

RESEARCH REPORTS

Reviews of new research at public agencies and private institutions

"Deregulation, Privatization, and Air Travel Safety."

The Heartland Institute, 634 S. Wabash Rd., Chicago, Ill. 60605. 27 pp. \$4.50.
Authors: *John Semmens and Dianne Kresich*

Has airline travel become unsafe at any price?

Since Congress passed the Airline Deregulation Act of 1978, airline travel has nearly doubled, reaching some 325 billion passenger miles annually. Dozens of new airlines have been created and fares have dropped.

But every fiery airline crash brings fresh charges that safety has suffered. In fact, say Semmens and Kresich, both economists at the Laissez Faire Institute in Arizona, airline

safety was improving before deregulation and has continued to get better.

Despite dramatic increases in air traffic, the accident rate has continued to fall by 6 percent per year. Researchers at MIT calculate that "the average person would have to take a flight every day for the next 29,000 years before being involved in a fatal crash."

True, the authors say, reports of "near collisions" have jumped recently (up 26 percent between 1986 and 1987).

But the vast majority of these incidents involve private aircraft, which have not been affected by deregulation. The key to further improvements in air safety, the authors insist, is building more airports—no major new ones have opened since 1973—and separating commercial from general aviation. What stands in the way? The Federal Aviation Administration's remaining regulations and the red tape of the local governments that build and operate airports.

"Religious Change In America."

Harvard Univ. Press, Cambridge, Mass. 02138. 133 pp. \$25.
Author: *Andrew M. Greeley*

"When the Social Science Research Council invited me to prepare this book," writes Andrew Greeley, "its letter assumed that one of the major tasks of a study of religious indicators over the past half-century would be to document the 'secularization' of the American population."

This study by the University of Arizona sociologist (and Catholic priest and popular novelist) is bound to disappoint the Council. Surveying public opinion data stretching back as far as 1940, Greeley found some changes where none would be expected (a decline in church attendance among Catholics) and little change where much would be expected (no upsurge in Protestant fundamentalist sentiment). But in matters of personal faith, America remains a nation of believers—so much so that many self-proclaimed

"nonbelievers" (five percent of the population) regularly pray to, well, something.

Three quarters of Catholics and Protestants (smaller groups could not be accurately surveyed) believe in the divinity of Christ and in an afterlife, the same as during the 1940s. More strongly than even the Irish (not to mention Italians, Germans, and Swedes), Americans believe that "God is important in their lives."

Catholics account for about 25 percent of the U.S. population, Protestants 65 percent, Jews two percent. The proportion claiming "no affiliation" grew from two percent in 1963 to seven percent in 1980, where it has remained. Greeley expects that number to decline again as the baby-boom generation ages.

Church attendance—40 percent of the population says that it has attended church during

the past seven days—is the same as it was in 1939. Yet attendance was once even higher: It peaked at 49 percent in 1958.

What happened? Most of the post-1958 decline occurred among Catholics, Greeley finds, and most of that happened after 1969, when Pope Paul VI issued the famous encyclical, *Humanae Vitae*, which forbade Catholics to use most forms of birth control. By 1975, the decline had halted. The net effect: not mass defections from the Church but less regular attendance.

Among Protestants, Greeley says, there has been a great game of denominational "musical chairs." As everybody knows, the "mainline" churches, especially the Methodists and Presbyterians, have lost many members to other denominations, which now claim the loyalty of up to 60

percent of the nation's Protestants. About one-third of the movers switch when they marry, and others seem to leave because of the involvement of the mainline churches in liberal social and political causes. But only about half of them embrace a literal interpretation of the Bible. Despite the prominence of fundamentalist TV preachers, Greeley believes that most of these switchers prefer to leave politics of all kinds behind when they leave the mainline.

Catholics remain more avid church-goers than Protestants. Less than a third of 20-year-old Catholics or Protestants attend church every week; by the time they reach their early forties, 51 percent of the Catholics and 34 percent of the Protestants

are no longer staying home to read the Sunday newspaper.

When the collection plate comes around, however, Protestants are more generous than Catholics. During the early 1960s, members of each group gave about \$140 annually. By 1984, Protestants were giving \$580, Catholics only \$320, failing even to match increases in inflation. That costs the Catholic Church in America some \$6 billion annually.

This occurred despite a remarkable change in the relative socioeconomic status of the two groups. By the early 1960s, white, non-Hispanic Catholics had achieved virtual parity with comparable Protestants in terms of education and income. Today, they are ahead. During 1980-84, for example,

Italian-American Catholics earned an average of \$30,321 annually, while Presbyterians earned \$27,513. Why haven't Catholics shared their new wealth with the Church? Greeley blames disaffection with Rome's teachings on birth control and sex. Indeed, surveys show that Catholics now have more liberal attitudes on matters sexual and social than Protestants do.

With apologies to the Social Science Research Council, Greeley thinks that little has changed beneath the surface. Christians, he says, have "shown remarkable skill in drawing from their faith what they want and need regardless of current organizational and theological fashions among their elites."

"U.S. Army Guard & Reserve: Rhetoric, Realities, Risks."

The Brookings Institution, 1775 Mass. Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036. 162 pp. \$8.95.

Authors: *Martin Binkin and William W. Kaufman*

It is not very fashionable these days to talk about preparations for war. Yet as reliance on the 44-year-old formula of nuclear deterrence in Europe diminishes, the importance of conventional forces increases.

Surveying the capabilities of the U.S. Army, Binkin and Kaufman, both Brookings analysts, are dismayed. Since 1970, and especially since the end of the draft in 1973, Army planners have been relying increasingly on reserve forces—the National Guard and the Army Reserve—that are in fact quite unreliable.

The regular Army (772,000 troops today versus 973,000 in 1964) is now structured so that it can barely fight without reserves. Traditionally, reserves have been used largely as re-

inforcements. If war broke out in Europe, according to the Congressional Budget Office, reserves would be called upon to provide 42 percent of the Army's manpower (300,000 men and women) on the European front during the critical first month of fighting.

The federal Army Reserve (602,000 troops) would supply most of the help during the first month, chiefly through combat support services such as supplies, engineering, and maintenance. From the Army National Guard (459,000 members nominally under the control of state governors) would come mostly combat units.

"If history is any guide," the authors write, "the contemporary Army's unprecedented dependence on the reserves is a

risky venture." Troops called up on several occasions since World War II—during the Korean War, the 1961 Berlin Crisis, and the Vietnam War—have been badly underprepared. Mobilizing the Army reserves has always had significant political repercussions at home and abroad: During the Vietnam War, President Lyndon B. Johnson delayed using the Army Reserve until 1968 (and then summoned only 20,000 troops) because he feared the erosion of domestic political support for the war. And the reservists themselves, with strong political support in Congress and elsewhere in Washington, have often resisted or shaped the character of mobilization.

Such political constraints

were eased only slightly in 1976 when Congress gave the president the power to activate up to 50,000 reservists (since raised to 200,000) without declaring a state of national emergency. Likewise, reserve

performance has been improved but remains disappointing. About a third of the units counted on during the first month of war would not be ready; reserve units lack about 30 percent (\$17 billion worth)

of their authorized equipment.

Reality and rhetoric must both be adjusted, the authors conclude. The reserves need more training and more equipment, and the regular Army must rely on them less.

"The Diverted Dream: Community Colleges and the Promise of Educational Opportunity in America, 1900-1985."

Oxford Univ. Press, 200 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10016. 312 pp. \$24.95.

Authors: *Steven Brint and Jerome Karabel*

There is no greater testament to this nation's worship of equality of opportunity than its two-year community colleges. These uniquely American institutions, which now enroll some four million students, including half of the nation's college freshmen, were born nearly a century ago in response to growing public demand for access to higher education and thus to the American Dream. The age of the self-made man was ending; anybody who wanted to get ahead in the new era of corporate capitalism needed a college education. The community college seemed the perfect solution.

But during the past two decades, write Brint and Karabel, sociologists at Yale and Berkeley, respectively, the nation's community colleges have been quietly transformed into vocational schools. No longer serving as stepping stones to four-year institutions, they now largely prepare students for work that will limit their opportunities for advancement in American society.

Actually, the authors say, the community college was born illegitimate. The first such institution, Joliet Junior College, was created in 1901 at the behest of William Rainey Harper, president of the University of

Chicago. Like many other U.S. university administrators of his day, Harper worried that the growing democratization of higher education would distract top universities from advanced research and graduate training. He even offered students at Chicago an associate's degree with the hope, he wrote in 1902, that some would "give up college work at the end of the sophomore year." But he and others saw the independent two-year "junior" college as an even better diversion.

By 1928, there were 248 of them, both publicly and privately run, enrolling some 45,000 students. But "administrators found that to legitimate their institutions, they had to emulate the first two years of a traditional college education," the authors write. In the popular mind, the two-year schools were "democracy's colleges," giving their graduates the chance to move up to more prestigious four-year institutions, and ultimately, to high-paying white-collar and professional jobs. Thus they were called "junior" colleges for the first 70 years of their existence.

Yet at no time since 1901 have more than about one-third of junior-college graduates actually transferred to four-year schools.

Tensions between goals and

realities gave rise during the 1920s to a quest among junior-college administrators for a new mission, spearheaded by men like Leonard V. Koos, a professor of education at the University of Minnesota and a popular lecturer at meetings of the American Association of Junior Colleges. According to the authors, Koos and his allies argued that junior colleges "could 'democratically' guide less capable students toward their place in society without subjecting them to the 'ruthless' but socially necessary elimination awaiting them at the university." They urged the junior colleges to transform themselves into "terminal" vocational schools for the "semiprofessions," educating future nurses, insurance agents, shipping department heads, forest rangers, and cafeteria managers.

Junior-college administrators liked the idea. There was only one catch: Students did not. By 1940, 150,000 students were enrolled in junior colleges (10 percent of all undergraduates), but barely a third of them agreed to sign up for the highly-touted "terminal" courses in vocational education.

After World War II the drumbeat for vocational education grew louder, as Wash-

Potomac Fever?

The U.S. House of Representatives, which the Founding Fathers expected to be the government's most sensitive barometer of public opinion, has instead become something like a faculty of tenured politicians. Last year, despite protests of low pay, 94 percent of its members ran for reelection; 98 percent of those 409 incumbents were returned to office. In a report for the Congressional Research Service, Analyzing Reelection Rates of House Incumbents: 1790-1988, David C. Huckabee finds what is unusual is not the high success rate among incumbents but the percentage of veteran Congressmen seeking another tour of duty in Washington.

Incumbents who have sought reelection apparently have always been relatively successful. More specifically, the proportion of incumbents running for reelection who were returned to office has rarely dropped below 70 percent (only seven times, 1842, 1854, 1862, 1874, 1890, 1894, 1932) and often has exceeded 80 percent (73 out of 100). Incumbent return rates exceeding 90 percent were experienced in the early Congresses (every election from 1790-1810) and since 1968 (except for the post-Watergate 1974 elec-

tion). Resignations, deaths, and retirements apparently account for much of the difference in return rates for the entire House between the 19th and 20th centuries.

What does appear to have changed over time is the percentage of incumbents seeking reelection. For most of the 19th century, this percentage was in the 60-70 percent range. With the trend towards careerism that emerged in the late 19th century and accelerated in the 20th century, this percentage rose to the 85-95 percent range.

ington, big business, foundations, and the higher education establishment joined the crusade. The peculiar mixed agenda of opportunity and elitism remained in place. As Clark Kerr, the architect of the University of California system's explosive growth during the 1960s, later wrote: "I considered the vast expansion of the community colleges to be the first line of defense for the University of California as an institution of international academic renown."

Yet junior-college students persisted in seeing themselves as being bound for bigger and better things, and enrollment grew ever larger.

The "great transformation," Brint and Karabel write, did not occur until the recession-plagued 1970s. Persuaded by exaggerated news media reports that a bachelor's degree was no longer a ticket to the good life, many junior college

students began opting for vocational courses. It was at about this time, the authors add, that the term *community college*—emphasizing local ties—came into wide use.

Administrators capitalized on the new trend by offering even more vocational courses and aggressively recruiting part-time, adult, and other "marginal" students. Enrollment jumped from 1.6 million students in 1970 to more than 4.5 million at the end of the decade. By then, about 62 percent of the students were enrolled in occupational fields, and only about 15 percent moved on to four-year schools.

Only recently have the costs of the "great transformation" become clear, the authors write. Several studies show that community college graduates wind up, as one might expect, in lower-status and lower-paying jobs than their better-educated peers. But

many even fail to find any jobs at all in their chosen fields. Since 1983, total enrollment has dipped, and criticism of some of the community colleges' marketing excesses—courses in personal awareness and the like—have grown.

Today, the community college faces another crisis of identity, the authors warn. They concede that these institutions must continue to serve what education professionals call a "cooling-out" function: encouraging some students to lower their sights. America generates more ambition for upward mobility than it can possibly satisfy. Yet at the same time, Brint and Karabel believe that community colleges must return to the older ideal of academically oriented democratic education, perhaps preparing only some students to move up the educational ladder, but preparing all of them to be better citizens.