
CONSORTIUM OF SOCIAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATIONS

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This Week . . .

ED Research Structure Reorganized
COSSA Holds Seminar on Policy Implications of an Aging
Population
Graduate Fellowship Program Regulations Issued
Scholarly Communication: A Franco-American Case
Ford Foundation Funds Social Welfare Policy Studies
Sources of Support: Department of Health and Human Services

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ED RESEARCH STRUCTURE REORGANIZED

On July 2 the long-awaited restructuring of the research and statistics functions at the Department of Education was unveiled by Secretary William Bennett. The new structure will place most of these functions under a new, more powerful Office of Education Research and Improvement (OERI). The President has nominated Chester Finn, former aide to Senator Moynihan, and most recently professor of education and public policy at Vanderbilt University, to direct this office.

Under the Department of Education Organization Act of 1980 the Secretary has the power to reorganize these functions by giving Congress 90 days' notice of his intentions; the plan takes effect at the end of that period unless Congress passes legislation to block it. The Department has asked the Congress to change the name of the new research office from OERI to the 'National Institute of Education.' Aside from some possible fine tuning, it now appears that Congress will not block the reorganization.

In essence, the new structure brings both the National Institute of Education (NIE) and the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) in from the cold. NIE, in

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Risa I. Palm, *President*

David Jenness, *Executive Director*

particular, acted autonomously from the old OERI since its Director and Deputy Director were presidential appointees. The new structure establishes a presidential appointee at the Assistant Secretary level, two deputies appointed by the Secretary, one for operations and one for management, and five program units, each led by a director. The five program units include:

1. Office of Research: basically the old NIE, including the Research Centers, but not the Regional Laboratories.
2. Center for Statistics: basically the old NCES, as well as the National Assessment of Educational Progress, which is being moved from NIE.
3. Programs for Improvement of Practice: several educational improvement programs now spread over the Department. The regional laboratories will be housed here, as well as the National Diffusion Network, the Excellence in Education program, the Science, Math, Computer Learning, and Critical Foreign Languages program, and the Secondary School Recognition program. This office will also fund projects for the improvement of teaching.
4. Information Service: a clearinghouse for persons and organizations seeking information on education statistics and research. The Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) will be located here.
5. Library Programs: will make federal categorical grants to support operations of public libraries and to aid research libraries.

The National Council on Educational Research, which was the policy arm of NIE and a source of political controversy in recent years, will expand its purview to include all of OERI, but its authority will be downgraded to that of an advisory body.

One disturbing provision of the reorganization would centralize the processing of grants and contracts in the Department's Office of Management. The American Educational Research Association (AERA) argues that negotiating and monitoring of R&D contracts and grants requires knowledge and expertise in R&D. The present NIE has its own grants and contracts authority.

Due to the Department's unwillingness to take on powerful lobbying coalitions, the plan does not affect the research arms of the Office of Vocational and Adult Education, the Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Language Affairs, and the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services. In addition, the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE), originally scheduled to be included in the new OERI, will remain in the Office of Postsecondary Education, after vigorous objections from higher education groups.

The new organization announced by the Department clearly rejects a proposal made by some education groups (e.g., Council for Educational Development and Research, the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, and the National Education Association) to spread the research function through the various program offices of the Department. In his announcement, Secretary Bennett stressed the need for a re-emphasis on basic educational research and that too often the subjects of government studies had been set by special-interest groups. Paul Peterson, Director of Governmental Studies at the Brookings Institution and COSSA's witness at hearings held by the House Select Education Subcommittee (see Update, April 5, 1985), noted that he thought the Secretary's comments were on target and that the Department's new structure was "a lot better" than the two alternatives -- the status quo or the proposal from the education groups.

COSSA HOLDS SEMINAR ON POLICY IMPLICATIONS OF AN AGING POPULATION

On June 21, COSSA sponsored a congressional breakfast seminar entitled, "Policy Implications of an Aging Population." Samuel H. Preston, Director of the Population Studies Center, University of Pennsylvania; Robert H. Binstock, Professor of Aging, Health, and Society, Case Western Reserve University; and Robert L. Kahn, Acting Director, Survey Research Center, University of Michigan, discussed research on the changing age structure in the United States, how this affects all age groups in society, and some of the resulting policy implications and alternatives. Over 60 congressional staff, federal officials, journalists, and members of associations concerned with issues of age attended the seminar, which was co-sponsored by the House Science and Technology Committee's Task Force on Science Policy.

Dr. Preston briefly described the demographic changes that have led to the greatly increasing number of older people, which he attributed more to declining fertility rates than to increased longevity, then focused on how these changes have affected children. "The decline in fertility that has produced our aging population, the rise in illegitimacy, and the rise in marital disruption can all be seen as part of the same process of decline in the significance of family-defining boundaries in American life." These changes in family structure, Dr. Preston said, contribute to the deterioration of the economic, emotional, and educational well-being of children, and public policy has not offset these effects.

Dr. Binstock stressed that it is more useful and fair to formulate our policies toward aging on the basis of the needs of people within various age groups rather than on the basis of age alone:

The present tendency to frame most of our health and social welfare dilemmas today in terms of age group conflict... diverts our attention from more accurate and more useful issues to confront, like the issues of rich versus poor, or

issues of which children, which older persons, which younger and middle-aged adults, which families, need collective assistance....

He suggested that our anxieties about sustaining a large elderly population, with regard to issues such as rationing acute health care resources and competition in the workplace between older and younger workers, are based on the extrapolation of existing policies into the future. Although older people are a heterogeneous group, existing policies often treat them as though they were alike, and "we're not farsighted enough to undertake collective actions directed toward children, young adults, middle-aged adults, for the purpose of shaping the conditions of old age."

One way in which policies toward aging could be shaped more accurately, according to Dr. Kahn, is by first recognizing the variety of productive behaviors through the life course and how patterns of productive behavior change at different stages of life, and then expanding our national statistics to account for productive activities beyond paid employment. Activity level is not only indicative of well-being, it can promote it as well. Because activities performed by the elderly are often unpaid, society perceives older people as non-contributing members. If we could begin to value unpaid productive behavior and measure it in national statistics, then

we'd recognize that at every age, there's a mix of these various forms of productive behavior, that the mix changes, characteristically, over the life course, but the fact of productivity tends to remain. And if we were to take this view...we could then turn...from the destructive and unanswerable question of whether or not we can afford our aged population to the more constructive policy question of how to optimize the mix of productive activities through the life course.

GRADUATE FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM REGULATIONS ISSUED

The Department of Education (ED) issued proposed regulations for the National Graduate Fellows program on June 3. The program, which was authorized in 1980 but not funded until 1984, provides need-based fellowships to graduate students in the arts, humanities, and social sciences.

The regulations appeared at a time of growing criticism from congressional supporters and others over the administration's delay in the implementation of the program. The Supplemental Appropriations bill currently before the Congress includes a provision to extend the FY 1985 appropriation for the program beyond the end of the fiscal year (September 30) until the end of the calendar year 1985.

The proposed regulations include two provisions which COSSA objected to in its written comments to the Department of Education. COSSA joined with other education associations in asking for the deletion of the provision establishing a \$32,500 family income eligibility cutoff for the fellowships. The second objection relates to the provision which allows the Fellowship Board to select the specific fields of study for which fellowships would be awarded. COSSA asked ED to make sure that this does not mean the eligible disciplines would be rotated over a period of years, thus creating a situation where a student would only be eligible if the Board happened to pick his or her discipline in the particular year he or she applied.

The Department has asked COSSA for names of social scientists who could serve on review panels for the program.

SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATION: A FRANCO-AMERICAN CASE

The following report of a recent scientific gathering was written by Laurence Ratier-Coutrot, Scientific Attaché for Social Sciences, Embassy of France, Washington. Dr. Ratier-Coutrot is a sociologist with the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique; as far as Update knows, she is the only social science attache in a foreign embassy in this country.

The Tocqueville Society is an informal scholarly network through which French and American social scientists further scientific communication. The Society publishes an annual bilingual publication, the Tocqueville Review, and holds periodic ad hoc conferences. In June, a small group of experts met in Paris, hosted by the Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, for a conference whose general title was "Reciprocal Observation."

A general view of the political, economic, and social situation in France and the United States was first presented. Speakers from the U.S. included Theodore Caplow, University of Virginia; Seymour Martin Lipset, Stanford University; Edmund Phelps, Columbia University; and Terry Clark, University of Chicago. Participating from France were Jean Fourastié, Membre de l'Institut, Jean-Luc Parodi, Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, Jean-Paul Fitoussi, l'Observatoire Français de la Conjuncture Economique (OFCE), and Michel Forsé, OFCE.

Lipset outlined a long-term political balance in the U.S., with the Republicans tending to control the White House and the Democrats in control of at least one house of Congress. He suggested that the Reagan electorate was not so far 'right' on many issues as the President, and predicted the emergence in 1988 of a less conservative Republican party. He also spoke about an apparent increased distrust among the American electorate of political leadership generally.

On the French side, Parodi held that the disappointment in government expressed today by French public opinion reflected

the high level of expectation in 1981, when 'the left' took power for the first time in a number of years.

Phelps urged caution about the current American economic recovery. Worldwide investment is flowing into the country, based on trust in American research and development, but as yet there is no definitive evidence of a renewal of productivity and profitability. Fitoussi reported on the French economic situation, particularly problems with unemployment.

Clark gave a picture of a Yuppie-generation 'new fiscal populism,' which he viewed as a new form of centralism on the political spectrum, while Forse questioned the supposed breakdown of the traditional family and household structure in France.

In the second section, speakers addressed more specific issues -- largely, the relation between public opinion in the two countries and education, immigration, and economic policy. Both Antoine Prost and Caplow held a fairly optimistic view of public education, but admitted that public concern was mounting. With regard to economic policy, H. Guillaume, Commissaire Général du Plan, reported that the French tended to be more interested in economic developments than in politics in general. Emile Bertier analyzed the increasing correlation between economic and political satisfaction, and the apparent desire among the French to see the state play a lesser role. Yankelovich, analyzing the American scene, distinguished between various rationales for attitudes toward deprived groups, and suggested that the dominant U.S. attitude rests today largely on the assumption that help for deprived persons will repay the investment, rather than on a belief in 'need' or 'rights.'

Olivier Sunz, a Frenchman teaching at the University of Virginia, closed the conference by presenting the view that consensus was becoming equally important in both societies.

FORD FOUNDATION FUNDS SOCIAL WELFARE POLICY STUDIES

The Ford Foundation has issued a request for proposals as part of their three-year project, "Social Welfare Policy and the American Future." The proposed research should examine basic notions of entitlement, need, and responsibility, and demonstrate a sensitivity to the ethical dimensions, standards of equity and adequacy, and political aspects of social policy. The Foundation is seeking proposals which focus on the following five areas of concentration: social insurance policy, aging, and generational dynamics; the relations between federal policy and other social welfare institutions; policy responses to poverty; the international economy and domestic social policy; and the media and public understanding of social welfare issues. The deadline for submissions is August 30, 1985, with funding decisions to be announced in early November. Further questions about the program should be directed to Alice O'Connor, Social Welfare Policy Project, The Ford Foundation, 320 East 43rd Street, New York, NY 10017.

SOURCES OF RESEARCH SUPPORT: DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

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

National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences

The National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) is located in Research Triangle Park, N.C., the only one of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) located outside the Washington, D.C. area. NIEHS follows standard NIH procedures for announcements, applications, deadlines, and review. NIEHS is the principal federal agency for the support of research and training on the effects of chemical, physical, and biological environmental agents on human health. NIEHS pursues its mission by supporting basic and applied research on the consequences of the exposure of man and other biological systems to potentially toxic or harmful agents in the environment.

NIEHS provides limited support for research and research training in the behavioral sciences in such areas as behavioral anomalies, behavioral toxicology, and the effects of environmental agents on learning and behavior.

NIEHS also conducts research in statistics, biomathematics, epidemiology, and risk estimation directed at estimating the probable risks for cancer, reproductive effects, and other adverse effects from environmental hazards. The major emphases are on refining existing methods for estimating human risk from data derived from studying laboratory animals and on examining quantitative issues involved in designing short-term tests. Epidemiological research focuses on the relationships between environmental exposures and human disease. Included are field studies of human disease, environmental pollutants, and the effects of toxins on fetal and child development. The Institute has an active interest in the development of laboratory, epidemiological, and statistical methods that help make field studies more feasible and interpretable.

FY 1985 Budget: The total research budget for NIEHS for FY 1985 is approximately \$194.6 million, with approximately \$4 million awarded for research grants in biometry and risk estimation.

Funding Mechanisms: Grants, contracts, career development awards

Review Process: Peer review panels

Deadlines: March 1, July 1, and November 1 for grant proposals; February 1, June 1, and October 1 for training awards

Contact: NIEHS Extramural Program Office
P.O. Box 12233
Research Triangle Park, NC 27709
919/541-7723

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