

An Empirical Examination Of Housing And Society

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*This article presents an empirical examination of articles published during the first eight years of **Housing and Society**. In order to assess the contents of the journal, articles were evaluated in terms of area of focus, author, and citations. Implications on the future development of **Housing and Society**, within the context of the journal's original objectives, are discussed.*

In 1974 an important development in the scientific study of housing occurred: the founding of the *Housing Educators Journal*. Resulting from the continual expansion of the *AAHE Newsletter*, the journal was designed to promote the objectives of the American Association of Housing Educators. According to the first issue of the *Housing Educators Journal*, these objectives consisted of the following:

1. A better understanding of the role of housing in the well being of the American family and its members;
2. The development of standards and guides to strengthen teaching and research in housing as an academic subject at the college level;
3. The exchange of knowledge and information among those persons with common interests in housing for the American family, as a subject in higher education, and among those persons and agencies, groups, and professional organizations involved in the improvement of housing for families;
4. The stimulation of graduate work designed to increase the quantity and quality of professional workers in the area of housing; and

5. The dissemination of information on current developments in housing.

When the *Housing Educators Journal* first appeared on the scene it was coedited by Suzanne Lindamood and Sherman Hanna and had an editorial board consisting of ten members. After the publication of two issues in 1974, the journal was published three times a year starting in 1975. In addition, a proceedings issue of each annual AAHE meeting was published. In 1978, the journal's name was changed to *Housing and Society* to appeal to a broader audience and to better reflect the orientation of journal articles.

Between 1974 and 1981, *Housing and Society* prospered as a journal, experiencing a significant increase in both quantity and quality of material. During this time period over one hundred articles were published in the journal along with numerous book reviews, literature lists, program descriptions, and other pertinent housing information. As 1981 drew to a close, Lindamood and Hanna still held the editorial positions with Lindamood as editor and Hanna as associate editor, while seventeen prominent housing scholars served on the editorial board of *Housing and Society*.

Considering the rapid growth and development of *Housing and Society* during its initial eight years of existence, it seems appropriate to review the journal's contents to understand where it has been and where it is

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going. Our purpose is to empirically examine the contents of *Housing and Society*, 1974-81, in an effort to answer three questions: 1) What has been published in the journal? 2) Who has published in the journal? and 3) What sources of housing information have been utilized in the journal? After answering these questions, we will assess the journal in terms of its stated objectives and offer suggestions for future development.

Methods

Copies of all journal issues (excluding proceedings of annual meetings) published during 1974-81 were obtained and a codebook was constructed to record determined pieces of information. Regarding the contents of articles, simple tabulation produced the number of articles and number of authors per year. All articles were carefully read and designated as either original research; review of literature, previous research results and programs; or description of model homes and computer programs. Articles were then categorized into one of ten identifiable topic categories: energy-efficient housing; neighborhoods; policy; norms, preferences and satisfactions; financial aspects; elderly and handicapped needs; post-occupancy evaluation; sociological and psychological aspects; education; and interiors, furnishings and equipment. Only articles were categorized into the above classifications, thereby excluding book reviews, program notes, and literature lists.

In terms of who has published in the journal, authors' university and departmental affiliations were determined by the descriptions of authors published in the first page of each article. Thus, reported affiliations pertain to the university and department with which an author was affiliated at the time of article publication. Names of the most published authors were obtained by recording the number of articles authored or co-authored by each individual. Since several people appeared as authors of more than one article, the total number of authors (which includes author duplication) is larger than the number of individually different authors.

Finally, sources of information utilized in articles were determined. The number of citations per article

was tabulated and then all citations were categorized into the following types of publications: book; journal; report, bulletin and government document; and dissertation and thesis. Journal articles were further analyzed to discover the most cited journals.

Results

The question of what has been published in *Housing and Society* is addressed in Tables 1 and 2. As shown in Table 1, a total of 113 articles were published in the journal during the 1974-81 time period. A mean of 14.1 articles were published per year with the seven articles in 1974 being the low figure and the 21 articles in 1981 being the high figure. The mean number of authors appearing in the journal per year was 23.2, with a mean of 1.6 authors per article. Generally, a trend toward greater numbers of both articles and authors can be detected as the journal progressed through the years. The journal issues published in 1978 seem to represent a transition point in the direction of increased quantity of articles and authors.

With the exception of 1974, original research formed the basis of a majority of articles. A mean of 65.5 percent of all articles published between 1974 and 1981 were based on original research, comprised primarily of survey research and case study results. A distant second were articles which reviewed literature, previous research results and housing programs (31.0 percent), followed by descriptions of either model homes or housing computer programs (3.5 percent). This distribution of type of article varied significantly during the eight years examined, although the rankings tended to be consistent. Statistical analyses utilized in articles ranged from frequencies and percentages to t-tests and analyses of variance, correlation and regression analyses, and discriminant and log-linear analyses. There was a clear pattern of increased sophistication in types of statistical analyses reported in articles between the early and more recent issues of the journal.

Table 2 presents a rank ordering of article topics. Generally, articles emphasizing the social aspects of housing appeared most frequently in the journal. Articles on housing norms, preferences and satisfactions accounted for 15.0 percent of the total number of

Table 1. — Distribution of Articles, Authors and Types of Articles, 1974-1981

	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	Mean
Number of articles	7	9	9	13	19	17	18	21	14.1
Number of authors	7	14	14	25	27	33	24	42	23.2
Percentage distribution by type of article									
Original research	14.3	55.6	100.0	53.8	73.7	76.5	61.1	66.7	65.5
Review of literature, previous research results and programs	85.7	33.3	0.0	38.5	26.3	17.6	38.9	28.5	31.0
Description of model homes and computer programs	0.0	11.1	0.0	7.7	0.0	5.9	0.0	4.8	3.5

Table 2. — Rank Order of Article Topics, 1974-1981

Topic	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	Totals	%
Norms, preferences and satisfactions	0	3	2	3	2	4	0	3	17	15.0
Energy-efficient housing	0	1	2	1	0	1	0	9	14	12.4
Financial aspects	1	2	0	1	0	0	6	3	13	11.5
Sociological and psychological aspects	1	1	1	4	2	4	0	0	13	11.5
Education	1	1	0	1	8	1	0	0	12	10.6
Post-occupancy evaluation	0	0	0	0	1	4	6	0	11	9.7
Policy	4	0	0	0	0	0	1	5	10	8.9
Interiors, furnishings and equipment	0	1	3	1	2	2	0	0	9	8.0
Elderly and handicapped needs	0	0	1	1	3	1	0	1	7	6.2
Neighborhoods	0	0	0	1	1	0	5	0	7	6.2
Total number of articles	7	9	9	13	19	17	18	21	113	100.0

articles published, followed by the topics of energy-efficient housing (12.4 percent), financial aspects of housing (11.5 percent), and sociological and psychological aspects of housing (11.5 percent). An examination of article topics published each year reveals the influence of special journal issues, illustrated by the nine articles on energy-efficient housing published in 1981 (special issue on housing energy conservation) and the eight articles on education published in 1978 (special issue on housing education methods). None of the topics were covered on a yearly basis, with articles dealing with housing norms, preferences and satisfactions published at the most regular intervals (six out of eight years). It is interesting to note that some topics lost popularity over the time period, particularly the

sociological and psychological aspects of housing as well as interiors, furnishings and equipment. The relatively low number of articles published regarding housing education seems to justify the journal name change.

Tables 3-5 deal with the question of who has published in the journal. Turning first to university affiliation, a total of 57 universities were each represented by at least one author. The 15 universities represented by four or more authors are ranked in Table 3. Purdue University and Texas Tech University tied as the universities represented by the most authors with 12 each. There exists a considerable drop to the third ranked university, Cornell University with eight authors, and then a rather tight clustering of the remain-

ing 12 universities. Of the total number of 186 authors who published in *Housing and Society* between 1974 and 1981, slightly over one-half were affiliated with these 15 universities. While it is clear that authors affiliated with a relatively small number of universities dominated the journal's contents during this time period, no single university emerged as the leader in housing research as reflected by *Housing and Society* publications.

Table 3. — Rank Order of Universities with Four or More Authors, 1974-1981

Rank	University	No. of Authors
1	Purdue	12
1	Texas Tech	12
3	Cornell	8
4	Memphis State	7
4	Virginia Tech	7
4	Washington State	7
7	U. of Tennessee	6
8	City U. of New York	5
8	Kansas State	5
8	Oklahoma State	5
11	U. of Alabama	4
11	U. of Arizona	4
11	Auburn	4
11	Clemson	4
11	U. of Nebraska	4

Housing is of interest to scholars in a variety of professions and disciplines; therefore, it is important to identify the departmental affiliation of authors published in the journal. Table 4 presents a rank ordering of departmental affiliations of authors who appeared in the journal between 1974-81. Clearly, home economics dominated the journal's contents, as authors affiliated with home economics programs comprised 50.0 percent of the total number of authors. Sociology ranked a distant second with 10.8 percent of all authors. It can be noted that authors from a wide variety of professions and disciplines published in the journal, with nonacademicians (i.e., government and private employees) making substantial contributions to *Housing and Society*.

When attention is directed at individual authors, ten scholars authored or coauthored three or more articles

Table 4. — Rank Order of Departmental Affiliations of Authors, 1974-1981

Rank	Affiliation	No. of Authors	%
1	Home economics	93	50.0
2	Sociology	20	10.8
3	Private employees	13	7.0
4	Economics/business/finance	12	6.4
4	Environment/design	12	6.4
4	Government employees	12	6.4
7	Architecture/engineering	7	3.8
8	Urban/regional planning	5	2.7
8	Psychology	5	2.7
-	Other areas	7	3.8
Total number of authors		186	100.0

published in the journal. Table 5 presents a rank ordering of these authors. The major finding displayed in the table is that there were no individuals who dominated the articles published in *Housing and Society*. In fact, a total of 150 different individuals published articles in the journal during 1974-81 (with 36 duplications resulting in the 186 total author figure); thus, a large number of people contributed to the journal.

The sources of information utilized by *Housing and Society* authors is an important issue because it reflects the amount of diversity of reading by those individuals published in the journal. As displayed in Table 6, the

Table 5. — Rank Order of Authors with Three or More Articles, 1974-1981

Rank	Author	No. of Articles
1	Kenneth R. Tremblay, Jr.	5
2	Sherman Hanna	4
2	Richard W. Henton	4
4	Kyle Jane Coulter	3
4	Don A. Dillman	3
4	Joye J. Dillman	3
4	Gertrude Fish	3
4	Charlan Graff	3
4	Marjorie Inman	3
4	Suzanne Lindamood	3

Table 6. — Distribution of Citations

	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	Mean
Number of citations	87	71	115	231	209	283	208	296	187.5
Number of citations per article	12.4	7.9	12.8	17.8	11.0	16.6	11.6	14.1	13.0
Percentage distribution by type of citation									
Book	34.5	45.1	34.8	34.2	48.3	36.4	37.5	27.0	36.2
Journal	41.4	22.5	40.9	44.6	30.2	32.2	25.5	36.2	34.4
Report, bulletin and government document	9.2	25.4	11.3	13.0	13.4	13.8	22.6	30.7	18.3
Dissertation and thesis	4.6	0.0	3.5	1.3	3.3	2.1	2.9	2.4	2.5
Other	10.3	7.0	9.5	6.9	4.8	15.5	11.5	3.7	8.6

number of citations per year ranged from a low of 71 in 1975 to a high of 296 in 1981, with a mean of 187.5 citations per year. The mean number of citations per article ranged from 7.9 in 1975 to 17.8 in 1977, with an overall mean of 13.0 citations per article. The number of citations per year and per article did not show a consistent pattern of decrease or increase during the time period examined. In fact, it appears that authors were only slightly more likely to cite previous research results and theories in 1981 than they were in 1974.

Focusing on the type of citations reveals that books were most frequently cited (36.2 percent), followed closely by journals (34.4 percent). The relative ranking of books and journals changed regularly with no consistent pattern. Reports, bulletins and government documents accounted for 18.3 percent of all citations, followed by other publications such as magazines and newspapers (8.6 percent), and dissertations and theses (2.5 percent). The only general pattern detected in type of publication relates to the greater use of reports, bulletins and government documents through the years.

Since journals are often considered to be the flagships of a profession or discipline, it was decided to conduct further analysis of article citations in an effort to rank the journals most frequently cited in *Housing and Society*. A rank ordering of the 15 most cited journals appears in Table 7. The most cited journal was *Housing and Society* with a total of 30 citations, followed closely by the *Journal of the American Insti-*

tute of Planners (26), *American Sociological Review* (25), and *Environment and Behavior* (23). Two striking results emerge from the table. First, there exist no journals which can be regarded as the major sources of housing information. Of the 516 journal citations which appeared in *Housing and Society*, less than one-half derived from the 15 most cited journals. This represents a wide diversity in the housing field. Second, sociology journals were more likely to be cited than home economics journals, despite the fact that a

Table 7. — Rank Order of 15 Most Cited Journals, 1974-1981

Rank	Journal	No. of Citations
1	Housing and Society	30
2	Journal of the American Institute of Planners	26
3	American Sociological Review	25
4	Environment and Behavior	23
5	American Journal of Sociology	19
6	Journal of Marriage and the Family	14
7	Land Economics	13
8	Home Economics Research Journal	12
8	Social Forces	12
10	Journal of Social Issues	10
11	Gerontologist	8
11	Journal of Home Economics	8
13	American Economics Review	7
13	Social Problems	7
15	Journal of Housing	6

vast majority of authors were affiliated with home economics programs.

Discussion and Summary

An empirical evaluation of *Housing and Society*, 1974-81, revealed several important findings: 1) there was a trend toward increased quantity of both articles and authors, 2) articles based on original research and which dealt with the social aspects of housing dominated the journal's contents, 3) authors affiliated with home economics programs and a relatively small number of universities were most likely to appear in the journal although many different individuals made contributions, and 4) books and journals were cited to the greatest extent in articles with *Housing and Society* being the most frequently cited journal.

Overall, *Housing and Society* appears to reflect the housing field as a whole. The scientific study of housing is conducted by a large number of individuals who have different housing interests, amounts and types of professional training, reference groups, and affiliations. In short, the diversity and fragmentation of the housing field was mirrored in the contents of the initial eight years of *Housing and Society*. Such diversity and fragmentation has both advantages and disadvantages. On the positive side, the journal has the potential to appeal to all those individuals interested in housing. On the negative side, it is extremely difficult to please everyone with the contents of each issue or volume of the journal.

Given the inherent difficulty of pleasing all individuals interested in the housing field, it is not surprising that *Housing and Society* has only been partially successful in meeting the objectives stated earlier in this article. The journal has clearly satisfied objectives one, four, and five. Through the publication of over one hundred articles dealing with the multifaceted aspects of housing, *Housing and Society* has contributed to a better understanding of the role of housing in the well being of families, provided an information base from which graduate students in housing can draw in their studies, and produced an efficient means of disseminating information on current developments in housing. However, the relatively low number of arti-

cles concerned with housing education has hampered the effort to satisfy the objective of developing standards and guides to strengthen the teaching of housing. The same is true for extension and other service related activities, as articles dealing with application aspects of housing have rarely been published. Although *Housing and Society* is an excellent dissemination device, objective three has not been completely satisfied because of a failure to adequately incorporate all housing topics in the journal on a regular basis as well as a problem in convincing scholars from a wide variety of disciplines to publish in the journal.

It should be noted that the degree of diversity that has existed is due in part to special efforts made. Special topic issues encouraged submission of articles on particular subjects that were considered important but were underrepresented in usual submissions. Some articles were solicited from authors with known expertise. Further, extra efforts were made in the review and editing process so that articles in less represented areas would reach publication. If no articles are submitted in particular areas, however, those areas will not be represented.

Several recommendations can be suggested for the future development of *Housing and Society*. First, the number of articles dealing with the application aspects of housing should be increased, particularly those articles concerned with teaching and extension. Second, it is important to maintain an adequate mix of housing topics in each journal issue in order to appeal to a broad audience. This recommendation implies a reduction of special journal issues and perhaps an increase in the number of pages per issue. Third, an effort should be mounted to solicit manuscript submissions from housing scholars in areas not adequately represented in *Housing and Society*. Economists, planners, architects, political scientists, individuals directly involved with the formulation or implementation of housing policy, and others should be encouraged to publish in the journal. Finally, it is essential to maximize the exposure of the journal via an increase in subscriptions at the individual, library, and institutional levels. *Housing and Society* obtained a great deal of success between 1974 and 1981, but continued improvement is warranted.