

# COSSA WASHINGTON UPDATE

Volume X, Number 6

April 1, 1991

## **SOCIOLOGIST MAKES PRESENTATION BEFORE NATIONAL SCIENCE BOARD** JA

For the first time in many years, a social scientist was invited to make a presentation before the National Science Board, the governing body of the National Science Foundation (NSF). On March 22, Michael Hannan, Henry Scarborough Professor of Social Sciences in the Department of Sociology at Cornell University, spoke to the board about the state of sociological research on organizations.

Hannan gave a lucid short-course on organizational research, including its theoretical and methodological foundations and subsequent developments in the field. The fundamental question posed by organizational sociologists, explained Hannan, is the contribution of organizations to long-term, large-scale social change. Current research focuses on two facets of organizations that affect the pace and character of social change: 1) the diversity of organizations; and 2) the rates of creation and mortality of organizations.

### **Populations Focus**

Over time, noted Hannan, the focus of this research has shifted from examining individual organizations, as in the case study approach, to looking at "entire populations" of organizations, for example, all firms in a particular industry. This population focus, coupled with recent developments in statistics, enables researchers to see general patterns and processes that apply to broad classes of populations. Comparisons can be made, for example, between the growth and decline of newspaper unions and that of banks in the same historical period.

Currently, the "hot" theory in organizational sociology, according to Hannan, is a qualitative one that emphasizes the relationship between density (the number of organizations in a population) and founding/failure rates. Founding rates are directly proportional to a legitimation process; that is, organizations become legitimate - and then proliferate - when taken for granted by social actors. Failure rates are directly proportional to an economic process, specifically the competition for finite re-

sources. Both of these processes are related to density, according to this theory. The model - which employs complicated mathematical modeling - takes into account social, cultural, and historical factors (for example, government regulation) that might confound the relationship.

Board members and the public audience seemed engaged by Hannan's presentation, asking a number of questions about the model and its predictive capacity. After the meeting, however, some board members were heard questioning the value of this kind of research to NSF - suggesting that social and behavioral perspectives are still not well-respected in some segments of the "science" community.

## **NATIONAL EDUCATION GOALS PANEL HEARS FROM RESOURCE GROUPS** HS

The national education goals panel held its fourth meeting on March 25, and the commission's six resource groups offered recommendations on ways to measure educational progress. Created to chart progress toward the education goals set by President Bush and the nation's governors, the panel's membership includes state governors, administration officials, and members of Congress;

### **INSIDE UPDATE . . .**

- Private Sector Urges Support for Education Research
- Science Committee Hears From Technology Office on Federally Funded Research in the 1990s
- House Subcommittee Examines Changing U.S. Population and Future Workforce
- Senate Rules Committee Debates Motor-Voter Bill
- Conference Explores the Use of Geographic Information Systems in the Social Sciences
- Science Foundation Awards Cognitive Science Center to University of Pennsylvania
- Sources of Research Support: Department of Health and Human Services

Governor Roy Romer (D-CO) heads the commission.

The panel asked its resource groups to recommend currently-available education data for inclusion in the education progress report due in September 1991. The groups, however, were encouraged to engage in long-range thinking and to free themselves from the limitations of current data. The goals panel is seeking suggestions for the sort of data that would be necessary or desirable for future progress reports.

Lauren Resnick, co-director of the Learning Resource and Development Center at the University of Pittsburgh, led the group concerned with the goal of improving student achievement and citizenship. The group concluded that currently "there are little data available that indicate directly what students know and can do." They recommended, at least for the September report, using measures from existing data sets such as the National Assessments of Educational Progress (NAEP), which includes state-by-state comparisons. The group also recommended using International Student Achievement Comparisons, the number of Advance Placement Tests given and scores earned, and high school course enrollment patterns. The group rejected such familiar measures as SAT and ACT test scores, because "the tests do not directly measure what is taught in schools." They also rejected military screening examination scores and college board achievement tests.

The Resnick group also suggested conducting a national poll to measure the satisfaction of the education's systems clients. The sample would in-

clude employers, postsecondary educational institutions, parents, and students who had left school one to five years ago.

The group found no reliable indicators of citizenship, community service and personal responsibility, nor did they identify any way to measure knowledge of diverse cultural heritage and world community (all of which are objectives of the "student achievement and citizenship" goal).

For its long-range strategy, Resnick and her colleagues urged "the development of a nationwide assessment system based on world-class standards that can ultimately be used to transform American education." Three major tasks need to be completed: 1) development of a national educational standards network; 2) design of a set of national anchor examinations; and 3) creation of criteria to measure student performance on those anchor exams. The group admitted that these tasks may take a decade to put into place.

#### Student Achievement and Citizenship

To achieve the first task, a "board" would establish procedures for a process of standards-setting. The intention is to engage Americans of all social groups in a substantive consideration of what they want young people to learn during their school years. Cooperation between this national board and the states, which would still have a major responsibility for education, would be an important part of this process.

The national anchor exams, reflecting national standards devised by the board described above, would be targeted at various discipline and skill areas. According to Resnick, "these assessments must be focused on thinking and reasoning skills, tied to curriculum goals or frameworks, and designed to be studied for and taught to." Finally, a grading process must be created to judge the reliability of these anchor exams.

The group recommended continuation of NAEP until the new system can be put in place. It suggested examinations to measure English proficiency, but also supported the encouragement of earlier and more intensive foreign language instruction for native English speakers. The foreign language effort would also encourage the preservation of native language capacity among immigrant children, according to the group.

#### CONSORTIUM OF SOCIAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATIONS

Howard J. Silver . . . . . Executive Director  
 Judy Auerbach . . . . . Government Liaison  
 Joseph J. Thorndike . . . . . Staff Associate  
 Karen E. Carrion . . . . . Office Manager  
 Tiffany Danitz . . . . . Intern

Joseph E. Grimes . . . . . President

The Consortium of Social Science Associations represents more than 185,000 American scientists across the full range of the social and behavioral sciences, functioning as a bridge between the research world and the Washington community. Update is published fortnightly. Individual subscriptions are available from COSSA for \$50; institutional subscriptions, \$100; overseas mail, \$100. ISSN 0749-4394. Address all inquiries to COSSA, 1522 K Street, NW, Suite 836, Washington, DC 20005. Phone: (202) 842-3525; Fax: (202) 842-2788.

## School Readiness

With regard to the goal of children starting school "ready to learn," the resource group chaired by Ernest Boyer, president of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, produced a matrix to comprehensively assess a child's physical well-being, emotional maturity, social confidence, language richness, and general knowledge. Indicators should be developed, according to Boyer and his colleagues, that would include maternal/child health data, parenting data, preschool participation information, school entry information (including a parent-completed form providing information about the child), and a health-screening form. Assessment would also occur in school, with measures including a child development profile, teacher observations, and a performance portfolio of the child's painting, stories, small construction projects, tapes of oral presentations, etc. These measures would come during the second-half of the child's kindergarten year.

Other resource groups reported to the panel on indicators to measure high school completion (Ed Gordon, Yale University, chair), science and mathematics achievement (Alvin Trivelpiece, Oak Ridge National Laboratory, chair), adult literacy and lifelong learning (Mark Musick, Southern Regional Education Board, chair) and safe, disciplined, and drug-free schools (John Porter, Detroit Public Schools, chair).

In June, the National Education Goals Panel will select the specific indicators and measurement strategies for its September 1991 report and future progress reports. Before deciding on these strategies, however, the panel will hold a series of eight regional forums during April and May. The forums are intended to involve and secure the advice of educators and the public. More information about these regional meetings can be obtained from Rae Young Bond, National Governors Association, (202) 624-5898.

## PRIVATE SECTOR URGES SUPPORT FOR EDUCATION RESEARCH *HS*

Announcing that "successful involvement of the private sector in education policy-making, and in the setting of priorities for education research and development is a critical factor" in global economic competition, Rep. Major Owens (D-NY), chair of the House Select Education Subcommittee, held a

hearing on March 20 with witnesses representing business interests.

Testifying were: Nat Semple, vice-president of the Committee for Economic Development (CED); William Kolberg, president of the National Alliance of Business; William Lurie, president of the Business Roundtable; and Carl Ball, chairman of the Board of George J. Ball, Inc.

The witnesses called upon the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) to use the energy, dollars, and commitment of the private sector in developing and advancing a systematic approach to educational improvement. A report published by CED has pointed out that "there is a great deal that we do not know about education, and much of what we do know is not being applied in the classroom."

Kolberg called on OERI to define and focus its role in conjunction with the national education goals. "Fundamentally," he said, "our federal education research and development agenda should be a national resource for restructuring." It should take the lead in developing national educational standards and the methods of assessing individual students against those standards, Kolberg concluded.

In a related development, newly sworn-in Secretary of Education Lamar Alexander announced the nomination of former Xerox Corporation Chief Executive Officer David Kearns as undersecretary of the department. Kearns, who was one of the first voices from the private sector calling for increased support for education research, faces Senate confirmation. Kearns' appointment is one of a number of changes expected in the top-level leadership of the Department of Education as the new secretary brings in his own team.

## SCIENCE COMMITTEE HEARS FROM TECHNOLOGY OFFICE ON FEDERALLY FUNDED RESEARCH IN THE 1990s *HS*

The House Subcommittee on Science, chaired by Rep. Rick Boucher (D-VA), asked the Office of Technology Assessment (OTA) to examine the health of the federal scientific research system by addressing the issues of overall national goals, scientific priorities, research infrastructure, and management. OTA presented a summary of its findings during a March 20 hearing before the subcommittee.

(The full report, *Federally Funded Research: Decisions for a Decade*, will be released in late April.)

Daryl E. Chubin, project director for the report, reviewed the process and the results of OTA's effort. In addition to analyzing various documents and data, he said, OTA interviewed 125 staff members of the six major research agencies (the National Science Foundation, the National Institutes of Health, the Department of Defense, the Department of Energy, the Department of Agriculture, and NASA). OTA also consulted with numerous researchers and research administrators, and the agency conducted several site visits of research universities and federal laboratories.

Noting that the research system is feeling the stress of internal competition, Chubin said that "this is a natural part of the competitive research system," where the growth in the number of researchers has outpaced the growth in dollars available for research.

#### Will More Money Help?

Will simply increasing research funding solve the problem? OTA suggests not necessarily. A cycle of more funds leading to more scientific opportunities and discoveries would also produce more deserving competitors for support and increase future demands for funding.

Chubin testified that "regardless of the level of funding, OTA has identified four issues that need to be addressed and that are central to producing a stronger research system: setting priorities, understanding costs, developing human resources, and refining data on the system."

On the issue of setting priorities, Chubin said, the federal government has not done a good job of developing and making explicit "decision rules" and criteria for selecting various areas of research and megaprojects, such as the superconducting supercollider. There is also, according to OTA, no formal or explicit mechanism for evaluating the total research portfolio of the federal government in terms of national objectives. For example, jurisdiction over federal agencies supporting scientific research is spread over many committees in the Congress. OTA recommends strengthening priority-setting mechanisms in both the Congress and the executive branch.

According to OTA, the need to better understand the costs of research, and their apparent rapid

escalation, continues to plague the funding situation. In addition, the issue of indirect costs needs clarification, especially in light of recent congressional scrutiny of research universities. Further, better estimates of future expenditures on megaprojects - where final costs tend to be well above initial estimates - are also necessary, according to Chubin's testimony.

OTA suggests that recent projections of shortages of Ph.D. researchers in the 1990s are "overstated" and "that these projections are poor grounds on which to base public policy." However, the agency stressed the immense value to the nation of expanding the number and diversity of students in the educational pipeline and better preparing graduate students for career paths inside or outside of research.

Chubin also called for refined in-house and extramural data collection, analysis, and interpretation that would be instructive for decisionmaking and managing research performance in the 1990s. The desired data would include agency funding allocation methods, research work force numbers, research process indicators, and outcome measures.

#### HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE EXAMINES CHANGING U.S. POPULATION AND FUTURE WORKFORCE *HS*

The House Subcommittee on Census and Population, chaired by Rep. Tom Sawyer (D-OH), tapped the expertise "of several of our nation's leading demographers and sociologists, in an effort to examine the demographic factors that will influence the workforce into the 21st Century and assess our ability to measure those factors." The hearing, held on March 20, coincided with the annual meeting of the Population Association of America.

Clifford Clogg, senior scientist at the Population Issues Research Center at Pennsylvania State University, reviewed the changing nature of the labor force during the next decade. It will be a labor force that will grow at a declining rate, he said, and one that will get older, have more females enter it than males, and become more racially and ethnically diverse. Clogg called for more funding for data collection, particularly the revival of the measurement methods and data resources program at the National Science Foundation (NSF). Clogg, who was a member of the ad-hoc task force which recommended consideration be given to the creation

of a separate directorate for the social and behavioral sciences at NSF, supported the idea of an NSF program on demography to foster scientific research on all aspects of population problems.

Robert Hauser, Vilas Research Professor at the Center for Demography and Ecology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, advocated the development of more useful longitudinal surveys of the key educational transitions among American youth. Calling them the "neglected stepchildren of the federal statistical system," Hauser said he wants to focus on the transitions in adolescence, especially from high school to college or high school to the work force. He called on the National Center for Education Statistics to do more in this area.

#### Housing and Census Data

Doug Massey, a sociologist at the University of Chicago, talked about housing data and the census. Given the difficulties encountered during 1990 census, Massey said, the Census Bureau and other data collectors are beginning to consider alternatives to traditional census enumeration procedures. The search for new procedures is motivated by the need to reduce costs and improve compliance. Massey warned, however, that reducing the size of the census sample will make information about small population groups unreliable and create problems for those who work with local area statistics. If changes are going to be made in the census, Massey asserted, then "Congress and the public should be assured that these two critical data needs will be met."

Walter Allen, a sociologist at the University of California - Los Angeles, focused on demographic trends and patterns among African Americans. He noted that the data reveal that "what we have witnessed since 1950 is the economic disenfranchisement of African Americans as their involvements in the nation's economy was gradually but inexorably reduced. This economic disenfranchisement produced shock waves which in turn disrupted the organizational basis of community life." Among the recommendations for data needs, Allen suggested locating more data centers at historically black universities, creating new measures more sensitive to cultural patterns in the black community and providing wider dissemination of data in more accessible form to the black community.

Committee chairman Sawyer raised a number of issues with the witnesses. He asked about the non-response problem as more people refuse to answer

survey questions. He also wondered about data on children in institutional settings and problems with immigration statistics.

#### SENATE RULES COMMITTEE DEBATES MOTOR-VOTER BILL *TD*

"American people don't care about their democratic rights or hold them in high regard," at least according to a Chinese newspaper quoted by Ralph Monroe, secretary of state for Washington state. Appearing March 21 before the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration, chaired by Sen. Wendell Ford (D-KY), Monroe used the quotation to focus attention on the example the United States sets for the world as U.S. voter participation rates continue to decline.

Appearing in support of the "National Voter Registration Act of 1991," Monroe argued that registration should be made as easy as possible. "Don't test the enthusiasm of the voter, but make it easy for the population to pursue democracy," he urged committee members. Monroe has instituted a "motor-voter" registration program in Washington state, which ties voter registration to motor vehicle registration. Monroe estimates that registration in Washington will increase by at least 400,000 voters over four years.

#### McConnell Opposed

Sen. Mitch McConnell (R-KY), however, voiced adamant opposition to the bill, raising concerns about state autonomy and increased taxes. "This bill dumps a gigantic voter registration system in the laps of all 50 states," he said, "imposing huge administrative burdens without ever facing up to the fact that the bill is going to cost a huge amount of money and state taxpayers are going to foot the bill."

In response to McConnell's argument, Emmett H. Frenaux Jr., executive director for the District of Columbia Board of Elections and Ethics, refuted the cost factor. Before the implementation of motor-voter registration in D.C., he said, the motor vehicles bureau had nine different forms for obtaining operators permits, learners permits, non-drivers identification, and so on. The forms were all condensed into one application, which included voter registration. There was no additional training necessary for processing, and the system became much more efficient and inexpensive, Frenaux said. The program also reduces the pre-election registration

peak load since the motor-voter system produces a steady stream of registrants during the slow periods.

Anita Tatum, director of voter education in Alabama, spoke in support of state autonomy. She explained that dual election procedures would need to be established for the federal and state level until the Alabama constitution could be amended. "Should the amendment fail, how will the state of Alabama regulate the dual registration and election systems?" she asked. "Will Congress be willing to reimburse the state of Alabama for the election to amend the state constitution should another election be required?"

Committee chairman Ford pointed out that motor-voter programs can be easily adapted for both state and federal elections. Something is not being done in the state of Alabama when only 39.67 percent of eligible voters turn out for an election, he said. Ford also expressed concern that several Alabama counties have registered 150 percent of their eligible voters. Tatum explained that the over-registration stems from slow purging of deceased voters from the voting rolls.

The Senate hearing marks the latest installment in a long-running drama on the motor-voter bill. The legislation almost won congressional approval last year, and both House and Senate committees have revisited the issue in recent months. In November of last year, the General Accounting Office released a report on low voter turnout. GAO determined that the most successful procedures for boosting voter turnout appear to be: 1) registration deadlines that fall on or close to election day; 2) toll-free phone numbers that allow a voter to request an absentee ballot; and 3) the practice of voting by mail rather than in polling places.

## CONFERENCE EXPLORES THE USE OF GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES <sup>HS</sup>

The National Center for Geographic Information and Analysis (NCGIA) invited 40 participants to a March 22-24 conference on the use of geographic information systems (GIS) in the social sciences. The conference was held in Santa Barbara, CA, whose University of California campus is one of three sites that make up the National Science Foundation-supported center on GIS. (The State University of New York at Buffalo and the University of Maine at Orono are the two others.)

Conference participants exchanged experiences on the uses of GIS technology in conducting fundamental social science research. As conference organizer Ross MacKinnon, dean of social sciences at SUNY-Buffalo explained: "Much of GIS is justified in terms of its application in real world problem solving - facility location and management, land use planning, etc." MacKinnon went on to note that "much of the research in the NCGIA is directed at attempts to improve GIS techniques." "We feel there is a need to examine the actual and potential use of GIS and related techniques in understanding social situations, both contemporary and historical," he said.

NCGIA co-director Michael Goodchild of UC-SB opened the conference by describing the spatial perspective and outlining different types of spatial analysis. Comparing GIS to the statistical packages available for social science analysis, Goodchild noted the need to expand GIS as a basic social science research tool.

### GIS as Instructional Tool

Ron Abler, executive director of the Association of American Geographers, added an historical perspective, noting that GIS goes back to Eratosthenes in ancient Alexandria and includes map making during the Middle Ages. He also explained how the development of new instruments has altered

## SCIENCE FOUNDATION AWARDS COGNITIVE SCIENCE CENTER TO UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA <sup>HS</sup>

The National Science Foundation (NSF) has awarded a cognitive science center to the University of Pennsylvania. One of 14 centers awarded in the second round of competition for NSF's Science and Technology Center program, the award is for five years, with a possible renewal of up to 11 years. The university will receive \$1.08 million in the first year. Profs. Arvind Joshi and Lyla Gleitman will co-direct the center. In addition to the NSF funding, the center will also receive support from the university, the state of Pennsylvania, and a host of corporate sources.

In making the announcement on March 7, NSF noted that the center will focus on three areas of cognitive science: perception and action, language learning, and language processing.

some of the scientific questions facing geographers and allowed the focus to shift from regional and agricultural questions to more global and environmental concerns. He also noted the capacity of GIS as an instructional tool. David Miller, professor of history at Carnegie-Mellon University, provided a demonstration of this application with "The Great American History Machine," a GIS to teach undergraduates American history.

The expanding use of GIS and the creation of ever larger data bases raised privacy and ethical concerns among conference participants. Credit reporting companies involvement in building these systems are an example of an area needing scrutiny and vigilance in recognizing the potential dangers of this technology.

During the conference, social science scholars from anthropology, geography, economics, history, and political science presented papers using GIS to examine a large number of topics. These included: analyzing regional systems in China during the 1980s, refining a housing price index in Dallas, analyzing racial representation in jury selection, charting the growth of French cities in the 19th century, and measuring the rate of frontier expansion in early American history.

The center is planning a future conference involving more scholars that will further explore the relationship of GIS to the social sciences.

## SOURCES OF RESEARCH SUPPORT: DEPT. OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

ST

COSSA provides this information as a service and encourages readers to contact the agency for further information or application materials. Additional application guidelines and restrictions may apply.

### Office of Human Development Services

The Office of Human Development Services (HDS) is seeking universities and four-year colleges to apply for a program to support field-initiated research in child welfare. (NOTE: Individuals may not apply directly for this award.) The program is intended to support pilot projects initiated by new researchers in the child welfare field. The principal investigator must have a terminal research degree but must not be more than five years beyond it at the time of award. The pilot project should be designed to lay the groundwork for continuing research in the field of child welfare by the investigator, and the research topics should be such that subsequent research in the area will inform state and local (public and private) agencies on ways to improve policy, practice, management, and evaluation of child welfare programs.

Pilot projects could include the range of services delivered by public and private child welfare agencies including: services to prevent foster care, foster care, reunification services, independent living, adoption (particularly special needs), and post-adoption services. Projects may also address the development of valid, reliable, and appropriate outcome measures for children and their families or measures of service delivery effectiveness and efficiency. Economic issues could also be addressed.

According to HDS, there is a continuing need in the child welfare field for new knowledge to guide the delivery of services to children and their families. Issues need to be raised and research projects developed which challenge assumptions about the nature and needs of the clients, service delivery strategies, and effective policies and practices.

**Budget:** HDS expects to fund two projects at not more than \$40,000 each.

**Deadline:** May 20, 1991

**Contact:** ATTN: HDS-91-1  
HDS Grants and Contracts  
Management Division  
200 Independence Ave., SW, Room 724-F  
Washington, DC 20201-0001

---

MEMBERS

---

American Anthropological Association  
American Economic Association  
American Historical Association  
American Political Science Association

American Psychological Association  
American Sociological Association  
American Statistical Association

Association of American Geographers  
Association of American Law Schools  
Linguistic Society of America

---

AFFILIATES

---

American Agricultural Economics Association  
American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business  
American Association for Public Opinion Research  
American Educational Research Association  
American Psychological Society  
American Society of Criminology  
Association for Asian Studies  
Association for Social Sciences in Health  
Eastern Sociological Society  
Gerontological Society of America

History of Science Society  
International Studies Association  
Law and Society Association  
Midwest Sociological Society  
National Council on Family Relations  
National Council for the Social Studies  
North American Regional Science Council  
North Central Sociological Association  
Operations Research Society of America  
Population Association of America

Rural Sociological Society  
Social Science History Association  
Society for Research on Adolescence  
Society for Research in Child Development  
Society for the Scientific Study of Religion  
Society for the Scientific Study of Sex  
Southern Sociological Society  
Southwestern Social Science Association  
Speech Communication Association  
The Institute for Management Sciences

---

CONTRIBUTORS

---

American Council of Learned Societies  
American University  
Arizona State University  
Boston University  
Brookings Institution  
University of California, Berkeley  
University of California, Los Angeles  
University of California, San Diego  
University of California, Santa Barbara  
Carnegie-Mellon University  
Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences  
University of Chicago  
University of Colorado  
Cornell Institute for Social and Economic Research  
Cornell University  
Duke University  
Emory University  
University of Georgia  
Harvard University  
Howard University

University of Illinois  
Indiana University  
Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan  
University of Iowa  
Johns Hopkins University  
University of Maryland  
Massachusetts Institute of Technology  
Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, Syracuse University  
University of Michigan  
University of Minnesota  
University of Missouri  
National Opinion Research Center  
University of Nebraska  
New York University  
University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill  
Northwestern University  
Ohio State University  
University of Oregon  
Pennsylvania State University

University of Pittsburgh  
Princeton University  
Purdue University  
University of Rhode Island  
Nelson A. Rockefeller College of Public Affairs and Policy, State University of New York at Albany  
Rutgers University  
Social Science Research Council  
University of Southern California  
Stanford University  
State University of New York, Stony Brook  
University of Tennessee  
Texas A & M University  
Tulane University  
University of Virginia  
University of Washington  
University of Wisconsin, Madison  
University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee  
Yale University

---

Consortium of Social Science Associations

1522 K Street, NW, Suite 836, Washington, DC 20005

---