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LETTERS

AAAS Elections and Equal Rights

In studying the outcome of the 1979 AAAS annual elections (24 Aug. 1979, p. 783; 7 Dec. 1979, p. 1170), we were struck by an apparent inequity in the electorate's treatment of the sexes. In 73 elections involving 2 to 16 candidates, we counted 224 candidates for 112 offices. We classified them as male (M) or female (F) and as elected (E) or not elected (N). Thus for all candidates:

Sex	E	N	Total
M	84	100	184
F	28	12	40
Total	112	112	224

If we eliminate from the classification all those contests involving only male candidates (there were no all-female contests), the discrepancy is even more striking.

Sex	E	N	Total
M	28	44	72
F	28	12	40
Total	56	56	112

We see that in elections where both sexes were represented, 39 percent of the male candidates won, while in contrast 70 percent of the female candidates won.

If we reject as untenable the theory that the electorate is swayed by such an irrelevant characteristic as sex, this suggests that the nominating committees are applying more exacting standards to female candidates.

Or vice versa.

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Is the Paranormal "Normal"?

Nicholas Wade (News and Comment, 4 Jan., p. 41) writes of Wagner and Monnett's conclusion that American college professors have much more positive attitudes toward extrasensory perception (ESP) than does the American population in general. They report that 15 percent think ESP is scientifically established and 50 percent think it is a likely possibility. It is more likely, however, that college professors are simply typical Americans. In a representative survey of the American population, conducted in 1973, Greeley (*1*) found that 58 percent of the population believed they had per-

sonally experienced at least one form of ESP (mind-to-mind contact with someone at a distance). Greeley further found that people who believe they have personally experienced ESP are significantly better educated and more liberal than those who do not believe they have personally experienced ESP. For those who believe that the characteristics of the majority or the more educated determine what is "normal," one may draw the interesting conclusion that people who do not think they have had a psychic experience are "abnormal!"

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References

1. A. Greeley. *The Sociology of the Paranormal: A Reconnaissance* (Sage, Beverly Hills, 1975).

Social Science: Ethics of Research

I am writing to correct some of the more blatant errors in Constance Holden's article "Ethics in social science research" (News and Comment, 2 Nov. 1979, p. 537) and to raise an issue or two for your readers.

Many items in the first two paragraphs of Holden's article are not accurate. In addition to those mentioned in the letter from Horowitz (30 Nov. 1979, p. 1022) and in the erratum in the same issue, I note the following errors. My research on impersonal sex acts in public restrooms was conducted not "in 1969" but from 1965 to 1968. Observations of these acts were made in dozens of public rest facilities rather than "in a public bathroom." My study was not "designed to cast light on society's treatment of homosexuals," noble as such a purpose might be, but to investigate a covert and highly stigmatized form of behavior engaged in by men who claim a *range* of sexual orientations and life-styles.

I did fill the role of a "watchqueen" to alert the participants to approaching intruders, although the purpose of performing those duties was to facilitate observing sexual behavior in a natural setting in the least obtrusive way possible. Rather than "lying" to the Department of Motor Vehicles (as the article's indictment reads) in order to trace license numbers of potential respondents, I misrepresented myself to the local campus police as engaging in "market research" for the purpose of protecting my respondents. The implication that I "then joined a public health survey team" in order to deceive my "subjects" is a distortion.