

NEWSLETTER OF THE  
**Comparative & Historical SOCIOLOGY**  
SECTION OF THE AMERICAN SOCIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

Spring 1985

Vol. II, No. 3

**CHAIR OF SECTION:**

Craig Calhoun  
U of N. Carolina-  
Chapel Hill

**SECRETARY-TREASURER:**

Gary Hamilton  
U. California-Davis

**COUNCIL:**

Theda Skocpol  
U. of Chicago

Barbara Laslett  
Ron Aminzade

Barbara Laslett  
U. of Minnesota

Ron Glassman  
William Patterson  
College

David Zaret  
Indiana University

Ron Aminzade  
U. of Minnesota

Mark Traugott  
U. of California-  
Santa Cruz

**NEWSLETTER EDITORS:**

Ron Aminzade  
Barbara Laslett

**ASSOCIATE EDITOR:**

Lazaros  
Christoforides

**INSTITUTIONAL**

**SUPPORT:**

U. of Minnesota

In this issue of the Newsletter, we continue our listing of Centers around the country that feature historical and comparative work. We also publish a research report on the history of social theory and announcements of members' current research. We encourage section members to continue to send in similar descriptions to Craig Calhoun (Dept. of Sociology, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill) who will be next year's Newsletter editor. Our next issue - the last of this academic year - will contain information on our sessions at the Washington meetings. See you there!

**CENTERS**

(Continued from last newsletter)

The Fernand Braudel Center for the Study of Economics, Historical Systems, and Civilizations.

Founded in 1976 to engage in the analysis of large-scale social change over long periods of time. Research is carried out by Research Working Groups (RWGs) and Collegia, which bring together faculty and graduate students of varied backgrounds. These currently include over 70 persons drawn from the fields of anthropology, art history, comparative literature, economics, english, history, philosophy, political science, romance languages, and sociology.

A Research Work Group is a group engaged in collective research on an intellectual problem and research strategy designed in common, in which each member performs tasks collectively decided on. The Center currently has seven active RWGs: Cyclical Rhythms and Secular Trends of the Capitalist World-Economy; Households, Labor-Force Formation, and the World-Economy; World Labor; Semiperipheral States in the World-Economy; Conception of the Historical Social Sciences; Southern Africa and the World-Economy; The Ottoman Empire and the World-Economy.

Collegia, unlike Research Working Groups, do not yet have or do not yet have collective research projects. They assemble faculty and graduate students from many departments around common interests. Several of them are planning to develop a research focus. We currently have five such Collegia: Women, Culture, and Society; Latin America; South Asia; Methods of World-Systems Analysis; the Interstate System.

## CENTERS (Continued)

The Center maintains working relationships with a wide variety of scholars and institutions both in the U.S. and abroad. Scholars regularly visit the Center for extended periods, just as Center affiliates visit and lecture at institutions throughout the U.S. and the world. The Center also runs a wide variety of publication activities. In addition to individual publication by affiliates in scholarly journals, the Center publishes its own quarterly journal, Review, now in Volume VIII. The Center directs as well the publication of two book series on the modern world system.

### The Center for the Study of Industrial Societies University of Chicago

CSIS was founded during 1982-83 to serve as a focus for collaborative activities among scholars and advanced graduate students interested in theoretically informed studies of social institutions, politics, and public policy-making in the United States, Europe, and Japan. Also of interest are the newly industrializing nations and the interdependent economic, political, and cultural ties that link nations to one another within the world political economy. Historical and comparative-historical approaches to research problems are prominent in the Center's endeavors.

The CSIS has been directed by Theda Skocpol (Sociology and Political Science) and William Julius Wilson (Sociology). Other core Center faculty are: John Coatsworth (History), Wendy Griswold (Sociology), Paul Hirsch (School of Business and Sociology), and Charles Lipson (Political Science), and Bernard Silberman (Political Science).

The Center sponsors weekly "brown bags" given by faculty, graduate students, and visiting scholars on a very wide range of topics. The Center also has an Occasional Papers Series (information about the Series can be obtained from the Program Coordinator, CSIS, Wilder House, 5811 S. Kenwood, Chicago, IL 60637). Some faculty research projects that employ graduate students are run through the Center. The centerpiece of Center activities, however, is long-running collegial "workshops" that bring together groups of two or three faculty with about ten graduate students who are working on articles, thesis proposals, and dissertations. Topics of major year-long or multiple-year CSIS workshops have included: "American Society and Politics in Historical and Comparative Perspective," "Culture and Society," "Interdependent Political Economy," and "The Political Economy of Latin America."

### The Center for Interdisciplinary Studies in Culture and Society University of South Florida

The Center is a small, relatively informal organization which has an official mission of "facilitating collaboration and exchange between social scientists and humanists" through research sponsoring conferences and speaker series and contributing to an interdisciplinary liberal studies M.A. program. The disciplinary origins of active participants in the center range widely and include history, sociology, art history, English, anthropology, American studies and international studies. At some point in the near future it should be possible for a student to construct an interesting M.A. degree program ranging over several of these areas.

Recent participants in Center activities have included historian and philosopher of science Larry Laudan, historian and philosopher of social science Ian Jarvie, political philosopher Harvey Mansfield, Jr., and Notre Dame sociologist Eugene Rochberg-Halton. Among recent work published by persons active in the Center is Ray Arsenault's "The End of the Long Hot Summer" (Journal of Southern History and American Heritage Magazine), a study of the demographic, social, and cultural effects of air conditioning.

# Research Report

The History of Social Thought  
Stephen P. Turner  
Center for Interdisciplinary Studies in Culture and Society  
University of South Florida

For those who remember the rise, the fall, and the subsequent discredit (especially among professional historians) of "intellectual history" as it emerged in the sixties, the current state of the history of social thought is something of a pleasant surprise. There is a great deal of activity and some of it of very high quality. Increasingly, the figures and themes of social thought appear not as social theorists but as part of other kinds of historical narratives. Lester Ward, for example, makes an appearance in Peter Gay's monumental work on Victorian sexuality, in the role of a satisfied (and satisfying) spouse.

Ward's is a bit part - Weber, in contrast, has become a major historical figure in his own right, in large part because of the conjunction between his career and the rise of German Imperialism, itself the subject of a massive historical effort in Germany which has spawned new schools of historical scholarship (e.g., Wehler, 1979), most impressively around the journal Geschichte und Gesellschaft (edited by Wehler), a journal with a range and brilliance which rivals Annales. Wolfgang Mommsen's Max Weber and German Politics, 1890-1920, the first edition of which was published in 1959, has made Weber into a major historical figure in his own right and established Mommsen as one of the major historians of the century. The study serves as a point of entry to the more general problem of imperialism (cf., Mommsen, 1977). Durkheim is gradually emerging, in a parallel fashion, as a key to the understanding of the rise and fall of French liberalism (Lougue, 1984), and is given a central place in standard historical surveys (e.g., Zeldin, 1977).

A number of historians of science and "historians and philosophers of science" have also discovered sociology. Larry Laudan's classic 1971 paper (reprinted in 1982) on Comte opened up a potentially important line of research, which has now reached the familiar territory of Durkheim's methodology (Schmaus, 1982 and forthcoming). Political scientists have also discovered the classical sociologists, particularly Weber, and there have been several major historical/analytic books, including Beetham's earlier study (1974) and more recently Robert Eden's stunning book on Nietzsche and Weber (1984). Another mark of the acceptance of classical social thought as a historical subject is the inclusion of an article in the integrative volume of the Cambridge Modern History (Outhwaite, 1979), right along with such pieces as Ladurie on Peasants!

Just as there is a Kant industry and a Darwin industry, there is now a Weber industry: a "complete works," including correspondence, is now underway, and a large Weber community has come into being. The study of Durkheim is not very far from this stage.

Industrialization and canonization are related phenomena, with somewhat different consequences. One consequence of placing these figures in a canon is that they become objects on which techniques of analysis can be practiced: thus there becomes a reception-problem for Weber, a problem of the rhetorical community between Weber and his supposed audiences, a psychoanalytic problem, and the like. The rise of deconstructionism in literary criticism has made for a great freeing-up of interpretation - a hundred flowers are blooming - and new canonical texts like Weber's become grist for the mill. One of the central figures in American literary theory, Frederic Jameson (1974), has a little essay on Weber which points out the way in which the speaker gradually vanishes from the text of science as a vocation - an important insight. Foucaultian styles of analysis and Foucault's idea of the centrality of the "history of disciplines" is having some impact on sociologists' historical reflections (e.g., Lemert, 1979, O'Neill, forthcoming). Michel Serres (1981), a currently fashionable post-structuralist, has revealing things to say about such figures as Michelet (whose tropes recur in Durkheim).

The proximity of the history of political thought to the history of social thought has had an important consequence in the form of the importation of a methodological dispute over "contextualism," a doctrine developed largely by Quentin Skinner (1969). The primary arguments for this view were restated by Robert Alun Jones in a paper in the AJS (1977). They are, roughly that the privileged means of understanding a text is to see how it varies from the conventional claims made by contemporaries of the author, i.e., the author's "context." Much of what we think of as distinctly "Durkheimian," for example, turns out to repeat views held by the minor figures of the day, and would not have been regarded as novel or distinctive by Durkheim himself. John Diggins (1984) calls it "contextual functionalism," for the question asked by contextualists is "how does this statement function in this context?" The doctrine has occasioned a lively controversy, and an interesting historical literature (Collini, et al., 1983) although it must be said that the contributors to it are beginning to repeat themselves, and enough time has passed that some of the earliest disputants have begun to back away from their earlier formulations (e.g., Stocking, 1982, pp. xvii-xviii).

Sociologists writing on the history of social thought have often attempted to be "sociological" in their historical approach. This has not led to a distinctive genre, in part because the sociological perspectives have varied: Charles Camic's study of the Scottish enlightenment is "social psychological;" Kasler's study of early German Sociology deals with the social origins of the pre-1933 generation, while Vidich and Lyman's (1985) history of American sociology as a history of departments is a study of corporate cultures.

The sociological approaches that have generated the most heat have to do with the question of the influence of foundation money, particularly Rockefeller Foundation money, on the social sciences in the interwar period. There are two basic opinions on the subject. Martin Bulmer's (1984) argument is that while the rise of empirical social science, especially at Chicago, was indeed heavily dependent on Rockefeller money, the intellectual and organizational sources were internal - Rockefeller money just enabled them to perform fruitful research, and built a dominant department. In contrast, Donald Fisher has concluded that the hand of the foundations was not merely a helping hand, but was a designed expression of the particular class interests of the Rockefellers, which had the consequence that "debates within social science disciplines and within the whole community as represented by S.S.R.C. were directed to a great extent by Rockefeller policies" (Fisher, 1983, p. 224). The issues here are quite complex, and there is an enormous amount of material which is only beginning to be digested - what it shows is that the impact of the foundations was very great, not just at Chicago but at the many other institutions where the social sciences which conformed to the foundations' ideas of excellence were bankrolled. Among these were Columbia, North Carolina, Harvard, Yale, Texas, and Stanford.

As historians of science have gradually discovered the social sciences, the existence of appropriate archival material is beginning to influence the course taken by research. A great deal of biographical work is now underway - writers like Elton Mayo, for example, are being given the full historical treatment (Gillespie, 1983); new autobiographies, notably Raymond Aron's endlessly amusing Memoires (1983) have appeared. In general, however, archival material on early sociologists is either scarce or not well suited to history dissertations. There are some large collections of papers relevant to sociology, notably at Chicago. Extraordinary documents turn up now and then, such as the diary of the southern pre-Civil War sociologist Henry Hughes.

The character of the archival remains, together with the fact that several of the figures important to the history of social thought are also of significance as political thinkers, as politicians and pundits, as scientific institution builders, as cultural representatives of their times, and, in a few cases, for their intrinsic biographical interest, mean that no "method" is likely to gain ascendancy in this area. It is likely to continue to be a cheerful muddle.

## References

- Aron, Raymond  
1983 Memoires. Paris: Julliard.
- Beetham, David  
1974 Max Weber and the Theory of Modern Politics. London: Allen & Unwin.
- Bulmer, Martin  
1984 "Philanthropic Foundations and the Development of the Social Sciences in the Early Twentieth Century: A Reply to Donald Fisher." *Sociology* 18:572-579.
- Camic, Charles  
1983 Experience and Enlightenment: Socialization for Cultural Change in Eighteenth-Century Scotland. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Collini, S., D. Winch, and J. Burrow  
1983 That Noble Science of Politics. Cambridge at the University Press.
- Diggins, John Patrick  
1984 "The Oyster and the Pearl: The Problem of Contextualism in Intellectual History." *History and Theory*: 23:151-169.
- Eden, Robert  
1984 Political Leadership and Nihilism: A Study of Weber and Nietzsche. Tampa: University Presses of Florida.
- Fisher, Donald  
1983 "The Role of Philanthropic Foundations in the Reproduction and Production of Hegemony: Rockefeller Foundations and the Social Sciences." *Sociology* 17:206-233.
- Gay, Peter  
1984 The Bourgeois Experience. Volume I. Education of the Senses. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Gillespie, Richard  
1983 "The Psychopathology of Industrial Life: Elton Mayo and the Prehistory of the Hawthorne Experiments." Paper presented to the meeting of the Society for the Social Studies of Science, in Blacksburg, Va., November 4-6.
- Jameson, Frederic  
1974 "The Vanishing Mediator: Narrative Structure in Max Weber." *New German Critique* 1:52-89.
- Jones, Robert Alun  
1977 "Understanding a Sociological Classic." *American Journal of Sociology* 83:279-319.
- Laudan, Larry  
1971 "Toward a Deassessment of Comte's 'Methode Positive.'" *Philosophy of Science* 38:33-53.
- Lemert, Charles C.  
1979 *Sociology and the Twilight of Man*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Logue, William  
1984 *From Philosophy to Sociology: The Evolution of French Liberalism, 1870-1914*. DeKalb, Illinois: Northern Illinois University Press.
- Mommsen, Wolfgang  
1959 *Max Weber und die deutsche Politik, 1890-1920*. Tuebingen: Mohr.  
1977 *Theories of Imperialism*. New York: Random House.
- O'Neill, John  
Forth-coming "Sociological Nemesis: Parsons and Foucault on the Therapeutic Disciplines." In Mark Wardell and Stephen Turner (eds.), *Sociological Theory in Transition*. London: Allen & Unwin.
- Outhwaite, William  
1979 "Social Thought and Social Science," pp. 271-292 in Peter Burke (ed.), *The New Cambridge Modern History XIII, Companion Volume*. Cambridge at the University Press.

- Schmaus, Warren  
 1982 "A Reappraisal of Comte's Three-State Law." *History and Theory* 21:248-266.  
 Forth- "Hypotheses and Historical Analysis in Durkheim's Sociological Methodology: A Comtean Tradition." *Studies in the History and Philosophy of Science*.
- Serres, Michel, et al., eds.  
 1981 *Hermes: Literature, Science, Philosophy*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Skinner, Quentin  
 1969 "Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas." *History and Theory* 8:3-53.
- Stocking, George  
 1982 *Race, Culture, and Evolution: Essays in the History of Anthropology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Wehler, Hans Ulrich  
 1979 *Krisenherde des Kaiserreichs, 1871-1918: Studien zur deutschen sozial-und Verfassungsgeschichte*. Goettingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.
- Vidich, Arthur and S. Lyman  
 1985 *American Sociology: Worldly Rejections of Religion and Their Directions*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Zeldin, Theodore  
 1977 *France: 1848-1945*. Oxford at the Clarendon Press.

## Members' News

Barry D. Adam (University of Windsor) is using the comparative, historical approach to address the basic questions of why gay and lesbian movements arise in particular times and places, and to contextualize homosexual movements and their enemies within the structural changes of host societies. To find the answers to these problems is to strain at the boundaries of "mainstream" political economy and seek to grapple with feminist and poststructuralist problems of the histories of reproduction, gender, sexuality, and the body. He is interested in learning of any similar research being undertaken by section members. His research will appear as a book in early 1986 in the Twayne Series on Social Movements, published by G.K. Hall in Boston.

Leonard Gordon (Arizona State University) is currently working on the topic of "A Longitudinal and Cross Cultural Analysis of Racial and Ethnic Stereotyping." One paper developed from this project is entitled "Racial and Ethnic Stereotyping of American College Students Over a Half Century." The longitudinal stereotyping data analyzed covers the period from the early 1930s to the early 1980s. Results raise a query about whether apparent college student dispositions of more accepting racial and ethnic attitudes represents a long-term attitudinal and behavioral shift or a secular trend.

Ferdinand Linthoe Nashagen of The Norwegian Institute for Historical Sources (Oslo) is now winding up a study of the recruitment to the episcopacy in sixth century Gaul. The study addresses the question: What lies behind the change in the late sixth and early seventh century? At the beginning of the period only one-tenth of the bishops had German names; at its close half of them had. The study furthermore deals with the problem for students of the Middle Ages and early periods: What can be done with data likely to be statistically biased and not obviously valid? The author's suggestions and a discussion of statistics versus other methods, mainly based on decision research, will be published in 1985 in an article in Volume 12 of the yearbook *Francia* entitled Statistics and Historical Research.

Stephen Turner (University of South Florida) is primarily interested in various forms of "the persistence of the old regime," and, in particular, in problems of personal relations and social structure. His current work is on trust and the patronage of nineteenth century geology in the United States. He teaches a course on "Tradition, Custom, and Moral Life," and one on "Comparative Historical Sociology."