

Theory

RC16 Winter 2018 Newsletter



Sociological
Theory

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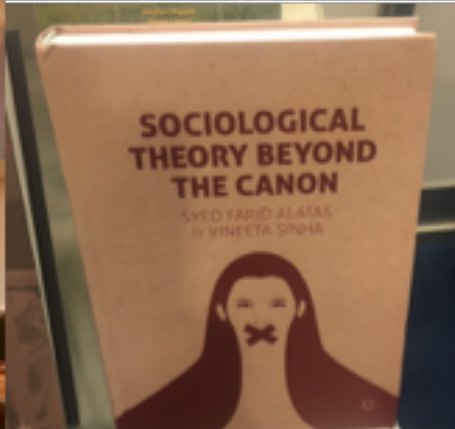
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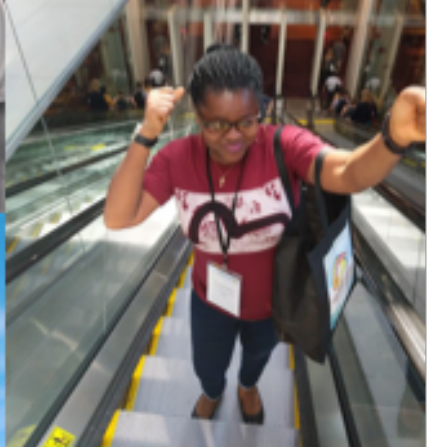
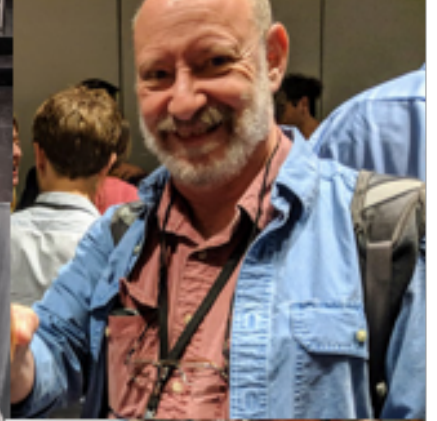


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Editors' Introduction

Dmitry Kurakin and Dean Ray

We are happy to take up the positions of the editors of the Newsletter, after the four successful years led by Erik Schneiderhan and Dan Silver. Newsletters like ours serve an important function for group life, as they provide a record of our interactions and serve as a symbol of those moments that found and re-found communities like RC16. Drawing on the developments of our forerunners, we are introducing several novelties. Our goal is to make the newsletter even more entertaining by keeping up with the high bar of style and professionalism, set by the previous editors. We are eager to make the newsletter a genuine venue for rich intellectual exchange and the great collaborative spirit of our community in the long periods between the collective effervescences of the congresses, forums and mid-term conferences.

Central to this issue are such moments. Our Newsletter begins with a collection of photographs from the ISA World Congress. One features the view of the Skydome from a hotel terrace in Toronto, another a book titled *Sociological Theory Beyond the Canon*. Yet another commemorates the meeting of the nominees for the ISA Junior Scholars Award on a local beach in Toronto. Some are from the ISA pre-conference Future Theory organized by Christopher Powell, Ariane Hanemaayer, and Dean Ray. Finally, many are from our exciting assemblies, including the dinner to honor Jeffrey C. Alexander who was the recipient of the Distinguished Contributions to Sociological Theory Award. Each photograph provides a window into the circuits of meaning our members weaved throughout Toronto in late July.

Photographs capture something within moments that cannot always be properly expressed through words. However, in the sections that follow we attempt just that. In "Reflections on the World Congress", we invited contributions from chairs who organized RC16 panels at the 2018 World Congress. Each of the contributors was tasked with thinking through the questions: what is sociological theory and how do we do it? We begin this section with an exciting piece by Frederic Vandenberghe who sets a perfect stage for the drama of current sociology. Like many of us these days, he is deeply concerned with the question whether sociology has a future, and if it does, what it might look like. The section concludes with an excellent highlight reel from one of our outgoing co-chairs Agnes Ku.

From these we turn again to Jeffrey C. Alexander's Distinguished Contribution to Sociological Theory Award. We are provided an important contribution from Ronald N. Jacobs in "A Reflection on the Work and Practice of Jeffrey C. Alexander". Jacobs attempts to interpret Alexander's theory alongside his scholarly practice, one of which is weaving scholarly communities together through what Jacobs terms "a spirit of supportive and critical dialogue" opposed to a hermeneutics of suspicion.

We then turn to an important moment in the foundation and refoundation of social theory, the events surrounding 1968, making use of its half a century jubilee. Here Dmitry Kurakin invites an important group of thinkers who attempt to wrestle with the paradoxical effects of 1968 on social theory. In the final section "Theorizing Theory", which we launch starting from this issue, Dmitry Kurakin confronts the important concept of culture and its expression in social theory. To this end he interviews Philip Smith and together they attempt to interrogate this important concept.

Overall, during the next four years we will try to make the newsletter more engaging and entertaining, by giving more space to interviews, short commentaries of various kind, and other forms, giving voices to the members of the RC16 community, and by making the newsletter more visual. We would like to encourage you to send us your ideas, thoughts and reflections, including commentaries to the materials of the current issue, which we could, in turn, publish in the Newsletter to start fruitful discussions. We also intended some changes which will be introduced in the Spring issue, so keep in touch!

Incoming Presidents' Welcome Address

ISA RC 16 Co-Presidents Craig Browne and Bradley West

It is a significant honour to be elected Co-Presidents of the ISA Sociological Theory Research Committee, RC 16. RC16 Sociological Theory is not only one of the largest ISA Research Committees but it serves a vital intellectual role for the discipline by fostering new lines of intellectual endeavour and positioning new ideas in reference to traditions of thought.

Over many years this role has been served well by various Presidents, Boards and members strongly committed to the field of research and to maintaining the good culture of the RC. We are very pleased to take this opportunity to recognise the substantial long-term contributions of these members to the Committee.

We would like to commence by acknowledging the tremendous work of the 2014-2018 RC16 Co-Presidents, Agnes Ku and Patrick Baert, who undertook their task with enthusiasm and integrity. We are fortunate to be able to draw on their experience and wisdom in the future. The past Editors of *Theory*, the newsletter of RC16: Erik Schneiderhan and Dan Silver, also deserve considerable praise for their commitment and engagement. Over the past four years, *Theory* has been challenging and dialogical, expanding our knowledge and uncovering new development.

The RC owes a debt of gratitude to all Board members from the past term: Jeffrey Alexander, Fuyuki Kurasawa, Martina Loew, Hans-Peter Mueller, Philip Smith, Lynette Spillman, Frederic Vandenberghe, Gilles Verpraet, Ronald Jacobs and Gieseppe Sciortino.

While we cannot list all individuals here, we would also like to acknowledge members who have served RC16 in other ways, for example those who contributed to important RC16 activities, like the awarding of the Best Junior Theorist Paper Award and Distinguished Contribution Award, and those who generously contributed to the hospitality of RC16 events, most recently by our Canadian colleagues at the ISA World Congress in Toronto. We particularly note the role of Fuyuki Kurasawa for helping to arrange the Distinguished Contribution to Sociological Theory Award Dinner for Jeffrey Alexander.

We would similarly like to extend a very warm welcome to all new members of RC16 and congratulate the members of the newly elected 2018-2022 Board. We wish to thank Eleanor Townsley for taking on the essential role of Secretary/Treasurer and the new Editors of *Theory*: Dmitry Kurakin and Dean Ray. We are sure that you will be enormously impressed by their first issue and initiatives.

Looking forward, the period 2018-2022 presents RC16 with opportunities to expand and diversify its membership. Building on the locating of the ISA Forum in Porto Alegre, Brazil in 2020 and the next ISA World Congress in 2022 in Melbourne, Australia, we hope to increase the membership of RC16 from Latin America and the Asia-Pacific, as well as the involvement of members from these and other regions.

The next RC16 2020 mid-term conference will be held in Brno, the Czech Republic, hosted by our theory colleagues at Masaryk University. This will likewise provide an opportunity to showcase work in sociological theory from that part of Europe. We would like to thank the local organizing committee in advance and particularly Csaba Szalo—the mid-term conference convenor.

One of the important functions of RC16 is to enable colleagues to get to know the work of like-minded scholars and engage in respectful yet lively intellectual debate. The RC16 stream of the recent ISA World Congress generated many substantial discussions. The sessions were a testament to the excellent work that is going on in sociological theory and its engagement with the most pressing current concerns. The RC16 session organisers deserve considerable credit for their contribution to the program. We invite you to further contribute to this process through our newsletter.

We can say with confidence that there are significant tasks for sociological theory today and that there are great variations in the national and regional situations of sociological theory. We would like RC16 to continue being a major means of communicating to each other about this, as well as a vehicle for developing the resources of sociological theory, and an outlet to test new ideas and deepen our knowledge of classic statements.

No doubt, for some members of the sociological theory community these are testing times, with having to confront a variety of challenges from outside and inside the academic sphere. One of the purposes a research committee is to support colleagues in the face of challenges to their intellectual situation and sociological theory. For other colleagues, it will be a period of considerable opportunity and achievement. A research committee is a means of publicizing, sharing, and extending this positive experience.

We look forward to facilitating RC16's informative and stimulating discussions of sociological theory.

Craig Browne and Brad West
RC16 Sociological Theory Co-Presidents

Reflections on ISA World Congress 2018



Frederic Vandenberghe, Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

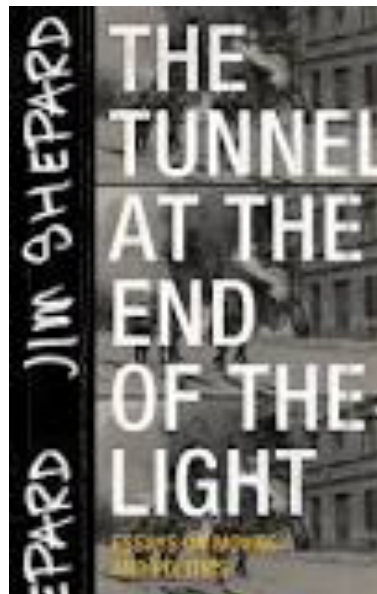
Organizer of [Axiological Neutrality or Axiological Engagement?](#)

Along With: Philip GORSKI

The Tunnel at the End of the Light

I went to many sessions of our RC 16 at the ISA World Conference in Toronto. It was a strange event. There was a sense of ending. We've changed epoch. Sociology is gone. Nobody does grand theory anymore. Not that sociology is gone as an academic operation or disciplinary organization. But the field has, for quite some time now, been losing its substance, core, and identity, rendering it hollow and shallow. We cannot exclude that another grand theory will emerge, but even if it does, it's unlikely that it will be purely sociological. Exactly a century ago, Paul Valéry (1919) opened his reflections on the crisis of the spirit, with the words: "We, civilizations, we know by now that we're mortal". Like Nineveh, Elam and Babylon, disciplines come and go. Sociology emerged in the nineteenth century as a self-reflection and self-observation of metropolitan modernity and Western civilization. It came into being during the first wave of modern globalization (1850-1914), contributed actively to the second wave (1914-1989), but will probably not survive the third wave (1989-2050). Like phrenology and Orientalism, metaphysics and aesthetics, sociology has reached its end. In this ending, sociology has played a major part itself, since it has stood by watching its domain be invaded and absorbed by scores of other fields and intellectual movements, from rational choice to post-structuralism. It has become difficult to draw any lines between sociology and journalism. Like everything else in polarized societies, the field has also become an ideological battleground of advocacy on the Left and trolling on the Right. Texts on class, gender and race are read, ridiculed and instrumentalized by intelligent readers on the radical fringes of the right who mobilize to fight the pernicious influence of "cultural Marxism" on family, youth and activist minorities.

The book fair in Toronto was a sorry spectacle. A big hall with only a few stands. Nothing remarkable. After the conference, I went to New York and paid a visit to Book Culture (formerly known as Labyrinth), at 112 St. West, probably the best bookstore on the East Coast. On the ground level, the new books were on display. On the wall, ten meters of stacks, two meters high. The philosophy section was quite impressive, both in size and content. Lots of fascinating stuff, mostly continental, with an emphasis on moral and political philosophy and fashionable topics, like speculative realism, posthumanism and crowd behavior. The political science section was a bit smaller, but crammed with highly actual books on Trump, the end of liberal democracy and populism. Anthropology was a bit smaller still, but innovative, slightly weird and cutting-edge. The sociology section had been reduced to a mere 60 centimeters, mostly books on poverty and immigrants. On the way out, I was struck by a book with a terrible, yet terribly good title: *The Tunnel at the End of the Light* by Jim Shepard.



The times are indeed terrifying. 2001 (the terrorist attack in NY), 2008 (the economic crisis) and 2016 (the Trump election, Brexit) are the markers of a new epoch. It started with a bang and will not end in whispers, but in tears. I am not sure that our sociological theories of late modernity (Giddens, Beck, Bauman, but also Castells, Boltanski and Chiapello) are still valid or that they can successfully capture the radical

disruption that societies are facing. Of course, it is always possible to blame capitalism and revamp the old theories of late capitalism as theories of post-industrial neo-liberalism. But the changes go deeper and are of a tectonic nature. To underscore its sweep, I propose to call the new epoch the second post-modernity. The first post-modernity that accompanied the end of the millennium was cultural. As a swansong for Marxism, it undercut the grand narrative(s) of emancipation through a playful deconstruction of the ontological, epistemological and normative foundations of systematic theory. The second postmodernity builds on the ruins of the first one and is, perhaps, causally related to it. It occurs when the politicization of culture starts to erode the very structure of the world as we know it. It radicalizes the critique of the system, but recuperates and redirects it to capture power, destroy the welfare state and pepper the markets. Recuperated by anti-systemic forces on the right, it attacks not only truth and all the other values we cherish, but also the whole social and political arrangement that was built on it.

For Americans, the election of Donald Trump came as an ontological shock. For the Europeans, Brexit and the end of liberal democracies in Hungary, Poland and Italy did the same. The election of Bolsonaro in Brazil just swept away all our remaining certainties. The recent upheavals on all the shores of the Atlantic (USA, EU and Latin-America) call for a revision of our research agendas. We can no longer go on checking our footnotes and writing elusive texts that are merely academic. We need to grasp the ontology of the present and analyze the disjuncture that menaces the future in conjunction with colleagues from neighboring disciplines in different countries at the frontline of the backlash. It doesn't matter if it is sociology, communication studies, political philosophy or political science. Whether it is science or high quality journalism is secondary. The multiple sessions on populism in RC 16 at the world conference point to the need of analysis, orientation and evaluation in times of acute crisis. We should not underestimate the challenge that right wing populism poses to our ideological assumptions. Our positions and theirs are actively and reactively interlinked in a neo-Gramscian metapolitics that seek to define the moral high and low grounds of public debate. Anti-racism and racism, feminism and the crusade against gender ideology, intellectualism and low brow populism, the defense of minorities and the attack on the weakest link of intersectionality, the critique of neo-liberalism and the affirmation of libertarianism are interconnected and form a system. Nor should we underestimate the deconstructive effect of the backlash on some of our central concepts and assumptions: reason, democracy, society, community, family, individual, communication, the state, civil society, etc. are all put under strain and under erasure (sous rature). We cannot think without them, even if we know that they are no longer

valid. Societies are not sliding back to the 1930s. They are moving fast forward to 2030. It's time to rethink our theories and reorient our research, in the hope that we can once again grasp the ontology of the raging present in concepts.



Mervyn Horgan, Guelph University, Canada

Organizer of Cultural Sociology of Interaction Orders: Cultural Structures and Everyday Lifeworlds

Report on the ‘Cultural Sociology of Interaction Orders’ session at the ISA World Congress in Toronto.

What better way to spend a Friday evening in Toronto than theorizing sex, art, violence, mystery, and Durkheim? Despite the lure of Toronto’s many delights, the session ‘Cultural Sociology of Interaction Orders’ gathered a spirited group of forty or so participants whose stamina clearly had not waned in the face of a week of stimulating sessions. Adopting a variety of theoretical perspectives, papers in this session were united around a shared concern with theorizing interaction, interpretation, and structures of meaning.

Gaëlle Chartier (Université Paris 13, France) kicked off proceedings with her paper “From Fun to Pain: Observations of Interactional Qualifications of Violence”. Her fascinating analysis wove together insights from cognitive sociology, Bateson’s theory of play, and Maussian cultural sociology, to analyze a public pillow fight, shedding light on this social setting as one where the metacommunicative properties of gestures are front and centre. Nikita Basov’s (St Petersburg State University) presentation “Emergent Meaning Structures: A Socio-Semantic Network Analysis of Artistic Collectives” (co-authored with Wouter De Nooy (University of Amsterdam, Netherlands) and Alexandra Nenko, (NRU ITMO, Russia), available on SocArxiv) asked the deceptively simple question: how do meanings come into being? Drawing on a rich corpus of data from two collectives of artists in St. Petersburg, Basov provided a nuanced take on institutional fields, showing the variegated ways that meanings both emerge from and are imposed upon small groups.

Shifting focus, the paper from Bjørn Schiermer (Oslo University, Norway) “Durkheim on Imitation: from Holism to Interactionism” offered an extended meditation on how interaction figures in Durkheim’s work that sought to overcome the ‘tedious dichotomy of action and structure’. With his paper, “Cultural Mechanics of Mystery: Competing Interpretations of the Dyatlov Pass Tragedy” (recently published in the *American Journal of Cultural Sociology*), Dmitry Kurakin, (National Research University Higher School of Economics, Russia) examined the ‘rival and wild explanations’ produced by thousands of lay researchers interested in the mysterious deaths of a group of hikers over fifty years ago. Kurakin’s analysis showed how, among other things, the prevalence of ‘mystery and epistemic surprise’ challenges Weber’s disenchantment thesis. Apoorva Ghosh’s (University of California, Irvine, USA) paper “Understanding Transnational Sexuality in India: Globalization and Institutional Schemas” closed out the presentations. Adopting elements of the institutional schemas approach, Ghosh critiqued the dominance of Bourdieusian understandings of sexuality in India. His paper demonstrated how questions of sexuality and identity are complicated by exposure to different national cultures.

Thoughtful questions raised by those in attendance generated discussion touching on, among other things, violence and framing, group identity and language use, and confluences between the work of Anne Rawls and Jeffrey Alexander. Afterwards, many presenters and audience members moved to a nearby outdoor bar where several prospective international collaborations were plotted at the points of tension and intersection between cultural structures and everyday lifeworlds. A Friday night in Toronto very well spent.



Martina Loew, Technische Universität Berlin, Germany

Organizer of [The Spatial Reconfiguration: Challenges for Social Theory](#)

What is sociological theory? How do I do it?

Sociological theory is hard work. What we do (and did in the ISA panel)? We now know that in the past decades both the spatial organization of the social and the social organization of spaces has changed fundamentally; but we also recognize that we have only very vague descriptions of what new forms these reconfigurations have assumed. I am sure that this lack of understanding for new spatial orders can only be remedied by systematic sociological theory. Space makes us realize that things can hardly be experienced in isolation, but only exist in arrangements, that is, that they can be synthesized to spaces, calling upon us to make connections between them. One of the great challenges for sociological theory in the future seems to me to be this: understanding the typology of relational arrangements—together with their interlocking with constructions of time—systematically as spatial orders of the social.



Lyn Spillman, University of Notre Dame, USA

Organizer of [Theorizing and Historicizing Economic Culture](#)

Theorizing and Historicizing Economic Culture RC16 Report

Our panel on “Theorizing and Historicizing Economic Culture” could not be bettered for the quality and interest of panellists’ research and theoretical contributions. Panellists were invited to offer new ways of theorizing well-specified links between macro-historical processes and meso-level economic organization and culture, and they did so in exciting ways. Kritee Ahmed (York University) showed how his study of London’s public transport challenged ahistorical theories of neo-liberalism and “customer service.” Nina Bauer and Linda Hering (Technische Universität Berlin) compared how local responses to global economic crisis vary according to differences in cities’ historical development of local routines and conventions. Jordanna Matlon (American University) analyzed racial capitalism over time as double commodification of blackness as

productive potential and cultural artifact, based on her research on labor narratives in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire. Aaron Pitluck (Illinois State University) argued for theoretical connections between processes of financialization and changing class, gender, and racial stratification. Rachel Harvey (Columbia University) showed how the incorporation of economists' hierarchy theory of money could enrich economic sociologists' focus on specific market structures, with a case study of the 20th century global gold market. The absorbing theoretical range of the panel— addressing theories of neo-liberalism, the economics of convention, racial capitalism, theories of finance, theories of stratification, and theories of money— provided us all with a lot to think about, and opened new conversations for RC-16.



Chris Powell, Ryerson University, Canada

Organizer of Future Theory (ISA Preconference) along with Ariane Hanemaayer and Dean Ray

Lean Over the Fence and Talk: Quotidian and Academic Theorizing at Future Theory 2018

Feedback. It's vital to any living thing. An agent acts, and is acted back upon, and as a result it changes. Adapts. Academic culture tends to inhibit feedback between its members and the outside world. This can be especially true with theorists. Our vocabulary sounds like natural language but isn't. Our interests and preoccupations are esoteric. We have many strong ties to each other, few weak ties to other networks. Conferences typically reinforce this, producing bridging capital within the university system while implicitly reinforcing the boundary that keeps the outside world, out.

At Future Theory 2018, we hoped to loosen up those boundaries a little. By asking "Does theorizing have a future and what future[s] for theorizing?", we encouraged participants to look outside the walls, to think about the places and roles that theorizing can have in the wider society we theorize. And in the session "Theorists Beyond Sociology" we took things a step further than that, inviting speakers without Ph.D.s or academic positions, people who speak to and for publics engaged in social struggles and who in effect theorize those struggles, to speak to us and tell us what "theory" means to them.

The results were instructive. For instance, we heard that the word ‘theory’ has a stigma. It conveys connotations of something disconnected from everyday life, from practical dilemmas. Something not useful. And something that’s difficult to grasp, that threatens to make one feel inadequate because one can’t understand it. So, for instance, Andrew Gurza, who speaks thoughtfully about complex intersections of disability and queer sexuality for the Disability After Dark podcast, avoids the word ‘theory’, even though it describes what he does. Sharmeen Khan, who edits *Upping the Anti*, and Angela Chaisson, a legal activist, also noted the care they take with theory’s elitist and exclusionary overtones.

To be fair, these concerns are not surprising. We’ve all heard variations on “that’s fine in theory, but it doesn’t work in practice”, and we’ve all heard students speak of being intimidated by the theory course. And also to be fair, those boundaries, the discontinuities or phase transitions between academic and quotidian theorizing, do serve a purpose. Sometimes a garden, or a field, does need a fence around it. But the fence needs to be low enough that we can lean over it and converse with the neighbours who buy our produce. And it needs gates through which can invite others in to show them what we do and hear what they have to say about it.

As theorists we do need conferences to provide spaces for the specialized, jargon-laden, exclusive conversations that further our work, the conversations we usually can’t have with departmental colleagues and can only have with others who have worked in the same fields we have. But conferences can also be places where we turn outwards, where we meet people whose lives inform our work and who might, in turn, find that work useful. A conference can be a site where academic theorizing and quotidian theorizing meet, mingle, and converse. Given enough of that kind of conversation, theory could lose its stigma and become instead an object of shared enjoyment, not just for theorists but for everyone.



Agnes Ku, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, former co-chair of RC16 (2014-2018)

Organizer of Innovations in Social Theorizing. Part II

RC16 Report

There is perhaps not much to say about our largely "administrative" role as chairs during our term. But in my experience of organizing the program for the World congress, I could tell that we have had a vibrant community of scholars working on diverse strands of sociological theory. I could recap a few features for your interest:

*a few sessions received quite an "overwhelming" number of submissions including, for instance, those on Simmel (organized by Dan Silver in commemoration of Simmel), on relational sociology, on popular culture, and on innovations in sociological theory generally.

*the theme of populism and political legitimacy was among the more popular ones by the session organizers (Patrick Baert has just published an edited volume on this theme).

*Brad West, now our new co-chair, organized a session on military power and violence echoing the main theme of the conference.

*Jeffrey Alexander was the recipient of our Distinguished Contributions to Sociological Theory award and gave a speech.

Btw, we organized a celebratory dinner for Jeff in a small yet homey Korean-Canadian restaurant in the Little Italy district in Toronto one evening, with members from the previous Board, Jeff's wife and a few other guests. It's a very joyful and cross cultural occasion where sociologists from across different continents (including Asia, Australia, Europe, North America and South America) met to chat about all sorts of global and local social issues while sharing food and having fun together. We stayed up till midnight feeling carried away by the joy and sense of solidarity shared over the dinner.

Sociological theory invites us to think through the hidden connection between self and society. It helps us to look at the society as a multi-layered structure shaped through a mix of structuring forces, institutional and cultural processes, as well as interactional dynamics. Theories will be important for keeping our way of thinking sociologically sensitive, sophisticated and nuanced. We need theories, but then we need also to remain connected to and stay vigilant about our fast-changing world so that we could fruitfully draw on, apply and extend existing theories. In my experience of organizing the program for RC16 in the World congress in the past years, I feel that we have had a vibrant community of scholars across different parts of the world working on diverse strands of sociological theory, ranging from critical to neo-functionalist, and from modernist to poststructuralist. They are, in their different ways, all seeking to respond to the challenges of our time through relating theory to what is going on in the world around us today."

Distinguished Contribution to Sociological Theory Award

The 2018 Award Winner was Jeffrey C. Alexander¹

Ronald N. Jacobs, University at Albany, State University of New York

A Reflection on the Work and Practice of Jeffrey Alexander: The Culture and Performance of Social Theory

In the Fall of 1990, I joined the graduate program in Sociology at UCLA. My relationship with Jeff began on my first day in Los Angeles, and it has been a continued and deeply valued presence in my life ever since that time. In my own scholarship, and in my work with students, I have tried to follow Jeff's example. These attempts on my part have been aspirational, of course, as I lack Jeff's level of energy and productivity, his creativity, and his charisma. But I have spent a lot of time thinking about the project that Jeff started in the 1980s, and which he and his colleagues continue today. In this reflection, I want to focus on two things (1) the social dimensions of Jeff's theoretical practice, and (2) the impact of the ideas themselves.

There is a strong social and performative aspect to Jeff's intellectual practice, which is grounded in a Durkheimian commitment to the importance of social solidarity. Rather than thinking about theory as the product of a lone, creative, individual genius, he treats it as a collaborative project. In Alexander's circle, collaboration works by creating a shared identity, a common project, and a set of rituals reinforcing the spirit of solidarity. This began early in his career as a faculty member at UCLA, and it intensified when he moved to Yale University as the Lillian Chavenson Saden Professor of Sociology.

Alexander's circle of collaborators have always had a common symbolic identity holding them together. In the early years, this was signified by the "Culture Club", which was a group of students, former students, and visitors all working together to create a common language for doing a late-Durkheimian version of sociology that

¹ This award is granted to a living thinker who has made a significant contribution to sociological theory over the last two decades at least. It is intended to recognize long term achievement rather than the excellence of an individual book or single idea. The winner of the prize will be a thinker held in high standing by sociological theorists throughout the world. Previous winners of this prestigious award include Alain Touraine and Zygmunt Bauman

came to be known as cultural sociology. Cultural sociology was the sacred signifier; its meaning was crystallized through a semiotic opposition to “sociology of culture”. As Alexander’s program for cultural sociology continued to develop during his time at Yale, he and Phil Smith re-branded the late-Durkheimian approach as the “Strong Program in Cultural Sociology”. The Strong Program became a key reference point for meaning-centered sociologists around the world, allowing a wider and more diffuse network of sociologists to attach themselves to Alexander’s version of cultural sociology.

As a Durkheimian, Alexander has always known that a shared symbolic system can more easily sustain a solidaristic community if it is reinforced by a regular cycle of rituals. While these rituals were informal during his years at UCLA, they became much more strongly institutionalized with his move to Yale. The big event was the creation of the Center for Cultural Sociology in 2002. As the physical home for the Strong Program, the CCS established a weekly workshop in Cultural Sociology, with its own distinctive ritual practices of intensely critical-yet-supportive intellectual engagement. The CCS also became a pilgrimage site for the growing network of international scholars who were interested in the Strong Program, and who chose to spend sabbatical periods in New Haven, participating in the weekly workshop with other faculty, graduate students, and visiting scholars. For my own graduate students, the CCS has indeed acted as a pilgrimage site; each visit there has left them more forcefully identified as Strong Program cultural sociologists, and more enthusiastically motivated to complete their work.

The final aspect of Alexander’s intellectual practice that should be mentioned is his commitment to a spirit of supportive and critical dialogue. Ricoeur famously distinguished between a “hermeneutics of suspicion” and a “hermeneutics of faith”. A hermeneutics of faith seeks to understand the text on its own terms, from the perspective of the author or speaker. A hermeneutics of faith reads with the author, believing that she has something important to say and working to draw out as fully as possible the key messages and contributions from her text. A hermeneutics of suspicion, in contrast, aims to unmask and expose the “real” meaning of a text, by passing over its more self-evident meanings in order to discover the less visible (and usually less flattering) meanings that can be uncovered by reading against the author. A hermeneutics of suspicion aligns effectively with the agonistic nature of academic culture in general (and peer review in particular), but it is in clear tension with a more collaborative intellectual culture that seeks to uncover unrealized possibilities in a paper or presentation. In fact, as Ricoeur himself suggestion, a hermeneutics of suspicion is ultimately an impediment to real understanding, becoming a corrosive force that encourages the interpreter to see through everyone and everything (Scott-

Baumann 2009). Alexander understands this limitation well. His intellectual engagement is deeply critical, and often combative, but it is not suspicious in the way that Ricoeur warned against.

Of course, Alexander's immense influence is not only a product of his social practice, but is also connected to the deep importance of the ideas contained in his published work. As the author of more than twenty books and hundreds of published articles, Alexander's corpus of work is immense. Over the last twenty years, at least, I think the contributions can be divided into two general theoretical areas: (1) theories of culture and meaning, and (2) theories of civil society and public life. Others have written about these intellectual contributions in greater depth. Rather than repeating their work, I want instead to make a few comments about what I think is distinctive in his approach.

Theories of Culture and Meaning

In Alexander's approach to culture and meaning in social life, everything begins from the insistence that the world does not come to the analyst pre-interpreted. This was a phrase that has resonated with me for a long time. I know that he used it often in talks and conversations during the early years of the CCS, though I am not aware of its appearance in any published work. But I use it frequently with my own students, because I think that it captures the essential difference between the Strong Program and other approaches to culture in sociology.

To say that the world does not come pre-interpreted is to say that we cannot decide in advance which features of social life will be meaningful to individuals and groups. To be sure, the key categories of sociological analysis – race, class, gender, sexuality, nation, ethnicity, religion, and so forth – are important and meaningful, but we cannot decide in advance how they will be meaningful, or how they will be combined with other categories of meaningfulness. This is why Alexander insists on a Geertzian thick description, attempting to provide the best cultural map possible of the world of meaningfulness that actors are relying on to navigate through the world.

Still, Alexander's thick description is explicitly a "structural hermeneutics", which orients to specific meaning structures in order to deepen the cultural analysis and to understand how the different elements of meaning fit together with one another. For today's cultural sociologists, Alexander's cultural theory functions much like Barthes's cultural theories did for an earlier generation, in the sense that they provide a set of conceptual tools from which cultural scholars can draw, depending on the kinds of data they are using and the kinds of questions they are asking.

Specifically, Alexander has developed extended theories and offered empirical exemplars for three distinct types of meaning structures. His theory of **codes and narratives** emphasizes deep meaning structures, which structure perceptions and evaluations for individual and groups at a societal level. These kinds of meaning structures are durable and persist over long periods of time, and their existence allows individuals to act strategically and creatively. In order to identify these kinds of deep meaning structures, the analyst is instructed to think about the language-like properties of culture: emphasizing pattern over variation, stability over change, language over speech. Actors may speak differently, but the differences are only comprehensible because they are drawing from a common language, which can be mapped out by the cultural sociologist. His theory of **cultural trauma** focuses on social responses to crisis and injustice. It builds on the earlier work about codes and narratives, but here the main focus is on how carrier groups use the codes and narratives about good and evil to make demands for civil repair and social change. The main usefulness of the theory of cultural trauma, in my opinion at least, is that it provides an exceptionally nuanced cultural sociological approach for studying social movements and collective action. Finally, his theory of **cultural performance** takes a comprehensive look at the relationship between culture, agency, and the larger cultural environment of public cultural expression. This is a very flexible and sophisticated theory of cultural power, which Alexander has deployed with great effect in the analysis of political campaigns and which is a research tool that has been used with increasing frequency among sociologists interested in the strategic dimensions of politics and culture.

Theories of Civil Society and Public Life

Alexander's civil sphere theory is quickly becoming a global industry, because of his collaborative style that I described before and also because of the analytic power that the theory brings to a cultural sociology of public life. Alexander's starting point is fundamentally Durkheimian: specifically, that society is a moral thing that serves as a key anchor and reference point in the lives of individuals and groups. But Alexander takes a decidedly cultural approach to this starting point. In his analysis of the civil sphere, society itself is an object of interpretation, critique, and moral evaluation.

The civil sphere provides its own structure of analysis and interpretation. It has its own semiotic code, the discourse of civil society. It has a distinctive set of narratives, which center around the romantic (future-directed) possibility of justice and the tragic (past- and present-directed) reality of injustice. These tragic narratives get institutionalized in the collective memory of specific societies, as a series of cultural traumas that call for

civil repair and periodic cycles of (re)interpretation. The demand for civil repair, which is central to Alexander's theory, provides a concrete and empirical way to think about how civil society operates simultaneously as the terrain of cultural and political struggle (i.e., the discursive space where the struggle takes place) and the object of that struggle (i.e., the shifting of public opinions and public narratives).

One of the key insights of Alexander's theory is that the civil sphere offers its own alternative moral metric for evaluating matters of common concern. It is analytically autonomous from economic logics and political logics, and as such it offers a potential resource for getting people to think about a social issue in terms of a logic of justice rather than a logic of market rationality or political expediency. This is part of a competitive and agonistic process. Actors and groups have to put forth narratives and cultural performances that explain why an issue should be evaluated and regulated according to the civic logic, while competing actors put forth alternative narratives and performances in favor of a different logic.

The mechanics by which which attempts at prioritizing the civil logic succeed and fail have significant consequences for the relative power that the civil sphere will have in particular societies and at particular points in time. In his newest work, which Alexander theorizes as the "societalization of social problems", he begins to pull apart the kinds of mechanisms by which this happens in the US. In a series of other collaborative projects – the Civil Sphere in Latin America, the Civil Sphere in East Asia, the Nordic Civil Sphere, the Civil Sphere and Radicalization – Alexander and his colleagues are beginning to identify the distinctive ways that these mechanisms operate in non-Western contexts. This work effectively combines the theoretical contributions in culture and civil society, and situates it within a global network of scholars committed to a common intellectual project. As with Alexander's other major projects, it is likely to produce consequential contributions in theory and empirical research, and it is likely to do so for a long time. Given the talk about the crisis of democracy and civil society in Europe, the US, and elsewhere, I expect that these works will be read widely. I know that I will continue to read the work with great interest, looking for ways to incorporate its insights into my own theoretical and empirical scholarship.

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1968 and Sociological Theory

Dmitry Kurakin, National Research University Higher School of Economics, Russia

Introduction

Half a century passed from the iconic 1968, the glorious and rebellious year, which changed the world and us. A lot has been said and written about the influence of the events of that year to culture and politics; it is of an obvious interest for sociological research and theorizing. Less obviously, 1968 powerfully affected sociological theory itself. Although, like any iconic event, 1968 reenacts itself recurrently in its own representations (while we were preparing this section, Paris 2018 showed some commonality with Paris 1968, and in my own university in Moscow students used to crowd around the Academic board, chanting “Disgrace! Disgrace!”). However, a different reason provoked me to organize this section. It was a single presentation at the conference dedicated to 1968, whose author, Professor Alexander Filippov put forward a thesis that the events of 1968 became crucial for eventual diminishing of sociological theory.

This sounded counter-intuitive in many ways, including a simple ‘structural’ argument that not only did 1968 greatly popularized theory (at least in the Western incarnation of 1968, as the Prague Spring rather seriously questioned the authority of compromised critical theory), it also followed by the educational expansion in several Western countries, so that yesterday’s rebellious students turned into a massive generation of university professors with an interest in theory. Filippov argued, however, that even though the theoretical inspiration of many of today's stars of the theory had been nurtured by the spirit of 1968, this spirit turned to be fatal for the great promise of the

whole sociological enterprise. Charles Wright Mills, whose 'Letter to the New Left' had in many ways set the agenda of 1968, famously dethroned 'grand theory', arguing that theorists like Parsons in fact only legitimized existing structures of power. Theodor Adorno, in turn, asserted that sociology and sociological theory are compromised by their inherent disposition to the static social order and persistent inability to grasp genuine change. Therefore, overall, this new sensitivity to theory turned out to be vain and destructive. This shapes a puzzle.

So, how 1968 affected sociological theory? To address this question, I asked several distinguished sociologists, leading theorists, some of whom were themselves participants or observers of the discussed events, the same question: "What are the meaning and the consequences of 1968 for sociological theory"? Six commentaries in this section reveal a broad range of various effects of 1968, and, I believe, allow us to read crucial parts of the 'genetic code' of our discipline. At the general plan, these commentaries demonstrated how 1968 both stimulated sociological theorizing, creating the 'theoretical boom' (Outhwaite), and undermined it by 'regressive intellectual developments' (Alexander). As Eyerman put it, it was 'both exhilarating and depressing'. Our authors showed, how some ideas and themes were brought into being directly by the struggles and debates of 1968 and the sixties (like 'dis-order' and 'inequalities' (Berezin)), whereas the obstructiveness of the others wiped them out eventually (like 'militancy' (Maffesoli; Alexander)), and the absence of still others became generative only to stimulate passionate inquiries in the future (like 'the possibilities of civil repair' (Alexander)). Getting deeper, these texts tell us, sometimes remarkably echoing each other, that 1968 became a 'turning point' (Joas) or a 'slow-burning revolution in ideas and lifestyles' (Outhwaite), and inaugurated a 'brand new epoch' (Maffesoli) or the 'long millenium' (Berezin); it brought utopia in the heart of sociological thinking, giving power to culture (Alexander) and the imaginary (Maffesoli) in the theorizing of tomorrow. So, theory neither flourished nor decayed, but rather deeply changed under the weight of 1968, and to grasp this change today, half a century afterwards, we have to reckon with the rich variety of its forms and manifestations.

Ron Eyerman, Yale University, USA

1968/Social Theory: Biography meets History

I spent the first half of 1968 as an undergraduate at the New School for Social Research in New York City preparing to write a senior thesis on Hegel's influence on the young Marx. The New School became known as the 'Refugee University' during World War Two, as many intellectuals fleeing fascist Europe found a temporary home there. The tradition of inviting (West) German intellectuals continued and I attended Hannah Arendt's lectures on The Human Condition and a seminar led by a leading German expert on Marx. I spent the latter months of 1968 at Leicester University, being tutored on Hegel's Philosophy of Right and attending Anthony Giddens class on Classical Social Theory. Besides Giddens own texts, we read George Lichtheim's The Concept of Ideology (1967), which along with Marx's own The German Ideology give us a foundational concept, especially when coupled with 'alienation' and 'false consciousness'. Giddens was also the faculty advisor to the Student Socialist Club, where I defended Arendt's critique of Marx, to unsympathetic ears that rejected her distinction between 'work' and 'labor' and the relegation of Marx's thought to the latter. Aside from Giddens himself, the interest there was more in political practice than theory and a few of the graduating students refused their diplomas to join the working class. 1968 was both exhilarating and depressing, with the highs being student strikes and mass demonstrations and the lows being violence and political assassinations. Social theory ran through it all, at least for those I associated with. Most of all, social theory meant critical theory, the Frankfurt School and the Budapest School around Lukacs. Marcuse's Reason and Revolution Hegel and the Rise of Social Theory (1941), One Dimensional Man (1964) and Negations Essays in Critical Theory (1968) were the works we carried around like the Bible at a religious college. My New School tutor Trent Schroyer, chided us for not being sufficiently fluent in German to read these works in the original. Lukacs' History and Class Consciousness (1923) was unavailable in English until 1971 and we had to rely on the sections appearing in journals and Schroyer's interpretations. That was social theory! I never read Weber or Durkhiem or any other French theory, let alone Americans like Parsons, until graduate school much later.

William Outhwaite, Newcastle University, UK

1968 and the rise of theory in the UK

1968 certainly transformed sociology in the UK. While in Paris Daniel Cohn-Bendit and others asked 'Pourquoi des sociologues?' (the title of a short text published on May 1st)²), Perry Anderson, in an article in *New Left Review* 50, July 1968, 'Components of the National Culture', lamented the absence both of a substantial Marxist intellectual tradition and of any alternative sociological theory in Britain. 'Britain – alone of major Western societies – never produced a classical sociology'; Anderson mentioned Herbert Spencer only to follow Parsons in dismissing him (p.7).

A few years later, the situation was utterly different. The explosion of interest in Marxism led to an interest in social theory more broadly. Steven Lukes' 1969 Oxford PhD on Durkheim was published in 1973; by then Giddens' *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory* (1971), covering what was to become the holy trinity of Marx, Durkheim and Max Weber, was already a classic. New styles of theory, engaging with Marxism, hermeneutics, Frankfurt critical theory and Foucault, were pursued and brought to bear on what in Germany are called the 'hyphen-sociologies' of education, deviance, and so on. I think it was my Sussex colleague Jennifer Platt who once observed that the subject had become 'much more Continental'.

This theoretical boom was accompanied by an explosion of numbers of sociology teachers in universities, polytechnics, and secondary and further education. While much of the work done still took the form of the empirical monograph or article, sociological theory intersected with philosophical, literary and cultural theory in what was often known simply as 'theory'.

1968 also of course inspired social movements for sociologists to study and/or join, opening up new areas of political action around gender, race, sexuality and the environment. The fate of the 'Prague Spring' also indicated that Moscow was not the place to look for a programme of democratic socialism. Like 1848, 1968 was a slow-burning revolution in ideas and lifestyles which we are still living through, as our politics becomes reconfigured around the opposition between cosmopolitan libertarianism and authoritarian nationalism.

² <http://hanryner.over-blog.fr/article-19215122.html>

Hans Joas, Humboldt University of Berlin, Germany

Shock in Florence³

The summer of 1968 was a turning point in my political and intellectual development. This statement will not sound particularly sensational, given the fact that a very great number of people that are my age and older will probably say the same. But each individual case is specific, and for me the crucial event happened in Florence on August 21 and the following days.

The marvellous Italian town of Florence was full of tourists that summer, as it always is. But for the first time since the communist take-over in Eastern Central and Eastern Europe, many of the tourists in Italy were Czechs and Slovaks. They took advantage of loosened travel restrictions in their home country and enjoyed the wonders of Italy. I was there as a student attending summer courses at the University of Florence, spanning the time between finishing school and starting my studies at the university.

<...>

These contacts and connections⁴ convinced me that the differences between East and West concerning the post-1968 movements were much greater than the similarities. For people deeply influenced by what had happened or was happening in Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Poland at the time, much of the sudden re-emergence of Marxism in the West remained mysterious and problematical. My personal way out of these dilemmas was through an ever stronger interest in American intellectual and political traditions, particularly those that I found inspiring in their radically democratic understanding of politics (John Dewey) and interpersonal relations (George Herbert

³ From the generous permission of the Czech Sociological Review, we republish here the fragments of the article published in the Symposium Remembering Prague Spring 1968. Original source: Hans Joas, "Shock in Florence", *Czech Sociological Review*, Issue 3, 2018, P. 449-451. The whole issue is available by the following link: <http://sreview.soc.cas.cz/cs/issue/195-sociologicky-casopis-czech-sociological-review-3-2018>

We are grateful for the permission to republish these fragments, granted by the journal.

⁴ In his article, Hans Joas describes his contacts with Eastern European intellectuals and broader public in 1968. The full version of the article is available by the link: <http://sreview.soc.cas.cz/cs/issue/195-sociologicky-casopis-czech-sociological-review-3-2018/3828>

Mead), but also in their profound reevaluation of the conditions of religious faith in modern times (William James). I had the feeling of having found in American pragmatism a kind of Archimedean point for a rethinking of German (and European) intellectual traditions. This has become constitutive for my intellectual work in many respects⁵, but also for my political activities and publications.⁶

Tony Judt's famous summary of the experience of August 1968 is certainly well-taken: 'The illusion that Communism was reformable, that Stalinism had been a wrong turning, a mistake that could still be corrected, that the core ideals of democratic pluralism might somehow still be compatible with the structures of Marxist collectivism: that illusion was crushed under the tanks on August 21 1968 and it never recovered. Alexander Dubček and his Action Program were not a beginning but an end.' [Judt 2005: 447] But history is never over. Maybe some of the lessons drawn post 1968 and guiding the developments after 1989 will also retrospectively be seen as illusions. If the financial crisis of 2008 had gotten completely out of control or if a new financial crisis is ahead, if a new major war erupts because of the foreign policy of the world's strongest military power, we will be forced to question contemporary capitalism again and probably rethink the heritage of the Prague Spring of 1968 in the sense of a viable combination of democracy and socialism.

⁵ Particularly the series of books leading from *George Herbert Mead: A Contemporary Reexamination of His Thought* [Joas 1985] through *Pragmatism and Social Theory* [1993] and *The Creativity of Action* [1996a] to *The Genesis of Values* [2000].

⁶ One of my writings on the 'communitarians' led to my only publication in Czech so far: Joas [1996b].

Mabel Berezin, Cornell University, USA

1968 and the Long Millenium

I was certainly not on the barricades in 1968. Yet, much of my academic career which began in the 1990s—as well as the careers of many other theoretical and macro-historical sociologists have been shaped by events of that year or more broadly the “sixties.” What I have to say speaks mainly to the United States and the American context. I see three effects of those turbulent years on sociological theory and research. First, 1968 more or less effectively ended Parsonian functionalism and modernization theory as viable macro-sociological approaches. Functionalism spoke to the post-war vision of stability and order in an economically prosperous society. Talcott Parsons’ “social system” was orderly, neatly divided into multiple fourfold tables and all departures from these categories constituted deviance. I am not sure that anyone reads Parsons today or at least not the Parsons of the 1950s. I do teach him as a historical entity when I teach Contemporary Sociological Theory—a historical artifact. Modernization theory was bluntly put simply a dictate that “developing” countries should embrace the Protestant Ethic in values and economics. Second, 1968 changed the conversation in social science by changing the subject matter. Instead of social order, analysts saw dis-order and inequalities that they had previously ignored. Suddenly, civil rights struggles brought interest in racial discrimination and collective struggle, as did the student protests against the war in Viet Nam. Marxism, although it never became fully mainstream, was discussed and studied in many elite sociology departments instead of remaining on the fringes. In 1983, Michael Burawoy of Berkeley and Theda Skocpol of Harvard published an edited volume Marxist Inquiries: Studies of Labor, Class, and States at the University of Chicago Press. The origin of the volume was a special issue of the American Journal of Sociology. Both the editors and the publishing venue were at the upper echelon of American social science. Although labor studies per se, never fully took off—other areas of study that focused upon exploitation did. The 1960s empowered multiple forms of protest although some did not come to fruition until the early 1970s. It was not until the Viet Nam protests died down that the women’s movement began to flourish and a new form of feminism took hold. This led to a focus upon women and gender as well as a flowering feminist theory

which had previously been non-existent in what had been (and to some extent continues to be) a male dominated academy. By the time the 70s turned into the 80s turned into the 90s all sorts of theorizing that no one had imagined in the 1960s dominated the theoretical landscape—identity theory, gender theory, race theory; queer theory. In many ways, 1968 was a tipping point that turned on new eye on social problems and in so doing managed to open up an entirely new universe of possibility in sociological theorizing. The third effect of 1968 was that it globalized sociological theorizing. To be sure from the 70s to the turn of the century—global more or less meant European. Academic translations flourished. But it was during this period, that scholars turned to Antonio Gramsci and his concept of hegemony to think about issues of power and culture. Jurgen Habermas introduced communication theory although his important work on the public sphere was not translated into English until early 1990s. Michel Foucault introduced us to “genealogies of power.” Arguably the most lasting figure from this group and the person whose work has generated the most widely has been Pierre Bourdieu. Bourdieu’s early translated work was on sociology of education and issues of class reproduction. His *Outline of a Theory of Practice* was a more specialized work that did not widely diffuse. It is in the new millennium that his work has had increasing influence—particularly his theory of fields. Scholars who do not consider themselves social theorists regularly engage Bourdieu and the extensive body of his work. As historical sociologists know, causality is tricky. Yet, in the grand scheme of things 1968 was a temporal code similar to what Eric Hobsbawm described as the “long nineteenth century” from the French revolution to the beginning of World War I. In a similar vein, 1968 ushered in the “long millennium” from 1970 to 2000. During that period, there was what Thomas Kuhn would call a “paradigm shift” from order to disorder and hence the end of functionalism (although I would argue that rational choice with its economic bias and the current appeal of social experiments is a new iteration of functionalism—the subject of another essay); new theoretical urgencies around new social issues; and lastly, the globalization or at least internationalization of the theorists who entered the academic lexicon.

Michel Maffesoli, La Sorbonne, France

May 68: On Utopia or the Utopia Between Us

(Translated by Dean Ray)

Introduction

My work does not contain a great number of sociological laws because it tries more to understand society than to explain it, more to grasp its diverse social phenomena in their entirety than to find their explicit causes.

Though, it looks to me that there is a law, more or less constant in the history of humanity, that makes an idea, a paradigm, a structure of the imaginary appear first in secret, and then discreetly, before it can finally appear in the open. To say otherwise, today's anomie becomes tomorrow's canon.

It is from this perspective that I understand the period of eruption that was May '68 in France, but also in Germany, Italy, the United States, Japan... It is an idea, a behaviour, a sentiment, a conception of life already appearing secretly to the romantics, then discreetly to the surrealists, before finally appearing in the open in the revolutionary effervescence and festival of '68. As was said in the writings of the Situationist International and then echoed in the interventions and writings during and after '68, "these ideas are already in all of our heads". It signifies the passage of the anomic to the canonical, of the avant-garde revolution (like Leninism and their Trotskyist and Maoist avatars) to a movement that is more spontaneous and more liberationist.

It has been well demonstrated by Alfred Schutz⁷ that we are predisposed to understand the present through the words, notions, and concepts forged by history and that these are not always adequate to the phenomenon we analyze. This is what is called "the stock of knowledge at hand". It is in this sense that May '68 was essentially analyzed in political terms—as the missed revolution, as the destruction of the foundations of bourgeois society, as the beginning of a revolution of mores and of laws.

Hypothesis

My approach is different. I see May '68 not as a political event, inscribed in the progression of history, but as a phenomenon participating in the advent of a brand new

⁷ Le chercheur et le quotidien. Phénoménologie des sciences sociales (traduction d'articles sélectionnés à partir des Collected Papers), traduction par Anne Noschis-Gillieron, postface et choix de textes de Kaj Noschis et Denys de Caprona, préface de Michel Maffesoli, Paris, Méridiens Klincksieck, 1987.

epoch, the passage from modernity (this period, which began in the 17th century to the middle of the 20th) to postmodernity.

I write here in the wake of my mentor, the anthropologist Gilbert Durand⁸ who demonstrated the succession of different structures of the imaginary, as Michel Foucault had demonstrated the succession of different epistemes or Thomas Kuhn had demonstrated the succession of different scientific paradigms. This has been classically known as the principal organizing society as it is given and understood.

There is in the history of humanity a succession of epochs, well demonstrated by Foucault, two or three centuries, dominated by a common imaginary, a common conception of the world, of myths, of images, of words permitted and used in understanding not only the world itself, but also the life of a society, its complexity (E. Morin) and wholeness.

As I have shown in many of my books⁹, modernity, particularly well analyzed by Michel Foucault in his early works¹⁰, is constructed on the return of 'the One' and the individualist principle, the primacy of rationalism, productivism or utilitarianism, and a projection in the future following the tradition of Semitic theology (Judaism, Islam, Christianity).

In contrast, we have entered into the epoch of postmodernity, which marks the end of grand universal stories (Lyotard)¹¹, the end of a society of objects, and because of this, marks the end of the subject of history that was well written by my friend Jean Baudrillard.¹²

But the passage of one epoch to another does not occur through a dialectic process or even an epistemological break (Althusser), but on the contrary, through a process of slow saturation as the characteristics of the epoch emerge piece by piece. Gilbert Durand employed a beautiful metaphor of a 'semantic basin' to describe the origin and

⁸ Gilbert Durand, *Les structures anthropologiques de l'imaginaire*, (1960), Rééditions, Paris, Dunod.

⁹ Cf. Maffesoli, *Le temps des tribus, le déclin de l'individualisme dans les sociétés de masse*, 1988 (*The times of the tribes*, Sage Publications. 1995).

¹⁰ M. Foucault, *Les Mots et les choses, une archéologie des sciences humaines* (1966), *L'archéologie du savoir* (1969).

¹¹ Jean-François Lyotard, *La condition postmoderne*, (1979), rééd. Minuit, Paris, 1994.

¹² Jean Baudrillard, *L'échange symbolique et la mort*, 1976, rééd. Gallimard 2001; *Simulacres et simulation*, Galilée, Paris, 1981.

diffusion of one imaginary replacing another.¹³ Sorokin demonstrated well this process of saturation as a series of ideas, concepts, and representations of the world appear, only to be replaced as new ideas emerge.

It is in this sense that I have analyzed contemporary society as a tribal society. Society now is nomadic, presentist and predisposed to the importance of the body. It is hedonistic, imaginary, and dreamlike, consumed by the everyday.

Like a monstration,¹⁴ May '68 represents the return of the imagination, of the everyday, of the ideals of community as an anthropological structure of the postmodern society.

“Monstration”

I will take something characteristic from the events of May '68 to show how it participates in the arrival of postmodernity—not to go beyond it, but to evoke understanding by the intuition and its sense of reason. '68 is a return to the philosophy of life rather than the arrival of a critical conception of the world. It is a movement from a mass society to the ideal of community rather than the arrival of a society organized by an individualist principal. It is the emergence of the importance of everyday life, of the here and now.

A vitalist affirmation versus a critique of domination

The sociology of 20th century was largely dominated—at least in Europe and in France —by a tendency to explain individual behaviour by social determinism, rather than an attempt to understand the social bond that creates society through the interaction of individuals.

The critical and objectivist currents in sociology attempt to explain domination, distinction, and the reproduction of inequalities rather than attempting to understand the possibilities of social cohesion. It is as Nietzsche said “we could live here, since here we do live.”

¹³ Cf. la reprise dans Les Cahiers européens de l’imaginaire n°7, Le Baroque, CNRS éditions, Paris, 2015, de l’article fondateur de Gilbert Durand sur cette approche : Le bassin sémantique et ses resurgences.

¹⁴ Monstration in French has the meaning of both a performance and a protest, like a piece of performance art that has a political or social motive. It is imported from Russian. In English it has not maintained the same meaning. However, the translator has chosen to adopt the term, untranslated, Maffesoli provided – *Translator’s note*.

As it was taken up by French sociology, the habitus translates determinism into appearance, the habit, the way of life, the belief, the infrastructure, the socioeconomic condition.

It seems to me, understanding the formidable explosion of public protests by artists, revellers, hedonists, but also politicians, that marked May '68, escapes the habitus, as it was first used by St Thomas Aquinas and as it has been adapted in sociology. The form is not determined by the content, the habit and the belief are not determined by the socioeconomic condition, but rather, the emergence of diverse groups are affirmed collectively by their posters, their poetic and revolutionary slogans, their habits, their haircuts, and their renunciation of the morality of anomie—the interactions making society.¹⁵

The so-called social movements that have followed one another since '68 do not translate a new mode of protest, but precisely the end of the revolutionary ideal. They are not the search for a change of the political-economic structure as a prerequisite for the establishment of a society yet to come (Marx), but precisely the establishment, here and now, of transformations in the modes not only of apprehension of politics, but of life in general.

The many versions of the slogan Take your desires for reality translates well into the present. This drive to realize utopia here and now is part of the analysis of postmodernity by a number of commentators who cite “the immediacy” of the youth and “their absence of a sense of the project”.

While the political words used in the movements still fell under a marxist doxa—like revolution, new society, etc.—we see something different emerge in the student movement. I mean student movement in the broadest sense, as those involved in universities, artistic and cultural institutions, as well as protesters. Here we see a desire for immediate gratification, this is what I call “collective effervescences” and “emotional communions.”¹⁶

In sociological theory we see a return to Georg Simmel, Marcel Mauss, the Emile Durkheim of *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, the Max Weber of *Politics as a Vocation* rather than a vulgar Marxism and its various epigones, or the strict adherents—far more than the master himself—of Durkheim’s phrase “treat social facts as things”.

¹⁵ I return to the oeuvre of my friend Guy Hocquenghem, “Lettre ouverte...”. CI (1986).

¹⁶ Michel Maffesoli, *Homo Eroticus. Des communions émotionnelles*, CNRS Éditions, Paris 2012.

In the madness of May '68, there is an attention to phenomena of social cohesion, of collective affirmation. These account for the whole and not just the one. They account for humanity as part of nature. They break with the dictates of atomism.

This is what Gilbert Durand calls the return to a "nocturnal imagination", that of the "cup" rather than the sword or the phallus. What, for my part, I have named an "invagination of the world".

From a class society to a society of tribes

Very rapidly, May '68 closed, opposing two worlds, that of the student revolt and that of the grand unity of Gaullist politics. But this opposition between established society and movements contesting it, should not be interpreted in terms of oppositions between left and right, capitalism and revolution, old and young, etc.

What is rather striking is the segmentation of the "student movement" into multiple small tribes¹⁷: the various ultra-left, leftist, strict Leninist, Trotskyist, Maoist, anarchist, situationist or post-situationist, Bordigist, Gramscian, etc. Each one is smaller than the last, until we arrive at the smallest groups, sometimes they are terrorists, but they are also those of diverse desires: of rurality, of communes, of alternatives to school, to work, to medicine, to psychiatry, etc.

Ephemeral communities, they form at a music festival, at pacifist protest or even at an environmental demonstrations.

It is tribalism which has won all of society after '68. It is the case in marketing, religion, and even science. Religious denominations have multiplied. Even scientific communities are less and less national and less and less similar. The internet enables collaborations and exchanges across the whole world.

One can see this ideal of communitarianism in important currents of the medieval imaginary—in schools not only scholastic, but also artistic. These were the influential minorities of modernity—fourierism, romanticism, surrealism.

We can say the collective effervescence of May '68 is a sign of the passage of a society organized on the principals of the social contract to a tribal one. This is a society in which each person has many identifications, each ephemeral or more perennial. These belongings are constructed around emotional communities, the

¹⁷ I have used the word 'tribes' since my book "Le temps de tribes". Not in the ethnological sense, but as a metaphor for these multiple community loyalties, for the efflorescences of these groups, reuniting these people with their common passions, their tastes, an idea, a sentiment, a dream... Not an original loyalty that determines the individuals believes, their practices, their way of life, but of the multiple identification that changes a 'one' into we.

sharing of feelings and of common dreams, rather than rationally constructed projects. The contract is succeeded by the pact even in the interpersonal relation and the family.

The importance of Everyday Life

One important person in the discourse both before and after '68, was Henri Lefebvre. He was a philosopher and a sociologist. A communist and a critic of communism, he returned to the fold of the party in his old age. He understood why daily practices were so interesting, their importance for the function of society. In 1947, 1961, and 1981 he expressed an interest in the “critique of everyday life”. But, for him it was always a question of showing how everyday life, in its repetition, its banality, was determined and dominated. In what way can it be neither creative nor free?

There is, though less marked, a temptation of this type in Guy Debord’s analysis and particularly in his criticism of the society of spectacle.

It is the same of Jean Baudrillard, regretting the ‘disappearance of the symbolic exchange’.

All of my feelings of closeness to these two authors aside, I developed my own approach to everyday life.

The centre that I founded in 1982 with Georges Balandier (Centre d’études sur l’actuel et le quotidien)¹⁸ is inscribed with an opposite conception of the importance of everyday life, of the affirmation of gestures, exchanges, images of living together.

Being in the lineage of Georg Simmel in particular, but also St. Thomas Aquinas, my work and the many works that I have influenced in my centre, were interested in everyday phenomena—the musical group, the first experience of an online social network, a sexual practice, sports, domesticity, etc. I used to tell my students “any social fact can become a sociological fact.”

We have developed at CEAQ and in the number of laboratories associated with it, at the national and international level, a wholistic conception of sociology. We are interested in what makes social connection possible, what brings people together, and what creates collective life, in all of its facets. This is not the utilitarian division of sociology into fields—urban, rural, cultural. This is not the analysis of the social determinants of the individual or social domination. Instead, it is an understanding of plural and imaginative sociality.

If we take the different groups formed during my 30 years of professorship at the Sorbonne within the CEAQ, we find many studies on these various ‘tribes’ as they

¹⁸ The Centre for the Study of Actual and the Everyday – *Translator’s note.*

began to emerge in the years that have followed May 68. For 68 has seen the advent of a return to the countryside, to communities of shared location; it has witnessed the birth of diverse alternatives for living, as well as great movements of sexual pluralism.

Toward an Opening

From the point of view of our discipline, it seems to me that May 1968 marked, if not the end, at least the irrelevance of the figure of the militant sociologist. The tradition of French sociology—unlike the great Weberian tradition of separating knowledge from the political—has often confused social analysis with political prescription. There are many examples of this type in all branches of sociology, including those who think they are the most advances. But these scientific and project oriented discourses are no longer relevant and they no-longer reflect social reality. Thus the primacy of the economy, of the economism which is the abc of the political discourse instituted as expert discourse, does not allow us to understand the importance of the resurgence of religiosity, the attention to daily life, the end of the value of work and the emergence of new forms of solidarity.

From an epistemological perspective, admittedly we still find some laggards, fanatical in their rendition of 'objective reality'. But it is clear that even among the followers of a critical and committed sociology, the recourse to various methods of qualitative investigation is increasingly accepted. Adoring, sometimes shamelessly, what they had once derided in front of those of us who had practiced this comprehensive approach for a long time. I think of Gilbert Durand and the galaxy of the sociology of the imaginary, Pierre Sansot, Edgar Morin, Jean Baudrillard, Serge Moscovici, and many of my friends and colleagues from CEAQ, Patrick Tacussel, Phillippe Joron, Martine Xiberras and the many, many others.

All of these are part of what I have called the return of Dionysus.

From then on, my understanding of May 68 is not that of an events, part of the arrow of history, a continuum from the past to the future. I would not say that May '68 had a positive or negative effect on our present. It is rather part of the contemporary imagination.

And because there was a lot of staging in this period, a lot of theatrics, I would say it was an arrival. Not a utopia, not an atopia, and not a failed revolution, but a swarming, the beginning of an epidemic of interstitial utopias.

These mark a recovery of the past becoming itself in the present—a return of tradition and religiosity. Is this not the paradoxical function of prophecy: to remember the past?

Jeffrey C. Alexander, Yale University, USA

1968 and the Sixties

If we take “1968” relatively narrowly, then we mean the events that took place during that year, which means radical student upheavals in Western Europe and North America and the Prague Spring in Czechoslovakia. I can't speak with any authority about the consequences of the latter: Did it push sociological theory to the right, to more conformist “Soviet Marxism,” or did it (also) have an underground effect, triggering the ruminations about humanistic Marxism and the revival of theorizing about civil society that began to appear in Eastern European social theory in the early and mid-1970s?

In the West, the events of 1968, again considered relatively narrowly, intensified what seems in retrospect to have been a counter-productive turn toward militancy and revolutionary Marxist-Leninism-Maoism. Young theorists of my generation – student intellectuals like myself at Harvard and Berkeley – came away from the uprisings and confrontations of 1968 with the idea that our capitalist democracies were teetering on the edge of revolution, and that physical, often violent confrontations with what Althusser called “the state apparatus,” if they were courageous and massive enough, could be successful in ushering in a post-capitalist order. This “68” produced the splintering of broad based student leftism into Maoist, even Stalinist factions that went back to orthodox Marxist thinking, leaving “New Left” ideas behind. I vividly remember reading the cover of the *New Left Review* when I entered graduate school at the University of California, Berkeley, in Fall 1969; it had the word “Militancy” splashed in large letters across its cover. In my view, these were dangerous and regressive intellectual developments. They made it very difficult for my generation of social thinkers to understand the nature of Western democracies, to see the possibilities of civil repair. They also created powerful right-wing backlash movements that took power for decades.

But if we understand 1968 in a broader metaphorical sense, as a sign standing for “the sixties,” then I see its effects in two, much more positive ways. Perhaps the broadest and most decisive effect for sociological theory was that the radical political and cultural experiences of this decade challenged scientism and evolutionism. Theorists in my generation were committed to normative and critical modes of thinking, to inserting the idea of a non-existent but still possible idea of utopia into any theorizing about contemporary societies. This is precisely, for example, what the theorizing of myself and Erik Olin Wright have in common. We were graduate students at Berkeley at the same time. Erik emerged as a Marxist, and I as a neo-functional

and we both eventually broadened and changed, but our thinking was deeply affected by our theorizing about what Erik later called “real utopias.”

The other pervasive effect of the sixties was to create the intellectual conditions for the cultural turn in sociological theory. The experience of utopian communes, whether political or hippy, of “sex, drugs, and rock'n'roll,” of what many called the cultural revolution of that time – all these created a sensibility to the role of meaning-making and the arbitrariness of signifiers. It's no accident that cultural sociology was created by the sixties generation two decades later. And not only this new generational sensibility was involved. The cultural turn in sociological theory drew from radical new thinking in the generation that preceded us, and these figures were deeply affected by the sixties too. Victor Turner's theory of liminality/communitas drew direct inspiration from the sixties sensibility, but so, less directly, did the writings of Clifford Geertz and Mary Douglas. Robert Bellah's turn to “symbolic realism” was a product of the sixties too.

Theorizing Theory

Dmitry Kurakin, National Research University Higher School of Economics, Russia

Theory and Culture

Sociological theory still keeps the enchantment of the sacred grove at the heart of the discipline, at least in the eyes of the 'theory people'. However, it is less and less clear, what exactly is a theory today, what does it promise to sociology, what is the duty and the life of a theorist, and how have these things changed since the times when today's 'contemporary sociological theories' (which are not that contemporary, as Omar Lizardo once aptly noticed) were created. An obvious tendency in the discipline is the shifting of the center of gravity toward empirical research. Thus, one of the ways to trace these changes is to focus on relations between sociological theory and central thematic concepts, which, designating spheres of concrete research, simultaneously hold crucial stakes in theory, shaping vanguards of theoretical inquiry in empirical studies. This is ever more important since purely abstract theory nowadays effectively vanished, giving way to theoretically-driven empirical research. If this is really the case, connections between theory and particular concepts represent the state of the arts in theory as it exists in our times. That motivated us to launch the current section. In the following several issues we will examine the most important concepts, which obtain theoretical capacity. In this issue, we begin with the notion of culture. Many of leading theorists, both well-established major figures and rising stars, have a pronounced interest in culture, and remarkable theory-driven debates are taking place at the realm of culture. To address this connection, I discuss culture with Philip Smith from Yale University, who is well known both as a cultural sociologist and as a theorist.

Interview with Philip Smith, Yale University, USA

Dmitry Kurakin: It seems to me truly intriguing, that, in the contemporary sociology, 'theory' becomes more and more associated with 'culture'. It is manifest in many forms; for a mere formal one, the majority of RC16 'Theory' sections at the congress, and many of members' personal profiles thematically focused on culture. A somewhat unexpected affinity or even, in some cases, convergence for the whole discipline's theoretical base, and this one particular concept, seems to be a particular 'sign of the times', and, hence, might shed light on the big picture of the contemporary sociology. Do you think this convergence does exist and sociological theory nowadays leans toward culture, and if so, what are the main reasons for that?

Philip Smith: Hey Dmitry. Did you look at the news today? One reason culture is moving to the fore is that pretty much every 'big issue' or controversy today is understood in terms of meanings or has its origins in a meaning system: Brexit, the Kavanaugh nomination, Trump's rise to power, climate change, refugees and migration..... It is not just cultural sociologists employed in academia saying this. So are leading commentators, analysts and critics. Sociological theory is being responsive in tracking this reality and by trying to generate better cultural theory. At the root of all this, of course, are wider and deeper shifts in social organization towards a knowledge society, semiotic society, late-modernity or whatever we want to call it wherein technological shifts, societal complexity, semiotic circulation and mediatization are ramping up. Another reason is that all the Messianic paradigms that have promised to reformulate social theory from the bottom up have run out of gas or been shown to have limited utility: rational choice, structural Marxism, ethnomethodology and so forth. There was a time not so long ago when these were on the rise. Of course in RC16 we are just part of the wider picture in the ISA. There is a lot of theory going on in other RCs of the ISA that is far less receptive to meaning – comparative and historical sociology, for example, is moving away from culture towards the study of networks, military power, or rational choice style models of authority and obedience. But really in

RC16 we keep an open mind. A few years ago, for example, the RC16 Junior Theorist runner up prize went to someone engaged in a justification of formal theory of a 'nuts and bolts' kind who was arguing that cultural theory was plagued by (the usual suspect) problems of causal imprecision, tautology and so forth.

Dmitry Kurakin: Thank you, Phil, you've quite set the scene! So, we live in more culture-driven and meaning-oriented world than ever before. However, do we? Are you saying, the issues people dealt with a couple of decades ago have been less about culture and more about, say, institutions, domination, and power? One apparent thing, admittedly, is we are facing more diversity in all the spheres of our lives nowadays. But does it necessarily have to be conceptualized with appeal to culture? Maybe that is just the old good globalization, and we should have been rather more concerned with changing economies and institutional landscapes than with culture?

Another thing, which comes to my mind, driven by your answer, is we are definitely dealing with a larger scope of information. But does it necessarily have to do with culture? Quite possibly, it might be in opposite: Google and Amazon know better than anybody about what is happening in social life, because they rest on networks of digital behavior instead of understanding meanings. We, ourselves, follow the pattern, for example, when we are skimming through books and articles using Ctrl+F instead of reading them closely, in fact, imitating data analysis's formal mechanisms. So, does a great intensification of semantic exchanges in contemporary life carry water for culture?

Philip Smith: Of course there was 'culture' a couple of decades ago. However there was far less reflexivity and awareness about cultural process and signaling among practitioners and consumers. As you point out there have also been increases in volume and speed associated with sub-sphere differentiation. I'm reminded of the Anthony Giddens line that sociology is shooting at a moving target. Social theory is continually adapting so as to track those movements. For example, as soon as we get a handle on broadcast TV along comes cable and CNN. Then the internet as a source of news and opinion. But alongside these we have extra layers of interpretative awareness. For example, after Presidential candidate debates in the United States the discussion is first and foremost on "How did X perform?", not "Did X have sensible policies?". This is then followed by commentary from figures who are experts in body language or political semantics. We didn't have this back in the days of Nixon-Kennedy. So, to sum up, there is not only more information but also more hermeneutic complexity due to reflexivity and circulation. Of course we need to be aware that

cultural systems have always been incredibly complex, as figures like Levi-Strauss or Marcel Mauss have taught us. As for those “larger scopes of information” the important thing to notice is that these shifts have themselves generated discourses, notably those concerning the issues of reduced attention spans, dumbing down, the death of the novel and so forth. Every technological shift generates anxieties and reflexive activity. Rather than swamping culture things like Google or Facebook become what Levi-Strauss might call “things to think with” for social theory or the civil sphere alike.

Dmitry Kurakin: Phil, I think, you touched on a very intriguing point. So, even though we see growing complexity in both technological or even ‘informational’ spheres and their organizational incarnations on the one hand, and in cultural meanings and their patterns, layers and interconnections, on the other hand, we might want to focus on the latter – in opposite to how earlier thinkers about technology-driven changes, such as philosophers of technology, approached to the same puzzle. To see culture, along with its complicating forms, as a figure, and technology and organization as a background. I think, you perfectly shown ‘referential’ (and then even ‘self-referential’) reasons to focus on culture. But do you think there are also internal reasons for this move toward culture in sociological theory, which have to do rather with development of particular theories and debates?

Philip Smith: I don't think that's exactly right Dmitry. Technologies do have affordances and objective properties, right, but we need to study these as they intersect with cultural systems. Freud has a line somewhere near the start of Civilization and its Discontents about how with the advent of the telegram we become anxious if a friend sets off to cross the Atlantic on a steamer and we don't hear anything from them within a week. In that case the speed and simultaneity of the telegram had itself changed expectations from those of the mail packet era. But generally of course as cultural sociologists we study the meanings of technologies, how they are narrated or take on symbolic valence and how this impacts their uptake and legitimacy. I did that myself a few years ago in my book on punishment. Returning to your argument, I think we were lucky to have a golden generation of theorists from the 1950s through to the 1970s – not so much in sociology but rather the cultural turn more widely. Figuring out how to make their ideas sociologically tractable – to our own audiences, methodological conventions, debates, theoretical traditions – took some time. Only by the end of the 1990s did we have a sense how to do this that was routinized. So there was a lag effect. Lags build up pressure, rather like water cumulating behind a dam wall. Once the flood gates are opened there's going to be a long period of flow. The flow was

sufficiently intense to generate a kind of autocatalysis wherein cultural sociology was able to cumulate on the basis of its own internal debates – say semiotics versus pragmatism to give an obvious example – and subfields. That would be my answer to your question. We passed an evolutionary tipping point and became a stand alone field powered from within like a perpetual motion machine. I guess the counterfactual here would be that if cultural theory had drip fed into social theory it would have been progressively assimilated and hence, not crossing some tipping point of flow and energy, less visible or significant.

Announcements

Call for Papers

Modernity and the Holocaust, thirty years on.

A symposium at the University of Leeds

Tuesday 10th September 2019

August 2019 will mark the 30th anniversary of Zygmunt Bauman's monumental book *Modernity and the Holocaust*. The Holocaust, the late sociologist famously argued, was not the polar opposite of modernity or a pathological deviation from modernisation processes. Rather, it was a *possibility* of modernity, 'born and executed in our modern rational society, at the high stage of our civilization and at the peak of human cultural achievement and for this reason ... a problem of that society, civilization and culture' (Bauman, 2000:x). Referred to as the keystone of 'sociology after Auschwitz' (Joas, 1999), the book contained critical messages – concerning the limitations of sociology, the condition of modernity and the consequences for morality – that challenged central foundations of the social sciences and humanities. For this, it was awarded the European Amalfi Prize for Sociology and Social Sciences. These core messages of *Modernity and the Holocaust*, however, continue to be of great relevance today, and not only to scholars in the social sciences and humanities. Indeed, in the context of what Zygmunt Bauman referred to as our contemporary 'crisis of humanity' (Bauman, 2016), they remain 'of the utmost importance not just for the perpetrators, victims and witnesses of the crime, but for all those who are alive today and hope to be alive tomorrow' (2000:viii).

To mark the anniversary of the book, and to evaluate its legacy, a full-day symposium will be held on Tuesday 10th September at the University of Leeds, where Bauman held a chair in sociology until retirement in 1990. The aim of the symposium is to discuss the continuing importance of *Modernity and the Holocaust* in the context of the present 'crisis of humanity'. As well as considering its enduring relevance for the discipline of sociology, the event will also incorporate reflections on the book's significant transdisciplinary appeal and will provide a space for critical dialogical extensions of the work to theoretical traditions outside of its scope, such as to feminist theory and gender studies, and to postcolonial/decolonial criticism. Moreover, it will consider how the more specific arguments developed in the book speak to contemporary debates and concerns related to ethnic relations, racism and anti-Semitism; about how the Holocaust ought to be understood vis-à-vis other instances of genocide and mass violence; and about what Zygmunt Bauman later termed 'moral

blindness' or 'liquid evil' (Bauman & Donskis, 2013, 2016). The event will also recognise the profound influence of Janina Bauman on *Modernity and the Holocaust* and will provide a space for honouring her own writings on the Holocaust, testimony and on gypsies.

We are inviting papers that might address, among other topics, the following areas:

- The continuing importance of the book in the context of the present 'crisis of humanity';
- The enduring relevance of the book for the discipline of sociology;
- Assessments of the book in light of shared European heritage;
- Reflections on the transdisciplinary legacy of the book;
- Bauman's work on ethnic relations, racism and anti-Semitism;
- Dialogic extensions of Bauman's arguments in the book to the works of other social theorists and/or theoretical traditions (i.e. postcolonial theory; feminist theory; gender studies; disability studies; theories of multiple modernities; theories of the Anthropocene; etc.);
- Critical discussions of Bauman's arguments in relation to other cases of genocide or forms of violence;
- The importance of the testimony of Janina Bauman in the development of the book and her own work on anti-Gypsy discrimination;
- Cultural memory and the Holocaust

Please send abstracts of 250 words with title, name, affiliation and email address to j.d.palmer@leeds.ac.uk. The deadline for abstract submissions is **1st February, 2019**. You will receive a response by **1st March, 2019**. Please submit the abstract under the subject heading 'CFP Modernity and the Holocaust'.

Call for papers

Session “Cultural Sociology and Education” organized by Dmitry Kurakin and Anna Lund at RC04 mid-term conference

The mid-term conference of the RC04 (Education) is going to be held in Moscow, Russia, July 24-26, 2019. The theme of the conference: “Culture and Education: Social Transformations and Multicultural Communication”.

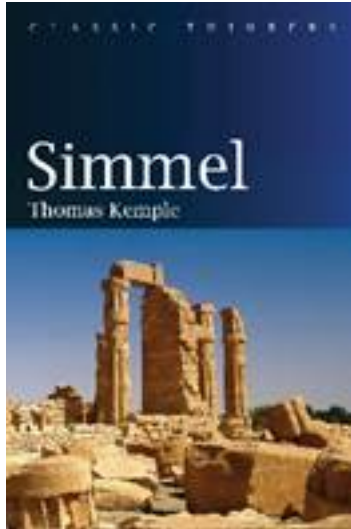
Submit abstracts: January 15, 2019 - March 15, 2019

Please take a note on a session organized by Anna Lund and Dmitry Kurakin:

Cultural Sociology and Education

In contemporary world, the growing cultural and institutional diversity put certain limitations on the validity of classical and well-established explanatory models, which has been successfully used within the sociology of education since the 1960s. The growing role of choice and patterns of meaning-making in education effectively amplified the importance of cultural dimension of such classical problems of the sociology of education as inequality, mobility, educational achievements and others. As a result, culture cannot be seen anymore as a passive transmission between institutional settings and human action. This means, that we need to bring highly developed cultural sociological approaches, which during the last decades increasingly proved their validity among many empirical fields, to the sociology of education. For example, to a certain degree need the school to be analyzed as something more than differentiation and mobility. The school can also be seen as an intermediary institution between civil sphere elements of autonomy, mutual recognition and modes of incorporation *and* social and cultural realms of life as ethnicity, class, gender, religion and family. Symbolic codes enabling, on the one hand, "civic capacities" and, on the other hand, civil exclusion through othering-processes are the double standard in schooling, as elsewhere. This session seeks to demonstrate how meaning-centered analysis can enrich the mainstream of the sociology of education.

If you want to submit an application to Lund and Kurakin’s session, please make a note in the application.



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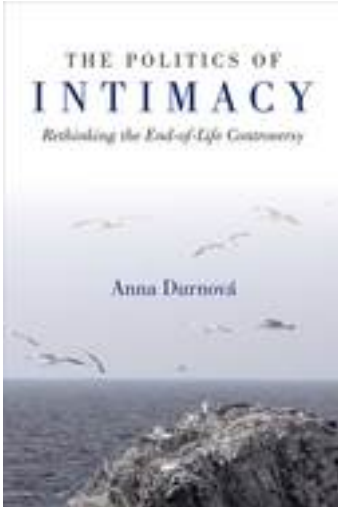
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Anna Durnová

Description

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Debates on the end-of-life controversy are complex because they seem to hijack national and cultural traditions. Where previous books have focused on ideological grounds, *The Politics of Intimacy* explores dying as the site where policies are negotiated and implemented. *Intimacy* comprises the emotional experience of the end of life and how we acknowledge it—or not—through institutions. This process shows that end-of-life controversy relies on the conflict between the individual and these institutions, a relationship that is the cornerstone of Western liberal democracies.

Through interviews with mourners, stakeholders, and medical professionals, examination of media debates in France and the Czech Republic, Durnová shows that liberal institutions, in their attempts to accommodate the emotional experience at the end of life, ultimately fail. She describes this deadlock as the “politics of intimacy,” revealing that political institutions deploy power through collective acknowledgment of individual emotions but fail to maintain this recognition because of this same experience.

“Even as Anna Durnová creates two utterly compelling empirical case studies, she makes a major theoretical contribution to the sociology of emotion. She conceptualizes public expressions of suffering as a new and powerful discourse of intimacy that challenges institutions of power.”

—Jeffrey Alexander, Yale University

Anna Durnová is Senior Researcher in Techno-Science and Societal Transformation at the Institute for Advanced Studies in Vienna and Faculty Fellow of Yale University's Center for Cultural Sociology.

Job opening

The Higher School of Economics' Center for Cultural Sociology and Anthropology of Education in Moscow, Russia invites applications for postdoctoral research positions in the field of **sociology of education and culture**.

- Center's research projects cover the following areas:
- role of culture, meaning and symbolic structures in educational and career choice
- career choice and career decision making
- role of culture and inequality in education in late modernity
- role of inequality and culture in career guidance

Requirements:

- a PhD from an international research university in such fields as: sociology of education, cultural sociology, sociology;
- a strong background in social theory, social research methodology, qualitative or quantitative methods, mixed methods research, research in education;
- fluent English, knowledge of Russian is required if you wish to work with qualitative data.

Please find more details [here](#). General conditions for Post-Doctoral Research positions can be found here. Appointments will be normally made for one year.

A CV and research statement should be submitted via online application form and **two letters of recommendation** should be submitted by the referees directly to fellowship@hse.ru by **February 15, 2019**. Please note that direct applications to the hiring Center for Cultural Sociology and Anthropology of Education may not be reviewed.

Member Publications

- Coles, Romand and **Simon Susen** (2018) 'The Pragmatic Vision of Visionary Pragmatism: The Challenge of Radical Democracy in a Neoliberal World Order', *Contemporary Political Theory*, 17(2), pp. 250–262.
- Curran, Dean**, (2018) "From Performativity to Representation as Intervention: Rethinking the 2008 Financial Crisis and the Recent History of Social Science", *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, pp. 1 – 19. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/jtsb.12186?af=R>
- Curran, Dean** (2018) "Risk Arbitrage and the Organized Irresponsibility Principle" *Critical Criminology*, pp 1–16. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10612-018-9415-x>
- Curran, Dean** (2018) 'Environmental Justice meets Risk-Class: The Relational Distribution of Environmental Bads', *Antipode* 50(2): 298–318.
- Curran, Dean** (2018) 'Risk, Innovation, and Democracy in the Digital Economy', *European Journal of Social Theory* 21(2): 207–226.
- Curran, Dean** (2018) 'Beck's Creative Challenge to Class Analysis: From the Rejection of Class to the Discovery of Risk-Class', *Journal of Risk Research* 21(1): 29–40.
- Jasso, Guillermina**. (2018) "What Can You and I Do To Reduce Inequality?" *Journal of Mathematical Sociology* 42(4):186–204
- Jasso, Guillermina**. (2018) "Quantitative Methods." Pp. 235–241 in J. Michael Ryan (ed.), *Core Concepts in Sociology*. New York, NY: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Jones, P.K. 'Insights from the Infamous: Recovering the social theoretical first phase of populism studies'. *European Journal of Social Theory*. (online first 2018)
- Kurakin, Dmitry**. "The cultural mechanics of mystery: structures of emotional attraction in competing interpretations of the Dyatlov pass tragedy." *American Journal of Cultural Sociology*. Published ahead of print 22 May, 2018. <https://rdcu.be/OZgH>
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- Susen, Simon** (2018) 'Justification', in George Ritzer and Chris Rojek (eds.) *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Sociology, 2nd Edition*, Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, pp. 1–3 [DOI: 10.1002/9781405165518.wbeosj012.pub2].
- Susen, Simon** (2018) 'The Economy of Enrichment: Towards a New Form of Capitalism?', *Berlin Journal of Critical Theory*, 2(2), pp. 5–98.
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