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Objective and Reputational Rankings of Ph.D.-Granting Departments of Sociology, 1965-1982

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From its inception in 1965 until 1975 when it stopped publishing such studies, The American Sociologist *(TAS) published numerous quality rankings of Ph.D.-granting sociology departments and several articles that compared different rankings. During these years* TAS *published far more rankings of sociology departments than did any other journal. This article reviews these studies as well as the rankings of sociology departments found in three major multi-disciplinary rankings (Cartter, 1966; Roose and Andersen, 1970; Jones, Lindzey, and Coggeshall, 1982). It discusses the major methodological approaches used in these studies and reviews the debate among scholars regarding the most appropriate ways to rank departments. An analysis of the various objective and subjective rankings reveals that there is an elite group of seven departments that consistently rank at the top regardless of the ranking method employed.*

Students of American higher education have long been interested in the stratification of graduate departments within the nation's colleges and universities. Since Hughes' pioneering reputational study of graduate departments in 1925, there have been five major reputational studies of graduate departments that have used the peer ratings of faculty and administrators to develop rankings of graduate departments (Keniston, 1959; Cartter, 1966; Roose and Andersen, 1970; Scully, 1979 reporting the results of a survey by Everett C. Ladd, Jr. and Seymour M. Lipset; Jones, Lindzey, and Coggeshall, 1982). Comparisons of the rankings of graduate programs across these reputational studies reveals a consistent pattern of findings: although there are variations in the numerical rankings of departments, the same departments have fairly consistently been identified at the top of the rankings. As regards departments with middle and lower rankings, the numerical rankings vary considerably but nonetheless show a relatively high degree of stability across broad groupings of departments (Conrad and Blackburn, 1985).

Notwithstanding the well-established stability in departmental reputations over the last half century, there are several important reasons for examining departmental status hierarchies, especially in the field of sociology. To begin with, there have been many forces acting on colleges and universities in recent years that may have affected the comparative prestige and reputation of some departments. Fluctuations in resources, pressures toward egalitarianism, the growth of multi-campus systems, and increased federal and state involvement in higher education are among the factors that may have affected the hierarchical structure of disciplines such as sociology. Further, and especially in sociology, there has been a spate of studies that have used a variety of objective (as contrasted with reputational) approaches and measures in developing rankings of departments. These studies, coupled with numerous comparisons that have been made between and among individual rankings, provide at once a rationale and a foundation for revisiting the issue of stratification in graduate departments of sociology.

The major purpose of this article is to examine the stratification of graduate departments of sociology from 1965 to 1982. In particular, has there been a stable hierarchy of departments across these years? In addressing this issue, we have two major objectives. The first is to review the academic quality rankings of graduate departments of sociology in *The American Sociologist* (TAS) from its inception in 1965 through 1975, when it stopped publishing such studies, and to examine the results of three major multi-disciplinary rankings: Cartter's *Assessment of Quality in Graduate Education* (1966), Roose and Andersen's *Rating of Graduate Programs* (1970), and the National Academy of Sciences' (NAS) *Assessment of Research-Doctorate Programs in the United States* (1982). The Cartter and Roose/Andersen studies are included because these reputational rankings have often served as the basis for comparisons made by the authors of the *TAS* studies — that is, between these studies' "subjective" rankings and the various "objective" rankings produced by the authors of the *TAS* studies. Because it is the most recent and most comprehensive study, the NAS study is reviewed in detail.

Although it is not a primary concern, our second objective is to delineate the major methodological approaches and objective measures used in ranking graduate departments of sociology. Beyond merely describing these approaches, we review the debate among scholars concerning the most appropriate ways to rank academic departments.

The studies reviewed are limited to those which explicitly rank graduate departments or critique methods of rating departments. That is, we review studies that address the prestige or quality rankings of departments but exclude those concerned with other dimensions of prestige such as regional productivity rates, variations in time spent obtaining the Ph.D., and faculty promotion rates.

The American Sociologist was chosen as the main source of ranking studies because it was, during more than half its first run, 1965-1982, the navel-gazing journal of the profession.[1] In the words of its first editor, Talcott Parsons, *TAS* was initiated to serve "as an organ of information and discussion for the professional concerns of sociologists as a social collectivity" (1965:2). From 1965 to 1975, *TAS* published ten articles presenting original rank order listings of sociology departments according to one or more criteria and at least nine more analyzing, comparing, and correlating existing rank orders. No other sociology journal during these years published nearly as many academic quality rankings. For example, not one of the three journals often considered the most prestigious

in sociology — the *American Sociological Review* (ASR), *American Journal of Sociology* (AJS), and *Social Forces* (SF) — published a single article ranking sociology departments from 1965-1975. Indeed, the studies ranking sociology departments published in *TAS* during these years provide a fairly complete history of the rankings of sociology departments during this period.

In an interesting turn of events that began with a change in editors in 1975, *TAS* stopped publishing ranking studies. The new editor, Allen Grimshaw, stated, "I want to declare a moratorium on introspective self-analysis of the stratification system of the discipline" and added that such self-analysis "should probably appear in substantive journals" (1975:192). In a personal communication, he explained the reasons for his decision:

> It seemed to me . . . that [at *TAS*] there has been a *preoccupation* [Grimshaw's emphasis] with prestige rankings. . . . I felt . . . that the articles which had been appearing were defective in several particulars. . . . First, it did not appear to me that the pieces had very much sociological relevance. They seldom raised issues about stratification in general. Nor did they make assessments about whether the quite similar co-associations they identified had implications for improvement of practice in the discipline. Second, they were marred, in my view, by the extraordinary narrowness of the data base on which they were founded, i.e., largely searches of the ASA directory and graduate department guide and publication patterns in our several journals (or annual programs, etc.). Third, while there may have been exceptions, it is my recollection that none (or very few) of these articles ever asked the questions of *why* [Grimshaw's emphasis] anyone should be interested, either as sociologists or as professionals, in the sorts of findings they reported (Grimshaw, 1982).

EARLY STUDIES

Before turning to the *TAS* rankings, it is instructive to begin with the study that ushered in the modern reputational quality ranking — Allen Cartter's *Assessment of Quality in Graduate Education* (1966) — which was sponsored by the American Council on Education. In brief, Cartter surveyed a sample of department chairpersons, distinguished senior scholars, and knowledgeable junior scholars in 29 disciplines at 106 institutions. Each respondent was asked to rate departments according to their reputation for "quality of graduate faculty" and effectiveness of graduate programs." For their "quality of graduate faculty," Cartter ranked departments on a 5.00 scale, as follows. Those with overall ratings of 4.01 to 5.00 he called "distinguished"; from 3.01 to 4.00, "strong"; from 2.51 to 3.00, "good"; and from 2.00 to 2.50, "adequate plus." For the rankings of the leading sociology departments according to this study, see Table 1.

The first ranking of sociology departments to appear in *TAS* was by Wanderer (1966) and marks the beginning of the dominance of "objective" — as opposed to "reputational" — rankings in *TAS*. He counted the number of articles, research reports, and notes in *ASR* from 1955-1965 according to the department where the author had obtained the doctorate. Owing to its status as the most prestigious sociology journal, *ASR* was selected as the sole source of publication data. Wanderer developed a list of 21 schools which ranked among the top ten in contributions to *ASR* in any one of the eleven years examined in the study. He concluded that Chicago, Columbia, Harvard, and Michigan, in that order, were the top four departments (see Table 2).[2] He also found that these four departments were overrepresented in publications appearing in *ASR* compared to the number of doctorates they granted.

TABLE 1

Sociology Rankings for Quality of Graduate Faculty in Cartter's Assessment of Quality in Graduate Education	Sociology Rankings for Quality of Graduate Faculty in Roose/Andersen's Rating of Graduate Programs
Distinguished	3.0 - 5.0 Range
1. UC/Berkeley	*1. UC/Berkeley
2. Harvard	*1. Harvard
3. Columbia	3. Chicago
4. Chicago	*4. Columbia
5. Michigan	*4. Michigan
Strong	6. Wisconsin
6. Wisconsin	7. North Carolina
7. Cornell	8. UCLA
8. Princeton	*9. Cornell
9. Minnesota	*9. Johns Hopkins
10. North Carolina	*9. Northwestern
11. UCLA	*9. Princeton
12. Stanford	*13. Washington (Seattle)
13. Washington (Seattle)	*13. Yale
14. Northwestern	*15. Minnesota
15. Yale	*15. Stanford
16. Washington U. (St. Louis)	*17. Michigan State
17. Michigan State	*17. Texas
	19. Indiana
	*20. Brandeis
	*20. Pennsylvania

* = Two or more institutions at the same position.

TABLE 2

Ratings of Graduate Sociology Departments by Total Productivity

Faculty

Knudsen/Vaughan (1969)	Glenn/Villemez (1970)	Oromaner (1972)	Doering (1972)
1. UC/Berkeley	1. Michigan	1. Wisconsin	1. UC/Berkeley
2. Harvard	2. Wisconsin	2. UC/Berkeley	2. Chicago
3. Chicago	3. Chicago	3. Columbia	2. Pennsylvania
4. Michigan	4. Columbia	4. North Carolina	4. Columbia
5. Columbia	5. Harvard	5. Michigan	5. Wisconsin
6. Princeton	6. UC/Berkeley	6. Chicago	6. Harvard
7. Wisconsin	7. North Carolina	7. Harvard	7. NYU
8. UCLA	8. Illinois	8. Yale	8. Michigan
9. Stanford	9. UCLA	9. Northwestern	9. Texas
10. Northwestern	10. Cornell	10. Johns Hopkins	10. Washington (Seattle)

Graduates

Wanderer (1966)	Knudsen/Vaughan (1969)	Yoels (1971)	Larson, Petrowsky and Vandiver (1972)	Sturgis/Clemente (1973)
1. Chicago	1. Columbia	1. Chicago	1. Chicago	1. UC/Berkeley
2. Columbia	2. Harvard	2. Harvard	2. Columbia	2. Oregon
3. Harvard	3. Chicago	3. Columbia	3. Michigan	3. Columbia
4. Michigan	4. Michigan	4. Wisconsin	4. North Carolina	4. Vanderbilt
5. Ohio State	5. UC/Berkeley	5. Minnesota	5. Harvard	5. Princeton
6. Washington (Seattle)	6. Yale	5. Northwestern	6. Wisconsin	6. UCLA
7. Wisconsin	7. North Carolina	5. North Carolina	7. Ohio State	7. Pennsylvania
8. Yale	8. Cornell	8. UC/Berkeley	8. UC/Berkeley	8. Harvard
9. UC/Berkeley & UCLA*	9. Ohio State	8. Indiana	9. Minnesota	9. Michigan
10. North Carolina	10. Pennsylvania	8. Ohio State	10. Yale	10. Brown

*These two institutions were combined. Since it is impossible to determine from Wanderer's data the exact individual ranking of UC/Berkeley or UCLA, this study has not been used in calculating the aggregate totals for these two institutions in Table 7.

Lewis (1968) was intrested in comparing Cartter's reputational rankings to an "objective" ranking of sociology departments. He ranked the top 17 departments identified by Cartter based on the number of articles, research reports and notes, and extended commentaries published by their faculty and graduates in *ASR* between 1956 and 1965. He found strong agreement between reputational rankings and productivity rankings for some departments (UC/Berkeley, Harvard, Chicago, Wisconsin, and North Carolina) but substantial disparities for other departments (Cornell, Princeton, Minnesota, Northwestern, Yale, and Washington University). In seeking to explain these departmental disparities, Lewis (1968:130) suggested that "universities whose reputation or prestige is significantly higher than graduate or faculty productiveness would seem to warrant are characterized in one of two ways. They are either private, relatively small institutions . . . or they have one or two eminent scholars in their departments."

Knudsen and Vaughan (1969) likewise considered the relationship between subjective and objective indicators of quality in graduate programs in sociology. They used all articles in *ASR*, *AJS*, and *SF*, plus the research notes and the book reviews in *ASR* for the five-year period from 1960 through 1964, as their data base. Authors were identified by the institution at which they were employed at the time of publication and the institution from which they had received their highest degree. Knudsen and Vaughan then devised a weighting system to reflect the varying degrees of prestige associated with different scholarly works. Scholarly contributions were weighted in the following rank order:

theoretical or research monographs, textbooks, an edited collection or an article in *ASR*, an article in *AJS*, and article in *SF*, and a research note in *ASR*. Size of departmental faculty and doctorates granted were controlled for by using the number of publications *per capita*.

Knudsen and Vaughan found that the relationship between Cartter's reputational rankings and their own productivity-based measures of quality was strong only for elite departments (Harvard, UC/Berkeley, Chicago, and Michigan). Below these few top departments, they found marked discrepancies between rankings based on subjective and objective methods. Size of faculty and number of Ph.D.s granted were found to be positively related to ranking. That is, rankings based on the absolute number of scholarly works produced by a department were similar to those based on the subjective (reputational) method (see Table 2). However, rankings based on faculty *per capita* productivity showed considerable discrepancies with the reputational rankings of departments below the top few departments (see Table 3).

TABLE 3

Ratings of Graduate Sociology Departments by Faculty per capita Productivity

Faculty			
Knudsen/Vaughan (1969)	Glenn/Villemez (1970)	Oramaner (1972)	Doering (1972)
1. Harvard	1. Harvard	1. Harvard	1. Harvard
2. Princeton	2. New School	2. Johns Hopkins	2. UC/Berkeley
3. Northwestern	3. Chicago	3. Columbia	3. Pennsylvania
4. UC/Berkeley	4. Michigan	4. UC/Berkeley	4. Columbia
5. Stanford	5. Columbia	5. North Carolina	5. NYU
6. Chicago	6. Princeton	6. Yale	6. Chicago
7. Michigan	7. Duke	7. Chicago	7. Johns Hopkins
8. UCLA	8. Northwestern	8. Northwestern	8. Cornell
9. Brandeis	8. Brandeis	9. Wisconsin	9. Texas
10. Tulane	10. Wisconsin	10. Michigan	10. Yale

In 1970 Roose and Andersen's *Rating of Graduate Programs* was published. While this reputational ranking closely followed the design of Cartter's study, it surveyed more raters and included more disciplines and institutions. Moreover, while Cartter had emphasized the "pecking order" in each discipline by classifying departments as "distinguished," "strong," "good," and "adequate plus," Roose and Andersen listed all schools rated over 3.0 in descending numerical order, then all schools listed 2.5 - 2.9 and 2.0 - 2.4 in separate alphabetical order without assigning either group a label. Leading sociology departments' reputational rankings for "quality of graduate faculty" are shown in Table 1.

Overall, there is considerable stability in the reputational rankings of the top sociology departments between the Cartter and Roose/Andersen studies. To be sure, several institutions substantially improved their rankings: Johns Hopkins went from being listed alphabetically as "good" in a group of departments below the top 17 to tie for 9th, and

Northwestern improved from tied for 14th to tie for 9th. Two others markedly declined. The University of Minnesota went from 9th to tie for 15th, and Washington University dropped from 16th to an alphabetized listing among institutions ranking lower than 21st and somewhere in the 2.5 - 2.9 range. However, of the other 14 schools given a numerical ranking by Cartter, five had not changed their rank at all, four had changed by only one position, two by two places, and three by three places.

In the same year that the Roose/Andersen study was published, Shamblin (1970) critiqued the Knudsen/Vaughan study. He argued that Knudsen and Vaughan were not measuring quality, as they had claimed; instead, they were actually measuring prestige as Cartter had in his reputational study. According to Shamblin, Knudsen and Vaughan failed to explain why publications in the three journals used in their study — *ASR*, *AJS*, and *SF* — were of higher quality than publications in other journals. Although Knudsen and Vaughan referred to these as the "leading" sociology journals, Shamblin contended that publication in these journals was an indicator of prestige, not of quality. To support his argument, Shamblin pointed out that the three journals used in the Knudsen/Vaughan study were controlled by persons from the most prestigious departments. Hence, publication in these journals was an indirect indicator of membership in a professional clique, rather than an indicator of quality. In turn, Shamblin cautioned the reader to expect the Knudsen/Vaughan method to yield findings similar to those found through the reputational approach.

GLENN AND VILLEMEZ

Glenn and Villemez (1970) devised a more inclusive measure of publication producitivity — the Glenn/Villemez Comprehensive Index (GVCI) — than had any previous investigators. The GVCI covered 22 journals and all books reviewed in *ASR*. Weights were assigned to the journals based on a survey of a random sample of 250 professors and associate professors in Ph.D.-granting departments listed in the *ASA Guide to Graduate Departments of Sociology* (1969). Since the book productivity measure indicated only quantity and not the quality of publications, Glenn and Villemez employed a weighting system that estimated the quality of each department's books based on the scores of the journals in which its members published. This adjusted book score is used in the GVCI. Publications in the GVCI cover the years 1965 through 1968.

The sample for this study consisted of the top 45 graduate departments of sociology as measured by the Knudsen/Vaughan Index. Unlike Knudsen and Vaughan, Glenn and Villemez considered the productivity only of faculty members in these departments. While their sample was not limited to Ph.D.-granting departments, only two programs not granting the doctorate were included.

In part the study was aimed at updating the findings of Knudsen and Vaughan from their 1960-1964 data base to the years 1965-1968. Computing the Knudsen/Vaughan Index for 1965-1968 data, Glenn and Villemez also found an elite group of five departments but some modest changes within the ranks of the elite: Wisconsin had moved into this group, UC/Berkeley had dropped to sixth place, and Columbia had risen from fifth to fourth place. However, a considerable amount of upward and downward mobility had occurred among the other 40 departments. Glenn and Villemez speculated that since the

productivity scores of these departments were relatively similar and productivity in many of these departments was limited to a small number of faculty members, modest changes in personnel could strongly influence productivity scores.

When using the more comprehensive GVCI as a measure of productivity, Glenn and Villemez found some discrepancies between it and the 1965-1968 Knudsen/Vaughan Index rankings. While the same departments ranked in the top five, their order was different. Based on the GVCI, Michigan rose from third to first, Wisconsin moved up three places to second, Columbia dropped from first to fourth, Chicago from second to third, and Harvard from fourth to fifth. (Berkeley was ranked sixth by the GVCI, and while in productivity it was well below that of fifth-ranked Harvard, it was nonetheless far above that of seventh-ranked North Carolina. The authors concluded that Berkeley could thus be considered a "marginal" member of the elite.) Of particular note, the positions of the other 40 departments in the sample differed considerbly from where they had ranked in the 1965-1968 Knudsen/Vaughan ranking. In 33 cases the positions differed by at least three places.

Glenn and Villemez also ranked departments on *per capita* productivity. Using this measure, the top five were as follows: Harvard, New School for Social Research, Chicago, Michigan, and Columbia (see Table 3). The productivity of UC/Berkeley and Wisconsin, neither one of which was in the top nine on a *per capita* basis, had therefore been inflated in the GVCI by the large size of their faculties. The New School for Social Research, on the other hand, had been rated 35th on the GVCI before controlling for *per capita* productivity. The rank order of the other 40 institutions in the sample varied greatly when *per capita* productivity was considered. While the Glenn and Villemez study was not without limitations (see pp. 246-47 of their article for a discussion of them), it was the most comprehensive approach to an objective assessment of the quality of graduate education in *TAS* until the Sturgis and Clemente (1973) ranking, which expanded the GVCI.

RANKINGS, 1971-1972

In an article on the doctoral origin of *ASR* editors, Yoels (1971) found consierable similarity between a ranking based on the departmental origins of those who had edited *ASR* in the years 1948-1968 and Wanderer's (1966) ranking of the doctoral origins of contributors to *ASR* (see Table 2). Chicago, Harvard, and Columbia were in the top three in both studies.

Yoels also calculated the proportion of those serving as *ASR* editors from 1963-1965 who had received their doctorates at one of the top five sociology departments according to Cartters' (1966) *Assessment of Quality in Graduate Education.* He found these departments falling into two separate clusters. While Harvard, Chicago, and Columbia accounted for 70 percent of the editors of *ASR* during these years, Michigan contributed fewer than 3 percent, and UC/Berkeley contributed no editors at all.

As displayed in Table 2, Oromaner (1972) ranked sociology departments according to the number of citations their faculty had received in the 1970 issues of *ASR* and the 1969-1970 issues of *SF.* His sample included the 79 departments that had granted at least one Ph.D. from 1965 through 1969. Sixty-six of these 79 departments (84 percent) had

members who were cited in at least one *ASR* or *SF* article, and ten departments accounted for 40 percent of the author citations.

When Oromaner ranked departments on the basis of the number of their citations per faculty member (see Table 3) and compared his findings to those of the Roose/Andersen (1970) ratings, strong agreement was found only among the highest ranked departments. Harvard, Columbia, and UC/Berkeley were ranked in the top five by both Roose/Andersen and Oromaner. Rankings outside the top four showed general agreement in the broad categories of "strong," "good," "adequate," "other," and "not ranked," but there were also some wide discrepancies. Nebraska and UC/Santa Barbara were not ranked by Roose/Andersen but were eleventh and twelfth in number of citations *per capita*. Oromaner found that the most frequently cited department was the University of Wisconsin at Madison. When citations per faculty member were analyzed, however, Wisconsin fell to ninth place. Johns Hopkins, on the other hand, was only tenth in citations as a department but second in *per capita* citations.

Solomon (1972) studied the relation of the Cartter and Roose/Andersen reputational rankings to the rankings of productivity used by Knudsen/Vaughan and Glenn/Villemez. He found that the Spearman rank-order correlations of the Roose/Andersen ratings with the GVCI (.76) and the Knudsen/Vaughan Index computed for 1960-1964 (.72) were both high and statistically significant. Solomon (1972:14) concluded with a note of caution:

> There is some tendency to think of publication productivity versus departmental prestige as a dichotomous objective versus subjective relation. Consideration of this assumption leads one to realize that the 'importance' attached to particular professional journals by a panel of 'experts' . . . is in some respects as much a matter of subjective judgment as is the ranking of graduate departments with respect to prestige or quality . . . it would seem that the primary advantage of weighted-publications measures as criteria of departmental quality is that they are more specific, rather than more 'objective,' than global prestige rankings are.

Clemente (1972) reviewed ten measures of productivity used in sociology from 1950-1971 and showed that varying conclusions regarding productivity could be drawn from these different measures. He recommended that sociologists use the GVCI as the sole measure of productivity, pointing out that it was "composed of a broad range of journals and circumscribes most general sociological work as well as important specialty areas within the discipline. Another argument for its use is that it has a considerably wider scope than most previous indexes and yet is not eclectic" (Clemente, 1972:7). Clemente contended that the GVCI was fair to all specialties within the discipline and that it was flexible, that is, it could be expanded to include more books. He (Clemente, 1972:8) concluded that "hopefully, future research in the area will incorporate the GVCI or a similar measure, and then progress toward the real goal of the study of productivity — grounded sociological theory — will begin."

Larson *et al.* (1972) studied departmental productivity based on the publications of their graduates. To construct a weighting system for journal publications, Larson and his colleagues surveyed the chairpersons of the top 20 graduate sociology departments as identified by Cartter, asking them to name the ten journals in which they would prefer that their faculty publish. A ranking of 12 journals resulted, and each of these journals was examined to obtain information on contributors.

Based on the publications of its graduates (listed in the American Sociological

Associations' 1970 *Guide to Graduate Departments of Sociology*) in these 12 journals from 1959 through 1986, Chicago was the most productive (see Table 2). Chicago had also conferred Ph.D.s on by far the largest number of productive sociologists: 99. In terms of the number of articles published by recipients of the Ph.D. in sociology, Chicago was followed by Columbia, Michigan, North Carolina, and Harvard. Statistically significant correlations were found between the Roose/Andersen ratings of the prestige of the degree-granting department and the productivity of both individual sociologists and sociology departments.

Doering (1972) was primarily concerned with the level of publication productivity across academic ranks, but his study also shed some light on departmental quality. His sample was limited to the top 26 departments as determined by Glenn and Villemez. Productivity was measured by book publication only. Doering found a rank-order correlation of .60 between departmental rankings based on his measure and the overall productivity rating of Glenn and Villemez. However, the correlation between Doering's *per capita* ranking and the *per capita* ranking of Blenn and Villemez was only .11.

Doering's study ranked UC/Berkeley first in total book production, followed by Chicago and the University of Pennsylvania, tied for second; Columbia was fourth and Wisconsin fifth (see Table 2). When size of department was taken into account, Harvard was ranked first, followed by UC/Berkeley, Pennsylvania, Columbia, and New York University (see Table 3). Chicago dropped to sixth, and Wisconsin dropped to eighteenth place.

Abbott (1972:14) argued that the "most fundamental issue in the development of departmental ratings is whether or not subjective ratings of quality are equivalent to ratings based on objective measures of research productivity and other types of performance." To answer this question, he assessed the relationship between research productivity, 1965-1968 (as measured by Glenn/Villemez); number of doctorates conferred from 1964-1968; and the size of the faculty with the Roose/Andersen ratings. Finding that these departmental characteristics accounted for only 57 percent of the explained variability in subjective ratings of departments, Abbott concluded that the reputational and objective methods are not equivalent.

Abbott went on to raise the possibility that the primary referent for rating the prestige of a department is the image of the university itself. He found that university prestige accounted for 74 percent of the unexplained variance in departmental ratings, or more than research productivity, doctorates granted, and size of faculty combined. Extending his analysis, Abbott (1972:15) found that "taking departmental and university characteristics as the explanatory and control variables respectively, the multiple-partial coefficients of determination are .33 and .67, indicating that departmental ratings are more effectively accounted for by university variables than by departmental variables." In short, Abbott found solid empirical support for the proposition that departmental prestige is closely linked to university reputation.

RANKINGS, 1973-1974

In another study Abbott (1973) examined the mobility of 61 sociology departments in the United States from 1964 to 1969, using the Cartter and Roose/Andersen reputational

ratings. He found that 26 percent of the departments were upwardly mobile, 72 percent remained in the same category, and one department (Washington University) moved downward (from 16th place to an unnumbered place somewhere between 22nd and 30th). All the upwardly mobile departments moved up one category, except Vanderbilt, which moved up two categories (from unrated to an unnumbered position, corresponding to Cartter's "good" departments, which was somewhere between 22nd and 30th). Upward mobility was most common for departments moving from the "good" category to the "strong" category. The top five departments and all but one of the "strong" departments did not change categories.

While the primary goal of Yoels (1973) was to determine how widely dissertations in sociology were disseminated, he also offered a ranking of departments based on citations of dissertations. Yoels counted the number of dissertations cited in *ASR* and *AJS* from 1955 through 1969. The top four departments were, in order, at Chicago, Harvard, Michigan, and Columbia. They accounted for 54 percent of all citations. Since these departments continually appear at or near the top of both reputational and objective rankings, it appears that the higher the ranking of the department from which one has obtained the Ph.D., the greater the likelihood of one's dissertation being cited in the two most prestigious sociology journals. As Yoels pointed out, however, Chicago, Columbia, and Harvard dominated the editorial staffs of *ASR* from 1948 to 1968, supplying 61 percent of its editors during these years. In addition, *AJS* is based at Chicago, and furthermore, these four departments produce a disproportionately large number of the Ph.D.s in sociology.

Another study that rated graduate sociology departments was done by Sturgis and Clemente (1973). It examined departmental quality by assessing the productivity of the graduates of 50 major Ph.D.-granting departments. The population for this study was all members of ASA who had received their Ph.D. from American departments during the period 1950-1966. All departments granting fewer than ten Ph.D.s in this period were excluded. An expanded form of the GVCI was used to measure productivity; it covered all books recieved for review by *ASR*. Data on publication records of the 2,120 sociologists in the study were gathered for the period 1940-1970.

A standardization procedure was used to control for differences in the number of graduates and the length of time since they had received their doctorates. UC/Berkeley, for example, had produced more Ph.D.s over a longer period than had Brown or Vanderbilt. "The result is the average number of productivity points, articles and books produced by the graduates from each department for every ten years beyond the Ph.D." (Sturgis and Clemente, 1973:171).

Productivity ratings were provided for a number of measures: total standardized point ratios, article ratios, book ratios, percent of graduates ever published on the GVCI, and percent of graduates who had published before receiving the Ph.D. Based on what the authors claimed to be the best overall indicator of productivity — the total standardized point ratios — they concluded, "there are no distinct top four or five top departments as suggested by other rankings . . ." (Sturgis and Clemente, 1973:174). That is, they found no large gaps in total productivity among departments when the standardization procedures were applied. This finding differs from those of Knudsen/Vaughan and Glenn/Villemez.

Sturgis and Clemente also found that their rankings (see Table 2) did not correspond closely with rankings based on reputational methods. Six of the top eight sociology departments in the Roose/Andersen reputational ranking, for example, were ranked lower by Sturgis and Clemente, based on total standardized point ratios. Harvard declined from tied for first to eighth, Chicago from third to twelfth, and Wisconsin from sixth to sixteenth. On the other hand, Oregon, Vanderbilt, Pennsylvania, and Brown all achieved much higher rankings in the Sturgis/Clemente ranking than in the Roose/Andersen report. Thus, the use of standardized scores for productivity of graduates of departments as a measure of quality resulted in rankings different from those of a reputational ranking published only three years earlier.

A new direction for the ranking of graduate sociology departments was suggested by Leonard and Schmitt (1974) when they argued that participation in ASA meetings was a better measure of department quality than those used by others. They noted that "institutional representation at the national meeting is much easier to determine, a recurrent event, and not as dependent upon past performance" (Leonard and Schmitt, 1974:40).

The data base for their study consisted of the final programs for the 1970, 1971, and 1972 ASA meetings. The department of each participant was counted, except when two or more authors of one paper were from the same institution — in which case the department was counted only once. Forty-seven graduate departments emerged as the most frequently represented at the ASA meetings. Size of faculty was controlled by a calculation of *per capita* contributions. Leonard and Schmitt found that these 47 departments had a relatively consistent pattern of participation in ASA meetings over the three-year period covered in the study.

After reviewing the correspondence between their method of assessing departmental quality and those of Glenn and Villemez (1970), the Glenn/Villemez computation of the Knudsen/Vaughan Index for 1965-1968, the Larson *et al.* (1972) method; and the Oromaner (1972) citation study, Leonard and Schmitt (1974:41) concluded that "departmental representation of ASA meetings exhibits a moderate positive association with selected other indicators of the quality of American sociology graduate departments."

Pfeffer *et al.* (1974) were primarily interested in the distribution of National Science Foundation research grants in the field of sociology from 1964-1971. (Their study assumed that all the recipients of such grants are based in sociology departments, not elsewhere at their universities — such as in schools of law, medicine, education, or social work.) After analyzing patterns of the institutional receipt of NSF funds, they concluded that while these funds are heavily concentrated among a few departments each year, there is less stability in funding distribution over time than might be expected. Specifically, "in three of the eight years, one-half or less of the top recipients were from the eight largest receivers of grants over the period" (Pfeffer *et al.*, 1974:197). The eight sociology departments receiving the most NSF money from 1964-1971 were Cornell, Wisconsin, Columbia, Chicago, Michigan, MIT, Stanford, and Harvard, in that order.

Solomon and Walters (1975) studied the causal linkages between prestige and scholarly productivity. They studied sociology departments that were among the 45 that had scored highest on the Knudsen/Vaughan Index for the years 1965-1968 (as listed by Glenn and Villemez, 1970:249) and had also been included among the departments rated by both

Cartter (1966) and Roose/Andersen (1970). This procedure resulted in a sample of 38 departments. Solomon and Waters used a longitudinal model to examine the causal relationship between department prestige and faculty publication productivity and concluded that:

> current prestige . . . is much more dependent upon previous prestige . . . than it is on previous productivity. . . . The above evidence . . . tends to support the assertion that organization-set generated prestige orders tend not only to determine subsequent prestige orders and to have a dominant role in the making of significant allocative decisions within sociology, but furthermore, such evaluative bases tend toward particularistic evaluations and allocative decisions, rather than universalistic ones, in such self-perpetuating prestige orders (1975:234-35).

THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES RANKING (1982)

The most recent major multi-disciplinary academic quality ranking was published by the National Academy of Sciences in 1982 (Jones *et al.*, 1982). A discussion of its methods and major findings can be found in Webster (1983). The NAS study covered 32 disciplines, including sociology, and it should be considered in some detail for at least three reasons. First, since *TAS* stopped publishing quality rankings of sociology departments in 1975, there have been few such rankings published, and the NAS study thus offers a relatively rare opportunity to examine the relatively recent status of these departments.

Second, the NAS ranking was unusually comprehensive:

a. Instead of ranking the top two or three dozen sociology programs, as did many other studies, it ranked 92 of them; these programs had awarded 93 percent of all the doctorates conferred in sociology from 1976-1980.

b. It ranked sociology programs not just on one or two dimensions but according to 16 criteria that its compilers considered related to academic quality. Three of these criteria related to a program's number of faculty and graduate students; four to the characteristics of its recent graduates (for example, the proportion who had received some national fellowship or training grant support during their graduate education); four to various measures on a reputational survey of academic sociologists; one to the size of the library in the program's university; two to the research support received by the program's faculty and by the discipline of sociology in general, in recent years, at each institution; and two to the faculty's published articles, 1978-1980, in journals covered by the *Social Science Citation Index*.

A third reason why the NAS ranking deserves to be covered in some detail is because the NAS deliberately published it in an obfuscatory form. Rather than rank the programs according to each of its criteria and list them in descending numerical order, the way most other academic quality rankings both for sociology and other disciplines have done, the NAS listed the programs in alphabetical order and provided the raw score and standard score for each program for each measure. Since no ranking is provided, the rankings for all 92 programs for all 16 criteria must be determined from the standard scores — an extremely time-consuming process.

Of the 16 criteria used in the NAS study, three have been chosen for examination here:

a. the faculty's reputation for scholarly quality in the eyes of other academic sociologists;
b. the program's reputation for overall improvement during the past five years;
c. the number of articles published by the faculty, 1978-1980, in journals covered by the *Social Science Citation Index.*

Based on their faculty's reputation for scholarly quality, all 92 sociology programs are rank-ordered (and their standard scores provided) in Table 4. The top 25 programs (with their standard scores provided) are rank-ordered in Table 5 based on their reputation for overall improvement, and they are rank-ordered in Table 6 based on the number of articles attributed to faculty between 1978 and 1980. For these three tables, the mean for the standard score is 50, with a standard deviation of 10 (that is, about 67 percent of all departments scored between 40 and 60, and about 95 percent scored between 30 and 70).

Overall, there was a high correlation (.80) between a program's reputation for its faculty's scholarly quality and the total number of articles its faculty had published between 1978-1980. However, the strength of this correlation conceals some substantial disparities for particular programs. The University of Chicago, for example, ranked first in terms of faculty scholarly reputation but tied for tenth in number of articles published; Stanford was tied for seventh in reputation but tied for 20th in number of articles published; the University of Illinois (Urbana/Champaign) tied for 16th in reputation but was fourth in the number of articles published; and Columbia was tied for seventh in reputation but ranked below 25th in number of articles published.

Comparing the NAS rankings for the faculty's reputation for scholarly quality with Roose/Andersen's (1970) ranking, some major changes clearly took place during the 12 years between these two works. Three departments that had not even awarded a doctoral degree as of 1967 and therefore were not included in the Roose/Andersen sample ranked among the top 25 (and ties) in the NAS rankings. These were SUNY/Stony Brook (tied for 14th); UC/Santa Barbara (tied for 25th); and CUNY Graduate School (also tied for 25th). Two departments which Roose/Andersen had ranked at some unspecified place below the top 46 departments were ranked quite highly by the NAS. They were the University of Arizona (tied for 9th) and UC/San Diego (tied for 20th). The sociology departments at the Univesity of Massachusetts (from some unspecified position between 31st and 46th to tie for 20th) and Stanford (from tie for 15th to tied for 7th) also improved their standing markedly between the Roose/Andersen and the NAS ranking.

There were some sharp declines as well. Cornell and Northwestern, tied for 9th in the Roose/Andersen study, declined to 19th and tied to 20th, respectively, in terms of faculty reputation for scholarly quality. Similarly, Johns Hopkins and Michigan State, tied for 9th and 17th by Roose/Andersen, fell in the NAS ranking to tie for 35th and tied for 32nd respectively.

DISCUSSION

This article has reviewed the major objective and reputational rankings of graduate

TABLE 4

National Academy of Sciences (1982)

Faculty Reputation for Scholarly Quality

Rank	Institution	Standard Score
1.	Chicago	71
2.	Wisconsin (Madison)	70
3.	UC/Berkeley	69
3.	Michigan (Ann Arbor)	69
5.	Harvard	67
5.	North Carolina (Chapel Hill)	67
7.	Stanford	66
7.	Columbia	66
9.	UCLA	65
9.	Arizona (Tucson)	65
11.	Washington (Seattle)	64
12.	Pennsylvania	63
12.	Indiana (Bloomington)	63
14.	SUNY/Stony Brook	62
14.	Yale	62
16.	Princeton	60
16.	Illinois (Urbana/Champaign)	60
16.	Texas (Austin)	60
19.	Cornell	59
20.	Massachusetts (Amherst)	58
20.	Southern California	58
20.	Northwestern	58
20.	Minnesota	58
20.	UC/San Diego	58
25.	CUNY Graduate School	57
25.	NYU	57
25.	UC/Santa Barbara	57
28.	Duke	56
28.	SUNY/Albany	56
28.	Rutgers (New Brunswick)	56
28.	Washington State (Pullman)	56
32.	Brown	53
32.	Vanderbilt	53
32.	Michigan State (East Lansing)	53
35.	Boston University	52
35.	Johns Hopkins	52
35.	Maryland (College Park)	52
35.	SUNY/Binghamton	52
35.	Virginia (Charlottesville)	52
35.	UC/Davis	52
35.	Brandeis	52
42.	Illinois (Chicago)	51
43.	Pittsburgh	50
44.	Connecticut (Storrs)	49
44.	UC/Riverside	49

TABLE 4 (continued)

Rank	Institution	Standard Score
44.	Ohio State (Columbus)	49
44.	Missouri (Columbia)	49
44.	SUNY/Buffalo	49
49.	Oregon (Eugene)	48
49.	Iowa (Iowa City)	48
49.	Purdue	48
49.	Syracuse	48
49.	Florida State (Tallahassee)	48
54.	Pennsylvania State	47
54.	Georgia (Athens)	47
54.	Temple	47
57.	Nebraska (Lincoln)	46
57.	Washington (Saint Louis)	46
57.	Kentucky	46
60.	Kansas	45
61.	Colorado	44
61.	New Hampshire	44
61.	Florida (Gainesville)	44
61.	Iowa State (Ames)	44
61.	Hawaii	44
66.	Notre Dame	43
66.	Brigham Young	43
66.	Fordham	43
66.	Emory	43
70.	Southern Illinois (Carbondale)	42
71.	Tennessee (Knoxville)	41
71.	New School for Social Research	41
71.	Loyola (Chicago)	41
71.	Akron	41
71.	Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University	41
76.	Bowling Green	40
76.	Wayne State	40
76.	Kent State	40
76.	North Carolina State (Raleigh)	40
80.	Utah (Salt Lake City)	39
80.	Denver	39
82.	American	38
82.	Western Michigan	38
82.	Case Western Reserve	38
85.	Kansas State (Manhattan)	37
86.	Tulane	36
87.	Louisiana State (Baton Rouge)	35
87.	Oklahoma State University (Stillwater)	35
87.	Catholic	35
90.	Mississippi State (Starkville)	33
91.	North Texas State (Denton)	31
92.	Texas Woman's University (Denton)	28

TABLE 5

National Academy of Sciences (1982)

Reputation for Overall Improvement, Past Five Years

Rank Score	Institution	Standard
1.	Arizona	78
1.	SUNY/Albany	78
3.	Massachusetts	69
4.	SUNY/Binghamton	68
5.	Maryland	67
6.	Georgia	64
6.	Illinois (Chicago)	64
6.	Virginia	64
9.	UCLA	63
10.	Indiana	62
10.	Washington (Seattle)	62
12.	Southern California	61
13.	Akron	60
13.	Stanford	60
15.	Rutgers	59
15.	SUNY/Stony Brook	59
15.	Texas	59
18.	Boston University	58
18.	UC/Santa Barbara	58
18.	Northwestern	58
18.	Pennsylvania	58
18.	Washington State	58
23.	UC/San Diego	57
24.	Brigham Young	56
24.	Florida State	56
24.	Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State U.	56

sociology departments that were published between 1965 and 1982. With the exception of a ranking derived from the 1982 NAS study, the objective studies were published in *The American Sociologist* between 1965 and 1975. The three reputational rankings were published in 1966, 1970, and 1982.

In general, there have been three major objective approaches to ranking departments: 1) ranking based on faculty aggregate productivity; 2) rankings based on faculty *per capita* productivity; and 3) rankings based on productivity of graduates. The objective studies have used three types of measures in assessing faculty and graduates' productivity: unweighted measures, assessed by counting the number of journal articles, books research reports, published notes, and extended commentaries; weighted measures, in which researchers or survey respondents counted forms of research productivity according to a predetermined scheme and then calculated the number of articles, books, and so forth; and other measures, such as research funds received, presentation at professional meetings,

TABLE 6

National Academy of Sciences (1982)

Number of Published Articles Attributed to Faculty Members, 1978-80

Rank Score	Institution	Standard
1.	Wisconsin	80
2.	Harvard	79
3.	Michigan	77
4.	Illinois (Urbana/Champaign)	76
5.	Washington (Seattle)	69
6.	UCLA	67
7.	Indiana	65
7.	North Carolina	65
9.	Massachusetts	64
10.	UC/Berkeley	62
10.	Chicago	62
12.	Cornell	61
12.	Southern California	61
14.	Arizona	60
15.	Washington State	59
16.	Duke	58
16.	SUNY/Albany	58
16.	SUNY/Stony Brook	58
16.	Texas	58
20.	Minnesota	57
20.	Pennsylvania	57
20.	Stanford	57
23.	UC/Santa Barbara	56
23.	Maryland	56
25.	Kentucky	55

and citation counts. In short, there has been a diversity of approaches and measures used in objective studies of sociology departments.

Accompanying the numerous objective and reputational studies has been a vigorous and ongoing debate among scholars concerning the most appropriate ways to rank departments. Most authors of studies have defended the salience of their methods, and others such as Shamblin (1970) have provided critiques of various methodological approaches. This debate over method has been closely accompanied by comparisons between rankings. In most instances, those who have compiled a ranking have compared it with at least one other ranking and, in a few instances, other scholars have made comparisons among rankings. In short, there have been numerous comparisons between and among many of the reputational and objective studies of sociology departments, including several comparisons among the three reputational rankings examined in this article.

What do all these rankings of graduate sociology departments tell us about social stratification in the field of sociology over the period from 1965-1982? Overall, based on

numerous comparisons between and among the reputational and objective rankings, we find that there is a small group of departments that has consistently ranked among the very best (albeit with minor variations in their numerical order) regardless of the ranking method employed. Outside of these elite departments, however, there is considerable variation in the rankings of individual departments and, in numerous instances, they differ markedly in status across the various rankings. In other words, the various *TAS* and reputational studies are often not in close agreement about the relative status of departments falling below the top departments. This finding of variation in the relative rankings of non-elite departments is grounded not only in the numerous comparisons made between and among the objective and reputational studies, but also in those studies that have usually found only moderate correlations between reputational and objective rankings of sociology departments. Given the emphasis that some scholars have placed on comparing objective with subjective rankings, it should be emphasized that in general there has been no more agreement among the objective rankings than between the objective and reputational rankings in terms of the rankings of non-elite sociology departments.

Since these conclusions paint a portrait of a small group of elite departments that has remained stable over almost 20 years, it is instructive to look more closely at those departments consistently ranked at the top. To identify the highest-ranked departments in the various *TAS* studies, we aggregated the results of the rankings displayed in Tables 2 and 3. We averaged the rank orders of the ten leading schools in the four rankings of faculty total productivity displayed in Table 2, the five rankings of graduate total productivity also displayed in Table 2, and the four rankings of faculty *per capita* productivity displayed in Table 3. For all studies, we credited a department with ten points if it ranked first, nine if it ranked second, and so on down to one if it ranked tenth. If two or more departments were tied, they shared their ranks' points. For example, if two departments were tied at ninth and tenth place, they shared the two points for ninth and the one point for tenth, receiving 1.5 points each.

As displayed in Table 7, there is a striking similarity among the top schools across the three widely used objective approaches to ranking departments. The top seven schools on the faculty total productivity and the graduates' total productivity lists are identical, though they are not ranked in the same order on both lists. They are UC/Berkeley, Chicago, Columbia, Harvard, Michigan, North Carolina, and Wisconsin. Five of these — all but North Carolina and Wisconsin — are among the top six on the faculty *per capita* productivity list.

Moreover, when the seven top schools identified in these aggregated objective rankings of *TAS* studies are compared with the three reputational studies of faculty quality examined above (see Tables 1 and 4), the pattern of a small group of elite institutions finds additional empirical support. For with the exception of North Carolina in the Cartter study (it was ranked 10th), all seven of these schools are ranked in the top seven — including ties — in the Cartter, Roose/Andersen, and NAS studies. Both the aggregated objective rankings and the reputational rankings strongly point to the existence of an elite group of seven graduate sociology departments that consistently rank near the top in the rankings. The same seven institutions are ranked at the top whether departments are evaluated "objectively" through quantitative indicators or "subjectively" through a reputational approach.

TABLE 7

Leading Sociology Departments According to Faculty Total Productivity			Leading Sociology Departments According to Graduates' Total Productivity			Leading Sociology Departments According to Faculty per capita Productivity		
Rank	Institution	Points	Rank	Institution	Points	Rank	Institution	Points
1.	UC/Berkeley	34	1.	Columbia	44	1.	Harvard	40
2.	Chicago	29.5	2.	Chicago	38	2.	UC/Berkeley	23
3.	Wisconsin	29	3.	Harvard	35	3.	Chicago	22
4.	Columbia	28	4.	Michigan	24	4.	Columbia	21
5.	Michigan	26	5.	UC/Berkeley	21	5.	Northwestern	13.5
6.	Harvard	24	6.	North Carolina	17.5	6.	Michigan	12
7.	North Carolina	11	7.	Wisconsin	16	7.	Johns Hopkins	9
8.	Pennsylvania	8.5	8.	Ohio State	14	7.	New School	9
9.	UCLA	5	9.	Oregon	9	7.	Princeton	9
9.	Princeton	5	10.	Yale	8	10.	Pennsylvania	8

While academics will doubtless continue to debate the hierarchical structure of sociology as a discipline as well as the methods employed in ranking departments, this review of the rankings suggests that it may be a propitious time for scholars — in other fields as well as sociology — to consider a moratorium on rankings of departments. In our view, scholars might more fruitfully turn instead to reflection and research that contribute to our theoretical understanding of the prestige rankings.

Toward that end, we invite others to address prestige rankings from a stratification perspective. Such a perspective encourages us to raise such substantive questions as these:

1. To what extent can the social stratification literature provide theories and frameworks to illuminate our understanding of prestige rankings?
2. Why are the rankings of elite departments so stable across time regardless of the ranking method employed?
3. Except for prestige, how — if at all — are elite departments different from non-elite departments in terms of such departmental characteristics as leadership, funding, organization, curriculum, culture, and students?
4. What are the links, if any, between departmental status and the quality of teaching and service?
5. What are the associations, if any, between departmental status and the development of scholarship in the disciplines, e.g., major theoretical and methodological contributions and directions?
6. What are the links, if any, between departmental status and the labor market, e.g., placement of graduate students?
7. What are the factors — such as a sharp rise or decline in resources — that best explain upward and downward mobility outside of the elite departments?
8. What are the implications of using a "sum-plus" as opposed to the traditional

"zero-sum" approach to prestige ratings? Must prestige decline in one department in order for it to be gained in another?

9. How do the policies and practices of the discipline (such as selection of key journal editorships) affect the shape and character of its stratification system?

Although these questions serve as only a point of departure, they suggest multiple lines of inquiry that would likely help to move research beyond the preoccupation with generating and comparing academic quality rankings for their own sake. At the very least, future research needs to place the study of rankings within a larger context of stratification or differentiation.

FOOTNOTES

1. It resumed publication in spring, 1987 as a member of the Transaction Periodicals Consortium. (From 1965-1982, it had been published by the American Sociological Association.) In its first three issues, the new *TAS* has not published any articles which rank sociology departments or discuss the rankings of others.

2. Only some of the studies discussed in this article have their highest-ranking departments displayed in Tables 2 and 3. In order to be included, an article had to present at least one new ranking of sociology departments, as opposed to comparison and analysis of others' rankings. It also had to rank at least ten departments. Thus, Yoels' (1973) study, listing departments according to the number of times their graduates' dissertations were cited in *ASR* and *AJS*, and Pfeffer et al.'s (1974) study listing departments by the amount of National Science Foundation money they had received, 1964-1971, were both excluded because they ranked fewer than ten departments.

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