

INTER-OFFICE CORRESPONDENCE

200  
Set, Research  
Kinsey  
DATE: March 8, 1951

FROM: WW

TO:

AG		AG
RSM		RSM
CIB		CIBA

COMMENTS:

APR 11 1951

SUBJECT:

Before calling Cochran on the phone, I decided to call John Tukey at Princeton. He is closer by, and I have worked with him so long and intimately that I knew that he would talk to me pretty freely - probably more freely than Cochran would.

I read to Dr. Tukey the relevant portion of the draft of your general description for the April docket. Dr. Tukey's immediate reaction was that what you have said is rather definitely too optimistic in tone, if not indeed in content.

It is useful to divide comments on this situation into two categories: comments concerning the statistical manipulation of the data which exist, not inquiring into the sampling or questioning system; and the more basic comments which one would like to make concerning the original sampling procedures.

With respect to the first set of comments, Dr. Tukey feels that they have made a good deal of progress with Dr. Kinsey. When I asked him whether Dr. Kinsey had been cooperative, receptive, and open-minded about his work with the committee, Dr. Tukey replied that there had been some rather heavy going, and that it had taken a good deal of education to get Kinsey to see some of their points, but that, on the whole, they had made a considerable amount of progress on the various aspects of statistical interpretation of the existing data. Tukey feels that Volume 2 is certainly going to be better than it would have if they had not been called in. For one thing, it was discovered that there were far too few data to support certain interpretations. Most matters of this sort have been cleared up.

But on the much more basic issue of the original method of sampling, it is in the nature of the situation that no progress is possible at this stage. All of that is over and done with. I think it is clear, from my conversation, that Tukey himself has pretty grave doubts as to whether useful and significant generalizations about the population as a whole can actually be inferred from the kind of samples which Dr. Kinsey used. Dr. Tukey obviously thinks that it is a very great shame that, when this

work was initiated several years ago, use was not made of the then available knowledge concerning good sampling techniques.

As an incidental point, Tukey remarked that after all of the very careful examination of this committee, he would be inclined to say that about half of the statistical criticism of Kinsey was quite unwarranted, but that most of the other half was significant.

After all of this is said and done, Dr. Tukey remarked quite voluntarily that if he were in your position he thinks that he would probably, although obviously reluctantly, go ahead with the project. In fact, Dr. Tukey said that if he were Dr. Kinsey himself, it is not at all clear to him that he would be willing to stop, wipe all of these years' work off the blackboard, and start over right. It was certainly inferred in everything Tukey said that what Kinsey is doing is a substantial improvement over what anyone has produced or otherwise done in this field.

Tukey rather warmly urged that I call Cochran on the phone also. After you have read this report, will you please let me know whether you would like to have me do so.

W.W.