



# Newsletter

July 2009

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### Letter from the President: How do we teach the history of Sociology?

Dear Fellow Historians of Sociology,

Albert Tzeng, whom those of you who had a chance to attend our last interim meeting in Umea will remember as one of our young and promising colleagues, recently wrote me an email from which I'd like to quote the following excerpt:

“Not being able to conduct a full-scale research at this time, I am wondering if it’s possible/ appropriate to circulate a message among the RCHS members to

invite feedbacks on the following questions, based on the respondents’ observation in his/her part of the world:

– Is the ‘history of sociology’ considered an important element in the

undergraduate/postgraduate curriculum in the sociology dept?

– What are the most frequently-assigned textbook/ key readings (or perhaps you have a bibliography/syllabus)?

– How much emphasis is put to the ‘domestic history’ of sociology?

– Are there some key texts on the domestic history of sociology? If yes, could you name a few?

– Was there some major debate/ controversies arising there about the teaching of history of sociology?”

I think Albert’s queries deserve serious attention. Being in the same situation as Albert and also not being able to conduct a full-scale research I nevertheless will try to answer at least some of his questions.

I can only speak about my own department and can maybe provide a few hints concerning other departments in Austria. In Graz we do a lot of history of sociology especially at the undergraduate level. However, people not familiar with the Austrian and German university systems have to take into account that our undergraduate studies of at least three years are much more specialized when compared to the American counterpart. As a consequence, 18-year-old high school graduates start their university studies in a particular and relative narrowly defined field, in our case sociology. By the way: another topic worth being investigated from a comparative perspective is the teaching of sociology at high school level. In the Austrian case there is practically no sociology taught,

neither in the old fashioned gymnasium nor on any other secondary school level, never mind elective courses. As a consequence, first-year students don’t have any idea what sociology is about. Most of those who inquire with peers or who consult advisors from the universities have something like social work in mind. Over the years I’ve asked first-year sociology students in their first days at university what they expect after having chosen sociology as their field of study. The most common answer was “studying something where I get in touch with people.” In light of this and several more idiosyncratic answers, we seem to subject our undergrads to quite a bit of history of sociology teaching.

In the first semester and besides an Intro course and one on empirical social research they have to attend a lecture on ‘Main Currents in Sociological Thought’ – one of Raymond Aron’s book had the same title – which covers the history from Comte to the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This course is not restricted to what elsewhere might be called ‘Classical Sociological Theory’. Besides the classics (Comte, Marx, Durkheim, Simmel, Weber, Cooley, and for patriotic reasons, Gumplowicz) this lecture course offers an overview of the development of sociology as a scholarly endeavor and as an academic discipline. Some remarks on the development of empirical social research and references to Lazarsfeld and Jahoda’s Marienthal study round up this course.

A so-called proseminar is dedicated completely to the history of sociology and the lecturers usually refer to selections from the classics. Besides theoretical texts, readings covering empirical research are on the reading

list, too. Another lecture course is entirely devoted to sociological theory and additional seminars should help to deepen the understanding of the classics. However, undergraduates have to take an additional course on the history of contemporary sociology. Whenever I teach this course I try to give an overview of the developments from the end of WWII until the end of Communism, focusing on institutional trajectories, transatlantic encounters and exchanges, the emerging of routine social research in the form of project research, funding regimes, etc. An accompanying reader consists of about ten selections from mostly American and German sociologists, ranging from Adorno, Lazarsfeld, Merton, Mills, Parsons, Riesman to Habermas, Bourdieu, Latour, and some papers from 'second-ranked' sociologist like Rose Coser, Everett Hughes and Heinrich Popitz.

At the master program level – a two year program – we don't teach much history of sociology but we offer courses on sociological theory and the sociology of science.

This sketchy portrait might give you an idea about the status of history of sociology in Graz. From what I know about other departments in Austria our historical emphasis is rather the exception. At other universities and departments undergraduates might come across Marienthal and will definitely read some pages from Marx, Durkheim, Weber & Co. but most of what they learn about the history will come from secondary sources. One of the domains where students get enough information for term papers is the website of the Graz based Archive for the History of

Sociology in Austria (AGSÖ)  
<<http://agso.uni-graz.at/>> with its special feature '50 Klassiker der Soziologie'  
<<http://agso.uni-graz.at/lexikon/>> and  
Die Arbeitslosen von Marienthal  
<<http://agso.uni-graz.at/marienthal/>>.

Austria's 'domestic' history of sociology plays a prominent role even at those departments which don't care much about history. The reasons are obvious: Austria's past was much greater than its present. Out of simple patriotic pride my fellow sociologists refer to giants as Ludwig Gumplowicz, Alfred Schutz, Otto Neurath, Karl Popper, Joseph Schumpeter, Paul Lazarsfeld, and Marie Jahoda whenever they have to deliver. The contrast at the textbook level could hardly be starker: there is no single monograph or textbook on the history of sociology in Austria; instead we have a lot of articles, collections, and, above all, the rich sources of the above mentioned archives' website.

The answer to Albert's final question could be very short: There wasn't and there isn't any debate about the teaching of history of sociology in Austria's departments of sociology or its professional association.

I hope these few lines will persuade others to send in their observations or comments concerning the teaching of history of sociology in their countries and departments.

*Christian Fleck*

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## History of Sociology in New Zealand: teaching and research

For much of the last 40 years of Sociology teaching in the half a dozen NZ sociology departments the history of sociology was only included in classical sociological theory courses (usually the founding fathers - with the course being variously taught at the 1<sup>st</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup> and/or 3<sup>rd</sup> year level.) More specific history of sociology material (let alone history of NZ sociology material) has seldom been even mentioned in passing in course work, and the usual presumption of sociologists at all levels (both staff and senior students), is that beyond one or two highly pertinent textbooks very little worthwhile has been published in earlier NZ sociology that they might need to

draw on. Documentation of the local history of Sociology has been sporadic although occasionally early information about early episodes of sociological activity has been documented and some short biographical reminiscences published. More recently, there has been more interest in the historical context of NZ sociology and more systematic material has been published, some emanating as a side-consequence of state interest in university research output activities (e.g. the PBRF scheme which is similar to the UK's RAE) and a program of collecting oral histories of retired sociologists has been developed.

*Charles Crothers*

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## First Year Teaching at University College Dublin: The Emergence of a Sociological Perspective

I can't speak for the entire sociology department at University College Dublin, never mind for what's being taught on the entire island of Ireland. In what follows I only speak of my own experience and design – and here only about the first crucial year.

At first year level we teach a course called “The Emergence of a Sociological Perspective” and it combines the history of sociology with substantive themes. I should add here that there is a second course which students have to take and

which runs parallel to the “Emergence” course. This second course introduces first-years to more national, i.e. Irish sociological themes, environments and discussions. Most important is that in both cases we try to combine the discursive dimensions with institutional ones. Thus, there is no separate institutional ‘history of’ but always a combination of institutional form and discursive substance, individual classics and their paradigms...

However, trying to gain a reasonable sociological perspective is always like trying to cut a path through the jungle. In order not to get lost I usually proceed in two steps. Firstly, I try to establish what is exactly meant when we talk about such things as ‘traditions’, ‘classics’, ‘canons’ and ‘paradigms’ in the social sciences. In

a second step I then look at the European sociological tradition (Marx, Weber, Durkheim and the Durkheimians Mauss and Halbwachs, followed by Toennies and Simmel) before comparing and contrasting it with the American tradition (Veblen, Park and Burgess, Mead, Parsons, Merton and Mills).

As a general textbook I use Lewis Coser's *Masters of Sociological Thought*, supplemented here and there by Larry Ray's *Theorizing Classical Sociology* and Richard Munch's *Sociological Theory (Vol. II) – From the 1850's to the Present*.

The course consists of 22 lectures in one semester (two lectures per week) and a number of seminars that accompany the lectures. I don't want to reproduce here the entire course outline, just the basic ideas. As you can see from the list below, almost every lecture deals with one classic and one classic topic or theme. I stress here that the focus is clearly on the intellectual, historical embeddedness and tradition – not all the ins and outs of each theoretical construction. As you can also detect, on this early level there is no clear-cut differentiation between theory and empirical methods. Furthermore, the course ends with Parsons and Mills and does not proceed beyond the 1950s. Students are required to read excerpts of the original texts. The final essay usually gives them a choice between the three parts, but for each seminar students also have to hand in written one-page summaries.

**TRADITIONS, CLASSIC CANONS,  
SOCIOLOGICAL PARADIGMS**

Establishing Knowledge

BURKE, P (2000) *A Social History of Knowledge*

The Development of Modern Knowledge and Social Science

WALLERSTEIN, I (1996) *Open the Social Sciences*

ALEXANDER, J. C (1987) *Twenty Lectures – Sociological Theory since World War II*  
Why are the Classics called the Classics?

BAEHR, P and O'BRIEN "Founders, Classics and the Concept of a Canon" in: *Current Sociology* (1994)

CLAWSON, D. (1998) *Required Reading – Sociology's Most Influential Books*

Typologies and Networks of Sociological Paradigms

MUNCH, R (1994) *Sociological Theory – From the 1850's to the Present*

ALEXANDER, J. C (1987) *Twenty Lectures- Sociological Theory since World War II*

**THE EUROPEAN TRADITION**

Alexis de Tocqueville and the French and American Revolutions DE TOCQUEVILLE, A (1994) *Democracy in America*

Karl Marx's Critique of Political Economy MARX, K (ed. KAMENKA, E) (1983) *The Portable Karl Marx*

Marx and the Development of Historical Materialism

MARX, K (ed. KAMENKA, E) (1983) *The Portable Karl Marx*

Weber: Some Basic Concepts and their Application

WEBER, M (1993) *Basic Concepts in Sociology*

GERTH, H.H and MILLS, C. W (eds.) (1946) *From Max Weber*

Marx and Weber – A Comparison

SAYER, D (1991) *Capitalism and Modernity – An Excursus on Marx and Weber*

Emile Durkheim

DURKHEIM, E (1982) *The Rules of Sociological Method*

DURKHEIM, E (1972) *Selected Writings*

Durkheim and the 'Durkheimians' (M. Mauss and M. Halbwachs)

MAUSS, M (2001) *A General Theory of Magic*

HALBWACHS, M (1992) *On Collective Memory*

Georg Simmel's Analysis of Functional Differentiation

SIMMEL, G (1971) *On Individuality and Social Forms*

Ferdinand Toennies' Distinction between Community and Society

TOENNIES, F (2001) *Community and Civil Society*

### ***THE AMERICAN TRADITION***

The American Marx: Thorstein Veblen

VEBLIN, T. (1953) *The Theory of the Leisure Class*

The Urban Sociology of the Chicago School (Robert Park and William Burgess)

PARK, R and BURGESS, E. W. (1925) *The City*

A Change of Perspective: George Herbert Mead

MEAD, G. H (1934) *Mind, Self and Society*

Talcott Parsons and Robert Merton: Structural

Functionalism and Middle-range Theory

PARSONS, T (1971) *The System of Modern Societies*

MERTON, R. K (1957) *Social Theory and Social Structure*

C. Wright Mills' Sociological Imagination: A Critique of 'Grand Theory' and 'Abstracted Empiricism'

MILLS, C. W. (1959) *The Sociological Imagination*

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## Call for Papers: Gothenburg 2010

### *Sociology on the Move*

Determinism is dead in the social sciences. Despite a strong interest in social structures, social mechanisms, forms of reproduction, we are all aware that human beings are not completely dominated by them. The world changes, and this change to a large extent depends on human action and imagination.

If sociology is to be useful, it has to contribute to an understanding of change – and it has to change itself. It is on the move and has to be on the move because the world, the societies, collective and individual actors are on the move.

“Sociology on the move” means that our discipline contributes to an understanding of our world by defining new objects of research, devising new approaches and reevaluating its rich heritage. It implies a new openness with regard to other disciplines and to normative questions. The International Sociological Association offers an enormous variety of perspectives – in terms of cultures, gender and generation. They all contribute to the vitality of our discipline.

*Michel Wieviorka*, ISA President

*Hans Joas*, ISA Vice-President, Programme

*Ulla Björnberg*, Chair, Local Organizing Committee

## *Deadlines*

### *Deadlines for presenters*

#### **Deadline for submitting paper proposals**

- see Call for Papers by Research Committees, Working and Thematic Groups

#### **May 4, 2010**

- Registration deadline for all programme participants (presenters, chairs, discussants, etc.). Otherwise their names will not appear in the Programme Book and abstracts of their papers will not be published.
- Deadline for on-line submission of abstracts of accepted papers to the Cambridge Sociological Abstracts web site. Abstracts are only accepted by the system from those who are already registered for the Congress.

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### *Deadlines for Programme Coordinators*

#### **September 15, 2009**

- Proposals for Integrative Sessions should be received at the ISA Secretariat in Madrid [isa@isa-sociology.org](mailto:isa@isa-sociology.org)

#### **January 31, 2010**

- Details of the sessions programmes (authors' name, affiliation, e-mail, and paper title) should be submitted by the Programme Coordinators.

#### **May 4, 2010**

- Registration deadline for all programme participants (presenters, chairs, discussants, etc.). Otherwise their names will not appear in the Programme Book and abstracts of their papers will not be published.
- Deadline for on-line submission of abstracts of accepted papers to the Cambridge Sociological Abstracts web site. Abstracts are only accepted by the system from those who are already registered for the Congress.

**June 1, 2010**

- Deadline for submitting last minute changes of sessions programmes.

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## Further RCHS Specifics for Gothenburg

In the meantime the Secretary and the President have received notification of the session allocation: >100 ISA members = 16 sessions, 85-100 members = 14 sessions and 70-84 members = 12 sessions. With 85 members full members we should qualify for 14 sessions.

So far we have received the following suggestions and we ask those who want to present in Gothenburg to send us a title and an abstract (max 100 words). You should also indicate in which session you want to present your paper (see list below). The deadline for our Research Committee stream is 31 December 2009. Please send all suggestions for RCHS to the Secretary of RCHS: a.hess@ucd.ie

Suggestions from the Umea meeting:

- The future of publishing with special regards to the history of sociology;
- public intellectuals;
- periphery and the history of sociology;
- comparative perspectives in the history of sociology;
- gender in the history of sociology;
- the reception of sociological research in historical perspective
- sociological perspectives on conceptual and intellectual history/histories;
- empirical research and the history of sociology
- national traditions and trajectories

After Umea the following suggestions were received:

- A joint session with the ISA RC on the Sociology of Leisure: Leisure through the Ages: Comparative Insights (proposal from Ishwar Modi, Jaipur)
- A session on Adam Smith and his relevance to sociology (proposal from Ragnvald Kalleberg, Oslo)
- A session on “The Entangled History of Gender and Sociology” (Theresa Wobbe, Erfurt, Isabel Berrebi-Hoffmann, Paris and Michel Lallemon, Paris).

Two more suggestions for sessions have been received more recently:

- The History of Sociology: How and why do we write the history of sociology? What is the role of biography? (Cherry Schrecker and Suzie Guth)

- Agenda Setting and Steering Mechanisms in National Sociologies (Jennifer Platt and Charles Crothers)

## New Publications:

Dreijmanis, J. (ed.) (2008) *Max Weber's Complete Writings on Academic and Political Vocations* (translated by Gordon C. Wells), New York: Algora Publishing (221+XII). [This is the first edition in any language of all of Weber's writings on academic and political vocations.]

Gerhardt, U. (2009) *Soziologie im zwanzigsten Jahrhundert: Studien zu ihrer Geschichte in Deutschland*, Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, (pp392) [This book deals with the history of sociology in Germany, from the end of the 19th century to the Fall of the Berlin Wall and German unification.]

Hess, A. (2009) *Reluctant Modernization: Plebeian Culture and Moral Economy in the Basque Country*, Oxford: Peter Lang (pp200). [This book discusses some crucial issues that arose in the context of the Basque egalitarianism debate. It also suggests a change of perspective by applying some central concepts of Albert O. Hirschman ('exit', 'voice', 'loyalty') and E. P. Thompson ('plebeian culture', 'moral economy') to the Basque context.]

Kettler, D. (2008) "Antifascism as Ideology: Review and Introduction", in: A. Wessely et al (eds.) *Habitus, Identität und die exilierten Dispositionen*, Budaspest: Nemzeti Tankönyvkiado, 139-159

Kettler, D. (2008) "Erste Briefe. Zwischen Exil und Rückkehr", in *Zeitschrift für Ideengeschichte* (May), 79-107

Kettler, D. et al (2008) *Karl Mannheim and the Legacy of Max Weber: Retrieving a Research Programme* (Rethinking Classical Sociology Series), Farmham, Surrey: Ashgate, pp228 [This book focuses on the important work of Karl Mannheim by demonstrating how his theoretical conception of a reflexive sociology took shape as a collaborative empirical research program.]

Kettler, D. (2009) „Negotiations: Learning from Three Frankfurt Schools“, in: R. Bodek and S. Lewis (eds.) *Fruits of Exile*, Charleston: University of South Carolina Press

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*If you have a new publication out, please let us know. Just send a note to the secretary and we will be happy to include your latest publication(s) in our next newsletter.*

## RCHS Subscription

The basic RCHS subscription is US\$10 for one year, or \$30 for 4 years. For students, however, it is \$5 or \$15. This reduced rate also applies to others from non-OECD countries who can't afford to pay the full rate. If unable to arrange even the reduced rate, please write to the Secretary to explain the circumstances and ask for free membership. RCHS is a Research Committee of ISA, so RCHS members are expected to be ISA members. The ISA membership registration form is available on <http://www.ucm.es/info/isa/formisa.htm>. There is also now a new facility for paying directly with credit card to the central ISA; further details are available from the ISA website.

If you are not an ISA member you should pay your membership fees directly into the new RCHS bank account (see details below) and by additionally notifying the secretary via e-mail: [a.hess@ucd.ie](mailto:a.hess@ucd.ie) or via post: Dr. Andreas Hess, School of Sociology, University College Dublin, Belfield, Dublin 4, Ireland. Please do NOT send cheques since extra charges apply.

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Membership in the RCHS is open to anyone interested in the field. You become a member as soon as your application form and money have been received by the secretary