

ence of unions and agency staff compared to elected officials, preferences of elected officials concerning taxes as well as services, degree of organization of various citizen groups—and analyzing them with more standard Census characteristics like income, education, poverty, home ownership, and the like. The Project is distinctive in including a list of 33 specific fiscal management strategies. To probe issues of adoption of innovations, trace diffusion strategies, and sort out effects of inter-related variables, demands careful analysis of the sort undertaken in the past work by several Project participants.

National Urban Policy Issues. In several countries, and especially the U.S., fiscal austerity for cities is compounded by reductions in national government funding for local programs, as well as by inflation and recession. How are cities of different sorts weathering these developments? Scattered evidence suggests that cities are undergoing some of the most dramatic changes in decades. When city officials come together in their own association, testify in Congress, or report on problems to media, they can pinpoint city-specific problems. Yet they have difficulty specifying how widely problems and solutions are shared across states or regions. The Project can contribute to these national urban policy discussions by monitoring local policies. Fiscal strain indicators of the sort computed for smaller samples of cities can be reported nationally. Types of retrenchment strategies can be summarized. Effects of federal and state program changes can be investigated, such as stimulation-substitution issues, which may have changed from the early 1970s when enactment of General Revenue Sharing inspired work on this issue. The methods from several research traditions—from the econometric to personal fieldwork—are being used by Project participants to illuminate these questions. Officials at the Department of Housing and Urban Development have shown considerable interest in the Project to help inform the National Urban Policy Report and related policy discussions.

Conclusion

The Project is such a huge undertaking that the initial participants doubted its feasibility. It was not planned in advance, but evolved spontaneously as common concerns were recognized. It is a product of distinct austerity in research funding, yet it shows that policy analysts can innovate in how they work together. But most of all, it is driven by the dramatic changes in cities around the world, and a concern to understand them so that cities can better adapt to pressures they face. Persons with overlapping interests are welcome to attend many Project meetings typically held at national and regional professional meetings.

About the Author

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An International Social Science Research Program on Global Change

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A massive international research program, the International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme: A Study of Global Change (IGBP), has been inaugurated by the International Council of Scientific Unions (ICSU). As currently conceived, IGBP is a natural science program. Steps have been taken to launch an international social science research program on global

change that either would be part of IGBP or, though separate, would parallel and complement IGBP. A major scientific symposium will be held in Tokyo, Japan, from September 19-22, 1988, to develop a preliminary plan for this research program. A workshop was held at the Institute for Social Research in Ann Arbor, Michigan, September 9-10 to consider social science research that could be relevant to global change and to consider what actions U.S. social scientists should take to prepare for participation in an international research program on global change.

Participants in the Ann Arbor workshop joined the growing consensus in favor of launching an international social science research program on global change. Human actions have an immense impact on the earth and its environment. Changes in the earth system have tremendous consequences for humankind. The participants in the workshop concluded that an international social science research program on global change should encompass both human actions that force changes in the earth system and human responses to changes in this system. The participants thought that the agenda of the social science research program should in large measure conform with the agenda that the natural scientists have already set; the program should investigate the human dimensions of the problems that the natural scientists have chosen to study. Because some social phenomena have important indirect consequences for the earth sys-

tem, they also felt that the social science research program should contribute to and extend the agenda that the natural scientists have set so that it would include topics such as demographic and attitudinal changes.

The Ann Arbor workshop identified broad topics that would be relevant to an international social science research program on global change. These include: demographic changes and the economic consequences of such changes; surveys of attitudes and behavior; studies of the industrial metabolism of economic systems; and studies of human response and control mechanisms.

Participants in the Ann Arbor workshop strongly felt that steps should be taken soon to organize the social science community in the United States and in other countries to facilitate the development and implementation of an international social science research program on global change. Recommended actions include: appointing social scientists to the existing committee structures that have already been created to organize U.S. participation in IGBP; the National Academy of Sciences creating an ad hoc committee or a sub-committee to plan U.S. participation in an international social science research program on global change; and mobilizing other scholarly bodies in the United States, such as the Social Science Research Council and the U.S. National Committee for Man and the Biosphere.