and the predicted results of such an application. Having described the major addresses generally, it is appropriate to conclude this discussion with a more specific tabulation of the distribution of the presidential addresses in terms of these three dimensions. This is provided in Table 1, along with an indication of any historical concentrations of themes within particular time periods.

Focusing on social problems, it can be seen that these consist of social change and conflict as well as a heavy emphasis on problems within the profession. Sentimentalism and the decline of democracy represent much smaller proportions of the addresses and also reveal concentration in particular historical periods. In general, then, it is possible to argue that sociology represents a reaction to the major problems produced by social change and conflict along with attempts within the profession to grapple with the theoretical and methodological difficulties of applying sociology to an understanding of such problems.

Turning to the role of sociology delineated in response to such problems, it can be seen that there is major emphasis on sociological understanding of social structure, sociological theory, and

TABLE 1. Major Themes of Presidential Addresses

Major Social Problems	%	Role of Sociology in Response	%	Predicted Results	%
social change	26.5	sociological understanding	44.3	solve social problems	35.7
social conflict	26.5	sociological theory	24.3	social integration	22.9
sentimentalism	10.3*	sociological methods	18.6	increase democracy	10.0*
decline of democracy	7.3**	control passions/instincts	8.6*	increase scientific knowledge	25.7**
professional problems	29.4	applied sociology	4.3	guidance/planning	5.7***
N:	70		70		70
Historical concentrations:					
	* 1915-1939		* 1910-1939		* 1915-1949
	** 1940-1954				** 1925-1979
					*** 1906-1924

sociological methods. Controlling passions and applying sociology, on the other hand, represent much lower emphases, concentrated primarily from 1910-1939. In general, presidents perceive that sociologists should respond by understanding social structure, and by applying sociological theory and scientific methods to such insight.

The predicted results of applying sociological knowledge consist primarily of the expected solution of social problems, increased levels of social integration, and the production of scientific knowledge. The prospects of increasing democracy and providing social guidance represent much lower emphases during specific historical periods. On the other hand, the concern with scientific knowledge appears to be a relatively recent development, beginning in the 1920s and proceeding through the present era. In general, however, these leaders appear to expect the solution of social problems, increased social unity, and creation of scientific knowledge.

From these data, it appears reasonable to argue that professional sociology is primarily a reaction to perceived problems created by social change and intergroup conflict along with professional issues involved in dealing with such problems. The leaders of the Association have argued for the sociological understanding of such issues through the application of sociological theory and methods, with the major expectation that sociology will solve these problems, bring about higher levels of social integration, and increase scientific knowledge generally.

Furthermore, the grounds on which so-

cial unity is proposed are relatively homogeneous, reflecting the speakers' own norms of consensus, democracy, reform, and stability. Thus, professional sociology's concerns in dealing with social problems remain highly normative, deemphasizing political and economic dimensions of social reality: the basic solution to social problems is normative integration brought about through the sociological understanding of social structure—a unity in which the great majority of a society's population are seen as having the values of those who study it objectively.

What may be labeled "scientific analysis," then, tends to represent normative projection as the perceived solution of general social problems, applied and legitimized in terms of the sociological perspective, i.e., the scientific understanding of social structure. While some problems, responses, and predictions appear limited to certain historical periods, this central theme appears to be persistent in professional sociology, from its early beginnings in the U.S. through the present era.

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