

Successful Advocates

Effective Social Science. Eight Cases in Economics, Political Science, and Sociology. BERNARD BARBER. Russell Sage Foundation, New York, 1988 (distributor, Russell Sage Foundation/CUP Services, Ithaca, NY). x, 205 pp. \$17.95.

For this volume Bernard Barber, a long-time student of the organizational, social, political, and economic contexts in which scientific developments occur, has collected the reflections of eight social scientists whose work has been "effective" in the sense of leading more or less directly to specific public policies or to the emergence of climates supportive of changes in line with their research findings. The result extends our sense of the combinations of the personal, professional, and environmental factors that underlie such effectiveness.

Each of Barber's respondents addressed nine open-ended questions in what, after his editing, have turned into engaging and personally revealing essays (all by males) in which most of the autobiographers manage to avoid taking themselves too seriously. All the subjects—one a bit grudgingly—concede that critics of their work and conclusions have often offered telling and useful arguments favoring other approaches than their own to given social, economic, or political problems. Often these acknowledgments take the form of recognition that the issues the autobiographers had sought to join ultimately did, after all, involve preferences that could not be fully justified by recourse to rigorous mensurational techniques and assertions of personal objectivity.

With the stage set by his questions, Barber's subjects write about their early training, the sources of their empirical interests, the roles of their sponsors, their main findings (expected or otherwise), the persuasiveness of their argumentation, the modes used to bring about the changes they wrought (media, congressional hearings, public reports, "networks," and the rest), and, finally, the prevailing social conditions (popular concern, scandals, social and political discontinuities, for example) that contributed to the adoption of their proposals for changes in policies and practices. "Timing is everything" may be an exaggerated claim, but the value of timing is a good bit greater than zero.

The first "change agent" is the sociologist James Coleman, who reviews three major

studies relating to education. The first, in the mid '60s, pointed to differences in family resources rather than in educational resources in accounting for differences in academic achievement. The second showed that, by 1974, racial segregation had declined within school districts but had increased among them. The difference, Coleman argues, was attributable to "white flight" from America's larger cities by those who were unfriendly to school desegregation or who perceived it as having untoward effects on the quality of schooling. The first study was widely cited by enthusiasts of busing as a means to school desegregation. The second was invoked widely by critics of school desegregation. The controversies among scholars, interest groups, public officials, and "op-ed" scribblers over these two studies were understandably intense.

Coleman's place in the eye of the education storm was secured, finally, by a third report showing that, in comparison with public schools, private (including parochial) schools had half as many black as non-black enrollees, thus contributing to segregation. But this development was balanced, he reported, by the fact that blacks were significantly more evenly distributed in private than they were in public schools. Blacks in the private sector, meantime—especially in parochial schools—had significantly better records of academic achievement than did blacks in public schools. Coleman attributed these differences, in part, to the schoolroom demands of private schools and the discipline these schools impose on their students. He was accordingly stung, as time passed, by the repudiation of the last two reports by many who had embraced the findings in his first study. The grounds for opponents' objections were that the later reports contributed to the erosion of support for desegregation and, implicitly, lent scientific credibility to hostility toward blacks.

Social scientists both gain and lose when their results reach large numbers of people who stand on opposite sides of a value-laden question. Many antagonists' positions appear, in these circumstances, to suffer from what we may call hardening of the categories, with the result that a scholar's work is admired by those who feel their cause has been served by it and damned by those who feel betrayed. Publicists, lawmakers, media analysts, interest group leaders, and non-specialist intellectuals contribute little of sci-

entific value to the resolution of differences by the rhetoric that goes with their espousal or rejection, as the case may be, of a scholar who becomes a public figure.

Eli Ginzberg, Columbia's venerable social science polymath, and an economist by training, is a teacher, on matters pertaining to the humane uses of human beings, who can count six American presidents and a host of senators and congressmen, military personnel policy-makers, and business leaders among his students. Ginzberg's "effectiveness" was generally not born of sets of singular findings leading to specific court decisions, laws, or charters. Rather, he has helped show, in a multitude of spheres, how to train, mobilize, and reward people so as to serve workers of all types, productivity aims, democratic progress, and the republic's weal generally.

Ginzberg's books—well over 100 of them—and journal articles, his meetings with leaders in government, business, education, and the armed forces, and his scholarly presentations to large audiences and Labor and Defense Department seminars have left their mark through their influence on thousands of persons, in and out of the United States, who in turn influence the character of laws, organizations, legal judgments, work methods, and administrative practices. The secrets of Ginzberg's successes lie in his dedication to work and to workers' well-being and in his preparation of well-reasoned and well-documented arguments to legions of readers and listeners.

The next essayist, the sociologist Morris Janowitz, turned his attention to what has become the "sociology of the military" even before himself serving in the Army in World War II. Like Ginzberg's, his effectiveness has come about through diffusion; his writings and counsel have left their mark in the thoughts and actions of those responsible for defense policies and those who train, equip, and lead the armed forces, rather than in particular policies, the contents of manuals, or specific laws or regulations.

I looked unavailingly for Janowitz's identification of his contributions, if any, to the passage (on the eve of the Korean War) of the Uniform Code of Military Justice—arguably one of the most important changes in our organization of military affairs in the 20th century—or even for his views about the code. What he does reveal, though, is an admiration for the pluralism of our system, a quality that he believes served to temper the debates out of which military and defense policies emerge; his own contributions to this balancing of opinions have, in his judgment, been well recognized by the parties involved.

Barber's next candidate for honors is Jo-

seph Pechman, an economist who has worked indefatigably in support of "comprehensive taxation"—that is, the taxation of all income—through laws that, as he has regularly demonstrated, would redound to the advantage of both Uncle Sam, as revenue seeker, and income earners at all levels who seek equity. Though Pechman's goals on this score have not been fully achieved, he has been a contributor to all the reforms in our Internal Revenue Service regulations that have moved toward this goal, including the reforms that began to go into effect in 1986.

The next contributor, Merton J. Peck, also an economist, has worked with a relatively small group of students and colleagues in support of the reform of regulations applicable to the transportation industry. This cadre played a substantial role in mobilizing and applying new "econometric" techniques that eventually informed arguments for the deregulation of air and surface transportation (and thus other industries) in favor of "cost-oriented" pricing systems. Their efforts have contributed to what, by the mid-1970s, virtually became a social movement.

It is worth noting that Peck and the members of his network recognized that its urgings would hurt some persons, most notably wage-earning truck drivers and airline pilots. But the reformers argued that the efficiencies realizable through deregulation would benefit the larger masses of citizens in what the late Adolph Berle usefully called "the American economic republic." Majorities of legislators were readily persuaded of the need for changes, and the social scientists' facts seemed compelling as weighed against the putative equities of the interest groups that, in regulated industries, benefited from "monopoly"-like situations.

Peter Rossi's experiences as a sociologist who was called by public officials to help sort out the conflicting results of studies regarding the criminal records of released prisoners are interesting. What effects, the studies had asked, actually resulted from the practice, endorsed by several national administrations as a way of reducing criminal recidivism, of according unemployment insurance to released prisoners? Rossi was attracted to this inquiry partly out of interest in puzzle solving, specifically in connection with the studies' methodology, and partly out of interest in the "middle-class liberal" values that informed the experimental programs.

As it turned out, the finding of successes for an unemployment insurance program in Baltimore was not replicated in the national studies on which Rossi worked; not many of the interested parties, among them prison

administrators, found it easy to endorse a program that, as Rossi's analyses suggested, generated "counterbalancing social processes": the programs provided work disincentives as well as crime disincentives. Modest successes in Maryland and California meantime seemed to be associated with program directors' ways, means, and commitments. The leaders of unsuccessful programs (in Texas and Georgia) did not pursue any of a variety of specific administrative initiatives pursued in Maryland and California.

In a candid overview, Rossi allows that "experts" can and indeed should contribute to the information available to partisans in policy debates but that resolutions ought to be struck by the interested parties in a frankly political process. Social science evidence is rarely as incontrovertible as it has been in studies of the economics of regulation. Peck, as well as Rossi and Coleman, recognizes that social science data may well not be dispositive of a given case on all counts.

The final contributor, political scientist and lawyer Alan Westin, has exercised significant influence on both public and private initiatives bearing on the protection of personal privacy, the rights and immunities of so-called whistle-blowers, and the civil rights, more generally, of all Americans. A well-organized publicist, Westin regularly presents the results of his sophisticated investigative reporting to television audiences, professional societies, American Civil Liberties Union members, corporate leaders, "op-ed" page readers, conference planners and their audiences, and book buyers. He is reassured, after over 40 years of efforts to protect the rights of citizens, by the fact that some of his apprehensions, about the impact of computer files on privacy, for example, have not substantially been borne out. The interplay of interests, as Janowitz also notes, helps to protect the rights of individuals on a variety of fronts.

Barber's own studies and his enduring professional engagement with policy issues, finally, have helped to protect the rights of social and other scientists' human subjects. Barber's respectful and kindly personal style undoubtedly (though he makes no such claims) contributes to his successes with impatient and sometimes self-righteous investigators who resent suggestions that their human subjects need formal protection against even well-intentioned "PIs" and their collaborators.

Reflections on the part of the contributors about the roles personal values have played in their work remind this reviewer that this year marks the 45th anniversary of Gunnar Myrdal's study of "the Negro problem and modern democracy," *An American*

Dilemma. That book contained a thoughtful and widely discussed methodological appendix on the futility of claiming that any social scientist's work can be objective in any meaningful sense of the word. Myrdal's reasoning underlying what amounted to an attack on "positivists" and "rank empiricists" has never been persuasively refuted.

Myrdal's prescription for dealing with what would otherwise be a conundrum was wonderfully simple: social scientists should search their souls and, having discovered the personal values and preferences that inform their selection of problems and choice of methods and measurements and the philosophical premises that are embodied in their key concepts (like "equilibrium"), should report them to their readers and listeners. The audiences who attend to social scientists' work would then be far better able to apply appropriate discounts to the investigators' inferences, arguments, and conclusions.

While Myrdal applied his urgings to the social sciences overall, he made it a special point that those engaged in studies of matters bearing on pending policy decisions have a special obligation to disclose their predisposing "sets." Barber's questions to his respondents have elicited precisely the kinds of statements Myrdal invited, and the answers help to enrich non-social-science readers' understanding of some of the problems facing those who seek to be rigorous and systematic in studies of the ways and means of social actors in different times and climes.

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Ecological Complexities

Novel Aspects of Insect-Plant Interactions.

PEDRO BARBOSA and DEBORAH K. LETOURNEAU. Eds. Wiley-Interscience, New York, 1988. xx, 362 pp., illus. \$47.50.

With millions of insect species and hundreds of thousands of plant species, finding novel aspects of interactions between insects and plants should not be too difficult. Yet most papers on such interactions dwell on a few time-honored themes such as spatial distribution or temporal dynamics. There are, however, some newer themes that have been working their way into the limelight in recent years. Among them is how insect-plant interactions affect, and are affected by, species at other trophic levels. This collection of papers explores one of the major questions on tri-trophic-level interactions: