

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

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A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

This is the first issue of the newsletter that I am editing. Steve Ellingson, a graduate student in sociology at the University of Chicago, will be the assistant editor. Submissions can be sent to either of us at the address listed at the bottom left of this page. Thanks to Eric Fink for helping us put together this issue of the newsletter.

George Steinmetz

As announced in the previous newsletter, the Comparative and Historical section is organizing three sessions for the 1992 ASA meeting in Pittsburg. We have asked several people to give us their thoughts on the topics of these sessions.

The first session, organized by Ann Orloff, is on "Identity Formation in Comparative/Historical Perspective." In this issue, Eli Zaretsky, author of *Capitalism, the Family, and Personal Life*, discusses the history of the concept of identity in psychoanalytic theory. John Walton, author of *Western Times and Water Wars: State, Culture, and Rebellion in California*, elaborates upon the relations between historical sociology and world system theory. This is related to the second session, "World Systems Analysis and Comparative/Historical Sociology," organized by Ron Aminzade and Philip McMichael. In the next issue of this newsletter, we hope to feature an article on the topic of the third session, "Empirical Explanation — People or Processes: Data, Events, and Aggregation in Historical Sociology." Submissions are invited.

A NOTE ON "IDENTITY"

Eli Zaretsky, University of
Missouri-Columbia

It may be of more than historical interest to note that the provenance of the term "identity" is within psychoanalysis. While Freud did not use the term as such, he described "identification" as the key to the building up of both the ego and of groups. His theory of identification began with "On Narcissism" (1914) which linked narcissism to idealized group identities and is spelled out in *Group Psy-*

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HISTORIANS AND THE WORLD SYSTEM

John Walton, University of
California, Davis

The 1992 American Sociological Association meeting will feature a long-awaited joint session of the sections on Historical-Comparative Sociology and Political Economy of the World System (PEWS). Historical sociologists, in particular, should benefit from exposure to recent developments in the theory and method of global political economy. Like their highly specialized col-

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chology and the Analysis of the Ego (1921), still unsurpassed as a study of the social psychology of "identity politics," broadly conceived. *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1930) develops the theory by showing how groups, such as nations and religions, raise the self esteem of their members by deflecting aggression outside themselves. "Object relations" theory similarly begins with the insight that identification is a substitute for an object relation—mourning and other forms of separation or loss are the models for this process. Thus, in *The Ego and the Id* Freud describes the ego as developing as if it said to the id: "Look you can love me too, I am *solike* the object" (my italics).

It was Erik Erikson, influenced by the Neo-Freudians of the 1930s, who first formulated the concept of identity in analytic theory and identified adolescence rather than infancy as its formative moment in the life cycle. Erikson defined identity as the outcome of "the selective repudiation and mutual assimilation of childhood identifications, and their absorption in a new configuration" and explained it as the product of an interaction between self and society. Rather than societal norms being grafted upon the individual as a vulgar Marxist or social control perspective might suggest, Erikson argued that the "society into which the individual is born makes the individual its member by influencing the manner in which he or she solves the tasks posed by each phase" of development. "A society," he wrote, (often through subsocieties) *identifies* the young individual," who develops epigenetically through a phased series of encounters with the environment.

Although for Erikson the focus was still on the achievement of individual identities, he linked identity to specific groups (youth, immigrants, native Americans, Germans, Russians, etc.) and described cultures as collective attempts to resolve problems of identity formation. In particular, he viewed the achievement of identity as a special problem in America with its disparate class and racial composition, its immigrants and native Americans, writing of the difficulty in sustaining 'ego ideals' in a land "characterised by expanding identification and by great fears of losing hard-won identities." "We live in a country," he concluded, "which attempts to

make a superidentity out of all the identities imported by its constituent immigrants," and in a time when "rapidly increasing mechanization" threatens the "agrarian and patrician identities" the immigrants had in their lands of origins as well. He argued that the primary problem of the epoch was the difficulty youths encountered in establishing their identity, a problem intensified by the delay in the individual's entry into society created by technological advance.

As American psychoanalysis developed in the 1950s, the term "identity" disappeared; in its place came the term "the self," with its far more intrapsychic connotations. However, the cultural politics of the 1960s has to be seen as transitional to the emergence of identity politics proper at the end of that decade in such forms as "black power," and women's and gay liberation. Although the term "identity" disappeared, Freudian thought, developed by such thinkers as Paul Goodman, Norman O. Brown, and especially Herbert Marcuse significantly supplanted Marxism as the warrant for the revolutionary and utopian impulse in so-called "affluent" societies and described distortions in the formation of the self or identity as the basis for a revolutionary critique. *Eros and Civilization*, for example was fundamental to Dennis Altman's writings on homosexual oppression of the early 1970's, among the first and most explicit formulations of the new politics of identity.

The emergence of identity politics, understood to include not only feminism and gay liberation but nationalism must, in my view, be understood in terms of the renegotiation of the borders of the public and the private. According to the enlightenment paradigm, individual identity was irrelevant to public participation and rights. While Marxism seemed to challenge this paradigm in its discussions of the *bourgeois/citoyen* distinction, it actually replaced the enlightenment grid of abstract individuals by a new superordinate and universalist group identity, largely thought rather than felt, that of the proletariat.

In our century, psychoanalysis was the unacknowledged supplement to Marxism, taking the private and concealed as its subject. Understanding the relation of the concept of identity to psychoanalysis, therefore, bears upon the relation of identity politics to Marxism and the Enlightenment. This, in turn, should prove critical for distinguishing progressive from reactionary forms of identity politics.

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leagues in the field of history, historical sociologists generally have been aloof to world-systems analysis, judging it from afar as grandiose, indifferent to societal detail, and imperious in its stress on the causal priority of capitalist development. To be sure, these critical perceptions are confirmed in selected and introductory writings. But they overlook a good deal of recent work aimed precisely at demonstrating the vital links between global and local historical processes.

In 1989, the PEWS section began giving its Distinguished Contribution to Scholarship Award for the publication (book or article published within the three previous calendar years) that best represents advances in world-systems analysis. Initial selection included: Stephen G. Bunker in 1989 for *Peasants Against the State: The Politics of Market Control in Uganda, 1900-1983*, (University of Illinois, 1987), a study of the struggles over independent production and government exploitation in an East African region directly affected by the international coffee export market, and Janet L. Abu-Lughod in 1990 for *Before European Hegemony: The World System A.D. 1250-1350* (Oxford University, 1989), an analysis of the rise and fall of an advanced trading network based in the Middle East during the Thirteenth Century.

In 1991, the award went to Dale W. Tomich for *Slavery in the Circuit of Sugar: Martinique and the World Economy, 1830-1848* (Johns Hopkins University, 1990). Tomich's study of slavery in Martinique is a dense, painstaking, methodologically executed, yet frequently brilliant account of "how relations of production and exchange are socially constructed in history" (p. 3). Employing a "theoretical-historical framework," Tomich plots the argument in a series of chapters beginning with Britain's rise to hegemony in the world economy at the outset of the nineteenth century, moving to contrasting (British and French) colonial-regime methods of increasing Caribbean sugar production for the world market, to related national economic policies and down to the vexations of planters endeavoring to produce sugar profitably and slaves persevering to realize autonomy in the colonies. "Like a set of Russian dolls, the chapters are contained within one another" (p. 7), the later local processes as implications of the earlier global

circuit. In the end Tomich intends to prove that the slave plantation collapsed of its own weight — that within a complex set of global-to-local conditions the slave form of production in French Martinique lost its productive advantage and slaves gained greater autonomy. From the standpoint of research design and interpretation, the distinctive contribution of Tomich and the others is their emphasis on causally interconnected systems that afford many points of entry or levels of analysis provided only that the system is held in the foreground.

Methodological treatises on comparative and historical research have come to recognize the unique contribution of world-systems analysis and to show how it complements more conventional inter- and intra-national case studies. Indeed, some commentators believe that this is the most compelling new approach to comparison. In *Big Structures, Large Processes, Huge Comparisons* (Russell Sage, 1984), Charles Tilly calls it "encompassing comparison [which describes cases] at various locations within the same system, on the way to explain their characteristics as a function of their varying relationships to the system as a whole" (p. 83). Philip McMichael's insightful article on "Incorporating Comparison" (*American Sociological Review* 55, June 1990) inverts the customary assumption that world-historical processes do in fact comprise integrated systems and proposes instead that comparisons be employed to "construct a whole as a methodological procedure by giving context to historical phenomena" (p. 386). Tomich's study of Caribbean slavery is a choice example of incorporating comparison. Slavery as a form of production and labor discipline collapsed in Martinique owing to a number of local conditions (e.g. inefficiently self-contained plantations and nascent local commerce based on self-provisioning by slaves) whose special features derived from the constraints of colonial competition and French economic policy.

Recent advances in world-systems analysis are precisely efforts to move beyond overly general models of core-periphery exchange on a global level. In that endeavor, researchers concerned with international political economy are exploring new methods that benefit all historical sociologists. Whether this innovative approach is called the Russian-doll strategy, encompassing or incorporating comparison, it grapples with causal complexity in a pragmatic fashion. By inquiring

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HISTORICAL SOCIOLOGY AT WILDER HOUSE

David Laitin, University of Chicago

The Center for the Study of Politics, History, and Culture (Wilder House) at the University of Chicago is committed to the promotion of research that examines the linkages between culture and power, and investigates how these linkages change over time. Its first two directors, Ira Katznelson (now at the New School) and Theda Skocpol (now at Harvard), focused on issues of class formation and social welfare in industrial societies. Its present director, David Laitin, working with George Steinmetz and Leora Auslander, has broadened the agenda so that issues of the historical construction of identities, states, and cultural practices have become of central concern.

The Wilder House Center sponsors a new book series published by Cornell University Press. Its first volume, *Language and Power* by Benedict Anderson, addresses problems of language use in the construction of the Indonesian state. Subsequent volumes continue in the tradition of historicizing culture and power. Susan Desan's book, *Reclaiming the Sacred*, reinvestigates the relationship of religion and gender to processes of revolutionary change in 18th century France. James Given's *State and Society in Medieval Europe* proposes the unusual thesis that the social structure of the periphery helps explain strategies of domination by the political center in the process of state construction. In *Communities of Grain*, Victor Magagna synthesizes a vast literature on early modern rural rebellions to demonstrate that the actors were defending community rather than class interests. Steven Kemper's book, *The Presence of the Past*, portrays Sinhalese sacred tradition as one that has throughout its history been rewritten to serve the purposes of those in power. Herman Lebovics' *True France* reconstructs the processes by which a unified French culture was created.

Doctoral students in sociology, history, political science, and anthropology use Wilder House as their base for writing their dissertations (some of which are described below). Wilder House also sponsors workshops, seminars, and a series of Working Papers. Those interested in subscribing to the

working papers or submitting a manuscript for consideration for the Cornell Press Wilder House book series, should write to the Director of the Center for the Study of Politics, History, and Culture, 5811 South Kenwood Avenue, Chicago, IL 60637.

Dissertations in Progress at Wilder House

Ronald Kasimir's dissertation, for which he has conducted extensive field research in Uganda, is on the role of the Catholic church as a part of civil society and as a provider of state-like services in periods of anarchy. A central goal of the dissertation is to specify the relationship between religion and power in the early periods of state construction.

Michael McIntyre's dissertation examines British imperialism in India and Brazil from 1850-1914 in relation to notions of stability, domination, and hegemony. Looking closely at those actors who had to mediate the divergent idioms of power which undergirded the Indo-British and Anglo-Brazilian pacts of domination, he hypothesizes that failure to mediate this crucial juncture undermined the cultural basis of hegemony. Since these non-hegemonic states were nonetheless stable the question arises whether hegemony is a pseudo-problem. State definitions of criminality and the political language of subaltern groups will be examined in an attempt to demonstrate the micro-effects of non-hegemonic imperial domination.

Steve Ellingson's dissertation maps the processes by which antislavery and colonization discourses were created, appropriated, and reworked by competing social movements, political parties, and interest groups from 1830 to 1860 in the United States. He examines how different organizations used language to gain constituents, promote contending solutions to the problem of slavery, struggle for control over public opinion, and mobilize action. He hopes to demonstrate how discourse constrained or enabled organizational efforts to influence collective action, legislative change, and relations of power.

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into how a complex system is formed and how its global and local constituent elements are affected by their connections with others, analysis of the incorporating process provides a methodological meeting ground for historical sociologists and a common theoretical discourse.

COMPARATIVE & HISTORICAL SOCIOLOGY SECTION PRIZE

Andrew Abbott, University of Chicago

The Comparative Historical Sociology Section has awarded its 1991 Prize for the best article jointly to two papers: to "Three Temporalities: Toward an Evenemental Sociology," by William H. Sewell, Jr., (University of Chicago) and to "Formal Organization and the Fate of Social Movements: Craft Association and Class Alliances in the Knights of Labor," by Carol Conell (Stanford University) and Kim Voss (University of California, Berkeley). Sewell's paper is forthcoming in *The Historic Turn in the Human Sciences*, Terrence J. McDonald, ed., while the Conell and Voss paper appeared in *American Sociological Review*, 55:255-69, 1990.

Sewell's paper discusses three kinds of temporality: teleological, exemplified by Wallerstein and Tilly; experimental, exemplified by Skocpol; and evenemental, exemplified by Traugott and Kimeldorf. Sewell argues for a reorientation of sociological analysis towards "global contingency," towards treating events and actions as central to sociological analysis. The master processes of Tilly, the causal analysis of Skocpol, ought in his view to be replaced by a focus on contingent events, a focus combining diverse causal and temporal rhythms within a larger, event-defined framework. Well-written, insightful, and quite controversial, Sewell's paper will provoke discussion for some time to come.

Conell and Voss's paper was, by contrast with Sewell's metatheoretical discussion, a particularly clean and elegant application of sophisticated methods to a historical and theoretical problem. It is among the, if not the, first quantitative paper to win this prize. Conell and Voss examine 400 assemblies of the Knights of Labor to show how, even when strong ideological opposition was absent, assemblies built on pre-existing craft associations, yet tended to recreate their divisions and thereby to fragment the labor movement. While pre-existing associations facilitated formation of the new assemblies, they endowed those new assemblies with the characteristics hindering further development. The paper was not only an elegant application of event-history analysis to the traditionally important problem of American

labor exceptionalism, but at the same time a clear contribution to the organization literature.

The prize committee—Liah Greenfield, Larry Isaac, Thomas Hall, and Andrew Abbott (Chair)—join the section in congratulating these sociologists for their excellent work.

ASA CONGRESSIONAL FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

As recent issues of *Footnotes* have described, the American Sociological Foundation is in the process of reviving the ASA's Congressional Fellowship Program, which operated briefly in 1983 and 1984, before being discontinued for lack of funds. The ASF has allocated \$5,000 out of current income to fund a fellowship for 1992, and has also received a challenge grant designed to create a permanent endowment for the program. An anonymous donor has pledged to give up to \$10,000 to the program, provided that this gift is matched on a 4 to 1 basis by gifts from other donors before the end of 1992. Thus this campaign if fully successful will raise a total of \$50,000 for the fund.

The fellowships awarded in the past were used to serve a wide range of purposes. Each of the three previous fellows became involved in specific research projects during their stays in D.C., and later produced publications focussing on the results of that research. More generally, however, each individual project and the program as a whole were intended to enhance the visibility of sociology in Washington, and to make congressional staffs and federal bureaucrats more receptive to our analyses of current problems and to our proposals for research.

If you think you might like to participate in this program, watch upcoming *Footnotes* for announcements about when the next competition for fellowships is going to take place. And if you would like to contribute to the program's endowment, send checks payable to the American Sociological Foundation Fellowship Fund, c/o the American Sociological Foundation, 1722 N Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036. Or if you prefer, include your contribution to the fund with your dues payment next time you renew your membership in the ASA.

Raymond Russell, Chair
Congressional Fellowship Fund