

Handy
AS 1/26

Research Publications Printed in Referred
Journals and Books by Faculty Members
of the Department of Rural Sociology
1971-1976

	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	Total	Person Years	Mean
Blumberg	0	2	2	—	—	—	4	3	1.3
Featherman	3	4	5	7	4	7	30	6	5.0
Flein	0	0	3	4	4	—	11	5	2.2
Fugitt	1	3	3	1	1	1	10	6	1.7
Haller	4	5	2	3	2	0	16	6	2.7
Havens	0	0	1	0?	0?	2	3?	6	0.5
Heberlein	—	0	2	1	1	3	7	5	1.4
Johnson	0	0	0	1	0	1	2	6	0.3
Stesinger	—	—	—	1	1	3	5	3	1.7
Stamfield	0	—	—	—	—	—	0	1	0.0
Summers	2	0	5	5	2	4	18	6	3.0
Trends	—	—	—	—	—	1	1	1	1.0
Withering	3	1	1	1	0	0	6	6	1.0
Total	13	15	24	24	15	22	113	60	1.9
Person Years	10	10	10	10	10	10	—	60	—
Mean	1.3	1.5	2.4	2.4	1.5	2.2	—	—	1.9

⚭ D.G. Marshall, who was ill, and Greta Schultz who was not a sociologist were excluded.

slip into file for my
AS last 20th
Century paper

5 October 1978

Professor Harold F. Kaufman
Department of Sociology
Mississippi State University
State College, Mississippi 39762

Dear Harold,

These are some papers that might interest you. I'd appreciate your comments on them. The later one is really not finished, so please judge accordingly.

Sincerely,

Archibald O. Haller
Professor

AOH:abr

Enc.

A.O. Haller
31 August 1978
San Francisco
Rural Sociological Society Meetings

Rural Sociology in the Late 20th Century

Reading the journal Rural Sociology for the last few years and reflecting upon the topics of many of the papers at this the 1978 annual meeting of the Rural Sociological Society (RSS), one cannot escape the thought that members of this Society are passing through another of the periods of soul searching that occasionally turn our interest inward. The questions that are being raised are perhaps more numerous and diverse than they have been in the past. And, if they are not more articulately stated, at least they are more publicly presented.

The Crisis of the 1950's

In the mid-50's, there was another such period, as I recall. By the end of the 50's, C. Arnold Anderson's searing review (1959) of rural sociology seemed to fall on deaf ears, as did Philip Olson's () a short time later. Yet it was not that rural sociologists were deaf, but that they elected not to respond directly. No one bothered to answer. This is not really surprising. They believed that the problem was not in the theory, but in the organizational underpinning. In fact, the social system of the field had already been rebuilt, and a new research emphasis was already in full swing. A check of the records will show that about 1958 or 1959, the membership level hit the bottom of a trough. About the same time, serious negotiations were carried on with the American Sociological Association (ASA), exploring the possibility of merger. The RSS dropped the idea when the ASA insisted on exclusive control of the journal Rural Sociology. At the same time, considerable thought was

given to dropping the word "rural" from the names of both the Society and the journal. This idea died, too. As suddenly as it came on, the period of self-doubt ended.

It ended, I think, partly because a number of the members of this Society took matters into their own hands, intent upon rebuilding the rural sociological enterprise, and because certain research done by rural sociologists gained the attention of two nearby systems - the Colleges of Agriculture and the general sociological community. In essays as far apart as that of the American, C.P. Loomis, and of the Brazilian, Maria Izuarda Pereira de Queros, American rural sociology became identified with the research on the diffusion of economically rational farm technology. Not that this was an especially new line of research. Indeed, much of the key work had already been done in the 1940's and 1950's. The rural sociological agricultural diffusion researchers and the general sociological medical diffusion researchers discussed each other's work as early as 1952, at the ASA meetings at the University of Illinois. But it takes awhile for important new information to spread, and the reviving impact of this line of research was not widely felt for nearly a decade.

Optimism in the 1960's

In any case, the creative research carried out by the diffusion groups came to provide the main justification for continuing the rural sociological enterprise during the 1960's. In this it was aided by efforts to reorganize the most important activity of the Society and its journal. When it became clear that the ASA wished to control the journal, a series of policy changes were instituted to improve it. The two roles of Editor and Managing Editor, once held by different people in

different universities, were merged into one. The Society then, for the first time, put up a small budget to help pay for the services of an editorial assistant. A full-fledged review board was also established. With the changes approved, the journal moved to Michigan State University, where for five years, Sheldon Lowry and Nancy Hammond, with the active support of MSU's Department of Sociology, gave it the loving care a first-rate journal requires, unencumbered by the ~~former~~, *previous* awkward division of labor. The journal attracted many fine research articles, and thereby improved its already good reputation. Also, when the membership fell to its low point (of around 425, as I recall) in the late 50's, a broad membership drive was begun. New money flowed in to support the Society and its journal.

Note that the rebuilding of the Society rested upon its research and its periodical. The journal Rural Sociology was at the center of attention and it was devoted to publishing good research conducted by sociologists interested in the isolated people of sparsely populated areas. So the field's growing reputation, which was fostered by the work in diffusion, was backed up by a reputable journal.

Yet new supportive developments were already appearing. Rural sociology was swept up in and supported by another pair of phenomena. The first was a renewed sense of the field's scientific and social mission. The other was the rising conviction of statesmen and scholars that many of the world's danger spots lay out in the countryside. To understand this, we must go back to 1960 or so. By 1960, almost the whole field of sociology seemed fascinated by what might be called the "urban-future image" - the view that sociological research should be devoted to describing the world of the future, and that this world was

to be urban, with life styles, amenities, and problems like those of New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles. A few, including some rural sociologists, thought that this world view was foolish at best, and pernicious at worst. I distinctly recall a series of discussions in which the urban-future image was considered, and, by some, rejected. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Some sociologists (the writer among them), became convinced that for the good of sociology, and for the benefit of the rural people who were then being ^{increasingly} ignored, [REDACTED] rural sociology should receive renewed attention.

To what was the attention to be directed? Research, of course. Research documenting life-styles and their changes. Research on the changing forms of contact between the urban concentration and the surrounding rural peoples. Research on social structure and its changes as continuously emerging rural and urban structures came into contact with each other. Research to identify and explicate the new sociological concepts, and to test the newly generated hypotheses, needed to provide explanations of the behavior of people implicated in the vast reorientations of life which were going on. Research, that is, that improves the conceptual apparatus of sociology.

But not only basic research. Research, too, to make the new insights of sociology available to help ameliorate the difficult life circumstances experienced by rural people.

Both of the above required publication, and while there were

other outlets for the research work of rural sociologists, the journal Rural Sociology was the main one. [REDACTED]

The second spur to rural sociology came from the outside. One part was international; another was purely internal. For the international aspect, suddenly in the early 1960's, Western statesmen, politicians, and thinkers began to realize that the great revolutions of the recent past had been born in the backlands. Marx expected the social revolutions to be made by urban industrial workers. He despised the "idiocy" of rural life. But Marx notwithstanding, both China's and Cuba's rural populations mounted successful revolutions. France's colonial wars in Algeria and Indo-China also were seen as rural revolutions. So, in the early 1960's, Western governments began to release money for sociological studies involving rural people. Two well-known examples are Project Camelot and Alex Inkeles' long term research on psychological modernization. But there were many, many others which were less spectacular.

The internal part concerned the plight of rural minorities: blacks, chicanos, native Americans, and Appalachian whites. The social concerns of the 1960's provided moral and monetary support for research on the disadvantaged ethnic groups with deep rural roots.

During the 1960's the prestige of rural sociology seems to have increased quite dramatically. This happened for the reasons reviewed above. ^{Specifically, it happened} [REDACTED] because of the creative research conducted by the diffusionists; because the journal was unambiguously devoted to publishing quantitative research which was credible precisely because its readers could see for themselves that the researchers and their referees were evaluating ideas by the most rigorous methods available;

and, because practical people, both defenders of the Western status quo and critics of society, had become aware of the need for dependable information on rural people.

By the end of the 1960's, there was no doubt in the minds of the rural sociologists that sociological research on rural people was needed badly to improve sociological thinking, and to help rural people, and that the rural sociological community was in a good position to conduct the research. Here, it must be said that the ^{point of view} ~~position~~ had both strengths and weaknesses. On the positive side, person for person, rural sociologists did have a clearer view of the problems and potentials of rural people than others did, and their published research always was done with care. In the old dilemmas of sociology - to herald the profound but unproven, or to assert the true but trivial - the rural sociologists of the era came out on the side of the angels: they were working on questions of importance to sociology and to rural people, and their results were dependable. On the negative side, there were really only a few institutionalized bases of rural socioloical research and relatively few such researchers. Also on the negative side, a great deal of trained research manpower had been siphoned off into extension activities which might have been done just as well, or better, by non-sociologists. ^{Rural sociologists} ~~we~~ were strong because ^{they} ~~we~~ had a clear vision of what needed to be done, because ^{their} ~~we~~ research was done well, and because ^{they} ~~we~~ had the support of outside groups. ^{They} ~~we~~ were weak in that only a few individuals and institutions were prepared to carry out the research that needed to be done.

Doubt in the 1970's

Several things have happened during the 1970's which initiated a reevaluation of rural sociology's promise. First, by the mid-1960's,

research on the adoption of new farm technology by individual farmers had just about run its course. It seems odd that this work was not continued at a different level, focussing on systems of technology and on organizational adopters. But it did not. Instead, most of the diffusion researchers turned to other topics. So, the scientific mainstay of the 50's and early 60's disappeared. Second, by the time the United States decided to stop fighting in Vietnam, the non-socialist poor countries of greatest interest to the West seemed to have brought most of their guerrilla groups under control. American politicians and statesmen lost interest in rural people abroad. Third, once attention had been called to the fact of extreme poverty among ethno-racial groups of recent rural origins - the blacks, chicanos, native Americans, and Appalachians - other groups took over the many jobs designed to work with them. Rural sociology's prophetic role regarding America's rural poor was ended, and only a few rural sociologists actually involved themselves in new research regarding them. Fourth, with the rising chorus of criticism regarding pollution of the air, earth, and water, and regarding inequality and exploitation, many rural sociologists turned their energies - but not much of their research - to what they saw as the agricultural establishment's abuse of workers and consumers. They quite correctly noted that the rural sociologists had not devoted much research effort to farming as such. Unlike their predecessors, who studied other facts of rural life while taking farming for granted, the new wave felt this to be a serious omission. ⁹ So, in the 1960's, many of rural sociology's publics found the field to be promising and useful. As the historical circumstances changed, these publics lost interest in rural sociology; and ~~the~~ new publics, and with them, newly emerging groups

of rural sociologists, came into being and found the field wanting in the areas of their own greatest interest.

Research in the 1970's

But it is not true that rural sociological research has withered. Just look at the CSRS figures. From 1970 to 1976 the dollar outlays for the field grew by 275 percent, from \$1.2 million to \$3.3 million (Moe, 1978) a figure far exceeding the inflation rate. During the same period, the number of CSRS projects grew from 362 to 470, and the scientist years from 91.8 to 134.4 (Moe 1978). More important than the bare "effort statistics" are other data pertaining to the quality of rural sociological research. The objectives of the field are to develop more effective sociological concepts and methods through research on rural life and to serve rural people by making appropriate concepts and evidence available to those who work directly with rural people. Obviously the former requires publication in basic sociological journals, and the latter implies publication in applied sociological journals. In 1971, the Rural Sociology Panel of the NRC/NAS Committee advisory to the USDA published 10-year figures on publications in the American Sociological Review, American Journal of Sociology, Rural Sociology, and Social Forces (1961-1970 or 1971). The panel found that rural sociologists published almost no basic research during that period: 1.7 articles per year in the ASR and AJS.

To learn something of the more recent situation [redacted] *(provided by Dr. E.O. Moe of the USDA)*

Let's take a look at a lot of more or less current CSRS reports They include the 1976 publications for all CSRS projects in social science. I selected those that could be identified as rural sociology (those conducted by sociologists in an agricultural college program in sociology or by known rural sociologists employed in other agricultural programs).

in basic sociological research journals (ASR and AJS)
In 1976 alone there were five ~~more~~ articles. By that index, the

production of basic research contributions of rural sociology[^] was much higher in 1976 than in the 1960-1970 period. If we suppose that articles in Rural Sociology comprise satisfactory samples, we can make a similar comparison. For the former decade, the annual rate was 9.4 RS articles apparently based at least in part on USDA funds. In 1976, the rate was 13. Again, it is up a bit. All in all, it would appear that rural sociology's contributions to basic sociology and rural sociology have gone up.

While comparable information from the earlier period is not available, other publication data from 1976 are enlightening. A count was made of all print publications reported by CSRS projects for 1976. As I count them, 269 projects were reported and from them 154 printed works (excluding all mimeographed pieces and theses) were published. Of these, 70 would be classified as "fugitive" by most libraries, because librarians find it hard to make them available to scholars. (These include all the extension circulars and experimental station bulletins.) The other 84 were articles, essays, or books which are catalogued in standard ways. Thus, on the average, these 1976 projects produced non-fugitive publications at the rate of about one every three years (.31/project/year), or some kind of printed work at the rate of .57 publications/project for the year.

The outlets in which they appeared were also noted and classified. The variety is as impressive as the numbers. 1. Non-fugitive Literature. ████████ Journals in Basic Sociological Research: 9 articles in 5 journals (American Journal of Sociology, American Sociological Review, Sociological Quarterly, Annali di Sociologia, International Journal of Contemporary Sociology, International Review of Modern Sociology), ████████ Journals in

though still small

Applied Sociological Research: 24 articles in 8 journals (Demography, Journal of Comparative Family Studies, Journal of Marriage and the Family, Public Opinion Quarterly, Rural Sociology, Sociology of Education, Sociologia Ruralis, Sociology of Work and Occupation), [REDACTED].

Journals of Basic Research in Other Behavioral Sciences: 4 articles in 3 journals (Administrative Science Quarterly, Educational and Psychological Placement, Journal of Personality and Social Psychology), [REDACTED].

Journals in Other Applied Fields: 26 articles in 21 journals. [REDACTED]

Unclassified Journals: 5 articles in 5 journals. [REDACTED] Books, Continuous Narrative: 2. [REDACTED] Books, Edited Compilations: 5. [REDACTED] Books, Bibliographies: 1. [REDACTED] U.S. Census Bureau Publications: 6. [REDACTED] Fugitive Literature (State in-house journals, bulletins, circulars): 70.

All this adds up to a small, but not unimpressive, set of articles in basic behavioral journals, and a surprising outpouring in applied outlets. Of these, I am familiar with the editorial practices of 15, which together published 36 of the articles. Each of these journals normally requires regular peer-refereeing for each article considered for possible publication. So, at minimum, a rather large percentage ($36/84=42\%$) were passed by peer referees. Since peer refereeing is generally considered to be the best guide to the originality and usefulness of the information contained in the paper, it is reasonable to conclude that the USDA-backed rural sociology projects of 1976 rather frequently produced genuinely new contributions to knowledge. All in all, this seems to indicate that research by rural sociologists is improving. Indeed, the research is better than I would have thought, and is surely better than it was a decade ago.

The crisis of the 1980's

What is the fuss all about? Is anything special wrong with the

research in the field? I think there are several such problems. 1) Less than 3% of the printed publications from CSRS projects or less than 2% of all the publications from all projects were published in basic sociological journals (one or two percentage points more if all basic behavioral science journals are included). The effort devoted to basic contributions to knowledge still appears to be quite small. It is well-known that the pay-offs to investment in the basic sciences related to agriculture are very high: \$50 output to \$1 input (Evenson 1978). Rural sociologists would surely make a greater impact if they were to double, triple, or even quadruple their efforts to ~~induce new~~ ^{conduct basic} research.

2) The current criticism of the field, that it neglects the sociology of farming, seems valid. One searches in vain for a good article describing the work roles of farmers, and almost in vain for works describing farm workers' class situation or the social organization of agricultural enterprises. 3) Rural sociological research publication is probably concentrated too much in one place. For example, by my count, during its whole 42-year history (from 1935 to 1977) there were 15 writers who authored or co-authored 100 or more pages in the journal Rural Sociology. Of these 15, ten are still active researchers; the others are deceased or retired. Seven of the ten who are now active are deeply involved with but one university, either as its faculty members, or its Ph.D.'s, or both. These seven individuals average 162 pages per person. The other three active writers average 137 pages each, while the now-inactive average 124 pages. Those from the most productive school are also individually the most productive. More: during the last 12 years the seven who are connected with this one research-oriented university increased their level of output; and finally, they are a few years

younger than the others.

Better data on Rural Sociology's research contribution probably could be collected, but they ~~simply~~ would tell the same story in a different way. For example, the same university dominates rural sociological publication in the ASR and the ASJ, and some other journals as well.

I suppose that some may think this is another example of the inequality of rewards. If so, they would be mistaken. The real issue concerns the concentration of ideas, not of rewards. A ^{productive} department tends to have a characteristic style of research, of concepts, and of reasoning. Because the journal literature is the main public outlet for new ideas, it follows that the new concepts of rural sociology disproportionately originate from just one research center. Since its program stresses research on rural demography, social stratification, and social psychology, with a strong preference for multivariate analysis of survey research data by which to test hypotheses, these are the characteristics most notably displayed by the research literature in rural sociology. It could be argued that within the rural sociological enterprise theoretical dialogue is made difficult by the lack of any serious alternative to the thought style of the rural sociologist of this one university.

In my opinion, this is the most crucial problem in the field today - the lack of significant dialogue. If so, what can be done about it? One might jump to the conclusion that editorial policies should be changed in order to make it easier to publish work from other centers. But this would be unwise; the solution is not to drop the ^{standards,} presents, but rather to encourage the building ^{other ~~new~~ programs with} ~~strong~~ strong, productive scholars, whose analyses can, on their own merits, enter into serious intellectual competition with the current dominant line of

analysis. There is reason to hope that over a decade or two this might be done. Here and there, a few productive and creative sociologists are working on rural questions from other perspectives. As yet these perspectives, ~~and~~ the validity criteria to which they adhere, are not entirely clear. I believe that the development of one or more serious competing thought traditions is the most important and difficult challenge confronting rural sociology today. A meaningful dialogue would enrich the thought of all of us, and one party to it is already well-established. But it will be extremely difficult to build others. Powerful thought traditions are woven intricately, and they involve a number of abstract concepts (each of which has a reasonably clear referent), a set of actual or implicit relationships or hypotheses, and a set of credible criteria of validity. These elements require much time and effort to elaborate and put together. But like increasing ^{the} ~~our~~ basic research effort as a whole, the pay-offs to be gained from a fully-engaged dialogue between powerful, but competing thought systems could be great indeed. The real challenge to the rural sociological enterprise is to put together one or two serious ^{counter foils} ~~to~~ the prevailing thought system. Research systems, like Rome, are not built in a day. A great deal of effort - even travail and deep frustration - will be experienced by any group ~~to~~ brave enough to try it. But a group that tries for a decade or two - writing, publishing, analyzing, hiring people with generally new ideas, discouraging those who lack them - will, I think, be pleasantly surprised with the intellectual and practical results it achieves.

In a few words, the present crisis is due partly to change in what others look for from us, to changes in what we want of ourselves, and to the rise of a single, dominant line of thought. It is not due to a

weakening of standards, or a reduction in effort, or a slackening of contribution to basic research. While all the latter could stand further improvement, the fact is that they are improving already. The basic challenge to the rural sociological enterprise is to build serious new thought systems, which in interaction with the one already in existence, can give us more penetrating, yet more comprehensive, analyses. A related challenge is to double or redouble our contribution to basic research. If these ends can be accomplished in a couple of decades or so, we shall witness an ever-increasing contribution of rural sociological research to the ^{thought} [redacted] system of sociology as a whole, simultaneously with an increase in the availability of powerful concepts that people of practical affairs may use to effect improvements in rural life here and abroad.