

institutions was not interpreted from this point of view. The question has been: Are we one of the top ten? As to how serious the exclusion of certain specialized journals is will depend on future research. The field is wide open, and I await the research of others in this area.

There was no attempt made or implied to "disprove" the belief in the excellence of the universities located in the northeastern part of the United States; rather, it was to take issue with the provincialism that assumes they "graduate the more productive sociologists." Of the individuals in-

cluded in the Northeast in Table 3, 71 per cent received their doctorates from "Ivy League" schools, and the vast majority of the remaining graduated from such reputable colleges as Pennsylvania State, the New School for Social Research, New York University, and the University of Pittsburgh. The point is that the training of capable sociologists is not confined to a particular geographical region within the United States.

LELAND J. AXELSON

Washington State University

TWO NASATIRS

January 25, 1961

To the Editor:

I wish to call to your attention an improbable case of mistaken identity.

While both of us possess title to the same sur- and given names, the David Nasatir who coauthored the letter which appeared

on page 366 of your January, 1961, issue and I are not the same person. That letter commented upon *A Basic Course in Sociological Statistics: A Textbook and Workbook Combined*, by Morris Zelditch, Jr.

E (UGENE) DAVID NASATIR

Columbia University

Family

THE URBAN FACUILY

January 9, 1961

To the Editor:

I would like to use the Letters medium as a way to present a hypothesis about an emergent of urban society which may be stated so simply that it does not require the space of an article. But the hypothesis seems so likely to be accurate, and so central to our changing society, that it should, I believe, be stated in the journal literature.

Since the Chicago studies of the twenties, American sociologists have tended to assume (1) that limited opportunities for today's highly specialized occupations force the head of the urban family and his dependents to be spatially mobile and (2) that, as a consequence of the nuclear family's mobility, that an extended family sys-

tem probably could not develop in urban society.

But is this sequence, in fact, inevitable? I doubt it. Today our gigantic urban areas and their environs—such as in Chicago, New York, and Los Angeles—contain almost every conceivable occupational specialty within the same small area. The modern urbanite can find positions fitting his specialty within the same urban complex in which he lives. One does not have to leave town to find an appropriate job. Moreover, today's urbanites are largely in the second or third generation of residence in the city. It takes only a few generations for marriage, children, and the childrens' marriages, etc., to link the individual tightly into a web of kinship. By now, a large proportion of the residents of large urban centers doubtless have many such links to

The editor screwed up
the name

Also a mark
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Chicago people
were incurred
at this
letter. I +
challenged one
of the things
they had been
paying for
many
decades.

others in the same city, and these carry with them a complex set of mutual obligations—for evening and week-end visiting, family picnics, participation in the family church. A great many people, doubtless, find pleasure in fulfilling these obligations. Could it be that the job—once so central to the urbanite's whole being—serves now as an economic support for an enjoyable extended-family life? In a word, is there an emergent urban familism?

And, if urban familism exists to any large degree, is it important? Any sociologist knows that a widespread change in one sector of a social system has repercussions for other sectors. If a substantial degree of urban familism is developing, we can predict that: (1) urbanites will be less and less concerned with the job as a mode of self-expression and, therefore, less willing to sacrifice family life for success at work and, in turn, therefore, will experience less vertical mobility; (2) urbanites will be less amenable to direct influence by the mass media (because they will have less time to attend to the media and because they will not be willing to risk the family's disapproval by adopting new ideas); (3) urbanites will be more amenable to manipulation by influencing the leaders of opinion in the family; (4) urbanites will be more concerned with finding leisure activities which can involve large numbers of the family;

(5) familistic cities and subsections of cities, over time, will develop distinctive styles of expressive culture, in language, folk architecture, religious patterns, etc. Other consequences could be hypothesized, but these seem to illustrate the point.

I know that this runs counter to much of our prevailing thought in America, and I know that there are countervailing forces, such as the schools and universities. But, if the hypothesis of urban familism is accurate, even the latter may be influenced by it, because they, too, may be increasingly staffed by the new family urbanites. If so, the faculties, too, will be less interested in activity which would compete with family life: general scholarly production will decrease, and local cultural orientation will increase.

In any case, the hypothesis of urban familism seems so plausible and so important, if valid, that it seems to call for exploratory research: first, to decide whether familism really exists in the city; second, to determine its extent; and, third, to assess its consequences. Let us hope that research already begun in the area by sociologists of the urban universities will be expanded in the near future.

A. O. HALLER

Michigan State University

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