

RECENT PUBLICATION PATTERNS IN THREE AMERICAN SOCIOLOGY JOURNALS

Cardell K. Jacobson, Central Michigan University

Barbara B. Seater, Somerset County College

The changing interests and methods of sociologists have long been of interest to sociologists (see for example, Lundberg, 1931; Duncan and Duncan, 1953; Simpson, 1961; Brown and Gilmartin, 1969; McCartney, 1970; Stehr and Larson, 1972). Some of the later authors (and numerous other authors not discussed here) have concentrated on status hierarchies in the profession. They have not, however, analyzed the effects which the publication patterns of the journals have on the profession. In this paper we examine some specific publication patterns of the "top" journals. In particular we shall present evidence that the patterns of publications are related to the prestige of substantive areas in the profession and that this fact may affect the publication rate for women in the profession.

METHOD. Articles from *The American Sociological Review*, the *American Journal of Sociology*, and *Social Forces* for the years 1970 through November, 1975, were coded by sex of author(s) and by primary substantive area using the 36 subfields listed in the Directory of Members, 1973-1974, of the American Sociological Association. These journals are the top three journals of the profession according to the Glenn (1971) study on prestige of sociological journals and were considered "core" journals by Lin and Nelson (1969) in their study of bibliographic reference patterns. All three are national, general journals, not regional or specialized journals and thus generally publish articles on interest to the full profession.

Both authors of this paper independently coded all articles for the three journals over the six year period. Initial coder agreement was 85 percent. Disputed coding was resolved by rereading and discussion. In some previous work (Seater and Jacobson, 1976) we asked a random sample of 315 professional sociologists drawn from the Directory

to rank the substantive specialties in sociology (from 1 = very low prestige to 5 = very high prestige). Two hundred fourteen respondents returned usable questionnaires. A clear status or prestige ranking emerged (see Table 1). We also found that most members of the journal editorial boards do their work in high prestige areas.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION. The Pearsonian correlation between the prestige ranking and the number of articles published in ASR, AJS, and SF for the years 1970-1973 (see Table 1) in each of the specialty areas was .518 (Kendall's tau = .287, N = 36, p .01).

It might be argued that a preponderance of articles on methods and theory should appear in these journals since they are the general journals of the field. We specifically avoided coding articles under these two specialties unless the central thrust was actually theory or methods. We did not use them as umbrella areas for articles that could not be classified in other substantive areas. Furthermore, the relationship between specialty prestige and number of articles published still holds if theory and methods are excluded from the analysis. The Pearsonian correlation drops, but only to .457. The general trend was for these journals to publish more articles from the high prestige specialties than from the low ones and suggests that it is more difficult to publish in some substantive areas than in others in these journals.

The best way to conclusively establish that editors and reviewers devalue work in some substantive areas but not others would be to analyze both rejected articles and reviewers comments. Of particular interest would be articles rejected from the "top" journals which are eventually published by lesser or regional journals. This is not feasible at present, however, since the journals routinely discard rejected articles at present dates after rejection and confidentiality of both the authors and reviewers would be seriously compromised. Thus, the substantive content may influence the final disposition of a paper and one's specialty can have a profound effect on one's career in terms of visibility among one's colleagues. It is true that some of the low prestige areas such as the sociology of education

TABLE 1. ARTICLES BY SUBFIELD IN ASR, AJS AND SF, 1970-1975

(N=913; figures are percent of total)

Subfield by prestige level	Rank	Articles
<u>High Prestige</u>		
Theory	4.54	4.2
Methods/Statistics	4.14	9.0
Knowledge/Science	3.86	4.1
Stratification/Mobility	3.81	8.8
Mathematical Sociology	3.71	.9
Social Psychology	3.63	11.9
Formal/Complex		
Organization	3.62	6.2
Social Organization	3.59	2.6
Demography	3.51	1.9
Urban Sociology	3.41	1.5
Medical Sociology	3.39	2.0
<u>Medium Prestige</u>		
Social Change	3.31	1.3
Comparative Sociology	3.24	.4
Occupations/Professions	3.23	3.0
Race/Ethnic Relations	3.10	8.5
Social Control	3.15	.2
Deviant Behavior	3.13	2.3
Small Groups	2.98	.9
Collective Behavior	2.97	.9
Law and Society	2.96	.4
Human Ecology	2.92	2.3
Community	2.91	1.4
Cultural Sociology	2.90	.1
<u>Low Prestige</u>		
Mass Communications	2.87	1.0
Economy and Society	2.86	.7
Crime/Delinquency	2.85	2.7
Industrial Sociology	2.81	.9
Marriage/Family	2.68	4.8
Military Sociology	2.56	.5
Sex Roles	2.54	1.2
Applied Sociology	2.50	.1
Religion	2.44	4.3
Education	2.39	2.2
Leisure, Recr., Sport, Arts	2.13	.9
Rural Sociology	2.05	.2

and the sociology of religion have their own journals in which they can publish, but this is also true of middle range specialties such as small groups, and high prestige specialties such as medical sociology, demography, social psychology and methodology and statistics. In some cases, specialists may prefer to publish in these specialized journals in order to reach a more select audience, but we believe this is not generally the case. Most members would prefer the national, larger visibility and the higher prestige that accompanies publication in ASR, AJS, or SF. Thus the selectivity of these journals tends to structure the profession in a traditional if not conservative way.

The data also indicate that women were underpublished in these journals for the selected years. While they constitute 14.1 percent of the doctorates in sociology, social psychology and rural sociology in the Directory of Members 1970, and were an increasing proportion in graduate departments (from 9 percent in 1970 to 18.5 percent in 1974, see Harris, 1975), all-female authored publications, whether single, dual, or triple authored accounted for only 7.1 percent of the total publications. All-male authored publications accounted for 83.2 percent of the total articles or over ten times the number of all-female authored articles. An additional seven percent of the articles were jointly authored by males and females. It is difficult to assess credits or responsibility for these multi-authored articles, but if sex of the first author is used, female authored publications still represent only 10.5 percent of the total articles. The percentage of female-authored articles may be inflated, however, since AJS devoted the January issue of 1973 to sex roles which included 22 articles, 20 of them authored by women only.

However, AJS also devoted one particular issue to the sociology of knowledge, but all of the articles were written by men. We suspect that with the exception of sex roles, editors for special editions are for the most part men who solicit articles primarily from other men--the old "buddy system" in action.

The number of female authored articles in the three journals increased from six in

1970, eight in 1971, ten in 1972, to twenty-five in 1973, the year of the special issue. The number dropped back to seven in 1974 and nine in 1975 (through November). Many of the special edition articles were concerned primarily with substantive areas other than sex roles but were included in the particular issue because of some focus on sex roles. These articles were appropriately classified when coded, but it is not known whether they would have been published if the particular issue had not been devoted to sex roles. If the January, 1973 issue of *AJS* had been excluded from our sample, the percentage of female authored articles would have been a low five percent, not seven percent, and the data would show that there has been no increase over the years 1970-1975.

In recent years there has been a strong effort on the part of American sociologists to remove obstructions to full acceptance of women in the profession. A larger proportion of women now occupy faculty positions in graduate departments. The number of women Ph.D.'s granted in sociology increased gradually but consistently from 15 to 25 percent during the years 1966 to 1972-73 (see Hughes, 1973 and Harris, 1975). And total participation of women in the annual meetings of the A.S.A. increased inconsistently from 9 percent in 1967 to 20 percent in 1973 (see Hughes, 1973). Our data indicate that this increased participation has yet to be translated into an increase in professional articles in the "top" journals.

Other researchers have examined the productivity of men and women in sociology, but the evidence is inconclusive and often contradictory. However, among those who have examined publication in only the top sociology journals, there is a consistent pattern. All found women to be underpublished (see Seater and Jacobson, 1975). Several possible reasons for the lower productivity among women have been suggested in the literature. Most of them relate to the position of women sociologists in the social structure of the profession: lack of social networks, underrepresentation in the higher professional ranks, underrepresentation of the high status departments, disproportionate teaching of undergraduates, teaching

out of specialty areas, and professional age (see Seater and Jacobson, 1975 for a summary of this literature).

When sex of authorship by substantive area was examined, another definite pattern emerged. Women claim expertise in all 36 specialty areas of the profession and with a few exceptions are proportionately represented in substantive areas of sociology (Jacobson and Seater, 1975). But in terms of publishing in *ASR*, *AJS*, and *SF*, 78.5 percent of the female authored articles were in nine specialties: education, marriage and family, occupation and professions, race and ethnic, social psychology, sex roles, stratification and mobility, knowledge and science, and theory. The same specialties comprise only 44.2 percent of the articles published by all male authors. Furthermore, 46 of the 74 mixed sex articles were in these same areas. (A full report is available from the authors.) Perhaps as women are more accepted into the American sociological profession they will participate more fully in all areas.

When the prestige areas are collapsed into high, medium and low prestige, male authors have a clear preponderance of higher prestige articles (Chi Squared = 7.39; $df=2$; $p=.025$). The number of male-authored articles in the upper third of the prestige specialties is approximately three times the number published in the low and medium prestige areas. On the other hand, the number of female authored articles in the high, medium, and low prestige levels is nearly the same. These differences by sex are significant at the .05 level. Note that marriage and the family, sex roles, and education are all traditional women's areas. Education and especially marriage and the family were also specialty areas in which we had previously found women overrepresented (Seater and Jacobson, 1975). Sex roles was not listed as a substantive area until the 1974 directory was issued. Thus the data indicate that women have concentrated to some extent on specialties that are accorded relatively low status in the profession. And though these low prestige specialties are published in these three journals, they are published less often than high prestige specialties. This may account in part for the different

publication rates observed for female and male sociologists.

CONCLUSION. In summary the data presented here indicate that the publication patterns in the three journals (ASR, AJS, and SF) affect the structure of the profession through differential exposure of some substantive specialties to the exclusion of others. The data also indicate that women sociologists publish less in these journals than men. However, controls on the variables affecting women's productivity, namely their "place" in the profession, are needed to assess this finding adequately. Both formal and informal structural factors need to be examined. The data further indicate that women sociologists, although listing expertise in all areas of the profession, publish work in these journals primarily in a quarter of the specialties. And women sociologists published disproportionately in low prestige specialties in these journals. Thus, women sociologists appear to be studying different phenomena than men and perhaps study it differently.

It would be difficult to say that the research conducted in the low prestige specialties is less or more valid and important than the other research. It is simply different. Perhaps it is more important, but ignored. In any case, the recent publication patterns of these three journals appear to structure the profession and have important implications for both individual careers and the profession as a whole.

REFERENCES

Brown, J.S.; Gilmartin, B.G. 1969. *Sociology Today: Lacunae, Emphasis, and Surfeits*. *The American Sociologist*, Vol. 4, November, p. 283-291.

Duncan, H.G.; Duncan, W.L. 1953. Shifts in the Interests of American Sociologists. *Social Forces*, Vol. 12, October, p. 209-212.

Glenn, N.D. 1971. American Sociologists' Evaluations of Sixty Three Journals. *The American Sociologist*, Vol. 6, November, p. 298-303.

Harris, J.R. 1975. Women and Minorities in Sociology: Findings from Annual A.S.A. Audit. *Footnotes*, Vol. 3, January, p. 4-5.

Hughes, H.M. (ed). 1973. *The Status of Women in Sociology 1968-1972*. Washington, D.C.; the American Sociological Association.

Lin, N.; Nelson, C. 1969. Bibliographic Reference Patterns in Core Sociological Journals, 1965-1966. *The American Sociologist*, Vol. 4, February, p. 47-50.

Lundberg, B.A. 1931. The Interests of Members of the American Sociological Society, 1930. *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 37, November, p. 459-460.

McCartney, J.L. 1970. On Being Scientific: Changing Styles of Presentation of Sociological Research. *The American Sociologist*, Vol. 5, February, p. 30-35.

Seater, B.B.; Jacobson, C.K. 1975. Productivity as Professionalization: Men and Women in Sociology. (Unpublished paper presented at Midwest Sociological Society Annual Meeting, Chicago, Illinois).

Seater, B.B.; Jacobson, C.K. 1976. Structuring Sociology: The Prestige of Sociological Sub-fields in North America. *International Social Science Journal*, Vol. 28, No. 2, p. 391-395.

Simpson, R.L. 1961. Expanding and Declining Fields in American Sociology. *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 26, June, p. 458-466.

Stehr, N.; Larson, L.E. 1972. The Rise and Decline of Areas of Specialization. *The American Sociologist*, Vol. 7, August, p. 3, 5-6.

(Continued from p. 33, McBride)

elementary school boys. *Child Development* 39, 257-264. 1968.

Whetstone, Harriet S. and Bernard Z. Friedlander. Effect of word order on young children's responses to simple questions and commands. *Child Development*. 44, 143-148. 1973.

Willoughby, Robert H. Age and training effects in children's conditional matching to sample. *Child Development*. 44, 143-148. 1973.

Witryol, Sam L. Incentives and Learning in Children. *Advances in Child Development and Behavior*. Vol. 6. Eds W.H. Reese, New York, Academic Press, 1971.