

A History of the
American Sociological Association
1981–2004

AMERICAN SOCIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION
Washington, DC

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Contents

Preface	vii
Acknowledgments	x
Abbreviations	xii
Introduction: Scope and Nature of Presentation	xv
Chapter 1: The 1980s: Critical Challenges and New Resolve	1
1. Introduction	1
Background and Context	1
ASA Priorities in the 1980s	2
2. ASA Membership Trends and Fiscal Status	3
Membership	3
Budgets and Fiscal Policies	5
3. The Executive Office (EO)	6
Transitions and Reorganization	6
Application of New Information Technologies (IT)	8
4. Governance: Constitution/Bylaws Changes and Council Policymaking	9
The ASA Constitution and Bylaws	9
Code of Ethics	10
Amicus Briefs	11
Awards Policy	12
Member Resolutions	12
5. Governance: Structural Changes	13
ASA Sections	13
Committee on Freedom of Research and Teaching (COFRAT)	14
The American Sociological Foundation (ASF)	14
6. ASA Programs and Activities	15
Research and Publications	15
Publications	19
Teaching Services Program (TSP)	22
Professional Development Program (PDP)	24
Certification Program	26
Public Information Program	26
Minority Fellowship Programs	27
7. Other ASA Programs and Activities	29
ASA Honors Program	29
Fund for the Advancement of the Discipline (FAD)	29
International Issues and Human Rights	30
8. Annual Meeting	33

Chapter 2: The 1991–2002 Period: Transformations and Innovations	35
1. Introduction	35
Background and Context	35
Revisiting Strategic Planning in 1998	37
2. Membership and Fiscal Status	37
ASA Membership in the 1990s	37
Profile of ASA Members and Minority Participation in ASA	38
Budgets and Finances	40
Development Campaign	41
3. Executive Office	41
Executive Office Staffing	41
Information Technology (IT)	43
Sale of the 1722 N Street NW Building	46
4. Governance: Bylaws, Ethical Standards, and Policy Changes	47
ASA Bylaws Changes	47
ASA Code of Ethics	48
Amicus Briefs	48
ASA Policy Statements	49
5. Governance Structural Changes	51
Awards Policy	51
Restructuring of ASA Committees	52
ASA Sections during the 1990s	55
Certification	56
Committee on Freedom of Research and Teaching (COFRAT)	57
Dues Restructuring	58
American Sociological Foundation (ASF)	59
6. Publications Program of the ASA	59
Publication Guidelines	59
Scope of Publication	60
Other Publications	61
ASA's Association with Boyd Printing Company	62
Electronic Publishing and Access	62
Controversy over <i>ASR</i>	63
7. Core Programs of the ASA	65
Academic and Professional Affairs Program (APAP)	65
Minority Affairs Program (MAP)	68
The Sydney S. Spivack Program in Applied Social Research and Social Policy	70
The Research Program on the Discipline and Profession	72
Public Affairs Program	73
Public Information Program	77
8. Other Programs and Activities	78
Fund for the Advancement of the Discipline (FAD)	78
International Activities	78
Human Rights	80
The ASA Archiving Project	81
9. Annual Meeting	82

Chapter 3: Moving Forward at Century's End: ASA at 2002–2004	85
1. Background and Context	85
Context and Issues	85
Leadership Changes	86
2. Highlights from Council Actions: 2002–4	87
Data on Race and Ethnicity	87
Defense of Scientific Integrity	88
Amicus Briefs	89
Member Resolutions	90
Other Council Actions/Policy Issues	91
Governance: ASA Council Bylaws Changes	93
3. Governance: Structural Changes	93
Sections	93
Task Forces and Committees	94
Status Committees	94
4. Executive Office Initiatives	94
ASA Departmental Activity: 2002–4	95
Highlights from Programs of the ASA: 2002–4	97
Other Programs and Activities	99
5. Centennial Planning	100
Centennial Events and Projects	100
The Focus of the 100th Annual Meeting	101
Epilogue: The American Sociological Association at its Centenary	103
Mission	103
Key Components of Success	103
Appendix	105
Appendix 1: Chronology of ASA Events	106
Appendix 2: ASA Presidents by Year of Term	118
Appendix 3: Vice Presidents of the ASA	120
Appendix 4: Secretaries of the ASA	122
Appendix 5: Executive Officers of the ASA	123
Appendix 6: Editors of ASA Publications	124
Appendix 7: Administrative Officers of the Association	128
Appendix 8: Executive Associates, Specialists, and Deputy Executive Officers of the Association	129
Appendix 9: Directors of the ASA Minority Fellowship Program	130
Appendix 10: Governing Bodies of the ASA	131
Appendix 11: Recipients of ASA Awards	133
Appendix 12: Membership by Year	140

Appendix 13: Characteristics of Membership and Membership Participation in ASA: 1982, 1992, 2001	141
Appendix 14: ASA Section Membership: Selected Years 1975–2004.	145
Appendix 15: Changes in the ASA Constitution and Bylaws	146
Appendix 16: ASA Committees and Task Forces	150
Appendix 17: ASA Section Formation History.	154
Appendix 18: Major Publications of the ASA	156
Appendix 19: The Presidential Series	159
Appendix 20: Teaching Services Program (TSP).	160
Appendix 21: Professional Development Program (PDP)	166
Appendix 22: Academic and Professional Affairs Program (APAP)	167
Appendix 23: Minority Fellowship Program Awards	173
Appendix 24: Other ASA Publications	174
Appendix 25: The Spivack Program: Policy Briefings, Issue Series, and Special Initiatives	176
Appendix 26: The Spivack Program: Congressional Fellows	179
Appendix 27: The Spivack Program: AAAS/ASA Mass Media Science Fellowship	180
Appendix 28: ASA's Organizational Affiliations and Collaborations: January 1, 2005	181
Appendix 29: ASA Departments and Programs: January 1, 2005.	184
Appendix 30: ASA Executive Office Staff: January 1, 2005	186
References	190
Name Index	191
Subject Index	195

Preface

This year 2005 marks the centenary of the founding of the American Sociological Society, the professional society for sociologists that became known as the American Sociological Association in 1959. Established in 1905 by a small group led by Lester Ward, William Graham Sumner, Franklin Giddings, and Albion Small at meetings of the American Economic Association, the Society held its first meeting the following year in Providence, Rhode Island. The membership in 1906 stood at 115. For the first several decades, the activities of the Society were centered on publishing a journal, holding an annual meeting, and performing various secretariat functions such as record keeping, sending out communications and so forth. In 1949, the first Executive Officer was appointed on a part-time basis, and in 1963 the Association established its permanent headquarters in Washington, DC. By the end of the 20th century, the American Sociological Association evolved into a complex organization with a roster of journals, other publications, meetings, workshops, and programs serving over 13,000 members.

There has been a keen interest expressed by members, leaders, and professional staff of the ASA in preserving the history of the Association. In 1983, ASA donated its records to the Library of Congress, where some 57,900 ASA administrative records and documents from 1931 to 1986 became part of the Library's Manuscript Division Materials. When the ASA was informed by the Library of Congress in 1992 that it would no longer accept additional materials in the ASA archives, the ASA Council began to explore other options and proposals for archiving its records. In September 1997, ASA signed a contract with Pennsylvania State University for this purpose. Since then, the ASA has been actively involved with Penn State in creating a complete ASA archive at its library in University Park, Pennsylvania, including all materials from the Library of Congress transferred in 2005.

Over the years, sociologists have also examined the history and development of the American Sociological Association from a range of perspectives in articles and books published on this topic. In 1980, Lawrence J. Rhoades, then Executive Associate for Program and Teaching in the ASA Executive Office, wrote a series of articles on the history of ASA from its founding in 1905 through 1980 to mark ASA's 75th anniversary. Originally published in the ASA newsletter *Footnotes* during 1980, these articles were subsequently edited and published by ASA in 1981 as *A History of the American Sociological Association, 1905–1980*, with Rhoades as author.

The Rhoades volume has been used widely and serves as a valuable resource on historical events during the first 75 years of ASA. In 2003, ASA Council approved a project to update the 1981 publication by documenting the major issues and events in the Association since 1980 as part of a collection of historical materials to mark the ASA Centennial. This new publication, *A History of the American Sociological Association, 1981–2004*, authored by Katherine J. Rosich, picks up in 1981 where Rhoades left off, and reports on ASA's history over the past quarter century.

Because the *ASA History, 1981–2004* is an update of the 1981 volume, it seeks generally to follow the first volume's structure and orientation. Thus, the basic outline of the current volume captures highlights following a chronological rather than functional or structural analysis. It is divided into three chapters which report on the ASA organizational history covering the periods 1981–91 (Chapter 1), 1991–2002 (Chapter 2), and 2002–4 (Chapter 3). An Epilogue provides a closing commentary, and detailed Appendices contain extensive historical documentation and information about the Association over its 100 years. The general orientation and style of this new volume—like the earlier one—is to present an analysis on each topic with “broad brush strokes” to feature the important events in each area, particularly focusing on institutional development and change. It does not, therefore, present an in-depth analysis of functional areas during this time.

We also emphasize that this volume is not a history of the discipline of sociology in the United States since 1980. That is the task of others, including Craig J. Calhoun who is editing an independent volume on the history of sociology in the United States supported by the ASA Council. Written by sociologists, that book will focus on the development of the discipline of sociology in the United States, and on institutional patterns shaping the field. An outstanding group of sociologists, with diverse backgrounds, subdisciplines, and intellectual orientations has been invited to contribute articles to that volume.

Finally, on the occasion of this historic event, it is worthwhile to reflect briefly on the question: What is the “state of the American Sociological Association” in 2005 as it marks its 100th anniversary?

In 1981, at the beginning of the period covered by this volume, retiring Executive Officer Russell R. Dynes summed up the complexity of the Association’s goals, and described some of the issues that had been at the center of debates within the ASA for decades. He described the challenges of implementing a publishing program that meets the highest standards of excellence, providing an annual meeting that is an opportunity for stimulating exchange of ideas and research findings, and creating programs that serve the changing needs of the membership. Not all of these goals, Dynes noted, are complementary. Tensions arise from differences in priorities focusing on research over teaching, in perspectives that advocate the goals of the discipline over those of the profession, and in advancing the traditionally academic base of the membership with the increasingly non-academic impulses in the profession. Dynes went on to say that the Association values diversity, but hopes for unity and integration; it seeks acceptance in the wider scientific community, while emphasizing the uniqueness of sociology. The Association promotes inclusiveness in the Association (particularly increasing the participation of women and minorities), and strives to foster democracy while electing excellence (*Footnotes*, August 1982:9).

These challenges echo those discussed earlier by Talcott Parsons in his 1966 Editor’s Column in what was then the Association’s publication *The American Sociologist*. Parsons described new functions undertaken by the Association with regard to the role of sociology in secondary and graduate education, the organizational problems posed by the multiplication of sections, and the issues arising with new journals and publications. He also emphasized that ASA is a democratically elected body, and thus is challenged by “preserving and extending this democratic base of the Association and at the same time providing institutions which could focus effective responsibility, on behalf of the membership in their special position as members of a learned, primarily academic, group, for the formulation of coherent policies and *both* the support *and* the control of the Executive Office.”

Many of these challenges still remain although with different shapes and new dimensions. Like the other social sciences, sociology must continually redefine its role and relationships with wider publics. The challenge for “public sociologies,” for example, is to engage an ever-wider audience including the media, policy makers, think tanks, social movement, and others, both at a national and international level. A new world of publishing is also emerging, posing important challenges and opportunities for the ASA as a major publisher of scholarly journals. The legal implications of electronic publishing, access to scholarly research on the Internet and other electronic formats, and how to reach audiences of teachers and learners as well as the general public and policy leaders are just a few of the exciting challenges for the ASA. Sociology, along with other social science associations, must also find creative, innovative, and persuasive ways to advocate for scientific funding and to develop research agendas that embrace and expand sociology’s leadership within the scientific community.

As the American Sociological Association moves into the 21st century, there is a larger emphasis on the need for cooperation and collaboration across the social and behavioral sciences in order to respond to the increasingly complex problems of a global society. The war on terror, interethnic

conflicts, wars, inequality, social disparities, forced migrations, and poverty are just a few of the critical challenges confronting an interdependent world. Fortunately, there is also growing recognition of the contributions that knowledge from the social and behavioral sciences can make to enhance understanding of effective responses to these challenges. The pages of this *History, 1981-2004* show continued growth and professionalization of the ASA, including the formation of well-established collaborations with other professional and scientific societies, the Consortium of Social Science Associations (COSSA), the National Humanities Alliance (NHA), the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS), the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), and other organized efforts to address issues of importance to the social and behavioral sciences. In 2005, as it celebrates its 100th anniversary, and looks toward the future, the American Sociological Association is well-situated to meet the challenges that need the profession and discipline of sociology.

Sally T. Hillsman
Katherine J. Rosich

Acknowledgments

Work such as this could not have been accomplished without the engagement and support of individuals who know the records, key events, and issues of the Association, especially over the past several decades. The Introduction, which includes a summary of the sources and methodology used to conduct the analysis, emphasizes the use of published ASA sources (Council minutes, articles in *Footnotes*, and so forth) as the primary records for this analysis. Yet the insights and diligent pursuit of facts and verification of data by past and present ASA members and staff helped to clarify inconsistencies and identify gaps in the data.

The reflections of the Executive Officers who served since 1981—Russell R. Dynes (1977–1982), William V. D’Antonio (1982–1991), and Felice J. Levine (1991–2002)—were invaluable to this publication. In addition to thoughtful reviews of an early draft of the manuscript, they were always available to comment on or corroborate information, raise questions, and clarify sequences of events and outcomes discussed in the text. They searched through their personal records and files and provided additional detail and precision where information in published records was limited. Although any interpretations in the text are those of the author, the three Executive Officers were essential partners in the effort to ensure complete documentary data. We greatly appreciate their contributions and the spirit in which they gave of their time and recollections to this effort.

The commitment and support of the current ASA Executive Office staff was also key to the success of this project. It especially benefited from the extraordinary circumstance of having three senior level staff members in the Executive Office whose tenure at ASA spans the entire period of this history. In 2005, Janet L. Astner marks her 30th year in the ASA Executive Office, Karen Gray Edwards celebrates her 25th year, and Carla B. Howery her 24th. In addition to their commitment and contributions to the ASA over the years, these staff members provide an invaluable institutional memory for ASA staff, officers and members—one that was essential in preparing the history of ASA in this period. The information they provided on documentary sources, issues, people, and events as well as their insights and recollections of the last quarter century added significantly to the writing of this history. We are grateful to them for their contributions that enriched this “story” of ASA at the end of the 20th Century.

It is important to note that these three staff members were involved in key areas of Executive Office and Association programmatic activities at a time of significant change and growth. In 2004, Janet Astner concluded the 25th ASA Annual Meeting for which she has been responsible, an unprecedented success in what is undoubtedly the singular most important event in the ASA annual calendar and, indeed, in the calendar of many sociologists in the U.S. For more than two decades, Karen Gray Edwards has been the mainstay of ASA’s publishing program with a command of the scholarly publishing business that has enabled the ASA Committee on Publications, editorial offices and Council to meet the complex demands of ASA as a major publisher in the print and now in the newly emerging electronic world of scholarly publishing. Carla Howery has been the face of the ASA in both its outreach and its commitment to higher education for more than two decades, 13 of which she has served as Deputy Executive Officer. Since 1995, as Director of the Association’s Academic and Professional Affairs Program (and prior to that the Teaching Services Program), her work at ASA has helped the profession face the challenges of the 21st century through testing new forms of pedagogy, new interdisciplinary partnerships in teaching and research, and new technologies for learning and communicating.

Other staff members at ASA also provided essential assistance to this effort. ASA Archivist Michael Murphy was a key source of information, records, and critical support throughout the entire project.

The breadth of his knowledge about both documentary sources and events and his skill in navigating ASA materials in storage, at the Library of Congress, or archived at Pennsylvania State University were very helpful. Michael and Dan Sackett jointly undertook the important task of reading and copy-editing the entire manuscript with dedication and extraordinary professional skill. This project also greatly benefited from the systematization and digitizing of ASA governance information which Michael has undertaken in his capacity as ASA Director of Governance and Sections.

Because the records used for this analysis are on site at the ASA headquarters, at its off-site storage location in Maryland, and in the archive at Pennsylvania State University, the author relied on staff cooperation for access to relevant documents. Roberta Spalter-Roth, Mercedes Rubio, Lee Herring, and Johanna Ebner not only made this process seamless, but also provided data and information for the appendices as well as valuable interpretation of some materials. Les Briggs reviewed the budgetary and financial data referenced in the text, and verified facts and figures by searching old financial and personnel records. Kevin Darrow Brown gave information on technical specifications for the information technology descriptions and also provided essential support on the computer systems. This was particularly important since all the documents extracted for the analysis were scanned and are now stored on the ASA computer network. Much of this document preparation took place in the ASA Executive Office where David Matthews has managed production services for more than 18 years, ensuring the smooth and efficient operation of ASA “backstage.”

We also thank Theresa A. Bicanic, a digital production specialist for her creativity, care, and professionalism in producing the cover and manuscript for final publication. In addition, we want to express our appreciation to Jane Carey and her staff at Boyd Printing Company who, as always, provide the extra measures of support to produce ASA publications.

Finally, we want to acknowledge the initiative and leadership of Troy Duster, Michael Buroway and William T. Bielby, the three most recent Presidents of ASA, and the ASA Council for their support and encouragement of this work. At the suggestion of President Duster, Arne Kalleberg and Eduardo Bonilla-Silva read the manuscript and provided thoughtful scrutiny of the substance and style of the text. They helped to clarify information, and made suggestions that significantly added to material covered in the history. We are deeply indebted to them for the considerable energy they devoted to this effort.

Because some of the period under consideration is relatively recent, the research process itself highlighted the value of preserving the Association’s historical records. In addition to a description of key events over the past several decades, this volume has resulted in a compilation of a great many facts and documents about the Association’s recent history. We hope this publication will not only become a useful resource, but that it will also serve as a stimulus for other investigations and more in-depth organizational analysis of the ASA and its place in the profession.

Sally T. Hillsman
Katherine J. Rosich

Abbreviations

AAAS	American Association for the Advancement of Science
AAASHRAN	AAAS Human Rights Action Network
AAC&U	Association of American Colleges and Universities (formerly the AAC, the Association of American Colleges)
AAP	Association of American Publishers
ABS	Association of Black Sociologists
ACLS	American Council of Learned Societies
AKD	Alpha Kappa Delta
AM	ASA Annual Meeting
AP	Advanced Placement
APA	American Psychological Association
APAP	Academic and Professional Affairs Program
APSA	American Political Science Association
ASA	American Sociological Association
ASF	American Sociological Foundation
ASR	<i>American Sociological Review</i>
BSSR-CC	Behavioral and Social Science Coordinating Committee (NIH)
CAFLIS	Coalition of Associations for Foreign Language and International Studies
CAHT-BSSR	Coalition for the Advancement of Health through Behavioral and Social Science Research
CARI	Community Action Research Initiative
CASTL	Carnegie Academy for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning
CCS	Certified Clinical Sociologist
CGS	Council of Graduate Schools
CNSF	Coalition for National Science Funding
COC	Committee on Committees
COFRAT	Committee on Freedom of Research and Teaching
CON	Committee on Nominations
COP	Committee on Publications
COPAFS	Council of Professional Associations for Federal Statistics
COPE	Committee on Professional Ethics
COS	Committee on Sections
COSSA	Consortium of Social Science Associations
CPST	Commission on Professions in Science and Technology
CRECNO	Classification by Race, Ethnicity, Color and National Origin (California Proposition 54)
CSGLBT	Committee on the Status of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Persons in Sociology
CSREMS	Committee on the Status of Racial and Ethnic Minorities in Sociology

CS	<i>Contemporary Sociology</i>
CSWS	Committee on the Status of Women in Sociology
CUPA-HR	College and University Professional Association for Human Resources
CUR	Council for Undergraduate Research
CUSS	Community and Urban Sociology Section
DBASSE	Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education
DFA	Dimensional Fund Advisors
DHHS	Department of Health and Human Services
DOJ	Department of Justice
DRG	Departmental Resources Group
EB	<i>Employment Bulletin</i>
EO	Executive Office of ASA
EOB	Committee on the Executive Office and Budget
FAD	Fund for the Advancement of the Discipline
FIPSE	Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education
FOIA	Freedom of Information Act
GSS	General Social Survey
ICPSR	Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research
IDA	Integrating Data Analysis Project
ISA	International Sociological Association
IIS	International Institute of Sociology
IT	Information Technology
IRBs	Institutional Review Boards
IREX	International Research & Exchanges Board
JHSB	<i>Journal of Health and Social Behavior</i>
JSTOR	The Scholarly Journal Archive
MAP	Minority Affairs Program
MFP	Minority Fellowship Program
MLA	Modern Language Association of America
MOST I	Minority Opportunity Summer Training
MOST	Minority Opportunities Through School Transformation
NAS	National Academy of Sciences
NCES	National Center for Education Statistics
NCSS	National Council on Social Studies
NCOVR	National Consortium on Violence Research
NEH	National Endowment for the Humanities
NHA	National Humanities Alliance
NIA	National Institute on Aging

NICHD	National Institute of Child Health and Human Development
NIE	National Institute of Education
NIH	National Institutes of Health
NIMH	National Institute of Mental Health
NHRPAC	National Human Research Protections Advisory Committee
NSF	National Science Foundation
NOAH	Name of specialized associations software and office automation system developed by JL Systems installed at ASA in 1993
NORC	National Opinion Research Center
OBSSR	Office of Behavioral and Social Science Research
OFAC	Office of Foreign Assets Control
OSTP	Office of Science Technology and Policy
PAA	Population Association of American
PFF	Preparing Future Faculty
PDP	Professional Development Program
POD	Problems of the Discipline
SBE	Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences
SES	Social and Economic Sciences
SM	<i>Sociological Methodology</i>
SOE	<i>Sociology of Education</i>
SPA	Sociological Practice Association
SPSSI	Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues
SPQ	<i>Social Psychology Quarterly</i>
SPR	<i>Sociological Practice Review</i>
SSDAN	Social Science Data Analysis Network
SSRC	Social Science Research Council
ST	<i>Sociological Theory</i>
SWS	Sociologists for Women in Society
TAGGE	Task Group On Graduate Education
TAS	<i>The American Sociologist</i>
TRC	Teaching Resources Center
TRG	Teaching Resources Group
TS	<i>Teaching Sociology</i>
TSP	Teaching Services Program

Introduction:

Scope and Nature of Presentation

This volume captures highlights in the history of the American Sociological Association (ASA) from 1981 through 2004. The objective of this work is to describe and report on the major events in the life of ASA during the last two decades of the 20th century—leading up to a new century and millennium, and also to ASA’s commemoration of its 100th anniversary in 2005. This introduction provides a brief overview of the structure and organization of this volume; describes the methodology used to compile, analyze, and conceptualize the topics for discussion; and explains the publication format in both its printed (pdf) and electronic (html) formats.

As noted in the preface, this volume is a companion volume to the 1981 ASA publication, *A History of the American Sociological Association, 1905–1980*, by Lawrence J. Rhoades. The 1981 Rhoades volume shaped the basic ideas for topics and the general approach used in this second volume. As in the 1981 publication, descriptive text is presented on key events within a specified time frame—for the decade of the 1980s, the 1990s (through the 2002 Council), and for key events in 2002 through 2004. Like the preceding volume, the descriptive analysis of each topic in this volume is reported using a style that features the important events, particularly focusing on institutional development and change. On occasion, evaluative comments by ASA leadership or others are included to lend perspective in the reporting.

There are several important differences between the two volumes. The subject matter and content of this history of ASA since 1980 were considerably expanded because source material for events of the past quarter century was generally more accessible than for earlier decades of ASA history. This also meant that a more rigorous and systematic review could be conducted for each topical area. Current technologies also permitted compilation of source material in electronic formats, which facilitated both analysis and the preparation of text (and also resulted in a digitized archive of basic sources, which can be used for other organizational or research purposes). Finally, the text is annotated with references.

Structure of this Volume and its Contents

Organization of Volume

The major events of the Association over the past quarter century are described in three chapters and detailed appendices (a list of common abbreviations is also included). The contents of the volume include:

- **History of the 1980s:** Covers events beginning with the 1981 Council and ending with the 1991 August Council; coincides with the tenure of Executive Officers Russell R. Dynes and William V. D’Antonio, and the year of transition with Felice J. Levine;
- **History of the 1990s:** Covers the period beginning with the August 1991 meeting of the 1992 Council to the end of the 2001 Council in August 2002; coincides with the tenure of Executive Officer Felice J. Levine;

- **ASA in 2002 to 2004:** Includes a brief overview of major events in 2002 through 2004 leading up to the Centennial year 2005 (coincides with the arrival of Executive Officer Sally T. Hillsman); and
- **Appendices:** Include (1) a timeline of major events from 1905, (2) lists of Association leaders over time, (3) data on membership and participation in ASA, (4) summaries of key information on governance, (5) information on ASA programs, and (6) a summary of Executive Office organizational affiliations, departments, programs, and staff in 2005.

Conceptual Framework

For each of Chapters 1 and 2, the text includes a discussion of the following issues:

- **Background:** Provides contextual setting and key goals of ASA;
- **Profile of ASA:** Includes summary of key facts about the ASA (e.g., data on membership, participation, budget, and finances);
- **Executive Office:** Describes staffing, operations, application of new technologies, and so forth;
- **ASA governance/policy changes:** Provides description of changes relating to ASA's authority to govern and conduct its work (i.e., amend its Constitution and Bylaws, change its Code of Ethics; modify policies on ASA awards, define guidelines for signing on to amicus briefs, or issue policy statements on behalf of ASA);
- **ASA governance/structural changes:** Includes summary of institutional changes in ASA structures and governance systems, such as its committees or sections, dues restructuring, and so forth;
- **Core programmatic activities:** Describes the growth and evolution of major ASA Programs (e.g., Publications, Certification, Teaching, Professional Development, Applied Sociology, Academic Affairs, the Sydney Spivack Program in Applied Social Research and Social Policy, Minority Affairs, Research on the Discipline and the Profession, Public Affairs, and Public Information);
- **Other programs and activities:** Describes other programs such as the Honors Program and the Fund for the Advancement of the Discipline (FAD), and activities focused on international events and issues; and
- **The Annual Meeting:** Includes highlights of key changes relating to the Annual Meeting.

The report on the history concludes in Chapter 3 with highlights of ASA activities from 2002 through 2004—leading up to the 2005 Centennial. An Epilogue provides a closing commentary.

Methodology

The primary sources of information are those published in *Footnotes* (particularly minutes of Council meetings, reports of the Secretaries and Executive Officers, "Reflections of the Presidents," feature articles by Executive Officers ("Inter Nos" by Russell Dynes, "Observing" by William D'Antonio, "Open Window" by Felice Levine, and "Vantage Point" by Sally Hillsman), and other official records. Other sources included minutes of the meetings of the Committee on the Executive Office and Budget (EOB), Council and EOB Agenda books, program file records, Annual Meeting Programs, committee and other reports to Council, and other records in the ASA files. The Executive Officers who served (or are serving) during this period, and ASA staff in 2003–5 provided valuable information and insights. Finally, extant literature on relevant topics was also reviewed.

Council and EOB minutes were systematically reviewed to obtain a comprehensive list of topics for consideration (starting with those topics used in the 1981 volume). Special attention was placed

on examining milestone events, major structural changes, constitutional changes, major programmatic innovations, and the development of Council policies and resolutions that had major impacts on the Association and the profession. The objective was to describe as succinctly and factually as possible the “what,” “who,” “when,” “why” (to the extent recorded) and “how” of these major events and issues over this time period, with a particular focus on outcomes (“what finally happened?”). An extensive set of notes was prepared (both in electronic and scanned form) during this analytic process that formed the basis for the final text. The review of materials and preparation of the text was accomplished between October 2003 and April 2004. Final text was reviewed by the three Executive Officers who served during this period (Russell R. Dynes, William V. D’Antonio, and Felice J. Levine), and by the current Executive Officer, Sally T. Hillsman. ASA President Troy Duster also appointed an ad hoc committee to review the manuscript in early 2005.

Publication Formats

This *History of the American Sociological Association, 1981–2004* is published electronically in .pdf and .html form on the ASA homepage at www.asanet.org. A limited run of printed volumes is also published primarily for archival purposes.