Serendipities
Journal for the Sociology and History of the Social Sciences

Volume 9, No 1 (2024)

Table of Content:

Serendipities – Journal for Sociology and History of the Social Sciences

Hosted by the Royal Danish Library

https://tidsskrift.dk/Serendipities/index

Serendipities
Journal for the Sociology and History of the Social Sciences

ARTICLE

#ThanksForTyping … and the fieldwork: the role of sociologists' wives in classic British studies

Rosalind Edwards & Val Gillies
R.S.Edwards@soton.ac.uk & v.gillies@westminster.ac.uk

Abstract

This article explores the role of social researchers' wives in post-war British studies, in particular drawing on the diaries kept by the wives of two noted sociologists while their husbands, Peter Willmott and Dennis Marsden, were respectively undertaking studies in the working class communities of Bethnal Green and Salford. The wives – Phyllis Willmott and Pat Marsden, made contributions to the community studies in the mid 1950s/early 1960s, at the point where British sociology and social research was on the cusp of transition towards formalisation and professionalisation. The wives were co-opted into the academic endeavour. Their practices as part of their family lives became professionalised as they undertook knowledge gathering, bridging between community and scholarship for their husbands, and reflecting on their own practice. The paper enables contemporary social researchers to recognise the part played by the wives of major sociological figures in the establishment of the men's reputations and the disciplinary enterprise of sociology.

Keywords

academic wives, British community studies, incorporated wives, Pat Marsden, Phyllis Willmott, wives' diaries

INTRODUCTION

The hashtag #ThanksForTyping began trending on (what was then) Twitter in 2017. It was started by Bruce Holsinger, a Professor of English at the University of Virginia. Using Google Books, Holsinger had scanned the acknowledgement pages of books and started a thread, posting screenshots on Twitter with the ThanksForTyping hashtag. The hashtag subsequently gained traction internationally. The examples of screenshot acknowledgements posted under the hashtag stretch from the post-war WWII period to more recently, and overwhelmingly involve male authors thanking their wives.[1] For example, an acknowledgement from a book published in 1992 gives sincere

[1] Holsinger's tweet and the example tweet cited here were accessed on 22.12.23: https://x.com/bruceholsinger/status/845637778251677697?s=20, https://x.com/AleSojka/status/847175184926887937?s=20. Unfortunately as people leave X (formerly Twitter) their account content is deleted and the #thanksfortyping contributions are erased.

thanks to the first wife, who came up with the theory that forms the backbone of the author's book, followed by an expression of profound debt to the second wife, who seems to have written the book, and with mention of the merit of her never getting headaches. Examining the tweeted examples under the hashtag, it is clear that much more was going on than the typing contribution captured in the hashtag: wives were facilitating and instrumental to the entire research and publication process.

A whole field of women's effaced research and domestic labour coalesces into visibility under the hashtag. The tweets are a partial glimpse of the contributions of wives historically and into the contemporary period. They alert us to the significant implications of the invisible work of academic wives in the past for our contemporary concerns. Wives' contributions enabled the careers of some of the male academics who embedded disciplines such as sociology, social policy and anthropology in post-war British higher education. Further, their contributions helped to establish expectations around the amount of research, teaching and administrative work expected of academics today, with or without the contribution of wives or partners (see recent discussion in the Mumsnet 'Academic common room') .[2] As John Goodwin and colleagues have noted in revisiting the work of sociologist Pearl Jephcott (2021), previous research connects the past, present and possible futures of sociology, an important part of what and how 'we' (sociologists and society) have been shaped.

In this article we explore the role of wives of social researchers in classic works of the 1950s and '60s that set foundations for how sociology conceived and sociologists enacted research investigations of social change in working class communities and family life. We draw in particular on cases involving the diaries kept by the wives of two noted sociologists of the period: Phyllis Willmott, wife of Peter Willmott, and Pat Marsden, wife of Dennis Marsden, while their husbands were undertaking intensive community studies in long-established (but no longer existing) poor working-class neighbourhoods. Multi-generational families lived side by side in sub-standard rented housing, respectively in the south and north of England: Bethnal Green, East London, with employment largely provided in manufacturing, docks and transport; and Salford, mainly serving the industrial/docks complex of Greater Manchester.

Phyllis Willmott kept two diaries during 1954 and 1955, during the period when Peter Willmott and Michael Young were undertaking their renowned *'Family and Kinship in East London'* study (Young and Willmott 1957). Phyllis wrote her diaries while she, her husband, and their children, lived in Bethnal Green. One journal was a handwritten personal diary, a sort of internal monologue, while the other was a typed daily set of observations about community life in Bethnal Green. Phyllis also wrote a retrospective commentary on her typed diary for the Institute of Community Studies in 2001. (Diaries and commentary housed in the Willmott Collection, Churchill Archives, Cambridge.) Pat Marsden's handwritten daily record of life for mothers and children on a slum clearance estate was kept while Dennis Marsden was undertaking his unpublished 'Salford Slum and Re-housing' ethnographic study. Pat, Dennis and their two young children lived on the estate during 1963. We interviewed Pat Marsden in 2009 about her memories of the time. (Diary transcript and interview held by authors.)[3] The wives and their husbands were from working class backgrounds in the north

[2] https://www.mumsnet.com/talk/academics_corner/4884814-male-academics-with-wivespartners-who-dont-work-anyone-else-noticed-this [accessed 5.1.24]

[3] Copyright for the diaries and commentary are held by the Willmott and Marsden estates, and can be accessed upon request. Pat Marsden gave consent for use of her interview. Ethical approval was granted by the University of Southampton under ERGO ID 71948.

(the Marsdens) and south (the Willmotts) of England. As the husbands gained a higher education and progressed in their research careers, the couples became socially mobile.[4] The wives' ambiguous class location, encompassing earlier insider lived experience growing up as girls in working class communities, and recently acquired outsider status socially and culturally, combined with a taken-for-granted positioning as wives and mothers within the communities under study, provides a distinct form of gendered insight into the local working-class communities that their husbands were studying.

The 1950s and 1960s were a significant period for British sociology, where a post war generation of sociologists aimed to contribute to social renewal and laid the foundations for the subsequent development of the discipline (Scott 2020). It is important to note that we are not seeking to undermine the standing of major British sociologists; rather we aim to introduce the work of wives alongside their reputations. In an interview on the history of British sociology (Crow et al. 2023, discussing Scott 2020), John Scott asserts the importance of disciplinary history in giving contemporary sociologists a sense of their own position in the collective enterprise and on whose shoulders we/they stand. In this article, through our uncovering of the contributions made by sociologists' wives, illustrated with consideration of the cases of the Bethnal Green and Salford community studies, we provide contemporary social researchers with a sense of the importance of past wives in the collective disciplinary enterprise. We insert their research involvement into the envisaging of the shoulders that are stood upon.

A SIGNIFICANT SILENCE

Male social researchers may include 'thanks for typing' type acknowledgements of a wife's supportive input in the front of their books, but this format camouflages the silence of their presence in the body of the text. Discussions of the trajectories of sociological knowledge about communities, families and class, and of sociology as a discipline generally also silence the presence of wives epistemologically and methodologically. Disciplinary reviews construct influential male sociologists as generating their classic studies unaided.

Silence concerning the details of the part that male sociologists' wives may have played in initiating, facilitating and generating foundational disciplinary knowledge and insight into community and family is significant in two respects. Firstly, post-war Britain saw the expansion and flourishing of sociology as a science of society regarded as essential within and outside the academy for understanding everyday lives and for a rebuilding of British society. The post-war generation of sociologists saw themselves as working towards social renewal and contributing politically to social reform (Scott 2020). In-depth studies of the implications of disruption in a shifting landscape of neighbourhood upheaval and family relocation were features of these efforts. Community studies in particular came to prominence in an effort to study new patterns of family, kinship and neighbouring in the face of anxiety about the state of marriage, the family and society. Sociologists utilised intensive ethnographic techniques of data gathering and participant observation that required extensive time and resource investment (Crow 2002). Community research of the 1950s and 1960s focused attention on the detailed habits and values of daily life, family and neighbourhood networks

[4] Phyllis Willmott was on her own socially mobile trajectory too, having recently qualified as a medical social worker before having her children. Pat Marsden had to leave school at 16 and went to work as an assistant in a library.

and relationships. Work at the Institute of Community Studies in Bethnal Green, initiated and directed by the social innovator Michael Young, was a key element in this, had a strong focus on the implications of rehousing for family and community cohesion. Despite criticisms by some sociologists that the Institute was unsociological (e.g. Platt 1971), Young and Willmott's *Family and Kinship in East London* study (1957) was highly influential conceptually and methodologically, spawning similar investigations such as Colin Rosser and Christopher Harris' study of family and kinship in Swansea (1965) and Salford College of Technology's 'Salford Slum and Rehousing Study' led by Dennis Marsden (1963, unpublished), as well as sociological studies of working class neighbourhoods internationally (Topalov 2003).

Secondly, there is a significant silence about the role that wives played in those community studies in the face of arguments that social research investigation was on the cusp of intellectual and methodological transition. Mike Savage (2010) has argued that in the post-war period, social research shifted from a practice dominated by 'gentlemanly' moralistic judgements towards objective disciplinary undertakings by professionalised social researchers but at a time when research methods (and ethical protocols) had not yet become formalised as techniques distinct from the researcher practicing them. Fieldwork was on the verge of developing into a legitimate social research method, with the 'rules of the game' brought into being (Savage 2022) including through the practice of community studies. In this respect, post-war community and family research both studied social change and embodied it. Any sense that the lives of sociologists' wives may have been professionalised through the linking of methods techniques and researcher practice, and that wives may have played a role in the professionalisation of community study methodology of the time is absent however.

INCORPORATED WIVES

The gender dynamics of 'incorporated' (Finch 1984) or 'forgotten' (Oakley 2021) wives who played or play a significant part in their husbands' employment is revealed in a strand of feminist literature about the ways that the wives are affected directly and indirectly by their husbands' work and become drawn into it across a range of occupations. For wives whose husbands have professional careers, their family lives become 'professionalised' – that is, wives' everyday activities become incorporated into professional research practice, and their productive labour is uncredited. In her 1983 book, *Married to the Job*, Janet Finch uses the term 'incorporation' to denote a two-way relationship between wives and their husbands' work. The husband's work imposes a set of structures on the wife's life; she is incorporated into the structures around which her husband's work is organised, which sets limits on what is possible for her. This then elicits the wife's contributions to the husband's work – the incorporation of her labour, whether enforced or chosen, into the work that men do. A decade earlier, Hanna Papanek (1973) developed the concept of a structurally and culturally generated 'two-person single career', which simultaneously requires a wife's participation and devalues it. Papanek points out that it also curtails opportunities for wives to build their own careers since they are so invested vicariously in advancing their husband's career. More recently in *Forgotten Wives* (2021), Ann Oakley argues that wifehood was, and remains, a political filter of gendered assumptions about what wives do -- a filter that makes a subterranean industry of wifely

labour so unremarkable that it is not recognised as there at all. Wives' contribution is forgotten, concealed behind their husbands.[5]

Looking specifically at research on the incorporated labour of faculty or academic wives, discussion tends to focus on the domestic and administrative support particularly evident in the mid-twentieth century, but continuing today as the ThanksForTyping hashtag has shown. Martha Fowlkes' (1980) work on wives of US-based doctors and faculty, for example, identifies three main ways in which a wife relates to and affects her husband's work life: being an adjunct who helps directly with her husband's work itself; providing emotional support that enables the husband to continue his work; and undertaking the 'double duty' of care of family life and protecting the husband from its demands. There is also some attention to academic wives' social contribution as well as the administrative and domestic support provided, hosting dinners and visiting academics, and nurturing and sustaining their husband's career and relationships by this means (e.g. Ardner 1984). Several studies refer to the University and Faculty Wives Clubs prevalent in North America (Prentice 2006). In the UK, there was a Sociology Wives Reading Group at Essex University in the 1960s (https://essexsociologyalumni.com/timeline/) for example, normalising the category of 'sociology wives'.[6] Such institutionalised forms of social labour make clear that it was not just academic husbands who benefitted from their wives' hidden administrative, domestic and social labour, but also the universities where their husbands were employed.

Jennifer Platt's book on *The Realities of Social Research* (1976) moves us beyond administrative, domestic and social incorporation to another form of professional incorporation of academics' family life. Focusing on the research practices of British sociologists, Platt indicates that wives were performing the role of research assistants, helping with typing, routine statistical tests, hand-counting of data prior to ubiquitous computers, and supporting husbands who were doing participant observation, smoothing relationships with key (male) informants and acquiring relevant information:

> A number of spouses, however, gave more concrete [research] help; they actually did some of the work themselves. In community participant observation this could hardly be avoided, since simply by living there both spouses were participating; help, however, could go well beyond this, as when a very attractive wife [sic] smoothed relationships with key informants … it seems evident that conjugal roles among sociologists are such that wives follow and support their husbands' careers in the conventional way (Platt 1976: 122-123).

What is missing in these analyses is a detailed engagement with the processes of wives' input and the skills they exercised beyond smoothing relationships for their husbands. Later in this article we show how Phyllis Willmott and Pat Marsden were in fact *doing* participant observation, exercising their articulating class and gender locations to give insights into aspects of community life where their husbands had limited access, and rigorously reflecting on fieldwork relations.

[5] See also Ann Funder's *Wifedom* (2023) on the invisibilising of the contributions to the writing of the novelist George Orwell by his wife, Eileen O'Shaughnessy.

[6] The University of Bristol had a University Wives Club in the early 1970s. Personal discussion with Miriam David 29.11.23.

POST-WAR SOCIOLOGISTS AND THEIR WIVES

There have also been biographies of individual academics that uncover wives' contribution to influential men's careers. In her biography of her father, Richard Titmuss, who founded the discipline of social administration and held a chair at the London School of Economics (LSE), and her mother, Kay Titmuss: *Man and Wife* (1996), Ann Oakley paints a portrait of the sort of wifely vicarious identification with her husband's career that Hanna Papanek noted as a feature of the two-person single career. Kay Titmuss did a great deal of support secretarial work and life management for Richard Titmuss, as Oakley relates, but there was an early book that the couple co-authored (Titmuss and Titmuss 1942). Oakley writes that her mother's contribution to this work was restricted to typing, referring to Kay's own characterisation of her input (1996: 158). Yet Kay Titmuss clearly downplayed her contribution in favour of her husband. In one of his letters, Richard Titmuss records his wife as 'sampling 3000 record cards in the M & CW [mother and child welfare] clinics' (op cit: 143). In other words, Kay Titmuss undertook research that formed the basis for the book on which she was acknowledged as a co-author. Inclusion as a book co-author, reflecting significant research input, was not often the case, as we will show below.

Richard Titmuss was part of an interconnected set of rising stars of post-war British sociology and social policy; a network that involved our case study wives Phyllis Willmott and Pat Marsden. It included Michael Young, whose PhD was supervised by Titmuss. Young instigated Peter Willmott and Dennis Marsden in their respective community research, as well as Dennis Marsden's collaboration with the educationalist Brian Jackson on *Education and the Working Class* (1962). Peter Townsend, a prominent sociologist and poverty campaigner, was also connected to this grouping. Initially working with Young at the Institute of Community Studies, Townsend joined Titmuss at the LSE, and then left for the University of Essex where he subsequently recruited Dennis Marsden to join his department. Others in this interconnected group serve to indicate how wives played a crucial enabling role in classic post-war social research studies. In the acknowledgements for Peter Townsend's *The Last Refuge* (1962: xiii), for example, as well as dedicating the book to his wife, Ruth Townsend, he refers to Ruth as part of 'the small team of research officers who undertook visits and interviews' for the study. In his research on Peter Townsend, the historian Chris Renwick (2023) has engaged with the under-appreciated but critical domestic, social and fieldwork contributions made by Ruth Townsend that undergirded her husband's early career. Renwick points out that the extent of Ruth's input was such that any sense of distinctions between the Townsend's home life, social research and political activities were dissolved.

Turning to Brian Jackson, his first wife, Sheila, carried out the pilot study of a working class community for the Institute of Community Studies that both stimulated the Jackson and Marsden *Education and the Working Class* study (see Hardwick 2003), and subsequently become a foundation for Jackson's *Working Class Community* book (1968). Jackson also dedicated his book to his wife, acknowledging:

> I don't suppose I would have stuck at the project at all had I not only had initial help from Sheila Jackson with the fieldwork and writing up, but generous and selfless encouragement all the way through (1968: vii).

Dedicating books to wives often seems to have alleviated any need to recognise them as co-researchers deserving of co-authorship. Indeed, Sheila's contributions show how wives were not just research assistants; they could make crucial intellectual input. Subsequently, when she remarried to Philip Abrams, Professor of Sociology at Durham University, Sheila is credited with having had a

key role in some of his major work. She conceived and conducted research for the study of communes, *Communes, Sociology and Society* (Abrams and McCulloch 1976). The authorship of the book was at least attributed to 'Philip Abrams and Andrew McCulloch with Sheila Abrams and Pat Gore'. The 'with' of the authorship attribution, though, seems rather parsimonious given that the Preface to the book (1976: vii) states:

> The work [was] … carried out by the authors together with Sheila Abrams and Pat Gore. Andrew McCulloch, Pat Gore and Sheila Abrams did most of the work of visiting communities while Philip Abrams studied the literature … Sheila (who had the idea for the research in the first place) spent a great deal of time making sense of the results of a questionnaire we had distributed to all members of the Commune Movement and keeping track of the actual organisation of that Movement … it would have been very difficult for us to understand the groups we have written about in this book without this further work on the wider alternative society movements.

Sheila also was formative in Abrams' posthumously published work on neighbours (Bulmer 1985). Martin Bulmer notes in his introduction:

> Sheila Abrams' influence is discernible throughout, reflecting participation in team meetings over five years, continuing involvement in fieldwork and the salience of neighbouring as a regular topic of conversation at the family dinner table … This was followed by the ten detailed case studies reported in chapters 8 to 10, for which they [other research staff] and Sheila Abrams carried out all the fieldwork.

Papanek states that the benefits wives might gain from a two-person single career could be mitigated by long term material losses (1973). On the death of Abrams, Sheila was left needing to find paid work and experienced the consequences of a serial two-person single career. In the interview in 2009, Pat Marsden recalled:

> Sheila came to see me about her CV and she said, 'Oh Pat I don't know how to put this together!' It was all about, 'when I lived with Brian we did this, and when I lived with Philip we did that'. And she was really worried because she didn't have any formal educational qualifications.

There has, then, been some feminist attention, most notably during its 'second wave' (c. 1960s and '70s), to conceptualising academic wives' contributions as incorporated and as a two-person single career. Additionally, as noted above, there is a trail of clues to the involvement of sociologists' wives in classic British social studies for those who look for it. There has, however, been little attention paid to in-depth tracking the specificities of wives' involvement in the generation of knowledge. There has been no revelation of how the wives' insight is a silent presence in the detail of arguments in the work upon which their husbands built their scholarly reputations. Phyllis Willmott's and Pat Marsden's fieldwork diaries enable us to uncover this presence.

THE BETHNAL GREEN AND SALFORD DIARIES

As social research was becoming professionalised, the everyday activities of the wives and families of social researchers become incorporated into these professionalised methods. Researchers undertaking community and family studies often lived temporarily in the location that they were studying, and they could be accompanied wives and children. Peter Willmott (1985) argued that community studies would lack 'immediacy' if researchers were not located in the area (although for

a critique of their actual involvement, see Frankenberg 1979).[7] The relocation involved for wives could be willingly, as in the case of the Bethnal Green community study, where Phyllis Willmott moved with Peter and their two little sons, from living in what she describes as 'a jerry-built house with peeling walls' in Hackney, North London, to a bright, refurbished flat on the top floor of what she calls the 'gracious house' at 18 Victoria Park Square, Bethnal Green, East London, which contained the Institute of Community Studies (personal diary 1.6.54). Or it could be less willingly, as Pat Marsden moved with Dennis and their small son and daughter, from what she termed their 'nice flat' in the northern town of Huddersfield, Yorkshire, to 2 Davenham House – a maisonette with a broken toilet, in need of redecoration, in the area of slum clearance and rebuilding in Salford, Lancashire, that was the focus of Dennis Marsden's ethnography (reflective interview 20.8.09).

Each wife kept diaries in the expectation that the entries would help inform their husbands' analyses, as evidenced in our case discussions below. The wives were incorporated into their husband's work structures, which then elicited their contribution – that is, ethnographic living in community and knowledge gathering. These diaries show how the wives were co-opted into the academic endeavour, bridging between community and scholarship for their husbands' research through becoming embedded in the everyday life of the community under study. They settled into community life in their gendered position as a mother of small children and a wife of a social researcher, drawing on their social class backgrounds, and making friends with other local wives and mothers. From this positioning, Phyllis and Pat were able to record accounts of everyday community life that were not accessible to their sociologist husbands. They were also participant observers operating on the cusp of the professionalisation of research methods.

We now build on our review of the acknowledgements of male sociologists concerning their wives in classic British studies, to throw light on the overlooked input of wives through consideration of Phyllis' and Pat's Bethnal Green and Salford diaries and reflections. While we may glimpse wives' input to their husbands' sociological knowledge generation through book acknowledgements and traces of them in fieldwork notes, Phyllis' and Pat's diaries enable us to directly demonstrate the shaping of the accounts of working class community and family life on which their husbands built their reputations and careers. Drawing on these unique diaries – we are not aware of the existence of any other wives' fieldwork diaries from the post-war period – we progress from the general substantiation of the role of sociologists' wives in classic British studies, as above, into the detail of how wives have made substantive and methodological contributions to the generation of disciplinary knowledge through their incorporation as wives in their husband's endeavours.

PHYLLIS WILLMOTT: BETHNAL GREEN COMMUNITY LIFE AND RECIPROCAL FIELDWORK RELATIONS

As noted earlier, Phyllis Willmott kept two diaries. One was her personal diary kept in a ledger, and running from May 1954 to November 1954. It is a barely legible handwritten account, a spilling out of thoughts about herself, jottings and plans, but with mention of life in the Institute and of the community study that Peter Willmott had embarked upon with Michael Young. She also kept a typed Bethnal Green Journal, running from October 1954 to March 1955. The journal diary entries contain

[7] In a critical piece on the gender politics of British community studies, Ronald Frankenberg remarks: 'A major weakness of all the studies I have discussed was the lack of commitment of their godlike authors. They observed, they commented, occasionally they advised; never did they participate in a real active sense' (1979: 119). This accusation of aloofness cannot be levelled at Phyllis Willmott and Pat Marsden.

detailed descriptions of life in the working class neighbourhood and friendships with local mothers. While Peter Willmott organised a general survey of Bethnal Green adults and a sub-sample of semi-structured interviews with 45 married parents with dependent children (see Appendix 1 of Young and Willmott 1957), Phyllis went shopping in the local market and waited at the school gates with the other mothers – and then wrote it all down in the Journal. As well as recording her interactions with other mothers (e.g. with Mrs C. below), Phyllis casts an eye over aspects of local living, such as this commentary concerning large families and poverty, which was a topic of policy interest (e.g. Land 1969):

> *Friday 24 December* (1954)
>
> At the end of the road we parked for a moment. Peter got out to get something and we watched the world go by. We were outside a butchers. A big well made woman pulled up her pram outside. She was shabbily dressed. Two children were walking with her, a boy of about 9 or ten, in long trousers, a girl of 6 – thin white legs, cotton socks, a coat with the hem let down badly. She had her hands in pockets, she looked cold in the sharp wind. "You stay outside" said the mother. The girl obeyed, still holding the pram. The boy followed his mother into the shop. At first I thought there were two children in the pram. Another look showed three. A boy of four, a girl of three, with a dummy in her mouth and looking rosy and bonny, a baby – hidden behind the girl and in the hood – of perhaps a year or eighteen months. The girl standing stared in at us; she didn't smile. I felt how unfair life is, more so now, perhaps, than ever. They are becoming a such a minority group the large 'poor' families.

There is confirmation that the Journal observations were kept at the instigation of and for Michael Young and the Institute of Community Studies. In her personal diary entry for 15 November 1955, Phyllis writes:

> Michael pleased me the other day when returning the B.G. journal by saying 'I like your book very much. It ought to be published in some form one day'. The second sentence I do not, cannot take seriously. *It was just a job for the Institute & I did it [sic]* [emphasis added].

When parts of the journal were indeed issued by the Institute of Community Studies, in the form of Phyllis' retrospective reflection in 2001 (only the archived typescript remains available), Michael Young wrote in his foreword to the publication:

> Phyllis found out, and recorded in her journal, so much more than we did … Although we had Phyllis' journal at the time of Family and Kinship we clearly did not appreciate fully its underlying message.[8]

One of the underlying messages for contemporary social researchers is contained in the journal entry for the 22nd October 1954:

> So many things one doesn't – and in this casual conversation can't – follow up. Is Mrs. C. rather jealous of her sister who goes so often to Mum? Where does each sibling come in the family group? Why is Mrs. C. so hopeful of her brother's help? Did she help get him the place in the next turning? *At the moment I am so anxious to try out my angle of leaning towards*

[8] Puzzlingly, given the Institute published the diary in 2001 with a foreword in which he acknowledges having access to Phyllis' diary at the time of the study, when interviewed by Paul Thompson in the same year (2001), Michael Young seems to pass over the diary as a job that Phyllis did 'for the Institute' and imply that he had not read it, saying 'I knew she kept a journal, but I didn't know she kept a detailed journal of that period' (Thompson 2019).

> *participator rather than observer. It seems essential to give as well as get. We swap opinions and experiences, and this way it runs true between us. I think that Mrs. C. is aware of the fact that the Institute's work is on B.G. family life and that she wants to help. But she doesn't want to be "interviewed", rather to give us large casual lumps of her knowledge and opinions.* If I asked "Did you worry over B. when you first had her?" she would probably answer "Well yes, you do over the first, don't you". But when I say "When I had Lewis, for the first year my stomach turned over every time he cried" (full stop) [original underline], she replies "Oh I didn't worry like that. What worried me was getting my work done. But she was always so good I did manage. But I couldn't stand all those nights again. Waking up at two and all that etc. etc." [emphasis added].

In other words, Phyllis Willmott was pioneering recognition of relationships and reciprocity in social research a quarter of a century before Ann Oakley (1981) wrote her influential piece about interviewing from a feminist perspective. Oakley challenged traditional, mechanistic methods textbook prescriptions about interviewers only eliciting, not giving, information to interviewees, remaining objective and neutral, and not interacting with interviewees beyond the information gathering exercise. Instead, Oakley emphasised the reciprocity involved in interviewing, where the interviewer is invested in the social relationship – echoing Phyllis Willmott's well illustrated point and her participant observation practice in the service of the Institute.

In the extract from her diary from 22nd October 1954 quoted above, Phyllis writes of Mrs C. giving 'us' lumps of knowledge; an 'us' that indicates she felt part of the research team endeavour. There are traces of the contribution of her observational insights in the published version of *Family and Kinship in East London*. Phyllis is thanked alongside a string of influential academic figures, for her 'valuable advice' towards the end of the Acknowledgements of the book (Young and Willmott 1957: xiv) – lost in a list of names. Far more directly, Young and Willmott could not have demonstrated their argument that 'Bethnal Greeners' are surrounded by dense and extensive networks of relatives and acquaintances without her contribution. Young and Willmott write: 'let us accompany one of our informants on an ordinary morning's shopping trip', followed by a list of all the people the informant, Mrs. Landon, nodded and chatted to, and provide her account of their connections to her and people she knows in reported speech (1957: 82). There is a footnote: 'We are indebted for this account to Phyllis Willmott'. Phyllis' shopping trips were professionalised as fieldwork, not only domestic.

PAT MARSDEN: SALFORD LIVES AND INSIDER/OUTSIDER FIELDWORK

Pat Marsden kept her handwritten diary in two exercise books, starting shortly after she, Dennis and family arrived in Salford in August 1963, and ending in an abrupt fashion six months later at the start of January 1964. The diary material involves lively descriptions of life on a local estate, with discussions of family life, parenting and childhood. Dennis Marsden's detailed notes and research diary contain labour mobility survey data, local authority Planning Department discussions, observations of the Tenants' Association, and so on, while Pat recorded the everyday life in the flats occurring in the square outside the window of her maisonette at number 2 Davenham House, Salford 3. The diary entries include engaged accounts of her exchanges and friendships with other mothers on the estate, as well as detailed descriptions of poor, working class children's life, presaging late 20th century ethnographies of childhood that feature aspects of the minutiae of children's cultures (e.g. Jenkins 1998).

> *Friday Aug 30th*

> David came round with a 'sweep' – tiny pieces of paper with numbers written on them in a Boots 'Glycerine Suppositories' cardboard box. Selling them for 1/2 d each. I hadn't a 1/2 d so gave him 1d and said he'd have to give me two. 'What are you going to do with the money' I said. David didn't know. Mark said, 'We're going to save 'em and then we'll have thousands of ha'pennies! Mark was distracted elsewhere when I gave D the penny and when he met up with D again I heard D telling him that 'Daniel's mam had bought two for a penny. A minute or two later Mark and John raced up with some of the bits of paper borrowed from D. and asked me to buy them. I didn't. Later they came back from the sweet shop with ½d chews. David gave Daniel one but I told him to keep it. 'Nobody'll buy any of 'em. I been round the block? Do you want 'em. You can have 'em for nowt if you like. Do you fink I ought to throw them away!' I said it might be best and he did …
>
> John, Mark and co. playing with the frame of an old car seat. Little boys with sticks in their belts whooping past – one with a table leg. More children playing with a pram-frame – rocking on it.

As with Phyllis Willmott, Pat Marsden's diary was kept for research purposes, as a contribution to the ethnographic slum rehousing study, and she was acting as an embedded and reflective participant observer. Her and her family's presence caused some puzzlement among the local families as to what they 'were' and how they lived:

> *Sunday 10th August*
>
> Christine asked if Dennis was a school teacher – a girl had said he was. I said 'No' … She also said 'Y'know when you first came – well all the children round here – when they bought that box of toys out they all said "Ooh look at them"! …
>
> *Tuesday Nov. 19th*
>
> Jean knocked on the door about one -clock to ask where we bought some stuff called 'Guard' which is brushed on to wallpaper to protect it and make it washable. We gave her what was left of our bottle … Liked our decorations very much – showed her upstairs. 'You've given me some new ideas'. Thinks that a patterned paper doesn't show dirt and fingerprints as much. Was surprised at how clean our off white painted walls were. Explained it was emulsion paint – could wipe marks off.

When we interviewed Pat in 2009, she reflected:

> It [the diary] was part of the research. So everyday I just jotted things down … I mean I did get really involved. If you read the diaries you can see how involved I am and people were coming around to see me and I was going round to see them. But there was always a difference because they were living in such extreme poverty.

Pat was grappling with her insider/outsider status as a participant observer, as have so many researchers since (e.g. Dwyer and Buckle 2009).

Pat Marsden also viewed herself as contributing to the Salford ethnography as a researcher, making similar collective references to Phyllis Willmott's use of 'us' in her diary: 'All our children nowhere in sight today although half term holiday' [original emphasis], 'Discovered the little boy called Malcolm who sometimes plays with our group – is the grandson of the middle shop across the road'. It is not possible to see traces of Pat's observations in a published version of the Salford Slum and Rehousing Study. The research was never written up in an academic form because Peter Townsend recruited Dennis Marsden to take up a position at the University of Essex before the study was

completed, and the Marsden family moved to the South of England. Nonetheless, the restrictions and hazards of the built environment faced by Pat and other mothers on the estate that were recorded in her diary found their way into Dennis' report and his recommendations to Salford Housing Department: a lack of outdoor play, drying and pram spaces, sharp gravel pathways, etc..[9] His own fieldnotes have '(see Pat's diary)' inserted at several points, and it is evident that Dennis intended to draw on Pat's diary in his analysis and writing up from the careful logging he made about its contents. In the diary itself, using a red pen, he numbered the pages and inserted codes next to most of the people, adults and children, that Pat mentioned in her entries. These codes relate to an index that he typed up, listing names and relationships. In rigorous thoroughness, DII is the Marsden family, listing Dennis, Pat and the children, family visitors who came to see them and friends who came to stay, and who are mentioned in Pat's diary. Again using red pen, on a separate document he numbered and listed in order the main topics covered in Pat's diary. Pat's spatial location, able to look out on the communal square, and social positioning as a wife and mother, were incorporated.

CONCLUSION

This article has provided an in-depth analytic focus on wives' role in classic British community studies, from their own perspective, drawing on two unique sets of diaries and reflections, and wives' contributions through scrutiny of acknowledgments, prefaces and so on in their husbands' books.[10] We are though, working with traces of the past of British community studies; that is, what sociologists decided to record in their acknowledgements, and what the wives selected for recording in their diaries and remembered to relay in their later reflections. It is we who are writing that past, rather than having direct access to it through the materials (Stanley 2017). Nonetheless it is clear that the wives of male academics made both substantive and methodological contributions to the classic community studies at a significant point for British sociology, on the cusp of an intellectual and methodological transition towards formalisation and professionalisation. The wives were co-opted into the academic endeavour, their activities in their family lives were professionalised as methodology as they initiated and undertook knowledge gathering for their husbands' research, and reflected on their own practice.

Uncovering the contributions made by sociologists' wives, illustrated with the cases of the Bethnal Green and Salford community studies, enables contemporary social researchers to understand the importance of the part played by the wives of major sociological figures in the collective disciplinary enterprise. As case examples, Phyllis Willmott's and Pat Marsden's family lives were professionalised as methodology. Their articulating class and gender positions as wives and mothers provided located epistemologies that generated substantive and methodological sociological insights that were not easily available to their husbands. For all the sociologists' wives we refer to (and others no doubt) their incorporation on many levels helped to build the reputations and careers of their

[9] *Salford Royal College of Advanced Technology – Work and Housing Project: A second report prepared for SALFORD HOUSING COMMITTEE by the Research Fellow of the Liberal Studies Department at the Royal College* (Marsden Box 1, Alfred Sloman Archive, University of Essex)

[10] We are not the first to work with diaries kept by a wife in the husband's fieldwork location. Robert Smith (1990) has written about his own 'appropriation' and writing up of the diary that Ella Embree kept to assist her anthropologist husband, John Embree, in a community study of a rural village in Japan in the mid-1930s. Under the terms of John Embree's research grant, Ella Embree was charged with studying the village women and children, and progress reports to the funding body were submitted jointly from John and Ella. Ella Embree's work was neither acknowledged nor used in John Embree's book publication, however – another silencing of an incorporated wife albeit in another discipline.

husbands. The wives also helped to build post-war British sociology. The male sociologists would not have been able to access gendered features of the British working class community life that they were pronouncing upon without their wives providing them with material and insights to write about these issues. The men appeared to produce foundational sociological insights and achieve academic recognition on their own or with other (usually male) academic colleagues. In actual practice however, all this was propped up by incorporated input from wives on so many fronts: domestic, research, publication, administrative, social, etc. Accounts of the development of sociological knowledge generally, and specifically about communities, families and class, need to rectify the silence about the presence of the wives of key sociological figures in classic British studies, epistemologically, substantively and methodologically.

REFERENCES

Abrams, Philip and Andrew McCulloch (1976) *Communes, Sociology and Society*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ardner, Shirley (1984) Incorporation and exclusion: Oxford academic wives, in: Hilary Callan and Shirley Ardener (eds) *The Incorporated Wife*, London: Croom Helm, 27-49

Bulmer, Martin (1986) *Neighbours: The Work of Philip Abrams*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Crow, Graham (2002) Community studies: fifty years of theorization, *Sociological Research Online* 7(3): http://www.socresonline.org.uk/7/3/crow.html

Crow, Graham, Linda McKie and John Scott (2023) Historical perspectives on British sociology's future: an interview with John Scott, *Sociology* 57(2), 315-324 doi: 10.1177/00380385221107490

Dwyer, Sonia C. and Jennifer L. Buckle (2009) The space between: on being an insider-outsider in qualitative research, *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 8(1): 54-63.

Edwards, Rosalind and Val Gillies (2013) 'Where are the parents?': Changing parenting responsibilities between the 1960s and the 2010s, in Charlotte Faircloth, Diane M. Hoffman and Linda L. Layne (eds) *Parenting in Global Perspective: Negotiating Ideologies of Kinship, Self and Politics*, London: Routledge, 21-35.

Finch, Janet (1983) *Married to the Job: Wives' Incorporation in Men's Work*, London: George Allen & Unwin.

Fowlkes, Martha R. (1980) *Behind Every Successful Man: Wives of Medicine and Academe*, New York: Columbia University.

Frankenberg, Ronald (1979) In the production of their lives, men (?) … sex and gender in British community studies, in Sheila Allen and Diana Leonard Barker (eds) *Sexual Divisions and Society: Process and Change*, London: Routledge.

Goodwin, John, Henrietta O'Connor and Laurie Parsons (2021) Pearl Jephcott's 'troubled areas': from Nottinghamshire to Notting Hill, *Serendipities* 6(1), 39-54: 10.7146/serendipities.v6i1.130855.

Hardwick, Kit (2003) *Brian Jackson: Educational Innovator and Social Reformer*, Cambridge: Lutterworth Press.

Jackson, Brian (1968) *Working Class Community: Some General Notions Raised by a Series of Studies in Northern England*, London: Routledge.

Jackson, Brian and Dennis Marsden (1962) *Education and the Working Class*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Jenkins, Henry (ed.) (1998) *The Children's Culture Reader*, New York: New York University Press.

Land, Hilary (1969) *Large Families in London: A Study of 86 Families*, Occasional Papers on Social Administration No. 32, London: Bell.

Marsden, Dennis, Salford Slum and Rehousing Study, 1962-1963 [unprocessed study]. Colchester, Essex: UK Data Archive [distributor], SN: 6225.

Oakley, Ann (1981) Women interviewing women: a contradiction in terms, in Helen Roberts (ed.) *Doing Feminist Research*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Oakley, Ann (1996) *Man and Wife: Richard and Kay Titmuss: My Parents' Early Years*, London: Flamingo.

Oakley, Ann (2021) *Forgotten Wives: How Women Get Written Out of History*, Bristol: Policy Press.

Papanek, Hanna (1973) Men, women and work: reflections on the two-person career, *American Journal of Sociology*, 78(4): 852-872.

Platt, Jennifer (1971) *Social Research in Bethnal Green: An Evaluation of the Work of the Institute of Community Studies*, London: Macmillan.

Platt, Jennifer (1976) *The Realities of Social Research: An Empirical Study of British Sociologists*, Falmer: Sussex University Press.

Prentice, Alison (2006) Boosting husbands and building community: the work of twentieth-century faculty wives, in Paul Stortz and E. Lisa Panayotidis (eds) *The Historical Identities*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 271-296.

Renwick, C. (2023) The family life of Peter and Ruth Townsend: social science and methods in 1950s and early 1960s Britain, *Twentieth Century British History*, 34(4): 634-656.

Rosser, Colin and Chris C. Harris (1965) *Family and Social Change: A Study of Family and Kinship in a South Wales Town*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Savage, Mike (2010) *Identities and Social Change in Britain Since 1940: The Politics of Method*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Savage, Mike (2022) History and Sociology: a twenty-first century rapprochement?, *Twentieth Century British History*, 33(3): 416-431.

Scott, John (2020) *British Sociology: A History*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Pivot.

Smith, Robert J. (1990) 'Hearing voices, joining the chorus: appropriating some else's fieldnotes', in Robert Sanjek (ed.) *Fieldnotes: The Making of Anthropology*, pp. 356-370, New York: Cornell University Press.

Stanley, Liz (2017) Archival methodology inside the black box: noise in the archive!, in Niamh Moore, Andrea Salter, Liz Stanley and Maria Tamboukou, *The Archive Project: Archival Research in the Social Sciences*, Abingdon: Routledge, 33-68.

Thompson, Paul (2019) *Pioneers of Social Research*, 1996-2018. [data collection], UK Data Service. SN: 6226, DOI: http://doi.org/10.5255/UKDA-SN-6226-6

Titmuss, Richard and Titmuss, Kathleen (1942) Parents Revolt: A Study of the Declining Birth-Rate in Acquisitive Societies, Secker & Warburg.

Topalov, Christian (2003) Traditional working-class neighborhoods: an inquiry into the emergence of a sociological model in the 1950s and 1960s, *Osiris* 18: 212-233.

Townsend, Peter (1962) *The Last Refuge: A Survey of Residential Institutions and Homes for the Aged in England and Wales*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Young, Michael and Peter Willmott (1957) *Family and Kinship in East London*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Willmott, Peter (1985) The Institute of Community Studies, in Martin Bulmer (ed.) *Essays on the History of British Sociological Research*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 137-150.

Willmott, Phyllis, The Papers of Peter and Phyllis Willmott Collection, 1933-2006, Churchill Archives Centre, Cambridge, GBR/0014/WLMT 1-3.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The research was funded by the British Academy/Leverhulme small grants scheme. Our thanks to Joanna Bornat for her comments on drafts of this article, and the anonymous reviewers.

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES

ROSALIND EDWARDS is Professor of Sociology at the University of Southampton, UK. She has published widely in the fields of families and research methods.

VAL GILLIES is Professor of Social Policy & Criminology at the University of Westminster, UK. She researches in the area of family, social class, and historical comparative analysis.

Serendipities
Journal for the Sociology and History of the Social Sciences

ARTICLE

Differences in Social Science Reporting

Jasper W. Korte
jasper.korte@dlr.de

Abstract

Public debate heavily relies on social scientific expertise as demonstrated by recent global events like the coronavirus pandemic. Social scientific knowledge is disseminated and discussed in the mass media, the main arena for the public understanding of social science. However, science communication research overlooks the significance of disciplinary differences in social science reporting while focusing on comparison with the natural sciences. To investigate the reporting of social sciences in the German press as societal communication, anthropology, sociology, and economics are compared within a distant reading approach. In the systematic sample (8,660 articles) over the previous 20 years, the absolute numbers for all disciplines are stagnant, but the share of reporting increases. The section distributions of the three disciplines are quite different but stable over time. In contrast, the sampled periodicals show only subtle differences in reporting. Dramatic events lead to a short-term increase in economics reporting. The combination of the metadata with the semantic structures of the text shows three distinct profiles of social science reporting. These findings reveal the varieties of social science reporting as an important feature in the societal role of the social sciences.

Keywords

sociology, anthropology, economics, news media, social science reporting, topic modeling, distant reading

INTRODUCTION

As is widely known, research about science in society is primarily focused on the natural and life sciences. Others, like the social sciences or humanities, receive less attention from scholars of science communication (Schäfer 2012). This has not changed despite the growing interest in science communication in Germany in recent years (Bonfadelli et al. 2017; Schäfer et al. 2015). However, this does not reflect the attention of the mass media towards the social sciences: more recent results about science in the German press show more reporting about social sciences than about life sciences (Summ and Volpers 2016). This imbalance may be explained by the greater proximity of the social sciences to society (Osrecki 2012). The social sciences are suspected to be not “real science” in the sense of ideological neutrality, but rationalizations of political worldviews. This would make the study of social sciences in the public arena a task of political sociology. However, this would end in an endless regress of ideological suspicion – in fact, an endeavor for public discourse but not for research. Instead, we conceptualize social science reporting as a case of societal communication about science. The relationship between science and mass media remains special: social science and news media both observe society and "mutually observe each other" (Luhmann 2012, 2013). As scientific knowledge becomes increasingly relevant to all aspects of life, this is also true for social

scientific knowledge (Fischhoff and Scheufele 2013). If there is a scientification of society, there is also a social scientification of society (Weingart 2008). However, the difficulties in identifying social science in the public remain, as Cassidy (2021) states in the third version of her review of social science communication research: "social sciences and humanities research seems to be everywhere and nowhere in public communication". This has been conceptualised as stemming from the problem of the double hermeneutic (Giddens 1984: 20f.): everyday and social scientific discourse are interrelated. Concepts, ways of saying, and also methods become common knowledge through a "cultural incorporation" from the sites of social science knowledge production to society (Merton and Wolfe 1995). However, recipients valuate social scientific knowledge using their everyday common sense (Fenton et al. 1998). This leads to different views toward theoretical knowledge based in social class (Moscovici 2008).

Previous research on the social sciences in the media presents an ambiguous picture. For science reporting from a historical perspective, Bauer (2012) shows ongoing growth since the 1990s (Bauer 2012). For Germany, Elmer et al. (2008) report large increases in the 2000s, contradicting stagnating developments in Denmark or Spain (Groves et al. 2016; Vestergård and Nielsen 2017). In contrast, the last comprehensive research endeavors about social science reporting date back from the last century: Weiss and Singer 1988 for the USA and Fenton et al. 1998 for the UK. The elusiveness of social science in the public is also found in the works of Summ and Volpers (2016: 783–784; Volpers and Summ 2015), where the social sciences is the only discipline group with significantly more articles found with their "elaborate selection logic" in contrast to a "narrow". However, social and behavioral sciences appear more often in German newspapers than life or natural sciences in sum, too (Summ and Volpers 2016: 782). Research on other countries does not confirm this finding (Suljok 2020; Vestergaard and Nielsen 2016). The social sciences also hold a significant role in media expert research (Albaek et al. 2003; Wien 2009). Seniority is the most important factor for social scientists in becoming an expert (Fenton et al. 1998). Media experts show essentially, social sciences are often not the focus of news articles but are used in ancillary form (Weiss and Singer 1988; Fenton et al. 1998). There is also research in the sociology of intellectuals (Gattone 2012) or ideas (Hallet et al. 2019), that deals with the public impact of social science, which leads to an even more fragmented situation. All this underlines the importance of using comparable and reconstructable methods in the monitoring of social science reporting.

The appearance of the social sciences in the mass media differs from that of the natural sciences: social science reporting lacks the construction of the "arcane" world of science, the findings are presented as less distinct from everyday reasoning, and the knowledge is considered less reliable. Similar reservations are present in the attitudes of journalists toward social science (Evans 1995). This is associated with an everyday usage of social scientific works, findings, and theories, that is oriented toward the systemic needs of the journalists (Böhme-Dürr 1992: 175, Weiss and Singer 1988: 127-128). The two forms of knowledge also differ in the judgment of validity with paradoxical outcomes: on the one hand, the social scientific knowledge is presented as a set of time- and context-less truths (Weiss and Singer 1988: 242; Weßler 1995: 29); on the other, journalists use it to construe causal relationships blaming specific actors for social problems (Weßler 1997). The social scientification of reporting and everyday discourse makes social science disappear and yet simultaneously increases the pressure to present surprising findings. However, these findings may be criticized as incomprehensible and useless if they leave the presumed ontology of actual individuals with motivations or other journalistic self-evidents.

The relationship between journalists and scientists is ambiguous from both perspectives. From the journalists' perspective, social scientists are inaccessible: literally, because they do not answer requests, but also cognitively because of fear of their jargon (Fenton et al. 1998, Weiss and Singer 1988). The "epistemological consonance" (Fenton et al. 1998: 101-102) of journalists and social scientists to describe and explain society makes them a kind of rival. The objectivity in journalists' self-understanding clashes with the scientists' awareness that facts are products of theoretical interpretations. Journalists often use schemes oriented toward natural science to evaluate social science, which gives quantitative approaches an advantage (Schmierbach 2005). However, productive coalitions between social scientists and journalists do exist (Plesner 2009). From the perspective of scientists, you find variations of the hostile media effect: the reporting about other social or natural sciences is perceived as more accurate than the reporting about their own field (Peters 1987: 21-22), but the satisfaction with the reporting about their own research is higher than with the general reporting (Weiss and Singer 1988: 64-66). For scientists, journalists are notorious for their over-simplifications and unreliability. Social scientists struggle with specific fears of going public because they enter realms with specific rules that are not their own: this can lead to success, attention, insults, humiliation, or jealousy (Schwartz 1998, Revers 2009). For social scientists taking a normative stance, there is always too little social science in the media – or the wrong theories, results, or disciplines (Burawoy 2005). These criticisms sometimes come with more naïve expectations about the impact of media presence.

Although general social science reporting and the connections between social scientists and journalists receive some attention in the literature, some aspects of social science reporting are empirically neglected. The heterogeneity of the social sciences is overlooked due to the orientation of comparing the social sciences with the natural sciences. However, it is plausible that different disciplines with different histories, subjects, and infrastructures receive different amounts of attention in the news. Given this differentiation, we might ask whether the newspapers report in the same way about the various social science disciplines or are there differences? Finally, when we see diachronous perspectives, mostly two points in time are chosen for contrast, but observing over periods of global crisis would be crucial. To identify what effects the coronavirus pandemic has on social science reporting, it is to be measured against comparable crises like the financial crisis of 2008 onwards as well as periods without explicit global crisis reporting (Maesse 2021). This paper builds on and continues the work done for Korte (2021).

STUDY DESIGN AND SAMPLING METHOD

Newspaper reporting is the model case for investigating communication about social science (Cassidy 2014). Despite losing importance during the late twentieth century, newspapers remain a highly used medium with intermedial connections. The social sciences show an affinity to written communication, the media of social scientific argumentation and newspaper reporting are similar: parts of social scientific books can be published in newspapers with ease; longer reports by journalists can hold a social scientific value. The longer tradition of investigating newspapers allows for comparisons through space and time. The applied distant reading approach provides an overview of the general structures of reporting in the German press (Stulpe and Lemke 2016). Distant reading in contrast to close reading is not focused on features, qualities, and meanings of single documents. With the help of text mining procedures corpora of texts beyond human capacity are analyzed for regularities and patterns of language use. The results of the applied algorithms are then to be interpreted in a sociological frame of reference. The approach lacks the decomposition level of a qualitative approach but handles the mass of articles.

For the comparison, three social scientific disciplines were selected: anthropology, sociology, and economics, because they are in some aspects similar and in others quite different. All three are established disciplines at German universities (Fleck et al. 2019). All have a certain universal account of explaining the social world, which may be theoretically more contestable for economics. Economics is in Germany a larger discipline than the other two. According to official statistics (Destatis 2022), in 2021, there were over 89,000 enrolled students in economics (Wirtschaftswissenschaften) and over 240,000 in business (Betriebswirtschaftslehre), while over 16,000 in sociology and over 3,000 in anthropology. For the category of scientists (Wissenschaftliches und künstlerisches Personal (Destatis 2022)) there are over 44,000 in economics (Wirtschaftswissenschaften), over 6,000 in sociology (as part of Sozialwissenschaften/Soziologie), and over 1,000 in anthropology (as part of Kulturwissenschaften). Economics provides some features that promote media attention. The economy itself is given an important placement in the news; the long-term observation with indicators meets media values for numbers and ebbs and flows (Beyrle 2016; Suttles 2010). Economic forecasts are news when published and when they fail to materialize. In Germany, there are several extra-university research facilities for economic research conducting this kind of research. Their heads are important public figures commenting especially on political decisions. In contrast, there is only one research facility for social research in Germany and none for anthropology. “The Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel” is a global media event (Lebaron 2006), it has no counterpart in sociology or anthropology. However, anthropology provides a connection to ethnological museums, which are often found in Germany. Sociology plays an important role in the public debate on the history of Germany since World War II. These structural features influence media attention.

Interestingly, the literature about economics in the mass media is not as extensive as expected. Of course, there is research about the economy in the news (Hester and Gibson 2003, Suttles 2010), and also about the field of economists and their significance in society (Maesse et al. 2021), but the role of economics in the media is not exhaustively researched. This is particular true for the German context (Maesse 2015). While in Germany, economists discuss the impact of their media presence, in sociology and anthropology the very presence is questioned. The media appearance of sociology is of some interest in the sociological community and also as a research question (Best 2003; Fähnrich and Lüthje 2017; Fleck and Hess 2016; Mikinovic 1978; Peters 1988; Revers 2009; Schwartz 1998; Siebel and Clegg Smith 2009). For anthropology, there is also some interest in the media attention, but much less from a science communication point of view (Pressereferat der DGV 1999; Shannon et al. 2021).

To obtain a comprehensive understanding of social science reporting in this study, the selection criteria focus on the mention of the disciplines. This strategy aims for all articles that pronounce the discipline and highlights what is commonly associated with its names. To cover the national news, four different newspapers were selected (die tageszeitung on the left side, Süddeutsche Zeitung on the liberal side, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung on the conservative side, and Die Welt on the political right; for more detail, see the table in the appendix). The Sunday versions of the FAZ and Welt, along with two news magazines: Der Spiegel and Focus, were also included. Articles for the respective disciplines are collected from different databases (Nexis, FAZ, SZ) using a set of search strings, and these can also be found in the appendix. The material in the first phase was collected for Korte (2021), and the same strategy was applied for the second phase.

The downside of this approach is the high number of false positives. In German as well as in English, the adjective ökonomisch (economic) is commonly used to describe the actual situation of countries, organizations, or persons. The adjective soziologisch (sociological) is, in certain contexts, misused as a synonym for social, for example, describing the audience of an event by its social structural features. This type of usage is also common for ethnologisch (anthropological), where it is frequently used in reviews of novels to describe the author´s attention to detail. Additionally, the corresponding search strings are the most important for the disciplines, as the counts in Table A2 in the appendix show. Besides these special cases, all artifacts of the databases, like doublings or content lists, were manually removed, so that only articles remain that contain social scientific references.

RESULTS

Periodicals over time

A total of 8,660 articles were found. The developments of the sources and disciplines are compared in absolute and relative terms (Figure 1). There is a slight growth in absolute terms: the total average of articles per issue is 4.4, while it is 4.3 in the first phase (2002-2013) and 4.6 in the second (2019-2022). In the first phase, the trend is slightly positive; however, it reaches its peak throughout the first coronavirus lockdowns in March 2020.

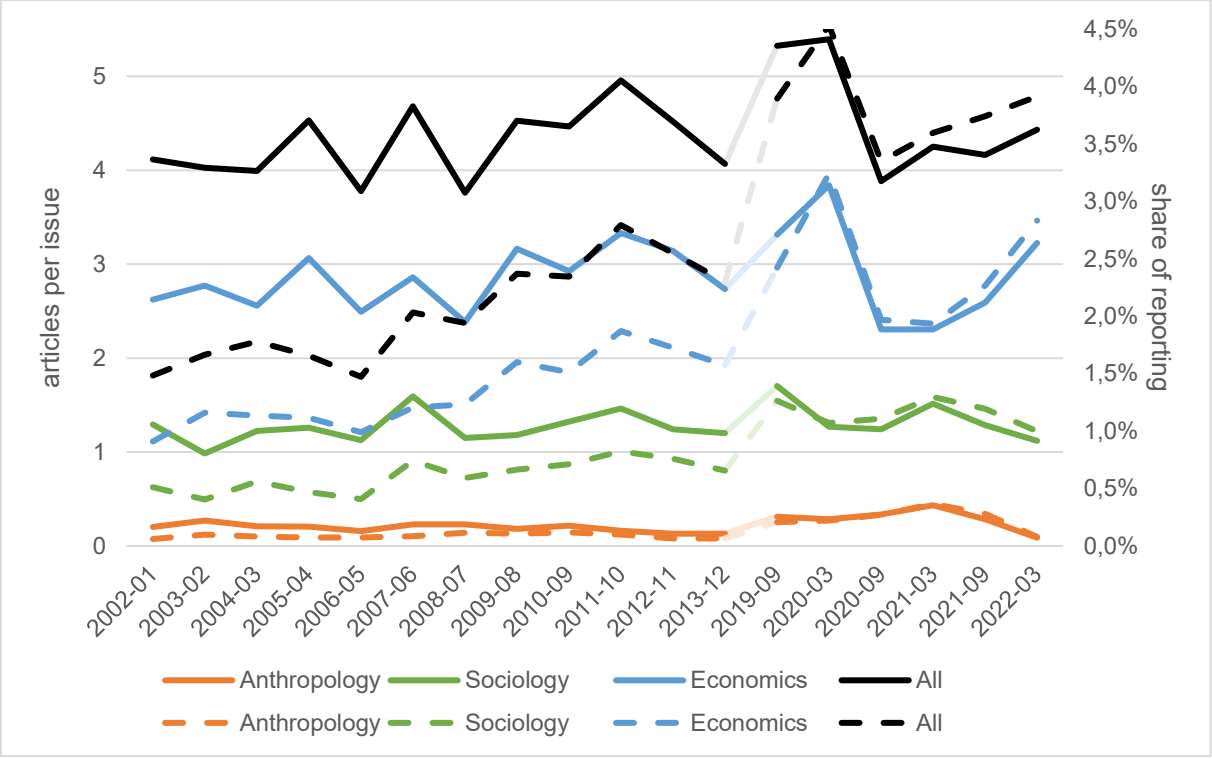

Figure 1: Mean article count per issue (solid) and percentage of articles on all articles (dashed) by discipline

Relatively to all articles listed in the databases, the growth of social science reporting is greather even than in absolute terms. On average, 2.6% of all articles are social science related, with an increase from 2.0% in the first phase to 3.8% in the second. Again, the trend is positive in the first phase, and it reaches its high in the second phase in March 2020.

The periodicals with the most social science reporting are FAS with 8.0 articles per issue, FAZ with 5.6, and WamS with 4.9. Welt and WamS are the lone periodicals with fewer articles in the second

phase than in the first. In the relative view, FAS has a proportion of 4.4% social science-related articles on all articles, Spiegel of 3.7%, and Welt of 2.8%. All periodicals share an increase in social science reporting.

For the disciplines, economics, with an average of 2.9 articles per issue, is about twice as strong as sociology (1.3) and anthropology (0.3) combined. The gap is more significant in the first phase, with 2.8 against 1.3 and 0.2, than in the second, with 2.9 against 1.4 and 0.3. While in the first phase, the trends of economics and sociology are positive while the trend of anthropology is negative, the trends in the second phase are consistent with the overall development.

From the relative perspective, economics (1.7% of all articles) outdoubles sociology (0.8%) and anthropology (0.1%), too. Again, the gap is slightly closing: in the first phase, 1.3% of all articles are economics-, while 0.6% are sociology- and 0.1% are anthropology-related; in the second phase, are 2.5% economics-, 1.2% sociology-, and 0.2% anthropology-related. The trends for all disciplines are positive in the first phase and negative in the second.

For anthropology, FAS (0.4 articles per issue), taz, and WamS (both 0.3) are the most important periodicals in absolute terms. But the FAS is the lone periodical with fewer articles in the second phase, while the WamS becomes the most important periodical in the second. In relative terms, taz (0.2%), FAS (0.2%), and Spiegel (0.1%) have the highest percentages of all articles. The ranking is unchanged between the phases, while all periodicals see more share in the second phase.

For sociology, FAS (2.4), Spiegel (1.5), and WamS (1.4) are the most important periodicals in absolute terms, but the phases have different rankings: in the first, FAS (2.2) is in front before Welt (1.6), and FAZ (1.3); in the second, FAS (3.0) leads before Spiegel (2.0) and SZ (1.3). Welt, FAZ, and WamS have fewer articles in the second phase. In relative terms, FAS (1.4%), Spiegel (1.3%), and taz (0.8%) are the top three periodicals. This does not change between the phases, but the WamS is the lone periodical that does not increase its proportion.

For economics, FAS (5.2), FAZ (4.1), and WamS (3.3) are the most important periodicals in absolute terms. WamS, taz, and Welt have fewer articles per issue in the second phase than in the first. From a relative perspective, FAS (2.8%), Spiegel (2.3%), and Welt (2.2%) see the highest percentages. Only the WamS decreases the percentage between the two phases.

3.2 Sections over time

Clear differences exist among disciplines regarding the sections of the newspapers (Table 1). Each article is presented in a section by the newspapers. To compare the distributions the different titles of the sections given by the newspapers are categorized into politics, economy, culture (Feuilleton), science, local, actuality (latest news and the title page), and miscellaneous (as a residual category). The economy section accounts for 43% of all social science-related articles. Culture (14%) and politics (11%) follow at a distance. Comparing the two phases, the halving of the local section is notable. Actuality and miscellaneous are also decreasing, while the other sections see a higher proportion (economy the most).

Economics is portrayed by the dominant economy section (61%), which is followed by politics (10%), while culture sees only 5%. Anthropology also has one important section (culture: 40%) but with bigger contractions in local (20%) and miscellaneous (14%). Sociology at last is the most mixed discipline: culture (28%) along with politics (15%) and miscellaneous (13%). The economy section is in this range at 10%, too.

	Anthro-pology	2002-2013	2019-2022	**Econo-mics**	2002-2013	2019-2022	**Socio-logy**	2002-2013	2019-2022	**All**	2002-2013	2019-2022
Actuality	**4**	3	5	**7**	7	8	**10**	11	9	**8**	8	8
Culture	**41**	36	48	**5**	5	5	**28**	28	28	**14**	13	14
Commentary	**2**	1	4	**3**	3	3	**4**	3	5	**3**	3	3
Local	**20**	24	16	**5**	6	2	**10**	12	7	**7**	8	4
Politics	**5**	6	3	**10**	10	11	**15**	14	16	**11**	11	12
Miscellaneous	**14**	14	14	**5**	6	4	**12**	12	13	**8**	8	7
Economy	**2**	3	0	**61**	60	64	**10**	9	12	**43**	42	46
Science	**11**	12	9	**4**	4	4	**11**	11	12	**6**	6	6

Table 1: Sections by disciplines and phases (2002-13; 2019-22) in percent

In comparing the two phases, anthropology shows the biggest shift from local to even more culture. The economy section sees no anthropology reporting at all in the second phase. The intensification of the dominant pattern is also found in economics, but the shift of the proportion towards economy and politics is not as strong as in anthropology. In sociology, we see minor shifts, most notably again the decrease in the local section, while not the most important section culture gets more sociology reporting, but the others aside actuality – what approves the dominant pattern of mixture in sociology.

Topics of reporting

While the metadata analyses give insights into the general structure of German social science reporting, the contents remain outside the scope. To cluster the articles regarding their contents, the topic modelling algorithm latent Dirichlet allocation (LDA) is applied (Blei et al. 2003; for an application for sociological newspaper analysis see DiMaggio et al. 2013). In LDA combinations of co-occuring words in documents of a corpus are calculated. The combinations are called topics and can be interpreted as reoccurring thematizations. Each word in an article is assigned a value for each topic and the sums of these values can be seen as measurement for the appearance of the topic in the article. The pre-processing steps were as follows: after download, metadata and article content are saved separately. Next, simple stop words were removed and the words were lemmatized (using the spaCy library for Python the words were brought to their dictionary forms). Then all words with fewer than four and more than 15 letters were eliminated. For each discipline separated the most frequent words without a content meaning as well as the least common were also excluded from the analysis (lesser occurrences than six for anthropology, 25 for sociology, and 55 for economics). The LDA was conducted using the Gensim library for Python, and the best models were identified by a large number of experiments. The experiments varied the coefficients and the number of topics (Maier et al. 2018). In the appendix, the quality measures of the models and a table with all topics with the top words can be found.

The topic modeling works a little differently for each discipline. On average, the sociology articles contain more words (988) than the anthropology articles (896) and the economic articles (773). For anthropology, the smallest articles count but the most different unique words (tokens) are found, which shows the variety of the reporting. But this also leads to the most challenging interpretation of the topics. Sociology has as many tokens as anthropology but in five times as many articles.

While the results of topic modellings are difficult to interpret and conceptualize (Grundmann 2022), the results presented are not considered as a definite list of themes of German social science reporting. The topics reveal differences in word usage, which is in reporting connected to the manifest content as well as the genre of the article. Reviews use similar words regardless of the book

reviewed, descriptions of the past other than expert interviews. The topics show a structure of the reporting that mixes manifest contents (for example: Islam, corona, euro crisis) with forms of reporting (thematization of studying, reviews, expert articles). That is why there are some topics found for all disciplines (like university) and some are very specific to one (like museums).

To discuss the results, multiple correspondence analyses were conducted with the Prince library for Python (Greenacre and Blasius 2006). For that, every topic percentage above .05 percent was coded as an occurrence, and all below as no occurrence. Besides the topics, the discussed metadata of the articles are also included. The results of the multiple correspondence analyses can be interpreted as spaces of reporting; they allow us to identify the general structure of the reporting as well as special clusters.

In the space of anthropology reporting, a triangle is formed between three clusters (Figure 2): museums and exhibitions (mostly sector 4), anthropology as science (mostly sectors 2 and 3), and anthropology in politics (mostly sector 1). The museum conglomeration grouped around the local section is the clearest to identify. Anthropological selections are an integral part of the German museum landscape, and media attention is often focused by the PR of the museums on the ongoing changes in the exhibitions or launches of new exhibitions. In the last few years, the debate about the Humboldt-Forum in Berlin (humboldt topic) and the debate about the restitution of relics to their home countries (skull topic) have given anthropology a more visible stand in the media. The boundaries of this conglomeration are areas where art and science meet (music and art topics). Along with the non-university research organizations, the topics of anthropology as a course of study and a university subject are located in the lower sectors. This can be interpreted as a difference in anthropology reporting between the organizational foundations and the knowledge produced there but circulated in other areas. This shows the two upper sectors with anthropology in connection with science and with politics. The first is in connection with the mentioned university topics and collects thematizations of anthropological knowledge and research findings. These group not along anthropological differentiations like theories or schools but on themes of general news appeal: family, society, and impressionistic descriptions of current life are connected with more or less detailed reported anthropological knowledge. Here are reviews of books alongside classical thoughts of anthropology in connection with other scientific endeavors. The exception is the expedition topic, which appears more anthropology-driven than the others. Anthropology in connection to politics is more expert-oriented and asks about instrumental knowledge provided by anthropology, for example, regarding countries like Afghanistan. This is for general public debates in Germany, like about Islam, but also about more direct individual challenges, like journeys.

Regarding the periodicals, the SZ is located in the middle of Figure 2, meaning that it covers all the mentioned forms of reporting in balance. The two Sunday issues are found between politics and science, the weekly magazines by politics alongside the Welt. The taz and the FAZ are in the lower half, but the latter is more oriented to culture, the first more to politics.

Figure 2: The space of anthropology reporting (periodicals in green, sections in red, topics in black)

The sociology space forms a square of cultural, political, economic, and scientific reporting (Figure 3). This reflects, to some extent, the divide between theoretical and empirical sociology. The section culture is found on the left of Figure 3 as one of the cornerstones of the square. From there, two lines can be drawn, one up to science over theory and one down to politics over church, international politics, and social movements. It is expected that here more interpretative and theoretical observations of society can be found. Sociological theory appears here more as a part of culture than of science. The more general the topics (religion, media, society), the more they are located at the center of sociology reporting. The more concrete, the more they appear between politics and culture. Here thematizations of the past of Germany and French theory combine with reporting about France and actual wars. In sectors 2 and 3, in contrast, there are subjects more connected to social research. Here enduring subjects of quantitative research are found as topics: family, elections, East Germany, and housing – as well as the new topic corona. The sections of economy, local, and miscellaneous

appear as the common homes of social research. The more general topics of research and university are heading towards the science cornerstone.

SZ and Welt are positioned more in the center, so they coverage is equivalent to the average reporting. Taz and the news magazines are oriented towards the politics cornerstone, WamS to the economy, and the two Frankfurter Allgemeine papers towards science.

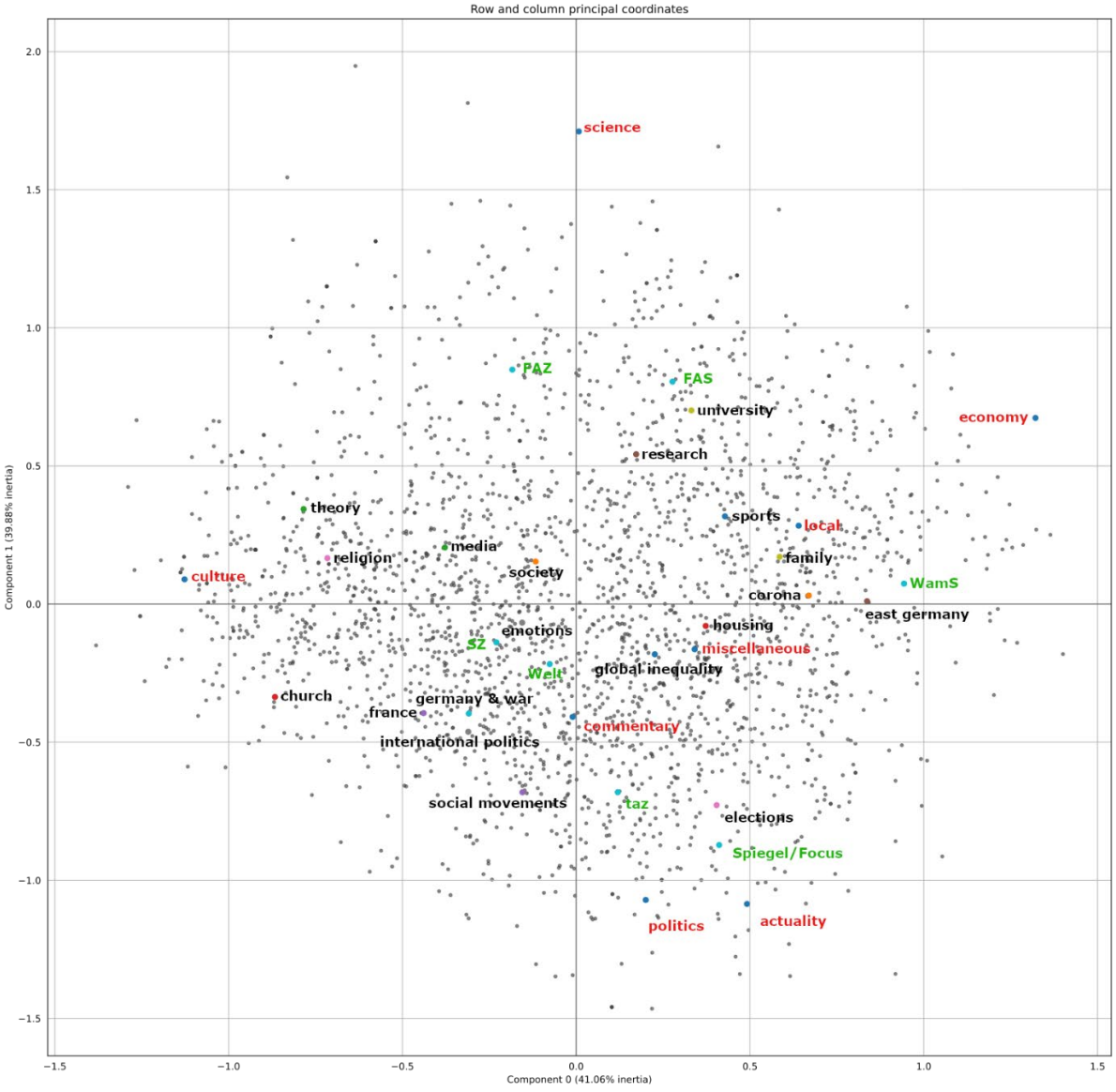

Figure 3: The space of sociology reporting (periodicals in green, sections in red, topics in black)

Economical, political, and scientific reporting form a triangle in the space of economics reporting (Figure 3). The basis of economics reporting is indicator-oriented news about the stock exchange, inflation, and the economic situation on the one side and the political regulation of the economy in work, taxes, and elections on the other side. Between these two poles, there are a variety of different topics of social research (East Germany, corona, housing) and political institutions (EU, Europe). The permanent economic observation of society also contains topics like family, enterprises, and

foreign politics. This base has on sections side economy as one cornerstone and politics along with actuality and local as the other. The other major pole of the economics reporting triangle is science and culture. There is a reporting about economics that contains discussions of theories and models. This is paired with reporting that puts economics into society, like as a subject in university, but also in analyses of football, media, or everyday life. This can also be a topic of theoretical appeal, like competition.

For the periodicals, we find taz and the news magazines, like for sociology, on the politics pole, which means that those do their political reporting more with the help of social science than the others. On the other hand, that means that indicator-based economic situation reporting is not as important as in FAZ and Welt. Again, we find the SZ in the middle of the coordinate system, this time along with the WamS. The cultural and scientific reporting of economics has its main emphasis in the FAS.

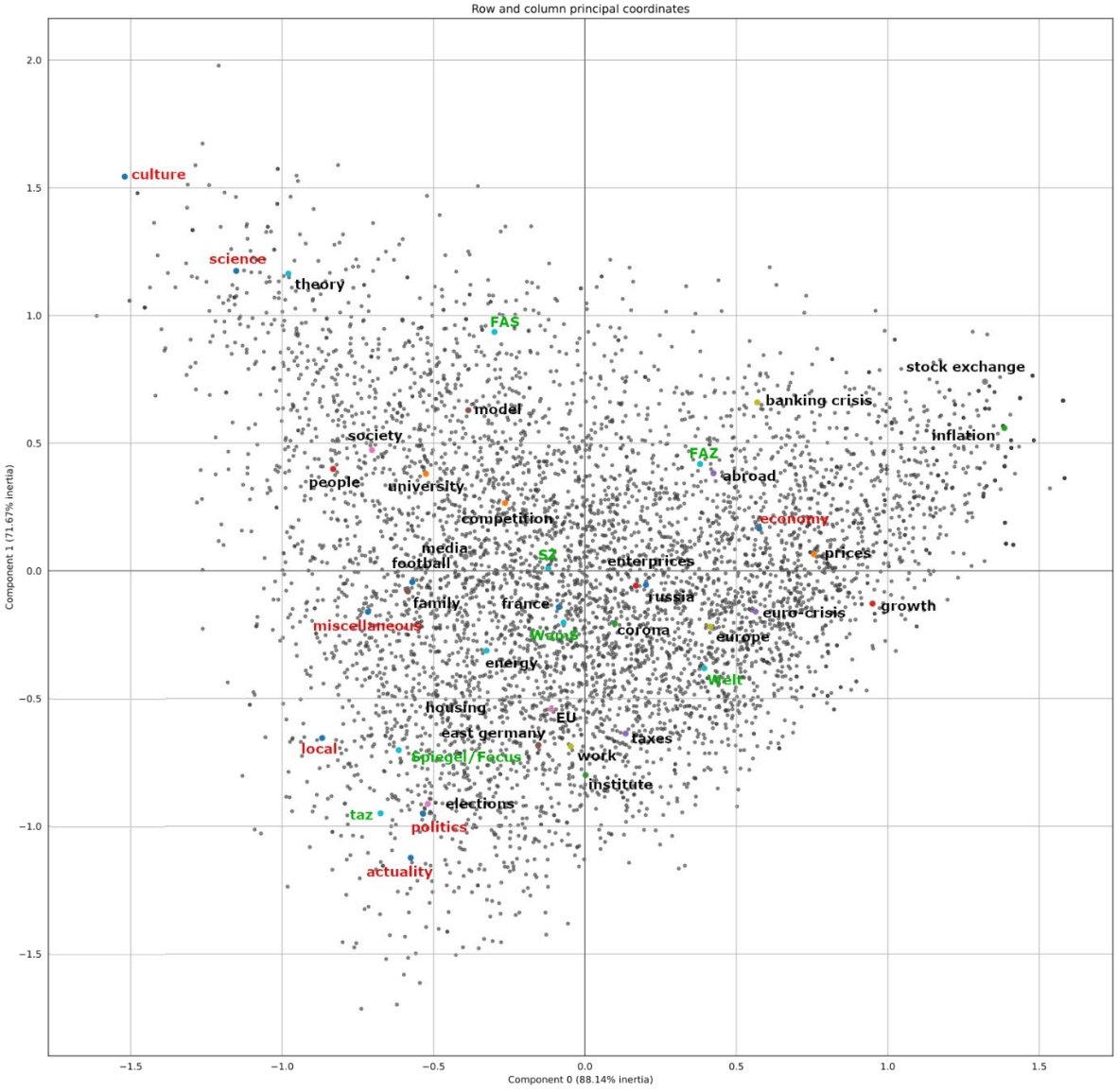

Figure 4: The space of economics reporting (periodicals in green, sections in red, topics in black)

DISCUSSION

Distant reading methods are generally composed against canons of all sorts and direct the observation to the regularities of the totality of the found objects. So, this description of the German social science reporting is not about a selection of notable events, discussions, scientists, or journalists, but about the variation in the way anthropology, sociology, and economics are reported in the media. Both social science and news media face multiple challenges in the 21st century – changing funding, audiences, distribution channels, or competitions. In light of these changes, the general structures are to be interpreted from a theory of society perspective. Social science and mass media are institutionalized permanent observations of society (Korte 2021). The mass media perform the task of disseminating knowledge to other parts of society, but they create their own images in doing so. Social sciences provide technical solutions (interpretation schemes, methods, concepts), but they primarily develop them for their own truth claims. Both are entangled in an ongoing social scientification of mass media and medialization of social science. The disciplines have to use the news media to disseminate their findings, and their organizations measure their success with this metric. The news media must draw on the permanent observations of the social sciences to provide their readers with an up-to-date portrayal of society. This includes providing quantifications of all kinds about semantic and moral changes in society as well as the social sciences as news items themselves. While the count of newspaper articles is constantly declining, the proportion of those with a reference to the social sciences rises. While it is difficult to address the changes in social side side directly here, extra-university research facilities such as museums and economic research institutions appear to be better suited to meet the media's needs and seem to be oriented towards that goal.

The appearance of social science knowledge in the media is controlled by the media. It is not the proportions of heads or students that lead to media attention. Economics is more reported than the other disciplines, but it is a larger discipline at universities or research facilities. While there are 17 times as many students and six times as many researchers in economics, it has only twice the number of articles compared to sociology and anthropology combined. The disciplines do not determine what is to be published. There is no central organization that would cover all disciplines and provide the newest and best works or knowledge for the media. Variations in the reporting of the disciplines matches the differentiation of society in the form of the differentiation of news beats. The section distributions remain stable over time, which gives specific disciplines specific freedoms. Sociology has a good chance to appear in all sections, economics is very fixed on the economy, which means established positions for social scientists in news media, too.

There is not much discipline variance regarding the periodicals, but the profiles of the disciplines show some differences. A strict left-right division is not evident. Rather, the periodicals show certain styles in their focus on social sciences. The more conservative FAZ and FAS report with a specific reference to science, the news magazines Spiegel and Focus to politics, and the right-wing Welt and WamS to economy. The left-wing taz reports proportionately more sociology and anthropology, but at the same time also less to science and more to politics and local – the liberal SZ mostly represents the average. The (unwritten) editorial guidelines and sections provide appropriate space for the different contents.

The changing daily agenda asks fordifferent experts everyday – but the need is constant. March 2020, with the first lockdowns in Germany due to the coronavirus pandemic, appears to be the exception, but it may reveal that the various disciplines work differently in crisis cycles. Economic forecasts and economic experts are the immediate social science reaction by choice – also seen in

March 2022 after the Russian invasion of Ukraine. In the same vein, the increased focus on anthropology is to be interpreted: the societal discussion of colonial objects and their restitutions is also a discussion about the role of anthropology, but not an actual anthropological research topic. The social sciences are used to comment on daily events. However, there is also reporting oriented on developments in the respective fields, mostly done in reviews of books, articles, talks, or congresses.

Mass media, in the genre of newspaper articles, translates social science in particular ways. While the analysis of re-contextualization is a task for qualitative research (Korte 2021: 148-210), some aspects can be addressed with the presented approach. The self-description of the social sciences necessarily differs from the presentation of mass media; however, it is the mass medial description that determines the impact of the social science. Social scientific findings, theories, and narratives are incorporated into the communications of mass media. They are sorted in the sections as well as the editorial guidelines. They are laid out in a specific ontology of timeless truths, biographies of important people, indicators, struggles over interpretation of theoretical concepts, exhibitions, books, conferences, casual criticism, and so on. In this regard, there is nothing special about social science reporting; mass media translate everything comparable into their communications. However, these boundaries also offer chances for irritation. This ongoing translation is the foundation of the variety of the permanent observation of society.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to investigate social science reporting in Germany longitudinally and with special attention to three different social science disciplines: anthropology, sociology, and economics. With a broad sampling method, 8,660 articles from 18 different months in a 15 years timespan were identified and analyzed. To understand science communication more comprehensively, questions were asked about variations in reporting in terms of discipline, the extent of reporting, media outlets, sections, topics and changes within. The diversity in this reporting was revealed. This is not only true for the differences between the reporting of the natural and social sciences, but for the differences between social science disciplines, and also for the various types of reporting taking place.

Social science reporting is an essential part of news papers and it is not vanishing through the changes in news media. Most of science communication research is ignoring this fact constantly, however, the differences of social science disciplines are neglected, too. Such preconceived notions not only affect the analysis of societal dealing with science, but also the analyses of public debates and societal negotiations about the huge variety of topics covered with the help of social science. The results provided here should give contextual information for such tasks. The amount of reporting und the topical diversity should also be reminded by every social scientist complaining about insufficient reporting. Instead the results presented here should give a more realistic view on the public image the disciplines have. Ironically, such biases are mirrored in the standardized ways of journalistic dealing with social science. Economists are allowed to speak about the economy, sociologists about society, and anthropologists about culture. The classics of the disciplines are constantly referenced as well as the media events of yearly reports (mostly about economic development).

The use of text mining in social science is comparable new and is confronted with much older theories basing on different methodological logics. The challenge of interpreting results of algorithmic analyses of natural language was implicitly shown rather than explicitly discussed. The increase of material and manageable complexity provided of these methods can be countered by

interpretation basing on most general theoretical assumptions about communication in society. At least that is my suggestion: using systems theory (Luhmann 2012,2013) to deal with computational methods (compare for that strategy also Korte et al. 2023). Use sub-systemic logics as a frame of reference to interpret patterns in huge amounts of systemic communications.

The proportion of social science reporting on all reporting is constantly rising. The social scientification of news is ongoing. Economics is twice as often covered as sociology and anthropology combined. This gap was larger in the first inspection period (2002-2013) than in the second (2019-2022). In most of the periodicals, the appearances of the disciplines are quite similar, except the leftist taz, where sociology and anthropology are reported above average. The disciplines have quite different yet stable section distributions: economics is very often in the economy section, while anthropology is mostly a culture discipline, and sociology shows the largest variety. These trends are intensifying with a declining local section in the national quality press.

Topic modeling was applied to explore the variety of the different reportings. In this study, the topics were interpreted as a mixture of the subject of the article and the form of the reporting, which means there are general (universities) and special (corona) thematizations along with reviews, foreign reporting, or reporting about elections. The space of reporting was interpreted with the help of multiple correspondence analyses to reduce the complexity. The results indicate for anthropology a triangle with cornerstones: museums and exhibitions, anthropology in politics, and anthropology in science. For sociology, a square is found, which differentiates science and politics alongside a theory-driven and an empirically driven sociology. Economics displays the most profound triangle with three different economics reportings: one oriented on economic indicators, one that discusses political decisions, and one that is about theory and models.

This quantitative, mono-modal, computer-assisted approach to German science communication may raise interest in the variety of social science reporting. However, other sample logics, modalities, and methods are needed to increase the understanding of social science communication.

REFERENCES

Albæk, Erik, Peter Munk Christiansen, and Lise Togeby (2003) Experts in the Mass Media: Researchers as Sources in Danish Daily Newspapers, 1961–2001. Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly 80(4): 937–48. https://doi.org/10.1177/107769900308000412.

Bauer, Martin W. (2012) Public Attention to Science 1820–2010 – A 'Longue Durée' Picture, in: Rödder, Simone Martina Franzen, and Peter Weingart (Eds.): The Sciences' Media Connection – Public Communication and Its Repercussions. Sociology of the Sciences Yearbook, Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 35–57. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-2085-5_3.

Best, Joel (2003) Killing the Messenger: The Social Problems of Sociology. Social Problems 50(1): 1–13. https://doi.org/10.1525/sp.2003.50.1.1.

Beyrle, Judith (2016) Die Form der Nachricht, Weilerswist: Velbrück Wissenschaft. https://doi.org/10.5771/9783845280905.

Blei, David M., Andrew Y. Ng, and Michael I. Jordan (2003) Latent Dirichlet Allocation. The Journal of Machine Learning Research 3: 993–1022.

Böhme-Dürr, Karin (1992) Social and Natural Sciences in German Periodicals. Communications 17(2): 167–76. https://doi.org/10.1515/comm.1992.17.2.167.

Bonfadelli, Heinz, Birte Fähnrich, Corinna Lüthje, Jutta Milde, Markus Rhomberg, and Mike S. Schäfer (Eds.) (2017) Forschungsfeld Wissenschaftskommunikation. Wiesbaden: Springer Fachmedien. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-12898-2.

Burawoy, Michael (2005) For Public Sociology. American Sociological Review 70(1): 4–28. https://doi.org/10.1177/000312240507000102.

Cassidy, Angela (2014) Communicating the Social Sciences: A Specific Challenge?, in: Bucchi, Massimiano, and Brian Trench (Eds.) Routledge Handbook of Public Communication of Science and Technology, 2nd ed., London: Routledge.

Cassidy, Angela (2021) Communicating the Social Sciences and Humanities: Challenges and Insights for Research Communication, in: Bucchi, Massimiano, and Brian Trench (Eds.) Routledge Handbook of Public Communication of Science and Technology, 3rd ed., London: Routledge.

DiMaggio, Paul, Manish Nag, and David Blei (2013) Exploiting Affinities between Topic Modeling and the Sociological Perspective on Culture: Application to Newspaper Coverage of U.S. Government Arts Funding. Poetics 41(6): 570–606. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.poetic.2013.08.004.

Elmer, Christina, Franziska Badenschier, and Holger Wormer (2008) Science for Everybody? How the Coverage of Research Issues in German Newspapers Has Increased Dramatically. Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly 85(4): 878–93. https://doi.org/10.1177/107769900808500410.

Evans, William (1995) The Mundane and the Arcane: Prestige Media Coverage of Social and Natural Science. Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly 72(1): 168–77. https://doi.org/10.1177/107769909507200114.

Fähnrich, Birte, and Corinna Lüthje (2017) Roles of Social Scientists in Crisis Media Reporting: The Case of the German Populist Radical Right Movement PEGIDA. Science Communication 39(4): 415–42. https://doi.org/10.1177/1075547017715472.

Fenton, Natalie, Alan Bryman, and David Deacon (1998): Mediating Social Science, London et al.: SAGE Publications.

Fischhoff, Baruch, and Dietram A. Scheufele (2013) The Science of Science Communication. Introduction. Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America 110(Suppl 3): 14031–32. https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1312080110.

Fleck, Christian, Matthias Duller, and Victor Karády (Eds.) (2019) Shaping Human Science Disciplines: Institutional Developments in Europe and Beyond, Cham: Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-92780-0.

Gattone, Charles F. (2012) The Social Scientist as Public Intellectual in an Age of Mass Media. International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society 25(4): 175–86. https://www.jstor.org/stable/23279955.

Giddens, Anthony (1984) The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Greenacre, Michael, and Jorg Blasius (Eds.) (2006) Multiple Correspondence Analysis and Related Methods, New York: Chapman and Hall/CRC. https://doi.org/10.1201/9781420011319.

Groves, Tamar, Carlos G. Figuerola, and Miguel Á Quintanilla (2016) Ten Years of Science News: A Longitudinal Analysis of Scientific Culture in the Spanish Digital Press. Public Understanding of Science 25(6): 691–705. https://doi.org/10.1177/0963662515576864.

Grundmann, Reiner (2021) Using Large Text News Archives for the Analysis of Climate Change Discourse: Some Methodological Observations. Journal of Risk Research 25(3): 1–12. https://doi.org/10.1080/13669877.2021.1894471.

Hallett, Tim, Orla Stapleton, and Michael Sauder (2019) Public Ideas: Their Varieties and Careers. American Sociological Review 84(3): 545–76. https://doi.org/10.1177/0003122419846628.

Hess, Andreas, and Christian Fleck (Eds.) (2016) Knowledge for Whom?: Public Sociology in the Making, London: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315591162.

Hester, Joe Bob, and Rhonda Gibson (2003) The Economy and Second-Level Agenda Setting: A Time-Series Analysis of Economic News and Public Opinion about the Economy. Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly 80(1): 73–90. https://doi.org/10.1177/107769900308000106.

Korte, Jasper W. (2021) Dauerbeobachtungen der Gesellschaft. Wie Printmedien über Sozialwissenschaften berichten, Weinheim: Beltz Juventa. https://www.beltz.de/fachmedien/soziologie/produkte/details/46472-dauerbeobachtungen-der-gesellschaft.html

Korte, Jasper W., Sabine Bartsch, Rasmus Beckmann, Roxanne El Baff, Andreas Hamm, and Tobias Hecking (2023) From causes to consequences, from chat to crisis. The different climate changes of science and Wikipedia. Environmental Science & Policy 148 (2023), 103553.

Lebaron, Frédéric (2006) Nobel Economists as Public Intellectuals : The Circulation of Symbolic Capital. International Journal of Contemporary Sociology 43(1): 88–101. https://shs.hal.science/halshs-00192299.

Luhmann, Niklas (2012) Theory of Society. Volume 1. Translated by Rhodes Barrett, Stanford, California: Stanford University Press.

Luhmann, Niklas (2013) Theory of Society, Volume 2. Translated by Rhodes Barrett, Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Maesse, Jens (2015) Economic Experts: A Discursive Political Economy of Economics. Journal of Multicultural Discourses 10(3): 279–305. https://doi.org/10.1080/17447143.2015.1050029.

Maesse, Jens (2021) Post-neoliberalism in Europe? How economic discourses have changed through COVID-19 pandemic. Post-filosofie 2021: 119-145. https://doi.org/10.15162/1827-5133/1267.

Maesse, Jens, Stephan Pühringer, Thierry Rossier, and Pierre Benz (Eds.) (2021) Power and Influence of Economists: Contributions to the Social Studies of Economics, London: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780367817084.

Maier, Daniel, A. Waldherr, P. Miltner, G. Wiedemann, A. Niekler, A. Keinert, B. Pfetsch, et al. (2018) Applying LDA Topic Modeling in Communication Research: Toward a Valid and Reliable Methodology. Communication Methods and Measures 12(2–3): 93–118. https://doi.org/10.1080/19312458.2018.1430754.

Merton, Robert K., and Alan Wolfe (1995) The Cultural and Social Incorporation of Sociological Knowledge. The American Sociologist 26(3): 15–39. https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02692031.

Moscovici, Serge (2008) Psychoanalysis: Its Image and Its Public, Cambridge: Polity.

Osrecki, Fran (2012) Diagnosing the Present: Towards a Sociology of Medialized Social Science, in: Rödder, Simone Martina Franzen, and Peter Weingart (Eds.): The Sciences' Media Connection – Public Communication and Its Repercussions, Sociology of the Sciences Yearbook. Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 307–32. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-2085-5_16.

Peters, Hans Peter (1988) Sozialwissenschaften in den Massenmedien - Empirische Bestandsaufnahmen: Bundesrepublik Deutschland. Wiebe, Burckhard (Ed.): Zwischen Marktplatz und Elfenbeinturm. Gesellschaft und Sozialwissenschaften, Berlin: Edition Sigma, 71–82.

Plesner, Ursula (2009) Disassembling the Mass Mediation of Research: A Study of the Construction of Texts, Relations and Positions in the Communication of Social Science, Roskilde: Roskilde Universitet.

Revers, Matthias (2009) Sociologists in the Press. The American Sociologist 40(4): 272–88. https://www.jstor.org/stable/20638852.

Schäfer, Mike S. (2012) Taking Stock: A Meta-Analysis of Studies on the Media's Coverage of Science. Public Understanding of Science 21(6): 650–63. https://doi.org/10.1177/0963662510387559.

Schäfer, Mike S., Silje Kristiansen, and Heinz Bonfadelli, (Eds.) (2015) Wissenschaftskommunikation im Wandel, Köln: von Halem.

Scheu, Andreas M., and Anna-Maria Volpers (2017) Sozial- und Geisteswissenschaften im öffentlichen Diskurs, in Bonfadelli, Heinz, Birte Fähnrich, Corinna Lüthje, Jutta Milde, Markus Rhomberg, and Mike S. Schäfer (Eds.) Forschungsfeld Wissenschaftskommunikation, Wiesbaden: Springer Fachmedien, 391–404. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-12898-2_21.

Schmierbach, Mike (2005) Method Matters: The Influence of Methodology on Journalists' Assessments of Social Science Research. Science Communication 26(3): 269–87. https://doi.org/10.1177/1075547004273025.

Schwartz, Pepper (1998) Stage Fright or Death Wish: Sociology in the Mass Media. Contemporary Sociology 27(5): 439–45. https://doi.org/10.2307/2654472.

Shannon, Jennifer, Claire Quimby, Chip Colwell, and Scott Burg (2021) Anthropology, Empathy, and the Need for Social Science Communication. Science Communication 43(4): 529–37. https://doi.org/10.1177/10755470211018812.

Siebel, Catherine, and Katherine Clegg Smith (2009) How Public Are We? Coverage of Sociology by the Associated Press. The American Sociologist 40(4): 289–308. https://www.jstor.org/stable/20638853.

Stulpe, Alexander, and Matthias Lemke (2016) Blended Reading, in: Lemke, Matthias and Gregor Wiedemann (Eds.) Text Mining in den Sozialwissenschaften, Wiesbaden: Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden, 17–61. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-07224-7_2.

Šuljok, Adrijana (2020) Media Coverage of Different Scientific Disciplines in the Croatian Daily Press – Socio-Historical Perspective. Media Studies 11(21): 44–65. https://hrcak.srce.hr/ojs/index.php/medijske-studije/article/view/9794.

Summ, Annika, and Anna-Maria Volpers (2016) What's Science? Where's Science? Science Journalism in German Print Media. Public Understanding of Science 25(7): 775–90. https://doi.org/10.1177/0963662515583419.

Suttles, Gerald D., and Mark D. Jacobs (2011) Front Page Economics, Chicago: University of Chicago Press. https://www.degruyter.com/document/doi/10.7208/9780226782010/html.

Vestergaard, Gunver Lystbaek, and Kristian Hvidtfelt Nielsen (2016) Science News in a Closed and an Open Media Market: A Comparative Content Analysis of Print and Online Science News in Denmark and the United Kingdom. European Journal of Communication 31(6): 661–77. https://doi.org/10.1177/0267323116674110.

Vestergård, Gunver Lystbæk, and Kristian H. Nielsen (2017) From the Preserves of the Educated Elite to Virtually Everywhere: A Content Analysis of Danish Science News in 1999 and 2012. Public Understanding of Science 26(2): 220–34. https://doi.org/10.1177/0963662515603272.

Volpers, Anna-Maria, and Annika Summ (2015) Der Wandel des einst verspäteten Ressorts – Konstanten und Veränderungen der Wissenschaftsberichterstattung in deutschen Printmedien, in: Schäfer, Mike S., Silje Kristiansen, and Heinz Bonfadelli, (Eds.) Wissenschaftskommunikation im Wandel, Köln: von Halem, 233–57.

Weingart, Peter (2015) Die Stunde der Wahrheit? zum Verhältnis der Wissenschaft zu Politik, Wirtschaft und Medien in der Wissensgesellschaft, Weilerswist: Velbrück Wiss.

Weiss, Carol, and Eleanor Singer (1988) Reporting of Social Science in the National Media, New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Wessler, Hartmut (1995) Die journalistische Verwendung sozialwissenschaftlichen Wissens und ihre Bedeutung für gesellschaftliche Diskurse. Publizistik 40(1): 20–38. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/258051875_Die_journalistische_Verwendung_sozialwissenschaftlichen_Wissens_und_ihre_Bedeutung_fur_gesellschaftliche_Diskurse.

Wessler, Hartmut (1997) Verschlungene Pfade: Wie sozialwissenschaftliches Wissen in die Medienberichterstattung einfließt. Relation: Beiträge zur vergleichenden

Kommunikationsforschung 4(1): 117–48. https://www.oeaw.ac.at/cmc/publications/book-series-relation/prior-editions/vol-4-1-wissenschaft-und-oeffentlichkeit-i/.

Wien, Charlotte (2014) Commentators on Daily News or Communicators of Scholarly Achievements? The Role of Researchers in Danish News Media. Journalism 15(4): 427–45. https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884913490272.

SOFTWARE

Gensim. https://radimrehurek.com/gensim/

Prince. https://github.com/MaxHalford/prince

spaCy. https://spacy.io/

Author biographies

Dr. Jasper W. Korte was awarded his PhD at the University Münster with a study of the reporting of social science in Germany. Korte is a researcher at the German Aerospace Center (DLR) and works in the digital humanities project InsightsNet. His research interests include the sociology of science, science communication, and computational social science.

APPENDIX

Table A1: Periodicals

Title (Abbreviation)	Type	Datasource
Der Spiegel (Spiegel)	Weekly news magazine	Nexis
Die tageszeitung (taz)	Daily newspaper	Nexis
Die Welt (Welt)	Daily newspaper	Nexis
Focus	Weekly news magazine	Nexis
Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung (FAS)	Weekly newspaper	FAZ-Archive
Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (FAZ)	Daily newspaper	FAZ-Archive
Süddeutsche Zeitung (SZ)	Daily newspaper	SZ-Archive
Welt am Sonntag (WamS)	Weekly newspaper	Nexis

Table A2: Sampling method and statistical information per discipline

Discipline	Used search strings (count)	Target constructs (in English)	Articles	Tokens	Topic modelling measures	MCA measures
Anthropology	*ethnolog* (383) *völkerkund* (114) *sozialanthropol* (26) *kulturanthropol* (65)	Ethnologie (anthropology) Völkerkunde (ethnology) Sozialanthropologie (social anthropology) Kulturanthropologie (cultural anthropology)	495	5,563	Perplexity: -8.20 u_mass: -3.52 c_v: 0.36	Component 0: 19.62% Component 1: 15.08%
Sociology	*soziolog* (2,139) *sozialforsch* (338) *sozialtheor* (16) *gesellschaftsforsch* (24) *gesellschaftstheor* (32)	Soziologie (sociology) Sozialforschung (social research) Sozialtheorie (social theory) Gesellschaftsforschung (society research) Gesellschaftstheorie (theory of society)	2,444	5,581	Perplexity: -7.96 u_mass: -1.85 c_v: 0.46	Component 0: 41.06% Component 1: 39.88%
Economics	*ökonom* (4,435) *wirtschaftswis* (814) *wirtschaftsfors* (1,517) *wirtschaftstheor* (58) *wirtschaftsprof* (349)	Ökonomie (economics) Wirtschaftswissenschaft (science of economy) Wirtschaftsforschung (economic research) Wirtschaftstheorie (economic theory) Wirtschaftsprofessor (professor of economics)	5,721	4,445	Perplexity: -7.55 u_mass: -1.88 c_v: 0.54	Component 0: 88.14% Component 1: 71.67%

Table A3: Topics and top keywords

Topic	Top 10 keywords
Anthropology	
pictures of life	mensch, studium, foto, studieren, leben, leute, zigarette, sommer, denken, bild
expedition	Insel, expedition, neuguinea, masse, sprache, papua, volk, einheimische, alte, reise
humboldt	humboldt, berlin, forum, berliner, schloss, alexander, stiftung,, boas, ethnologische, deutsch
work	arbeit,raum, kunde, london, gesprach, verdienen, bekommen, geld, hotel, deutschland
afghanistan	staat, land, gruppe, taliban, ethnisch, afghanistan, konflikt, richter, prasident, bevolkerung
art	kunst, ausstellung, bild, fotografie, schau, film, kultur, werk, kunstler, blick
society	Gesellschaft, mensch, buch, leben, kultur, wert, geschichte, kind, sozial, wissen
tradition	traditionell, tradition, verwenden, erklaren, schwarz, nachst, symbol, verstehen, bunt, kleid
museum	museum, objekt, sammlung, benin, afrika, ausstellung, zeigen, bronzen, deutsch, geschichte
culture & politics	Land, bourdieu, berlin, hamburg, kultur, afrikanisch, pierre, stadt, franzosisch, algerien
journey	Haus, euro, stadt, besucher, million, land, gast, licht, wasser, restaurant
music	Musik, bredekamp, musiker, instrument, brasilien, horst, band, weltmusik, villa, taubes
studying	Labyrinth, universitat, detail, veranstaltung, fach, ikea, koka, stecken, professor, mensch
culture & history	Gewalt, strauss, levi, jude, generation, deutschland, mensch, leben, europa, tabu
skull	Schadel, forschung, bastian, sammlung, museum, ethnologe, volkerkunde, hamburg, deutsch, kannibalismus
islam	Jahrhundert, roma, leben, samad, abdel, deutsch, europaisch, islam, kultur, china
being abroad	straße, mensch, paris, leben, haus, krieg, schriftsteller, stadt, ottinger, erzahlen
culture & nature	Natur, tier, kultur, ethnologie, wissenschaft, modern, ding, mensch, material, disziplin
narrations	leben, deutsch, erzahlen, roman, otto, deutschland, franzen, prozent, mexiko, vater
foreign countrys	mensch, prozent,indien, land, million, grund, euro, mussen, kind, projekt
university	universitat, institut, reinhard, leiten, professor, georg, berufen, gehlen, anfang, kollege
family	Peter, martin, familie, demokratie, kind, leben, buch, korper, vater, richard
Sociology	
global inequality	mensch, million, welt, china, stadt, reich, dorf ,wachsen ,geld ,dollar
society	gesellschaft, sozial, frage, politisch, politik, freiheit, staat, offentlich, mensch, handeln
theory	buch, geschichte, verlag, theorie, sprache, werk, text, jahrhundert, philosoph, roman
housing	stadt, berlin, euro, haus, berliner, wohnung, frankfurt, geld, projekt, raum
social movements	bewegung, protest, polizei, opfer, leute, held, medium, gewalt, gruppe, straße
research	studie, mensch, ergebnis, frage, forscher, gruppe, vertrauen, datum, wissenschaftler, wissenschaft
religion	mensch, religion, religios, gott, kunst, welt, kunstler, ausstellung, glaube, museum
International politics	staat, europa, prasident, regierung, amerika, russland, nation, national, europaisch, politisch
family	kind, familie, prozent, eltern, mutter, schule, jugendliche, vater, deutschland, madchen
germany and war	deutsch, deutschland, krieg, deutsche, turkisch, gewalt, turkei, berlin, ukraine, frage
sports	spiel, sport, arzt, mensch, patient, fußball, krankheit, gesundheit, psychisch, risiko
corona	unternehmen, krise, corona, pandemie, euro, mensch, arbeit, geld, firma, mitarbeiter
media	welt, spiegel, mensch, gesellschaft, internet, kapitalismus, buch, netz, medium, sozial
church	kirche, jude, papst, paul, johannes, judisch, nazi, hitler, welt, israel
france	Frankreich, franzosisch, paris, kultur, identitat, franzosische, bourdieu, integration, migranten, muslim
east germany	prozent, osten, deutschland, generation, deutsch, berlin, unternehmen, westen, stiftung, studie
elections	partei, wahl, politik, prozent, merkel, grune, politiker, wahlen, wahler, politisch
emotions	freund, buch, lieben, mensch, fragen, gefuhl, welt, haus, denken, leute
university	universitat, student, professor, hochschule, soziologie, studium, studieren, institut, wissen, lehre
Economics	
football	deutsche, munchen, spiel, geld, million, deutsch, deutschen, bayer, vorstand, uber
university	universitat, professor, student, hochschule, forschung, foto, studieren, studium, kollege, wissenschaftler
inflation	inflation, zentralbank, zins, notenbank, geldpolitik, euro, bundesbank, prozent, europaische, okonom
growth	prozent, wirtschaft, wachstum, rechnen, quartal, deutsch, prognose, konjunktur, zahl, rezession
euro-crisis	euro, staat, krise, europa, italien, schulde, europaisch, kredit, griechenland, geld
models	modell, frage, ergebnis, verhalten, wissen, mensch, entscheidung, entwickeln, vertrauen, unterschiedlich
society	gesellschaft, politik, sozial, staat, politisch, soziale, marktwirtschaft, wirtschaftlich, burger, kapitalismus
housing	stadt, berlin, wohnung, haus, million, prozent, hamburg, miete, wohnen, immobilie
work	arbeit, million, arbeitnehmer, arbeitsmarkt, gewerkschaft, stelle, arbeitgeber, arbeitsplatze, mitarbeiter, lohne
energy	energie, klimaschutz, ziel, klima, okologisch, tonne, nachhaltig, strom, umwelt, klimawandel
france	regierung, prasident, frankreich, reform, franzosisch, paris, franzosische, bush, protest, parlament
competition	wettbewerb, markt, privat, staatlich, staat, gesetz, offentlich, regel, staatliche, international
corona	corona, pandemie, krise, mensch, arzt, virus, patient, coronavirus, maßnahme, zahl
people	mensch, welt, leute, geld, denken, geschichte, wissen, erzahlen, verstehen, sitzen
abroad	china, dollar, welt, staat, regierung, amerika, vereinigte, million, global, japan
family	kind, studie, familie, prozent, schule, mensch, eltern, mutter, schuler, zahl
elections	partei, merkel, grune, koalition, union, schroder, angela, schmidt, wahl, kanzler
media	zeitung, frankfurt, osterreich, frankfurter, medium, platz, august, foto, fischer, schweiz
europe	deutschland, deutsch, europa, großbritannien, folge, wirtschaftlich, okonomen, london, schaden, britisch
theory	buch, okonom, okonomie, theorie, okonomisch, jahrhundert, geschichte, these, verlag, denken
russia	russland, krieg, ukraine, russisch, putin, sanktion, russische, westen, russlands, moskau
prices	preis, teuer, kosten, prozent, verbraucher, steigend, nachfrage, kaufen, cent, auto
institutes	institut, berlin, bundesregierung, peter, scholz, chef, hans, okonom, kritisieren, warnen
enterprises	unternehmen, firma, deutsch, konzern, deutschland, branche, kunde, mitarbeiter, industrie, ausland
taxes	euro, milliarde, prozent, steuer, geld, kosten, zahlen, million, rente, einkommen
east germany	Osten, region, prozent, westen, deutschland, ostdeutschland, baden, sachsen, west, bundesrepublik
eu	Kommission, vorschlag, europaisch, brussel, europaische, entscheidung, national, union, gesetz, bund
stock exchange	prozent, dollar, anleger, aktie, borse, kurs, euro, gold, rendite, wert
banking crisis	banken, bank, geld, krise, finanzkrise, markt, spiegel, amerikanisch, risiko, okonom

Serendipities
Journal for the Sociology and History of the Social Sciences

ARTICLE

Edgar Zilsel 'The Social Roots of Romantic Ideology' (1933). A translation and commentary

Alan Scott
alan.scott@uibk.ac.at /ascott39@une.edu.au

Abstract

Edgar Zilsel (1891-1944) was an associate of the Vienna Circle and an Austro-Marxist. He is remembered for the so-called 'Zilsel Thesis', a historical reconstruction of the social and economic preconditions for the emergence of modern experimental science written in exile in the USA. His earlier work in Vienna on the cult of genius has recently been revisited by a number of scholars. The aim of this translation is to make one of his writings on this subject available to an Anglophone audience. Here he develops a genealogy of irrationalist ideology—one opposed to the rationalism of urban and commercial culture and to science—whose roots he traces to the German Romantic Movement. He offers a novel account of the interaction between Romantic writers, artists, and philosophers and wider currents of counter-revolutionary thought that emerged as a reaction to the French Revolution. The commentary seeks to contextualize the work as a critical, if indirect, contemporary engagement with fascism and points to its contemporary relevance.

Keywords

Austro-Marxism; cult of genius; Edgar Zilsel; fascism; German idealism; German Romanticism; irrationalism

Edgar Zilsel (1891-1944) was an associate of the Vienna Circle of logical empiricists and a Marxist, making him part of what Thomas Uebel (2005) has called the Left Vienna Circle. Like many intellectuals, artists, and (left-wing) politicians in Vienna at the time, Zilsel's background was middle class (his father was a lawyer) and Jewish. He studied natural science and philosophy at the University of Vienna and took his doctorate in the philosophy of mathematics (1915). Zilsel then taught secondary school while also working on two books on the cult of genius. The second, and longer, of these books (published in 1926) he submitted as the manuscript for the *Habilitation* in philosophy (1923/1924). While the application had the support of a majority of the committee, including Moritz Schlick, it met with unyielding opposition from more conservative members on the (ostensible) grounds that it was too empirical to qualify as a work of philosophy. However, the anti-socialism and anti-Semitism prevalent within the professoriate of the University of Vienna may have played at least as great a role (see Taschwer, 2022). Zilsel eventually withdrew the application. With a career in academia now barred, he carried on as a schoolteacher but was able to take leave to teach in municipal *Volkshochschulen* ('people's universities') supported by the SDAP, the Social

Democratic Workers' Party who governed so-called Red Vienna between 1919 and the Austrofascist seizure of power in 1934. In 1938, the year of the *Anschluss*, Zilsel escaped first to Britain and then, in 1939, to the USA. In US exile he led a hand-to-mouth existence on temporary research grants and teaching, and with some help from the exiled Frankfurt School in New York. Like Kleist, one of the Romantic writers he mentions in the essay translated here, faced with lack of recognition and dogged by financial woes he took his own life in 1944 (see Stadler, 2022 for a more detailed account of the tragic life of Zilsel as perpetual outsider). Zilsel's outsider standing was compounded by the fact that he was both working across disciplines—philosophy, sociology, history—and was an ill fit within any one of them, which may in part explain the relative neglect of much of his work (see Rief and Scott, forthcoming).

Insofar as Zilsel is remembered today it is for the so-called 'Zilsel Thesis', the thesis that the origins of modern experimental science are to be found in the socio-economic as well as technological changes brought about by early capitalism. The thesis focuses particularly on the interactions between 'higher craftsmen' or 'artist-engineers' and university scholars and humanists during the Renaissance. This contact, and eventually cooperation, between those with craft skills and more systematically trained scholars gradually overcame the 'barrier between tongue and hand' (Zilsel 2000 [1942]: 19), a necessary condition for experimental science. Zilsel's work on the origins of modern science was written in American exile between his emigration in 1939 and suicide in 1944.

However, the Zilsel Thesis is, to borrow the title of an insightful paper by Donata Romizi (2018), merely the American tip of a Viennese iceberg. That iceberg contains the two book-length studies on the concept and cult of genius (Zilsel 1990 [1918] and 1926). Neither book has been translated. But we also have Zilsel's more accessible summaries of the arguments published in *Der Kampf* (the struggle/the campaign), the theoretical journal of the SDAP in which many of the theoretical discussions within Austro-Marxism took place. There has recently been a spate of excellent commentaries on Zilsel's analysis of the cult of genius (Romizi 2018; Fine 2020; Köhne 2022; Nemeth, 2022; Riesinger 2022; Sandner 2022; Stadler 2022) and one of the *Der Kampf* pieces ('The intellectual state of our time?' ('Die geistige Situation der Zeit?'), Zilsel, 2020 [1932]) has been translated and published in abridged form in the very useful *The Red Vienna Sourcebook* (McFarland et al (Eds.) 2020). This revival of interest in Zilsel is further illustrated by the publication of an updated edition of Johann Dvořák's *Edgar Zilsel und die Einheit der Erkenntnis* (2023). With this translation of another *Der Kampf* piece, *'Die gesellschaftlichen Wurzeln der romantischen Ideologie'* (1933), I hope to contribute to this revival of interest in Zilsel's early work by making this programmatic statement available in English.

But why? And why now? Are there reasons, beyond scholarship for its own sake, why contemporary readers should take note of an analysis developed in inter-war Europe that has been largely passed over? The residual influence of the later Zilsel Thesis is not in itself a sufficient answer. The analysis of the genius cult must be of intrinsic interest and of some relevance not simply to Zilsel's time but also to ours. I shall briefly attempt to address this.

In these studies, Zilsel seeks to identify the sources of an ideology of irrationalism, and his reasons for doing so are political. These works, or at least those from the mid-1920s and 1930s, can be read as responses to the rise of fascism. (The piece translated here was published in the year of Hitler's Enabling Act and one year before the Austrofascist seizure of power in Zilsel's home country). Zilsel traces the source of irrationalist ideology back to German Romanticism and its philosophical expression, German idealism. These he interprets not simply as (increasingly) politically counter-revolutionary but also as opposition to rationality, calculability, technology, science, and capitalism;

in brief, to modernity. He was not alone in this. We have Karl Mannheim's much better-known analysis of the 'thought style' of German conservatism (1986 [1925]), which has clear affinities with Zilsel's account—e.g., both identify Adam Müller (1779-1829) as a key figure in translating Romanticism into a reactionary political creed. Nor was Zilsel alone in this endeavour within his own left-wing Viennese milieu. For example, Karl Polanyi (2018 [1935]) likewise interpreted fascist thought as a metaphysical and anti-naturalist epistemology and not simply as an irrationalist social and political philosophy (see, Rief and Scott forthcoming). In this sense, the work translated here, like his more elaborate accounts of the genius cult, is to be located within the anti-fascist efforts of left and left-leaning intellectuals across Central Europe in the inter-war period. Whereas Zilsel's work in America offers a genealogy of rational thought and action, the earlier Viennese work offers a genealogy of its opposite.

Zilsel's specific contribution was to accord the cult of genius a central place both in Romantic literature and, more broadly, in anti-rationalist counter-revolutionary thought. He traces the genius cult back to societal subgroups of early Romantic writers that emerged out of a very specific milieu, student circles in small university towns, notably Jena, in the early decades of the nineteenth century, which then spread and become increasingly metropolitan. His sociological analysis here is innovative. He seeks to show how the interactions within and between subgroups can get caught up in larger social and political struggles, become instrumentalized and mobilized for quite different (political) purposes. But he does not present this process as one way. The subgroups provide a breeding ground for ideas that both transform and are transformed by wider social currents in a dynamic feedback loop. While Zilsel in the end reaffirms the Marxist view that economics trumps ideas, he accords the latter considerable weight and views the relationship between ideas and material interests as a matter of historical and empirical contingency.

The genius cult turns on the contrast between (i) the genius and the philistine and (ii) the genius and the masses (*die Menge/die Massen*). Thematically, it rests on what Zilsel considers the key distinction, and innovation, of Romanticism, namely that between shallowness and depth. It is not merely the philistine who is shallow, but empirical science, calculating reason, and commercial society. In contrast, Romantic writers and idealist philosophers view empirical reality as a mantle drawn across the world's primal origin and inner mystery that must be deciphered rather than merely empirically investigated. Similarly, history is viewed as superior to the individual. History, by which Zilsel means irrational forces and fate-like social bonds, we would now likely subsume under the term culture (cf. Eagelton 2016: 113-115). Zilsel's theme is intellectual resistance against increasingly rational urban and commercial culture. There are clear affinities with what one might call the early modernist sociological 'mainstream', with Max Weber's rationalization thesis and Georg Simmel's account of the mental life of the urbanite (Simmel 1950 [1903]). But there are also less superficial similarities.

First, thematically, despite Zilsel's general hostility to Weber his analysis of the genius cult is strikingly close to the concerns of Weber's St Louis lecture (2005 [1906]). Both Zilsel and Weber, in that lecture, seek to identify the social groups/classes opposed to rationalization and to capitalism, and the often curious anti-capitalist coalitions that emerge. For Weber, these are coalitions between peasants, the clergy, the aristocracy, sections of officialdom, and the urban working class. For Zilsel, they are coalitions between Romantic writers, artists, and philosophers, on the one hand, and the much more powerful currents emerging as a reaction against the French Revolution on the other.

Secondly, the piece is interesting as a contribution to the sociology of art, or rather the sociology of the artist. As Martin Jay (1992: 46-47) has noted, 'as Europe's first self-conscious intellectual avant-

garde, the Jena Romantics [...] set the agenda for the conflation of art and politics pursued by so many later intellectuals.' The centrality Zilsel accords the political influence of artists, and of the early Romantics in particular, already hints at the 'aestheticization of politics' and its possible relation to fascism, a matter famously raised a couple of years later by Walter Benjamin (1999 [1935]). Furthermore, Zilsel is concerned with artistic production as a way of life. The conduct and lifestyle of artists, writers, and philosophers are formed in conscious opposition to that of the modern bourgeois subject. The relationship between the two is both confrontational and one of mutual dependence. Writers and artists who can no longer rely on, or have broken free of, patronage need sources of income from a mass (but middle-class) audience that they also mock as philistine. Zilsel relates this lifestyle and the ideology of freedom that accompanies it both to the rise of capitalism, and with it the emergence of the freelance writer and artist, and views them as trans-historical features inherent in artistic production because artists' conduct of life always and everywhere verges on the extrarational.

If, as suggested above, there are thematic overlaps between Zilsel and Weber there is also a sense in which the former's critique of genius might also be taken as a critique of Weber. Weber is no less implacable an opponent of German political Romanticism and of its assertion that there is a specific 'German' state form, the corporatist state (*Ständestaat*), and economy, the communal economy (*Gemeinwirtschaft*), than is Zilsel. He advises any littérateur who touts such nonsense to 'learn his sociological ABC before troubling the book-market with the products of his vanity' (Weber 1996 [1917]: 91). However, there is one respect in which Weber may have remained trapped in the world of Romantic thought, namely in his expectation that the true political leader must be an exceptional talent with 'inner charisma' (1996 [1919]). Here the exceptional (political) talent comes close to the genius ideal. In Weber's account of political leadership, the contrast between the political leader and the masses is retained, but the other contrast here is not with the philistine but with the 'parvenu' (see Scott, forthcoming). Nevertheless, the logic and assumptions are broadly similar. Weber's view of the 'natural' leader as possessing extraordinary (*außeralltäglich*) qualities and the Romantic genius cult may have, at the very least, an elective affinity.

Given that Zilsel's analysis of the social roots of Romanticism is primarily a search for the roots of irrationalism, with all its potentially dangerous political implications, it is striking that he does not slip into mere polemic. Instead, he acknowledges that its 'discovery' of the primacy of history and the irrational in human thought and action are genuine discoveries that have altered (and darkened) our worldview. Without the former, he notes, there would be no Hegel – and no Marx! – and, without the latter, presumably no Freud. The emphasis on folk and national traditions also, in his view, generated new fields of research, notably linguistics.

I have been, very sketchily, suggesting that Zilsel's analysis of the cult of genius is of continued interest, first, because it is part of a broader intellectual confrontation with fascism in inter-war Central Europe and, secondly, due to its potential contribution to the wider sociological analysis of modernity. But what of its possible present relevance? Zilsel characterizes anti-rationalism as coming in waves that swell, peak, and recede, and sees, with good reason, 1920s/1930s Europe as caught in a powerful swell. But does this not also apply to our own times? Have we not, over the last couple of decades, witnessed the rise of anti-science and growing scepticism towards, and declining trust in, expert systems? From Orbán to Modi, religious conflicts have been rekindled as a strategy for retaining power and garnering support (at least within majority religious communities). Putin has been peddling a semi-mystical nationalism, which eerily resembles the 'historical-extrarational bonds' Zilsel described, to justify the invasion of a sovereign country, and with imperialist intent

(Snyder, 2018). From populist 'wars' against institutions—the judiciary, public service broadcasting, the universities, etc.—and against 'cosmopolitan' (cultural, rarely economic) elites to Trump's depiction of himself as a 'very stable genius', we find echoes of anti-rationalism and the genius cult, now, as then, potentially culminating in the cult of the political 'strongman' (cf. Ben-Ghiat, 2020). The 2020s are not the 1920s, but a sociological examination of the sources of anti-rational and anti-procedural currents would not go amiss.

A NOTE ON THE TRANSLATION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Zilsel likes to describe past events in the present tense (the historic present), lending them immediacy. I have sought to retain his tenses. I have, however, split some of his more baroque sentences into more digestible bites. I have also used masculine pronouns throughout, not simply because a gender-neutral rendering of historical texts is anachronistic, but also because the cult of genius itself is profoundly masculinist. Finally, I would like to thank Helen Chambers (to whom I owe the final observation in trans. fn.23) and Brigitte Scott for fielding my many pesky questions concerning German terminology and Romantic literature with good humour and patience, and Silvia Rief, Friedrich Stadler, and the two anonymous reviewers for further helpful suggestions.

REFERENCES

Ben-Ghiat, Ruth (2020) Strongmen. How They Rise, Why They Succeed, How They Fail. London: Profile Books.

Benjamin, Walter (1999 [1935]) The work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction, in: Illuminations, edited by Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zorn, 211-244. London: Pimlico.

Dvořák, Johann (2023) Edgar Zilsel und die Einheit der Erkenntnis, updated new edition. Münster: LIT Verlag.

Eagelton, Terry (2016) Culture. New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press.

Fine, Abigial (2020) Assimilating to art-religion: Jewish secularity and Edgar Zilsel's Geniereligion (1918). Yale Journal of Music and Religion 6(2): 8-32. https://doi.org/10.17132/2377-231X.1169

Jay, Martin (1992) "The Aesthetic Ideology" as Ideology; Or, what does it mean to aestheticize politics? Cultural Critique 21: 41-61. https://doi.org/10.2307/1354116

Köhne, Julia B. (2022) Insufficient recognition: Comparing Julian Hirsch's and Edgar Zilsel's analyses of the glorification of personalities, in: Donata Romizi, Monika Wulz, and Elisabeth Nemeth (Eds.) Edgar Zilsel: Philosopher, Historian, Sociologist. Vienna Circle Institute Yearbook, 27, 219-242. Cham: Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-93687-7_11

McFarland, Rob, George Spitaler, and Ingo Zechner (Eds.) (2020) The Red Vienna Sourcebook. Rochester, NY: Camden House.

Mannheim, Karl (1986 [1925]) Conservatism: A Contribution to the Sociology of Knowledge, edited David Kettler, Volker Meja, and Nico Stehr. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Nemeth, Elisabeth (2022) How to explain the modern personality cult. Some reflections on Edgar Zilsel's studies on modern genius-veneration, in: Donata Romizi, Monika Wulz, and Elisabeth

Nemeth (Eds.) Edgar Zilsel: Philosopher, Historian, Sociologist. Vienna Circle Institute Yearbook, 27, 21-43. Cham: Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-93687-7_10

Polanyi, Karl (2018 [1935]) The essence of fascism, in: Claus Thomasberger, and Michele Cangiana (Eds.) Karl Polanyi: Economy and Society. Selected Writings, 81-107. Cambridge: Polity.

Rief, Silvia and Alan Scott (forthcoming) A tale of two sociologies: Empiricism versus 'metaphysics' in the early sociology of knowledge, in: Fran Collyer (Ed.) Research Handbook of the Sociology of Knowledge. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.

Riesinger, Bernadetta (2022) The religion of genius taken seriously. Edgar Zilsel's Die Geniereligion (1918) reviewed as a critical philosophical treatise, in: Donata Romizi, Monika Wulz, and Elisabeth Nemeth (Eds.) Edgar Zilsel: Philosopher, Historian, Sociologist. Vienna Circle Institute Yearbook, 27, 243-266. Cham: Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-93687-7_12

Romizi, Donata (2018) Die amerikanische Spitze eines Wiener Eisbergs. Edgar Zilsel und die Frage nach den Möglichkeitsbedingungen von Erkenntnis, in: Max Beck and Nicholas Coormann (Eds.) Historische Erfahrung und begriffliche Transformation. Deutschsprachige Philosophie im Exil in den USA 1933–1945, 78–99. Münster: LIT Verlag.

Sandner, Günther (2022) The cult of genius and its critics: Edgar Zilsel and Otto Neurath, in: Christian Damböck, and Adam T. Tuboly (eds) The Socio-Ethical Dimension of Knowledge: The Mission of Logical Empiricism. Vienna Circle Institute Yearbook, 26, 49-63. Cham: Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-80363-6_8

Scott, Alan (2025) The populist and the parvenu: On the continuing relevance of Max Weber's account of political leadership, in: John Schwarzmantel and Helen Beetham (Eds.) Deformations of Democracy, David Beetham in Contemporary Politics. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Simmel, Georg (1950 [1903]) Metropolis and mental life, in: Kurt H. Wolff (Ed.) The Sociology of Georg Simmel, 409-424. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

Snyder, Timothy D. (2018) The Road to Unfreedom. Russia, Europe, America. London: Vintage.

Stadler, Friedrich (2022) From the problem of genius to the integration of philosophy, history, and the sociology of science: Edgar Zilsel's life and work viewed in the context of recent historiography and research, in: Donata Romizi, Monika Wulz, and Elisabeth Nemeth (Eds.) Edgar Zilsel: Philosopher, Historian, Sociologist. Vienna Circle Institute Yearbook, 27, 21-43. Cham: Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-93687-7_2

Taschwer, Klaus (2022) The circumstances of Edgar Zilsel's failed Habilitation. A case-study on the instigations of anti-semitic and conservative academic networks in the 1920s at the University of Vienna, in: Donata Romizi, Monika Wulz, and Elisabeth Nemeth (Eds.) Edgar Zilsel: Philosopher, Historian, Sociologist Vienna Circle Institute Yearbook 27, 45-60. Cham: Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-93687-7_3

Uebel, Thomas E. (2005) Political philosophy of science in logical empiricism: The Left Vienna Circle' Studies in the History and Philosophy of Science 36: 754–773. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.shpsa.2005.08.014

Weber, Max (1994 [1917)] Suffrage and democracy in Germany, in: Peter Lassman and Ronald Speirs (Eds.) Weber: Political Writings, 80-129. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Weber, Max (1994 [1919]) The profession and vocation of politics, in: Peter Lassman and Ronald Speirs (Eds.) Weber: Political Writings, 309-369. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Weber, Max (2005 [1906]) The relations of the rural community to other branches of social science, edited and annotated by Peter Ghosh as: Max Weber on 'The Rural Community'. A critical edition of the English text, History of European Ideas 31: 327 66. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.histeuroideas.2005.02.001

Zilsel, Edgar (1926) Die Entstehung des Geniebegriffes. Ein Beitrag zur Ideengeschichte der Antike und des Frühkapitalismus. Tübingen: J.C.B Mohr (Paul Siebeck).

Zilsel, Edgar (1990 [1918]) Die Geniereligion. Ein kritischer Versuch über das moderne Persönlichkeitsideal, mit einer historischen Begründung, edited Johann Dvořak. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.

Zilsel, Edgar (1933) Die gesellschaftlichen Wurzeln der romantischen Ideologie, Der Kampf 26(3/4): 154-164. Available: https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno-plus?aid=dks&datum=1933&pos=85&qid=YHYOMAXYU05QT0271Z7PYAHK7LA59H (retrieved 10 January 2024). Reprinted in Edgar Zilsel Wissenschaft und Weltanschauung edited Gerald Mozetič, 58-73. Vienna: Böhlau, 1996.

Zilsel, Edgar (2000 [1942]) The sociological roots of science, in: Diederick Raven, Wolfgang Krohn, and Robert S. Cohen (Eds.) Edgar Zilsel The Social Origins of Modern Science, 7-21. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

Zilsel, Edgar (2020 [1932]) The intellectual state of our time? trans. Daniel B. Friedman, in: Rob McFarland, George Spitaler, and Ingo Zechner (Eds.) The Red Vienna Sourcebook, 102-105. Rochester, NY: Camden House.

Author biographies

Alan Scott is Professor in the Department of Social & Philosophical Inquiry, UNE (NSW, Australia) and Professor of Sociology iR at the University of Innsbruck (Austria). He has recently been researching into political and intellectual debates in Vienna in the 1920s and 1930s. Relevant publications include 'Reactionaries of the lectern: Universalism, anti-empiricism, and corporatism in Austrian (and German) social theory', *European Journal of Social Theory* 24(2), 2021: 285-305. doi: 10.1177/1368431021992205 (with Silvia Rief); 'The Kelsen-Bauer debate on Marxist state theory and the equilibrium of class forces', *Thesis Eleven* 165(1): 72-100. doi: 10.1177/07255136209856 51; 'Introduction to Otto Neurath's "Bourgeois Marxism" (1930) and "Worldview and Marxism" (1931)', *Sociologica* 14(1), 2020: 227-34. doi: 10.6092/issn.1971-8853/10821.

Serendipities
Journal for the Sociology and History of the Social Sciences

TRANSLATION

The Social Roots of Romantic Ideology

Edgar Zilsel

As we know, the advance of the capitalist economy and spread of urbanism throughout the modern era is accompanied by the advance of the rational; that is, rationally calculating action and thinking. In economy and technology; in state building, army, and politics; in science and philosophy we can trace the rise of rationality. Viewed psychologically, until the end of the eighteenth century only the natural inertia of men, who everywhere sought to hang on to tradition, and religion, with its extrarational authority and emotions, stand in opposition to rational procedure. The Enlightenment—an intellectual movement that in the eighteenth century all but dominates public opinion but whose basic tendencies are more-or-less evident among the great scientific researchers and philosophers of the seventeenth century—fights successfully against these two enemies. However, since the end of the eighteenth century other opponents have become audible. Up to that point, rationality was an unwelcome intruder and hostile to faith. Now, moreover, the Enlightenment is shallow, pure science lifeless, calculating reason vapid. Who today is not familiar with such assessments hostile to rationality? Although the new resistance against the ideals of the Enlightenment has come in waves since 1800—peaking in the decades up to 1830, then receding and then, from 1870 until today, swelling fast—the resistance of the last 130 years differs from that found in the centuries of early capitalism. This difference is most pronounced in the German cultural sphere. The French, and particularly the Anglo-American, spheres are today closer to Enlightenment ideals. The striking intellectual differences—between both the periods and the cultural spheres mentioned—justify here a brief look at that movement out of which the new irrational ideals in intellectual history emerge, namely German Romanticism (roughly 1800 to 1830). An examination of the Romantic Movement is particularly useful because almost all emotional shades hostile to rationality that appear in the ideology of our contemporary opponent—whether nationally, clerically, or fascistically oriented—cannot deny their Romantic ancestry.

* * *

In Novalis's verdict from 1799, the writers of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment 'were constantly preoccupied with purging poetry from nature, the earth, the human soul, and the sciences. Every trace of the sacred was to be destroyed, all memory of noble events and people was to be spoiled by satire, and the world stripped of colourful ornament. Their favourite theme, on account of its mathematical obedience and impudence, was light. [...] [A]nd so they called their great enterprise "Enlightenment"'[1]. Novalis on the other hand composes hymns to the night because Romanticism seeks and finds its ideals in mysterious darkness[2]. At first, the Romantic writers value the irrational sides of the *human soul*. Premonition, longing, nebulous melancholy are in Novalis and Eichendorff, but also passion, all-consuming lust, enthusiasm, intoxication, and rapture in the Schlegel brothers,

[1] [*trans. note*] Novalis (Georg Philipp Friedrich Freiherr von Hardenberg) (1772-1801), Die Christenheit oder Europa (1799). I have used Beiser's translation (Novalis, 1996 [1799]: 70) and added ellipse where Zilsel cut the text.

[2] [*trans. note*] *Hymnen an die Nacht* (1800).

Clemens Brentano, Arnim, Kleist, and E. T. A. Hoffman, the most interesting and most valuable aspects of men. And likewise humour when, that is, as Brentano demands 'one laughs from the heart not from the intellect'. Even further removed from rationality than feeling and passion are unusual and pathological mental states. Indeed, for the first time in intellectual history in the works of Romanticism dreams and insanity, lapses of consciousness, and split personality play a significant role. Abnormal mental states are always thought of as supernatural and cloaked in all the awe of magic. This mixture of occultism and psychopathology forces its way into the philosophy of the time. Schelling's followers in particular now love to speak of the 'dark side of mental life' (G. H. Schubert, 1808 and 1830)[3].

Because rationality coincides with detached objectivity, the irrational sides of mental life are those that come closest to the dissolved innermost core of the self [*das Ich*]. Indeed, Romanticism is more interested in subjective-personal experience than in objective-factual achievement. In the sphere of art, this meant the cult of *genius*. Although the concept of genius has a long prehistory and plays a significant role for specific writers of the eighteenth century it acquired its current tenor of distinctly quasi-religious awe first with Romanticism. The suggestive qualities of the idea of genius are everywhere reinforced by Romanticism. For the first time, the quasi-mythical idea that the exceptional genius went perpetually unrecognized by the contemporary world is developed with full clarity (Schopenhauer). For the first time, the modern caricature of the shallow philistine who drags all that is elevated down to his own mediocre level emerges as the dark background against which the genius ideal shines out. With this the genius ideal outgrows its original home, the sphere of the poets. Artists, musicians, religious prophets, philosophers, and researchers join the ranks of geniuses, and that peculiar division of humanity appears in which a few towering individuals are juxtaposed to the teaming masses. Such exceptional men distinguish themselves in quite diverse ways, but still, they are somehow transcendentally united by genius.

In his satire on the philistine from 1811[4], Clemens Brentano places the following demand in the mouth of the shallow Enlightenment thinker: 'All prejudice must go!' and, in Romantic spirit, goes on to identify this as meaning 'all that divides and unites former times and the primordial world [*vor- und Urgeschichte*]'. With former times and the primordial world, that is to say history, we have now arrived at a new form of irrationality. All those who in action and thought hold fast to that which has arisen historically are not governed by rational considerations and thus conform to the Romantic ideal. Romanticism has for the first time recognized the forceful superiority of history over the individual and at the same time derided as 'shallow' the ahistorical man hostile to tradition. Naturally, the Romantics particularly love the Middle Ages in which, as in all pre-capitalist eras, rationality is only sparsely developed. But it is not simply the Middle Ages that are poetically, pictorially, and scientifically idealized again and again but also history in its totality counts as a sacred power. In Novalis's essay on Christendom he at first fights the Reformation and Enlightenment with deep distain: 'Now we stand high enough […] to recognize in those strange follies remarkable crystallizations of historical matter. Thankfully we should shake hands with those intellectuals and philosophers; for this delusion had to be exhausted for the sake of posterity […]. So that India might be warm and magnificent in the centre of our planet, a cold, frozen sea […] and a

[3] [*trans. note*] Gotthilf Heinrich von Schubert (1780-1860), *Ansichten von der Nachtseite der Naturwissenschaft* (1808) and *Die Geschichte der Seele* (1830).

[4] [*trans. note*] Clemens Brentano (1778-1842), *Der Philister vor, in und nach der Geschichte* (1811).

long night, had to make both poles inhospitable.'[5] So Novalis in 1799. Some twenty years later Hegel, beholding world history, will speak of the thesis and antithesis that are necessary for synthesis to emerge therefrom—because without the metaphysical enthusiasm of the literary Romantics for history there would be no Hegel—and no Marx. It is the Romantic writers' reverence for all things historical that has decisively stimulated many cultural configurations [*Kulturgebilde*]. Romantic legal scholars are the first to study law not through formal logic but historically (Savigny)[6]. Romantic writers research early German poetry for the first time. Romantic philologists generate German linguistics and classical studies.

Indivisible from the historical is the *national* way of seeing things. Romanticism loves all historical-extrarational bonds. They view the individual as embedded in the tradition of his profession and his estate [*Stand*] and the estates are united in the nation. While for the Enlightenment folklore/national character [*Volkstum*] is simply a web of irrational traditions and prejudices, for Romanticism national peculiarity and national bonds, like all that is irrational, are sacred (Fichte, Görres). And the same goes for *religion*. Once more the new enthusiasm for religious feeling, religious ecstasy, and religious faith in miracles cannot simply be equated with the Romantic Movement's well-known preference for Catholicism. Alongside Catholic and Catholicizing Romanticism there is also Romantic-subjective Protestantism (Schleiermacher) and a quite unorthodox aesthetic-suggestive enthusiasm for religiosity in general: 'Whoever wants to see religion must travel to India' announces Friedrich Schlegel in 1803[7]. Schlegel's investigations into religion and language in India grew out of this enthusiasm for devout Asia (1808)[8]; investigations that have become decisive in the development of comparative linguistics and initiated the influx of Far Eastern mysticism into Europe. With Schopenhauer (1819)[9] Indian teachings of salvation have then flowed into Philosophy for the first time.

This holy trinity of history, nation, and religion was first sketched in purely ideological terms. Of all Romanticism's ideological aspects, these are self-evidently the most significant, socially and politically, and thus they also govern the Romantic theory of the state. This theory of the state emphasizes in particular the historically emerging occupational and professional groups and transforms them into the transcendental. The economic and political thought of the archreactionary Adam Müller (1809 and 1819)[10] enthuses about all irrational bonds, praises pre-capitalist estates and guilds, and finally ends up with the Catholic Church. In contrast, Müller attacks Adam Smith's

[5] [*trans. note*] Novalis, 1996 [1799]: 73-74. I have added ellipses where Zilsel cut the text. In doing so, he slightly, but not significantly, altered the meaning. The full passage is as follows:

Now we stand high enough to smile back amiably upon those former times and to recognize in those strange follies remarkable crystallizations of historical matter. Thankfully we should shake hands with those intellectuals and philosophers; for this delusion had to be exhausted for the sake of posterity and the scientific view of things had to be legitimated. More charming and colourful, poetry stands like an ornate India in contrast to the cold, dead pointed arches of an academic reason. So that India might be warm and magnificent in the centre of our planet, a cold, frozen sea, desolate cliffs and fog, rather than the starry sky and a long night, had to make both poles inhospitable.

[6] [*trans. note*] Most likely a reference to Friedrich Carl von Savigny (1779-1861), *Das Recht des Besitzes* (1803).

[7] [*trans. note*] Friedrich Schlegel (1772-1829), *Reise nach Frankreich* (1803). Zilsel is paraphrasing rather than quoting.

[8] [*trans. note*] *Ueber die Sprache und Weisheit der Indier. Ein Beitrag zur Begründung der Alterthumskunde* (1808).

[9] [*trans. note*] Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860), *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* (1819).

[10] [*trans. note*] Adam Müller (1779-1829), *Die Elemente der Staatskunst* (1809) and *Von der Notwendigkeit einer theologischen Grundlage der gesamten Staatswissenschaften* (1819).

rational-capitalist economics because for him every attempt to analyse social causes and interrelations scientifically and rationally is nothing but 'impudent theory'.

In his fragment from 1799, *Die Lehrlinge zu Saïs*, Novalis tells the fairy tale of the childhood love between Hyazinth and Rosenblütchen. A wondrous old man tempts the boy Hyazinth away from his love. For years, the boy wanders the eerie world looking for its original secret. In Saïs he comes to stand in front of the picture of a veiled goddess. He lifts the veil and Rosenblütchen stands before him. The mysterious primary origin of the world lies in the sensitive, childlike unreasoning depths of the soul, or so one might roughly summarize the fairy tale's meaning. Indeed, one may be justified in seeing in this the basic idea of the entire Romantic Movement. Romantic writers almost always seek to connect their manifold endeavours intellectually. The life of the soul and the genius of art, history, folklore, and religion lead, it is always suggested, into the same sacred depths. Likewise, all natural formations are, it is said again and again, 'mysterious Sanskrit'; are 'runes' and 'hieroglyphs' that proclaim the same primal mystery. The entire experience must be deciphered and uniformly interpreted—formulated as a thesis: the whole world is a mantle over a single, soul-like, irrational, and sacred primal origin. Or, as Novalis puts it, nature is the solidified enchanted city of the spirit.

This brings us to the Romantic Movement philosophers because the so-called 'German idealist philosophy' of our textbooks is in reality nothing other than the philosophy of Romanticism. Fichte and Schelling, Hegel and Schopenhauer, clearly in distinct ways, thus transform that genuinely Romantic thought of the soul-like primal origin of the world [*Weltenurgrund*]. For Fichte, the primal origin is the self, which as 'action' [*Tatenhandlung*] drives the world out of itself. In Schelling it is the world soul [*Weltseele—anima mundi*]; in Hegel world reason [*Weltvernunft*]; in Schopenhauer, the primal will [*Urwille*]. Fichte is a follower of Kant. His early work is closely bound to the world of Enlightenment thought but all his deviations from Kant express a distinctly Romantic subjectivism. His satire on the Enlightenment thinker Nicolia (1801)[11], his mystical *Anweisung zum seligen Leben* (1806), his speech to the German nation (1808)[12], his journal on animal magnetism (1813)[13] are fully imbued with the spirit of Romanticism. Schilling stands closest to literary Romanticism. His mythological-fantastic nature doctrine and theosophy, just like his metaphysics of genius, are indivisible from Novalis and Friedrich Schlegel. Matters are somewhat different with Hegel. Hegel has built the most comprehensive and meticulously structured system that seeks to rationalize Romantic myth and align it with all the facts of experience—even the metaphysical primal origin here has become 'rational'. But Hegelian reason, which did not oppose true and false but rather drove ever new oppositions out of itself that are in turn transcended, diverges from that which one would call reason in an everyday sense and is irrational enough. There is no need to point to the deeply Romantic roots of Hegel's philosophy of history. And finally, Schopenhauer! With him the world's primal origin is as irrational and dark as the dark Novalis—but in the process it has become subdued will and slips into original evil. This time it is the devil who resides in the sacred depths. Certainly, it was Schopenhauer who most idiosyncratically reordered Romantic myth. He fiercely mocked his Romantic fathers—Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel. He completely lacked a sense of history, but his metaphysics of nature and mythology of genius, his preference for Indian religiosity, his attempt at spiritualism place him too in that intellectual movement to which all those philosophers mention here belong. All these thinkers are no longer satisfied with sober truth but rather constantly operate with the opposition between the shallow and the deep. This new idea of 'depth', which here arises for

[11] [*trans. note*] Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762-1814), *Friedrich Nicolais Leben und sonderbare Meinungen* (1801).

[12] [*trans. note*] *Reden an die deutsche Nation* (1807/08).

[13] [*trans. note*] *Tagebuch über den Magnetismus* (1813).

the first time in the modern period, is however their common Romantic heritage. By the way, at crucial points Schelling and Schopenhauer even explicitly express the Novalis-Schlegel-Hoffmannian thought that the world is an inscription that must not be merely empirically observed but also deciphered for its secret meaning and interpreted irrationally.

* * *

We have already dwelt on purely ideological aspects for too long. Now we must examine the roots of this ideology from a Marxist perspective. First the social situation of the Romantic writers themselves! Viewed economically, the writers of the early capitalist epoch fall into three groups: they are either aristocrats who live from rent or commoners who are maintained by aristocrats or princes and who in return grant their patrons fame, entertainment, and intellectual lustre, or they are civil servants on fixed salaries, clergy, and professors who pursue literary activities only as a sideline. There are many overlaps between the last two groups. Initially, in contrast, professional writers who live on earnings from their writings are absent because the precondition for their livelihood, namely a broad stratum of educated readers, is lacking. Not until around 1750 did the rise of the bourgeoisie in England and France create the required reading public, and with it the first freelance writers. In contrast, in economically backward Germany decades later men like Lessing, Herder, Wieland, Goethe, still lived as ducal librarian, court chaplain, princely governor, and minister. However, after 1795 a circle of writers under thirty years of age, who had already published in established journals and in newly founded newspapers, forms in the university town of Jena. They declined aristocratic patronage, created a literary salon on their own initiative, and consciously distanced themselves in their lifestyle from the salaried professors, civil servants, and businessmen who surrounded them. These were the early Romantics, the first freelance writers in Germany. The circle's centre is formed by the Schlegel brothers—grandsons of a professor and author and sons of a consistory councillor and author[14], the rope manufacture's son Tieck[15], and the nobleman von Hardenberg-Novalis. Tieck later continued to live as a writer and dramatist. Only Novalis had his main employment as an official in the Elector's salt-works[16]. Associated with the early Romantics were Kapellmeister and man of letters [Johann Friedrich] Reichardt, students, actors, painters, and some young professors, theologians, and civil servants still only loosely bound to their profession and active as writers. The Jena Circle dissolved itself already in 1800 but its spirit spread through similarly constituted writers' circles. To name some names, Brentano, von Arnim, von Kleist, and E. T. A. Hoffmann also live for longer or shorter periods without steady positions and without patronage. Arnim's literary activity pretty much ends when, at the age of thirty-seven, he is forced by constant financial worries to take on the management of his family estate (1818). Conversely, Hoffmann begins to publish when, at the age of thirty-one, he loses his position as a judge in the tumultuous war of 1807. The fates of the Romantic writers—one thinks, for example, of Kleist's pitiful end—show how extremely difficult it still is to make a living as a freelance writer[17].

The early Romantics had been active in smaller university towns. Their literary activity in part grows out of the freedom of student life. The movement that emerges however gradually undergoes two

[14] [*trans. note*] August [Wilhelm] Schlegel (1767-1845) and [Karl Wilhelm] Friedrich Schlegel (1772-1829).

[15] [*trans. note*] Johann Ludwig Tieck (1773-1853).

[16] [*trans. note*] In Weißenfels (Saxony-Anhalt).

[17] [*trans. note*] Heinrich von Kleist (1777-1811) died in a suicide pact at the age of thirty-four. On the banks of the Kleiner Wannsee (Berlin) he first shot, at her behest, the terminally ill Henriette Vogel (1780-1811) and then himself (see Stein, 2014).

changes, each representing something completely new in German intellectual history. After 1805 Romanticism starts to come into personal contact with foreign literary circles and, beyond this, begins to take on a metropolitan character. It is Madame de Staël[18], a writer and émigré with haute bourgeois-aristocratic colouring, who largely forges these international connections. The royal seat of Dresden, and more especially Berlin and Vienna, supplied the 'metropolitan' atmosphere. In Romantic circles in Berlin and Vienna after 1815 the haute bourgeoisie, aristocracy, writers, and artists mix, while in Vienna Jesuits too are present. Since for the first time in German intellectual history Romantic circles gather in the salons of the nouveau riche, often Jewish finance capitalists—in Vienna, the Arnsteins, Eskeles, and Pereias—rigid feudal and solid old-bourgeois attitudes are from the outset softened and compelled towards considerable intellectualization in a new way. That milieu, like the entire later Romantic Movement, is without doubt distinctly counter-revolutionary, yet here too it is the literati who provide the glue and the spirit.

The lifestyle of Romantic writers is consciously unbourgeois. Sociologically instructive is, for example, the all but bohemian married and love life of the early Romantics and its artistic expression, the sexually revolutionary novel *Lucinde* (Friedrich Schlegel, 1799). Likewise, for Arnim and Brentano, even rape and seduction are more hallowed than philistine intercourse. Likewise, bourgeois marriages of convenience are mocked and love marriages demanded. Sexual passion is thus always cloaked in an aesthetic metaphysics at the apex of which is ideological opposition to sober reason and sociological opposition to the bourgeoisie and honed by paradoxes. Such a constellation is always characteristic of freelance writers. Even more instructive is the attitude of the early Romantics towards the economy. They stand outside regular employment and are fully conscious of this fact. Often, they complain—in particular, a broken Brentano in his letters. More often their lack of engagement with economic life is ideologically transfigured. Beggars, itinerant folk, students, gamblers, and others outside the economy are often depicted poetically. From the eulogy to 'sloth and God-like idleness' in Schlegel's Lucinde to Eichendorff's charming novella *Aus dem Leben eines Taugenichts* (1826), vocational philistinism is mocked again and again. Sometimes there is an obvious sociological connection with turmoil in the conditions of life of the intellectuals. 'Let the dutiful composer become Kapellmeister; the poet court poet; the painter court portraitist, and soon you will have no more useless fantasists in the land, only useful citizens' mocks the ingenious musician Kreisler in Hoffmann (*Kater Murr*, 1819)[19]. And Brentano sneers at the solid economic bourgeoisie who welcome the fact that nowadays the actor is no longer in a traveling troop: 'They wish the actors good fortune, that they come into good company; that is, that they come to them in order to be equally great philistines' (*Der Philister*, 1811).

The poetry of the age of patronage is also in its themes—honour, power, love—completely unencumbered by the economy. But it is aimed at an aristocratic audience; that is, landed rentiers who are above breadwinning. People engaged in economic activity are, until towards the end of the eighteenth century, ignored in literature not ridiculed. In contrast, freelance writers depend on an audience consisting of economic citizens. They face not individual patrons but rather an anonymous mass audience to which they have to appear in a good light and are thus subject to the laws of mass psychology. Thus, the audience must be whipped up; its undesirable characteristics must be derided. In the age of patronage, a travesty of the audience is dispensable. Even so, there we occasionally find

[18] [*trans. note*] Anne Louise Germaine de Staël-Holstein (1766-1817).

[19] [*trans. note*] E. T. A. Hoffmann (1776-1822), *Lebens-Ansichten des Katers Murr nebst fragmentarischer Biographie des Kapellmeisters Johannes Kreisler in zufälligen Makulaturblättern* (1819/21).

the caricature of the rich carouser who is unfit to be a patron of the arts due to his lack of education![20] The freelance writer in contrast necessarily develops the caricature of the audience as commonplace philistine; that is, a travesty of sober economic citizens and civil servants who become absorbed by family and profession, who do not bother with literature, art, and intellect, and who reject every irrational impulse and all non-conformists. It is precisely this equally effective and consequential travesty that is formulated by Romanticism for the first time. It can be found in the Schlegel brothers, in Tieck, Hoffmann, and Eichendorff. It forms the background to the intellectual attitude of the whole Romantic Movement and is filled out in detail and grounded metaphysically in the grandiose witty satire on the philistine by Brentano from 1811. Here the social reference to businessmen and civil servants clearly comes to the fore. As the name suggests, the caricature of the philistine originally came from student circles; from the youthful, unattached, and not yet employed students who had their run-ins with the shopkeepers and craftsmen of the university towns. The ideal of freedom coloured by student life then plays a large role in the writers of the *Sturm und Drang*, which occasionally reaches into the early Romantic Movement (*Halle, ein Studentenspiel*, Arnim, 1811)[21]. Precisely this student commentary is, however, mocked as philistine in Hoffmann's *Klein Zaches*[22] and *Kater Murr*. The caricature of the philistine is therefore decisively refined in the Romantic Movement. From the students it retains its anti-bourgeois, anti-economic edge, but has become steeped in literary-artistic intellectualism, and the philistine is therefore now identical with the petit bourgeois [*Spießbürger*], the upstanding citizen [*Pfahlbürger*], the stout and stolid denizen [*Mastbürger*], and the 'bourgeoisie' of modern metropolitan artists and writers[23]. In Germany in the early nineteenth century, however, all haut bourgeois aspects are of course lacking.

Even *épater le bourgeois*, the artistic scandalizing of the audience, is already quite familiar in Romanticism. When Schlegel, for example, in his studies of literary history praises precisely the minor works of great writers—from Boccaccio not *Decameron* but *The Elegy of Lady Fiammetta*; from Cervantes not *Don Quixote* but *The Siege of Numantia*; from Shakespeare (the likely falsely attributed) *Pericles, Prince of Tyre*—so such traits of literary snobbery, because they represent a historical novelty, are all the more sociologically telling. This is because only freelance littérateurs who wish to distance themselves from the audience emphasize their arcane knowledge and seek paradox. The same spirit lies behind well-known 'Romantic irony'. In Tieck's comedies for example prompters, stagehands, and a handful of audience members join in, the last as a chorus of philistines. Illusions are created and then shattered. Art becomes a superior game. The freelance littérateur towers above his work—and his audience. The court poet would never address his princely patron in this way. And here finally lies the sociological explanation of the idea of depth. The writing in Athenaeum, the first journal of the Romantic writers, was paradoxical and enigmatic, to the extent that some readers had complained. Friedrich Schlegel responds. His sparklingly witty essay *Über die*

[20] [*author's note*] cf. Zilsel, E. *Die Entstehung des Geniebegriffes*, Tübingen, 1926.

[21] [*trans. note*] Achim von Arnim (Carl Joachim Friedrich Ludwig von Arnim) (1781-1831), *Halle und Jerusalem. Studentenspiel und Pilgerabentheuer* (1811).

[22] [*trans. note*] E. T. A. Hoffmann, *Klein Zaches, genannt Zinnober* (1819).

[23] [*trans. note*] *Spießbürger* is usually translated as philistine, and *Kleinbürger* is closer to the neutral usage of petit bourgeois. However, for philistine Zilsel uses the word *Philister* and *Spießbürger* (or *Spießig*) is very close to petit bourgeois in the derogatory sense, as for example in 'petit-bourgeois mentality' – i.e., narrow minded and conformist. *Pfahlbürger* is a historical term dating from the Middle Ages for those living beyond the city limits but who nonetheless had acquired town burghers' rights. The use of the term is presumably ironic and close to the more common *bieder*, upright, conventional, staid, etc. *Mastbürger* seems to be a rarity. I take it this is a, once more ironic, reference, this time to *die Mast* (fattening (up))/*mästen* (to fatten/to gorge). The list may be a humorous rhetorical intensification: *der Spieß*, spike/pike; *der Pfahl*, stake/pale; and *der Mast*, mast.

Unverständlichkeit (1800) battles in principle all triviality. He demands in principle fundamentally paradoxical formulations of the truth, enthuses about depth, finally leading to a worldview: the well-being of families and nations rests on opacity. No disrespectful reason may approach their sacred boundary: 'Truly, you would be scared if the whole world ever became perfectly comprehensible. And is it not itself, this infinite world, created by the comprehension of the incomprehensible?' In this way stylistic obscurity is all but cosmically justified. The world's hallowed primal ground and the writing style of a literary journal—does one still doubt that Romantic metaphysics derives from the anti-rational ideal of depth and that this in turn arises sociologically from the freelance littérateur's antagonism towards his audience?

Of course, the suggestive, quasi-religious idea of the genius, which the Romantic Movement first developed, has the same roots. The genius and the philistine—these are the ideological reflections that correspond sociologically to the freelance writer and freelance artist and their bourgeois mass audience. The interconnections are self-evident and cannot be discussed in the limited space at our disposal. By the way, the anti-bourgeois and anti-economic tip of the Romantic genius ideal occasionally appears completely undisguised, for example in Hoffmann's novel of the painter and the merchant, *Der Artushof* (1815).

In general, the extrarational conduct that makes up a large part of everyone's inner life is particularly strongly developed at all times and under all economic conditions in poets, writers, and artists. Artistic achievements are intimately bound up with unconscious processes. Artists are particularly dependent on atmospheres, enthusiasm, rapture, and inspirational ideas. Even in quite primitive societies the singer and the bard therefore border on the sorcerer, the entranced, the religious seer. The very first germs of the irrational literary professional ideology are ancient. The irrationality of the poet becomes particularly clear by way of contrast when in the course of societal development social and economic circumstances shift to the side of calculability. This is the case with early capitalism, whereby however intellectuals at first merely confront a small audience of rentier patrons. The contrast attains the decisive momentum when writers and artists become completely dependent on a mass bourgeois audience the members of which are themselves employed and therefore progress all the more the better they know how to calculate, but who nevertheless must grant writers and artists admiration and income. Now calculating conduct must be emphatically disparaged, the extrarational elevated to the highest value of life as a whole, and the professional ideology of the literati enlarged into a suggestive worldview. This is exactly what German Romanticism accomplished for the first time.

Up to now we have observed Romanticism as a movement of a small societal subgroup. Now it is once again time to incorporate it into the larger currents of European society as a whole. We start with its attitude towards the French Revolution. Friedrich Schlegel's *Athenäumfragment* of 1799 has become famous[24]. In that work the French Revolution, Fichte's philosophy of science, and Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* are celebrated as the three great trends of the age. What explains this revolutionary momentum? The educated youth of the German bourgeoisie had sympathized with the bourgeois revolutionaries in France. In particular, the aging Kant and young Fichte had given expression to their sympathy. In 1796 Schlegel thoroughly reviews Kant's essay *Zum ewegen Frieden*[25], which, as

[24] [*trans. note*] The standard reference is *Athenäums-Fragmente* (1798).

[25][*trans. note*] Kant's *Zum ewegen Frieden*, known in English as Perpetual Peace, was published in 1795. The full title of Schlegel's critique is *Versuch über den Begriff des Republikanismus veranlaßt durch die Kantische Schrift zum ewigen Frieden* (1796).

is well known, sharply rejects, politically, absolutism and, socially, the aristocracy. The review titles itself *Versuch über den Begriff des Republikanismus* [Essay on the Concept of Republicanism] and agrees enthusiastically with Kant. The two objections raised by Schlegel are all the more telling: Kant does not value the [Jacobin] dictatorship—'one of the most splendid inventions ever created through political genius'—and he fails to do justice to the 'sovereignty of the people' and to the 'sanctity of the people'. Both deviations from Kant take a leftward turn. Both, however, take a genius-irrational turn. And four years later Schlegel highly praises the French revolutionaries as 'mystics'. He wishes their work to be understood religiously and see its religiosity carried forward (*Ideen*, 1800). For us, whose vision has been sharpened by similar contemporary manifestations, the revolutionary spirit of the early Romantics is a sociologically clear-cut matter. The early Romantics revolt against the audience; their sexual view is highly revolutionary. Among educated Germans, Friedrich Schlegel is among the first to remove the wig. And here also lies the root of their political ideologies. They praise the political revolution because they are literary rebels and because they have a metaphysical enthusiasm for every irrational pathos. Objective political goals are foreign to them[26].

Just as aesthetic-literary rooted is the attitude of early Romanticism to religion. As early as 1799 Novalis and Schlegel enthuse about the Catholic Church and the new Christianity. But here Novalis announces a new saviour who like a 'true genius, will be at home with men, believed but not seen. He will be visible to the believer in countless forms: consumed as bread and wine, embraced as a lover, breathed as air, heard as word and song, and as death received into the heart of the departing body with heavenly joy and the highest pains of love.'[27] The beautiful language must not allow us to forget that the content of Christian beliefs is completely aestheticized and all but vanishes. The early Romantics enthuse not about any religious conviction but about religious enthusiasm. In religion too they seek not truth but depth. And so it is too with Romanticism's ideology of the sanctity of the nation. In 1802 in a letter to Brentano the young Arnim develops his plans for the nation: a publishing house must be founded, Goethe songs must be disseminated among the people, a new system of musical notation and new musical instruments must be invented, and a writers' academy must be created in a castle close to the Rhein Falls. In this way Germany would become unified and foreign forces kept at bay. Sympathy for the lower, uneducated, not yet rational classes is clearly evident, but in an attitude that is literary through and through. In the following years of the Napoleonic Wars the Romantic Movement's national ideology took on political-military aspects. Still, only the officer's son von Kleist made any serious effort to take part in the fighting. The rest of the Romantic writers stuck to literature.

The French Revolution is the victory of bourgeois over aristocratic society. Similarly, in the national current at the start of the nineteenth century the retreat of dynasties is indivisible from the rise of the bourgeoisie, and in Germany was evidently powerfully aided by the Napoleonic Wars of aggression. Finally, under a thin stratum of urban intellectuals the world of religious thought had persisted throughout the entire Enlightenment. All these processes play out in European society as a whole, but early Romanticism fed and incorporated them into the new professional ideology of the freelance literati. The great revolution in France now calls forth opposition forces across Europe that

[26] [*author's note*] In a parody of Schleiermacher (*Vertraute Briefe von Adelheid B. an ihre Freundin Julia S.* [1801]) [Christoph Friedrich] Nicolai [1733-1811], leader of Berlin Enlightenment, contrasts Schlegel's revolutionary *Athenäumfragment* with three other major events of the century: Friedrich the Great, the American Republic, and the potato. Apparently, German businessmen only like a republic if there is an ocean in between and *sans-culottes* are absent. At closer range, enlightened absolutism is quite sufficient. This too one must know in order to understand the revolutionary enthusiasm of early Romanticism.

[27] [*trans. note*] Novalis (1996 [1799]: 74).

remodel the writers' worldview and put it to service. How this works is made quite clear by one of their number, Baron de la Motte-Fouqué[28]. Fouqué never went through a phase of literary rebellion even though he was a few years older than Brentano and Arnim. As early as 1793 the sixteen-year-old, already well equipped with the class instincts of a young Baron, ran into constant disagreement with his middle-class private tutor concerning the French Revolution. Eight years later Fouqué becomes acquainted with Schlegel and becomes a Romantic writer. His old German dramas, his numerous chivalric novels and novellas lack the richness of thought and the glittering spirit of his literary master, but they too are imbued with the sanctity of the irrational, of the Middle Ages, of folklore, and of religion. It is precisely these unparadoxical and often cloying works of Fouqué that achieve the greatest public success of all Romantic writings between 1808 and 1820. In 1840, he then published the *Zeitschrift für den deutschen Adel* [Journal for the German Aristocracy] and received a pension from the King of Prussia. Fouqué's resonance makes it very clear which social forces now appropriate anti-rational literary ideology. The French Revolution triggers a powerful countermovement of all absolutist, feudal, and church circles, which the bourgeoisie, ridden with angst about the revolution, in part joins, in part does not oppose. The rational Enlightenment is now tainted by its association with the Revolution; the sacred power of irrational tradition works to preserve the state, the Middle Ages appear feudal, the altar becomes the support of the throne, and folklore is likewise suitable for stemming revolution. Universal, equal, rational human rights fall away for the Romantic Movement: one thing does not suit all—the French may revolt but Germany has a distinct history and acts differently. Thus, Romanticism becomes in part distinctly counter-revolutionary—an instrument of the aristocracy and the financial bourgeoisie—in part agreeably escapist for the average citizen wary of revolution. Even those Romantics who had begun as rebellious littérateurs now become pious and archreactionary. In the reactionary period from 1815 to 1830, for example in the works of Adam Müller and Görres[29], this development reaches its highpoint.

The curious transformation of literary metaphysics into an ideology of counter-revolution is not difficult to understand. From the start, Romanticism springs from the rebellion against the spirit of calculating commercial society; a rebellion against the middle class. Bourgeois and Romantic attitudes are sharply antithetical from the beginning[30]. Originally this was merely the antagonism of the newly formed freelance littérateurs in Germany towards their audience. Then, as the French Revolution mobilizes a powerful anti-bourgeois movement with a quite different ancestry, that movement was easily able to appropriate this literary ideology: all it takes is to downplay the bohemian aspects and to politically supplement somewhat the anti-bourgeois barbs. After all, the great class struggles in society as a whole are always stronger than the status concerns of smaller groups, even if they include a group as ideologically influential as the literati.

* * *

Some general comments still need to be included. Our sketch has shown that ideological courses of events first come about through the combination of large-scale class struggles and the interaction between small societal subgroups. In particular, those small groups that really disseminate ideologies—writers, artists, philosophers, etc.—are important in intellectual history. Their respective

[28] [trans.note] Friedrich Heinrich Karl de la Motte, Baron Fouqué (1777-1843).

[29] [trans.note] Johann Joseph Görres (1776-1848).

[30] [*author's note*] [Eduard von] Bauernfeld [1802-1890] wrote about this contrast in his comedy *Bürgerlich und Romantisch* as late as 1835.

social situation should be closely scrutinized by the Marxist history of ideas. Further, the significance of the pace of partial societal developments can acquire for history has become evident. In Germany, the emergence of freelance littérateurs 'coincidently' corresponds with the period of counter actions carried out against the French Revolution. In England and France this happens some half a century earlier. Probably it is precisely this coincidence that in Germany, on the one hand, supplied counter-revolutionary ideology with such an abundance of intellectual and cultural stimuli and, on the other, created a powerful resonance for literary irrationalism. In comparison, in English and French Romanticism these currents were noticeably more meagrely developed. In Germany too anti-rational ideology quickly ebbs after 1830, the time of industrialization and the natural sciences. Only towards the end of that century as the conservative peasantry enters politics bringing with it a new religious-ecclesiastical groundswell; only as the urban intellectuals begin to suffer more under the rationality of the business and machine world; and, above all, only as the dangerous rising proletariat drives the bourgeoisie into bitter defence does the Romantic Movement's irrational literary and artistic metaphysics, which had never died out, come to be honoured once more. From [the idea of] the brilliant personality and depth down to the Schlegel-Schelling opposition between the organic and the mechanical, Romantic sacred ideals will once more be invoked and adapted to new opponents and to new problems.

Finally, a word about the problems of irrationality itself! One will find it hard to believe that capitalist industrial society required the freelance writer and the artist in order to become aware of the effectiveness of the extrarational. But this appears to be the case. There is namely an important difference between the styles of thinking in early capitalism and that of the last 120 years, which can be traced back to the emergence of Romanticism. It has become self-evident to us that artistic production is not a matter of rational calculation. But we now view not just the artist but people in general very differently from the Enlightenment. Initially, Schopenhauer taught metaphysically that the decisive factors for human behaviour play out not in cognition but in the will. Voluntaristic psychology has followed him. It has empirically demonstrated how cognition is governed by drives. Deep psychology has taken the final step. Since Freud we view consciousness as a whole merely as a thin crust under which dark and powerful currents are at play. Once the Enlightenment liked to define human beings as reasoning animals. For us today this definition is valid only within severe limitations. And what applies to individuals applies to society. The Enlightenment placed a low value on mindless mass processes. The businessman calculates and quickly advances. Whoever does not calculate will be out competed and will happily return to reason. If one translates this schema into intellectual terms, one has approximately the image that early capitalism created of history and society. Early capitalism dissolved society into individuals who, insofar as they are connected at all, come together only out of reason. And history it viewed as an uncoordinated game of intrigue; intelligent and stupid individuals conspire against each other and the intelligent easily carry the day. The Romantics disparagers of this commercialism were the first to overcome this inadequate image. It was not until the Romantics that the power of extrarational tradition was discovered and the effects of the historical past in every present and the superiority of historical mass processes over individuals was intuitively recognized. Hegel brought these intuitions into a powerful system of thought. And finally, Marx expressed the thought that it is not the calculating thinking of individuals but the economic needs of the masses that drive history forward. For the course of history it is no longer enough that a thinker, however clever, works out what for him personally appears reasonable and then writes it down in a book to convey it to other thinkers. In intellectual-historical terms, the irrational Romantic Movement ultimately lies between the utopians of the early modern era, for whom rational thought is all powerful, and Marx, who makes thought dependent on the economy.

Precisely the example of Marx however shows what divides us from the Romantics. The Romantic Movement did not merely identify extrarational darkness, it rather sanctifies it, withdrawing it from science and handing it over to magic. Its fruitful new insights spring, as so often in history, from an emotive, hazy metaphysics mingled with magic. As good Marxists, as heirs to Hegel, we may apply to the Romanticism that which Novalis was the first to say about the course of history: 'Now we stand high enough […] to recognize in those strange follies remarkable crystallizations of historical matter. Thankfully we should shake hands with those intellectuals and philosophers; for this delusion had to be exhausted for the sake of posterity […]. So that India might be warm and magnificent in the centre of our planet, a cold, frozen sea […] and a long night, had to make both poles inhospitable.' Out of its literary needs the Romantic Movement made the enormous discovery that the vast majority of human manifestations of life do not arise out of rational considerations. Our worldview has become much darker as a result of this discovery. Nevertheless, and for this very reason, we shall never cease to explore the irrational in a worldly and scientific way; psychologically, biologically, and economic-sociologically. Even extrarational processes show regularities, can be calculated in advance, can be subsumed under rational laws, and can thus be incorporated into rational plans. Not only abstract structures of reason, but also human instincts can be scientifically recognized and guided by knowledge; even loving, struggling people can realize rational plans.

Because traditions slow down the course of history and because masses are less flexible than individuals, the irrational aspects of history appear fairly conservative. Nevertheless, it would be superficial simply to equate the extrarational with the reactionary. The real motor of world history, as Marx has shown, is not thought but the economy. And the masses are not only difficult to set in motion but also difficult to resist. Fact-blind 'reasonableness' is therefore not particularly revolutionary. Certainly, it cannot be said often enough that even revolutions require knowledge and a plan if they are to achieve their goal. But the unreasonable in man, seen from a sociological point of view, is not simply ballast and inertia. It is also the impetus, force, and a strong following wind in the sails of history.

Trans. Alan Scott

REFERENCES

Novalis (1996 [1799]) Christianity or Europe: A fragment, in: Friedrich C. Beiser (Ed.) The Early Political Writings of the German Romantics, 59-80. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139170604.010

Stein, Sandie (2014) The final chapter. The Paris Review, 16 October 2014. Available: https://www.theparisreview.org/blog/2014/10/16/final-chapter/ (retrieved 10 January 2024).

Zilsel, Edgar (1933) Die gesellschaftlichen Wurzeln der romantischen Ideologie, Der Kampf 26(3/4): 154-164. Available: https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno-plus?aid=dks&datum=1933&pos=85&qid=YHYOMAXYU05QT0271Z7PYAHK7LA59H (retrieved 10 January 2024). Reprinted in Edgar Zilsel Wissenschaft und Weltanschauung, edited Gerald Mozetič, 58-73. Vienna: Böhlau, 1996.

Serendipities
Journal for the Sociology and History of the Social Sciences

BOOK REVIEW

Sooryamoorthy, R. (2022) Sociology Global: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives.

Charles Crothers, University of Auckland

Sooryamoorthy, R. (2022) Sociology Global: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives. Anthem Press, New York
230 pp
ISBN:9781839986819

[editor's note: this review was completed by Charles Crothers, who passed away in 2023 before its publication. The text has been very lightly edited after his passing. Charles is greatly missed by his friends, family and colleagues].

Following rapidly after several books on Transforming Science in South Africa: Development, Collaboration and Productivity (2015); Sociology in South Africa: Colonial, Apartheid and Democratic Forms (2016); Networks of Communication in South Africa: New Media, New Technologies (2017); Management Studies in South Africa (2019); Scientometrics for the Humanities and Social Sciences (2020); Science, Policy and Development in Africa (2020); the edited Doctoral Training and Higher Education in Africa (2022); and the Oxford Handbook of Sociology of Africa (2022**)**; Radhamany Sooryamoorthy (Professor of Sociology at the University of KwaZulu Natal) has produced a study of Sociology Global: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives. Such a task faces many difficulties as it requires some acquaintance with and ability to source data on each national sociology across an array of different fields and over time. Sooryamoorthy develops a craftsman-like design to tackle this task and has produced a useful sourcebook documenting global sociology this millenium and providing an indispensable platform for further studies. His compilation spans three laborious tasks: discussions of national sociologies and fields of sociology; data on sociology publications; and discussions of commentaries on global sociology.

The first and last tasks are based on the amassed, nearly 30 pages, of references, in most cases briefly summarised in appropriate places in the text. These are invariably swiftly summarised and perhaps, for some particularly pertinent studies, some of the results might have been displayed to save readers having to look up material. Over many decades various handbooks have provided a global tour of national sociologies of field of sociology, although of course much is now historical. Moreover, the quality of such accounts varies enormously with observers of such sociologies facing a large task of summarising key features in a dispassionate and accurate way: a challenge not always successfully achieved. Sooryamoorthy leans most on the recent *Cambridge Handbook of Sociology* (Korgen, 2017) although this only has a few chapters covering regions. The three volume set edited by Burawoy

et al. (2010) is only sparingly drawn on, and the earlier ISA booklet series curated by Wallerstein is of course much out of date. Sooryamoorthy has vigorously scoured the published literature for articles which provide descriptions, although I think he has overlooked quite a few book-length treatments. The final chapter summarises issues which have been raised about the development of global sociology.

The heart (or rather the engine room) of the book is a major study of publications across the first two decades of the millenium (presumably the *historical* perspectives of the subtitle are incorporated with the summaries of literature). Ten percent of every other year (even years) between 2000 and 2018 are sampled from the *World of Science*. It may be a source of regret that insufficient attention is paid to the existing literature comparing the various data sources. This is supplemented by ten percent coverage of the WOS book and chapter database, although these were developed later in 2008 and 2010. Finally a 10 percent sample of the two ISA English-language journals *International Sociology* and *Current Sociology* (as a way of offsetting the limitations of the *WOS* database), which is carefully curated to include only journals of high quality. While the two journals are only of moderate ranking, they are undoubtedly the most global of the stable of sociology journals. So nearly 5,000 items are included. It is not clear how this dataset relates to the actual range of publications but at least it has the benefit of providing a multiplicity of sources (in the subsequent analyses each source is kept separate but also totals are provided).

In preparing the dataset for the study, Sooryamoorthy downloaded the identified items and supplemented the usually available information provided by the WOS (author(s), title, keywords, departmental affiliation of author, citation, field of research) by searching websites to identify the gender of authors, discipline (of training), location, disciplinary affiliation and gender of collaborators, methodology etc. I would have preferred (for replication purposes) more discussion of the coding of some variables. The data is largely presented in tables, with the two decades usually separately displayed (with totals and percentages presented). Some tables have many empty cells which is untidy. In general, the commentary is confined to reporting on key points in the tables or providing an account where there is not a supporting table. The results are spread across two chapters with the first table, while the second examines the characteristics of 17 research fields. (A short comparative analysis of a few fields shows that they differ considerably in relationships amongst their constituent characteristics).

Sooryamoorthy has a “flat” conceptualisation of global sociology:” i.e. global sociology is the sum total of the work produced by all sociologists around the world. It is 'flat' in the sense that all publications are heaped together so that, in effect, the global becomes a portrait of North American/European sociology – with only a couple of country by country tables available for teasing out core/periphery differences.

It is also 'flat' in that the infrastructure and body of researchers lying behind the production of knowledge is barely attended to. A contrast might be in Heilbron’s work on globalisation of the social sciences where he proposes there are four levels to consider in understanding the globalisation of sociology, arguing that:

> … the social sciences today are best seen as an emerging global field or world system, because they have come to include producers from virtually all countries and regions of the world. Like other transnational structures, this globalizing field is best characterized as a core-periphery structure, firmly dominated by producers, publishers and journals from Western countries. The power relations that derive from this structure form the background for much of the current

> debate about global social science. What has been largely neglected in these debates, however, is that this emerging global field is interrelated with the equally increasing significance of transnational regional structures. Located between the national and the global level, these regional structures are essential for understanding the scope and significance of global institutions (2014: 687).

While the writing is mainly clear there are some strange constructions, as well as far too frequent a recourse to platitudes – which don't convey much meaning and with occasional jarring wretches of subject focus. Sooryamoorthy's almost unrelenting positive sensibility hides conflicts, for example, the latent conflicts between the various 'worlds' pertinent in much earlier decades. Nevertheless, the literature on the globalisation of sociology has tended to rely too much on discussions or on high-level generalisations of patterns and trends, so Sooryamoorthy's work will help establish it on a much stronger footing for the future.

REFERENCES

Michael Burawoy, Mau-kuei Chang and Michelle Fei-yu Hsieh (eds) (2010) *Facing an Unequal World: Challenges for a Global Sociology*. Taiwan, Academia Sinica and the Council of National Associations of the International Sociological Association.

Heilbron, Johan (2014) The social sciences as an emerging global field. *Current Sociology* 62(5): 685 –703.

Kathleen Odell Korgen (ed.) (2017) *The Cambridge Handbook of Sociology.* Cambridge University Press, 2 Vols.

Serendipities
Journal for the Sociology and History of the Social Sciences

BOOK REVIEW

Camic: Veblen: The Making of an Economist Who Unmade Economics

Alex Thomas, Azim Premji University (India)
alex.thomas@apu.edu.in

Camic, Charles (2020): *Veblen: The Making of an Economist Who Unmade Economics*, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press
492 pp.
ISBN-13: 9780674659728

Veblen: The Making of an Economist Who Unmade Economics (2020) by the sociologist Charles Camic, is a big book with 363 pages of text proper, 112 pages of end notes and 13 pages of index. Veblen is well known among economists for his work on conspicuous consumption, which mainstream economics textbooks regard as an anomaly. In *Veblen*, Camic undertakes an "historical study of the connection between Thorstein Veblen's economic ideas… and how he was born and bred intellectually" (2020:2). In the process, Camic successfully captures Veblen's sociological and historical approach to economics: very unlike contemporary marginalist economics.

Veblen studied at Carleton, Yale, Johns Hopkins, Cornell and Chicago (Camic, 2020:3). After obtaining a PhD in philosophy, Veblen, at age 34, decides to do a second PhD—in political economy (2020:212, 215). Veblen's first book, *The Theory of the Leisure Class,* was completed in September 1898 (2020:298), and the second, *The Theory of Business Enterprise,* in February 1904 (2020:321). In 1901, when Veblen submitted the manuscript of his second book, then titled 'The Captain of Industry and His Work' to Macmillan, it was rejected (2020:322). Camic conjectures that the elimination of the "leisure class" from his subsequent writings "perhaps explains why later commentators on Veblen, captivated by his earlier ideas about the leisure class, have been fairly indifferent to these later writings" (2020:326). Veblen frequently suffered financial hardship, applying for fellowships and taking loans (2020:217). Camic tells us that much like Keynes, Veblen "took part" in the Political Economy Club (2020:263) but offers little more information on this. A brief account of the club's activities would have been insightful.

Camic's main argument is that Veblen's economic ideas can be fully explained by studying his intellectual milieu, something to which biographers pay insufficient attention. In doing so, Camic successfully repudiates the dominant interpretation of Veblen as an intellectual "outsider", first advanced in Joseph Dorfman's 1934 biography. Of interest to those of us in a department of economics, is the origin of Dorfman's biography. Dorfman's mentors at Columbia University "encouraged him to write as his dissertation an intellectual biography of Thorstein Veblen" (2020:43). In departments of economics today, unfortunately, it is unlikely for there to be any encouragement for this type of thesis.

Dorfman's "Veblen-as-an-outsider thesis" was carried forward by economists like Galbraith and Heilbroner, both of whom have written popular books on the history of economic thought (2020:5, 44). In Camic's account, "…Veblen emerges as the consummate academic insider" (2020:291). As Camic puts it, "Thorstein Veblen knew the field of economics inside out because he was involved in it from the inside, not looking down on it from Olympus as a detached spectator or iconoclastic outsider" (2020:290). Similarly, Veblen is said to have been "an experienced insider to the academic world of his time" (2020:50).

This review essay is divided into eight sections followed by a conclusion. The sections deal with the following themes respectively: Camic's standpoint; Veblen's intellectual milieu; his approach; his teachers; forgotten aspects of classical political economy; Veblen's critique of marginalism; his theory of value and distribution; and his problematic reading of the history of economic thought.

CAMIC'S STANDPOINT

Camic is, in his own words, an "historically oriented sociologist of knowledge", whose "research interests have always been in the relationship between lives and ideas" (2020:15). Consequently, his sources are wide ranging; his archival sources include the Veblen papers housed at Carleton, Cornell, Chicago and Yale, the Clark papers at Columbia, the Ely papers at the Wisconsin State Historical Society, among many others (2020:18–23). There is an insightful discussion of knowledge production where he defines a 'field'—a sociology of knowledge (2020:31). Camic is dissatisfied with mainstream biographies because of the lack of attention given to time. According to Camic, "…capturing temporality requires the sociological study of biography…" (2020:34). In line with this, Camic provides mini biographies of Veblen's teachers throughout the book.

Most biographical accounts, notes Camic, do not pay attention to *how* the individual entered academia (or the intellectual world) and *how* they innovated there (2020:35). In particular, there is a tendency "to abbreviate the education of these figures almost to the vanishing point" (2020:35). In a biography I recently reviewed—Patel's *Naoroji*—some attention is given to his educational experience in the first chapter (Thomas 2021a). However, I must admit to having wondered about the precise nature of the education in economics imparted to Naoroji at Elphinstone College and to the British civil servants (of colonial India) in Balliol College.

Camic identifies two kinds of standard biographical narratives. However, these narratives fall short because "the biographer superimposes his or her [or their] story line onto the historical evidence without taking sufficient account of the temporality of life" (2020:38). Camic is correct in highlighting that "knowledge production is a process that happens in time and hinges on time" (2020:39), and takes this point a little further by pointing out that an innovative idea arises from "a temporal snowball that gathers force with each successive repetition". As such, it is important to examine the "repetition of knowledge practices" in the life of innovative economists (2020:40).

In the book, Camic takes up a defensive position when he defines originality as a contemporaneous and not an historical question:

> "Here and throughout the book, when I myself speak of someone as 'original' or 'innovative,' I am situating the person's work in a particular historical context. What is original by this metric is what informed contemporaries see as a new addition—whether theory, concept, argument, bundle of information, or whatever—to a historically specific conversation. I realize that there are other—more transhistorical, but defensible—metrics of originality" (2020:365, n2).

When originality is understood in this manner, there is a potential problem—what is original depends on the orthodoxy or the mainstream. And, in the presence of competing paradigms of economic thought, originality becomes narrowly understood in relation to the dominant paradigm.

Camic interprets the 'political' in political economy in the mainstream way—as 'policy'—and therefore as providing "advice for legislators and other elites about policy issues such as free trade, tariffs, currency reform, and so forth" (2020:115). This is a conceptually poor way to understand political economy because for the classical political economists, 'political' meant the following: (i) the social surplus is utilized according to the needs and aspirations of the people, (ii) wages are determined by historical and cultural arrangements, and (iii) structures of power are analytically significant.

II VEBLEN'S INTELLECTUAL MILIEU

Camic ably situates Veblen's ideas within the contemporaneous economic thought. A "glossary on economic schools" is provided by Camic (2020:127–32). The two schools of thought prominent during Veblen's education were classical political economy and the German Historical School. The first, as Camic notes, went by many names: "Old school", "deductive school" and "orthodox school" (2020:127-8) and the second too: "Younger School", "inductive school", "new school" and "historical school" (2020:129). Economists such as Adam Smith, David Ricardo, and J.S. Mill belonged to the first school and Karl Knies and Gustav Schmoller to the second (2020:130). It must be noted that, as Camic writes, Mill was the face of classical political economy, for Mill's *Principles* (1848) "remained the most widely read book on the subject for decades" (2020:128–9). In a similar fashion, the evolutionary ideas of Herbert Spencer "quietly made their way into America's educational institutions, infiltrating high schools and colleges through new or revised textbooks…" (2020:95).

The "Austrian school" arrived in the US in the late 1880s and early 1890s with the work of Carl Menger, Eugen Böhm-Bawerk and Friedrich Wieser. This school, a branch of the "marginal utility school" or "marginalism", was seen as making a "departure from both leading economic schools" (2020:131). Marginalism appears in the intellectual landscape vividly only in the 1870s with the pioneering work of Leon Walras, W.S. Jevons and Carl Menger. And during Veblen's time, the marginal productivity theory of income distribution was on its way to dominance; its "leading American exponent" (2020:11), John Bates Clark, who was Veblen's teacher (at Carleton), asserted that people get what they contribute. According to Camic, the success of "the marginal utility theory of value" partly owes to the various methodological criticisms faced by classical economics and the empirical fervor and concomitant theoretical poverty visible in "German historicism" (2020:283).

Veblen's thought, Camic argues, can be better understood by noting the "four features of the turbulent American economy in the last quarter of the nineteenth century" (2020:186). These are a "huge expansion in industrial production", "the emergence of the corporation" (including the "creation of the investment banks"), "consumerism", and "economically inspired protest". Indeed, all these themes are visible in Veblen's body of work.

VEBLEN'S APPROACH

Camic identifies three methodological principles in Veblen: (i) the economy as an historical entity that changes and evolves; (ii) methodological holism, which locates the individual within the social; and (iii) distinguishing activities as productive and non-productive from a social, not economic, standpoint (2020:46). As Camic convincingly demonstrates, Veblen was extremely familiar with

these ways of seeing and thinking, mainly owing to his teachers who emphasized historical thinking, holism, and "valorizing work over idleness" (2020:100).

Overall, like many other writers of his time, Veblen's thought "was an amalgam of philosophical premises, ethical presuppositions, political and social commentaries, historical and ethnological information, and views on a wide range of biological, psychological, sociological, and economic subjects" (2020:45).

Wesley Mitchell "credited Veblen with 'blending historical research and theory more perfectly' than any previous figure in the history of economics" (2020:14). The exaggeration is perhaps understandable given that Mitchell was "Veblen's student and close friend…" (2020:175). Using Veblen's book reviews (from mid-1893 onward) as an archive, Camic argues that they already indicate the presence of "institutionalist-evolutionary ways of thinking" (2020:268). Essentially, "institutional-evolutionary" implies the first two methodological principles outlined above (also see 2020:250). As an institutionalist, Veblen "upheld holism against atomism" (2020:361). As an evolutionist, Veblen upheld historicity.

It is refreshing to read that economic thinking in America during Veblen's time was pluralist and therefore open to his critiques and alternatives:

> "This is not to say that the newcomers opposed Veblen's assault on atomistic and ahistorical economic thinking or his agenda to study the evolution of economic institutions. Some economists still found Veblen's agenda compelling, while others did not; American economics of this era was pluralistic in outlook. In 1918 economists sympathetic to Veblen's program launched 'institutional economics' as a reform movement within the discipline, and the movement continued strong until after World War II" (Camic 2020:356).

Such openness is perhaps not all that surprising because the professionalization of economics had only just begun at that time.

VEBLEN'S TEACHERS

Camic's biography of Veblen is very much an intellectual biography of his teachers. And as a detailed picture of Veblen's education, it is an important pillar of Camic's knowledge-as-repetition thesis. In my review, I shall focus only on four of his teachers—John Bates Clark, Richard T. Ely, William Graham Sumner and James L. Laughlin.

CLARK

Clark taught political economy and "half-dozen different courses" to Veblen at Carleton (Camic 2020:114). This was in the late 1870s when Clark had not yet taken up the marginalist mantle fully. In any case, Veblen "had received a little foretaste of marginalist thinking" (2020:227). It is important to note that Clark exposed Veblen to classical economics through Henry Faucett's *Manual of Political Economy* and J.S. Mill's *Principles of Political Economy* (2020:116–7). Fawcett's book aligned classical political economy with "laissez-faire doctrines opposed to government intervention into the economy"; the popular books that did this "found a substantial readership" (2020:128). And the utilitarian underpinnings of Mill are well known. Camic motivates the readers in his chapter on Veblen's childhood by calling him a "future critic of classical and marginalist economic theories that rested on atomistic premises" (2020:57). Given that classical economists like Smith and Ricardo

adopted methodological holism, such an interpretation by Camic is odd. Perhaps Camic's reading of Smith and Ricardo is also through the distorted lenses of Faucett and Mill.

Clark (and consequently Veblen) was exposed to the German Historical School because "he had studied with Karl Knies, one of the school's founders" in the period when Clark was a graduate student at Heidelberg (2020:117). Knies criticized classical political economy for assuming a self-interested person, methodological individualism, and for being asocial and ahistorical. It is extremely difficult to reconcile this interpretation of classical political economy with the writings of Smith and Ricardo. Perhaps, inspired by the German Historical School, Clark suggested that political economy "'be built on a permanent foundation of anthropological fact'" (2020:118). This is the same Clark who would later develop the marginal productivity theory of income distribution; nothing could be farther from anthropological fact because income distribution is exogenously determined by policies and politics and not endogenously by marginal products.

ELY

Veblen took a course on the 'History of Political Economy' with Ely at Johns Hopkins, who had also studied with Knies (2020:144). Ely had a "deep interest in the historical evolution of economic life-forms" (2020:145). With others at Hopkins, Ely cultivated "historical institutionalism" (2020:154); in 1884, the university published a monograph titled *Institutions and Economics* (2020:154–5), an early work on institutional economics. Veblen also "received his first systematic introduction to the subject of socialism" in Ely's course (2020:148).

> "In course lectures, Ely examined the doctrines of Adam Smith (and his predecessors and successors) through the lens of an invidious contrast between classical economics and historical economics. Channeling his teacher Karl Knies, Ely's account reproached Smith and his accomplices for making 'universal self-interest the preponderating cause of economic phenomena,' eliding motives such as 'generosity, love of mankind, a desire to see those about one happy, pride, sentiment, etc.'" (2020:147).

In the above passage, we again come across a distorted view of Smith and other classical political economists because classical economists like Smith and Ricardo underscored the role of power, especially ranks and social classes in society, as an important driver of economic phenomena (similar criticisms had already been made by Clark at Carleton). It would have been helpful for Camic's readers to see how he reconciles such views with that of Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments* wherein social sentiments such as duty, justice and sympathy are explored. The social aspects of classical economics remain forgotten; for instance, their view of wages as being determined by history and culture has strong anthropological bearings.

"Wealth," Ely stated, "has a dangerous tendency to accumulate … in accordance to [property] inheritance, privilege, and class," rather than "in proportion to useful intellectual and physical labor performed" (Camic 2020:149). Camic tells us that Henry George's 1879 book *Progress and Poverty* was "one of Ely's favourite texts" (2020:152). As Ely put it, "America has been … *the land of the unearned increment*" (2020:152). This idea would later become central to Veblen's economic thought.

SUMNER

While at Yale, Sumner taught Veblen "political economy, offering two graduate-level courses on the subject each year, which he taught using lectures and recitations (still a favorite teaching method, even with graduate students)" (Camic 2020:161). Like Clark and Ely, Sumner was influenced by German historicism. For Sumner, this occurred when he went "abroad to study ancient languages, history, and theology for three years, during which time he came under the influence of biblical scholars from the German historical school" (2020:161). However, Sumner "regarded himself as an orthodox economist in the tradition of the English school"; teaching with the use of "the standard textbooks of classical economics" (2020:162). It is extremely likely that Sumner's understanding of classical economics was *also* based on the textbooks by Mill and Fawcett, both of which espoused methodological individualism and laissez faire. This is highly plausible because Camic informs us that "Sumner's analysis of the financial history of the United States had an ulterior purpose: to lend scientific credence to the doctrine of laissez-faire" (2020:164).

LAUGHLIN

The presence of Laughlin was an important reason for Veblen to attend Cornell (Camic 2020:222). Laughlin "was widely known for authoring two Older School textbooks and for his abridgment of the bible of classical economics, John Stuart Mill's *Principles of Political Economy*, which he brought out in many revised editions, heavily annotating them to keep the gospel up-to-date" (2020:223). Yet again, we see how Mill became the spokesperson for classical economics.

According to Laughlin, "land, labor, and capital (which he took pains to define and parse into categories) are the universal "requisites of production," the "three factors [that] enter into … the production of anything we see about us." Moreover, all three material factors operate according to scientific "laws" of increase; these laws determine the quantity of each factor and account for the differential economic returns that accrue to landowners as rent, to laborers as wages, and to capitalists as profit" (2020:224). Such a view of classical economics is clearly alien to the ideas of exogenous wages and distributive conflict found in Smith and Ricardo. The classical economists' use of 'normal' and 'natural', as Laughlin rightly notes, are descriptive terms and not stamps of approval (2020:224). It is indeed the same with productive and unproductive labour.

Veblen's teachers, writes Camic, "opted for the role and the style of the controversialist, seeing themselves as rebels fighting in opposition to error and cant, raining down skepticism, even heresy, on citadels of misguided and dangerous ideas" (2020:177). Veblen would also adopt this style in his writings. Moreover, Veblen viewed his classroom as a place where ideas were to be contested (2020:294).

From the intellectual portraits of Veblen's teachers, it is clear that Veblen "combined the extended repetition of… [their] knowledge practices with multiple variations on those practices" (2020:178). Unfortunately Camic labours this point, repeating his knowledge-as-repetition thesis ad nauseam (for some instances, see 2020:177, 179, 180, 205).

Another experience which stands out, at least through the lens of today, is pluralism. Veblen's educational experience was pluralistic; he "studied with professors in different disciplines: philosophy, history, psychology, and sociology, as well as economics" (2020:362). Moreover, one of his reasons to attend Cornell was, as Veblen wrote to his brother, "to hear and get in touch with men of different views from his own and different from his former teachers" (2020:222). That is, he preferred pluralism within economics too.

CLASSICAL POLITICAL ECONOMY: FORGOTTEN ASPECTS

As I have already noted above, Veblen's reading of classical economics was distorted by that of Fawcett and Mill. Although Camic defends his decision not to critically evaluate Veblen's teachers' understandings of classical economics early on in the book (owing to Camic's definition of originality, which we discussed in Section I), I believe an examination of Veblen's economic thought warrants a more critical account.

At several points in the book, Camic highlights Veblen's approval of methodological holism, his social standpoint, and his commitment to historical reasoning (as opposed to a tendency to universalize, visible in the works of many other economists). Quoting John Dewey (a contemporary of Veblen's at Hopkins), Camic writes that "'interests … are social in their very nature.' Consequently, understanding them demands 'a more organic view of the individual and of society than is logically possible' on the basis of utilitarian and hedonistic conceptions about action" (2020:248). A few pages later, Camic cites Frederick Starr, the comparative ethnologist and a good friend of Veblen, to argue that "body coverings" or "dress" is social (2020:250–1). Such a social standpoint is explicit in Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments* and, surprisingly, nowhere does Camic engage with this. Moreover, such a sociological viewpoint is present in Smith's *Wealth of Nations* when he discusses ranks (for a detailed account, see Thomas 2021b). Similarly, when Camic discusses "benevolence" and "parental affection" (2020:105), it is difficult not to recall Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments* where sympathy, benevolence, affection and other moral sentiments are discussed.

In the July 1892 issue of the *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, which was co-founded by Laughlin while at Harvard (2020:232), Veblen published an article titled 'The Overproduction Fallacy'. Following in the intellectual footsteps of Mill (and Laughlin), Veblen argued that:

> "the notion of 'general' overproduction is 'palpably absurd'; inasmuch as commodity overproduction occurs, it is a 'particular' dislocation due to short-term industrial disruptions that eventually right themselves though a normal process of 'readjustment'" (2020:235).

It would have been pertinent had Camic highlighted that Sismondi and Malthus, both classical economists, had already argued about the possibility of an overproduction crisis.

By equating Mill's ideas with those of the classical economists, Camic writes that "wages were determined by the size of the 'wage fund' that capitalists maintained to cover labor costs…" (2020:284). Such a view of wages, Stirati (1994) has ably demonstrated, is alien to both Smith and Ricardo. Overall, these point towards a less-than-satisfactory understanding of classical political economy in Camic's book.

VEBLEN'S CRITIQUE OF MARGINALISM

Although Veblen launched "a mild attack on the wage-fund theory that had just appeared in a book by Eugen Böhm-Bawerk, whom economists of the time regarded as 'the foremost champion of the Austrian School' of marginal utility theory" (Camic 2020:234), his main adversary was Clark and his marginal productivity theory of income distribution (2020:358). According to Clark, under conditions of competition, "We get what we produce—such is the dominant rule of life" (2020:359). Or, in other words, "income shares are legitimate 'rewards' to workers and capitalists alike for their differential "contributions" to the production of economic goods" (2020:286). As Camic puts it unequivocally, "Clark's productivity thesis constituted a strong defense of the economic status quo; he used his notion that capitalists and workers 'get what they produce' explicitly to assail the

'socialist,' 'revolutionist' contention that 'the laboring classes … are regularly robbed of what they produce'" (2020:287). The marginal productivity theory of income distribution continues to perform that political role—defending the "economic status quo".

Veblen criticized the marginal productivity theory for being blind to "empirical facts" (2020:294), marginalists for being "blind" (2020:297), and asserted "that marginalist theory was 'a consistent and comprehensive failure'" (2020:320). According to Camic, Veblen's "judgment was corroborated by research he had recently completed in his ongoing effort to develop his own nonproductivity theory of distribution" (2020:320).

VII: VEBLEN'S THEORY OF VALUE AND DISTRIBUTION

In *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, Veblen attacks the marginalist theory of value in the early chapters (2020:300). So, for Veblen, what determines value? "According to Veblen, the value of an object derives, foremost, not from the importance an individual consumer attaches to the last unit she or he acquires, but from the object's social significance…" (2020:300). However, this is still a subjective theory of value, even if not as subjective as the marginalist one. There is no further discussion in Camic's book; it would have been helpful to see a detailed discussion of Veblen's theory of value.

According to Camic, Veblen saw his book as making "a critical and constructive contribution to economic theory" (2020:299). Camic urges his readers to view Veblen as "the theorist of nonproductivity in relation to productivity" (2020:12) and as someone advancing "a new theory of distribution—a nonproductivity theory…" (2020:293). Later, Camic writes that Veblen was "developing a theory of waste that would defeat the marginalist theory of distribution" (2020:295; also see 340).

For the classical economists, productive labour contributed to the social surplus and unproductive labour did not. The classical economists struggled to come up with an analytically coherent definition because they were wedded to the idea of physical surplus (as in agriculture, and subsequently in manufacturing as well), and so legal and education services were classified as unproductive labour. That is, unproductive labour was *not* unimportant for an economy. Moreover, the productive-unproductive labour notion was associated with their theories of production and growth, *not* income distribution.

According to Camic, Veblen:

> "equated nonproductive, pecuniary activities with the jobs of business managers and 'undertakers' (Clark's entrepreneurs), corporate promoters and speculators, bankers and stock brokers, lawyers and real estate agents…. Industrial activities, on the other hand, Veblen associated with inventors, mechanical and civil engineers, industrial chemists and mineralogists, mining experts and electricians, foremen and skilled mechanics, and farmers" (2020:328).

In Veblen's distinction, there seems to be some cognizance of the idea of a surplus or perhaps it has more to do with "the object's social significance" (which also determines its value). Unproductive activities "causes a misdirection of social resources; and, in this way, 'waste' becomes the ruling economic principle—not 'productivity,' as distribution theorists were wrongly asserting" (Camic 2020:294). However, it must be noted that for the classical economists, unproductive labour contains essential workers such as legal and educational workers whereas for Veblen, unproductive

activities "add nothing in serviceability to the community at large" (2020:339) and were a "conspicuous waste" (as he had written in a letter to Sarah Hardy, his love interest, in December 1895) (2020:295; also see 301, 307, 318, 360).

For the marginalists, everyone received according to what they contributed. Veblen fiercely disagreed; as Camic writes, "By Veblen's account, the leisure class gets plenty, consuming with abandon, all the while doing nothing even remotely productive for the larger 'human collectivity'" (2020:302). It appears that Veblen's criticism of the marginal productivity theory was largely empirical, built on a weak theoretical edifice. This point becomes clearer when Camic writes that Veblen considered his own theory of nonproductivity to be "applied only with greater or lesser degrees of probability to individual historical cases" (2020:330). Camic himself admits to this when he writes that Veblen "sought to show empirically that economic conduct is often nonproductive" (2020:336; also see 359). The only criticism Camic makes of Veblen's distinction is weak: that Veblen's "dichotomy" did not include scientific activity (2020:337).

The novelty of Veblen's contribution to distribution theories does not emerge clearly from Camic's book. It seems as if the novelty is simply asserted by drawing on select secondary assessments. For instance, Camic quotes Frank Taussig (a Marshallian) who notes that Veblen's distinction "between 'productive' and 'pecuniary' activity… is a novel one" (2020:322). What is novel is determined by the available paradigms *and* the mainstream paradigm. Since Camic's definition of originality is not historical (or, as he puts it, "trans-historical"), the arguments around novelty are rather tenuous.

"For Veblen," writes Camic, "the distribution of wealth between social classes was not an eternal fact of nature; it, too, was an evolving 'social institution'…" (2020:307). Ironically, this historicity is very much embedded in the classical economists' idea of exogenous wages.

VEBLEN'S PROBLEMATIC EVOLUTIONARY NARRATIVE

The term "neo-classical", widely used today to refer to marginalism, belongs to Veblen. He used this term "to label Alfred Marshall's approach, which combined principles of marginalism and classical economics" (2020:132). As Camic informs us, Veblen called marginalist economists "those economists who adhere with least faltering to the body of modernised classical doctrines" (2020:300).

What was Veblen's teaching and research experience with respect to the history of economic thought (HET)? Not only did Veblen teach courses dealing with HET, he also published several articles on HET in the *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, "where it was a natural fit because the journal was a magnet for expository essays on the different kinds of economic theory" (2020:314). In the years 1896 and 1897, he taught the graduate-level courses 'History of Political Economy' and 'Scope and Method of Political Economy' (2020:314). In his articles, he argued that economics was not an "evolutionary science" because it was "stymied by misguided methodological assumptions" (2020:315). He also wrote review articles on the German Historical School and Marxist economics (2020:319).

During Veblen's time, it was "standard" to partition economic thought into "the classical school, the German historical school, and the Austrian school" (2020:315). The term "neo-classical" first appears in Veblen's article 'The Preconceptions of Economic Science: III', which was published in the 1900 February issue of the *Quarterly Journal of Economics*; he argued that the "Austrian school

is scarcely distinguishable from the neo-classical, unless it be in the distribution of emphasis" (2020:409, n83).

Despite Veblen's "dense exegesis of the work of some dozen canonical writers, from worthies like Adam Smith to the marginalists of his own time" (2020:315) and "critical analyses of schools of economic thought" (2020:312), Veblen did not see the markedly different logical structures of classical and marginalist economics. Neither does Camic when he writes that the marginalists are "descendants" of the classical economists (2020:315) and that the "hedonistic theory" is one of the "sequels" of classical economics (2020:317). This dominant and incorrect view largely owes to Alfred Marshall, who saw himself as synthesizing classical and marginalist economics. A recognition that classical and marginalist economics are distinct and competing paradigms had to await the 1960s work of Piero Sraffa and Pierangelo Garegnani. And thus, Veblen's linear account of the evolution of economic thought stands easily repudiated. Terms such as "neoclassical" matter because they imply intellectual progress, and such a view is based on the problematic view that intellectual progress in economics is cumulative (see Aspromourgos 1986, also cited by Camic (2020:410, n85)). Moreover, such terms deny the existence of competing paradigms in economics.

CONCLUSION

I find two significant issues with Camic's biography of Veblen. First, Camic's unsatisfactory definition of originality when coupled with his rich accounts of Veblen's teachers yields the following upsetting conclusion: there is nothing particularly original about Veblen's contributions. Some kind of a resolution is warranted. Second, Camic's uncritical attitude towards Veblen's view that marginalism descended from classical economics is disconcerting. Veblen appears to get this idea from his teachers, who in turn, have received their understanding from Mill—whose economics differs in fundamental ways from Smith and Ricardo.

Overall, Camic's *Veblen* succeeds in providing a satisfactory historical account of Veblen's economic thought. The sociologist in Camic shines through when he painstakingly pieces together the state of affairs during Veblen's time, paying close attention to the ideas, politics and people in Veblen's life. And Camic convincingly takes down Dorfman's Veblen-as-an-outsider thesis—the dominant view. Camic's approach to biography, which ought to be replicated, is the following: "The story of the development of Thorstein Veblen's ideas—like the story behind many major intellectual achievements—is one that involves fields, field entry, knowledge practices, and the process of repetition-with-variation" (2020:358).

REFERENCES

Aspromourgos, T. (1986), On the origins of the term 'neoclassical', *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, vol. 10, no. 3, pp. 265–70.

Stirati, A. (1994), *The Theory of Wages in Classical Economics*, translated by Joan Hall, Aldershot: Edward Elgar.

Thomas, A. M. (2021a), Review of Dinyar Patel's *Naoroji: Pioneer of Indian Nationalism*, *Artha Vijnana*, vol. 63, no. 2, pp. 209–11.

--- (2021b), On 'effectual demand' and the 'extent of the market' in Adam Smith and David Ricardo, *European Journal of the History of Economic Thought*, vol. 28, no. 3, pp. 305–23.

Serendipities
Journal for the Sociology and History of the Social Sciences

BOOK REVIEW

Philippe Fontaine and Jefferson D. Pooley (ed): Society on the Edge. Social Science and Public Policy in the Postwar United States

Benno Nietzel, Humboldt University/Bielefeld University
benno.nietzel@hu-berlin.de

Fontaine, Philippe, and Jefferson D. Pooley (2020): *Society on the Edge: Social Science and Public Policy in the Postwar United States*. Cambridge: University Press.
420 pp.
ISBN: 9781108487139

Philippe Fontaine and Jefferson Pooley present an anthology that addresses the sociological study of "social problems" in two ways: on the one hand, the editors themselves have made a selection of nine such problems, which are dealt with in individual contributions by experts in the respective field of research. On the other hand, it is not the aim of these contributions to investigate these problems empirically. The concern of the volume is instead a historiographical one, in that the concept of "social problems" itself becomes a historical object and the history of research on the selected problems is analyzed.

In a long introduction, the editors provide an interpretative framework and some guiding questions and also outline some general developments that can be observed repeatedly in the individual contributions to the volume. Fontaine and Pooley locate thinking in terms of "social problems" in the older tradition of American sociology of the first half of the 20th century, which assumed that scientists should contribute to a better society through their work. Numerous publications from this period present and analyze various "social problems", implicating that these could be tackled and finally solved. In the post-war period, on which the volume lays its focus, this social-problems-tradition was largely discredited, although the topics and subjects it dealt with remained on the agenda of the social sciences without always being explicitly named as a "problem".

The editors develop three key questions, which the chapters take up in examining their research field: Firstly, they ask about the status of the respective problem in social science, but also in public perception and in politics. The implications of this question are far-reaching and also affect the approach of the volume itself: the very acceptance of the fact that such thing as a "social problem" exists at all springs from a certain kind of thinking. For

interwar sociology, the guiding model was a social order that could be disturbed or unbalanced by problems and difficulties of adaptation, which could be remedied with the help of social scientists. In this view, problems were objectively there, sometimes unrecognized or underestimated by contemporaries. This changed in the post-war period, when social scientists became more sensitive to the social process of definition and made it their own subject. All the contributions in this volume therefore pursue the question of when, by whom and for what reasons a phenomenon was understood as a "social problem". In their own selection of problems for the volume, the editors were not guided by the "objective" relevance of these issues, however this might be measured, but rather by the internal discourse of the social sciences: they chose those problems that sociology, psychology and economics "took to be the most trenchant over the postwar decades" (21). In the course of the 20th century, there were major divergences between the social sciences and politics in the definition and perception of social problems. However, the editors insist that the social sciences by no means simply emulated political conjunctures, but always retained a decisive role in the conceptualization of social issues.

The second central question of the volume focuses on the intradisciplinary and interdisciplinary division of labor in the treatment of social problems, which concerns the issue of "problem ownership". Roughly speaking, the development has been such that since the 1960s sociology has increasingly lost its sovereignty over most formerly exclusively "social" problems, mainly because the disciplines of psychology and economics discovered them for themselves and successfully expanded their territory. The third key question concerns the scientific explanation for the problems dealt with. Here, too, there is a general tendency to increasingly strip social problems of their social dimension and to understand them more as individual problems, with structural explanations being replaced by individualistic ones. Economics and psychology made a decisive contribution to this development.

The individual articles not only cover the post-war period, but often also devote much attention to the first half of the 20th century. In contrast, the more recent past since the 1980s is often only discussed very briefly. While the other contributions are strictly nationally in focus, the chapter on the "Family" (Savina Balasubramanian and Charles Camic) has an international dimension: in the discussion on modernization and development since the 1950s, the crucial connection between average family size and economic development on a global scale became an important topic. In later times and to this day, the American family has tended to be seen as an institution for the transmission of social inequality.

The chapter on "Education" (Andrew Jewett) traces how the link between education and social inequality was transformed in an ambivalent way with the emergence of the "human capital" approach in the 1960s: on the one hand, this approach was meritocratic because it saw all individuals as fundamentally equal rational actors; on the other hand, it could provide education policy with incentives to focus educational investments more on better-off individuals, as the outcomes were greater.

The chapter on "Poverty" (Alice O'Connor) makes the tension between systemic and individualistic understandings of a social problem particularly clear: poverty has never been understood as a problem that touches the foundations of American society. Even the war on poverty proclaimed by Lyndon B. Johnson in the 1960s assumed that the difficulties could be solved within the existing economic and distributional structures. The conservative turn in social policy was associated with scientific efforts to make poverty disappear statistically as far as possible. The neoliberal social reforms of the 1990s clearly understood poverty as a problem of individual attitudes and psychology.

The chapter on "Discrimination" (Leah N. Gordon) also describes the gap between "dispositional approaches" and "systemic approaches", which was linked to the question of whether sociology should rather investigate the causes or the consequences and manifestations of discrimination. Since the end of legal segregation in 1964, the systemic dimensions of discrimination were more difficult to grasp empirically, and with the rise of the politics of colorblindness in the 1980s, the research field itself was in a precarious situation. The following chapter on the "Black Ghetto" (George C. Galster) has some overlaps in terms of content but focuses more on the connection between social science and social policy, for example the efforts to foster spatial desegregation in American cities since the 1960s, which were not very successful in the long term.

The chapters on "Crime" (Jean-Baptiste Fleury) and "Addiction" (Nancy D. Campbell) deal with fields of research that were never entirely under the jurisdiction of the social sciences in the first place, partly because they are prominent and controversial policy areas. In the 1970s, criminology as a discipline separated from sociology, and in the 1980s and 1990s, neuroscience largely prevailed in research into drugs and addiction. Political and economic factors also play a major role in the development of the field of "Mental Illness" (Andrew Scull). The Second World War had an important impact by making the psychological trauma of veterans an urgent matter for the state to deal with. The pharmaceutical industry also had a significant influence, contributing to a "psychopharmacological revolution" that saw psychoanalytic psychiatry largely replaced by clinical psychology.

The final chapter deals with "War" (Joy Rohde), a topic that not many would have seen as a "social" problem. In fact, it shows that war was only briefly treated as such a problem by sociology. Dominated since the 1970s by political science and the sub-discipline of international relations, in the Cold War era, war was increasingly understood as a threat to national security and, above all, as a means of statecraft that, with the help of science, could be used in a rational and efficient way. The disastrous experiences of the Vietnam War did not lead to this view being completely abandoned.

The volume follows a complex concept and accomplishes two things: it introduces the history of US social science research into some of the most important sociological topics in the 20th century, and also provides a comprehensive picture of the changing societal position of the social science disciplines, their relation to neighboring disciplines and their connections to social policy in America. Perhaps unintentionally, the contributions demonstrate the extent to which the American social sciences are a closed national shop –

transnational influences or exchanges are barely mentioned in any of the chapters. The choice of topics means that almost all the contributions tell a story of decline: the social problems dealt with were increasingly stripped of their social character and sociology was more or less displaced or marginalized by other disciplines. Recently emerging topics, new challenges and new departures in the social sciences in the second half of the 20th century are thus not valued. Nevertheless, the volume is a must-read for anyone interested in the history of the American social sciences.