

TIMELINES

NEWSLETTER OF THE ASA HISTORY OF SOCIOLOGY SECTION—SEPTEMBER 2020

WRAP-UP From 2020 Virtual Engagement: American Sociology in the 1930s

THE HISTORY OF SOCIOLOGY AS DISCIPLINE AND PROFESSION

Gillian Niebrugge-Brantley

This issue of *Timelines* completes the interrupted work of the History of Sociology's 2020 Annual Meeting Program by presenting in full three papers originally scheduled for "An Invited Paper Session on American Sociology in the 1930s": Charles Camic's "Everywhere and Nowhere," Patricia Lengermann's "'On the Edge' and at the Margins--An Appreciation of and Response to Charles Camic's Study of Sociology in the 1930s," and discussant Peter Kivisto's "Comments: Edges/Margins/Everywhere/Nowhere." The session was carved out, as it typical for many small sections, of the total time slot allotted for the Section Business Meeting (this point about scheduling is not an extraneous cry of frustration by a past organizer but is integral to my discussion in this introduction and I shall return to it later).

The paper session was organized with several purposes in mind: first, to further the study of sociology in the 1930s as essential to an understanding of the state of sociology today; two, to reinforce earlier works by Camic and Lengermann that may serve as exemplars of some key principles in the methodology of the history of sociology; three, to raise a concern that we as a subfield need to give more attention to the work of conceptualizing the nature of our subject matter and, its corollary, our method. While the inroads of the Covid-19 pandemic canceled the ASA Annual Meeting of 2020 and made the virtual presentation of this session a bridge too far, these papers by Camic, Lengermann, and Kivisto more than justify the original judgment to create such a session. Contrary to the legal maxim that "hard cases make bad law," in the history of sociology it may be argued that while difficult events demand careful research and nuanced interpretations, they make for significant insights, moments when history truly does teach—or, at the very least, points us toward the questions we

CONTENTS¹

The History of Sociology as Discipline and Profession

Gillian Niebrugge-Brantley 1

Everywhere and Nowhere

Charles Camic 5

"On the Edge" and at the Margins—An Appreciation of and Response to Charles Camic

Patricia Madoo Lengermann 14

Comments: Edges/Margins/Everywhere/Nowhere

Peter Kivisto 27

Charles Camic

should be asking right now, in the current moment, and promotes scholarship that proceeds with what W.E.B. Du Bois beautifully described as “an earnest desire for the truth despite its possible unpleasantness.”*

My interest in such a session began with my reading in 2007 of Charles Camic's essay “On the Edge: Sociology during the Great Depression and the New Deal,” his contribution to *Sociology in America*, edited by Craig Calhoun for the ASA's centennial volume *Sociology in America*. Camic's essay approached the history of sociology along lines Patricia Lengermann and I had talked in terms of when we first argued for the creation of a section on the History of Sociology (and which Lengermann had implicitly practiced in her 1979 ASR article “The Founding of the American Sociological Review: The Anatomy of a Rebellion”). These lines converge in a working thesis that a key method in the history of sociology is the analysis of the interaction between discipline, the ideas and practices of the field, and profession, the relational ties that give body and form to and come to represent the interests of practitioners of the discipline, which shapes sociology's place in the society it seeks to study.

One of the points that comes through more clearly to me now in Camic's current reflections on the 2007 chapter, is his suggestion that the ASS's practice of operating through Sectional specialties may have weakened its ability to respond to crisis in the 1930s. In “Everywhere and Nowhere,” Camic amplifies this claim with a well done comparison of the Depression-era annual meeting programs of the American Economic Association, which was more centrally organized, and those of the ASS where the professional differentiation into numerous substantive sub-units (Sections) seemed to control much of the program and made an overall response by the field of sociology more difficult to command.

Lengermann originally made a similar point in her 1979 ASR article “The Founding of the American Sociological Review: The Anatomy of a Rebellion” when she saw that the battles which so preoccupied sociology in the 1930s were less about issues of the discipline than the workings of the professional organization as the arbiter of space, in which disciplinary work could be received and reviewed. Here she picks up on that theme to consider what was happening outside that central battle, to propose that we need to investigate how sociologists not at the core of the profession were using the discipline to study the Depression and the New Deal. These studies of the Depression teach by example the need of the profession to expand its understanding of the discipline, showing that that need is not only for sociology but to make sociology really of service to the society.

Reviewing both these papers, Kivisto raises questions about why some sociological sub-fields, most especially rural, succeeded in becoming part of the New Deal; what was it about the different sub-fields that led some to fashion their work so it became part of New Deal policy-making while other fields seemed to turn more and more inward to debates focused on specialized interests.

This understanding of the history of sociology as an interaction between sociology as discipline and sociology as profession leads to a second, almost corollary, concern: the need to pay attention to dates in the writing of the history because the dates give us a beginning way of tracing the relationship between discipline and profession, these two related but not coterminous ways sociology exists. Camic's “On the Edge” shows an informed respect for the fact of chronology, as Lengermann notes, for time, for establishing events in a temporal relation, from which we usually derive some possibilities for classifying the relationship—event x occurring one year after event w typically logically cannot be thought of as the cause of w. A too

casual treatment of dates can lead to a mistaken historical logic in which, for instance, a work or action is correctly dated but is attributed to a broader mood, the main events of which are acknowledged to occur after the work or action is completed.

These three papers offer examples of how a history of sociology might follow these working principles of tracing the relation between discipline and profession and of inscribing that tracing through a system of careful dating. And these examples occur around an important case in sociology's history: what happened in the US in the 1930s in terms of the Great Depression and the New Deal.

To this day, sociology as a profession suffers from its failure during the Depression years to establish a recognized expertise employable by the federal government. (A sociologist and former senior researcher at the Social Security Administration, with whom I worked in the District of Columbia Sociological Society, argued repeatedly that there really were no jobs for sociologists in the federal government, that those few job listings constitute an "empty cell" and the real way sociologists get hired is for their showing statistical competencies. Similarly, in discussions between faculty and civil servants as part of an American University initiative in public sociology, the idea was reiterated that in government hiring, one of sociologists' most trenchant skills, the ability to see connections among seemingly separate actions, was not sufficiently appreciated but statistical skills were acknowledged and a frequent basis for a job offer.) How this pattern emerged, the results of which were to leave academic employment as the rather overwhelming default career path for sociologists, needs to be explained. These three papers give related explanations. And those explanations have lessons for today that I wish to point to—one in terms of the relationship among Sections, profession, and discipline.

As you read, I ask that you mentally recast what these papers argue in terms of the distinction between discipline and profession. I do not present this as a profound concept, suddenly shaking the premises of the history of sociology, but I do feel that it is a very useful one. I wonder if part of sociology's problems in the 1930s and perhaps into to the present moment is difficulty creating a viable relationship between profession and discipline. These papers certainly admit of that interpretation.

A second hope is that these papers create a general desire to talk about methods and principles in the history of sociology. Regardless of what one may feel about the two working principles I argue these articles demonstrate, I wish we could achieve agreement on the need for more discussion about the methods of the history of sociology. One of the real drawbacks to being a smaller section is that we do not have the luxury of being able to offer substantive sessions and reflective sessions in the same year. This is one of the ways that profession quite unintentionally, shapes discipline—by making discussion of issues important to the Section's internal health difficult to have without sacrificing the opportunity to showcase its disciplinary achievements.

Abstracting from the historical case, we can suggest that one of the ways the profession shapes the discipline is the rules by which it allots "space"—time, resources, publications—to various sections within sociology. Sections, while functioning as administrative units of the profession, are essentially constituted as disciplinary units, empowered to produce a program but not with material resources beyond what is allocated. Today in ASA, that allotment of resources to Sections, a major effect of differentiation into sections, occurs through the "democratic" process of giving the most space to the sections with the most

members—an allotment most of us would feel is fundamentally “fair” but also, on reflection, would see as not necessarily intellectually “sound.” On the one hand, this allotment process may allow Sections autonomy with Section members controlling the direction of the discipline in the section. On the other hand, when resources are limited, it means the Section may be allotted little to work with—especially in the case of the smaller sections. It also means that in an emergency, like the current multi-faceted crisis in the US or like the worldwide Great Depression of the 1930s, the profession has only limited levers to pull to activate an overall disciplinary response.

I want to pick up on this point in terms of the history of sociology as a Section. The History of Sociology, as one of the “small Sections,” typically has only one paper session at the annual meeting; it lacks a journal and is not, because of its size, allowed to attempt to start one under ASA current rules; I right now do not know of a required course in “The History of Sociology” at any Departments in the US (indeed I do not know of any such course anywhere but would be happy to be informed and corrected). Those current rules do not press Sections with multiple sections to mark one of those sessions for a discussion about the nature of the subject matter of that discipline; thus, an opportunity is missed for Sections to have a moment of reflection, to remember Thoreau’s warning, “how can they remember well their ignorance who have so often to use their knowledge”—to which the answer bluntly is that they cannot. The annual meeting of the profession is concerned, again understandably, with providing space for members to present papers on what their current research which is most typically on empirical investigation rather than reflection on the nature of their specialty within sociology. “Sociology” as the umbrella profession is not at the current time using what power it has to encourage that reflection by requiring and enabling such reflection through the vehicle of the annual meeting.

A MODEST PROPOSAL: that ASA consider ways it can ultimately get better service from its Sections by making more demands on them for reflection—which will mean ultimately committing resources to them for that purpose. For instance, each Section could be allotted, in say every third year, an annual meeting session for the specific purpose of thinking about the nature of its subject matter and methodology. Similarly, ASA could emulate The Society for the Study of Social Problems which achieves some control over its Divisions (akin to ASA Sections) by requiring that they each offer one session that addresses the theme of the annual meeting for that year; ASA could also consider some version of SSSP’s policy of requiring that Divisions combine to produce some of their session offerings for each annual meetings. (Of course, ASA also faces the enormous task of thinking about the relevance of the annual meeting as a physical occurrence in an age of virtual engagement.)

This *Timelines* also is an opportunity to celebrate outcomes of the 2020 Virtual Engagement. The Section had a very successful virtual open paper session on “Sociology in Politics; Politics in Sociology”; that program can be viewed at <https://drive.google.com/file/d/18Fpl-3nOf3dVNp5nygHd5f4lR4K7zc3r/view?usp=sharing>. The Symposium on New Voices in the History of Sociology (NVHS), originally planned, under the leadership of Laura Ford, as a series of roundtables at the San Francisco meeting, emerged as a well-attended and stimulating virtual meeting program with eight papers that so energized attendees that under the leadership of Taylor Winfield, Laura Ford, Kerby Goff, and Hannah Waight, the Section has now established NVHS as a “Working Papers Series” done through Zoom virtual conferencing. The first session in September featured a

closer look at one of the symposium papers, Cornell graduate student Alec McGail's "On the Mortality of Cited Works, Cited Authors, and Writing Authors in Sociology" with discussion by Emily Erikson and Peter Bearman; the next session is planned for October and will feature new Princeton post-doctoral student Grace Tien's "Reinterpreting Weber's Protestant Ethic in China." Further updates and recordings of these events will be available at <http://www.newvoiceshist sociology.org/>.

Finally, as the Section at the current moment considers the possibility of a name change, we may want to take advantage of the new technologies that make virtual meetings of the Section increasingly viable and lively, to have a discussion among members about directions for the future of history.

I invite you now to turn to the papers by Camic, Lengermann, and Kivisto as exemplars of scholarship in the history of sociology.

*Thanks to Kalashia Daniels and Earl Wright II for calling attention to this lovely phrase from Du Bois in their insightful article: Daniels KS, Wright E. "An Earnest Desire for the Truth despite Its Possible Unpleasantness": A Comparative Analysis of the Atlanta University Publications and American Journal of Sociology, 1895 to 1917. *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity*. 2018;4(1):35-48. doi:10.1177/2332649217706519

Everywhere and Nowhere

(Remarks for History of Sociology Session on "American Sociology in the 1930s," ASA 2020)

Charles Camic

Northwestern University

I want to begin by thanking Jill Niebrugge-Brantley for proposing this session on "American Sociology in the 1930s," and for inviting me to participate in it. I also want to thank Patricia Lengermann for giving me the opportunity to take part in a session with her, as well as for her excellent paper.

Pat takes as her point of departure for her paper a chapter I wrote some years ago about American sociology during the Great Depression and the New Deal, and she graciously makes a number of flattering comments about the chapter, all of which I valued receiving from the scholar who is sociology's preeminent historian of sociology for the era my chapter treats. Setting my old chapter aside for the moment, however, I want to enthusiastically commend Pat's own ambitious, current project on sociologists who were at the "margins" during this era, and to thank her for previewing her important findings about these neglected scholars. This is a contribution I will come back to later in my comments, though I won't be able to really delve into it here unless I ignore Jill's assignment to me, which is to revisit my 2007 chapter. (After reading Pat's paper, I wish our roles here were reversed, so that the focus fell on her paper and I was commenting on it, rather than the other way around.)

But sticking to my own assignment, I want to do two things: first, to spotlight a few points I made in my chapter but that Pat (understandably for her purposes) sets to the side; and second, to supplement my

previous explanation of the position of American sociology during the Depression and the New Deal. In regard to these two tasks, I admit that I will fall short of the standard Pat sets when she enjoins us to look beyond the profession of sociology during the 30s and span outward to the margins of the discipline. Like my chapter, my comments today are (regrettably) restricted to the top rungs of the profession, so they suffer from the shortcomings Pat finds in research that is restricted in this way.

With apologies for this limitation, I want first to bring to the fore some data that I included in my chapter. Pat's generous summary of the chapter (which I find completely correct) does not dig into these particular data, but they are a useful starting point for me.

The data have behind them the national drama we learn about in school: the Great Stock Market Crash of October 1929 and the nation's resulting economic collapse, which by late 1930 brought many thousands of business failures, massive contractions in industrial and agricultural production, and unemployment numbers upward of four million. A year later, these horrific figures deteriorated further (with the unemployment rate, for example, hitting 25%), thus turning what had initially looked like a severe cyclical downswing into the Great Depression, and resulting in the electoral defeat in November 1932 of President Herbert Hoover by Franklin Delano Roosevelt. This outcome ushered in FDR's enormous efforts to right the situation through a wide range of new government programs created to arrest the downwards economic spiral, provide relief to millions of victims of the Depression, and set the nation on a path to recovery: the range of programs that comprised the New Deal.

What struck me when I was originally researching my chapter was how deeply involved social scientists, as well as professionals from the outskirts of the social sciences, were in designing and launching New Deal programs (and accompanying agencies), directing them, and staffing them at the top echelons and all the way down through the lower ranks of professional personnel.

We know that the Great Depression hit higher education hard, severely reducing college and graduate school enrolments and tanking the academic job market. Much less well-known, however, is what a windfall the various New Deal programs proved to be for some social scientists and for women and men with training in the orbit of the social sciences – to the point that, by the decade's end, one well-placed observer called the 1930s the “greatest opportunity for the social sciences America had known” (up to that point) (Bruere 1940, 5). To support this claim, the observer furnished a list that consisted almost entirely of economists, legal academics, political scientists (mainly from the area of public administration), and statisticians – the last a group overlapping with the others and significant because of its expertise in analyzing the quantitative data that these other groups relied on. The observer might have added, as well, people trained in the heterogeneous field of social work, considering that New Deal programs created positions for more than 50,000 social workers, associated with both the casework and the settlement-work branches of the field, as Pat points out. In any event, a study from the late 1930s found that, as of December 1938, the federal government employed (exclusive of social workers), an astounding 7,100 professionals in what it called “the social science field” (McDiamond 1945, 74). Of these, moreover, *more than five thousand* – 71% of the total – *were economists*. (These numbers did not include the large contingent of economists on the New Deal's top-level advisory and planning councils.) Already by the mid-1930s, the buzz in Washington D.C. was that “the Federal Government is the economist's heaven” (quoted in Sims 1938, p. 30). Indeed, there seemed at times

barely enough economists to meet the New Deal demand for expertise; so that, according to one contemporary economist, “virtually every university in the country was combed by the various federal agencies for competent economists,” causing “leaves of absence [from the academy to become] numerous and widespread” (Lubin 1937, p. 216).

The situation in sociology stood in stark contrast, as I sought to document in my chapter. By my arithmetic, based on information patched together from several sources (including a data set kindly provided by Andrew Abbott and James Sparrow), sociologists held somewhere in the meager vicinity of 100 positions, all told, in various federal agencies between 1930 and 1939.¹ Reporting in less quantitative terms, a 1938 study of the federal civil service stated: as for the sociologist, “there are no jobs for him – or rather just a few. The Division of Population of the Bureau of the Census and the Farm Population Division [within the Department of Agriculture] are the best examples of agencies employing sociologists — at that, only a few. And, of course, these sociologists must be statisticians as well” (Sims 1938, p. 33). The reference here to the Farm Population Division was a reference to a subunit inside the Department of Agriculture’s Bureau of Agricultural Economics, which grew during the New Deal to include roughly 50 researchers in the field of rural sociology, thus making the Agriculture Department by far the largest home for sociologists in the federal government during the 1930s. Even so, compared with the number of economists, political scientists, legal scholars, and social work experts who were on the scene, the number of sociologists was nearly as miniscule by the end of the New Deal (usually put at 1939) as it had been at the start, when an anecdote circulating among academics in D.C. went as follows. “A prominent American sociologist remarked, as he ate his luncheon in a Washington restaurant, ‘I’m almost lonesome here at the capital’ – [a remark] he elaborated by asking, ‘Why it is that in this city, overrun with economists, political scientists, statisticians and even historians, one cannot find a sociologist unless he is here in the guise of one of these others?’” (Willey 1934, p. 213).

Among sociologists of the time, some were largely unruffled by their exclusion from the centers of the New Deal, while others sociologists – those opposed to what we would now call “public sociology” – were relieved to watch it. But these reactions were atypical. More common in the world of professional sociology by 1934 – the second year of the New Deal and five years after the start of the Depression – were indignation and outrage. These were the responses that sociologists from a range of institutions voiced in a rising chorus. Hear, for example --

- Stuart Rice (University of Pennsylvania): “There are [in Washington] dozens and dozens of bureaus, divisions, offices, and sections which have in their title the name ‘statistics’ or ‘economics,’ but where is sociology found?” (1934, p. 220). Or...
- Stuart Chapin (University of Minnesota): “Many statisticians, economists, and political scientists have been drawn into the various [New Deal] divisions,” which neglect “the point of view of the sociologist” (1934, p. 473). Or ...

¹ This data set is described in Abbott and Sparrow (2007).

- W. P. Meroney (Baylor University): Amid “present economic, political, and social conditions, . . . sociologists [have] little influence and scant recognition” (1934, p. 198). Or ...
- H. C. Brearley (Clemson University): “The present . . . crisis reveals clearly the impotence of sociology”; sociologists “are playing far less important roles than the economists” (1934, p. 192).

Statements like these did not stop in 1934, however. They persisted for the life of the New Deal, as sociologists continued to recognize and to complain about their exclusion – though only rarely to go beyond this (as we will see).

In my chapter, these data led me to ask: why were professional sociologists excluded from the apparatus of the New Deal, and why did their dissatisfaction with their exclusion not lead more of them to step forward, in their capacity as scholars, with research relevant to the problems of the time, rather than to suffice with more complaints about their sorry lot?

My answers to these questions primarily centered on two factors, which Pat clearly describes: social networks and framing. By and large, sociologists were not wired into FDR’s Ivy-league based, old-boys-network, from which so many New Deal policy-shapers and administrators were recruited, either directly or through indirect network linkages. Furthermore, from the outset, policymakers and public commentators framed the Depression as a set of economic (or economic-political-administrative) problems, calling out for analysis by specialists in economics, political science, law, and social work, rather than as problems falling partly within the ambit of sociology. This framing, I argued, reflected the tendency for sociologists of the time to define their subject-matter – by way of contrast with and opposition to the subject-matter of these other disciplines – as having to do with “culture”: or, in their terminology, with phenomena such as mores, customs, values, ideals, and attitudes.²

In the 15 years since I published my chapter, I have not changed my mind about this two-fold explanation, and I don’t read Pat’s paper as challenging my account on this score. But after revisiting my chapter for this session, I now think that – intertwined with network and framing factors – there was another factor, which I did not previously appreciate, but which I want to discuss as a supplement to my earlier account. Not long after completing my chapter, I had the privilege of chairing the Section on the History of Sociology. In that connection, I wrote a couple editorials for our section newsletter, where I urged historians of sociology to beware of totalizing or essentializing sociology (as it stood at any given period) to the neglect of an analysis of the discipline’s subunits, which may or may not have been synced with one another, or with trends in the discipline as a whole. The point was not new; Jennifer Platt, Ed Tiryakian, and Eleanor Townsley had made it before, when they chaired the Section.

² Aside from these two factors there was (as Pat notes and elsewhere documents) the important factor of organizational quarrels within the American Sociological Society.

In my own case, I expressed the point by saying that, when we study periods in the discipline's history, we should not limit ourselves to characterizing the state of Sociology-at-Large, but should examine as well developments occurring at the specific intellectual and organizational sites where sociologists actually carried out their work. In my editorials, I equated these sites, in particular, with the discipline's specialty areas: viz., the subfields of the discipline. Reading Pat's new paper makes me realize that my suggestion about studying specialty areas was too limited: that, in addition to analyzing subfields, the historian of sociology should examine the state of sociology *at the margins*, as Pat does when she examines sociology as it was practiced, for example, on the much overlooked – but very rich – terrain of Historically Black Colleges and Universities. Unaware of this innovative line of research, however, I confined my editorials to proposing that we combine our attention to sociology-at-large with historical research on the discipline's specialty areas.

When I revisited my chapter on sociology during the Depression and the New Deal, it became clear that I had failed to follow my own advice; that my chapter treated American sociology as a whole, but slighted developments in its subfields. What makes this oversight especially serious, I now realize, is that it was during the 1930s that sociological subfields really took off in their number and variety, to the point that they came, increasingly, to concentrate the research of sociologists on substantive topics that happened to be salient within their own specialty areas (much as subfields do for most of us do today).

Once I turned my attention to subfields, however, the exclusion of sociologists from the infrastructure of the New Deal appeared in a new light – and one that modifies my previous emphasis on framing and network factors. As I now see the situation, sociologists' "framing" of their subject-matter in terms of "culture" was a secondary factor, derivative of the fact that many professional sociologists of the 1930s were narrowing their focus to interior issues on the specialized agendas of their own subfields. This inward channeling of their attention served, to greater or lesser degrees, to buffer and deflect these sociologists from the agenda of the New Deal – thereby muting their responses to it and distancing them from the social networks that fed the policy circles of the New Deal. This distancing was in striking contrast to the situation within the profession of economics, where subfields were less salient and constraining, leaving economists available (and eager) to engage the national agenda. Their efforts in this regard successfully embedded the Depression and the New Deal within an economic framing, which economists thereafter continually burnished, while they established their place in the social networks that brought them positions within the New Deal. (Political scientists and legal scholars were in a similar situation, though I'll concentrate here on economists, because, as I've said, they formed the largest contingent of social scientists working in the New Deal.) This account of sociology is, however, no longer the kind of Sociology-at-Large story that my chapter presented, because in instances where sociologists belonged to *subfields that did not turn inward and did relate to the national agenda*, these specialists did not experience exclusion, but were rather incorporated within the framing and the networks of the New Deal.

I stumbled on this revised argument when I compared the programs of the annual meetings of the American Sociological Society and the American Economics Association during the 1930s.³ This type of

³ In the following pages, I take titles of sessions and papers directly from the annual programs of these associations, which met concurrently in late December each year. For the American Economics Association, these programs appear in *The American Economic Review*, where they run in the March issue of the journal for the calendar year that immediately

evidence, as Pat cautions us, has serious shortcomings. Programs of annual meetings of national associations mainly capture life at the top, or near the top, of a discipline; they omit sociologists at the margins who lack the means (or the interest) to attend national meetings. Further, programs from annual meetings give us the titles of sessions and papers, not much else. Yet titles can be deceptive; often they promise something other than what the paper or the session actually delivers. Even so, titles are chosen deliberately; they are public signals to audiences and potential audiences about what a session organizer or a presenter intends as her or his focus.

So let me begin with the programs of the American Economics Association. The Great Stock Market Crash occurred in late October 1929, and when the AEA convened just two months later in December 1929, its program already included entire sessions with titles such as “The Public Works Plan and Unemployment,” “Industrial Instability,” and the Federal Reserve Board’s “Problems and Policy.” A noteworthy feature of this 1929 meeting, and a feature that held for AEA meetings throughout the 1930s (and subsequently), was the organization of sessions around substantive themes, not around specialty areas; in the meeting program, sessions are identified not by the names of subfields, but by topics, many of them right out of the headlines.

And 1929 was just the beginning. The 1930 program features a full session on “The Business Depression of the 1930s,” and another on “Industrial Change and Unemployment”; while the 1931 program shows sessions on unemployment, business cycles, and the control of industry. In the 1932 program, we find sessions entitled “Economic Instability,” “Insurance in the Depression,” and the “Stabilization of Industry.” These annual AEA meetings all predate the New Deal; but immediately following its arrival, there are, at the next three annual meetings (to go out in time no further), entire sessions on the “Economics of the Recovery Act,” “Unemployment and Public Works,” “The Relief Aspect of the New Deal and a Unified Program for the Unemployed,” “The Effects of New Deal Legislation,” even “The New Deal and the Teaching of Economics.” These session titles are just a sampler.

In contrast, programs of the American Sociological Society from the same period are structured around and named to correspond with sociological subfields – or, more accurately said, with those subfields that the national association then recognized as official “sections” and “divisions.”

What these subunits were varied somewhat from year to year, but in the early 1930s the count stood at roughly a dozen, and it grew throughout the decade. In 1930, the Society was divided into sections labelled “community,” “family,” “educational sociology,” “sociology of religion,” “sociology and psychiatry,” “sociology and social work,” “rural sociology,” and “social statistics” (as well as “teaching”). A mere two years later, the program encompassed as well sections named “ecology and demography,” “social psychology,” “biological sociology,” “historical sociology,” “criminology and delinquency,” “cultural and folk sociology,” and “urban sociology.”

Here we see a plethora of subfields, covering together an enormous swath of the social world. Sociology during the 1930s, it seems, reached everywhere – or almost everywhere – and sociologists relished and

follows the Association’s December meeting. Printed programs of the American Sociological Society are, in every case, the “preliminary” programs, which prior to 1936 appear, *in advance* of the December meeting, in the November issue of the *American Journal of Sociology*. After 1936, the preliminary program appears in either the October or December issue of *The American Sociological Review*.

cultivated this expansive image of their discipline. Yet, to judge by the programs of their annual meetings, sociologists were nowhere – or almost nowhere – when it came to engaging the central issues associated with the Great Depression and the New Deal; just as sociologists were almost nowhere within the government commissions and agencies tasked with addressing these issues. The program for the December 1929 meeting of the American Sociological Society contains not a single paper whose title refers to the Depression. And the same appears to be the case the next year, unless we count a paper on “Social Welfare Legislation” and another titled “A Social and Economic Program for Sub-marginal Agricultural Areas,” both of them given at joint sessions sponsored, respectively, by the American Association for Labor Legislation and the American Farm Economics Association. Not including papers of this kind, the programs for the 1931 and 1932 meetings tell the same story of omission, though 1933 brings – now four years following the Crash – a paper on “Community Relations during the Depression,” appearing in the section-session on community. In addition, the session mounted by the rural sociology section includes two papers on “The New Deal in Rural Culture,” while the session put on by the section on “Sociology and Psychiatry” offers a paper titled the “Methods of Handling Unemployment,” presented by a prominent settlement house social worker. At the meetings the next year (1934), most sessions contain no titles that signal the Depression or the New Deal, although there are three notable exceptions. In sessions sponsored by the section on rural sociology, we encounter “Sociological Aspects of the New Deal” and the “Status of ... Research in Rural life under the New Deal,” while the Social Work session includes a paper titled “What, if Anything, are Social Workers Contributing toward Fundamental Social Reorganization”? Likewise, the section on Social Statistics devotes its session to a “Discussion of Research Carried on under the Auspices of the Federal Emergence Relief Administration.”

The calendar year of these sessions – the year 1934 – bears special emphasis here, because this was the same year that unleashed the chorus of complaints by sociologists (quoted above) about their exclusion from the ranks of the New Deal. Yet, outside the sections sponsored by the sections on rural sociology, social work, and statistics, the Society’s 1934 program is conspicuously absent papers dealing with the Depression and the New Deal. And, if we run the narrative out to 1937 (which I won’t do here), we see more of the same: widespread (though not complete) neglect of these subjects in virtually every session, except for those put on by the sections on rural sociology, social work, and statistics. If we recall the meetings of the AEA during this same period (as I just described them), the difference with the meetings of the American Sociological Society could hardly be greater.

Now to repeat: what occurs at annual meetings of professional associations furnishes only a narrow window onto the intellectual life of a discipline. But, in the cases I’m dealing with, what shows through in the annual programs accords with a great deal of other historical evidence. For instance, almost from the moment the Depression began and continuing for the whole duration of the New Deal, economists explicitly addressed these historical events in books, articles, newspaper columns, radio talks, conferences, and on and on.

By comparison, professional sociologists were all but silent. (Again, I’m not speaking of scholars at HBCUs or at the other “marginal” sites that Pat identifies.) Slow out of the starting gate, sociologists (by my tally) published, prior to 1937, a meager half-dozen empirical studies of the Depression and the New Deal, even as many prominent voices in the profession were amping up their protestations about sociologists’ exclusion

from the New Deal. (I name and discuss this miscellany of empirical studies in my chapter.) By 1936, this research void was so blaring that William Ogburn, one of the few professional sociologists involved in architecting the New Deal, appealed (successfully) to an external foundation, the Social Science Research Council, for funding to produce a series of short monographs – “research memoranda” they were called – that focused on the “*Social Aspects of the Depression*” as these exhibited themselves in the family, religion, education, rural life, internal migration, minority groups, crime, health, recreation, reading, consumption, social work, and relief policies. (My words here come from the titles of volumes in the series.)⁴ Quickly turned out by 1937, these 13 monographs consisted, however, more of lists of questions that still merited research than of analyses of research that sociologists had actually carried out by this time – which was now seven years after the Crash. Even so, taken together, the monographs attest again to the very broad sweep of the sociologist's net.

When I discussed some of these developments in my chapter, I did so (as I've said) in a totalizing way, mainly treating sociologists *en bloc* as representatives of Sociology-at-Large. But I now see the error of my ways. Yes, many sociologists were excluded from the infrastructure of the New Deal, but by no means was this true of all of them. Rural sociologists were definitely not excluded, nor were sociologists attached to various branches of social work, nor were social statisticians (though the number of positions they held in the New Deal was comparatively modest). And these were not fringe specialties; “rural sociology,” “sociology and social work,” “social statistics” – these subfields formed sizeable sections of the American Sociological Society (Duncan and Duncan 1933). But these particular subfields were also directly engaged with the policies of New Deal agencies – obviously so in the instances of statisticians and social workers, perhaps less obviously so (to us today) for men and women in the subfield of rural sociology. Nevertheless, rural sociologists had a long tradition of partnering with agricultural economists to study the “economic and social” problems facing farmers and rural communities (Larson and Zimmerman 2003) – constituencies blighted by the Great Depression and in need of New Deal agencies like the Agricultural Adjustment Administration. The social “networks” involved in the New Deal and the economic “framing” generally given to the problems of the Depression and to the policies of the New Deal: these factors, important as they were, did not hinder sociologists affiliated with the subfields of rural sociology, social work, and statistics from participating in the New Deal.

⁴ Short and Hughes (2007, p. 614, note 19) list the authors and full titles of the volumes in this series.

Outside these particular subfields, however, sociologists – despite their aspiration to be everywhere – generally stayed away from “economic” phenomena (or economic-political-administrative phenomena). Writing in 1937, prominent NYU sociologist Henry Fairchild spoke of “a sort of unwritten Gentlemen’ Agreement” that ceded economic topics to economists, while sociologists were allowed to carry out “comprehensive inquiries into . . . those human relations that had to do with sex, the family, recreation, [community and school] organization,” and on, and on, and on. Fairchild objected to this Agreement, insisting that economic phenomena such as “wages, prices, trade unions, corporations, factories, the standard of living, all [were] fit subjects for *sociological* treatment” (1937, p. 8). Many sociologists before the 1930s (think Marx, Weber, or even Sumner) and many since then (think of the current members of the ASA’s section on Economic Sociology) would likely concur with Fairchild’s view. Furthermore, during the 1930s itself, members of many subfields of the discipline might – hypothetically – have taken up the economic dimensions of the Depression and the New Deal had these sociologists opted to look outward in their research. It is not hard, for example, to envision educational sociologists examining the positive and negative effects of these events on school resources, school attendance, and educational outcomes; nor to imagine family sociologists studying the impact of the Depression and New Deal on marriage and divorce rates, household composition, care for children and elders, etc. (I could add many other examples.)

But in the way many subfields of sociology were practiced in the 1930s, their tendency was to turn the focus of their members inward to specialized packages of theoretical, empirical, methodological, and applied topics, which then commanded members’ attention year after year. While the discipline as a whole fanned out further and further, staking claims to more and more topics (except those given away under the Gentlemen’s Agreement), subfield specialists increasingly looked inside their subfield for their agendas. Programs from the annual meetings of the American Sociological Society show sociologists of education discussing not the Depression and the New Deal, but endless variations on topics such as “education of the immigrant” and “urban community research and the schools”; while sociologists of the family repeatedly gravitate to titles like “present knowledge concerning assortative mating” and “sex as a factor in domestic discord.” (I take these titles from the program of 1935 meetings.) For the institutional and intellectual viability of these subfields over the long haul, cleaving to these differentiated agendas may have been a smart move for specialists to make. (I offer no evaluation of this.) But, in the context of the 1930s, it was a move that left specialists in many subfields of a discipline that sprawled (almost) everywhere simultaneously (almost) nowhere in terms of issues on the national agenda and positions in the apparatus of the New Deal. Only by analyzing sociology’s subfields can the historian of sociology understand these developments.

Bibliography

Abbott, Andrew, and James T. Sparrow. 2007. “Hot War, Cold War: The Structures of Sociological Action, 1940-1955.” Pp. 281-313 in Craig Calhoun (ed.), *Sociology in America: A History*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

- Brearley, H.C. 1934. Contribution to "Questions for Sociology: An Informal Round Table Symposium." *Social Forces* 13: 191-93.
- Bruere, Henry. 1940. "The Social Sciences in the Service of Society." Pp. 5-22 in Louis Wirth (ed.), *Eleven Twenty-Six: A Decade of Social Science Research*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Chapin, F. Stuart. 1934. "What has Sociology to Contribute to Plans for Recovery from the Depression?" *Social Forces* 12: 473-75.
- Duncan, H.G., and Winnie Leach Duncan. 1933. "Shifts in Interests of American Sociologists." *Social Forces* 12: 209-212.
- Fairchild, Henry Pratt. 1937. "Business as an Institution." *American Sociological Review* 2: 18.
- Larson, Olaf F., and Julie N. Zimmerman. 2003. *Sociology in Government: The Galpin-Taylor Years in the U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1919-1953*. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press.
- Lubin, Isador. 1937. "Government Employment as a Professional Career in Economics." *American Economic Review* 27 (Supplement): 216-224.
- McDiarmid, John. 1945. "The Mobilization of Social Scientists." Pp. 73-96 in Leonard D. White (ed.), *Civil Service in Wartime*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Meroney, W.P. 1934. Contribution to "Questions for Sociology: An Informal Round Table Symposium." *Social Forces* 13: 198-200.
- Rice, Stuart A. 1934a. Contribution to "Questions for Sociology: An Informal Round Table Symposium." *Social Forces* 13: 220-222.
- Short, James F., Jr., and Lorraine A. Hughes, 2007, "Criminology, Criminologists, and the Sociological Enterprise." Pp. 605-638 in Craig Calhoun (ed.), *Sociology in America: A History*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Sims, Lewis B. 1938. *Recruiting Social Scientists for the Federal Civil Service*. [No publication information.]
- Willey, Malcolm M. 1934. Contribution to "Questions for Sociology: An Informal Round Table Symposium." *Social Forces* 13: 213-15.

"On the Edge" and at the Margins—

An Appreciation of and Response to Charles Camic's Study of Sociology in the 1930s

Patricia Madoo Lengermann

The George Washington University

When, in 2007, I first read Charles Camic's "On the Edge: Sociology During the Great Depression and the New Deal," his contribution to *Sociology in America*, edited by Craig Calhoun, I had two contradictory responses—one, I thought it a genuine achievement in the history of sociology, highlighting the principles that guide the methodology of this field; two, I disagreed on some points and wanted an opportunity to raise my counter interpretation. So I was pleased when I was approached with an opportunity to appear with Professor Camic and discuss sociology in the 1930s at ASA 2020 because I thought that the Thirties was the decade sociology needed to revisit and learn from. History has more than proved that view right:

repeatedly today commentators and ordinary citizens reach to the 1930s for an experience of crisis equal to this present moment.

In what follows I use the speaking voice of the remarks I had been preparing before Covid-19 forced a change of plans. My remarks divide into two parts: the first part reflects on Professor Camic's achievement in "On the Edge: Sociology During the Great Depression and the New Deal," (hereafter "On the Edge"); the second part raises some differences I have with him, most particularly on the issue of how we, as historians, constitute the field of sociology, in the 1930s, and generally.

Professor Camic's Achievement

Professor Camic (hereafter Camic) makes clear what his project will be on the first page of his 55-page chapter:

The 1930's, an age of harsh material conditions and thwarted expectations for millions of Americans, fell hard on American sociologists as well. Encouraged by the progress of their fledgling field during the 1920s, they watched with increasing awareness and frustration as a national societal drama removed them to the sidelines, revoking their newly won position as authoritative social analysts and conferring public stature instead on rival professionals. Scrambling to overcome this setback, sociologists in the era of the Great Depression and the New Deal responded in ways that helped configure and lock in some of the defining intellectual tendencies of mid-twentieth-century American sociology.

This chapter reports this untold episode in the social and intellectual history of American sociology (225)

What Camic accomplishes in "On the Edge" has a twofold significance. One, it gives sociologists a foundational introduction to a period in which, sociology, perhaps permanently, lost power, power as Carolyn Heilbrun (1988) defined it, "the ability to take one's place in whatever discourse is essential to action and the right to have one's part matter." Two, it provides a model for scholars of what it means to do the history of sociology. I begin with a discussion of this second point.

In the late 1990s, when Gillian Niebrugge and I were organizing the ASA Section on the History of Sociology, we were challenged by many in ASA to show that the history of sociology was not a repeat of sociological theory nor another version of comparative-historical sociology but a worthy subfield in its own right. We came in our own minds to an ideal type of the history of sociology, marked by six major features: (1) understanding of sociology as both a profession and a discipline, (2) locating sociology in time, (3) using narrative as a basic mode of argument in the field, (4) focusing on the pattern of connections among discipline, profession, and context in shaping the narrative; (5) drawing generalizations of cause-and-effect out of the narrative, (6) taking account in the narrative of multiple vantage points. (I am indebted to conversations with Gillian Niebrugge and her article in the 30th issue of *Timelines* for this framing.)

"On the Edge" is a commanding demonstration of the subject and method of the history of sociology. Camic offers an implicit understanding of sociology as "a profession" and as "a discipline" as he takes account of the power arrangements that shape its discourses and responses to events while attending to the actual processes and products of sociological research. He maintains a clear chronology as he moves the reader through the 1930s, dealing effectively with the problem of synchronicity—things don't unfold only

one-after-another but many times they happen at the same time. Sociologists are trying to organize themselves to offer a disciplinary response to the Depression while also fighting internal battles over power in the profession, while also watching economists, political scientists and, most to their chagrin, social workers steel a march on them. There is a complexity of events and connections which, in turn, raises the problem novelist Henry James describes as the fact that “Really, universally, relations stop nowhere.” This is a problem the historian faces as well—but where James adds “the artist [must] draw . . . the circle within which they shall happily *appear* to do so,” the duty for scholars in the history of sociology is not to invent a beginning and ending but to own honestly what is beyond the scope of one’s current narrative, which Camic does very well, setting out the limits of his narrative by acknowledging in the 1930s—“forces that would have made the era a dynamic one even apart from the Depression and the New Deal.” He stresses that “the focus of this chapter is nonetheless restricted to the effects on sociology “ of the Great Depression and the New Deal.

The second limitation he delineates concerns the kinds of generalization that it seems possible to make.

The second limitation of the chapter pertains not at the level of historical description but with regard to historical evaluation. My aim in this account is to present a historical narrative, not to pass retrospective judgment on the historical actors involved. Accordingly, when I report that sociologists of the 1930s confronted the Depression and the New Deal at a later date and in a less sustained manner than other social scientists of this period did, my point is not to stand above this period and fault sociologists for the decisions they made. In a few instances, to be sure, my sense has been that readers will better understand the precise nature and historical consequences of these decisions if I somewhat enlarge the historical canvas and call attention to choices that were not made, but this shift in historical perspective implies no verdict as to whether the decisions of the past were wrong or right, reckless or wise, from my own viewpoint as a sociologist writing in the early twenty-first century. Given *their own* aspirations in the 1930s, sociologists sometimes grew frustrated with themselves, and, as part of my narrative, I recount these attitudes and try to make sense of them in terms of their historical context. (pp. 226-227)

This attitude of reservation of judgment grows in the reader as Camic describes in carefully selected detail what was going on in sociology in the 1930s.

Essentially Camic’s narrative is about what happened to American sociology and how sociology reacted to what happened to it in the 1930s. The narrative tells that sociology lost ground as a profession and a discipline; its leaders did not manage to connect the profession to the expansion of employment possibilities in the New Deal; the general judgment today is that the discipline did not produce any major studies in or of the Great Depression or the New Deal. To his credit, without hiding the outcome, Camic manages to sustain suspense and concern over that outcome because the reader keeps hoping for a turning point or at least a point where things *could have* turned around. American sociology as a profession seems to have responded with utter incomprehension to the Great Depression and the New Deal. Camic’s telling shows that this response was not only at first but practically to the bitter end as economists, political scientists and lawyers, became the specialists who mattered.

He presents sociology's responses in a drop by drop narrative of inadequate responses—like this 1934 comment by Frank Hankins (who would be made ASR editor in 1936 and ASS president in 1938)—“I do not see that [the sociologist] has anything of a clearly scientific nature to contribute to the major problems of a sick capitalist society. He may think he has, but his contribution is almost certain to be tainted with . . . self-deceptive wishful thinking”—or failed initiatives by other sociologists who, rankling at the privileged status of economists and political scientists, tried to take active organizational and intellectual steps to show the contribution sociology could make in the current crisis. Camic's paced accretion of detail engages the reader in the complexity of the problems facing sociologists in the Thirties, which cease to be the encapsulated story we know as “the Great Depression” and become a story of lived experiences.

One of the most painful moments in this narrative—but a high point in Camic's analysis—comes as the reader thinks that there might be light at the end of the tunnel as Camic recounts a 1936 effort in which several movers and shakers

secured from SSRC support for an entire series of commissioned volumes, titled *Studies in the Social Aspects of the Depression* (emphasis added). . . . they lost no time in assigning these volumes to prominent or up-and-coming authors—Chapin, Queen, Sanderson, Stouffer, Paul Lazarsfeld . . .—and to turning out finished products. In 1937 all thirteen monographs appeared in print, under the SSRC's imprint, with the titles standardized in the form of *Research Memorandum on [X topic] in the Depression*. The thirteen topics covered were family, religion, education, rural life, internal migration, minority peoples, crime, health, recreation, reading, consumption, social work, and relief policies. (268)

But, Camic (270) writes, the series “originally launched ‘to stimulate’ more empirical research by sociologists on the Depression . . . formed a watershed of an ironic sort. . . mark[ing] the end of studies on the Depression and the New Deal by sociologists of that period.” He takes issue with “a plausible explanation of this retreat [which] would attribute it to the onrush of history” as sociology turns to the international events and the movement toward World War II. For he points out that “although this is not incorrect in the long view,” in fact, in 1937-38, America was much preoccupied with the Depression and the New Deal—signs of recovery in early '37 gave way to another recession in October; major policy solutions were under debate, like Social Security, government reorganization, anti-trust expansion.

Using the concepts of frames and networks, Camic offers three interrelated explanations for sociology's failures in the 1930s. First he describes events outside of sociology's control. The Depression, and hence the New Deal response, was framed as an “economic” problem, that framing in part was the result of the networks that were brought in to government by the New Deal. Those networks themselves go back to earlier networks, and frames, in which many of the major actors in the New Deal had their education at East Coast schools where sociology was only beginning to be a discipline. These leaders had been trained in economics and political science and sociology as a body of ideas meant very little to them.

A second explanation involves the issue of the frames that sociology had itself produced and illustrates the way a profession can affect and be affected by its discipline. Sociology by the end of the 1930s had worked its way through to an agreement that its subject matter was “culture.” It had started down this path in the 1920s, as a way of separating its subject matter from the “material” subjects of the natural

sciences: sociology dealt with social things, things people made—norms, attitudes, beliefs, and especially institutions. But as part of its “gentlemen’s agreement” with other social sciences, sociologists did not look upon “the economy” and “politics or government” as coming under the province of sociology’s study of culture but as more naturally falling under the auspices of economics and political science. Instead sociologists focused on family, education, religion, community, and the fine arts.

A third explanation, one frequently suggested, is that sociology was preoccupied by its own internal struggles, “the increasing organizational and intellectual splintering . . . , which already in the 1920s had begun breaking down into specialized areas of empirical research and distinct methodological camps.” (Camic 273). I incorporate this theme into the commentary on Camic in the section that follows.

Camic concludes with three points of convergence that sociologists arrived at over the course of the 1930s. One, that sociologists had a public role to play: “Whether in its hard (objectivist) or softer (Parkian) forms, scientism generally combined the belief that sociological investigators should eschew value-laden statements and other expressions of partisanship with a commitment to sociologists’ involvement in public policy discussions” (Camic 274). Two, that empirical research and the publication of results was a central activity (a shift that Camic feels historians have not well accounted for but which his narrative suggests may be a result of the growth of federal employment and federal funding for research). And three, as discussed above, an agreement that culture was sociology’s subject matter.

CHANGING THE MODEL: FROM CENTER TO MARGINS

Charles Camic’s work in “On the Edge” has particular interest for me as I am one of a small group of scholars who have wrestled in some way with the some of the same materials he has here—the other three, R.E.L. Faris, Henrika Kuklick and Don Martindale, are now dead—so I had better write quickly! When I did the research in the 1970s for “The Founding of the American Sociological Review: The Anatomy of a Rebellion” (1979), I looked in part at the ASS meeting of 1935 and discovered but did not generalize the distinction between profession and discipline; I tended to accept that “sociology” was the people and practices I was describing therein. In the subsequent years, my encounter with feminism and, through that, the reawakening of the skepticism of authority engrained in the liberationist political theories of my youth (by thinkers from my island, Trinidad, like Eric Williams, C.L.R. James, and Oliver Cox), have led me to revise my understanding of sociology.

So, as I re-read “On the Edge,” I asked myself “*who are the sociologists being discussed here?*” As I have indicated in the first section of this paper, I am impressed by Professor Camic’s commitment to and practice of disciplined historical analysis. But I think his execution of the strategy of holding the line of argument to a “focus” on “the effects on sociology” of “the Depression and the New Deal” with “occasional enlargements of the historical canvas {to} call attention to choices that were not made” could have led to a better account if the historical canvas had included mention of the other groups and places—outside of the professional core of sociology represented at the apex of the ASA—where sociology was being practiced. The *profession* of sociology in Camic’s treatment is controlled almost entirely by a small population of hegemonic white, academic men, with senior positions in the sociology departments of six elite universities—Chicago, Columbia, North Carolina, Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin. This is, let me stress a quite accurate depiction of what was thought of by the academy as professional sociology at that time. But the

discipline of sociology—the use and creation of theories, methods, and empirical studies focused on how people organize to live together and the effects of that organizing on people—involved many more actors operating at a variety of locations. For Americans, in particular, had early embraced sociology as a scientific method for solving social problems (Bernard and Bernard 1943).

So, in what follows I want to lay out a research agenda based on a theoretical hunch—a hunch drawn most especially from feminist theorizing, that urges a movement of vision to consider the margins of the community being studied, to, in the case of the response to Professor Camic, move from center to margin. I wish to offer an alternative model of sociology as a stratified community in which the core group just described related to a greater or lesser degree to four other groups: (1) the associational players, white primarily male academics not at the elite universities; (2) the rank and file, men and women who practiced the discipline of sociology but were largely outside the relations of the professional organization of sociology; (3) the “social workers,” in Camic’s account largely women who appear in his narrative as important players in the New Deal, and (4) HBCUs the historically black colleges and universities where African American sociologists worked. My data for this account come from a preliminary review of the *AJS* 1930-1939, including the suggested program for the ASS Annual Meeting, the research projects listed by author and school in the yearly Census of Research Report, and the “News and Notes” section. I also reviewed the articles and book reviews for the same period in *AJS*, *Social Forces*, *Rural Sociology*, *The Journal of Educational Sociology*, *The Journal of Negro Education*, *The Crisis*, and two volumes of the *Negro Year Book* (1931 and 1938).

The **associational players** become important in the 1930s as members of the “rebels” who supported and, in a few cases, helped lead the “rebellion” of 1935 that founded the *American Sociological Review* and broke the University of Chicago Department’s dominance in the profession. In this discussion here I draw on a 1934 symposium held in the pages of *Social Forces* (13: 2, December 1934) titled “Questions for Sociology: An Informal Roundtable Discussion,” an event Camic also discusses. The event is important as perhaps the first formal acknowledgement to a broad audience that sociology’s engagement with the Great Depression—the subject of all the questions—was inadequate. All participants were like the core members, white academic men, most in senior academic positions, but only two of the 25 from the elite schools (Arthur Evans Wood, Michigan; Malcolm Willey, Minnesota). Other anomalies were Stuart Rice, who had been at Chicago and the University of Pennsylvania, now listed his affiliation as the “US Census Bureau,” but he would be widely seen as “the Chicago candidate” in the 1935 ASS Presidential election, and Maurice T. Price listed simply as “Washington, D.C.” an occasional visiting professor at the University of Illinois and the University of Washington in the 1930s who had lived from 1917 to 1927 with Christian missions in China; two others came from modest schools, in terms of sociology rankings—Clemson Agricultural College and Hartford Theological Seminary. There is a fair amount of overlap between the symposium participants and the men I identified as rebels in “Anatomy of a Rebellion.”

Four traits characterize the participants in this symposium. First, a shared resentment of Chicago’s control over the executive offices of ASS; the publications of the profession, notably the *AJS*; the annual meeting programs and selection of participants, and access to research funds. Their determination was to change this monopoly and, in December 1935 they succeeded in a rebellion at the annual meeting in New York City (Lengermann 1979). Several of those who contributed to the symposium and the 1935 revolt had

held or would go on to hold executive office in the reconstructed ASS—including Presidents Emory Bogardus, 1931; Luther Bernard 1932, Edwin Reuter 1933, Henry Fairchild 1935, Frank Hankins 1938, Stuart Queen 1941, Dwight Sanderson 1942. This point, especially the presence of previous presidents, suggests a fairly wide and deep dissatisfaction, not just a disgruntlement of junior members, which may suggest in turn a highly refined state of stratification in organized professional sociology where even people who had had some success felt left out of major decision making moments. Second, in studying the statements made at the symposium, no clear alternative theory emerges; indeed, the symposium statements reveal commonalities with the core group, grudgingly or wholeheartedly stated. The issues shared with the core group are promotion of a scientist philosophy, a value-neutral stance toward their research, and a subject matter focused on the study of culture as attitudes, norms, values, beliefs, and institutions—a pattern Camic also identifies. Third, they shared an expressed dissatisfaction with the core group's failure to seriously engage the Depression and the New Deal. Fourth, a study of articles in the ancillary journals shows that many of these men did publish or present on impacts of the Depression or New Deal.

Rank and file sociologists were men and women who practiced sociology at non-elite schools and in places outside the traditional academy like agricultural stations, government agencies, non-governmental organizations like settlement houses, philanthropic foundations and research associations. I turned to look at these sociologists—largely but, in many cases, undeservedly forgotten, because I wished to test the hypothesis that we get a significantly different picture of sociology in the Thirties if we move from the center to the margins of the sociological community.

I began with a clue offered by Camic, as he summarizes sociology's response to the Great Depression, "the early 1930s brought forth from sociology (so far as I am aware) only one book focused on the Depression, *Human Aspects of Unemployment and Relief* (1933) by James Mickel Williams, a sociologist (from Hobart and William Smith colleges) situated well outside the professional mainstream and its tributaries" (259-260). For my purposes here, I selected this book and let Professor Williams stand as an example of the rank-and-file sociologist of the Depression. (Now in doing this, I am perhaps unfair to Professor Williams and perhaps over-sanguine about the life-chances of the average rank and file member as Professor Williams had what many of us might consider a quite successful career as detailed in his *Footnotes* obituary by Helmut R. Wagner of Hobart and William Smith. Williams was a student of Franklin Giddings, earned his PhD at Columbia, and became, as Professor Wagner describes him, part of that first generation of American sociologists to "make the journey from armchair sociology to serious investigations on a social psychological basis." His dissertation *An American Town* was published in 1906 and is still available today; (Professor Wagner sees it as building on Williams training under Giddings, which encouraged that students seek explanations of phenomena in "psychological" rather than "biological" factors.) Williams pursued this directive in several books—*Our Rural Heritage* (1925), *The Expansion of Rural Life* (1926) and *The Foundations of Social Science: An Analysis of Their Psychological Aspects* (1920), and *Principles of Social Psychology as Developed in an Analysis of Economic and Social Conflict* (1922) and then for his last book responds to the Depression with *Human Aspects of Unemployment and Relief* (1933).

Human Aspects is a case study of how the experiences of being unemployed and going on relief affect families in five upstate New York counties; it is drawn from records of various relief agencies in that area

directly charged with overseeing relief and from larger pictures presented by state, regional, and national organizations and government agencies. Williams's particular focus is on the effects on families and, especially, children of having the main breadwinner, almost always the father, unemployed. The study is rich in stories of relief recipients drawn from welfare workers' files. Though Williams may be located, as Camic judges, at a distance from mainstream sociology, *Human Aspects* meets many of the desiderata that professional sociology held out for its subject matter and method—Burgess (1938) lamented sociologists have made “no adequate recording of the greatest depression in history”; Fairchild (1936) argued the need for sociologists to see business as part of culture and, therefore, of the subject matter of sociology; a 1933 ASS committee on the introductory course in sociology recommends “culture,” meaning socially produced things, including attitudes and institutions, as one of the field's organizing concepts—along with “the inculcation of definite scientific attitudes” (“Recommendations of the Committee” 1933). Williams delivers on these points; he declares his purpose—“This book has been written as part of the record of these times; and it will be of practical use after the depression is over”; he places the problem of relief in “the institutional setting”—“the situation [that is, the inadequate relief system] occurs within an institutional setting. Our economic system is one in which managers, representing absentee stockholders, and often with the dictation of absence financial interests, control the activities of workers”; he looks at the attitudes that keep the relief system in place—“this acquiescence [of the poor on relief] is the fact that impresses the sociologist. It rests on that complex of social attitudes that expresses itself in the conventional acceptance of the social order. And in his data collection, and ultimately its publication, Williams worked in partnership with welfare workers desperate to have their story told in a way that would arouse understanding and a desire for change. He is the sociologist working with the social worker to produce meaning and coherence and a plan for action. The only point he might be judged falling short on is professional sociology's equation of “scientism” with “value-neutrality.”

The research issues here for the history of sociology is how many studies like this were there? What happened to them? And what happened to their authors? My preliminary review of *AJS* not in terms of the articles published, about which I agree with Camic's assessment, but in its descriptions of annual meeting programs, research in progress and “News and Notes” as well as my review of articles in *Social Forces*, *Rural Sociology*, and *The Journal of the Sociology of Education* does suggest that there was a numerous group of men and women whose writings and research cover a wide-range of topics, often focused on the newly ascendant understanding of culture, like family and community, and frequently exploring consequences of the Depression and New Deal (poverty, reduced standards of living, relief efforts, migration, relations between white and minority populations, and the mixed effects of New Deal policies on the attitudes of the groups being studied). While many were employed at or graduate students in the non-elite institutions, others worked at state-level relief agencies, agricultural stations, university extension programs, and as data collectors in New Deal agencies. Some of these people were members of ASS as suggested by the listing of new members in *AJS* but others may have helped form and participated in the less expensive regional associations that began in the 1930s (see Camic 238). Less than half the regional association members belonged to the ASS (Pease and Hetrick 1977).

“Social Workers” The question of the marginalization of social work within sociology brings us to an issue which perhaps unexpectedly takes us deep into the history of American sociology. In studying the 1930s, Camic is struck by the fact that the social work was one of the top three professions in the New Deal measured by number of people employed, along with economists and lawyers (246). Noting that many key positions in the New Deal administration were staffed by social workers and that up to 50,000 new positions were created in agencies for caseworkers and welfare workers, he explains that sociologists, nevertheless, distanced themselves from social work because they saw it as “a low status female profession” (246). But he remains puzzled about the history of the relation between sociology and social work which he says is “a complicated trend that scholars have yet to investigate in sufficient detail” (n. 231).

In the same volume as “On the Edge,” I have (with Gillian Niebrugge) a chapter on sociology’s relationship with social work “Thrice-Told: Narratives of Sociology’s Relation to Social Work” (2007: 63-114) in which we argue that there are three possible interpretations of sociology’s relation to social work as it evolved in the 1920s and 1930s in the US. “A natural history narrative” shows sociology and social work growing apart over time because of dynamics of differentiation in each. “The social history narrative” treats the relation between sociology and social work as an ongoing social construction, created not by the abstract dynamics of differentiation “but out of the actions, relationships, negotiations and associational inventions of individual social actors in multiple social settings,” including the academy. The critical history narrative is a later interpretation by second wave feminism, from the 1980 to the present, that traces the separation of sociology and social work to their mutual embrace of “professionalism” which called for “objectivity” and value neutrality, separating them both from projects of advocacy and critique. The critical narrative introduces a new actor by focusing on the social settlements and settlement sociology, a topic now of intense focus from feminist historians of sociology, (Deegan 1988, Lengermann and Niebrugge 1998, 2002, 2007; Williams and MacLean 2015).

The critical narrative of sociology’s relation to social work makes five points: (1) between 1885 and 1930 there existed a third location for both sociology and social work other than the professional bases of the academy and relief agencies-- the settlement houses, which numbered around 410 by 1910, located throughout the US; (2) the settlement movement was united around the goal of reforming society and formulated its social theory and research on a particular understanding of social science; (3) that understanding combined sociology and social work into “a science of reform” with theory, methodology and a body of research that “mobilized public opinion to effect legislative change”; (4) settlement social scientists participated in both sociology and social work, but their activist stance marginalized and erased them from the histories of both disciplines, and (5) at every stage, including the final act of erasure, settlement sociology were affected by “a politics of gender.” Further while the primary location for sociology as a science of reform was in the settlement houses, there were also bases in other settlement-inspired projects: the Consumers League, the Urban League, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and the Children’s Bureau and Women’s Bureau in the federal government. The settlements are a thread linking these progressive groups. Second, Jane Addams (1860-1935) and the Hull House settlement (established 1889) are the major actors in this narrative, “Addams serving as both prototype and archetype for the emergence of women into public life and for the ways women participated in the

founding of American sociology" (Lengermann and Niebrugge 2007: 94). Addams saw the problem afflicting American democracy as the capitalist mal-distribution of goods and services and the answer lying in developing greater equality; she said early in her career and lived all her life by the principle that "*The good we secure for ourselves is precarious and uncertain... until it is secured for all of us and incorporated into our common life.*" That incorporation had to come through structural change not through the "social diagnosis" of individuals by "caseworkers." This difference in approach divided the settlement sociologist from the social worker and created a lasting rift within social work between the casework approach and those advocated structural change and formed schools of "social administration" (Reich and Drews 2001).

In the 1930s, many women—and men—who had been part of the settlement movement were still active in public life (though Addams was weakened by ill health and would die in 1935)—and were sometimes identified as "social workers" because the public generally were often not too certain about the distinction. But the distinction was very real. Indeed, for Addams, the social worker sometimes represented the negative other, the thing that settlement workers were not in terms of their relationships to the people they wished to help: the social worker stood as a counselor to help individuals in trouble adjust to the demands of their social environment; the settlement resident stood as a neighbor to help the neighborhood build a community in which everyone could experience equity, that is, a share of the common good.

I would qualify Professor Camic's conclusion that "some of the principal policymakers and administrators of the New Deal had roots in social work" because that conjures up an image of individuals dealing one-on-one with people in trouble. With the exception of Eduard Lindemann the people Camic names as social workers who influenced policy—Grace Abbott, Harry Hopkins, Paul Kellog, Henry Morgenthau Jr., and Frances Perkins—had all had settlement house training, as indeed had Eleanor Roosevelt who worked before her marriage at Rivington Street Settlement in New York City and provides one line linking the New Deal to settlement house sociologists. Many of the 50,000 jobs for case workers and other welfare workers Camic refers to, probably meant work for both settlement workers and social workers. But the distinction can be elusive—and was clearer at the beginning of the settlement experiment in the 1890s than it was by the 1930s. For example, Helen Hall had a successful career that combined settlement work, social work, an orientation to structural change, and some power in the New Deal. A snapshot of how this blurred distinction looked can be seen in the 1933 ASA Annual Meeting program in the listing for a Session on "Effects of Job Security and Insecurity on Personality" jointly presented by the Section on Sociology and Psychiatry and the American Association for Labor Legislation, with Helen Hall of the Henry Street Settlement speaking on "Current Methods of Handling Unemployment in the Light of Existing Psychiatric Knowledge." This could, given the total context, sound as if it were a demonstration of social casework but the focus out of the settlement houses would be changing the bureaucratic processing of unemployment. In the early 1930s, Hall sat on the Advisory Council of the President's Committee on Economic Security which helped to create the Social Security Act. And she did have training both at the settlements and in social work.

I venture the hypothesis, as a possibility for further research, that sociology would be in a stronger place by the end of the 1930s and today, if sociology had worked out a viable relation with some parts of the social work continuum, those parts known in Britain as "social administration" which like the American settlement

sociologists sought to provide not individual casework but support in making structural change to produce a more equitable society.

The Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), A fourth move from center to margin should include the sociology practiced at the HBCUs as part of the picture of sociology in the US in the 1930s. While there are signs in the journal literature I have reviewed of African Americans both as subjects and makers of sociology and while there are important treatments by white sociologists of African Americans who worked in white academies (see Winant 2007), white sociology has for the most part remained blind to sociological work done in the 131 HBCUs in the 1930s—with the exception of W.E.B. Du Bois's work at Atlanta University. But during the period of the Depression and New Deal, black sociologists working at HBCUs like Howard, Fisk, Atlanta, and Tuskegee were doing significant sociology under conditions of chronic material shortages and the constant pressure of living in a world ultimately organized by racial prejudice. This unwitting blindness of white sociology is displayed in the lists Camic (272) summarizes of "'great books' in sociology" which he notes "all but exclude works of American sociologists from the Depression era" except for Parsons's *The Structure of Social Action* (1937), Lundberg's *Foundations of Sociology* (1939) and Lynd's *Knowledge for What?* (1939). While Camic is justifiably skeptical about these lists, they do underscore the wall that separated black and white sociology, because in 1935 Du Bois published *Black Reconstruction in America: An Essay Toward a History of the Part Which Black Folk Played in the Attempt to Reconstruct Democracy in America, 1860–1880*—a book that challenged prevailing definitions of those crucial two decades in America's long history of racial conflict and which might have been considered for inclusion on these lists. The incorporation or even recognition of black sociology has moved slowly since Donald Cunnigen's 2003 statement of the problem: "unlike major universities with extensive works dedicated to the historical contributions of a single academic department, most African-American colleges are considered fortunate if they have any institutional history in print. It is the rare African-American college that has a published volume on an academic department" (397). But as the glimpses of sociological research and writing at the better known HBCUs—Howard, Fisk, Atlanta, Tuskegee—suggest, there was a brave, pioneering and vibrant sociology being practiced at the HBCUs in the 1930s. An important research initiative should be to review that output as part of completing the history of sociology in this troubled decade. One source of data can be a review of *AJS* in the 1930s looking at "Report of the Research Census" done each year, to which African American sociologists sent in statements of their own research. Other important sources are articles and reviews in *Social Forces*, the best of the white journals on race relation and Howard University's *Journal of Negro Education*, Du Bois's NAACP magazine *The Crisis*, contemporary writings by Black members of the history of sociology community like Aldon Morris and Earl Wright III, and two installments of an extraordinary serial edited by Monroe Work, the 8th (1931) and 9th (1938) editions of his *Negro Year Book—An Encyclopedia of the Negro*. This last is an invaluable source for studying the effects of the Depression on African Americans. The year books claim in their prefaces to be *the* information resource about Black Americans, and this does not seem an idle boast. Work appears to draw on sources from all over the US and much of the world. He offers a comprehensive assessment of Black life under general standing categories such as race relations, education, family, agriculture, business, inventions, crime, etc. All of these look at what is termed "the progress of the Negro"—taking 1865 as the starting point. The various reports given under these categories are well written and

frequently supplemented by informative charts and tables. Work was part of what Aldon Morris describes as “the lost generation of black sociologists,” sociologists whose significance and achievements are in danger of disappearing but who would have been of an age to be doing important work in the 1930s and Work really was. *The Negro Year Book* could lay claim to being one of the most useful books ever compiled by a sociologist. It is particularly relevant for the project of exploring the 1930s because volume 8 (1931) and volume 9 (1938) are available for comparison. In both one finds a recording of the effects of the Depression on African Americans. These are vital data sources for seeing how sociology—not as a mainstream profession but as a discipline of inquiry on behalf of an oppressed people was achieving what Burgess feels mainstream sociology has missed, the making of a record of the Depression years “by students of society” (Camic, 271). Figure 1 on the left gives an overview of the Table of Contents for one year, 1931.

THE NEGRO IN UNITED STATES	
DIVISION I INTER-RACIAL COOPERATION	DIVISION XIV INVENTIONS
DIVISION II WOMEN'S WORK	DIVISION XV CARNEGIE HERO FUND COMMISSION AWARDS
DIVISION III ANTICIPATION CELEBRATIONS	DIVISION XVI SPORTS
DIVISION IV RACIAL CONSCIOUSNESS	DIVISION XVII SCHOLARSHIP AND OTHER DISTINCTIONS
DIVISION V DISCRIMINATIONS	DIVISION XVIII EDUCATION
DIVISION VI NEGROES AND JURY SERVICE	DIVISION XIX CHURCH
DIVISION VII SEGREGATION	DIVISION XX CRIME
DIVISION VIII RACIAL INTEGRITY	DIVISION XXI LYNCHING
DIVISION IX POLITICS	DIVISION XXII MORTALITY STATISTICS
DIVISION X PROGRESS	DIVISION XXIII SLAVERY IN THE UNITED STATES
DIVISION XI AGRICULTURE	DIVISION XXIV NEGRO SOLDIERS
DIVISION XII BUSINESS	DIVISION XXV POPULATION, UNITED STATES
DIVISION XIII LABOR	

Each Division contains empirical accounts of the “Negro’s experience” of the topic named in its title. For instance, under Division XX “Crime,” Work reports that “From various sections of the country, there have come complaints of the brutality of police in arresting Negroes.” The discussion goes on to give specific examples and tables on crime rates and arrest rates, comparing Black and white, and discussing unfair sentencing practices. Divisions on Business and on Inventions report on black success stories. This research would provide an insight into the utility of sociology as a discipline in a time of crisis, allowing for a comparison of its relevance in black and white society. Without the inclusion of the African American community, we have to question if we can speak about sociology in America in the 1930s.

Conclusion

It has been a great pleasure to spend a portion of my time over the last few months revisiting the history of sociology in the 1930s in the company of Charles Camic’s “On the Edge.” He begins his conclusion to that pioneering essay by noting that “since, like others, sociologists prefer to recall their accomplishments rather than episodes of self-perceived failure, it is little wonder that sociology’s history during the Depression and the New Deal has previously fallen outside of the discipline’s collective memory.” Denial is certainly one response to embarrassment. But the question here is, what is the right response to achievement, when the quality of another person’s work sparks interest and gives pleasure. I think the response to that should be imitation. And the right action is to keep alive the pioneering work done by Professor Camic with our own efforts to explore what happened in American sociology in the 1930s. I have tried to suggest that exploration can be enriched by moving one’s attention from the power centers of the profession of sociology to the sociologists who work faithfully in the discipline’s margins.

REFERENCES

Bernard, Luther and Jessie Bernard. 1943. *The Origins of American Sociology: The Social Science Movement in the United States*. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co.

- Camic, Charles. 2007. "On the Edge: Sociology During the Great Depression and the New Deal," Pp 225-280 in *Sociology in America: A History*, edited by Craig Calhoun. Chicago: University of Chicago Press
- Deegan, Mary Jo. 1988 *Jane Addams and the Men of the Chicago School 1892-1913* New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Books.
- Fairchild, Henry Pratt. 1934. Contribution to "Questions for Sociology: An Informal Round Table Symposium." *Social Forces* 13:179-181.
- Hankins, Frank. 1934. Contribution to "Questions for Sociology: An Informal Round Table Symposium." *Social Forces* 13: 202-203.
- Heilbrun, Carolyn. 1988. *Writing a Woman's Life*. New York: Norton.
- Lengermann, Patricia Madoo. 1979."The Founding of the American Sociological Review: The Anatomy of a Rebellion." *American Sociological Review* 44: 185-198.
- Lengermann, Patricia Madoo and Gillian Niebrugge 2002. "Back to the Future: Settlement Sociology 1885-1930." *The American Sociologist* 33: 5-15
- Lengermann, Patricia Madoo and Gillian Niebrugge. 2007 "Thrice-Told: Narratives of Sociology's Relation to Social Work" Pp 63-114 in *Sociology in America: A History*, edited by Craig Calhoun. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Lengermann, Patricia Madoo and Gillian Niebrugge. 2014. "Debating Service Sociology: The Settlements, The Academy, and the Social Work Profession, 1890-1930." In *Service Sociology* edited by Javier Trevino and Karen McCormick, London: Ashgate Publishers.
- Lengermann, Patricia Madoo and Gillian Niebrugge. 2015. "The Founding of DCSS—Part One." *The Sociologist* February pp. 7-10.
- Lengermann, Patricia Madoo and Gillian Niebrugge. 2016. "A Washington Life: The Sociology of Anna Julia Cooper" *The Sociologist* May pp. 6-12.
- Pease, John, and Barbara Hetrick. 1977. "Association for Whom: The Regionals and the American Sociological Association." *The American Sociologist* 12: 42-47.
- Recommendations of the Committee on the Introductory Course. 1933. https://www-jstor-org.proxygw.wrlc.org/stable/2961512?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents; doi DOI: 10.2307/2961512
- Reisch, Michael and Janice Andrews. 2001. *The Road Not Taken A History of Radical Social Work in the United States*. Ann Arbor, MI: Brunner Routledge.
- Williams, James Mickel. 1933. *Human Aspects of Unemployment and Relief*. Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press.
- Williams, Joyce E. and Vicky M. MacLean. 2015. *Settlement Sociology in the Progressive Years—Faith, Science, and Reform*. Chicago: Haymarket Books

Comments: Edges/Margins/Everywhere/Nowhere

Peter Kivisto

Augustana College

In their respective papers prepared for the History of Sociology section's 2020 ASA conference, Patricia Lengermann and Charles Camic engage in further consideration of developments in American sociology during the 1930s. This was a period during which a deep economic crisis was met by an intervention by the federal government unlike anything that had occurred since the founding of the republic, and in the process it implicitly laid out issues germane to the idea of a public sociology not only at that historical juncture, but subsequently. Lengermann and Camic make those issues explicit. The New Deal, arising out of a desperate time, managed to be both bold and pragmatic, constrained by the dynamics of racial and class politics. By the end of the decade, the contours of a distinctive American welfare state were in place, providing such social rights to citizens as Social Security and unemployment compensation. At the same time, as Ira Katznelson has made clear, in order to elicit the support from Dixiecrats, those rights were skewed along racial lines. Katznelson (2006) aptly characterized this moment as one in which "affirmative action was white."

This constitutes the backdrop for Lengermann and Camic's reflections, which are not focused on the New Deal, *per se*, but rather on how sociology fit into the creation of the welfare state. This is an especially consequential concern given that the New Deal, in expanding the role of national government, paved the way for bringing experts into the policy-making process. As sociology had succeeded in institutionalizing itself within universities leading up to the stock market crash in 1929, one might reasonably have expected that they would have assumed roles akin to those played by economists and political scientists. This is precisely the topic that Camic explored in considerable detail in his contribution to the Craig Calhoun-edited, 913-page tome published on the centennial of the founding of the American Sociological Society. That chapter, "On Edge: Sociology during the Great Depression and the New Deal," serves as a point of departure for both papers. In Lengermann's case, the goal is to suggest that the empirical frame of reference for what counted at American sociology would benefit from a more expansive perspective than an elite-centered account, while Camic reflects on whether sociologists were as marginalized from elite networks than he had earlier thought.

As this suggests, one cannot simply comment on the two papers, but instead must begin with "On Edge." In this chapter, Camic (2007: 229) observed that, "By the end of the 1920s, sociology stood as an established component of the liberal arts program in an expanding number of universities and colleges, particularly in the Midwest." In arriving at this point, the discipline had coalesced around seeing its subject matter as socio-cultural, thereby breaking with biology, while simultaneously seeking to emulate the methodological scientism of the natural sciences and in the process creating a distance between sociological analysis and social reform. This did not mean that sociologists were disinclined to want to play an active role in informing and shaping social policy. Indeed, the conviction that sociology has a "public role" to play "ran deep" in the discipline (Camic 2007: 231).

The Depression, because of the financial strains experienced by institutions of higher education, put this hard-earned achievement to the test. Nevertheless, Camic contends that sociologists had reason to assume that once the New Deal took off, they might be invited to participate in informing policy decisions. To the dismay of most sociologists at the time, few opportunities for involvement in policy were forthcoming, in stark contrast to the experience of economists and political scientists, and thus in terms of engaging in a policy-oriented public sociology, this looks like a lost decade for the discipline.

Camic focused on two factors that contributed to sociology's marginalization: networks and framing. The former points to the fact that FDR's New Deal brain trust derived heavily from Ivy League institutions, precisely the places where sociology had only slowly gained entry. Thus, prominent sociologists elsewhere in the country were not sufficiently networked into these elite circles to receive the call for service. They waited, but the phone did not ring. This was an external impediment to participation, whereas framing was an internally produced limitation. Camic depicts the framing of sociology's subject matter as "culture" as being at the root of the problem. I am not convinced by this argument, in part because institutional analysis—certainly within the Chicago School—laid the groundwork for research on the material manifestations of culture and these certainly should have been of interest to New Deal administrators. I am more convinced by the conclusion of "On Edge," in which Camic (2007: 280) points to consequential roads not taken, in the form of failing to develop the subfields of the sociology of economics, political sociology, and the sociology of law,

He also raises concerns about the negative impact of the emergence of disciplinary subfields more broadly. But here, I am not quite certain about the argument. Is it subfields per se that are problematic, or is it the specific subfields that emerged? Or is it about how various specializations are packaged for presentation at annual meetings? Camic observes that the American Economics Association annual meetings were structured around thematic sessions and not subfield specializations, while the American Sociological Society were organized in the opposite way. Did this have implications for the disciplinary presentation of self to larger outside audiences seeking needed expertise? Maybe, but I would like to know more.

In Camic's revising of his earlier conclusions, he points to the relatively robust presence of rural sociologists in New Deal efforts to address the Depression's impact on the agricultural sector and on rural America. Why, I wonder, did rural sociologists succeed in being invited to the table, whereas urban sociologists did not? Though Robert Park's career was winding down and the work on cities in the 1920s did not carry over in quite the same way in the 1930s, the department's urban interests continued to be advanced by Louis Wirth. And, of course, Chicago was by that time not the only place promoting urban sociology. I, quite frankly, do not have an answer to why urban sociologists fared poorly, and would suggest that this might prove to be a fruitful topic for a future historian of sociology to explore. I do, however, have a hunch that the establishing of land-grant institutions under the provisions of the Morrill Act in the nineteenth century may in part account for the fact that New Deal policy makers turned to rural sociologists. Under the provisions of the legislation, part of the core mission of these institutions involved assisting in the formulation of agricultural policies aimed to strengthen the rural sector during a period of rapid industrialization. Consequently, this cadre of sociologists may have had the ear of New Dealers in a way that urban sociologists simply did not.

Summarizing the take-away regarding Camic's rethinking of network, he argues that it ought to be seen as an important explanatory variable in accounting for sociology's fate during the 1930s, but it was not as insular as "On Edge" suggested. Put another way, the strength of weak ties—such as those of rural sociologists—needs to be factored into the analysis. In terms of framing, Camic persuasively calls for more attention being paid to sociology's subfields. I would also speculate that although sociologists had wanted to play a role in social policy, it may be that they failed to articulate precisely what they meant since they were simultaneously continuing to seek distance from social reformers. The result may have been mixed messages.

And it is precisely on this score that Lengermann's intervention is made. Her main point is that Camic's admittedly elite-centered focus distorts the larger picture of American sociology, which was not only more diverse, but at least for three of the groups she identifies the performance of sociology was undertaken with little effort aimed at modelling their vision of the profession along elite lines. She identifies four groups: the associational players, the rank-and-file, social workers, and professors at historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs). In defining these groups, Lengermann has offered for consideration four potential research agendas, which if pursued will yield a richer, more complex understanding of sociology during the 1930s.

The first group—associational players—differs from the other three insofar as its members were either already established elites or were knocking at the gates of the elite establishment. Their bond was opposition to the dominance of the University of Chicago in the ASS and its annual meetings, its control of the discipline's flagship journal, and its ability to parcel out research funding. Their vision of sociology did not differ from that of their opponents, and as such these "rebels" were largely engaged in a struggle over the redistribution of power. Any successful analysis of this rebellion must proceed with an appreciation of this narrative's complexity and ambiguity. Thus, I simply observe that two of the rebels cited by Lengermann—Emory Bogardus and Edwin Reuter—were products of the University of Chicago during the Albion Small era. Moreover, they had ongoing relationships with his successors. Bogardus' research on race relations on the Pacific coast are connected to Park's work and conceptually framed in similar ways. Reuter, once he retired, was invited to Fisk University as a resident scholar, replacing Park in that capacity after his death. Both had been invited to Fisk by Charles S. Johnson, a former student of Park who authored the famous study of the 1919 Chicago race riot (and who, incidentally, is the grandfather of Jeh Johnson, the Secretary of Homeland Security during the Obama administration).

The other three groups constitute sociologists at the margins. The rank-and-file is a broad category that would need further analytic refinement in order to know precisely who counted as a member. To begin with, how many of those in this group would also fall into one of the other two marginalized groups? How many of these sociologists had been trained by elites and sought to transplant what they had learned to the provinces? In contrast, how many either resisted or ignored the elite vision of the discipline and profession? Were these sociologists publishing or were they primarily or entirely devoted to teaching? What was their role in the establishment of regional sociological societies, and did they see such organizations in pragmatic terms (easier to get to annual meetings, less expensive, more of a *Gemeinschaft* feeling?), or were they seen as a rejection of the ASA? Did they have local venues for sociological policy engagement?

Whereas it is an open question about where to turn for previous research on the rank-and-file and for sources of archival material, such is not true for social workers. There is a solid body of research upon which to build, and there is no better place to begin than with Lengermann's chapter co-authored with Gillian Niebrugge that appears in the same collection as "The Edge"—their article titled "Thrice Told: Narratives of

Sociology's Relation to Social Work" (Lengermann and Niebrugge 2007: 63-114). And there is considerable archival material available, such as the Social Welfare History Archives housed at the University of Minnesota's Anderson Library.

This is also true of sociologists who worked at HBCUs. Work has been underway since the 1970s to retrieve the legacies of several Black sociologists, sometimes paying attention to the institutional settings in which they worked. The most recent expression of this trend can be found in Aldon Morris' (2017) influential study of W.E.B. DuBois, in which he argues that a distinctive Atlanta School of Sociology was created but has yet to achieve the level of recognition it deserves. I am in complete agreement with the need to continue research in this area, which would include studies of white sociologists who were employed at HBCUs, including émigré scholars fleeing the rise of European fascism.

I will conclude by pointing to yet another marginalized group that merits further inquiry: Catholic sociologists teaching at Catholic colleges and universities. In the interwar period, liberal Catholics participating in a neo-scholastic revival attempted to come to terms with modernizing intellectual currents in the larger society, while simultaneously seeking to preserve central elements of the Catholic tradition. Among Catholic sociologists, this intellectual movement took institutional form in the founding of the American Catholic Sociological Society in 1938 (Kivisto 1989). Since some of the Catholic sociologists were also involved in both civil rights issues and the labor struggle, their response to the Depression and their relationship to New Deal planners merits further attention.

As these comments reveal (in which I raised far more questions than offering answers to them), we are in debt to Professors Camic and Lengermann for encouraging us to reconsider sociology in the 1930s, a decade that has not received the attention it is due. They point us in potentially productive avenues of investigation and suggest serviceable ways of framing those inquiries.

References

- Camic, Charles. 2007. "On Edge: Sociology during the Great Depression and the New Deal." Pp. 224-280 in Craig Calhoun, ed., *Sociology in America: A History*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- _____. 2020. "Everywhere and Nowhere." Paper prepared for the History of Sociology section session at the American Sociological Association annual meeting.
- Katznelson, Ira. 2006. *When Affirmative Action Was White: An Untold History of Racial Inequality in Twentieth Century America*. New York: W.W. Norton.
- Kivisto, Peter 1989. "The Brief Career of Catholic Sociology." *Sociological Analysis*, 50(4): 351-361.
- Lengermann, Patricia Madoo. 2020 "'On the Edge' and at the Margins: An Appreciation of and Response to Charles Camic's Study of Sociology in the 1930s." Paper prepared for the History of Sociology section session at the American Sociological Association annual meeting.
- Lengermann, Patricia and Gillian Niebrugge. 2007. "Thrice Told: Narratives of Sociology's Relation to Social Work." Pp. 63-114 in Craig Calhoun, ed., *Sociology in America: A History*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Morris, Aldon. 2017. *The Scholar Denied: W.E.B. DuBois and the Birth of Modern Sociology*. Oakland: University of California Press.