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I would like to present some data to provide information about the PEWS and ASA’s membership over time. I hope the data provide a help for understanding the overall picture of PEWS membership change.

I will present the time-series change of the PEWS and ASA membership and year-on-year percentage change of both since the inception of PEWS in 1978. I will also add the comparison of membership numbers and percentage changes of PEWS with the Sociology of Development and Global and Transnational Sociology sections in the past ten years.

First, I would like to present the PEWS membership counts and its percentage of ASA membership since its inception. Figure 1 shows the PEWS membership counts since 1978. Overall, the PEWS membership count shows a slow increase, and then it has kept the membership in the range between 350 and 450. The membership dropped to 373 in 2017 but there were similar drops in 2009 (386), 2001 (378), and 1994 (382).

Figure 1: PEWS membership count since 1978

Figure 2 shows the percentages of PEWS membership of total ASA membership. It is a similar story as in Figure 1, except that the peak percentage (3.5%) was reached in 2016.

Figure 2: Percentage of PEWS membership of total ASA membership

In order to look at the PEWS membership change relative to the ASA total membership, I compared the year-on-year percentage changes of both. Figure 3 shows the percentage change of PEWS and ASA membership from 1978 to 2017. Throughout the time, the growth and decline of PEWS membership has been influenced by the same ASA membership change. The decline of membership in PEWS has been affected by the decline of membership in ASA. This implies that ASA membership change has been the largest factor influencing PEWS membership change, rather than PEWS internal issues.

Figure 3: Percentage change of PEWS, ASA, and PEWS in total ASA since 1978

Lastly, in order to compare the change of PEWS and the competing sections, the Sociology of Development (SD) and the Global and Transnational Sociology (GTS) for the recent years, their membership counts (Figure 4), their percentage of the ASA membership (Figure 5), and percentage of total ASA data (Figure 6) are presented below.

Figure 4 shows the membership counts of the three sections. From 2016 to 2017, the PEWS dropped its membership (39 members, -9%); the Development of Sociology increased (27 members, +6%); the Global and Transnational Sociology kept the number almost the same (one member loss, -0.14%). The ASA membership in the same period declined, losing 289 members (-2%).

It is possible that the migration of PEWS members to the Development of Sociology, Global and Transnational Sociology, and other new sections might have occurred, which caused a drop in the number of PEWS membership in the past ten years. Another possible cause of the drop of PEWS membership count in 2017 could be the change of the ASA’s method that allows the sections to buy gift memberships for students. The period for the sections to be able to gift memberships within a year was shortened in 2017. The drop of PEWS membership counts in 2017 could be that PEWS have been dependent too much on the member recruitment system over the years.

Figure 4: PEWS, Sociology of Development, Global and Transnational Sociology section’s member counts since 2008

Figure 5: Percentage change of PEWS, Sociology of Development and Global and Transnational Sociology section

Figure 6: Percentage of PEWS, Sociology of Development, and Global and Transnational Sociology section in total ASA membership since 2008

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