INTERNATIONAL HANDBOOK OF CONTEMPORARY DEVELOPMENTS IN SOCIOLOGY

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Sociology in Austria can look back on a very long tradition, which was, however, not without discontinuities and deep-reaching lines of fault. If we disregard historical reports and other literary descriptions of social conditions, as well as contributions to *Polizeywissenschaft*, which can be seen as the basis for an understanding of the Josephinian and Vormärz administration, the first important representative of a sociology that did not as yet call itself such must be Lorenz von Stein (1815–1890), who was a professor of political economy at the University of Vienna for 30 years. He directed his interest in social sciences toward the so-called social question, (i.e., toward the emergence of a new social class in the aftermath of industrial development). His emphasis on labor as the driving force behind social integration and conflict between social classes make Stein the pioneer of the non-Marxist analysis of society in the German-speaking world. He did not, however, attempt to establish sociology as a new scientific discipline; his argument with sociopolitical issues and the social movement took place within the context of political science and economy which, according to Stein, are based on an idealistic philosophy. This makes Stein one of the founders of *Kathedersozialismus* (i.e., the paternalistic conception of the new social problem of the working class and the labor movement).

The first person in Austria to speak out in favor of the creation of sociology as a discipline, who endeavored to found such a faculty, was the Polish-born Ludwig Gumplowicz (1838–1909), who was a professor of public law at the University of Graz from 1876 onwards. Gumplowicz...
viewed sociology *naturalistically* as an exact science whose obligation it was to discover the laws of society. He also viewed it as *holistic*, since society was composed of different social groups, and as *conflictual*, since these social groupings, or aggregates, were at odds with each other.\(^2\) There was an extraordinarily lively response to Gumperwicz’s theory, even during his lifetime. Not only did he have students and followers in various countries and his works translated into all major languages, but the international scientific community also acknowledged him and his theory.

While it is possible to approve of Gumperwicz’s theory insofar as it could have been the basis for a university discipline, the conditions under which he was working clearly demonstrate why this never came about. First, there is Gumperwicz’s multiple marginality: he was a Pole by birth, working at a German-speaking university, which was also a provincial university, and hence had little prestige within Austria; he was a Jew and agnostic in a German nationalistic, anti-Semitic, and Catholic environment; he was a “sociologist” among law professors, and finally he led a secluded life, doing little to rally students and followers around him.

It is also worth considering Jerzy Szacki’s comment: “Gumperwicz was too radical for the conservatives and too conservative for the radicals.”\(^3\) Another reason for his theory’s not being overall positively received, especially later on, was the fact that he used the term “race” at the core of his argument. He viewed “race” in the cultural, anthropological context of “ethnic,” rather than as a biological term; however, this does not prevent those reading and interpreting his theory, even today, from classifying Gumperwicz alongside racist social Darwinists. Among Gumperwicz’s followers were the Austrian scholar and Field Marshall Lieutenant Gustav Ratzenhofer (1842–1904), Franz Oppenheimer in Germany, the Italian Franco Savorgnan, and the American Lester Ward.\(^4\)

**FIRST ATTEMPTS AT INSTITUTIONALIZATION**

Sociology reached its first peak between the turn of the century and World War I, due, no doubt, to the intellectual impetus stimulated by Gumperwicz’s work. This was manifested most clearly by the creation of Sociological Societies in Vienna (1907) and Graz (1908). In 1909 sociology for the first time took on an institutional form in the German-speaking world with the founding of the German Sociology Society, even before the advent of the German Empire. The equivalent Austrian institution was, however, not as strong as its German counterpart in that the applicants had fewer ties with the academic world. It was therefore not possible to establish a sociology faculty in the form of university chairs and courses of studies, which had been the initial intention.

The most important representatives of this founding generation are the philosopher Wilhelm Jerusalem (1854–1923), Rudolf Eisler (1873–1926),
Max Adler (1873–1937), the later State Chancellor and Federal President Karl Renner (1870–1950), and the independent scholar ("Privatgelehrter") Rudolf Goldscheid (1870–1931). Loosely affiliated to this learned society were Eugen Ehrlich (1862–1922), a professor of Roman law at Czernowitz; Hans Kelsen (1881–1973), a professor of public law at the University of Vienna; and the medievalist Ludo Moritz Hartmann (1865–1924). The following points are useful indicators to any intellectual common ground between the representatives of this founding generation: there were philosophical similarities between the early Austrian sociologists and Ernst Mach (1838–1916), an outstanding natural scientist, philosopher, and theorist of science, even though some showed a tendency toward neo-Kantianism in their thinking. The evolutionist train of thought originating from Darwin and Spencer, and the then very popular Ernst Haeckel and Wilhelm Ostwald, is regarded as extremely relevant for the social sciences, even though none of the above-mentioned representatives shared the Darwinians' conviction of the survival of the economically fittest. Sociopolitically, the early Austrian sociologists belonged to the reformist wing of the enlightened bourgeoisie, and some were (or later were) party supporters or sympathizers of the social democratic labor movement.

Among the lasting intellectual accomplishments of the members of this founding generation, although little attention was paid to them, are the contributions to sociology of knowledge, sociology of law, Marxist sociology, and state and financial sociology. A striking feature and even a peculiarity of the development of sociology in Austria is the early appearance of such specialization in sociological research. However, this generation failed to produce large, systematic, informative works as their contemporaries did in Europe and the United States. The early specialization can be viewed in correlation with the high rate of development in neighboring disciplines: economy, philosophy, and psychology at the turn of the century have for a long time aroused the interest of histories of ideas. The early cognitive differentiation is one of the reasons why none of the above-mentioned Austrian sociologists were able to establish sociology as a university discipline.

We must also mention the authors of the first sociological overviews and textbooks, as well as the editors and translators responsible for making the works of Durkheim, Tarde, and William James, among others, accessible to a broad public shortly after their original publication.

CLOSED UNIVERSITY AND UNATTACHED CREATIVITY

Attempts to institutionalize the teaching and research of sociology, that is, the establishment of an academic sociology, were not crowned with success. The outbreak of World War I, the ensuing fall of the Habsburg
Monarchy, and the difficulties encountered in the reconstruction of the
democratic republic after the so-called Austrian Revolution\textsuperscript{17} created con­ditions in the 1920s and 1930s which were even more unfavorable to the
institutionalization of sociology than before:

1. The chronic lack of university funding and the stronger emerging anti-Semitism,
primarily among the ranks of the more educated classes, who faced the threat
of impoverishment and social degradation, restricted the possible development
of new disciplines, among them sociology.

2. The number of potential professional sociologists was diminished in the postwar
period by two mobility processes: on the one hand, some scholars who had
published scientific articles before 1914 assumed political posts (Otto Bauer,
Michael Hainisch, Rudolf Hilferding, Karl Renner, and, temporarily, Joseph
Schumpeter), without, as was requisite during the Habsburg Monarchy for those
holding professor ministerial posts, having university positions, to which they
could have returned after their political careers. On the other hand, outstanding
social scientists emigrated or did not return to Austria (Carl Grünberg, Hans
Kelsen, Emil Lederer, Jacob Moreno, Karl Pribram, and Joseph Schumpeter).

3. The few university positions available were taken up by right-wing intellectuals,
of whom Othmar Spann (1878–1950) immediately became the leader. In the
tradition of the German romantic movement (Adam Müller, 1779–1829) and of
Albert Schäffle’s organicism (1831–1903), his ensuing thinking can justifiably be
described as “anti-sociology.” Through Spann’s skillful personnel policy, com­peting sociologists were kept away from or ousted from the universities. This
applied equally to the “old”-liberal theorists, who, in the tradition of the Aus­
trian School of Economics (Carl Menger), were also dealing with sociological
issues,\textsuperscript{18} such as Ludwig Mises (1881–1973), a bourgeois Republican who was
denied access to the most prestigious university of the time in Vienna, as was
Schumpeter (1883–1950), or those who were squeezed out (Kelsen); and to left­
wingers, who were denied the possibility of receiving their postdoctoral lectur­ing qualification, with the exception of Max Adler.\textsuperscript{19} The academic sociology of
the First Republic was the domain of semifascist social theorists.

Despite these unfavorable political and institutional circumstances, so­ciology developed during this period to an intellectual peak unmatched in
Austria since.\textsuperscript{20}

The studies of Alfred Schütz (1899–1959)\textsuperscript{21} and Felix Kaufmann (1895–
1949)\textsuperscript{22} emerged from Ludwig Mises’ private seminar. These two, espe­cially Schütz, after emigrating to the United States, greatly influenced
phenomenological sociology and ethnomethodology. However, in the
course of the transatlantic process of approval, it was forgotten that the
ideological basis of Schütz’s radical thinking was rooted in the liberalism
of the end of the nineteenth century, and that his theory was supposed to
be the sociophilosophical backing for Mises’ anti-statist program.\textsuperscript{23}

Several social scientific authors belonged to the neopositivistic Vienna
circle: after the circle organizer, Otto Neurath (1882–1945), there was Ed-
gar Zilsel (1891–1944). While the former programmatically pleaded for the unity of social and natural sciences, Zilsel, during his years in Vienna, presented sketches of a sociological history of science, which he extended during his few years of emigration to the United States. The underlying assumption of the German Positivism Debate of the 1960s, that positivism also signifies political conservatism, is not borne out by a closer investigation of this school of thought. The thinkers of this school, who were also active in the field of natural science, were convinced that it was worth “forming thinking tools for everyday use, for the everyday use of scholars, but also for the use of everyone somehow involved in the conscious forming of life. The intensity of life, which is visible in the attempts to reform the order of society and science, flows through the movement of the scientific conception of the world.”

Many sociological articles were printed in the theoretically sophisticated magazines of the labor movement, and social democratic publishers published several socially critical articles. One of the few links between the intellectual world of the labor movement and institutionalized science could be found under the patronage of Karl and Charlotte Bühler (1879–1963 and 1893–1974, respectively), who were professors of empirical psychology at the University of Vienna from 1923. Assistance from the Rockefeller Foundation (which also sponsored Ludwig Mises’ Austrian Institute for Economic Research) enabled in particular Charlotte Bühler, who was working on child development and family psychology, to support younger researchers in the field of social psychology. Thanks to the Bühlers the young Paul Lazarsfeld (1901–1976) was given the possibility of establishing a Research Group for Industrial Psychology. The most prominent work of this group of young, left-wing graduate students was the investigation of the effects of long-term unemployment: Die Arbeitslosen von Marienthal became one of the classics of empirical social research.

The cognitive productiveness of the interwar years was matched by institutional stagnation: it can even be said that ground that had already been covered was lost again, such as in the fields of academic publishing and, of course, in the world of paid university positions.

This phase, which lasted only fifteen years, came to an end with political changes: the transition to a corporate state in 1933–1934 and the Anschluss of Austria to Nazi Germany in 1938. Almost all sociologists were forced to emigrate, most of them because of their Jewish ancestry, and some of them for political reasons.

LONG PERIOD OF SLACK AND LATE NORMALIZATION

After the fall of Austrofascism and National Socialism, it took sociology in Austria almost two decades to recover. For many years the Catholic thinker August M. Knoll (1900–1963), a social philosopher trained by
Spann, Johann Mokre (1901–1981), a member of the Catholic wing in Graz after returning from emigration in the States, and Johannes Messner (1891–1984), who worked at the Catholic theology department of the University of Vienna, were the only sociologists in Austria, assuming one adopts an extremely broad definition of the term sociology. Messner endeavored to establish a social theory based on natural law, Mokre hardly distinguished himself as a prolific writer, but Knoll emerged in later years as a knowledgeable critic of ideology, especially of Catholic natural law and ecclesiastical history.\textsuperscript{30} The early attempt at carrying out a sociological analysis of the Nazi concentration camps through Benedikt Kautsky (1894–1960), on the other hand, remained an episode, because its author did not hold a university position and was prevented from carrying out scientific work by his participation in the trade union program for adult education.\textsuperscript{31}

It was only the founding of the Institute for Advanced Studies (IHS) in Vienna in 1963, financed by the Ford Foundation and energetically pushed forward by Oscar Morgenstern and Lazarsfeld, that led to a reconstruction of sociology in Austria.\textsuperscript{32} This period also saw the founding of commercial opinion research institutes, most of which sympathized with political parties,\textsuperscript{33} as well as the founding of the first social science specialist journal: \textit{Die Meinung}\textsuperscript{34} was primarily committed to the field of public opinion research and Lazarsfeld also had a hand in its founding. It was only in 1966 that the universities followed suit, after a recommendation by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), with the establishment of sociology as a course of studies.

Since then it can be said that a sociological education is available in Austria on a university and extra-university level. The clear division between these two sectors is also reflected by research efforts and publications. The extra-university research’s stronger ties with the political world correspond to a greater extra-scientific research significance (even if only temporarily). Apart from a few exceptions, the majority of this research is pure contract research and rather insignificant. On the other hand, university research is earmarked by its tendency toward complacency, and its results can seldom be regarded as important after a certain amount of time.

The cohort effect can also partly explain the development of sociology in Austria over the past two decades. The creation of university chairs, almost all of which were filled at the same time, preceded the introduction of sociology as a course of studies (in Vienna and Linz in 1966 and in Salzburg and Graz in 1984). More than half of the full professors still lecturing today were appointed in the 1960s. None of these professors were able to establish a good, stable rapport with their students, partly due to the politically turbulent years of the student movement and uprisings in West Europe, which also left its mark on Austria. The results of
this anomaly are the publication of numerous, rather unprofessional re-
search reports by the younger generation and the retreat to the ivory
tower of artistic complacency on the part of the spurned professors.\(^35\) (The
above-average number of textbooks produced by Austrian sociology pro-
fessors is not necessarily an indication of their pedagogical ethos.)

The IHS was temporarily an exception in this respect: the usual practice
in the first half of the 1970s—engaging excellent foreign researchers as
guest lecturers and employing them as project supervisors—collapsed in a
few noteworthy empirical studies.\(^36\) This development came to an end with
the waning of the Austrian social democratic enthusiasm for reform to-
ward the end of the 1970s, and especially after the recent worldwide eco-

nomic crisis: the transformation of the IHS from a multidisciplinary basic
research institute into an institute for economic prognoses and applied
research—in connection with this Anatol Rapoport was fired as director
in 1984 under undignified circumstances—also put an end to this innova-
tion.

The high degree of specialization\(^37\) is of particular importance, since the
small number of researchers into particular topics prevented an exchange
of ideas.\(^38\) Even the founding of the Österreichische Zeitschrift für Soziol-
ologie did little to change the undeveloped desire for discussion.\(^39\)

In relation to this, it must be said that there are hardly any sociologists
who deal with questions of sociological theory on a general level; the pre-
destined (through their position) university sociologists hardly distinguish
themselves with relevant publications.\(^40\) Together with the lack of contin-
uous research in the field of sociology is the purely rhetorical reference to
the modern authors and theories: in the late 1960s it was the theory em-
anating from the Frankfurt School, which was followed in the early 1970s
by structuralist French-originating neo-Marxism, after which theoretical
references multiplied: the spectrum stretches from Luhmann through Ha-
bermas to Bourdieu.

There is more continuity, while still maintaining an internationally re-
pectable level, in the field of methodology. Since 1972 Kurt Holm has
been lecturing at the University of Linz; he and his collaborators have
published numerous works concerning the techniques and methods of
quantitative social research.\(^41\) Authors of methodological works were also
to be found elsewhere.\(^42\)

There is no room to mention all the works in the subfields of sociology
here. After referring to research institutes, I will restrict myself to a few
examples, which will presumably still be worthy of discussion in a few
years’ time. The sociology of the life-cycle goes back a very long way, to
which Leopold Rosenmayr, the doyen of academic sociology, was com-
mitted from the very beginning. During his forty-year career Rosenmayr
carried out research into succeeding life-cycles. He has most recently been
examining the process of age.\(^43\) Thematically assignable to this field is also
an extensive literature study on the use of autobiographical documents in different human and social sciences by Sigrid Paul, from which thoughts about biographical methods in sociology originate.44

Another field, which has been studied for years, is that of deviant behavior. Research into this is being carried out at the Institute for Legal and Criminal Sociology, which was founded in connection with the reform of criminal law, and at the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute for Research into Drug Abuse, both of which are located in Vienna.45 Works based on the observation of marginal groups were published by Roland Girtler,46 and a theoretically more critical study is Peter Strasser’s discussion of the history and tradition of criminology.47

Following the emerging unemployment of the 1980s, attempts at research into this were relatively quickly established; these were primarily initiated and financed by the Federal Ministry for Social Affairs. As well as empirical studies,48 there are attempts at interdisciplinary research49 and international cooperation.50

Extensive reports on the situation of the family and of women in Austria appear regularly, which are also organized and financed by the state.51 The last group especially can be viewed in relation with emerging feminist women studies.52

There is no doubt that there is a lack of research in Austria carried out in many fields abroad and that research results presented by Austrian sociologists only seldom receive international recognition. On the other hand, after many years, sociology, which was primarily in the hands of independent scholars during the interwar period, such as Schütz, Kaufmann, Neurath, Zilsel, and Lazarsfeld, has become professionalized and will therefore be in a better position to weather the coming storms. Or so one hopes.

NOTES

1. For the period before 1918 I am limiting myself to the development of sociology in the German-speaking part of the Habsburg Empire. Second, only those who are working or who have worked in Austria are mentioned.


16. Philosophisch-soziologische Bücherei (34 vols.), editor: Rudolf Eisler (Leipzig: Kröner, 1907–1915). This is all the more remarkable since the scientific community was then very small and it was taken for granted that everyone spoke French and English. See Fleck, Rund um “Marienthal.”


18. For example, Friedrich Wieser, Das Gesetz der Macht (Vienna: Springer, 1926).

19. He also remained a nonappointed university lecturer during his lifetime.


27. Some of the authors were Alexander Gerschenkron, Marie Jahoda, Paul F. Lazarsfeld, Käthe Leichter, and Karl Polanyi; see Fleck, Rund um “Marienthal.”


31. Bendikt Kautsky, *Teufel und Verdammt* (Zürich: Gutenberg, 1946). Later on, through his role as co-editor of Karl Marx’s works, Kautsky paved the way for a Marx renaissance in the German-speaking world.


33. Since 1953 the Catholic church has had a polling institute.


35. In relation to this it is worth remembering that also younger academics have emigrated abroad, not always of their own free will. Worthy of mention are Ernst Topitsch (1962 to Heidelberg), Judith Janoska-Bendl (1967 to Darmstadt), Henrik Kreutz (1974 to Hannover), Hermann Strasser (1977 to Duisburg), Karin Knorr-Cetina (1980 to Bielefeld); it must also be mentioned that many Austrians qualified as university lecturers in the Federal Republic of Germany because they encountered difficulties in Austria.

36. The project on Austria’s health care system was supervised by Frieder Naschold: Frieder Naschold et al., eds., *Systemanalyse des Gesundheitswesens in Österreich*, 2nd ed. (Vienna: Montan, 1978); the project on social reporting, social structure, social mobility, and inequality was advised by Wolfgang Zapf, John Goldthorpe, and Robert W. Hodge, among others: Josef Bucek and Marina Fischer-Kowalski, eds., *Lebensverhältnisse in Österreich* (Frankfurt: Campus, 1980); Max Haller, *Klassenbildung und soziale Schichtung in Österreich* (Frankfurt: Campus, 1982); inspired by Paul F. Lazarsfeld: Karin Knorr, Max Haller, and Hans Georg Zilian, *Sozialwissenschaftliche Forschung in Österreich* (Vienna: Jugend und Volk, 1981); other projects, which were only presented as project reports, were advised by Otis D. Duncan and Wolf-Dieter Narr, among others.

37. Mainly in the form of institutes organized by the Ludwig Boltzmann Society, which, however, do not have continuous, communicative links with each other; there were Ludwig Boltzmann Institutes for, among others, medical sociology, research on drug abuse, social gerontology, and life-cycle research; the Institute for Criminal Sociology was dropped from the Society after ten years of very successful activity and has since been reestablished as the Institute for Legal and Criminal Sociology. Further research institutes are financed by the Austrian Academy for Science (Institute for Socioeconomic Development Research), UNESCO (European Center for Research into Social Sciences and Documentation), the UN (European Center for Social Welfare), municipalities, parties, trade unions, or boards.

38. It is worth considering that there are strong ties with West German sociology.

39. An exception was the number of plaintive reactions by the guild to a publicly
reported criticism of the science minister: Herta Firnberg, “Zur Rolle der Sozialwissenschaften in der österreichischen Wissenschaftspolitik: Das Anwendungsdefizit der Soziologie,” Österreichische Zeitschrift für Soziologie 3, 1 (1978), 4-10, and the replies in this and the following journals.

40. Exceptions are Judith Janoska-Bendl, Methodologische Aspekte des Idealtypus (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1965); Heinz Steinert, Strategien sozialen Handelns (Munich: Juventa, 1972); Johann A. Schülein, Theorie der Institution (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1987); Andreas Balog, Rekonstruktion von Handlungen (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1989); Helmut Kuzmics, Der Preis der Zivilisation (Frankfurt: Campus, 1989); Helga Nowotny, Eigenzeit (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1989); examples from neighboring disciplines are Elisabeth List, Alltagsrationalität und soziologischer Diskurs (Frankfurt: Campus, 1983), and Peter Koller, Neue Theorien des Sozialkontrakts (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1987).


42. Henrik Kreutz, Soziologie der empirischen Sozialforschung (Stuttgart: Enke, 1972); Kreutz is also the senior editor of the journal Angewandte Sozialforschung 1 (1969 ff.). Heinz Steinert not only received recognition through having edited the first reader on interactionism in German (Heinz Steinert, ed., Symbolische Interaktion [Stuttgart: Klett, 1973]), but also published, alongside his works on social deviance, essays on methodological questions: e.g., Heinz Steinert, “Das Interview als soziale Interaktion,” in Heiner Meulemann and Karl-Heinz Reuband, eds., Soziale Realität im Interview (Frankfurt: Campus, 1984), 17-60.


45. The journal Kriminalsoziologische Bibliografie (1974ff.) continuously reports on the studies; compare the two “Festschriften”: 9 (1982), 36/37, and 14 (1987), 56/57. Also from this institute are Arno Pilgram, ... endet mit dem Tode (Vienna: Gesellschaftskritik, 1989); and Gerhard Hanak et al., Ärgernisse und Lebenskatastrophen (Bielefeld: AJZ, 1989).


47. Peter Strasser, Verbrechermenschen (Frankfurt: Campus, 1984).

48. See Federal Ministry for Employment and Social Affairs, Forschungsberi-

49. Since 1986, under the co-direction of the two economists Kurt Rothschild and Gunter Tichy and financed by the National Research Fund, research efforts have been channeled into the dynamics of unemployment and employment, which sociologists are also researching. See Kurt W. Rothschild and Gunter Tichy, eds., *Arbeitslosigkeit und Arbeitsangebot in Österreich* (Vienna: Springer, 1987); Manfred Prisching, *Arbeitslosenprotest und Resignation in der Wirtschaftskrise* (Frankfurt: Campus, 1988).


52. For (feminist) women’s studies in Austria, see Helga Nowotny and Karl Hausen, eds., *Wie männlich ist die Wissenschaft?* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1986); Elisabeth List, “Helden im Wissenschaftsspiel. Geschlechtsspezifische Implikationen der Wissenschaftskultur,” in Beate Frakele et al., eds., *Über Frauenleben, Männerwelt und Wissenschaft* (Vienna: Gesellschaftskritik, 1987), 18–33.