
CONSORTIUM OF SOCIAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATIONS

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HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE VOTES INCREASE FOR NSF

Moving swiftly after the apparent collapse of the conference on the budget resolution, the House Appropriations Subcommittee on HUD-Independent Agencies, Rep. Edward Boland (D-MA), Chairman, marked up the FY 1986 NSF appropriations bill on June 26. The Subcommittee increased the funding for the Foundation to \$1.524 billion, \$22 million over the FY 1985 levels. This represents a slight 1.5% increase. However, this is \$45 million below the FY 1986 budget requested by NSF. Earlier this year, the House voted to freeze the authorization of NSF at the 1985 numbers. However, since an authorization bill is unlikely to emerge from the Congress (the jurisdictional dispute continues in the Senate), the appropriations committee can make its own decisions.

In the Research and Related Activities category, the Subcommittee appropriated \$1.347 million, a \$45 million or 3% increase from the FY 1985 appropriated level. The Subcommittee instructed NSF to spend \$7 million of the increase on "high priority" research. The remaining \$38 million will be left to the discretion of the Foundation to spread over the various programs, including those in the social and behavioral sciences. Science and Engineering Education was increased by \$10 million

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Risa I. Palm, *President*

David Jenness, *Executive Director*

over FY 1985 levels, to \$92 million. (This figure includes the \$31.5 million deferred from last year's appropriation.)

The Subcommittee's action represents the first step in the actual funding of the Foundation for FY 1986. Given the House's action on the authorization bill, it is far from certain whether even these slight increases will hold up when the process is completed.

HOUSE VOTES TO REAUTHORIZE NIH

On June 17, the House of Representatives passed the Health Research Extension Act (H.R. 2409) by voice vote. The Act reauthorizes the National Institutes of Health and also creates two new institutes, of arthritis and nursing. The legislation increases the emphasis on research into the prevention of disease by establishing Associate Directors for Prevention within three institutes, including the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) and the Office of the Director. The House bill also includes language that would encourage the appointment of social and behavioral scientists to NIH advisory councils. The Senate version of this bill (S. 1309) was introduced on June 17 by Senators Orrin Hatch (R-UT) and Edward Kennedy (D-MA), the Chairman and Ranking Democrat on the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee. It is expected to move quickly through the Senate. The Senate bill does not include the nursing institute and uses slightly less encouraging language concerning the appointment of social and behavioral scientists to the councils. President Reagan vetoed Congress' attempt to reauthorize NIH last fall because the legislation was too costly and created two new institutes.

COSSA HOLDS CONGRESSIONAL SEMINAR ON OUTCOMES OF HIGHER EDUCATION

At a COSSA Congressional Seminar on June 14, William H. Sewell, professor emeritus of sociology, University of Wisconsin Madison; Paul J. Taubman, professor of economics, University of Pennsylvania; and Herbert H. Hyman, professor emeritus of sociology, Wesleyan University, discussed the topic, "Social, Economic, and Attitudinal Outcomes of Higher Education." More than forty congressional staff, federal officials, press, and members of the educational community attended the seminar, which was co-sponsored by the House Science and Technology Committee's Science Policy Task Force and the Subcommittee on Postsecondary Education of the House Education and Labor Committee.

Professor Sewell discussed sociological research that has demonstrated the role higher education plays in the acquisition of attitudes, values, habits of work, and skills required by the more demanding occupations in our society. Sewell's longitudinal study of high school students, which uses a model that includes measures of intelligence, grades in school, the extent to which the student perceives his parents', teachers', and peers' encouragement, and the student's aspirations, shows that

education is a major determinant in occupational attainment, earnings, and social mobility.

According to Paul Taubman, research shows that more educated people have higher rates of earnings; however, it is unclear how much these higher earnings are attributable to skills or knowledge gained from higher education, and how much they depend on ability. Taubman's own research on twins, which holds constant the variables of genetic endowment and some aspects of early environment, indicates that "about half the returns to schooling really come about because of returns to ability, and half come about because of the extra advantages conferred from more education."

Economic and occupational effects are not the only results of higher education. Professor Hyman and his colleagues did secondary analyses of surveys of national samples to determine the impact of education on enduring attitudes and values. It appeared, at least for whites, that the more education a person had, the more tolerant and open to new ideas and social changes he or she would be. All three scholars admitted the difficulty they have had in measuring the impact of higher education on non-white, and in some cases, non-male samples.

The seminar was presented as part of COSSA's interaction with the House Science and Technology Committee's two-year study of U.S. science policy.

GERONTOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA BECOMES COSSA AFFILIATE

COSSA is pleased to announce that the Gerontological Society of America has become a COSSA Affiliate. The Society, which is composed of gerontological researchers and educators, promotes interest in research on aging and encourages the use of the results of such research in the development of public policy.

FEDERAL RESEARCH SUPPORT: INSIDE NIMH

From time to time the Update publishes articles aimed at providing an interpretive, in-depth look at certain federal agencies or programs of particular significance for the social and behavioral sciences. We continue that series with a look at two issues of current concern at the National Institute of Mental Health: a plan to reorganize and redefine the mission statement of the Institute, and the status of an important social science laboratory in the intramural division.

National Institute of Mental Health Plans Major Reorganization

One of the first tasks undertaken by Director Shervert Frazier since taking over the reins at the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) in January has been the planning of a major reorganization of the Institute. Parallel to consideration of

the reorganization plan, officials are also attempting to re-define the mission statement of NIMH.

The mission statement presented to a meeting of the National Advisory Mental Health Council last month reads, "The mission of the National Institute of Mental Health is to improve the understanding, treatment, and prevention of mental illness primarily through the support of research, as well as through the dissemination and implementation of an expanded knowledge base." One obvious element missing from this statement is any mention of "mental health." Whether or not this signals a departure from NIMH's legislative mandate and traditional emphasis on the "promotion of mental health" is unclear. At the Advisory Council meeting several representatives of NIMH liaison groups and some Council members suggested that the statement was too narrow, and that "mental health" should be incorporated into the statement. NIMH officials defend the deliberate focus on research and mental illness as an effort to "sharpen" the image of the Institute.

After many months of consultations, meetings, and staff retreats, a proposed organization plan are scheduled to be forwarded to Donald I. MacDonald, head of the Alcohol, Drug Abuse, and Mental Health Administration, on July 1. The proposed reorganization of NIMH is aimed at clarifying the function and primary mission of NIMH as a research Institute. Existing divisions (except intramural research) are slated to be abolished, and new ones created using guidelines of function rather than topical areas. A new Division of Basic Sciences would house behavioral science, neuroscience, and psychobiology. The Division of Biometry and Epidemiology would lose the Center for Epidemiologic Studies and become the Division of Biometry and Applied Sciences. (Epidemiology would be moved to the Division of Clinical Research.) Research training programs apparently will become less distinct entities and will be more closely integrated with research programs.

The reorganization plan should reduce the number of operating units within NIMH and facilitate the impending staff cut of over 100 positions mandated by the Office of Management and Budget. Interestingly, the Division of Basic Sciences will have by far the fewest staff positions of all the new divisions.

If the plan is approved by MacDonald as anticipated (and by Health and Human Services Secretary Margaret Heckler) a reorganized NIMH (or the new National Institute on Mental Illness) should be in place by October 1. What effect these changes will have on the behavioral and social science research community is yet to be seen.

Psychosocial Research at a Crossroads at NIMH Intramural

Later this summer, sociologist Melvin L. Kohn will leave the Intramural Research Program of the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) to assume a professorship at the Johns Hopkins University. Kohn has spent virtually his entire professional

career, 33 years, at NIMH intramural, and since 1960 has been chief of the Laboratory of Socio-Environmental Studies. Over the years, in his one government position, Kohn has become a leading American sociologist, the author of books and research papers called 'pathbreaking' in his field. Two weeks ago Kohn was notified that he had been elected President-Elect of the American Sociological Association, as of August 1, 1985.

Kohn admits he would happily have stayed at NIMH and continued his long-term research program had he not realized that, in recent years, his laboratory has been gradually downgraded. Kohn's departure raises questions about the future of his lab, and the position of psychosocial research in the NIMH intramural program and in the Public Health Service agencies generally.

Historically, since the founding of the NIMH intramural program in 1951, research budgets have been relatively generous -- and lab chiefs don't have to write grant proposals. An NIH Board of Scientific Directors and various external Boards of Scientific Counselors have provided a system of peer review; but the most important check on the quality of output has been professional publication and validation by the scientists' own colleagues. The Laboratory of Socio-Environmental Studies, also founded in 1951, had as its first chief the well-known sociologist John Clausen, who worked on schizophrenia and the family, among other topics. Clausen hired Kohn, as well as other sociologists, anthropologists, and social psychologists. In the 1960s and early 1970s, NIMH in general had a strong social-problem emphasis, the assumption being that mental health was not only a biomedical or even an intrapsychic matter but was strongly affected by the social environment and social experience.

Kohn ploughed his own furrow, and began a series of highly regarded investigations. His main body of work has focused on work and personality and on the mutual interrelations between job characteristics and social-psychological variables. More recently, the lab has been pursuing parallel studies of the relation between educational process, adult personality, and achievement. A key colleague for many years has been Carmi Schooler, trained in social, personality, and clinical psychology as well as sociology. The lab received large-scale funding for two waves of a national panel study of workers and their families, one in 1964 with a follow-up in 1974. In recent years the work on occupation and social processes has been broadened by comparative studies in Japan and Poland.

In the mid-to-late 1970s, the emphasis at NIMH generally began to shift away from what appeared to many in the research field to be an ideal balance of biomedical and biobehavioral research to a stricter focus on the etiology of mental illness and its cure. By the early 1980s the NIMH leadership explicitly acknowledged that 'social research' per se was not part of its mission. While this tacking and veering was felt more keenly on

the extramural side, it was not ignored intramurally. Basic research became related more explicitly to priority diagnostic areas.

Kohn's and Schooler's (and their colleagues') work had been considered basic, methodologically innovative...and 'relevant.' Now some of these attributes began to be questioned. The work experience, while it might have important ramifications with regard to the course of management of mental illness, was presumably not a strong etiological factor. The lab's methodology, moreover, was 'nonexperimental', in that it depended on complex analysis and re-analysis of a large database, with reliance on linear structural equation analysis of the reciprocal relationships between job conditions and personality. There was little question about the rigor of the research; but to some of the NIMH brass, it seemed time to move on to another topic.

Kohn's own furrow became a Procrustean bed. He asked for the funds, some half a million dollars, to gather new survey data -- which could have widened the scope of the lab's inquiry. Intramural director Frederick R. Goodwin made it clear Kohn's research was well-regarded, but that that kind of funding would not be forthcoming, and in fact, that a continuing decline in support was to be anticipated. Simultaneously, federal personnel reductions that have affected all the labs over the past few years left Kohn and Schooler virtually colleague-less, while other labs suffered less. Without new funds, which he would have welcomed, Kohn admits the relative narrowness of his lab's work, but regards it more as scientific single-mindedness. He says, "It may have been our bureaucratic undoing, but it has been our scientific achievement."

It is not just this one lab that faces an uncertain future. As the biologizing of NIMH/NIH intramural proceeds, even the experimental psychologists and psychiatrists find their work constrained into more narrow and reductionist paths. Many at NIMH seem to devalue survey and sampling research, longitudinal analysis, cross-national comparison -- in other words, the whole range of variables involving social structure and social process and data drawn from nonlaboratory settings. As one lab chief remarked to Update: "I don't care how much good lab science gets done, mental illness isn't going to be cured by a vaccine or gene splicing."

Ironically, while the NIH agencies downplay social and behavioral research, NIMH's parent agency, the Alcohol, Drug Abuse, and Mental Health Administration (ADAMHA), seems to be rethinking its position. Robert Trachtenberg, ADAMHA Deputy Administrator, spoke at a February NIMH Advisory Council meeting of "the breakdown in the social fabric of the United States. Because the underlying demographic and social issues call for a leadership role from ADAMHA, there must be a clear resolution of that role." Goodwin's decision on what to do about the Laboratory of Socio-Environmental Studies may give some clues as to what agency, if any, will assume that role.

SOURCES OF RESEARCH SUPPORT: DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

COSSA provides this information as a service, and encourages readers to contact the agency rather than COSSA for more information.

Secretary's Discretionary Program
Field-Initiated Grants

The Secretary of Education awards grants for field-initiated education research projects through its Discretionary Program. To be eligible for funding under this program, a project must relate to one or more of the purposes of the Education Consolidation and Improvement Act of 1981 (ECIA). The ECIA generally addresses the special educational needs of educationally deprived children and the improvement of elementary and secondary education. Eligible activities include: 1) providing a national source for gathering and disseminating information on the effectiveness of programs designed to meet the special educational needs of educationally deprived children; 2) research and demonstrations related to the purposes of the ECIA; 3) improving the training of teachers and other instructional personnel; or 4) providing technical assistance to state or local educational agencies in the implementation of ECIA programs. Three priorities have been announced for field-initiated grants submitted in FY 1985: content, character, and choice. Research projects that analyze the content of instructional materials, the effects of school policies on student discipline, or community attitudes toward education vouchers and other vehicles are examples of the areas of research the Department is interested in funding.

FY 1985 Budget: The Department expects to award 10 to 20 grants ranging from \$25,000 to \$150,000. Evaluation and research proposals should be in the \$75,000 range.

Funding Mechanisms: Grants

Review Process: Peer review

Disciplines Funded: No restrictions

Deadline: August 5, 1985

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