A VISTA FOR RESEARCH IN THE HISTORY OF SOCIOLOGY:  
SCHOOLS AS THE UNIT OF ANALYSIS—Edward A. Tiryakian

I. I was recently invited by the editors of The International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, 2nd ed (Macmillan 2007) to prepare an entry on “Sociology, Schools”. I draw on this and earlier writings on schools to present to those having a serious interest in the history of sociology why I consider this a still untrodden vista for significant research and for application in revising how we train graduate students in the history of the discipline.

It is fine to teach undergraduates the names of individual sociologists who have made their mark in the development of sociology — indeed, I have done that in my teaching the undergraduate course (which when I gave it regularly was designated “History of Social Thought”). In fact, most textbooks in sociological theory or the history of sociological theory do follow some sort of individualizing order, with some “canons” and perhaps some idiosyncratic choices. But this ordering is not the optimal way of training graduate students of sociology, in my judgment.

After all, we are not training historians but sociologists. My contention is that the field has developed — at least until fairly recently—by the emergence, development, and occasional hegemony of schools.

II. “Schools” have a long history in sociology — how can it be otherwise if so much of sociology, now and then, has been the quest for community, present or absent in the everyday lifeworld?


In writing to inheritors of the sociological tradition, Alvin Gouldner reminded us that “. . .the roots of sociology pass through the sociologist as a total man [and we presume woman], and the question he [she] must confront . . .is not merely how to work but how to live” (1970: 489). The Disobedient Generation is about becoming a sociologist and about working and living in the change, challenge, loss, and chaos of the sixties. The book consists of an Introduction and 18 chapters, written by sociologists whose names are recognized for their contributions to social theory. The editors focus on 1968 as the “peak of sociology,” label students of the era as “the generation of 68,” and the environment or culture of the period as “the events of 68.” They also note that the students of 68 began their education on “a high note,” but when Ph.Ds. were completed the job market was glutted and career opportunities for white males diminished by Affirmative Action and the feminist movement. The

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**New HOS section officers for 2006-2007**

The Nominations Committee of HOS is pleased to announce the results of the Spring 2006 elections. We congratulate those elected and look forward to their leadership as officers in HOS during the next three years. We also wish to express the appreciation of the entire HOS membership to those who stood for office but were not elected. Their commitment to the section as expressed by their candidacies is deeply appreciated. We look forward to welcoming our new officers at our meetings in Montreal.

Chair-Elect (2006):  Jennifer Platt

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The HOS Nominations Committee 2005-2006

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**Congratulations to the History of Sociology Award Winners**

**Graduate Student Paper Award**

Jonathan Dirk VanAntwerpen, Univ. of California at Berkeley

"Empiricism, Interactionism, and Epistemological Authority: Reexamining Blumer's Early Sociological Practice"

**Book Award**

Anthony J. Blasi, Tennessee State University

Editor, *Diverse Histories of American Sociology* (Brill 2005)

**Distinguished Scholarly Achievement**

Irving Louis Horowitz, Rutgers University

The presentation of these awards will be made at the HOS reception in Montreal, Sunday, August 13.
Recent Member Publications


Glenn A. Goodwin and Joseph A. Scimecca, "Classical Sociological Theory: Rediscovering the Promise of Sociology"


Segre, Sandro. 2005. La relación entre Weber y Troeltsch y la génesis de La ética protestante In Javier Rodriguez. En el centenario del la ética protestante y el espíritu del capitalismo (Javier Rodriguez Martínez ed.). Madrid: Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas (Spagna).


(Continued on page 4)


they could make the genesis of sociology more interesting and more relevant (especially in terms of the general theme of 2007 ASA meetings, “Is Another World Possible?”) if they started the historical narrative of sociology with Saint-Simon. It is one thing to acknowledge, if at all, that Comte was the one-time secretary of Saint-Simon, and perhaps even to mention that Saint-Simon had a grand vision of a new science of “social physiology” to cope with the transformation and social upheavals of European society at the beginning of the 19th Century. But graduate students, at least, should learn about the real school of adepts that gathered around Saint-Simon, the Saint-Simoniens, attracted to their charismatic leader and his vision of a bountiful industrial age. Many of them, some coming from marginal social strata, went on to become leading entrepreneurs of the Second Empire. But their intimate gatherings, vehement discussions, communal lifestyle, and even schisms gave them public recognition.

If the Saint-Simoniens did not fill academic places, they are as much or as little of a school as those who grouped a generation later around Marx. Just as Saint-Simon’s teachings were promulgated and codified by some close lieutenants, so did Marx benefit from the steadfastness of Engels, during and after Marx’s lifetime. Marxism, of course, has had many varieties, some taught in the academy, some practiced in the raw of party organization, but there is no difficulty in recognizing a Marxist school. The networks of the school, its mode of recruitment, its adaptations to mainstream institutions, its diffusion across disciplines including successes and failures (e.g., why given that Marx if anything identified himself as an economist has he had a greater niche in sociology than in economics?) are integral to a presentation of Marxism, yet this is seldom invoked in what undergraduates and graduates are taught in the history of sociological theory.

Contemporary with Comte and Marx is a school which seldom gets noticed on this side of the Atlantic, yet was very influential in France in the period of Napoleon III: the school of Frederic Le Play which carried out extensive empirical field research on working conditions and family organization. Besides being labeled as “conservative”, their bad luck in American historiography of sociology is twofold: first, their guiding postulate was to search for social peace instead of social conflict, and second, their major works do not seem to have been translated into English. But they would offer important research possibilities: their nexus to the basic postulates and approach of the next great French school, the Durkheimians (Besnard 1983). Politically, Le Play and his followers were to the right, the Durkheimians to the left (social democrats). Yet, both shared implicitly a model of normative social integration.

In doing a “schools approach” it is certainly heuristic to compare the institutional clout a school has by dint of volume of publications, placing of students via networks having the charismatic intellectual leader or his immediate lieutenant develop professional and institutional ties. In effect, there is an “economy of scale” being part of a school which is not available to individuals. Yet, some truly highly gifted and productive figure leaves his or her mark on the discipline, at least for a while. So, one should also discuss great individuals, as one does in the customary treatment of the development of the field. But this time, the individual gets an added significance in relating that persons to a school his/her contemporary. So, for instance, Herbert Spencer is often taken as the foil of Durkheim. True enough, but, though Spencer wrote far more than Durkheim and though Jonathan Turner has repeatedly vindicated the intellectual worth of Spencer (Turner 1985), the Durkheimians made a united front of social realism and the critique of utilitarianism, while nobody even in his later years took Spencer very seriously. Why? (advantage belonging to a school, I suggest). Two other great individuals to look at in the context of not having schools: Max Weber and Pitirim Sorokin. Weber is the case where the figure who still towers the field today like no others, did not have a “school” in Wilhelmine Germany, though he was a central figure recognized by all. Sorokin was equally brilliant intellectually (I can speak from personal experience as his TA), but temperamentally was not a good graduate student teacher, whereas his nemesis Parsons was: Sorokin lectured to students, Parsons interacted with them.
And when we move into the 20th century, we have other schools that form major segments in the development of sociology. As American as apple pie used to be, the Chicago School needs no introduction and has been extensively studied as such (among many, Abbott 1999; Bulmer 1984). But even here, it is more common in textbooks on the history of sociology to talk about the contributions of individual members of the school than to discuss and present how they interacted, how they recruited and socialized, how they were placed, what resources they commanded in what ways, how they fitted in the University of Chicago, and the like. And to make the research pot a little thicker, what connections did Chicago have with sociology and social anthropology outside the United States, for example with France, on the one hand (Halbwachs was recruited to teach a semester at Chicago) or with Great Britain, on the other.

Even the absence of connections and networking might become relevant to a school's approach. So, for example, at the same time as the Chicago school flourished and was at its zenith in the 1920s, the "Frankfort School" with Horkheimer, Marcuse, Adorno, Benjamin and others were developing an enriched Marxism linked to psychoanalysis. Did these have any contact with one another, say perhaps with Karl Mannheim and Louis Wirth?

In terms of training and research undertaken by graduate students brought together in a single department and exposed to a basic paradigm by an intellectual leader and his close associate, the Chicago school for the 1920s and early 1930s can be considered "hegemonic". It had publication outlets for its students' dissertations and a great sociological journal for established scholars. The fame and prestige of the Chicago department spread world wide and it would be part of the archival research to see what students came from what countries overseas to study what courses under whom, and in turn, what did they do after their graduate stay? Some years ago while I spent a sabbatical semester at the University of Laval in Quebec, I met Jean-Charles Fallardeau who as a graduate student had gone to Chicago and brought back training in field research; he also was an important contact with Horace Miner and Everett Hughes who launched community studies in French-speaking Canada.

The second hegemonic school that comes to mind is the postwar Harvard school that gathered in the Department of Social Relations, and under the charismatic intellectual leadership of Talcott Parsons made "structural-functional analysis" seem to be the vital core of the sociological enterprise, grounded in the study of social systems. Like the Chicago school, the theoretical framework was reinforced by very capable figures in social psychology, social anthropology, clinical psychology, and statistics. A schools analysis would bring into focus how the school recruited in competition with other centers (Columbia, Wisconsin, Chicago), how its message was diffused outside the United States, its various resources including a multitude of publication outlets.

Finally, at least for this very brief sketch of the heuristic merit of doing a schools approach, one may raise a twofold question: first, can schools prolong themselves for more than one or two generations? Are schools so tied to a basic paradigm of the intellectual leader that it cannot expand into new domains or keep up with the times? Perhaps schools become institutionalized in the culture of a department and perhaps there are ruptures in that culture when some new faculties are brought in who are not in the network of the department's previous leadership. Essentially, the question here is one of the dynamics of schools over time, a vast topic for research.

Second, I leave this topic with the question as to whether "schools" are present today in American sociology. If so, how would they be identified and categorized? If none come readily to mind, what does this tell us about the state of American sociology today?

So I leave with this cursory treatment of what I do consider an important and necessary sociological complement to how we deal and present as the history of sociology. I welcome comments.—Edward A. Tiryakian, Duke University, Durham, NC
REFERENCES


†The recent study of social isolation (McPherson, Smith-Lovin and Brashears 2006) is, de facto, a continuation of the long quest for community signaled by Nisbet (1953) and extended by Wuthnow (1994).

Urgent Message from the Chair—
HOS Section Members Needed!

According to the HOS membership count as of 7/31/2006, a minimum of 84 new members are needed in the HOS section by Sept. 30, 2006. Unless we can get 84 additional members between now and September 30, we can only count on ONE session at the New York meetings. We have 33 student members. How to increase numbers has been my central preoccupation this past year and should continue to be the focus in 2006-07. Please come to the council meeting with suggestions that can be put into practice before the 9/30 deadline.—Ed Tiryakian
Review of *Disobedient Generation*—continued

(Continued from page 1)

Editors assume that this generation of sociologists is unique in their pedagogical and cultural experiences. They also assume that their impact on sociology is predetermined by the fact that the “great figures of academic sociology,” most now in their 70s, are “departing the scene” leaving a small cohort from the post-war “institutions of scholarship shaped by the GI Bill.” The heritage and the future of sociology will subsequently become the responsibility of the “generation of 68” (Sica and Turner:xii).

This volume cannot be critiqued substantively because the contributions are quantitatively and qualitatively different, some largely about work; others about social locations and experiences vis-à-vis the events of the sixties. Nor can the work be critiqued as representative of the theoretical contributions of the sixties. Contributors are largely white males; four females are included. Despite the fact that much of the culture of this generation in the United States was defined by the Civil Rights movement and paradigmatic changes in sociology were driven by confrontations with racism, the only African American included is Patricia Hill Collins. In fact, the contributors are “success stories” rather than profiles in disobedience or even nonconformity. As one of the contributors concluded, “To be truly disobedient and so deserving inclusion in this volume, one would have to refuse to be included” (Woolgar: 312). The editors do not say if anyone refused inclusion; nor do they give the criteria for those included. The volume must be critiqued for what it is, autobiographical descriptions of the interaction of professional and personal development with social location, and macro-level social events. Historically, 1968 was the year that the Viet Nam War was accelerated and expanded with the Tet offensive; it was the year that the Soviet Union invaded Czechoslovakia; the year of violent student rebellions and a general strike in France; and when two American heroes, Martin Luther King, Jr. and Robert F. Kennedy, died at the hands of assassins. In 1968 there were police confrontations with students in Paris, at Columbia University and on other campuses, and in the streets of Chicago during the National Democratic Convention; and black Olympian athletes gave the Black Power salute as they received their metals.

The choice of contributors from the US, Canada, and Europe defines this work as something more than another US retrospective on the sixties. There is, however, evidence that the contributors experienced different social worlds. This is acknowledged only indirectly in Sica’s Introduction (pp.1-16). The “graduates of 1968” in the United States are framed by the assassination of John F. Kennedy when they were high school seniors and the assassinations of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Robert Kennedy when they were college seniors. Sica describes this cohort as tormented by a war that forced them to make personal decisions about life and death and about their careers. The sixties in Europe are characterized more generally by the “events of May,” or as “the pivotal year,” with the Paris student uprising treated as representative of the era. John Hall, a Canadian, acknowledged the different social worlds in pointing out that neither he nor his European colleagues “faced a draft that might get them killed in Southeast Asia,” nor did they experience a country forced to “face up to its racial scar” (p.132). “For men, the draft was the 1960s” and “the draft virtually forced you to barter your values” (Abbott: 29, 31). All of the US male contributors addressed the draft issue and its impact on their lives although only one served in the military. Another did alternative service as a conscientious objector; yet another filed for conscientious objector deferment only to be turned down and to appeal the decision until the draft was ended. One contributor candidly acknowledged becoming a seminary student in order to receive a ministerial deferment although he had no intention of becoming a minister.

The autobiographical chapters comprising this volume are varied and uneven in content and style. Some writers approached their task with very personal points of reference and others abstract ones. Most authors characterized the sixties as perceived or experienced; some, however, avoided the personal and discussed the decade in terms of its impact on social the-
Review of Disobedient Generation—continued

(Continued from page 8)

ory and research (B.Turner:282-283). In fact, even personal accounts were often framed analytically in theoretical rhetoric. Karen Cetina described the sixties as “a continuous Harold Garfinkel experiment” (p. 179); Calhoun concluded that the sixties, in defiance of Sorokin’s grand scheme of social and cultural dynamics, represented simultaneously the “sensate, ideational, and idealistic” (p. 93). Jeffrey Alexander proclaimed that the sixties made him into a social theorist because “It created the space not only to make the world anew but to think it anew” (p.41). Some contributors were esoteric and impersonal in their reflections; such was the conclusion that “…social theory as an explicitly designated activity and form of scholarship is more or less identical with this period. …a diagnosis of the times” (Outhwaite: 216). On the other hand there is sometimes candor stripped of all idealism, as when Wright explains his decision to become a quantitative sociologist although he was more at home with qualitative work: “research anchored in conventional survey research. …offered tangible rewards” (p. 339).

It is presumptuous to draw conclusions from a body of work such as The Disobedient Generation. The collection, however, presents several interesting and obvious themes. First, most of the contributors came to sociology circuitously: they were in the right place at the right time, either to come under the influence of mentors or to be offered a job, fellowship, or other academic opportunity. Second, many of these now well-known sociologists were more influenced by the sociology of the public than that of the classroom. The student protest movements, both in the US and abroad, were ideological but not without literary influences from economics, philosophy, political science, history, anthropology, and sociology. Finally, the often criticized “fuzzy boundaries” of sociology allowed for the entrance of persons seeking to meld their intellectual interests with their consciousness, their humanness, and their activism.

Other Works Cited


Joyce E. Williams
Professor of Sociology Emerita
Texas Woman’s University

Please join us in Montreal!

GREAT DIVIDES: TRANSGRESSING BOUNDARIES

101st Annual Meeting | August 11-14, 2006 | Palais des congrès de Montréal | Montréal, Quebec, Canada
Session 1 (to be held at the time of the Section business meeting):
Graduate Student Forum: *New Perspectives on the History of Sociology*
Yolanda Johnson, University of Nebraska at Lincoln, convener, sociyyj@hotmail.com
Bart Bonikowski, Princeton University, bartb@princeton.edu
Isaac Reed, Yale University, Isaac.Reed@yale.edu
Anna Xiao Dong Sun, Princeton University, xiaosun@princeton.edu

Session 2 (invited papers):
Panel Discussion, *The Impact of the 1960s on the History of Sociology*
Organizer: Edward A. Tiryakian, Duke University, Durkhm@soc.duke.edu
Chair: Eleanor Townsley, Mt. Holyoke College, etownsle@mtholyoke.edu
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Immanuel Wallerstein, Yale University, Wallerstein@yale.edu
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Sandro Segre, University of Genoa (Italy), Segre@unige.it
John Drysdale, University of Concordia (Canada) drysdal@alcor.concordia.ca

Session 3 (submitted papers): *Globalization and the History of Sociology*
Organizer and Chair, George Ritzer, University of Maryland, Ritzer@socy.umd.edu
Panelists: Tekle Woldemikael (University of Redlands)
Jean Guy Vaillancourt ((University of Montreal)
Hermann Strasser (University of Duisburg)
Peter Beilharz (LaTrobe University)
Discussant: Edward A. Tiryakian, Duke University, Durkhm@soc.duke.edu

*HOS Reception and Awards Presentation:*
Sunday, August 13, 2006, 6:30-8:15pm, Palai des Congres
ASA Annual Meeting 2006  
Montreal, Quebec, Canada  
Workshop/Seminar  
Saturday, August 12, 8:30AM- 12:10 PM  
(Registration with ASA required)

Organizer and Convener: Edward A. Tiryakian, Duke University, Durkm@soc.duke.edu

Introduction: Charles Tilly, Columbia University, ct135@columbia.edu, “History and Sociology”

Overviews: Christian Fleck, University of Graz (Austria), Christian.fleck@uni-graz.at, “The History of Sociology : International Approaches”

Craig Calhoun, Social Science Research Council, Calhoun@ssrc.org  
“Preparing the History of American Sociology”

Microlevel: Intellectual Biographies

Barry Johnston, University of Indiana at Gary, bjohnsto@iun.edu, “Doing the intellectual biography of Pitirim Sorokin”

Uta Gerhardt, Heidelberg University, uta.gerhardt@urz.uni-heidelberg.de “Doing the intellectual biography of Talcott Parsons”

Mesolevel: History of Marginalized Groups; Institutional History

Jill Niebrugge-Brantley, American University, niebran@american.edu  
and Patricia Lengerman, American University, plenger@american.edu  
“Doing the History of Women Sociologists”

Ida Simpson, Duke University, isimp@soc.duke.edu  
“Doing the History of the Southern Sociological Society”

Macrolevel: Methodological Research Issues in Comparative Histories

Jennifer Platt, University of Sussex, j.platt@sussex.ac.uk

Jack Goldstone, George Mason University, jgoldsto@gmu.edu
## SECTION ON THE HISTORY OF SOCIOLOGY EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

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