Footnotes

Reaction to ASA Report on Integrity of Federal Statistics

Two top officials associated with federal statistical programs have reacted largely in a positive manner to the report on the integrity of federal statistics prepared by the ASA Committee on Government Statistics, but they also registered some disagreement. The officials are Joseph W. Duncan, Deputy Associate Director for Statistical Policy, Office of Management and Budget, and Edward D. Fiallo, Administrator of the Social and Economic Statistics Administration.

Both officials recorded their generally favorable reaction in letters to Robert Parker, committee chair. Duncan said, "...I was pleased with the findings of your Committee and will look forward to further follow-up in this area." Fiallo commented, "...there is much in the Committee’s report to which I subscribe and which SEAS supports by positive actions."

A third official, Vincent P. Bocchia, Director, Bureau of the Census, did not provide an overall evaluation of the report, for he restricted his comments to "....those areas where the report perceived the need for greater progress...."

A full-page summary of the committee report, which was published in the February issue of FOOTNOTES. Since the three officials comment on eight of the nine recommendations made in the report, the remainder of this article will present the officials’ comments by committee recommendations. Only Recommendation 2 dealing with the Statistical Policy Division, OMB, was not commented on by officials.

See Reaction, page 4

Inaugural Remarks* by ASA President Alfred McClung Lee

*Before the business meeting.

In assuming the presidencies of any organization I want to say especially two things. I am greatly honored by those who shared the eligibility for my nomination and election. I. It is already clear to the members of the A.S.A. Council, committees, and staff that I am not changed by being given this status. I am still just as much a critic of the A.S.A. and of so-called "establishment" sociologies as I ever have been, and I will continue to be so.

I want to thank my colleagues of Brooklyn College and of the rest of The City University of New York, my fellow members of the Radical Caucus of the A.S.A., and my other colleagues in the country who sponsored my nomination and worked for my election. My wife and fellow sociologist, Dr. Elizabeth Brant Lee, shared my hesitancy about what my election might mean or accomplish, but she shared and continues to share as wholeheartedly as usual in this and my other struggles. As president-elect and now as president, I shall do what I can to convey to the Council, to our committees, and to our editors and editorial boards what a the ordinariness represented majority of American sociologists would like to see our association do and become, to the extent that I know and understand the views of that majority. I realize that some folks look upon me as unaligned to run for office in a professional society. As I see it, that viewpoint is just another part of the shams with which we try to disguise the political character of our organization. In running for this office, I was fortunate to have the aid of a group of colleagues and other friends who helped me to draft a ten-point program of items we hope the A.S.A. will now implement. I want to comment on some of those points:

1. The first point in that list, called for a widening of sociological discussions by encouraging the expression and participation of all wide spectrum of sociological perspectives that now exist. As one way of accomplishing this, I have chosen "Sociology for Whom?" as the theme for next year’s convention. The idea is intended to focus attention on the fact that there is neither nor can there be one sociological perspective. Sociology cannot but signify an array of competing sociologies. The A.S.A. should recognize this and should open its conference, symposia, periodicals, and monographs to a greater range of existing sociological perspectives than ever has been. The 1975 Conference, page 4

Mathematics, Minorities, and Women

Lucy W. Sellers

Executive Specialist for Minorities & Women

There are some hidden, invisible barriers that minorities from equitable access to undergraduate admission to colleges and universities, and which filter women from free choice of undergraduate major. These are generally not considered in such discussions. There is a growing literature on the importance of high school mathematics as one of the hidden screening factors.

In a recent sample of San Francisco high school students, more than 66 percent of the Whites, and 8 percent of the Asians. The percentage of Blacks reporting spending two or more hours a week on mathematics homework was 28, compared with 31 percent of the Chicanos, 34 percent of the Whites, and 65 percent of the Asians. The percentage of Blacks who received As and Bs in mathematics was 24, compared with 33 percent of the Chicanos, 38 percent of the Whites, and 53 percent of the Asians. C. Fernandez, W. W. Espinosa, and S. M. Dornbusch, Factors perpetuating the low academic status of Chicano high school students. Research and Development Memorandum No. 138, Stanford Center for Research and Development in Teaching, School of Education, Stanford University, July, 1975.)

Ninety-two percent of the entering freshmen in the fall of 1972 at Berkeley did not qualify for the freshman calculus course on the basis of insufficient high school mathematics preparation, compared with 43 percent of the men. A year later, 68 percent of the men did not qualify for calculus, compared with 35 percent of the men. The high school mathematics preparation of social class, and the social class distribution of undergraduates. Sociological Quarterly, 1973.)

The overall response rate for these three samples is about 55 percent with graduate institutions most often responding and two-year colleges least often responding to the survey. Among the major findings reported in the study is the following:

In-Service Career Development Activities

(1) Only a small minority of departments in any of the three types of institutions report providing in-service career development activities for sociology teachers, with only about one graduate department in 15, one four-year college department in seven, and only one year college department in four providing such activities.

Alternative Teaching Techniques

(2) Of the 14 alternative teaching techniques studied in this survey, the ones employed most often in the three types of institutions were films, independent study and research, overhead projectors, charts and other visual aids, and audiocassette. The techniques studied were reportedly more often employed by faculty members in four-year and two-year colleges than faculty members in graduate institutions.

Evaluation of Teaching

(3) Whereas almost all respondents from four-year and two-year college rank teaching as the most important activity in making personal decisions regarding sociologists only about two-thirds of respondents from graduate institutions giving teaching this type of prominent ranking.

See Survey, page 4

Survey Conducted on Teacher Development in Sociology

Bill Everet Diane Emmering

Michigan State University

How important is teaching in the evaluation of the job performance of sociologists?

How do graduate programs prepare sociology graduate students to teach?

How are the teaching activities of sociologists evaluated?

What career development activities are available for sociology teachers?

What are the major findings reported in the study of in-service career development activities?

What are the major findings reported in the study of alternative teaching techniques?

What are the major findings reported in the study of evaluation of teaching?
Meeting Calendar


March 19, 1976. Michigan Sociological Association. Spring meeting, Michigan State University. Special focus of the meeting will be on teaching and research.

April 2-4, 1976. Third Annual Social Policy Conference, Amherst, University of New York, Albany. Call for papers. The theme is Art & Politics: Papers and communications to Arnold Foster, Department of Sociology, SUNY, Albany, New York 12222.


Other Organizations

ARKANSAS SOCIOLOGICAL AS- SOCIATION recently convened on the campus of the University of Ar- kansas at Little Rock. The focus of the meeting was on the role of sociologists and students. Call for papers. The theme is "Sociology and the Arts." Poster session on Women's Studies and social persons.

SWS New York Chapter will hold a Conference on Women and Work. February 28, 1976 at Monticello College in New York City. A day-long conference with a series of panels, workshops and discussions. The theme is "Women and Work." For information contact Lynn Davison, SUNY College, Department of Sociology, Purchase, New York 10570.
3. From the five years that I served as a sitting chairperson of the A.S.A.'s press relations committee and from being an officer for many years of the Public Affairs Program (of the Public Affairs Committees, and Sociological Abstracts), I am aware of the type of misinformation about sociology as well as some of the instruments through which the misinformation is disseminated. In some cases (and I am not being facetious) the collapse of the professions could be somewhat corrected. I suggest that the more than two million Public Affairs Program abstracts that are distributed each year do more to help "sociology" in this respect than does any other medium. This is especially true when one takes into account how many of the pamphlets are summarized, reprinted, and discussed in news- and other media week after week. Sociological Abstracts provides a more professional and technical perspective and beyond the confines of professional sociologists and clear around the world. It also produces a heavy traffic in requests for copies of whole original articles, another service provided in microfiche or on tape by Sociological Abstracts.

As effective as these media are, they are not nearly so comprehensive nor so quickly typed by other disciplines. Media coverage of our conventions is haphazard and unguided. Surely our mass communications specialists could provide liaison to facilitate press coverage of papers delivered. We should also try to get people at other times of the year—well-structured symposia, workshops, non-conference, non-conference-to-stimulate the actual and potential contributions to sociological and human health. Certainly the kind of "social studies" or "sociology" taught in a large high schools is not likely to strenghten the image of the field, to create sociological jobs, to make sociologists live in the affairs of humanity, political, or sociological. An idea of the concept is needed to be more clearly presented.

4. The American Psychological Association's Monitor of December 1974 reviewed the Carnegie Commission's report, American Universities in Transition. It notes the Carnegie Commission's prediction that "white-collar unionism will expand to include new larger industries but not the blue coller employed by industry and government, making learned and the legions of professional organizations.

Learned societies are thus likely to become once again the exclusive domain of eminent scholars and scientists from the nation's elite colleges and universities.


These data show large and statistically significant ethnic and sex differences in educational achievement. Although a variety of cultural interpretations are possible, the biggest leverage to enhance opportunity for minorities and women on the long journey to such careers is not the recruitment and hiring through affirmative action. Improving the educational system itself, thus improving access, by middle school mathematics skills and opportunities may be one avenue.

Workshop on Faculty Development

As an in-service activity for currently employed sociology faculty, a two-day workshop will be held during the fall semester at the University of Pennsylvania, the Philadelphia area. The workshop is being organized by the Teacher Development Committee of the A.S.A. Project on Teaching Undergraduate Sociology. The primary purpose is to demonstrate that departmental workshops can work at instructional improvement of student performance. Meetings will begin Friday afternoon and the closing session will be held Saturday evening.

While representing sociology departments will be especially encouraged to participate, interested individual sociologists would also be welcomed. The number of participants will be limited to ten, and each participant will be selected on the basis of letters of application which indicate the needs of the individual, or individual interest in teacher development activities.

The proposed workshop will be held in the various department-based models of teacher development activities. Workshop components will include case studies for delimiting instructional problems, development and demonstration of models for faculty development among sociologists with similar concerns. A workshop about the workshop should be addressed to William L. Harrington, Northwestern University, Department of Sociology, Evanston, Illinois 60201. Please address the A.S.A. Committee on Committee on Faculty Development, 9000 Georgia Avenue, College Park, Maryland 20740.

Acknowledgment: The workshop is supported by a grant from the National Science Foundation, Grant No. 79-02132. Participation in the workshop is open to all sociologists who are interested in teacher development activities.
In Recommendation 1 the committee urged the extension of Circular A-91 to a broader range of federal agencies. The circular represents a public commitment by the government to scheduled release dates of specific time series.

Duncan reported that his staff is presently evaluating methods by which they could most effectively extend the coverage of A-91. He also said his staff has "concluded an analysis on the current economic patterns under A-91" and will issue a report on its findings.

In Recommendation 3 the committee calls for the establishment of an ombudsman position to receive professional and lay criticism of the Federal statistical system.

While noting that establishing an ombudsman position may continue to be by some regarded as a "soft" recommendation, the committee asserted that "the present efforts which are underway to enhance public input to the planning of Federal statistical programs may, in part, provide an appropriate mechanism for receiving professional and lay criticism of the Federal statistical system."

Barabba feels "there are a variety of ways that the (ombudsman) function could be performed, including, for example, the activities of the Committee on Statistical Policy of the National Academy of Sciences. Advisory committees which are truly responsive to the public interest can and do perform an important role in this area.".

In Recommendation 4 the committee cited the need for the appointment of a Federal ombudsman to "head" the public role in the Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, and its component Bureau, Statistical Administration.

Duncan noted the "controversial" nature of this proposal and commented that "it is intended to 'suggest professionally qualified candidates' for the position of Ombudsman of the Bureau of the Census and the Bureau of Economic Analysis.".

Survey continued from page 1

(4) Across the three institutional categories, the most often used teaching methods are discussion and teaching performance of sociologists are given teacher ratings, including, for example, the activities of the Committee on Statistical Policy of the National Academy of Sciences. Advisory committees which are truly responsive to the public interest can and do perform an important role in this area.

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