

Sociology Departments and Article Production

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As the National Research Council careens through its study of graduate departments, anticipation of the results is high. The study is considered the Cadillac of graduate ranking studies and promises to have important effects on our views of departments, and on the flows of faculty, graduate students, and resources important to the life of the ranked departments. But as with any ranking study, concerns abound. One in particular is the role that reputational ratings will have on the results of the study. As in the case of all reputational studies (such as those conducted periodically by U.S. News and World Report), it is not completely clear what factors produce reputation. Furthermore, it is commonly thought that reputational ratings suffer from serious inertia problems, such that recent developments (either positive or negative) may take many years to show up in the reputational rankings. Although the NRC has not been completely decisive about how reputational measures will figure in, it is clear that they will be influential.

Given all of this, it would seem useful for scholarly reputational ratings to be at least informed by some reasonably up-to-date data. Toward that end, we offer an analysis of one measure of scholarly productivity: placement of research in the most prestigious and visible journals in the discipline. Following Markovsky (2000) and Jones et al (2000), we examined publications in sociology's three leading general journals, the *American Sociological Review*, *American Journal of Sociology*, and *Social Forces* for the three year period covering the most recently published issues for each journal [AJS 109(3)-112(2); ASR 68(6)-71(5); SF 82(2)-85(1)].

To assign credit to each department, we tabulated all faculty who published in these three journals and determined their current department affiliation using the ASA Guide to Graduate Departments and WWW listings. We award credit to departments based on the author's current affiliation, rather than the affiliation at the time the article was published. This approach is intended to capture the immediate impact that faculty recruitment (from recent Ph.D. to senior faculty hires) can have on the overall strength of a department's faculty. To increase the reliability of our measure, all coding decisions were made by two different coders. Any discrepancies were resolved via personal contact. Following Jones et al., faculty not affiliated with sociology departments were eliminated from the study. All peer-reviewed research articles were tabulated, and a 1.0 weight was divided equally among all authors. We then summed credits affiliated with each department.

We recognize that publications in these journals are far from a comprehensive assessment of department pro-

ductivity or quality. While this analysis neglects other measures such as book production, graduate training, specialty journal publications, and the general prestige of the faculty, it does provide one important piece of information about contributions to the discipline and therefore is useful in informing our understanding of departmental standing.

Table 1 presents the ranking and scores for each department. In addition, we report the previous rank calculated by Jones et al. for the period of 1997-1999 as well as the change in rank between our study and Jones et al. study. Finally, to get a sense of the differences between this measure and the most recent reputational study, we report the ranks produced by the US News and World Report 2005 ranking study as well as the difference between that ranking and our measure (USN-Rank). Not surprisingly, the biggest gainers were in the lower ranks: Stony Brook, Tulane, and Utah all moved up more than 25 places. As in Jones et al (2000), Ohio State ranks number one. But the top ranks are more permeable than in reputation studies. UNC Chapel Hill, Duke, Stanford, and Notre Dame round out the top five. To land in the top five, Duke and Notre Dame each jumped more than 15 spots. Wisconsin, Princeton, and Minnesota move ten or more places into the top ten. Michigan, Chicago, and SUNY Albany lost the most ground since the prior study. There is a fair amount of stability as well: 24 programs moved less than 10 places.

The US News Ranking is very discrepant from the article production ranking. The correlation between the 2005 US News ranking and our measure is only .45. The US News ranking reflects the Jones et al. study a bit better at $r = .61$, but it still only accounts for 37 percent of the variance. Inasmuch as article production in these journals is a key indicator of scholarly productivity, the departments most under-rated by US News are Notre Dame, Purdue, and Oregon. Those rated lowest here compared to their US News rating are Berkeley, Michigan, and Chicago. Obviously, these departments are deriving their high prestige ratings from other sources.

Ultimately, any useful evaluation of graduate sociology departments must resonate with the discipline's subjective sense of what constitutes departmental excellence. Indeed, the strength of reputational measures is that they recognize the importance of sociologists' (varied) definitions of departmental quality. But the accuracy of departmental reputations is only as good as the information that is available about them. The analysis we have offered here is not the only dimension necessary to inform departmental reputations, but one we maintain is important.

Table 1. Article Production by 2006-07 Sociology Department Faculty

| Rank | University | Credit | Previous | Change | US News | USN-Rank |
|-------------|-----------------------------|---------------|-----------------|---------------|----------------|-----------------|
| 1 | Ohio State | 14.73 | 1 | 0 | 20 | 19 |
| 2 | North Carolina- Chapel Hill | 11.82 | 9 | 7 | 4 | 2 |
| 3 | Duke | 11.81 | 19 | 16 | 14 | 11 |
| 4 | Stanford | 10.83 | 5 | 1 | 6 | 2 |
| 5 | Notre Dame | 8.06 | 24 | 19 | 49 | 44 |
| 6 | Pennsylvania State | 7.66 | 12 | 6 | 17 | 11 |
| 7 | Wisconsin- Madison | 7.58 | 17 | 10 | 1 | -6 |
| 8 | Minnesota | 7.56 | 30 | 22 | 22 | 14 |
| 9 | Columbia | 7.33 | 15 | 6 | 11 | 2 |
| 9 | Princeton | 7.33 | 25 | 16 | 6 | -3 |
| 11 | Washington | 7.16 | 10 | -1 | 17 | 6 |
| 12 | Northwestern | 6.99 | 7 | -5 | 11 | -1 |
| 13 | Indiana | 6.83 | 2 | -11 | 11 | -2 |
| 14 | Arizona | 6.82 | 8 | -6 | 17 | 3 |
| 15 | Cornell | 6.49 | 16 | 1 | 14 | -1 |
| 16 | Harvard | 6.41 | 22 | 6 | 8 | -8 |
| 17 | Pennsylvania | 5.83 | 21 | 4 | 10 | -7 |
| 18 | California- Irvine | 5.57 | 25 | 7 | 27 | 9 |
| 19 | Washington State | 4.83 | 40 | 21 | 38 | 19 |
| 20 | State New York- Albany | 4.81 | 3 | -17 | 25 | 5 |
| 21 | Purdue | 4.50 | 37 | 16 | 58 | 37 |
| 21 | California- Los Angeles | 4.50 | 20 | -1 | 8 | -13 |
| 23 | Chicago | 4.33 | 6 | -17 | 4 | -19 |
| 24 | Michigan | 4.08 | 4 | -20 | 3 | -21 |
| 25 | Tulane | 4.00 | 59 | 34 | * | * |
| 26 | Massachusetts- Amherst | 3.99 | 35 | 9 | 34 | 8 |
| 27 | Texas- Austin | 3.98 | 29 | 2 | 14 | -13 |
| 28 | South Carolina | 3.82 | 48 | 20 | * | * |
| 29 | Western Washington | 3.74 | * | * | * | * |
| 30 | California- Santa Barbara | 3.50 | 31 | 1 | 29 | -1 |
| 30 | Oregon | 3.50 | 39 | 9 | 55 | 25 |
| 32 | California- Berkeley | 3.33 | 37 | 5 | 2 | -30 |
| 32 | Utah | 3.33 | 59 | 27 | * | * |
| 34 | California- Davis | 3.25 | 28 | -6 | 29 | -5 |
| 35 | Johns Hopkins | 3.23 | 46 | 11 | 22 | -13 |
| 36 | State New York- Stony brook | 3.00 | 78 | 42 | 38 | 2 |
| 36 | Georgia | 3.00 | 40 | 4 | 55 | 19 |
| 38 | North Carolina State | 2.82 | 57 | 19 | 46 | 8 |
| 39 | Dartmouth College | 2.50 | * | * | * | * |
| 39 | California- San Diego | 2.50 | 50 | 11 | 34 | -5 |

* Not ranked