

TIMELINES

Section on the History of Sociology

May 2006

E-Newsletter Number 5

Inside this issue:

<i>Message from the Chair</i>	2
<i>2006-2007 HOS Section Council Member Candidates</i>	5
<i>2006 ASA history of Sociology Section Preliminary Program</i>	6
<i>HOS Officers and Committees</i>	8
<i>ASA Council 2005-2006</i>	8

A Message from the Chair Edward A. Tiryakian

In my first message to our History of Sociology (HOS) section, I suggested that a mission of our section is to make the history of the discipline, of the profession and of its subfields not an epiphenomenon of residual or antiquarian interest but rather a cornerstone of further development. Essentially, the challenge for our section is to move from the peripheral position reflected in its membership size to a central focus of attention, retaining and attracting the brightest persons in the profession. There

are many paths to doing so, and they cannot all be undertaken or exhausted in one year, so I hope that for the next several years the leadership and the members of the section will take the mission as an enduring legacy.

Let me try to add some flesh to this bare-bones statement.

First, the history of sociology and the history of subfields is not a bland evolution. It is full of contestations, challenges, struggles, resistance, much as is the larger historical process

of nation-states. And what holds true at the macro level (e.g., the American Sociological Association) may well also be reflected as lower levels, such as regional and departmental levels. At the departmental level, for example, some departments have split up because of ideological disputes; others have split over methodological issues. Some departments have been marked by a central figure providing it with a broad research and/or theoretical framework;

(Continued on page 2)

A Man's Grasp Should Exceed His Reach: A Biography of Sociologist Austin Larimore Porterfield By Leonard D. Cain 375 pp. University Press of America, Inc. 2005 —

Jean Giles-Sims, Ph.D., Department of Sociology, Texas Christian University

In 1917 a young Austin Porterfield had already acquired training as a preacher and a teacher. He was faced with the decision to choose between those two callings. We in sociology are grateful he chose teaching, but the role of clergy to do good in society also continued to influence his entire career. It appears that the

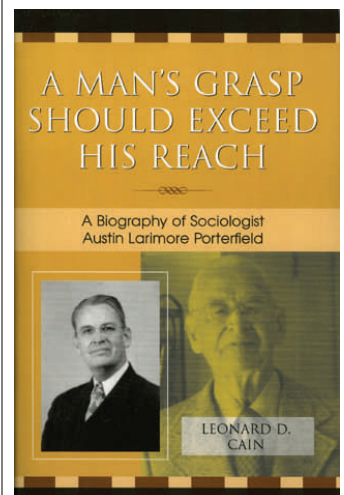
flu epidemic of 1917-18 also influenced his choice to specialize in medical sociology, for which the profession also benefited greatly. The early experience of illness changed Austin Porterfield. In 1917 he wrote:

There is a great deal of sickness here in this community. One of my pupils has

pneumonia, others are suffering with severe attacks of la grippe and other diseases among which is a contagion that people fear. The attendance at school this week does not surpass 50%.

At this point he had

(Continued on page 4)





A Message from the Chair cont'd

(Continued from page 1)

others have grown by accretion without a central figure. Putting a department's history in perspective is a factor in giving it its present identity, or in the construction of a new departmental identity. The same may hold for subfields, such as gerontology, demography, criminology, and so on. To consider the "paradigms" and "paradigm shifts" of the profession and its subfields is to become interactive with the historical process and the situational factors involved in the formation of the "paradigms" and "paradigm shifts".

In my first message last fall, I evoked some vignettes about utilizing the history of sociology. Very recently I was a participant in an interdisciplinary workshop organized by a noted mechanical engineer. The theme of the workshop was "Constructal Theory of Social Dynamics", a new and exciting theory that predicts animal design and geophysical and engineered flows, adding physics to fractal geometry and evolution. My knowledge of physics is pretty much limited to what I learned in elementary physics in college an eon ago, and my knowledge of the mathematical background involved in the modeling of societal flows is just as barren. But besides some stimuli that I got for some of my present research interest in global flows, I could make an initial contribution to the discussion by bringing in from the history of sociology how models and metaphors from physics and engineering have been utilized by sociologists, starting with Comte, trained as an engineer whose first

designation for the new science was "social physics", and changed it to "sociology" because Adolfe Quetelet published "Social Physics" ahead of him. And Comte, of course, saw sociology as justifying itself in social engineering to reestablish in new structures the social order that had unraveled with the French Revolution and its aftermath. The ties of sociology with physics and engineering continued with Pareto (whose theory of optimization is very central to constructal theory), and one can continue with Zipf's Theory of the Principle of Least Effort or Parsons's use of cybernetics. What I tried to put in historical perspective are the linkages of sociology with a natural science, in this instance physics and engineering, and the limitations of the linkage. That is, sociology (and various subfields) at various stages have drawn from metaphors in the natural sciences. We need now to have some serious methodological reflections and dialogues on how metaphors can be used for theorizing and empirical research. But at least, some grounding in the history of sociology is an important and useful tool as sociologists meet other sciences.

Pointing to the future, we will have a very exciting program at the Montreal meetings that should generate increased interest in both our section and in the history of sociology itself. The future of the section, like the future of the discipline, ultimately rests with a new generation of sociologists who can add new conceptualizations and new research vistas. So our program will give graduate students a forum (New Vistas for the History of Sociology", which I hope may become institutionalized at our later meet-

ings, and help to recruit graduate students into section membership.

That we are meeting in Montreal offers another stimulus for our invited papers session, "1968 and Subsequent Histories of Sociology". The year "1968" (or broadly, 1965-1970) was marked not just in the United States, but in Canada, Europe, Latin America, and Asia with upheavals, particularly impacting higher education, the university, and sociology. Needless to say, it is as critical a year as "1848" or "1989" in global significance, and for those of us who were students or teachers then, it remains an existential moment. So the panel session will bring together participants from different settings to reflect on that historical moment and its enduring consequences for sociology in different national settings.

With globalization, the history of sociology may have an enlarged vista from several stimuli. While those of us teaching the history of sociology will have no difficulty in talking about American sociology and, to a limited extent, European sociology, the global scene is usually absent regarding other major regions. I don't think we can assume that our "exports" of the historical canon will continue to suffice for the development of sociology in, say, China, Japan and India, or Australia for that matter. We will need to incorporate in the canon of sociology the many

(Continued on page 3)

Message from the Chair cont'd

(Continued from page 2)

"others". As a preliminary step, we will entrust George Ritzer with organizing a path-breaking session on "Globalization and the History of Sociology".

Lastly, the *pièce de résistance* of our program is not a session but a didactic seminar that the Program Committee of the American Sociological Association has graciously consented for us to organize. This will be a 3 ½ hour seminar on "Methodologies of the History of Sociology" that will inform those taking it with how established leading scholars have gone about doing aspects of historical research at basically three different levels: micro (biographical), meso (institutional), and macro (national and international).

I end here with urging all section members to attend all components of our exciting Montreal program. And that will include a reception with some "value added" aspects: we will meet with representatives of all four universities in Montreal, two French-speaking (Université de Montréal, Université du Québec à Montréal) and two English-speaking (McGill and Concordia), with welcoming remarks by ASA President Cynthia Epstein and a foremost Canadian sociologist, Guy Rocher. — Edward A. Tiryakian, Chair



Hope to see you in Montreal!



GREAT DIVIDES: TRANSGRESSING BOUNDARIES

101st Annual Meeting | August 11-14, 2006 | Palais des congrès de Montréal | Montréal, Quebec, Canada



Remember to visit the History of Sociology Website at:
<http://www.mtholyoke.edu/go/hos>



Review of 'A Man's Grasp Should Exceed His Reach' cont'd

(Continued from page 1)

a wife and child, formal education that included only high school and a few college level courses and a burning desire for more education and to serve his community. In 1918 he enlisted in the army "to be of service", to "seek physical strength and mental development" and because, "I wanted my conscience to be always clear." This choice for military service later opened doors to more college education (B.A. Oklahoma City College, 1923) and eventually the Ph.D. from Duke University in 1936. In 1937 Porterfield, his wife Ella, and their three children moved to Fort Worth, TX to accept a Professorship in Sociology and duties as department chair.

Cain's book includes all of these early details and excerpts from many letters that trace his early development in the church and through his educational training in the first 15 pages. The remainder of the book focuses on his long career at TCU (1937-1966) and indirectly on the rise of the discipline of Sociology nationally. Ellsworth Farris was an early faculty member at TCU, but in Porterfield's words, "A man offered Texas Christian University \$5000 to 'fire the radical,' and the administration took the money." This history apparently influenced Porterfield's efforts to optimize academic freedom and he and Farris became fast friends. Farris went on to become an academic star at the University of Chicago, and later Porterfield arranged for him to return to TCU as a Distinguished Visit-

ing Professor of Sociology in the Spring of 1950 – perhaps as final vindication. Porterfield also had his share of political notoriety. In the post WW II McCarthy era, Porterfield and two other social science professors at TCU were accused of being communist sympathizers and the TCU Board of Trustees considered taking severe action, but Chancellor Sadler publicly threatened resignation and the action ceased.

Cain captures the essence of Porterfield's teaching career through testimonial letters and interviews with former students. Jerry Michel commented:

Dr. Porterfield loved teaching. He was always exciting and exuberant in the classroom. He believed in what he was lecturing about and loved talking about it.... He believed that social science is cumulative and, thus, was highly optimistic about the long-run value of current research. He was always involved in research and writing projects and these interests often overflowed in his classes. ... Dr. Porterfield had one major weakness as a teacher. He always assigned term papers, but he hated grading papers and exams and procrastinated doing so. He jokingly claimed that 'grading papers is the lowest form of human activity!'

Many of us find that remembrance comforting as we strug-

gle with student papers. But Michel also writes:

Dr. Porterfield was a remarkable person in many ways and I am a better person and a better sociologist and a better classroom teacher today and throughout the past 38 years because of his influence on my life. Though dead, he still lives in all of our lives and those of countless others whom he touched.

Indeed, Porterfield mentored many. At least eighteen students went on to study for the Ph.D. in sociology and many became professors themselves. Appendix G lists scholars, teachers, a college president and several university administrators among Porterfield's students.

Cain next tries to capture the legacy of Porterfield's enormous scholarly output in professional essays and journals articles. This includes 22 articles on crime, delinquency and suicide, 14 on the family, 2 on humanities, 10 on medical sociology, 3 on religion, 3 on the scientific method, 3 on social problems, 2 on social psychology, 7 on war and peace, and 8 other articles. Porterfield also published 11 books on similar topics. Jerry Michel commented on what made Porterfield write, write, and write to explore the significant troubling issues of mankind:

He had a strong sense that the written word was the most effective means

(Continued on page 5)

ASA 2006-2007 Elections

Voting for the 2006-07 Council Members is now underway. Below are the candidates for the History of Sociology Section Council.

Click here to find out more about each candidate and to vote: <http://www.intelliscaninc.com/soc-39.htm>

Chair-elect

Valerie A. Haines, University of Calgary

Jennifer Platt, University of Sussex

Secretary-Treasurer

Andrea Malkin Brenner, American University

Mikaila Arthur, New York University

Council Member

Jan M. Fritz, University of Cincinnati

Sylvia Pedraza, University of Michigan

Jonathan D. VanAntwerpen, University of California-Berkeley

Alford A. Young, University of Michigan

Voting ends at 5:00pm Eastern Daylight Time, June 8, 2006.

“A Man’s Grasp Should Exceed His Reach” (Continued from page 4)

of communicating with his target audience.... Writing for him was as natural, healthful and therapeutic as food, drink, exercise and sleep.... He thoroughly enjoyed it and saw it directed toward the best goal possible – the betterment of all mankind.

Perhaps Porterfield’s greatest contribution to sociology was the development of the *Journal of Health and Human Behavior*, later retitled the *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* which became a mainstay publication of the American Sociological Association. Here we see Porterfield return to his early interest in illnesses and health care. He said:

Social knowledge in the medical setting is important not only for doctor, nurse and intern. It is important in the patient. The patient’s understandings, misunderstandings, loves, hates, fears, and reassurances which grow out of his appreciation, or lack of appreciation, of his life situation, obviously affect his food and drink habits, his attitude toward medical care and convalescence, and his motivation to stay well.

This quote from 1960 eerily presages our current concerns with health and well-being. It attests to Porterfield’s dedication, insight, and hard work to bring the most pressing issues of his day and the future to the attention of sociologists and the public.

Cain’s book is methodically researched, detailed in its biography and history of sociology, a testament to the legacy Porterfield left to the Sociology Department at TCU, and an inspiration to us all.



ASA 2006 History of Sociology Section Preliminary Sessions

Session 1 (to be held at the time of the Section business meeting):

Graduate Student Forum: *New Perspectives on the History of Sociology*

Anna Xiao Dong Sun, Princeton Univ., convener, xiaosun@princeton.edu

Yolanda Johnson, University of Nebraska at Lincoln, sociyyj@hotmail.com

Bart Bonikowski, Princeton University, bartb@princeton.edu

Isaac Reed, Yale University, Isaac.Reed@yale.edu

Session 2 (invited papers)

Panel Discussion, *The Impact of the 1960s on the History of Sociology*

Organizer Edward A. Tiryakian, Duke University, Durkhn@soc.duke.edu

Chair: Eleanor Townsley, Mt. Holyoke College, etownsle@mtholyoke.edu

Guy Rocher, University of Montreal, Rocher@droit.umontreal.ca

Immanuel Wallerstein, Yale University, Wallerstein@yale.edu

Alan Sica, Pennsylvania State University, Alansica@psu.edu

Peter Beilharz, Latrobe University (Australia), p.beilharz@latrobe.edu.au

Sandro Segre, University of Genoa (Italy), Segre@unige.it

John Drysdale, Univ. of Concordia (Canada) drysdal@alcor.concordia.ca

Session 3 (submitted papers): *Globalization and the History of Sociology*

Organizer, Edward A. Tiryakian, Duke University, Durkhn@soc.duke.edu

Chair, George Ritzer, University of Maryland, Ritzer@socy.umd.edu

Discussant: Edward A. Tiryakian, Duke University, Durkhn@soc.duke.edu

ASA 2006 History of Sociology Section Preliminary Sessions Cont'd

Workshop/Seminar: *Methodologies of the History of Sociology*

Organizer & Convener: Edward A. Tiryakian, Duke Univ., Durkhn@soc.duke.edu

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

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

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

Position	Name	Affiliation	E-mail Address
<i>Chair</i>	Edward Tiryakian	Duke University	durkhn@soc.duke.edu
<i>Chair-Elect</i>	Eleanor Townsley	Mount Holyoke	etownsle@mtholyoke.edu
<i>Past Chair</i>	Susan Hoecker-Drysdale	Concordia Univ. & Univ. of Iowa	susan_hoecker@yahoo.com
<i>Secretary-Treasurer</i>	Jill Niebrugge Brantley	American University	niebran@attglobal.net
<i>Council Members (2006)</i>	Donald Cunnigen	University of Rhode Island	dcunn@uriacc.uri.edu
	Doris Wilkinson	University of Kentucky	dwilkin@uky.edu
<i>Council Members (2007)</i>	Larry Nichols	West Virginia University	larry.nichols@mail.wvu.edu
	Jack Nusan Porter	University of Massachusetts	jacknusan@earthlink.net
<i>Council Member: (2008)</i>	Uta Gerhardt	University of Heidelberg	uta.gerhardt@urz.uni-heidelberg.de
	Betsy Lucal	Indiana University South Bend	blucal@iusb.edu
<i>Student Member</i>	Yolanda Johnson	University of Nebraska-Lincoln	sociyyi@hotmail.com

**COMMITTEES OF THE HISTORY OF SOCIOLOGY SECTION 2005-2006
ESTABLISHED AT PHILADELPHIA ASA MEETINGS AUG 13-16 2005**

Committee	Name	Affiliation	E-mail Address
<i>Nominating</i>	Susan Hoecker-Drysdale	Concordia Univ. & Univ. of Iowa	susan_hoecker@yahoo.com
<i>Newsletter</i>	Cathy Coghlan, Editor	Texas Christian University	c.coghlan@tcu.edu
<i>Webmasters</i>	Eleanor Townsley	Mount Holyoke	etownsle@mtholyoke.edu
	Mikaila Arthur	New York University	Mikaila.Arthur@nyu.edu
<i>Awards</i>	Mike Keen	Indiana University South Bend	mkeen@iusb.edu
<i>Distinguished Book Award</i>	Kay Broschart	Hollins	kbroschart@hollins.edu
<i>Distinguished Achievement Award</i>	Michael Hill	University of Nebraska-Lincoln	mhill@jwcc.edu
<i>Student Paper Award</i>	Anna Xiao Dong Sun	Princeton University	xiaosun@Princeton.EDU
<i>Membership</i>	Ed Tiryakian, Chair	Duke University	durkhn@soc.duke.edu

2005-2006 ASA Council

<p>Officers of the Association</p> <p>Cynthia Fuchs Epstein, <i>President</i>, CUNY Graduate Center</p> <p>Lynn Smith-Lovin, <i>Vice President</i>, Duke University</p> <p>Frances Fox Piven, <i>President-Elect</i>, CUNY Graduate Center</p> <p>Bonnie Thornton Dill, <i>Vice President-Elect</i>, University of Maryland</p> <p>Troy Duster, <i>Past President</i>, New York University</p> <p>Caroline Persell, <i>Past Vice President</i>, New York University</p> <p>Franklin Wilson, <i>Secretary</i>, University of Wisconsin, Madison</p> <p>Sally T. Hillsman, <i>Executive Officer</i></p>	<p>Elected-at-Large</p> <p>Rebecca Adams, University of North Carolina, Greensboro</p> <p>Judith Auerbach, American Foundation for AIDS Research</p> <p>Kathleen Blee, University of Pittsburgh</p> <p>Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, Duke University</p> <p>Evelyn Nakano Glenn, University of California, Berkeley</p> <p>Michele Lamont, Harvard University</p> <p>Nan Lin, Duke University</p> <p>Ann Shola Orloff, Northwestern University</p> <p>Gay Seidman, University of Wisconsin - Madison</p> <p>Diane Vaughan, Columbia University</p> <p>Bruce Western, Princeton University</p> <p>Min Zhou, University of California, Los Angeles</p>
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