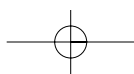
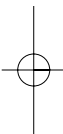
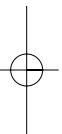


PART V

SOCIAL AGGREGATIONS



15

THE SOCIOLOGY OF SOCIAL STRUCTURE

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In the most general sense, the notion of “structure” refers to a set of relations between elements that has some measure of coherence and stability. It is, then, a concept with a heavy load of abstraction, a concept that we could, in principle, apply to any parcel of reality where we perceive a certain order. The way it is commonly used in the social sciences, it simply designates the deepest, most recurrent aspects of social reality, its framework or underlying form. In this sense, it is often used to distinguish the fundamental elements of society from the secondary ones, the essential aspects from the superfluous ones, the stable ones from the contingent ones (Boudon 1968). The idea of social structure refers, in this general case, to the idea of an ordered or organized arrangement of elements (Smelser 1992). On other occasions, the structure of a social aggregate is equivalent to the distribution of its elements in given positions. Sometimes the structure of a social entity is simply identified with its form or shape.

As the previous paragraph suggests, the meaning of the term *social structure* is not free from ambiguity. Adapting a famous joke of Raymond Aron’s (1971) on the heterogeneity of the approaches of sociology, we could say that the only thing that the sociologists who deal with social structure share is that they all acknowledge how hard it is to define social structure. But the reference to Aron’s joke may be more than just an analogy. Due to the importance of the concept of social structure in sociology, its definitions end up reflecting the plurality and heterogeneity of

approaches that characterize the discipline. As the late Robert Merton aptly said (1976:32), the evolving notion of social structure is not only polyphyletic—because it has more than one ancestral line of sociological thought—but also polymorphous—because these lines differ partly in substance and partly in method.

Where does this semantic ambiguity that envelopes the term *social structure* come from? The Latin source of the word *structure* is *struere*, which means “to build.” And the most general notion of this term does, in fact, refer to the framework of elements and materials that constitute and support a building (López and Scott 2000). Another relevant and more recent (nineteenth century) historical source of meaning for the term *structure* comes from the anatomy of living beings, where the term designates the relation of the parts to the organic whole. In his classic work on structuralism, Jean Piaget (1970) went far beyond the constructive and organic analogies to specify three important characteristics that define the idea of structure in a great variety of scientific fields and disciplines. Every structure is, first, a *totality* whose properties cannot be reduced to those of its constituent elements. Second, it is a *system* with its own laws or mechanisms for functioning. And third, it is a *self-regulated entity* that to some degree maintains itself or preserves itself throughout time. These characteristics that Piaget pointed out have, in one way or another, impregnated the meaning of the concept structure in the social sciences and, more specifically, the use of the

term *social structure* in sociology. As we will see, however, this Piagetian minimum common denominator has not been enough to produce a paradigmatic consensus on the concept of social structure. In addition, the contributions from neighboring disciplines have not always facilitated the task of achieving this paradigmatic consensus. The use of the idea of social structure in social anthropology, where it moves at very different levels of abstraction (Radcliffe-Brown 1940; Nadel 1957; Lévi-Strauss [1949] 1968) and is oriented toward very diverse empirical referents (e.g., Murdock 1949), is a good illustration of this.

In this chapter, we have three principal objectives. First, we will present two main visions of social structure that correspond to two important currents of structural sociological thought: on one hand the institutional or cultural vision and on the other the relational or positional vision. Both visions try to determine which element of society is the most *structural* one, in the sense of the element that conditions others the most, by answering the following question: What is social structure and what does it consist of? These visions of social structure, although they share some generic traits, can be distinguished because they give analytic priority to certain aspects of the social structures as opposed to others. Deep down, the difference between these visions reflects the discussion about the relationship between the sphere of culture and the sphere of social relations, a discussion that repeats itself throughout the development of sociological theory. Nevertheless, we will discuss some efforts at a theoretical synthesis of the two visions that have arisen. Afterwards, in the rest of the chapter, we will try to organize the debate on the notion of social structure by presenting two key aspects that are clearly interdependent from the analytic point of view but that should be treated separately for the sake of explanatory clarity. The first aspect refers to the definition of the different levels of social structure and the analysis of the relations that hold among them. Here, the relevant question is, How many levels of social structure is it possible to identify and what is their configuration as a whole? (Prendergast and Knottnerus 1994). The second matter has to do with the margins of freedom and creativity left by social structure to individual action, and how individual action tends to modify or reproduce the structure (Sewell 1992; Kontopoulos 1993). The question, in this case, is, What relationship is there between social structure and individual action?¹ We will end the chapter with a summary of the main ideas presented.

VISIONS OF SOCIAL STRUCTURE

The different approaches to the term *social structure* make it quite clear that there is no basic paradigmatic consensus. To illustrate these relevant differences, we are going to examine two different visions of social structure—the institutional and the relational visions—that, without

exhausting the inventory of existing approaches, point to the two main currents in structural sociological thought and, more generally, in sociological theory.

Institutional or Cultural Vision

In the first place, we will consider the *institutional* or *cultural* vision of social structure. From this point of view, the basic elements of social structure are the norms, beliefs, and values that regulate social action. A complete, influential sociological tradition understands social structure to be an *institutional* structure—namely, a set of *cultural* and *normative* models that define actors' expectations about behavior. The structural sociology that favors the ideational contexts of action—for example, norms, beliefs, values—has clear antecedents in the currents of thought that defend some kind of cultural determinism of human behavior. But the idea that the social structure consists of institutions, understood to be cultural phenomena and collective representations that regulate social action, is present above all in the functionalist theorization of the 1940s and 1950s. The clearest and most systematic expression of the relevance of cultural models for understanding the basic structure of social relations can be found in the work of Talcott Parsons. In fact, Parsons (1951) imagined a *social system* made up of differentiated roles that maintained structured (systemic) relations among themselves. Each role is defined in the value system shared by the individuals who form the society, so that the society is ruled by cultural norms that are transmitted from one generation to the next by a process of socialization. Individuals internalize these roles in their infancy: They learn to behave and to relate to others according to these shared cultural models. What we wish to highlight is that the social institutions—namely, the shared norms that reflect the fundamental values of society—constitute the skeleton of the social system (Parsons 1951). As Hamilton (1983) observes, in Parsons's theorization, social structures coincide with the systems of expectations—normative orientations—that regulate the relations between the actors, with the objective of satisfying the society's functional needs. In this approach, society's material structure itself derives from its cultural structure. This means that we can apprehend the basic structure of social relations (from kinship to stratification) from the contents of the culture that the members of the society share.

After a hiatus of almost 20 years, these visions of social structure have reappeared with renewed energy in the current of thought known as neo-institutionalism (Brinton and Nee 1998). The most recent position of the neo-institutionalists, particularly in economics, political science, and the sociology of organizations, is much less ambitious and deterministic than the version of Parsons and his more orthodox followers. In other words, there is no attempt to provide a general explanation of how society functions, nor is the idea that the cultural/value sphere constitutes the ultimate essence of social structure held.

164 • SOCIAL AGGREGATIONS

In fact, the neo-institutionalists in economy and political science “limit” themselves to acknowledging the importance of institutions as shared norms and cultural representations that regulate individual action. Institutions function as “game rules” and procedures that give a sense of stability and order to interactions and reduce the insecurity of market transactions. On the other hand, neo-institutionalism in the field of the sociology of organizations has introduced the concept of institutional isomorphism to describe how the emergence of similar structures among previously different organizations is the result of the diffusion of organizational languages and cultures (DiMaggio 1994).

Relational and Distributive Vision

Second, we have the *relational* perspective. From this point of view, the elements that make up social structure are, basically, social relations, and the analysis of social structure focuses on the tissue of social relations that connects individuals, groups, organizations, communities, and societies. With reference to the antecedents of this perspective, we must mention, first of all, the Marxist tradition, which interprets social structure as a system of relations between class positions, with the basic relations being the relations of exploitation of the dominated classes by the dominant classes; these relations are defined by the modes of production of a given society in a particular historical period (Marx [1859] 1936). Authors such as Simmel ([1908] 1950), for whom society exists insofar as individuals enter into association or reciprocal action, should not be forgotten as pioneers of this vision of social structure.

For the sociology of social structure, however, this relational perspective has its nearest origins in British social anthropology. English anthropologist Radcliffe-Brown (1940:2), for example, saw human beings “connected by a complex network of social relations” and used the term *social structure* “to denote this network of actually existing relations.” Social structure thus includes both all person-to-person social relations and the differentiation of individuals and of classes by their social role. Of course, contemporary applications of this approach go well beyond the anthropological study of small groups and communities. And, in all probability, the main development in this vein nowadays is modern network analysis, with a really broad range of studies, from personal relationships to kinship, from organizations to markets, from cities to world economy. Modern network (or structural) analysis aims to study “the ordered arrangements of relations that are contingent upon exchange among members of social systems” and claims that social structures “can be represented as *networks*—as sets of *nodes* (or social systems members) and sets of *ties* depicting their interconnections” (Wellman and Berkowitz 1988:3, 4). Network theorists try to map social structures, studying regular and enduring patterns of relation in the organization of social systems and analyzing how these patterns affect the

behavior of individual members (see, e.g., Granovetter 2005, for an analysis of the impact of social networks on economics outcomes).

An important variation on this second vision of social structure is the *distributive* or *positional* perspective. From the distributive point of view, social structure is an ordered or hierarchical set of positions. For example, according to Blau (1976b, 1977a, 1977b, 1980, 1994), social structure is defined quantitatively in terms of the distributions of the members of a population in different social positions. In Blau’s own words (1976b), social structure refers “to population distributions among social positions along various lines—positions that affect people’s role relations and social interaction” (p. 221). A set of parameters—or criteria of social distinction, such as age, sex, race, and socioeconomic status—defines a social structure, which is composed of social positions and social relations. Under these assumptions, Blau’s theory essentially deals with two things: (1) establishing the structural conditions of a specific society—namely, defining the quantitative properties of its social structure (e.g., the number of individuals who occupy the different social positions and the size of the different groups and social strata) and (2) analyzing how a society’s structural conditions, understood in quantitative terms, affect the models of social interaction or of association (e.g., marriage or friendship) among those who occupy its different social positions. Furthermore, Blau’s theory of social structure is not only distributive but also macrostructural and multidimensional. One of the objectives of the social structure theory of Blau (1977b) is to explain certain forms of social inequality. In a similar vein, Lin (2001:33), in his recent work on social capital, defines a social structure as consisting of “(1) a set of social units (*positions*) that possess differential amounts of one or more types of valued resources and that (2) are hierarchically related relative to *authority* (control and access to resources), (3) share certain *rules* and procedures in the use of the resources, and (4) are entrusted to *occupants* (*agents*) who *act on* these rules and procedures.”²

Some Attempts at Synthesis

A persistent problem in the debate between the cultural vision and the relational vision is that it often leads to a dual representation of the social structure and to a split image of society. In some classic authors, such as Durkheim ([1893] 1964) and Weber ([1921] 1968), and in other contemporary ones, such as Dahrendorf (1972), Giddens (1984), Sewell (1992), and Bourdieu (1989), we can find a broad conception of social structure that attempts to include both the ideational and the relational aspects. Dahrendorf (1972:163) uses the expression “the two faces of social structure” to refer to this idea. According to Dahrendorf (1972:157ff.), the categories of integration and values, on one hand, and the categories of authority and interests, on the other, correspond to these two faces of social structure.

Giddens (1984) presents a very elaborate development of a dual theory of structure that encompasses both the relational and the ideational aspects of social reality. According to Giddens, social structure represents a kind of grammar that orients social action. While the action constitutes an activity that is situated in space and in time, the structure has only a virtual existence that becomes explicit in the actors' models of action. Another fundamental distinction in Giddens's theorization is made between structure and social system. As has already been mentioned, the notion of structure denotes basic, deep principles: Structure consists of "rules and resources" that the actors employ to manage in situations of social action and interaction (Giddens 1984). However, when he uses the term *social system*, Giddens refers to the concrete relations between actors and collectivities. A social system can, then, be considered to be the manifestation and updating of a particular social structure. The application of rules and resources by the actors involves the production and recursive reproduction of the social structure and, consequently, of the social system. The structure does not consist of the models of social practices that make up the social system but of the principles that give models to the practices. Thus, the two key ideas of Giddens's structuration theory can be as follows: (1) Structure, understood to be the set of rules and resources belonging to a specific social system, limits and makes possible the action of individual actors; and (2) action, insofar as it consists of carrying out and updating the structure, contributes to reaffirming it and transmuting it and, consequently, to reproducing and transforming the social system.

Giddens's theorization has been the object of numerous criticisms, some radical and others more favorable. Among these last ones, Sewell's (1992) stands out: He upholds a revision and broadening of Giddens's theory and focuses on two aspects: the nature of moral rules in the structure of legitimization and the immaterial character of resources. Sewell (1992) criticizes Giddens's concept of rules and advocates substituting it with the "schema" to include "not only formally established prescriptions but also the schema, metaphors, and presuppositions that are assumed by these prescriptions, which are informal and not always conscious" (p. 8). These are procedures that can be generalized to the most diverse contexts of interaction, known or new, and that are applied on several levels of depth, from the deepest levels described by Lévi-Strauss to the most superficial ones, such as protocol norms. The schemata are, therefore, not distinguished by their field of application, as Giddens's distinction between semantic rules in the field of communication and moral rules in the field of sanctions suggests, but by their level of depth.

Sewell's notion of "schema" comes close to Bourdieu's (1989) notion of *habitus*, a system of "durable and moveable" dispositions that generate sensible practices and perceptions capable of giving meaning to the practices that are generated in this way. The dispositions that form the *habitus* operate as mental schemata that routinely orient

individuals' actions and offer a practical knowledge of the meaning of what has to be done and of how it should be done. The crucial point is that the mental schemata operate like a filter that puts the options available to the actor in order, without the actor having to actively worry about them (López and Scott 2000:103). Bourdieu (1989) defines the *habitus* as a "structuring structure," since the logical categories with which the social world is perceived are, in turn, a product of the division of social classes. This is the same as saying that the dispositions of the *habitus* depend on the position that the actor occupies in the society's system of differential positions.

Other attempts at synthesis present a kind of contextual vision of social structure that is much broader than the institutional and relational visions but also much more diffuse and indeterminate. From this other point of view, social structures are, simply, the context in which social action happens and develops. According to another exponent of this current, Rytina (1992), social structure

is a general term for any collective social circumstance that is inalterable and given for the individual. Social structure thus provides a context or environment for action. The size of organizations, distribution of activities in space, shared language, and the distribution of wealth might all be regarded as social structural circumstances that set limits on feasible activities for individuals. (P. 1970)

Clearly, with this broad contextual perspective of social structure, we have moved far from the bounded field of norms, or of social relations and positions, to situate ourselves in the diffuse world of all those factors that—insofar as they are, in some measure, structured—can influence social action.

In summary, the two broad visions of social structure share some generic traits that are implicit in the very idea of structure, but at the same time they present crucial differences. As for the similarities, we will mention three common features. First, the elements of the structure are organized or ordered in some way; in other words, they maintain patterned or nonrandom relations—and, precisely because of this, we can say that they form a structure. Second, these relations among the elements of social structures are constituted by regular or recurring behaviors that are repeated and that give the structures a certain permanence in time and space. And third, these regularities that constitute the social structures condition, in several ways, many social choices and behaviors. As for the differences, it is obvious that these visions of social structure differ, above all, in the specifications they make about which is the fundamental dimension of social structure: normative contexts of action or social positions and relations. This disagreement has, in addition, crucial sociological implications because the analytic key to the explanations of social action depends on which structural aspects or dimensions are judged to be most relevant. In other words, the relevant dimensions of the social

structure—norms or relations and positions—are not only *structured* in the sense that they are ordered, regular, persistent sets, but they are also *structuring* in the sense that they offer opportunities and establish constraints for social action.

THE PROBLEM OF THE LEVELS OF SOCIAL STRUCTURE

Another problem that any approach to social structure must resolve, no matter which aspect or dimension receives priority, is the question of choosing the units or elements that make up the social structures on which the analysis will focus. The obvious candidates for becoming units of analysis are those social entities that are susceptible to establishing relations, occupying positions, or constituting contexts that are relevant for action. But it is difficult to make an exhaustive list of all the social entities that can operate as units of analysis for social structures. Why is it so hard to make a complete list? The difficulty arises because opting for one entity or another depends, on one hand, on the kind of range that the phenomenon we want to investigate has; it is, thus, an eminently empirical problem that can have many solutions. On the other hand, it depends on the theoretical and methodological orientation chosen, which will favor some structural units over others in explaining the phenomena studied. Furthermore, several inventories of elements are also possible, depending on the degree of abstraction at which we wish to move.

Prendergast and Knottnerus (1994) identify six levels of social structure: interpersonal relations, networks among individuals, relations in organizations, relations among organizations, societal stratification, and the world system. Other classifications are, logically, feasible. But, keeping in mind that the identification of levels reflects growing ranges of complexity, one possibility for classifying these different levels is to resort to a triple scheme that distinguishes, moving from simple to complex, three main social levels: micro, meso, and macro. The crucial factor that allows us to clarify on which level of social structure we should be moving is not only the range of the phenomenon we wish to study but also—and this is equally fundamental—the theoretical and methodological assumptions that we adopt in our explanations of social action.

If we consider that the relevant structural units are individuals and their relations, then we will be getting involved in some form of microsociology of social structure (Homans 1976; Collins 1981; Coleman 1990). As Homans (1987) clearly stated, those who practice this sort of individualist sociology “are most interested in how individuals create social structures” (p. 73). If, for whatever reasons, our interest is focused on intermediate entities such as groups, networks of relations, communities, and organizations, which we consider to be causal agents or independent variables in the social structures analyzed, then we will be practicing some kind of mesosociology. The

sociology of organizations (Perrow 1986) fits into this formulation. Finally, if what attracts our attention are social entities or aggregates that are very complex—either because of the number of elements they contain or because of their high relational density—and if we judge that these complex social structures are the explanatory instances of our dependent variables, then we will situate ourselves in the area of macrosociology. Excellent examples of structural macrosociology can be found in Blau’s theories of social structure, in which he explains the phenomena of inequality and heterogeneity (1977a, 1977b) and formulates a set of axioms on the models of social association and interaction drawn from the quantitative characteristics of social structure (Blau 1994).

Sociological literature has resorted, also, to different metaphors to explore the relations among the different levels of the structure (López and Scott 2000). We will present three here. The first one represents the levels of the social structure as being fitted one within the other, such as Chinese boxes. The second one resorts to a geological image and distinguishes between one level that is the base of the structure and the others that are on top of the structure and are conditioned by it. A third metaphor divides social structure into system and subsystem levels.

A Chinese box-type of metaphor is used by Prendergast and Knottnerus (1994) to explain the relation among the different levels of social structure. Both authors understand social structure as systems of social relations that manifest themselves with different levels of complexity and that maintain among themselves nested ties. Blau (1981) has expressed this idea very clearly: “social structures are nesting series with successive levels of more and more encompassing structures” (p. 12). In this perspective, the most complex systems of social relations include the simplest ones, although each level has its own properties and characteristics. Besides, the logic of each level of social structure is not determined by the higher or lower levels of the structure. The notion of social structure that can be deduced from Simmel’s ([1908] 1950, [1908] 1955) theorization offers an example of the Chinese box metaphor. Simmel analyzes how the quantitative determination of the group influences the form of its structure. The simplest groups are those made up of only one, two, or three elements. The movement from one of these groups to the next bigger one occurs through the presence of a single added element. Nevertheless, the presence of this added element deeply modifies the structure of group relations. The movement from the dyad to the triad opens up the possibility of new forms of relations that were impossible in a relationship between just two elements. These forms are the “impartial mediator,” the *tertius gaudens* (the third who rejoices), and the *divide et impera* (divide and rule). What matters here is that the three types of social configuration—the single element, the dyad, and the triad—can be considered to be forms of elemental relations that are within one another and that, nevertheless, are qualitatively different among themselves. In general, we feel it is

important to underline that this kind of conception of social structure remains essentially neutral with respect to the matter of which is the ultimate, basic element of social structure that conditions the rest.

The base and superstructure model identifies two main levels of social structure and suggests that there is a causal relationship between them (López and Scott 2000). One level, the base or infrastructure, conditions or determines the other, the superstructure. In some versions, this model translates into a strong determinism, according to which the superstructure is nothing more than a simple product or epiphenomenon of the base. In others, some degree of autonomy is acknowledged and the analysis focuses on demonstrating the limits of this autonomy.

The clearest formulation of the base and superstructure model can be found in the theory of Marx. According to this author, the basic structure of a society coincides with the mode of production that characterizes it. Marx distinguishes between the material basis of the social relations of production and the superstructures formed by the political and legal apparatuses and the collective representations (values, norms, ideologies) that are associated with them. In addition, the superstructure reflects the nature of the mode of production and does not have a logic of its own. As for the political superstructure, the institutions of the State and their ways of functioning are designed according to the needs of the productive structure, to guarantee its maintenance by different means of coercion; something similar happens with the ideological superstructure, built to serve the interests of the bourgeoisie by persuading the proletariat of the goodness of the system. In the "Preface" to his *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Marx ([1859] 1936) described his approach as follows:

In the social production of their existence, men inevitably enter into definite relations, which are independent of their will, namely relations of production appropriate to a given stage in the development of their material forces of production. The totality of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which arise a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the general process of social, political and intellectual life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines consciousness. (Pp. 517–18)

The vision of social structure as something that is formed of systems and subsystems tends to be associated with the theory of Parsons and the school of systems theory that his work has inspired. The idea that is behind Parsons's (1951) AGIL scheme is that to survive, every social system has to fulfill four functional prerequisites: (1) adaptation to the environment (A), (2) the ability to achieve goals (G), (3) integration (I), and (4) latency or maintenance of a latent pattern (L). In the case of the social system as a whole, the following functional subsystems correspond to

each function prerequisite: the economy (A), politics (G), the legal system and the community (I), and, finally, the family, school, and cultural institutions (L). Each of these subsystems can, in turn, be divided into four other subsystems (Collins 1988). The political system, for example, is subdivided into the subsystems of administration (A), executive (G), legislation (I), and Constitution (L). These subsystems can, in turn, be subdivided into other subsystems that fulfill the four functional prerequisites.

What it is important to underline is that in this vision of social structure as opposed to the model of base and superstructure, there is no hierarchical relationship that separates the subsystems into lower and higher levels. A subsystem of action is an analytic aspect that can be abstracted from the total processes of action but does not, in any concrete sense, exist independent of them. On the other hand, the subsystems fit into one another laterally to form the logical and coherent unit of a system of action.

THE PROBLEM OF STRUCTURE AND ACTION

Once the main visions of social structure and the problem of its different levels have been presented, the second part of the debate on this important sociological notion that we will deal with in this chapter refers to the relation between the structural elements and the action of individual actors. Our question here is, To what extent does the structure condition and determine the action of individuals? Or, taking the opposite perspective, To what extent can the structure be considered nothing more than the product of the action of individuals? To present the different responses to these questions, one can distinguish, following Kontopoulos (1993), three main perspectives: the strategy of reduction (or strong individualism), of systemic transcendence (or holism), and of construction (or methodological individualism).³

The strategy of reduction in the physical and natural sciences is based on the idea that the structures are nothing more than the parts that make them up and that the highest levels of organization of phenomena are totally determined and explained by the lowest levels of organization. In the case of sociology, the lowest levels of organization from which the higher levels derive are individuals. In other words, the individual actors are the atoms, and structure takes its form and existence from their aggregation. As examples of the strategy of reduction, one can consider Homans's behaviorist sociology and Collins's microtheory of the chain of interaction rituals.

According to Homans (1967), any structure is created and maintained throughout time by the action and interaction of individuals. Thus, to explain a social phenomenon, it is necessary to reduce it to psychological propositions about human conduct and, in particular, to the actors' optimizing intentions. It is important to note that the behaviorist paradigm does not conceive the social structure to be an

168 • SOCIAL AGGREGATIONS

entity that is separate and autonomous of individual action. In one of his latest works, Homans (1987) claims,

When I speak of social structures I shall mean any features of groups that persist for any period of time, though the period may not be long. I shall not attempt, nor shall I need to attempt, any more sophisticated definition. (P. 72)

On the other hand, he acknowledges that individual action is subject to the influence of and to certain restrictions from the actions of other individuals, but he rejects the idea that institutions, organizations, and other structural factors, such as the social stratification system, are anything other than the result of interaction among individuals. In his own words, “The characteristics of groups and societies are the resultants, no doubt the complicated resultants but still the resultants, of the interaction between individuals over time—and they are no more than that” (Homans 1974:12).

Along the same lines, in an article from the early 1980s, Collins (1981) proposed a microrefounding of sociology based on a theory of the chains of ritual interactions. According to this theory, all social phenomena, including social structure, are nothing more than microrepetitions of certain behaviors in the real world. In strict terms, according to Collins’s proposal, things such as the “State,” the “economy,” or a “social class” do not exist.⁴ All that exist are collections of individuals who act in specific types of microsituations.

The strategy of systemic transcendence or collectivism is characterized by a strong determinism of the micro parts by the macrosystem interpreted to be an autonomous entity, on the highest level, superimposed on the systemic parts of the lower level in a kind of hierarchical control. In the case of sociology, the approaches that share this epistemic strategy imply a relation between structure and action that opposes the strategy of the theorizations studied up to this point. In other words, the structure is what fundamentally conditions and determines action. In this view, the existence of a deep structure, whether material, cultural, or of another kind, is assumed. This deep structure generates the observable forms of social action and, therefore, is independent of them, so that it can be studied “objectively.” Individuals’ actions turn out to be nothing more than a reflection of the logics and properties of the structural elements of the system. Examples of these collectivist or holistic kinds of views can be found in the theoretical traditions with functionalist orientations and in some structuralist variants of Marxism.

The clearest origin for this approach can be found in Durkheim’s definition of the sociological method and social facts. To found a new social science subjected to the method applied in the natural sciences, Durkheim granted “social facts” a reality independent of individual impulses, whose erratic appearance was disturbing in comparison with the “astonishing regularity” of social phenomena. One basic assumption of Durkheim’s sociology is that

social facts are to be considered and treated as *things* that are external to, and coercive of, the actor. He thus defined social facts as ways of acting, thinking, and feeling that are external to individuals and have coercive power over them. This exteriority is due to the fact that individuals are born into an already constituted society and they are no more than a minimum element in the totality of social relations. The coercive characteristic derives from the mechanisms of social sanction and punishment that are instituted to preserve the network of moral obligations that society is and from the resistance that these mechanisms pose to reform. Individual action is, to a great extent, determined by social causes that cannot be explained by means of individual psychology but only by their relation with other social facts (Durkheim [1895] 1938). According to this approach, complex processes such as the progressive “division of social work” can be described leaving out any reference to the attitudes and preferences of those who participate in them and can be explained by other processes that are also objective, such as the increase in population density, the improvement of communication, or competition for scarce resources.

At the “materialist extreme” of structural approaches, we can also find reasonings according to which individual action is, to a great extent, determined by the structural position occupied. The Marxist terms *class consciousness* and *class action* referred, originally, to thoughts and behaviors derived from the individual’s position in the system of production. The social classes’ ways of political thinking and acting rest on and are shaped by economic interests. At any rate, it is true that clearly holistic positions have been more frequent among Marxist sociologists than in Marx himself. However, some more recent readings of Marx—particularly the current called analytic Marxism (Roemer 1986)—question an overly deterministic interpretation of his thought and put greater emphasis on the actors’ capacity for choice.

Finally, the strategy of construction represents an intermediate position between the two extremes that we have presented in the preceding paragraphs. In recent decades, this approach has been acquiring greater relevance in sociology, perhaps due to its remarkable capacity for orienting empirical research and interpreting the results that it produces. In this approach, the relation between structure and action is bidirectional. On one hand, the restrictions and opportunities of the structural context in which the actor finds himself capacitate and constrain his action. In other words, the structure limits and conditions action. Nevertheless, individuals do not cease to have a margin of freedom in their actions. On the other hand, the aggregation and combination of individual actions can result in emerging, unforeseen, or undesired effects of change in the social structure. In other words, the structure itself is the product of the complex aggregation of individual actions (Boudon 1981). This view demonstrates that individualism and collectivism are not logically incompatible, necessarily opposed positions.

The basic propositions of methodological individualism can be summarized as follows. In the first place, there is a structure of constraints and opportunities associated with the different positions in a given social context. In the second place, the unit of analysis is the individual actor and his intentional actions. The individual actor chooses his course of action intentionally, from among the available options and according to his preferences. Intentional action is understood to be a purposeful action—namely, an action directed toward achieving an objective. The influence of the structure is manifest both in what the actor can do (i.e., his available options) and in what he wants to do as his preferences have been formed in a specific social context. Third, individual actions can produce effects on the structure of constraints and opportunities that are undesired or unexpected by the individuals. These propositions cover and connect different levels of analysis. As Coleman (1990) has observed, the first proposition (how the structure condition individual action) implies a movement from the macrolevel of structure to the microlevel of the actor, while the third (how individual actions can result in a change of the social structure) implies an inverse movement from the microlevel to the macrolevel.

One key aspect of this explanatory model is the actions of individuals. What does it mean when we say that the individual actions depend on the structure of the actors' situation? To answer this question, it is necessary, according to Boudon, to *comprehend* why an individual in a specific situation chooses a particular course of action. Following Weber, comprehending a social action implies, for Boudon (1986), getting enough information to analyze the motivations that inspire the action. An observer *comprehends* the action of the subject observed when he can conclude that in an identical situation, he would have acted in the same way. In general terms, this operation of comprehension implies that the sociologist adopts a particular model of the individual actor. To this end, Boudon and the majority of the sociologists who share the epistemic strategy of construction have used a model of an actor with a rationality limited by the character of the situation in which he finds himself (Simon 1982; Gambetta 1987; Elster 1989). With respect to the economists' classic model of the rational actor,⁵ this model observes that there are limits in access to all the relevant information for making a decision. Second, it acknowledges that in certain situations that share a strategic dimension, it is impossible to univocally establish which behavior is the rational one. In situations of this kind, individuals resort to representations that are more or less solidly founded as norms, traditions, or imitations of others to make a decision.

To summarize, the causal explanation of a social phenomenon requires the description of the structural context in which the actors find themselves, a comprehension of the actions in this context, and the reconstruction of the aggregation process of these actions. Boudon (1986) defines this explanatory model as the "Weberian paradigm of action." For the purposes of this chapter, it is important

to underline that on the epistemological level, this model attempts to conjugate the explanation of the structure with the phenomenological comprehension of the actor's action. On the analytic level, it seems to offer a flexible, useful framework for investigating the interdependence of structure and action.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this chapter, we have discussed some basic aspects of the sociology of social structure around three questions: (1) What is the ultimate nature of social structure? Or in other words, is it fundamentally collective representations such as norms and values, or relations among actors who occupy social positions? (2) How many levels of structure are there and how do they combine with one another? And finally, (3) what is the relation between structure and the action of an individual actor?

As we have seen, the sociology of social structure is not an intellectually unified field because it lacks a unitary conception of social structure. When sociologists use the term *social structure*, they usually refer to a set of social entities—the elements or constitutive units—that are ordered, organized, or hierarchized in some way and that maintain patterned, nonrandom relations among themselves with a certain permanence in time and space. But beyond this perfunctory commonality in the use of the term, there is no clear agreement about what the fundamental dimension of social structure is.

In this chapter, we have presented the two broad visions of social structure that have been most influential in sociological thought. On one hand, we considered the *institutional* or *cultural* vision of social structure, for which the basic elements are the norms, beliefs, and values that regulate social action. From this point of view, social structure is an *institutional* structure—namely, a set of *cultural* and *normative* models that define the actors' expectations about their behavior. We have also explained how this cultural vision of social structure has developed theoretically in structural functionalism and in the work of its most outstanding representative, Talcott Parsons, and, more recently, in neo-institutionalism. On the other hand, we distinguished the *relational* vision, for which the elements that make up the social structure are, basically, social relations. From this point of view, the analysis of the social structure focuses on the tissue of social relations that connects individuals, groups, organizations, communities, and societies. Modern network analysis exemplifies this second vision very well. A relevant variant of this second vision is the distributive or positional perspective. The representatives of this current of structural thought, among whom we highlighted Peter Blau, consider the social structure to be, above all, an ordered or hierarchical distribution of positions that share certain attributes and that affect people's social relations and interactions.

170 • SOCIAL AGGREGATIONS

To the extent that the foundations of both visions—cultural and relational—imply a split image of social reality, several attempts at synthesis have been made to try to overcome this double representation of social structure. Here we have examined some recent theorizations (those of Giddens, Sewell, and Bourdieu) that try to integrate the basic assumptions of both visions in a single analytic framework, considering the normative and relational dimensions of social action jointly. Another attempt to avoid this dual representation of social structure is the definition of social structure in very broad and diffuse terms as the contexts in which social action develops—namely, the varied social circumstances that, being inalterable and given for the individual, provide the surroundings for his social action. From this last point of view, the precise conceptualization of social structure depends, in each case, on the type of social action theory that it defends and on the causal factors to which the proposed explanations point.

In addition to identifying the fundamental dimensions of the social structure, structural sociology faces the matter of choosing the units or elements that make up the social structures. Many classifications are possible, but we advocate a schema that discriminates three broad levels of complexity—micro, meso, and macro. However, deciding on which level of social structure to move depends not only on the phenomenon that we wish to study but also on the theoretical and methodological assumptions of our explanations of social action. Another interesting matter in relation to the levels of social structure is the matter of the images or metaphors that represent the relation among the different levels of the structure. We have presented three metaphors here. The first one represents the levels of social structure fitting into one another as if they were Chinese boxes. The second one resorts to a geological image and distinguishes between one level that is the base of the structure and the others that rest on top of the structure.

A third metaphor divides the social structure into levels of a system and subsystems.

With reference to the relation between structure and action, we have presented two main epistemological and methodological strategies that are opposed: individualism and holism. While the first consists of reducing the structural phenomena to the individual behaviors that form them, moving from the microlevel to the macrolevel, the second one considers individual behaviors as a reflection of the logic of the social structures and moves from the macrolevel to the microlevel. We have also seen that the approach called methodological individualism offers a possibility of overcoming the opposition between individualism and holism. According to this approach, the restrictions and opportunities defined by the structural context in which the actor finds himself condition his action. Nevertheless, individuals do not cease having margins of freedom to choose their courses of action. Besides, the aggregation and combination of individual actions can produce emergent, unforeseen, or undesired effects of change in the social structure. It is important to highlight the idea that the restrictions and opportunities that condition the actor's action can be of a relational nature, as well as cultural or ideational. In other words, they can be determined both by the actor's position in a specific system of social relations and by the cultural, normative, and value orientations that prevail in this system.

Given the current state of our discipline, it is hard to envisage the future development of a fully unified sociology of social structure. As always, theoretical and methodological preferences will determine the results of research on this topic. But the analysis of social structures will keep on being a fruitful field as long as it is able to solve the persistent problems of specifying the pertinent levels of social reality, define the relevant social entities that compose social structures, and disentangle the mutual relationship between social structures and individual action.

16

THE SOCIOLOGY OF GROUP DYNAMICS

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The study of groups and their structure has variously been termed *group dynamics*, *small groups*, and *group processes*. The sociological and the psychological interests in groups coincided in the early development of sociology and psychology and still coincide. The close relationship between the psychological and sociological investigations of groups is one of the important characteristics of this area of study. In fact, this interdisciplinarity, which existed at the beginning of its development, has continued, is still one of its most distinctive characteristics, and has further developed to include economics and political science.

Groups, their organizations, and their processes were important foci of many of the early sociologists. In an influential book, *Small Groups*, edited by A. P. Paul Hare, Edgar F. Borgatta, and Robert F. Bales (1965), the editors pay allegiance to the early theorists Émile Durkheim, Georg Simmel, Charles B. Cooley, and George H. Mead. In particular, the editors emphasize Durkheim's generic interest in group organization and his theoretical ideas of division of labor, which can be translated easily into role differentiation and stratification within groups. Both Cooley and Mead are important ancestors for the specific framework of symbolic interaction and frequently addressed the central importance of groups, especially small groups. Cooley, for example, developed and elaborated the idea of primary groups. Mead's (1934) theoretical conceptualizations in *Mind, Self, and Society* were important for developing concepts central to the development of group dynamics. Such concepts involved the centrality of groups and the importance of role-taking. Within these discussions, Mead used the example of a ball game

in which the attitudes of a set of individuals are involved in a cooperative response in which the different roles involve each other. In so far as a man takes the attitude of one individual in the group, he must take it in its relationship to the action of the other members of the groups; and if he is fully to adjust himself, he would have to take the attitudes of all involved in the process. (P. 163)

Simmel ([1907] 1971) wrote about many of the concepts and perspectives that have preoccupied group theorists for the 100 years since he detailed them. His discussions of conflict and exchange framed issues in the form of dynamic. For example, he argued that exchange was pervasive in human life:

Most relationships among men can be considered under the category of exchange. Exchange is the purest and most concentrated form of all human interactions in which serious interests are at stake. Many actions which at first glance appear to consist of mere unilateral process in fact involve reciprocal effects. The speaker before an audience, the teacher before a class, the journalists writing to his public—each appears to be the sole source of influence in such situations, whereas each of them is really acting in response to demands and directions that emanate from apparently passive, ineffectual groups. (P. 43)

What are group processes or group dynamics? What makes this line of investigation unique and distinct from other investigations? First, as indicated by the discussions of early theorists, the group is the unit of analysis (or in later work, one important unit of analysis). Second, in part because of the area's early alliance with psychology, it has

172 • SOCIAL AGGREGATIONS

traditionally accepted and developed laboratory studies, although experimental research has not been exclusively employed.

While it is impossible to be exhaustive, I summarize and discuss areas that seem to define the area by virtue of their continued attention by researchers. In particular, I focus on status, cooperation and competition, exchange, justice, and legitimation. I provide an assessment of trajectories of research and suggest particular questions or approaches that appear particularly promising.

STATUS AND STATUS EFFECTS

Status is one of the most important concepts in the discipline of sociology. In fact, much of sociology can be conceptualized as questioning what constitutes status and the effect of status. Status is usually defined as a position in a social network. Importantly, these statuses involve status beliefs, beliefs about the social worth of the individuals who occupy these statuses, such as the belief that a person who occupies one position is “better than” a person who occupies another position (see Sewell 1992).

Early studies in status tended to examine leadership. While these studies sometimes examined individual “styles” of leadership, most studies focused on general types of leadership approaches. A well-known study by Kurt Lewin, Ronald Lippitt, and Ralph White (1939) involved an experimental investigation of three different kinds of leadership: autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire. The groups consisted of 10- and 11-year-old boys in after-school groups, and all the leaders were adults. On the basis of their experiment, the researchers found evidence that the democratic group resulted in more “we-ness” and group goals and less scapegoating compared with the autocratic group. Interestingly, autocratic groups spent more of their time working than did the democratic groups, who in turn spent more time working than did the laissez-faire groups. However, when the autocratic leader left the room, the boys stopped working, while the boys in the other groups continued working.

Bales (1950) and researchers at Harvard developed different kinds of analyses to map behaviors within the group. Interaction process analysis (IPA), described in 1950, was then an innovative technique and still shapes many group investigations. In its original form, it consisted of 12 categorizations of behavior. These categorizations separated out behaviors into positive and negative social emotional behavior and neutral task behaviors. So, for example, asking for opinions, disagreeing, and giving suggestions were coded, depending on their specific context. In particular, Bales and his colleagues were interested in the kind of interaction that occurred and how the particular behaviors of one group member conditioned the behaviors of another. These studies provided important evidence that status was *relative* to the group (Borgatta and Bales 1953), a central insight for group dynamics. This insight was

critical for most of social psychology because it was the beginning of the powerful idea that while people might possess the same characteristics from one setting to another, these characteristics did not have the same salience in different settings. Such an idea took many years to develop but took root in new thinking about characteristics such as sex (or gender) and ethnicity.

Many sociologists have suggested that status significance is acquired through resources. In an analysis of one process through which nominal characteristics, such as race and sex categories, might acquire status-value and status beliefs, Cecilia Ridgeway (1991) developed and then tested aspects of status construction theory (Ridgeway and Erickson 2000; Ridgeway et al. 1998). This theory posits one mechanism through which a characteristic previously not status-valued might acquire such value. According to the theory, members differ in the level of material resources they possess—they differ on an unordered nominal characteristic, and resources are correlated with the “state” or category of the characteristic (Ridgeway 1991, 1997).

Status has been examined from a number of different perspectives. One of the most developed research programs, in many ways a direct descendant from Bales’s research in group processes, is expectation states theory. The theory has several subsets. One portion of the theory, status characteristics theory, is concerned with how status characteristics generate and then sustain inequalities of power and prestige within groups. (Summary statements of the theory involved in this process can be found in Berger, Conner, and Fisek 1974; Berger, Wagner, and Zelditch 1992; Berger et al. 1977; Correll and Ridgeway 2003; Humphreys and Berger 1981.)

There are two types of status characteristics that have different properties. Specific status characteristics are those associated with a specific ability, such as the ability to score soccer goals or the ability to do accounting. These characteristics consist of two or more “states” that correspond to an expectation or assessment of how the individual will perform in the completion of a task. A diffuse status characteristic is a characteristic that also possesses at least two states of differential evaluation. However, associated with each state, not only are there associated specific performance expectations, but there are also associated general performance expectations “without limit as to scope” (Webster and Foschi 1988).

If individuals are within a task group and all are motivated to succeed on that task, status characteristics that differentiate among the group members are activated in the first step of a status organizing process, the burden-of-proof process. Unless some other characteristic or event intervenes, the status characteristics organize interactions such that those who are higher in social status receive higher amounts of power and prestige than those lower in status. The burden of proof rests on a demonstration that the status should NOT be used. The process proceeds in several steps; importantly, while the process might be conscious, it can be unconscious as well.

Much of the recent expectation states theory in general and status characteristics theory in particular has been explicated and elaborated through graph-theoretic models (see, e.g., Berger et al. 1977, 1998; Webster and Hysom 1998). These models serve to depict how different characteristics within the group and outside the group structure expectations and subsequent behavior.

Because of the burden-of-proof process, status can serve to organize the interactions within a group and help legitimate power use (or the lack of power use). The acceptable use of power can make a group function relatively smoothly and can generate an acceptance of inequality. Additionally, however, power use can generate negative sentiment and interrupt the process through which power use translates to status (see Lovaglia and Houser 1996; Lovaglia et al. 2005; Walker et al. 2000; Willer, Troyer, and Lovaglia 2001).

Dissolving status hierarchies involves more than just a reversal of the burden-of-proof process. Once a status hierarchy is created at an initial point in time, the deference granted at time one serves to reinforce subsequent power differentials. Because of this, initial differences become more and more entrenched. Consequently, it seems that interventions must either occur early in the group interaction or serve to severely contradict the expectations generated by other characteristics. Most researchers who have investigated this have considered how the addition of certain kinds of characteristics can serve to “dampen” or even eliminate the effects. Some research has investigated decreasing the effects of diffuse status through adding performance information (or specific status characteristics) that contradicts the evaluation associated with the diffuse status characteristics. Such investigations include those of Pugh and Wahrman (1983) and Wagner, Ford, and Ford (1986) for sex and Freese and Cohen (1973) for age. One important caveat to this research (and an implication from the graph theory) is that characteristics that equate actors do not contribute to the formation of expectations and to the subsequent observable power and prestige (Martin and Sell 1985; Webster 1977). Consequently, if both actors have equally high (or low) specific status characteristics and they are differentiated by a diffuse status characteristic, only the diffuse status characteristic organizes their interaction.

Another approach was suggested by Fisek in 1991 and then expanded and tested by Goar and Sell (2005). This approach emphasizes how changing the nature of the task might change the inequalities generated in the group: specifically, if the group task involves different abilities that are inconsistent with each other, group participation tends to equalize.

A long-term research and application program associated with expectation states theories was initiated and developed by Elizabeth Cohen and her colleagues (see Cohen 1982, 1993; Cohen and Roper 1972). These studies developed intervention strategies to reduce the participation differences between minority and majority children.

Additionally, the strategies were applied to other kinds of labeling, including reading ability (Tammivaara 1982).

The investigation of inequality within groups and how it relates to status remains an important area within the group dynamics area. Early studies stressed descriptions of groups, while later studies investigated possible ways in which status hierarchies might be modified or disrupted. One of the most exciting and promising areas of investigations is that of studies that examine different groups, how these groups are nested, and how status differences translated from one group to others. For example, Lovaglia et al. (1998) developed a formulation that assesses how status differences created in a group translate to individual-level performances on standardized tests.

LEGITIMATION

Closely related to the issues of status are issues of legitimation. Legitimation is the process through which a principle or set of rules is adhered to, deferred to, or supported even in the absence of obvious incentives to do so. These principles may or may not be written, and they can refer to persons, positions, and acts. This process is often taken for granted in the establishment and maintenance of social structure.

Max Weber, although not often discussed in terms of small-groups analysis, was important for initial conceptualizations of power (and subsequently exchange) and types of authority. He conceptualized three types of authority: charismatic, traditional, and legal rational (Weber [1924] 1978). Traditional authority is based on time-honored traditions, and charismatic authority is legitimated based on personal qualities of the leader. Legal rational authority, a characteristic of the modern bureaucracy, stresses universal rules, calculability, and efficiency.

Early studies on leadership (mentioned above) can be considered part of legitimation studies (see Burke 2003). In the context of leadership, an important study by Evan and Zelditch (1961) specifically tested some aspects of Weber's formulation and was one of the first experimental studies that created a bureaucracy in the laboratory. They investigated authorization as a source of legitimation and tried to separate the *legal* and *rational* components of Weber's theory of bureaucratic authority, finding that the source of legitimation was more important than the competency of the authority when it came to eliciting compliance.

Dornbusch and Scott (1975) elaborated a theory of authority, based on Weberian concepts of power, authority, and legitimacy. Different dimensions defined authority. One dimension refers to the norms that underlie the power relationship. Dornbusch and Scott (1975) refer to this dimension as either validity, collective support for a normative order, or propriety, individual belief in the fairness of norms. A second dimension refers to the sources of legitimacy. The power *structure* becomes legitimated

174 • SOCIAL AGGREGATIONS

through authorization, endorsement, or both. The third dimension of authority refers to its formal or informal character.

Expanding, modifying, and further developing these formulations, Bell, Walker, and Willer (2000), Zelditch and Walker (1984), Walker, Rogers, and Zelditch (2002), and Zelditch (2001) argued that theories concerned with the emergence of legitimacy must deal not only with types (validity and propriety) and sources (authorization and endorsement) but also with multiple objects such as acts, persons, and positions. For example, Thomas, Walker, and Zelditch (1986) found that collective approval can override personal approval.

Read (1974) created leaders with different sources of support: election, appointment by expert external authority; appointment by nonexpert external authority; and usurpation by a self-appointed leader. The study pointed out an important aspect of legitimation: What is given or the “status quo” is usually not questioned until something unusual occurs that calls into question the existing arrangements. Read concludes, “The leader selection process may establish a relationship between group members and the agent of selection which remains unexpressed until the leader places unusual demands upon group members” (p. 202). Subjects chose to retain the elected leader more than they did the expert appointed leader even though the expert leader had more task influence. This suggests a complex relationship between source of authority and influence, even in small informal groups.

Questioning the status quo was also a focus for research on revolutionary coalitions. Such coalitions were called revolutionary because they existed to “overthrow” some given arrangement within the group or organization (Lawler 1975; Webster and Smith 1978). Research in this area also suggested that endorsement was a particularly powerful source of authority. When the leader was responsible for a payment scheme that vastly underpaid some members, the disadvantaged were likely to revolt against the leader (Lawler and Thompson 1978). And in further demonstration of the importance of endorsement, Sell and Martin (1983) and Martin and Sell (1986) found that such a revolution could occur even if a legitimate authority had specifically prohibited the act.

In face-to-face group situations, it is often the case that influence and legitimacy are intertwined. (For a discussion of these concepts and how they are similar and different, see Lovaglia et al. 2005.) Berger et al. (1998) consider specifically the emergence and consequences of the legitimation (and delegitimation) of power and prestige orders. They describe legitimation as a social process that mediates the relationship between social actors and social structures. It is also a multilevel process. “Referential belief structures” or commonly held socially validated beliefs exist on a cultural level and can then be imported into a local setting, such as a task setting. The theory of reward expectations connects to this process by describing the relationship between performance and reward expectations

that are based on the valued status characteristics. Rewards are then allocated to valued status positions in line with referential belief structures.

Another theory that addresses how legitimation can be transported from one arena to another is the theory of structural ritualization (Knottnerus 1997). The theory details how ritualized social practices can be reproduced, even in the absence of incentives and even when their reproduction may not be beneficial to the group (see Knottnerus 1997; Knottnerus and Van de Poel-Knottnerus 1999; Sell et al. 2000). Such a theory helps explain paradoxical behaviors, such as how those subjected to coercive practices eventually come to adopt and then support these same practices.

Legitimation concerns began with studies of individuals, specifically leaders, and their support from other group members. A particularly critical development within this area is the recognition and then elaboration of how different groups and organization can be “nested” and consequently how legitimation in one area can be imported into other areas. A particularly promising area for further investigation is how the sources and origins of legitimation can determine the stability of a group or organization, the potential development and dissolution of routines (see Johansson and Sell 2004), and the sudden development of crisis. In this regard, however, there must be further investigation of time. Even though the term *group dynamics* refers to change and time, strangely, “most research on groups neglects the role of time” (Arrow et al. 2005).

Much of what legitimation addresses relates to ideas of justice and fairness. Historically, the areas seem to have developed somewhat independently, with legitimation issues more often studied and applied in more “macrosociological” contexts, while justice and equity was more often studied in dyads or microsociological contexts. Recently, however, the two areas seem to be integrating.

JUSTICE

Within psychology there is a large literature related to issues of interpersonal justice. This literature aims to answer how individuals might make assessments of justice regarding their own and others’ benefits (see, e.g., Adams 1965; Homans 1974; Walster, Walster, and Berscheid 1978). As Hegtvedt and Markovsky (1995) point out, sociological contributions to justice theorizing and research sought to extend justice decisions beyond the individual. Only by going beyond the individual can we begin to see the dynamics involved in the relative infrequency of revolution, for example (see Moore 1978).

One of the most important steps in this sociological focus was the status-value theory of distributive justice (Berger et al. 1972, 1985). The importance of a referential structure was developed and highlighted in these formulations. Such a structure is the general belief about how the social characteristics of generalized others correspond to

social rewards. This structure is important for the judgment of actors about their local or immediate situation. So, for example, when professors assess whether their immediate situation is fair, the referential structure of “professor” is activated, and then a comparison between “what should be” and “what is” occurs. When there is congruence, the situation is evaluated as just.

Jasso (1980, 1988, 2001) developed a series of theoretical arguments and resulting models that use the insight of the referential structure. Her mathematical models allow estimates of the degree of felt injustice, and she argues that they can be extended to a wide variety of group-level phenomena, including such disparate acts as robbery and playing games of chance.

Markovsky (1985) developed a multilevel justice theory that highlighted the importance of the type of comparison, and the empirical results from differing comparisons. Specifically, he demonstrated that increased group identification could change actors’ targets of comparison and therefore assessment of justice from interpersonal to group.

As mentioned, many of the sociological concerns with justice seem linked with legitimation and the question of authority. Hegtvædt and Johnson (2000) and Hegtvædt and Clay-Warner (2004) make the connection explicit. In particular, the literature makes it clear that different norms can be more or less valued or supported, depending on the way in which the norms were developed. Much of this idea relates to the referential comparison and the strength of different types of authority.

EXCHANGE

As Simmel ([1907] 1971) noted,

Exchange is not merely the addition of the two processes of giving and receiving. It is, rather, something new. Exchange constitutes a third process, something that emerges when each of those two processes is simultaneously the cause and the effect of the other. (P. 57)

Group dynamic investigations of exchange emerged in the 1950s in both sociology and psychology. Homans (1950, 1958, 1961) adapted behavioral or operant learning tenets to describe behavior among individuals and, in doing so, gave homage to Simmel and his insight into human behavior. He presented human exchanges as involving rewards and costs and said that people responded to these in ways in which benefits outweighed costs. Blau’s (1964) work on interactions in bureaucracies indicated that people compete for scarce resources and trade different social commodities (such as advice).

In psychology, Thibaut and Kelley (1959) developed their theory of social power, which involved the idea that the amount of power one individual or group possesses is determined, in part, by the alternatives present. Thus

individuals gauged whether to engage in exchanges on the basis of the value of the exchange itself and whether alternatives were available.

Emerson’s (1962, 1964, 1972) formulation of power dependence theory in social relations took these previous conceptualizations and developed an overarching theory. It specified a relational aspect to power that placed the exchange relation as central. Power was inversely related to dependence: For a given exchange relation, the more powerful an individual or group, the less dependent it was on the relation. Furthermore, Emerson’s theory posited a continual balancing mechanism in exchange relations. If people had power, they used it because it gave them an advantage. But if power was used, it was (incrementally) lost. This shift of power leads to continual balancing. In tests and extensions of the theory, Cook and Emerson (1978) demonstrated that power was a function of relative dependence. Empirical tests of the formulation supported this balancing notion (see, e.g., Cook et al. 1983), but other developments in the area questioned it (Willer 1987).

Further distinctions in different kinds of exchange emerged in work that followed. Specifically, Molm distinguished two types of exchange that had different properties. Negotiated exchange involves bargaining and negotiation and then agreement on the terms of the exchange. In contrast, reciprocal exchange does not involve negotiation but instead consists of individual acts performed for an other or others without knowledge about a future reciprocation. (For these distinctions, see Molm 1990, 1997a.) Given equivalent costs and benefits, reciprocal exchanges generate more trust and affect than do negotiated exchanges (Molm, Takahashi, and Peterson 2000). Part of the reason for this is that, at least under some conditions, risk generates trust (see also Kollock 1994).

Molm (1994, 1997a, 1997b) investigated coercive power in these nonnegotiated exchanges as well. Coercive power (in the sense of punishing others) is seen by participants as intentional and most likely to be used when an actor has little reward power. This is probably the case because coercion is risky and can decrease the possibilities of future beneficial exchanges. (We can see such coercive power use in examples of terrorism.) So, even though punishment can be an effective strategy if it is consistently and contingently applied, actors use it relatively infrequently.

While there are differences between negotiated and reciprocal exchanges, there are similarities as well. One important similarity rests with the negative emotion that can be generated with power use. For example, the conflict spiral, a theory about bargaining processes, documents that unequal power, even without punishment, can produce negative emotion (Lawler 1986; Lawler, Ford, and Blegen 1988).

Much of the research on negotiated exchange has countered part of Emerson’s power dependence theory claims. While most of this research has supported the statement that “to have power is to use it,” not all research has supported the second part of this, “to use it is to lose it.” Much

of the research within this area has focused on the idea of alternatives to valued resources and so considered exchange networks. Relative power of positions in simple networks can be analyzed by calculating the alternatives to a given position. Suppose there is a network in which there are three actors, Alphonse, Brunheilde, and Constantine (or A, B, and C). If Brunheilde can exchange with either Alphonse or Constantine, but Alphonse and Constantine can only exchange with Brunheilde, then B has alternatives while the others do not. As a result, in negotiations, B can demand much, and A and C can demand very little. This type of network has been termed strong power (Cook et al. 1983; Markovsky, Willer, and Patton 1988).

This network approach to negotiated exchange has flourished and other important exchange relations have been explored. One of the most important is weak power. Weak power yields exchange results intermediate between equal power and strong power (Markovsky et al. 1993; Willer 1999).

There have been a number of attempts to find methods of predicting power in networks that vary in structure and size. There is the graph-theoretic approach (Lovaglia et al. 1995), a game-theory approach (Bienenstock and Bonacich 1993), and an expected-value model (Friedkin 1992), among others. However, as discussed in Lucas et al. (2001), a general solution for a range of networks that vary in complexity is not yet clear.

As mentioned earlier, recent work within exchange perspectives has begun to consider how emotion is implicated in the exchange process. The affect theory of social exchange, for example (see, in particular, Lawler 2001; Lawler and Yoon 1993, 1996, 1998), maintains that while social exchange has an instrumental and individual function, the exchange itself involves a group product that fosters emotional, affective processes. While rational choice formulations had examined how commitment in exchange networks was fostered by uncertainty reduction, Lawler, Thye, and Yoon (2000) demonstrated that affect, in and of itself, also generated commitment. They also present the argument that such affect is particularly strong in productive exchanges. These exchanges occur in settings in which group members have equal power, coordination issues exist and must be solved, and the interdependence of group members is necessary for the production of the outcome.

While the study of exchange has always been important to group dynamics, the addition of emotion and notions of risk, trust, and uncertainty has transformed early investigations of simple cost and benefit. The transformations have expanded both the depth and scope of exchange formulations. For example, depth has been transformed by analysis of actors' strategies in the face of contingencies, and scope has been transformed by analysis of the network configurations under which exchange occurs. In this regard, the effects of economics in terms of game theory, anthropology in terms of studies of gift exchange, and psychology in terms of risk have been particularly influential.

COOPERATION AND COMPETITION

Very early studies in cooperation drew attention to the incentive structures that "steer" actors toward cooperating with others or competing with others (see Coser 1956, 1967; Thibaut and Kelley 1959). In a study meant to reflect on why people might "panic" in settings, Mintz (1951) provided people with incentives if they withdrew their playing pieces successfully. However, only one person could withdraw at a time. When incentives or costs for not withdrawing were high, cooperation decreased and consequently success decreased. These findings illustrated that early ideas of mob or panic "mentality" were not appropriate social psychological models of group behavior. In fact, actors respond to perceived immediate individual incentives that might result in long-term negative results both for themselves and for the group. In other words, panic situations could be analyzed in terms of incentive dilemmas.

Social dilemmas are one of the most studied phenomena within the area of cooperation and competition. A social dilemma is any setting in which there is a conflict between individual short-term incentives and overall group incentives (see Dawes 1980). Common examples of social dilemmas include the creation of collective movements, such as civil rights movements, and the maintenance of resources, such as fisheries or fragile ecosystems. Such settings are very different from market settings, in which individuals pay a price (money, time, etc.) to obtain a private good. Social dilemmas can only be solved through group effort, yet individuals cannot be excluded from the benefits, even if they have not contributed. For example, even if an individual does nothing to preserve a fragile ecosystem, he or she benefits by it. This feature of social dilemmas creates the "free-riding problem," the temptation for individuals to reap benefits but not contribute. Of course, if every individual reacts to the immediate incentives and free rides, the public good or resource is not provided. Social dilemmas are pervasive and appear in all levels of interaction.

Two statements often used to frame the issues surrounding social dilemmas are Mancur Olson's (1965) book *The Logic of Collective Action* and Garret Hardin's (1968) article "The Tragedy of the Commons." Olson's book is about public goods, while Hardin's article addresses common property resources. Because both types of problems have an incentive structure that pits individual against group interest, they are considered social dilemmas; however, there are social psychological differences between the public good problem, which involves "giving up" individual resources for the group good, and the resource good problem of establishing individual restraint from using the resource (see Brewer and Kramer 1986; Sell and Son 1997; Sell et al. 2002; Son and Sell 1995). There are many further categorizations of social dilemmas. An important distinction is between a two-person (or -actor) dilemma and multiperson dilemmas, termed *N-person dilemmas*. Other distinctions relate to the timing and structure of the incentives and to the

relationship between cooperation (and the reverse of cooperation, defection) and group gains.

Because social dilemmas are so pervasive, most of the social sciences have investigated them. As a result, there is an especially rich cross-disciplinary literature. Particularly important has been game theory. Game theorists have concentrated on formal solutions that invoke the mathematics involved in expected utility arguments. One very important formulation for advancing the possibility of “rational” cooperation is the folk theorem. The folk theorem posits a whole range of history-contingent strategies that allow for cooperation if, at some point, it is the case that an actor’s cost of contributing exceeds the cost of contribution and the discount rate is sufficiently large for contributing to remain an individually rational strategy. This means that social dilemmas can be solved rationally, without resorting to explanations such as altruism. However, while the folk theorem does suggest many possibilities for purely rational cooperation, it does not rule out many possibilities.

In line with this, there are a number of conditional cooperation strategies (for a discussion, see Yamagishi 1995) that have been investigated. One of the simplest and most investigated strategies is the tit-for-tat strategy (see Axelrod 1984). This strategy suggested a “nice response” of initial cooperation and thereafter cooperating when a partner cooperates and not cooperating when the partner does not.

Many solutions to social dilemmas involve changing the basic structure of the dilemma and thereby affecting incentives (see Messick and Brewer 1983; Samuelson and Messick 1995). Such solutions include factors such as punishment mechanisms for not cooperating (one class of which includes “trigger strategies”) and incentives for cooperating (see Ostrom, Walker, and Gardner 1992; Sato 1987; Sell and Wilson 1999; Yamagishi 1988).

Other solutions to social dilemmas have focused on “social” factors—namely, factors affected by group interaction. After much research, it is apparent that communication among group members facilitates cooperation (Sally 1995). The reasons include the creation of commitments (Kerr and Kaufman-Gilleland 1994; Orbell, van de Kragt, and Dawes 1988) and the development of in-group identity (Brewer and Kramer 1986). However, simply sending signals of intention, or “cheap talk,” is not enough to increase cooperation (Wilson and Sell 1997).

Two other very powerful social factors are social identity and trust. Social identity is the sense of “we-ness” that accompanies shared significant social categories that indicate some extent of common fate. Trust is a more diffuse property, which may or may not relate to social identity but does entail a sense of predictability of others’ actions. If an actor trusts others to cooperate, and so acts on that basis, the original incentives of the social dilemma can be transformed and the dilemma solved (see Brann and Foddy 1987; Kollock 1998; Scharlemann et al. 2001; Yamagishi 1995). Some cross-cultural research indicates that there are indeed initial differences in levels of trust and cooperation,

a difference we might expect based on cultural differences in social identity (see Hwang 1987; Kopelman, Weber, and Messick 2002; Sell et al. 2002; Yamagishi 1988, 1995).

Studies of cooperation and competition continue to be a primary focus in group dynamics. This area, perhaps more than any other, promises further interdisciplinary work because it already possesses an interdisciplinary base, which includes many different disciplines. Early studies emphasized incentive structures, and because of this, much of the literature is characterized by a rational choice perspective. Such a perspective does not inhibit analysis of trust and social identity but demands that it be placed within the incentive structure. It is this combination of “rational choice” along with the more traditional social psychological emphasis on “not so rational” choice that provides an intriguing combination for further innovative theory.

NEW DIRECTIONS AND NEW INNOVATIONS

The study of group dynamics or group processes has been an important part of sociology since its inception. It was closely allied with psychology and, perhaps because of this, never abandoned the methodological acceptance of laboratory experiments. Later developments, especially in the areas of legitimation and cooperation, included contributions from political science and economics. Studies of coalition formation in political science and collusion in economics, for example, were important in the development of principles in cooperation.

Because of its interdisciplinary approach, for the most part, group dynamics research has not fallen into an insular pattern in which reference is made only to sociological developments. In fact, recent research reaches across not just to the social sciences but to the biological sciences as well (see, e.g., McCabe et al. 2001; Robinson, Rogalin, and Smith-Lovin 2004). Such interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary research will almost certainly guarantee greater theoretical development and more attention to application. If the area is to remain vibrant, researchers cannot be reticent about attempting new methodologies that might be less well known and accepted. Such techniques might include physiological measurements and techniques, simulations, and explorations of virtual reality experiments.

A common vocabulary and framework also helps to frame different approaches to a similar problem. Lovaglia et al. (2005) and Sell et al. (2004) argue that one common vocabulary that might unite research across different areas in group dynamics is that of institutional rules. Institutional rules are formal or informal rules that specify who can engage in certain acts and under what conditions this can occur (see Crawford and Ostrom 1995 for a general discussion of institutional rules). Institutions might be an important framework for integration because they

178 • SOCIAL AGGREGATIONS

enable comparisons among very different groups. So, as an example, we can speak of the boundary rules of groups: who is and who is not in the group. These rules specify the permeability of the group. Can people easily come and go from the group, or are there membership rules that prevent entrance and exit? As another example, position rules define who gets to act and when he or she gets to act. Such position rules might specify leaders and a hierarchical form of group governance or the complete opposite, a total equalitarian governance.

The institutional framework allows comparison and also highlights the structural dimension of group dynamics. It can enable comparisons of the structure and dynamics of groups of schoolchildren, groups of circus entertainers, groups of world leaders, and groups of workers and CEOs

in a bureaucracy. These rules could also help strengthen the development and analysis of nested groups. There is an important theoretical push in group dynamics to consider how smaller groups might be nested within larger groups and *at the same time* how larger groups are affected by smaller groups (see Lawler, Ridgeway, and Markovsky 1993). Institutional language can also aid this theoretical endeavor because it enables assessment of how rules compare within and across levels. The idea of nested groups is especially important for the development and elaboration of group dynamics because it points out that the study of “small groups” is really not necessarily about small. Groups can have a powerful impact on “big” structures. Indeed, the topics of status, exchange, legitimation, justice, and cooperation reach out to and into all domains of society.

17

THE SOCIOLOGY OF ORGANIZATION

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The literature on the sociology of organizations is vast and represents a refracted history of the study of bureaucracy. The object of study is variously labeled bureaucracy, complex organizations, and formal organizations, but the concept of organization and the notion of organizing principles subsume all these labels. Thus, according to Blau and Meyer (1987), “the concept of bureaucracy, then, applies to organizing principles that are intended to achieve control and coordination of work in large organizations” (p. 3). This vast literature will be reviewed by dividing the field into approaches distinguished by their organizing principles and discussed more or less in the chronological order of their emergence. This provides the reader with a context and addresses these organizing principles in readily digestible portions. However, the chronology does not imply that the field developed in a linear fashion, nor does the division into major approaches suggest that all scholarship fits neatly into distinct approaches. The discussion of each approach is followed by a critique, and the review concludes with speculation on the future of the sociology of organizations in the twenty-first century.

The study of organizations varies within sociology, between academic disciplines, and across the globe, limiting in-depth communication. Studies of political parties by political scientists, private-sector firms by economists, and employees by industrial psychologists and sociologists within the United States and abroad may claim to predate the sociology of organizations. However, according to Scott (2003:9), there are three defining features of the sociology of organizations: (1) Examination is empirical, not normative; (2) organization is considered *sui generis*, not

the aggregate of its members; and (3) an effort is made to generalize the analysis beyond analysis of the specific form of organization studied. These criteria became institutionalized after the 1960s and will be used to explore its refracted development.

EARLY WRITING

The Pyramids at Giza, the Roman conquests, and the spread of Christianity were accomplished through organizations and illustrate how the issues of organization stretch back in time. These large-scale organizational efforts represented attempts to grapple with the ambitions and stubborn facts of their day. The stability of societies was at stake, and their survival attracted powerful intellectual contemplation. As James March (1965) comments, “There is scarcely a major philosopher, historian, or biographer who has overlooked the management and perversities of organization. The church, the army, and the state had to be managed” (p. xi). After all, religions passed into obscurity, armies were defeated, and states fell. Impressive as an intellectual fascination and operational challenge, the term *bureaucracy* appears rather late in Western history.

The concept of bureaucracy appeared in the eighteenth century as a semantic partitioning of society and a new element in the stratification of society. The French term *bureau*, understood as *table*, took on the additional meaning of where officials worked. Bureaucracy represented a new group of rulers and a new method of government in contrast to monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy. The concept of bureaucracy began to refer to power over the

180 • SOCIAL AGGREGATIONS

population. By the nineteenth century, the theme of bureaucracy as a threat to democracy developed into ideas that democracy was the fundamental corrective to the routine, inflexibility, and power that came to characterize bureaucracy.

John Stuart Mill (1861) provided an interpretation of bureaucracy and democracy by comparing different types of governments and raising the question of the locus of decision making and power. Gaetano Mosca ([1895] 1939) continued the theme of bureaucracy acquiring power relative to other forms of governance, classifying all governments as either feudal or bureaucratic. Bureaucracy was not an element of society but represented society. Robert Michels ([1911] 1962) reversed the logic of nineteenth-century thought by arguing that democracy was inconceivable without bureaucracy. He also viewed bureaucracy as a particular example of a more all-embracing category of social organization, and he investigated the generic features of this modern structure (Albrow 1970:36). In addition, Michels ([1911] 1962) reasoned that if salaried officials were a necessary part of bureaucracy, oligopoly was the result, in his notion of the “iron law of oligarchy” or the tendency of organizational leadership to maintain itself. Yet a systemic treatment of the concept of bureaucracy was left to Max Weber.

Weber’s renowned work on bureaucracy is spread across his theoretical, comparative, and historical analyses but may be briefly sketched in the following themes. Similar to Michels, Weber built his analysis of bureaucracy on the generic concept of *verband*, a group whose task it was to maintain the organization, including a leader and staff and a distinctive set of rules. *Verband* was broader than bureaucracy and included such differing notions as the state, political parties, commercial enterprise, and the church. Bureaucracy simply meant an “administrative body of appointed officials” whose work and influence could be seen in all kinds of organizations (Albrow 1970:42).

Using bureaucracy as a generic administrative body, Weber developed the theme of the affinity between Western rationalization and the rationality of bureaucracy and its inevitable importance. Precision, continuity, discipline, and reliability made bureaucracy the most satisfactory form of organization, both for authority holders and for other interests (Weber 1958, 1968, 1981). Weber’s theoretical and empirical writings identify and develop key elements of government and profit-making organizations in Western society (Swedberg 2003). On the inherent tendency of bureaucracy to accumulate power, Weber advocated representative government as both a critical context and a training ground for leaders who could counterbalance the increasing power of bureaucracy.

Although his theory of organizations is much broader, Weber developed the ideal type of rational-legal bureaucracy as a methodological tool for his empirical work. Weber believed that rational bureaucracy was a major element in the rationalization of the modern world. Based on

his position that legitimacy was fundamental to all systems of authority, Weber set out 5 related beliefs of legal authority, devised 8 propositions about the structuring of rational-legal authority, and then formulated 10 characteristics of the ideal-type bureaucracy. These include observing only professional duties, a clear hierarchy of authority, specification of functions of the office, appointment on the basis of contract, personnel selection on the basis of examination, graded salary positions, official’s post as sole occupation, a career structure where promotion is based on seniority or merit, no appropriation of position or resources, and the organization being subject to unified control and discipline (Albrow 1970:44–45). This ideal type was then used to identify the degree of bureaucratization and its explanation in historical and comparative work.

Weber’s theory of domination is based on a special type of power, authority, and the belief of the ruler to have the right to rule and the ruled to have an obligation to obey. This nexus of beliefs in the legitimacy of the administrative apparatus becomes fundamental for more specific discussions of rational-legal bureaucracy and the issues of domination, depersonalization, and exploitation. For Weber, bureaucratic power was both the cause and the consequence of the rise of capitalism and democracy in the West. Bureaucracy was the outcome of economic, political, and cultural features of the West, necessary for the development of democracy, and a tool of power affecting the rationalization of society and domination of its people. This broad intellectual canvas provided a rich legacy for the study of organizations.

ORGANIZATIONAL SOCIOLOGY IN THE UNITED STATES

The sociology of organizations began in the 1940s with Robert Merton’s translation of a small portion of Weber’s work. Indicatively, Weber’s work that is typically cited in organizational sociology is “Bureaucracy” in Gerth and Mills’s (1946:196–244) *From Max Weber*, representing a small excerpt from Weber’s (1968:956–1002) *Economy and Society*. This pagination illustrates how Weber’s work on organizations was narrowly and selectively imported into the American academic scene. At that time, Merton was promoting the application of his “empirical functionalism” to “theories of the middle range” that circumscribed an emerging definition of organizations by focusing on elements of ideal-type bureaucratic structure as a self-perpetuating, legally recognized entity with goals and clearly defined and defended boundaries (Scott 2003).

However, this dating of the origin of organizational sociology overlooks sources of the key conceptions of organizations provided by Chester Barnard (1938), Philip Selznick (1943, 1948, 1949), and Herbert Simon (1957). Barnard’s work was the first comprehensive theory of an organization as a unit of analysis as a “cooperative system”

(Perrow 1986:53). He develops a behavioral theory of organizations that includes coordination and decision making, rather than the legalistically and formally based theories. Influenced by a biological system heuristic and the Human Relations School, Barnard's theory emphasizes the social aspects of organizations conceived as social systems seeking stability and equilibrium of its internal and external relationships. The organization was a cooperative system, with interdependent elements (workers/management, organization/environment) that must be consciously structured to address the maintenance needs of the organization and to obtain resources from the environment and use them in order to induce contributions from organizational members (Barnard 1938:73). Although in different forms, these themes are repeated in subsequent approaches to the sociology of organizations.

Selznick pioneered a structural functional theory of organizations, establishing the (old) institutional approach. Merging Weber's rational-legal elements of bureaucracy with Barnard's social elements of a cooperative system, Selznick stresses how formal structure never completely succeeds in conquering the social elements of organizational behavior. Therefore, Selznick emphasizes the importance of normative controls of values and norms that are both internalized by actors and enforced by others in social situations. Out of the dynamic interaction of human features and structural elements, Selznick developed a goal-oriented theory of adaptation for organizational survival. The adaptive interaction of human action and formal organizational structure is shown to produce unanticipated consequences, establishing the "exposé" tradition associated with the institutional school.

At about the same time, an important interdisciplinary development was under way at Carnegie Institute of Technology (Carnegie Mellon University), where Herbert Simon had gathered political scientists, economists, engineers, and psychologists to focus on a decision-making theory of administration. Simon combined rational aspects with social factors in his view of organizations as decision-making entities. He proposed a "boundedly rational" theory of decision making, based on the limitations and biases of individual decision making, in reaction to economic assumptions of rational maximizing models. People are intentionally rational but have structural and cognitive limits on their information. This leads to the notion that the search for alternative choices, rather than free, represents increasing costs, so that decision-makers settled for "satisfactory" rather than continuing to search for optimum solutions. Bounded rationality and satisfactory solutions lead to incremental decision making and the use of rules, standard operating procedures, routines, and habitual patterns of behavior (Pfeffer 1982:6-7). As in Barnard, organizational equilibrium represented a balance between the contributions of members and their organizational rewards. Later, the decision-making scholars recognized that organizational policies were the outcome of multiple and competing objectives of organizational participants and people who

controlled the organization represented a coalition of interests that affected the organizational structures and processes (Cyert and March 1963). Later approaches adopt this view that human problem-solving processes determine the basic features of organizational structures and functions.

By the 1960s, the master features of organizational sociology were becoming institutionalized through the publication of textbooks, handbooks, and a new journal, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, emphasizing the interdisciplinary character of the study of organizations. The new field of study underwent a conceptual transformation: The central features of organizational structural elements turned into dependent variables, rather than independent variables, whose variation became the focus of explanation (Scott 1975:2). Within this causal transformation, the field shifted back and forth between various approaches, with some emphasizing the causal import of a purposive organization involving goals, decision making, and strategies, while others emphasized a more passive organization shaped by its environment (Hall and Tolbert 2005).

DEVELOPING APPROACHES

Prior to 1980, several approaches emerged in the sociological study of organizations. They questioned the presumed tight linkage between actions and outcomes and instead postulated a looser relationship between the organization form, its members, and its environment. The approaches identify economic and social factors that disrupt tight interrelationships, causing problems of organizational performance. To manage these problems, each approach is distinguished by the adaptive mechanisms offered that change organizational structure, strategies, and practices that are designed to improve organizational performance. These approaches include strategic contingency, resource dependency, and neo-institutional and transaction cost analysis. The population ecology approach represents an exception to this pattern by assuming that individual organizations cannot change or change too slowly, so where problems of organization-environment interdependency occur, some organizations must fail.

The *strategic contingency* approach was popularized in the late 1960s and became prominent as a loose framework for synthesizing the principal notions of organizations as open systems with objectivist empirical research. The organization represents a configuration of strategies, structures, and processes, and the structural features that best fit the demands of environmental and internal contingencies are by definition the most efficient. Similar to economic models, the contingency approach emphasizes efficiency, but like sociology models, it contends that the structure of the organization depends on various environmental and strategy contingencies (Donaldson 1996). Environmental contingencies include firm size and the complexity, predictability, and interdependence of technological and market changes.

182 • SOCIAL AGGREGATIONS

Strategy and environmental factors are the contingencies affecting organizational structure, and efficiency is found in the fit or alignment of the environment and strategies with organizational structures. Strategies are considered part of the normative culture of the organization, with a presumption of an efficiency-seeking orientation among managers. The notion of fit between the organization and its environment resides somewhere in management perception, interpretation, and action. Managers are constantly surveying their environments, interpreting “strategic contingencies” that affect corporate performance (Child 1972). Having perceived such contingencies, they would, for example, create new programs or specialized departments or adjust administrative rules or structures to adapt to these contingencies.

The contingency approach moved the sociology of organizations away from notions of a tight relation between the organization and the environment and that there was one best way to organize toward the notion that the better way to organize depended on the particular environmental contingencies confronting the organization. However, critics question the tautological character of organization-environmental fit and the capacity of managers to perceive and change organizational structure (Pfeffer and Salancik 1978). Also unspecified are the internal dynamics that affect managerial strategies and the notion that the perception of environment contingencies may be social and political constructions rather than objective facts (Pfeffer 1982).

The *resource dependence* approach emerged in the late 1970s, in part as a reaction to the structural contingency approach. The environment was now the “task environment,” including customers, suppliers, competitors, creditors, and regulators (Dill 1958), with increasing emphasis on the structures and processes of organizational operations sensitive to resource flows, such as information, raw materials, markets, and credit. Resource requirements forced exchanges with other organizations, not for efficiency but for survival, and the scarcity and importance of a resource supplied by another organization determined the degree of power/dependence between the two organizations. These resource requirements entangle the organization in patterns of power-dependence relationships. Similar to the contingency approach, the emphasis on economic or technological resources implicitly orients the framework toward private firms.

Managers are responsible for gaining favorable exchanges and avoiding debilitating dependencies. They seek discretion to maintain their own power and to permit subsequent adaptations to new environmental dependencies. The distribution of power within the organization is seen as an outcome of environmental dependencies. Thus, decision making is a function of the internal power structure, which interprets and defines the most critical dependencies and the choices of strategies to address them. The actors’ position in the internal power structure depends on their ability to control and solve dependencies (Pfeffer and

Salancik 1978) through their positions within the firm, their specialized knowledge, or their links to the outside world (Fligstein 1987). Management mediates the relationship between the environment and the organization by adapting the organizational structure, negotiating favorable terms of exchange, and using a range of strategies from stockpiling supplies to joint ventures and mergers. Organizations are seen as loosely connected to the environment, so managers are capable of “enacting the environment” by defining environmental dependencies and the practical options to address them. The sheer capacity to enact an environment implies that the resource dependency model is most appropriate for large, powerful, and dominating organizations.

The resource dependency model focuses greater attention on internal organizational decision making and the efforts of managers to strategically adapt to the environment. However, the larger pattern of asymmetrical relations in which the focal organization is enmeshed is left largely unexplored.

The *neo-institutional* approach began with the work of Meyer and Rowan (1977). Building on the earlier institutional school of Selznick, this approach represents a reaction to economic contingency and resource dependency models that postulate that organizational structure is the result of technical and economic contingencies in the environment. Instead, this approach presumes that many sectors and even parts of organizations are free of these technical and economic constraints and that organizational structure is more the result of efforts to fulfill normative expectations in the environment. The emphasis is on how organizational decision making is shaped, mediated, and channeled by normative institutional arrangements (DiMaggio 1991), where these arrangements take the form of routines, operating procedures, and standard ways of perceiving the environment and agreed-on value priorities. Broadly shared patterns of beliefs and habitual practices mitigate problems of uncertainty, leading to emphasis on the role of ideas and belief systems in supporting and structuring organizations. Thus, organizations involve established procedures and rule-bound and standardized behaviors, and researchers attend to the process of infusing such procedures and behaviors into the organization as regularized and stable features (Jepperson 1991).

Isomorphic mechanisms infuse the organizations’ structures with normative expectations of reference group organizations or the generalized expectations of the environment. Organizational structures become similar as organizations interact and formal or informal rules emerge to govern these interactions. Once institutionalized, or taken for granted, these rules exert powerful normative effects on subsequent organizational interactions, and changes in organizational structure result more from issues of legitimacy than from rational adaptation or efficiency. DiMaggio and Powell (1983) contend that the primary institutionalizing mechanism is imitation, which also works through coercive and regulatory mechanisms of the

state and professions that disseminate and elaborate sets of beliefs and rules about appropriate organizational structure and practices. Their point is that modern organizations cannot be adequately understood in terms of efficiency and adaptations to technical and economic contingencies because of the often contradictory demands of maintaining organizational effectiveness and legitimacy. One solution to this dilemma is for organizations to “decouple” their formal structure from their everyday operations. They adopt formal structures that are legitimate, while informal everyday activities pursue effective operations, independent of the formal structure.

The institutional approach is more applicable to public sector organizations because of its greater sensitivity to issues of normative expectations and legitimacy. The approach is criticized as tautological in the sense that outcome is the evidence for the cause and there is a lack of specification of what practices, procedures, and behaviors are institutionalized and which ones are freer to vary (Hall and Tolbert 2005). Also, the emphasis on normative features deflects attention from issues of interests, power, and conflict (Perrow 1986) and the technical and economic challenges to the organization.

The *population ecology* (or *natural selection*) approach began with the works of Hannan and Freeman (1977) and Aldrich and Pfeffer (1976) and presumes a tight relationship between the organizational form and the environment by stressing the impact of the environment on organizational survival. In contrast with approaches that explain organizational change through adaptation of individual organizations, population ecology scholars emphasize selection processes such as competition embedded in the environmental or ecological conditions of a population of organizations. This approach operates at the level of groups or populations of organizations that carry out similar activities, compete with each other, and are dependent on similar resources within the same ecological niche. They examine the birth or death rates of types or forms of organizations to identify the survival rates of a particular form. Organizational form changes not as a result of adaptation of existing organizations but through the replacement of one form of organization with another (Hannan and Carroll 1995:23). There is no commonly accepted definition of organizational form, but rather, it represents a “heuristic” generally based on the interests of the researcher (Romanelli 1991:81–84).

The research objective is to explain the variation in form, the longevity of that form, and its birth rates and death rates (Hannan and Carroll 1995). Three evolutionary processes are viewed as the mechanisms linking the environment with the survival of the organizational form or activity. Variation in forms and activities of organizations may occur in a “planned or unplanned” manner. Some organizational forms or activities are selected over alternatives as a result of better fit in a given environment or “niche” (Aldrich and Pfeffer 1976). Researchers explain this selection based on characteristics of the niche

representing a distinct combination of resources and density of organizations as a kind of organizational ecology. Narrow niches have been shown to support specialized forms of organizations, while broader niches support a more generalized form of organizations. Finally, the selected forms or activities are retained through some type of reproduction process, and reproduced forms generate variations that begin a new cycle of selection and retention.

The emphasis on ecological niche adds to the present knowledge of specific industries, and their longer time frame of analysis provides a historical perspective absent in other approaches (Hall and Tolbert 2005). However, the source of the initial variation or mutation is not specified. The notion of “fit” between organizational forms and environment resources is left unspecified, representing a tautology similar to that of the contingency approach. The logic of this approach suggests that large, powerful public and private organizations and government sponsorship of certain environments neutralize the selection process by enacting their environments, thus limiting the applicability of the approach. Finally, focusing on the selection effects of competing organizations directs attention away from more symbiotic and cooperative interorganizational arrangements (Scott 2003).

The *transaction cost* approach is the economic approach best known to sociologists and has become an important foil for their arguments. Oliver Williamson (1975, 1981) has promoted an approach focused on the creation and changes in governance structure to explain organizational efficiencies. Organizational governance structures are arrangements for establishing and safeguarding economic exchanges of the firm. The approach postulates two broad governance structures of economic exchanges: markets and organizations. Markets represent immediate exchanges, but when exchanges involve future transactions, the market becomes less useful for securing satisfactory exchanges. Organizations appear as an alternative to markets as a governance structure for exchanges, and the structure of the organization varies by the types of exchanges to be governed.

This approach attends to the efficiency of autonomous firms and the cost of exchanges of goods and services within the organization and between the organization and the market. It assumes that actors are boundedly rational, based on the limits of information, and opportunistic in that they will lie, cheat, and steal. The issue is that not all eventualities can be anticipated in contracts and that actors may deceive. One solution is to bring transactions inside the organization to control opportunism through authority relations. Then, firms respond to issues of bounded rationality by subdividing operational problems, making simpler decision guidelines, channeling information, and creating standard operating procedures. Bounded rationality and opportunism present transaction cost problems for the firm when contracting outside the organization, where tasks are difficult to specify and monitor. Transaction costs include searching for information on quantity, quality,

184 • SOCIAL AGGREGATIONS

and price; negotiating and monitoring agreements; and providing incentives for cooperation and resolving disputes. Organizations may respond by writing contingent contracts and creating auditing and controlling systems to safeguard the efficiency of exchanges. Opportunism is aggravated when firms have few exchange partners representing transaction disadvantages such as monopoly prices. The emphasis on transaction costs shifts analysis toward the governance structures as the organizational form created and adjusted to search, create, and monitor exchanges. Thus, the form of the organization is a function of the transaction costs to which it needs to adapt.

Transaction cost scholars' attention to "small numbers bargaining" provides a notion of the greater leverage of large, powerful firms in their interorganizational relations. Also, since the theory can be applied to both interfirm and intrafirm exchanges, it provides a fertile link between the nature of markets and intra-organizational relations (Swedberg 2003). However, the fact that an organizational form (governance structure) reduces transaction costs does not explain its creation. All organizations that exist are not, by this fact, efficient. In addition, the arguments about efficiency ignore power and goal ambiguity, and therefore the analysis of decision making is simplistic. Finally, the approach neglects the extent to which search, creation, and monitoring of economic behaviors are embedded in social relations (Granovetter 1985).

CHANGING CONTEXT FOR ORGANIZATIONAL SOCIOLOGY

Since the 1980s, organizational sociologists have recognized the theoretical importance and practical effectiveness of groups of organizations, leading to the development of new approaches. Recognition was sparked by the worldwide competitive successes of East Asian firms that rely on network forms of organization (Hamilton and Biggart 1988) and the limits of economic theory in restructuring the economies of the former Soviet republics (Stark 1996). Also, changes in technology, labor markets, and laws governing rules of competition and cooperation in the United States contributed to a rethinking of organizational processes (DiMaggio 2003). The global movement and management of money also led to conceptual questions about coordinated activities among groups of organizations (Davis and McAdam 2000). Furthermore, sociologists began to use economic theories as a foil for their arguments because of the overwhelming dominance of economists in discussions of corporate and industrial policy and their theoretical vulnerability from simplistic assumptions about organizations (Biggart 2002).

Sociologists used the concept of a network of organizations as a way of analyzing the cooperative interconnections among groups of firms. This shift in attention to interactions among organizations in level of analysis from the single firm to a collection or network of firms

represents a substantial theoretical shift. Furthermore, the recognition of how collective meaning among network firms makes a difference provided a new sense of organizational culture and took the form of attention to "organizational fields." In addition, the success of East Asian economies and a careful historical analysis of Western development led to new questions of how the state shaped organizational environments. These responses reconnect the organizational sociology literature with a Weberian framework for studying organizations by moving from the internal and external interactions of autonomous organizations to how groups of organizations fit within the social organization of society.

Network approaches represent a synthesis of strategic contingency recognition of the complexity and uncertainty of the environment with a resource dependency framework of relations among suppliers, customers, competitors, and regulators. Some network approaches move to groups of organizations as the unit of analysis and reorient the framework to confront economic theories of efficiency. These approaches deal with the types and patterns of relationships and the causes and consequences of those types and patterns. Networks represent "any collection of organizations that pursue repeated, enduring exchange relations with one another and lack a legitimate interorganizational authority to arbitrate and resolve disputes that may arise during the exchange" (Podolny and Page 1998:58–59).

The causes of network formation are technical and environmental complexity, speed of market change, bounded rationality of decision making, need for efficient and reliable information, and defense against a hostile environment. Networks foster access to resources (Powell and Smith-Doerr 1994), mutual interests and defense (Gerlach 1992), legitimacy or public approval (Galaskiewicz 1985), and better and quicker response to external demands (Uzzi 1996). The interdependence of products, services, and flexible resources and the specialization of member firms provide the conditions and adjustment mechanisms for networks of organizations. Additional factors facilitating the formation of networks include geographical proximity of customers and suppliers (Saxenian 1996) and products whose value is not easily measured and whose members have an orientation to innovation (Powell 1990). Network analyses on groups of private firms tend to look at outcomes of efficiency and product quality, while analyses in the nonprofit sector typically look at outcomes of status, legitimacy, integration, and coordination.

At the level of networks, structural patterns include the centrality and structural equivalence of firms in the network (Nohria and Eccles 1992). The interactions among the organizations in a group representing the pattern and form of the network are adaptive mechanisms of networks. However, there is less agreement on the nature or type of relations that constitutes the network that represents these adjustments. Some authors emphasize the normative context and affective elements of network relationships, including reputation, identity, trust, loyalty, mutuality of

orientation, friendship, and altruism. Others focus on the behavioral issues. For example, networks of organizations represent multiple owners that manage a specific subset of resources, leading to increasing decision-making participation, greater specialized niche seeking, customized production, forms of “relational contacting” (Dore 1984), and organizational learning (Saxenian 1996). Boundaries between the organization and the network are often vague, and familial traditions and societal obligations provide social norms that substitute for formal controls. Identities, norms, and actions define an informal boundary between organizations in the network.

Network analysis points to areas of the network that may be buffered from dependencies on other organizations, density of relations in different parts of the network, and stratification of the organizations within the network. Yet criticisms include the lack of clear specification of the social mechanisms of adjustment to changing contingencies of the network. There is also neglect of the role of interests that would provide a mechanism of change (DiMaggio 1988), and it is not clear whether managers’ perceptions and intervention or emergent properties of network relations affect network configurations. Finally, there is a bias toward viewing networks as positive, and the constraints and dysfunctions of network membership are underexamined.

The *field* approach developed, in part, in reaction to the network approach’s exclusive focus on the interactions of firms and its relative neglect of the roles of normative beliefs, politics, and the strategies of member organizations. This approach attempts to synthesize organizational goals and strategies with the articulation of the environment. DiMaggio and Powell (1983) define the field as “those organizations that, in the aggregate, constitute a recognized area of institutional life: key suppliers, resource and product consumers, regulatory agencies, and other organizations that produce similar services and products” (p. 148). Invoking Weberian concerns for rationalization and the bureaucratization of organizational behavior, these authors contend that firms within a field are defined through their objective practices and the perceptions of managers as to the reference group for their firm. Different authors posit isomorphic mechanisms of imitation, coercion, and regulation or conflict and struggle as the adaptive mechanisms of organizations within the field.

The field is formed as the interdependence among organizations, competition for resources, and monitoring of the behavior of other organizations become increasingly intense, elaborating a strategic vision and tactical maneuvering on the part of managers to the point where the practices of the organization take on the characteristics of a game with goals, rules, and players. The very ground is in motion, and the goal of each organization is to stabilize its relationships and institutionalize its existence (Emery and Trist 1965; Warren 1967). This field dynamic represents a melding of the destiny of the organization with that of the field members, in which the organization’s goals

cannot be defined independently of the fate of the field (Martin 2003).

DiMaggio and Powell (1983:148) contend that the field develops its structural elaboration through the emergence of interorganizational relations of domination and coalitions among groups of organizations that are involved in mutual enterprise. The patterning of the field is the result of both direct and indirect relationships. Even hostile firms that do not share direct linkages may be drawn closer together because they share suppliers, distributors, competitors, and regulators. In addition, DiMaggio and Powell provide agents of alignment among groups of organizations by identifying the state and professions as the social mechanisms facilitating the homogenization of forms, practices, and perceptions of the organizational field.

Fligstein (1996, 2001) further develops the notion of field by emphasizing conflict and struggle among firms as the adaptive mechanisms of the field and elaborates its political and cultural components. He highlights the organizations’ motivation to produce a system of domination and the elimination of competition. This system of domination and competition is supported by a local culture rendering a cognitive map of the role position of the organization in the field. The cognitive maps define social relationships and help managers interpret the organization’s location in the field and status expectations in a set of social relationships; and these interpretations are reached through political processes. The field is stratified between dominant firms, which benefit the most from current arrangements, and subordinate firms, which benefit less. Dominant firms seek a set of collective understandings that allow for accommodation in the field and legitimation of those understandings by the state. Once in place, the interaction in the field becomes “games,” where dominant firms use the accepted institutional rules to reproduce their power.

The field approach provides a corrective to the normative and structural deterministic notion of the organizational environment by linking the analysis to the struggles that produce those structures and cultures (Swartz 1997:119). However, some contend that the field itself is not directly measurable and its existence can be proved only by its effects (Martin 2003:8–9). Furthermore, some suggest that seeing life as antagonistic games ignores the myriad interactions that are not strategic but altruistic, civil, and “downright pleasant” (Martin 2003:33) and may limit application of this approach to certain competitive sectors. Also, the transformation of the field relations and adaptation mechanisms of the field are underdeveloped.

The *organization and state* approach is reminiscent of Weber’s work because it highlights the distinctive power of large corporations in the context of the development of capitalism and the state. This approach raises both historical and functional questions, including how large industrial organizations emerged in Western countries (Dobbin

1994; Perrow 2002) and how private corporations, markets, and industries produce stable arrangements for economic exchanges (Colignon and Usui 2003). Scholars examine how states shape the environment of organizations, affecting their emergence and decline, form, and effectiveness, and how large organizations, in turn, affect the patterns of interactions and the subsequent policy directions of the state. Some work includes organizational goals, strategies, choices by managers, and how they are linked to alliances and antagonisms involving state and societal interests (Colignon 1997).

The organization-state approach takes up key elements of Weber's work by linking powerful organizations to the interactions of markets and the state, material and ideal interests, and how large organizations dominate state policy patterns. Historical studies focus on the emergence of large, dominating organizations that reflect and define the corporate and government policy directions of their countries. Researchers identify critical historical moments and potential policy alternatives that not only define practical policy possibilities involving the passage of laws, wars, and legislation but may also involve the less formal interventions of state actors. Some studies identify those actors promoting and resisting different alternatives, their capacities, alliances, and good fortune (Colignon 1997; Roy 1998).

Another strand of the organization-state approach asserts that states and societal actors negotiate property rights, governance structures, and rules of exchange that function to define the market environment for organizational operations. Property rights are rules defining ownership and control over the means of production, such as partnership forms, patents, and credentials. Governance structures are rules and regulations defining relations of competition and cooperation among firms and how firms should be organized, such as corporate hierarchies and industrial associations (Campbell and Lindberg 1990). Fligstein (2001:34–35) adds rules of exchange that define who can transact with whom and the conditions under which transactions are carried out, such as setting standards of weights, enforcement of contracts, and setting health and safety standards. These features direct attention to an interface between government agencies and the economy contested by organizations, industrial associations, government, labor, and consumers that varies across sectors, country, and time providing a framework for comparative analysis of the political struggles among institutions, organizations, and interests and the historical conflicts.

Although this approach resonates within developed countries, it is not clear how it fits with developing countries, where legal and administrative instruments are not as well developed. Furthermore, there is an underdevelopment of the specific mechanisms of change and the importance of changing state structures to the deinstitutionalization of old organizational forms and the institutionalization of new forms (Guillen 2003).

CONCLUSION: THE FRACTURING OF ORGANIZATIONAL SOCIOLOGY IN THE 21ST CENTURY?

The information explosion at the end of the twentieth century generated new organizational forms that are flatter, networked, nimble, and global (Castells 1996). These new organizations created enormous wealth, while mergers, acquisitions, restructuring, and bankruptcies have transformed the nature of decision making and employment. At the same time, government organizations played important roles in the development of these new organizational forms and the deinstitutionalization of older forms of organization. The passage of laws, allocation of resources, changing regulatory frameworks, and provision of failure protection (bankruptcy protection and assuming medical and pension obligation) changed organizational environments and advanced the interests of some organizations. While these changes are taking place in industrialized countries, the gap between technologically rich and poor countries has widened with little attention. In the face of these changes, what does organizational sociology have to offer for the twenty-first century?

This chapter sketched different approaches to the sociology of organizations implying a few theoretical and empirical programs for the twenty-first century. Theoretically, there is the need to examine the broad landscape of organizational theory as well as to attend to the more rigorous and nuanced application of the different approaches. Some approaches are more applicable to public or private organizations by emphasizing normative expectations or, alternatively, the technical and market contingencies of the environment. The performance of some organizations is determined by normative attitudes and expectations, while for others it is the result of technology and markets. Furthermore, some approaches are more applicable to large, dominant, monopolistic organizations, whereas other approaches are better suited to smaller, weaker, competitive, or "trivial" organizations (Perrow 1986). Some approaches view organizations and environments as so tightly linked that failure is imminent, while other approaches assume the linkage is so loose as to remove organizational failure as an outcome. Both distinctions, public versus private and dominant versus trivial, suggest a decoupling of the study of different types of organizations from the pursuit of a general theory of organizations. Ironically, both distinctions are evident in Weber's historical and comparative work (Swedberg 2003).

All too often organizational theory is overdrawn and analytic subtlety is lost. There is a tendency to present differences between approaches in oppositional terms, such as legitimacy versus markets or dominant versus subordinate organizations, but these differences are more complex. For example, public and private firms face constraints of both markets and legitimacy. Multiple approaches may be relevant in explaining markets for the funding of public organizations and issues of legitimacy for the forms and

practices of private organizations. Similarly, the mechanisms of adjustment for dominant and subordinate organizations may be not only qualitatively different but also a matter of degree. Small organizations may gain flexibility in ways similar to large organizations but are restricted to their local environments. The theoretical effort should be to unravel the ways in which the contingencies of markets and legitimacy are intertwined for both public and private and dominant and subordinate organizations.

The defining features of organizational sociology may limit the capacity of sociologists to address issues of organization in the twenty-first century. The master features of organizational sociology that were institutionalized after the 1960s may hobble the abilities of sociologists engaged in explaining social developments surrounding new organizational forms and environments in the twenty-first century. As organizational sociologists institutionalized these defining features, they reduced their analyses to the impact of the environment on the organization and failed to locate the organization in the broader role structure of industry and society. Empirical examination of distinct types of organizations, public and private, dominant and subordinate, fell within the drive for a universal theory that would fit all organizations.

The approaches of organizational networks, fields, and state-organization relations circumvent this problem by substituting a view of organizations as a relational process inseparable from their interactional context (Weick 1995), rather than *sui generis* structures, and moving up levels of analysis to incorporate the location of the organization in its group, industry, or society. This allows them to incorporate issues of interests and power and examine the consequences of organizational actions. These approaches combine normative and instrumental elements reminiscent of Weber's work. Their general applicability and flexibility regarding goals, environments, interdependencies, and mechanisms of change provide the possibility for a more unified theoretical development. Yet even these new approaches suggest that variation in industry and societal location may create and enforce substantially varied environments that require comparative analyses.

All the approaches reviewed in this chapter may benefit from comparative analysis across social situations and between different theories. Many of these theories have developed in specific sectors or national contexts. For example, the concept of "opportunism" is central to both transaction costs analysis and resource dependency, but its meaning varies by social situation, which has rarely been addressed. In addition, empirical work tends to concentrate on variables identified with a particular theoretical approach. Research does not so much test the applicability

of different approaches as illustrate the application of a particular approach. Consequently, it is difficult to assess the viability of pursuing a general theory for the sociology of organizations. For example, neo-institutional and ecological approaches, which minimize interests and strategy, would be well served by comparative hypothesis testing across sectors with variables from other approaches, including decision making, transaction costs, structural contingency, and resource dependency, which share the key assumption that strategic adaptation matters in organizational performance.

The examination of the relationship between people and organizations is another area of neglect that followed from the institutionalization of organizational sociology in the 1960s. Empirical work on decision making and employment experience was neglected as the approaches to organizational sociology increasingly focused on the correspondence between organizational structures, strategies, and the environment. Favored approaches in organizational sociology pay minimal attention to the changing internal dynamics, such as agency, voice, power, and resistance practices. These approaches describe relations between environmental changes and organizational forms by relying on near-tautological explanations instead of examining the social mechanisms of human interaction that mediate the effects of the environmental changes and changing forms of organization. The neo-institutional perspective would benefit from a deeper and more fine-grained analysis of decision making and work activities to specify the processes of institutionalization and the conditions under which institutionalization takes place (Tolbert and Zucker 1996).

The future of organizational sociology depends on practical application of key assumptions and more rigorous comparative and longitudinal examinations of key concepts and relationships to better address the organizational forms and environments of the twenty-first century. Otherwise, it stands to relinquish its academic birthright to scholars from disciplines that are less encumbered by these assumptions. For at least 30 years, organizational sociologists (trained in sociology departments) have been taking positions in business schools to provide them with analytic rigor in the study of organizations. This has created a situation where scholars with an institutional location outside of sociology contribute considerably to the development of the sociology of organizations. A review of the top organizational books over the last several decades and a casual examination of the editorial boards of journals and handbooks of organizational studies reveal the extent of the interdisciplinary nature of the field of organizational sociology.

18

INDUSTRIAL SOCIOLOGY

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Trying to define and then describe industrial sociology is a challenge because there is no general agreement among sociologists about the definition of industrial sociology or even the content of the subdiscipline (Miller 1984). This disagreement has produced alternative labels for the subdiscipline from “sociology of work” to “work and occupations” to “organizational sociology.” Furthermore, there is no sense of identity among social scientists conducting industrial sociology investigations. While important industrial sociological research is being conducted, it is spread among many different disciplines, including sociology, economics, and business. Here, industrial sociology will be defined as the study of work and work organizations, careers and adjustments by workers, and the relations of workers and work organizations to the community and society (Miller 1984; Stover, Lichty, and Stover 1999).

THE HISTORY

Investigations of topics that would eventually be labeled industrial sociology began in the early part of the twentieth century. In-depth studies of occupations such as prostitutes, teachers, salespeople, physicians, waitresses, and ministers were conducted in the 1920s at the University of Chicago (Taylor 1968). However, the subdiscipline of industrial sociology is generally considered to have begun with the famous Western Electric research program conducted at the Hawthorne Works in Chicago (Whyte 1968). These studies, conducted during much of the Great Depression, were designed to understand the factors

involved in worker productivity (Simpson 1989). When the studies ended, the researchers claimed to have determined that the social environment—the work group of the worker and the way workers were treated by management—had a powerful effect on worker performance (Roethlisberger and Dickson 1939). Although disagreement now exists about whether their results actually support their claims (Carey 1967; Franke and Kaul 1978; Jones 1992), there is little doubt that their conclusions captured the imagination of social scientists interested in worker productivity and culminated in substantial research projects dealing with work, workers, and the workplace.

That research activity eventually became known as industrial sociology and represented, for a time, one of the most vibrant sociology subdisciplines (Miller 1984). (For examples of the research being conducted during this time, see Chinoy 1955; Walker 1950; Walker and Guest 1952; Walker, Guest, and Turner 1956.) Guest provides an example of the importance of this research when he describes the results of one of his projects. In 1948, he and his team launched a two-phase project on a community whose U.S. Steel plant was to be shut down. The first phase was to be a study of the plant and the community before the shutdown and the second was to be a study of the community after the shutdown. After the first phase was completed, the results were published in the book *Steeltown*. A year later, he contacted the head of public relations for U.S. Steel and asked why the mill had not yet closed. The director was surprised that Guest had not heard what had happened. Apparently, the head of engineering for U.S. Steel had read the report, realized the importance of the skill in the mill’s workforce, and convinced top

management to upgrade the mill to keep it in operation. The director concluded by saying, "You won't have a ghost town to study, but I'm sure that if you went back for a visit the Chamber of Commerce would parade you down Main Street as heroes. Everyone knows the story" (Guest 1987:8).

THE SPLINTERING

During the 1960s, industrial sociology began to splinter. As sociologists recognized the potential value of the information available from a study of the workplace, they carved out specialty areas of study. Some began to study industrial organizations instead of the workers within those organizations; others focused on nonindustrial organizations (e.g., government, education, and welfare organizations); still others focused on the characteristics of the labor force (e.g., the unequal distribution of wages among various occupations). At the same time, others chose to leave sociology and to affiliate with business schools. Miller (1984) argues that industrial sociology research began to spread outside of sociology when business schools abandoned their "trade school" image in the late 1950s and created new sociology-based courses with labels such as Business and Society, Personnel and Organizational Behavior, Management and Labor Relations, and Dynamics of the Labor Force. Through the appointment of sociologists to academic positions in business schools, sociological expertise was transferred to other disciplines (Miller 1984). This splintering is at least partially responsible for the current status of industrial sociology as a very important but underappreciated subdiscipline within sociology.

MILESTONE INVESTIGATIONS

Social scientists have investigated and described numerous exceptionally important industrial sociology topics. Among the more important are those pertaining to changes in society due to industrialization and to changes in the design and operation of industrial organizations.

Societal Changes

Convergence versus Divergence

Perhaps the most important of the topics that industrial sociologists have investigated pertain to the consequences of the industrial process. What happens to a society as it industrializes? Two opposing theories have been described. The *divergence theory of industrialization* suggests that although the industrialization process changes the production system of a society, the culture of a society is so strong and durable that the industrialization process has minimal, if any, effect on it. In contrast, the *convergence theory of*

industrialization argues that the industrialization process is so strong it substantially transforms any society that is industrializing. Substantial research supports the convergence theory (Form 1976; Form and Rae 1988; Inkeles 1960; Inkeles and Rossi 1961). For a time, it appeared that Japanese workers might be exceptional and provide support for the divergence theory. However, formal investigations support the conclusion that Japan is not an exceptional case (Cole 1971; Marsh 1984; Marsh and Mannari 1976; Naoi and Schooler 1985).

Deindustrialization of America and the Development of a Service Economy

The concept *deindustrialization* means the loss of industrial capacity and, implicitly, the loss of goods-producing jobs. The phrase *deindustrialization of America* refers to both the loss of industrial capacity and to the economic and social consequences of that loss for the United States. The development of the service economy is the counterpart to that trend. Service-producing jobs have arisen to take the place of goods-producing jobs.

The change started in the 1960s when the United States lost the virtual monopoly it had maintained on many markets since World War II; in fact, the United States was forced out of several markets (Bluestone and Harrison 1982; Harrison and Bluestone 1988). Corporations responded in several ways. As Harrison and Bluestone (1988) state, "They abandoned core businesses, invested offshore, shifted capital into overtly speculative ventures, subcontracted work to low-wage contractors here and abroad, demanded wage concessions from their employees, and substituted part-time and other forms of contingent labor for full-time workers" (p. xxvii). Bluestone and Harrison (1982) suggest that somewhere between 32 and 38 million jobs were lost during the 1970s alone as the direct result of private disinvestment in American businesses (p. 9).

The consequences of this deindustrialization are substantial. First, the ability of a country to continue to develop economically depends on having a strong and growing manufacturing base. Many industries (e.g., trucking and railroads) are highly dependent on goods production because they move parts to the assembly plants and then move the finished products to the distributors.

Second, the nature and character of the jobs available to workers change. The United States has developed a service economy. The combination of the loss of a substantial number of goods-producing jobs with the creation of a huge service sector has produced a substantial shift in the nature of the jobs available in the U.S. economy. Good jobs with good pay, good fringe benefits, job security, and guaranteed civil rights are being destroyed or moved overseas and are being replaced by bad jobs with poor pay, few fringe benefits, no job security, and little protection of civil rights.

In 1970, the proportion of workers in the goods-producing sector of the economy was about 44 percent; by

190 • SOCIAL AGGREGATIONS

2003, it had dropped to about 27 percent. While the number of jobs in the goods-producing sector increased slightly from about 35 million in 1970 to 37 million in 2003, the number of service-producing jobs increased from about 44 million to slightly more than 100 million (*Statistical Abstract of the United States* 1997, table 649; 2004–2005, table 601).

The change in the characteristics of the available jobs is also clearly evident. Thurow (1987) demonstrates that in the 1963 through 1973 time frame, almost half of newly created jobs were well-paying jobs, whereas only about 20 percent were poor-paying jobs. Yet only six years later, the proportions had reversed; over 40 percent were poor-paying jobs, whereas only 10 percent were well-paying jobs (Thurow 1987). Average hourly and average weekly earnings peaked in the early 1970s; both have declined substantially since then (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2005a, table B-16; *Economic Report of the President* 1994:320).

The Decline of U.S. Private Sector Unionization

The 1930s and early 1940s were periods of solid growth for organized labor in the United States. The three decades following World War II were years of relative stability for unions. However, since the mid-1970s, private sector unionization has experienced a precipitous decline (Clawson and Clawson 1999). Whereas at its peak in the 1950s, almost one in three eligible workers were union members, today the number is slightly more than 12 percent and still declining (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2005b). Nationwide, total membership is down from the historic high of about 21 million in 1979 to about 16 million today (Chang and Sorrentino 1991:48; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2005b, table 1).

Two contradictory trends complicate the discussion of the decline of membership in the American labor union movement. One trend applies to private sector union membership and the second pertains to public sector union membership (essentially, governmental employment). While the unionization rate for private workers has dropped from almost 40 percent in 1960 to about 8 percent in 2005, the unionization rate for public employees shows the exact opposite trend; it has risen from about 10 percent in 1960 to close to 36 percent in 2005 (Stover, Lichty, and Stover 1999:238; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2005b:1).

The reasons given for the decline include the abandonment by management of the tacit agreement it had with unions to maintain the standard of living of current union members in exchange for the abandonment of (or at the least a diminution of) aggressive union-organizing activities, the actual attempts by management to hamper union activities among the workers in an organization, the shift by many companies of their operations to nonunion geographic areas such as the South and West, the failure of unions to successfully organize work in nonunion areas such as the South and West, the failure of unions to successfully organize traditionally nonunion work such

as women-dominated occupations and service work (Kimeldorf and Stephan-Norris 1992), the choice of increasing numbers of workers to eschew unions (Farber and Krueger 1993), and changes in the legal climate making it more difficult to be protected from retaliation for union activities (Freeman and Medoff 1984; Geoghegan 1991; Weiler 1993). Structural changes in the economy—(a) the development of a service economy, (b) the shift within the manufacturing part of the economy from “traditional” to “high-tech,” and (c) the increasing importance of the export component part of the economy—have also been noted as reasons for the decline in private sector unionization (Troy 1990).

Trends in Unionization Outside the United States

But what about unions in other industrialized countries? The discussion is complicated because countries vary in their approach to organized labor. For some countries, generalizations are difficult because little is known about their policy toward organized labor. For example, the status of unions in the former Eastern Bloc nations—the former United Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and its East European allies—is hard to describe because those unions have been free of political control for such a short period of time that it is unclear how they will be treated. For other countries, commenting on the status of unions is a useless endeavor because organized labor has little or no legal standing. Unions in some developing countries (such as the Philippines) are either outlawed or have had their activities severely curtailed by the laws of the country (McGinnis 1979). Unionization in Japan deserves special consideration because of its variety. Many unions are company unions and are controlled to a great extent by company management (Berggren 1992; Ginsbourger 1981). Others are either industrywide unions or members of nationwide coalitions that are sometimes able to achieve worker demands (Kerbo 2006). Finally, German unions must be distinguished from unions in other industrialized countries because of their special relationship to management. Germany’s labor-management relationship is qualitatively different from that of other industrial countries because of its *Mitbestimmung* labor-management system—a legally mandated formal arrangement between workers and management requiring cooperation between workers and management. (For details, see the section below titled “Germany’s *Mitbestimmung* Labor Policy” and also Kerbo 2006:538–543.)

Accepting these caveats, several overall trends in unionization rates among various countries since World War II can be described (Chang and Sorrentino 1991; Kassarow 1984; Stover, Lichty, and Stover 1999:255). First, the proportion of the labor force unionized in most of these countries has remained remarkably stable over the last two to three decades. There have been fluctuations—some minor declines and some minor increases—but overall there is a great deal of stability. Second, France and the

Netherlands, like the United States, have experienced substantial declines in unionization rates since World War II. Third, two countries—Sweden and Denmark—have experienced substantial increases. In both the countries, virtually the entire labor force is unionized.

Four differences have been noted concerning differences in the approach taken by Western European nations to organized labor and that taken by the United States (Kassalow 1984; Thurow 1992). First, there seems to be a much greater acceptance of unionization as a societal institution in European countries. While unions in the United States are the subject of considerable ambivalence, if not outright hostility, unionization in Europe is accepted as a matter of course. Second, while the United States is experiencing growth in industries that were previously heavily unionized, much of that growth is not covered by union contracts. That type of growth of nonunion employment in an industry covered by union contracts typically would not occur in Europe; the workers in a new mill or new mine would be covered automatically under the terms of a previously existing, industrywide contract.

Third, management responses to the adverse economic conditions of the 1970s and 1980s were radically different. Members of many unions in the United States had to accept severe declines in their quality of life either through pay cuts or fringe-benefit givebacks. Other unions faced attacks on their existence as companies developed tactics to convince workers to decertify their unions. Such attacks tend not to be the case in Europe. Although some union members in Europe have had to accept concessions, these concessions generally do not threaten the standard of living of the workers, and they do not represent an assault on the existence of the unions. Fourth, while workers in both high-tech and service industries—both high-growth areas in mature industrial societies—will be covered by existing contracts in Europe, they will not be covered by such contracts in the United States.

Organizational Changes

Challenges to Frederick Taylor's Scientific Management

With his success in popularizing his scientific management theory in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Frederick Taylor (1911) saw many of his ideas about how to run organizations eventually dominate management practices (Braverman 1974; Hill 1981; Kanter 1977). As Hill (1981) notes, "Taylorism . . . established the basic philosophy of work organization which has dominated the administration of work through to the present day" (p. 27). However, there have been numerous industrial sociology investigations into the consequences of his management philosophy for workers, and calling into question the validity of his insistence that the best way to manage an industrial organization is to have managers conceptualize and plan work and to have workers carefully controlled and carefully

instructed on exactly how to do the work. Berggren (1992) argues that the consequences of Taylorism—such as alienation, massive job dissatisfaction, worker absenteeism and turnover, deskilling, and worker powerlessness—were so negative there was a virtual revolt against it during the 1970s in the Western industrial world (p. 232). (For discussions about concerns with the limitations and negative consequences of Taylorism, see Blauner 1964; Braverman 1974; Chinoy 1955; Gersuny 1981; Goldman and Van Houten 1981; Gottfried 1998; Harvey 1975; Roy 1952, 1954, 1958; Walker and Guest 1952; Weil 1962.)

Sociologists have described three especially striking international challenges to the basic principles of Taylorism: (1) Germany's *Mitbestimmung* labor policy, (2) Spain's Mondragon industrial complex, and (3) Sweden's automotive assembly system.

Germany's Mitbestimmung Labor Policy

Industrial and political leaders of West Germany planning to rebuild the economy of the country after the devastation of World War II decided not only to rebuild the physical plant of industry but also to restructure labor-management relations as well. They embarked on a policy of *Mitbestimmung* (roughly translated, *Mitbestimmung* means codetermination) to ensure that the interests of workers would be given serious consideration in industrial organizational planning (Frege 2003; Furstenberg 1977; Kerbo 2006; Putman 1977). Workers have extensive rights and representation in all but the smallest companies through workers' corporate board representatives and worker councils elected by employees of the company. Kerbo (2006) notes,

Workers must be given extensive information about all matters affecting them and the whole company; works councils must be consulted on any changes in policies affecting work time arrangements, overtime, work breaks, vacation times, plant wage policy systems, the introduction of new technologies and any other alterations in the work environment, as well as the hiring, transfer, reclassification, or firing of workers. (P. 540)

Furthermore, under German law, workers are assumed to have rights, legal protection, and authority equal to that of stockholders. The supervisory board of large German corporations (roughly equivalent to an American board of directors) must include representation for workers equal to that of stockholders; the supervisory board must be made up of 10 employee representatives and 10 stockholder representatives (see Diamant 1977; Rowley 1977 for critiques of *Mitbestimmung*).

Spain's Mondragon Industrial Complex

After World War II, a Catholic priest began a radical experiment in industrial development in the Spanish town

192 • SOCIAL AGGREGATIONS

of Mondragon. The radical nature of the experiment stems from the way the work organizations are owned and managed. The workers own and control the organizations. Only workers own the organization in which they are employed, and all workers own a share of the organization in which they work. Workers, acting through worker councils in each of the product or service organizations, establish the policies of the company and hire management to carry out the policies; managers are thus the subordinates of the workers. Managers do not make policy, and they have little say in the policies that are created. They must carry out policy; managers who fail to carry out worker directives can be fired (Johnson and Whyte 1977; Whyte and Whyte 1991).

The Mondragon experiment has recorded substantial organizational success. Of the 103 worker cooperatives (and supporting organizations) created between 1956 and 1986, only 3 failed (Whyte and Whyte 1991:3). The number of cooperatives now exceeds 160 industrial and service organizations, and the complex as a whole is recognized as one of the most successful industrial complexes in Europe (see Mondragon 2003, 2005). There has also been success in terms of creating jobs. Employment grew from 23 workers in 1956, to 25,322 in 1992, and to 68,200 in 2003 (Mondragon 2003, 2005; Whyte and Whyte 1991:3).

For a different perspective on the success of the Mondragon experiment—one that focuses much more on the political aspects and implications of the Mondragon experiment—see Kasmir (1996). Writing the results of her ethnographic study from a working-class perspective, Kasmir argues that workers in cooperatives face the same strains as do those not in cooperatives—shift work, assembly line work, routinization of tasks, and demands for ever-increasing productivity. Furthermore, she insists that the cooperatives have political implications. For example, they divide the working class—those in cooperatives from those not in cooperatives—in terms of trying to achieve working-class goals.

Sweden's Automotive Assembly System

In the 1960s, Swedish auto companies faced a labor crisis consisting of very high rates of turnover (which approached 100 percent per year), high rates of both short-term and long-term absenteeism, and the inability to recruit new workers. Searching for an answer to their labor crisis, the Swedish automobile industry leaders discovered the results of studies by sociologists working in industry—especially those studying workers on the assembly line. Based on the results of the studies, those leaders began to completely revamp their production processes (Berggen 1992; Freyssenet 1998).

Volvo was a leader in the changes as it experimented with a series of different assembly systems. All the systems with which they experimented had two distinct features. First, they represented efforts to eliminate the traditional assembly system by having teams assemble major

components—for example, an engine or a transmission. Second, they replaced the traditional shop floor hierarchy with work groups responsible for shop floor assembly decisions. The role of the foremen was changed to that of coordinating and planning the activities of the work groups and of providing the logistical and informational support for the activities of the groups. Volvo's Kalmar plant—the first plant designed with the new assumptions—opened in 1974. At that time, it was the world's first auto assembly plant without mechanically driven assembly lines. Speaking of the importance of the Kalmar plant, Berggren (1992) suggests that it was important in several ways; it demonstrated that there were feasible alternatives to the traditional rigid assembly line, that a small factory could produce efficiently because it was more productive than a Volvo plant five times as large, and that a small plant could produce high-quality products because in one of the years of its operation its cars had the highest standards in the history of Volvo (p. 129).

In 1993, Volvo closed Uddevalla—a three-year-old plant designed with their new automotive production principles. Some argued that the failure of the plant cast doubt on the potential success of Volvo's principles, whereas others argued the closure could be explained by other factors (for the debate, see Adler and Cole 1993; Berggren 1994).

A Critique of the Japanese Lean Automotive Production Model

In 1982, Japanese automobile transplants first appeared in the United States with the opening of the Honda plant in Marysville, Ohio (Graham 1995:6). The success of the Japanese automobile industry relative to that of the U.S. automobile industry spurred industrial sociology research into the nature of organizational and management practices of the Japanese. That research agrees that Japanese management practices are as authoritarian as they are under scientific management (Berggren 1992; Graham 1993, 1995). In fact, management—especially in the guise of the foremen—seems to have even greater authority and decision-making power than ever. There are strict and precise management controls concerning (a) the distribution of power—workers have virtually no decision-making authority at all, (b) the way a worker works, (c) the way a worker dresses (he or she will wear company uniforms), and (d) the way the worker thinks (under the “Kaizan” system of continuous improvement, a worker who does not constantly think of new ways of improving productivity is assumed to have the “wrong” attitude and will be sanctioned or even fired) (Berggren 1992).

The Quality Revolution

The Quality Revolution refers to the increasing emphasis by consumers for quality goods and services; it is a label for a revolution of rising expectations in terms of quality. Numerous investigations, including those by

industrial sociologists, documented how this revolution affected the operations, success, and sometimes failure of U.S. organizations (Dobyns and Crawford-Mason 1991; Kanter 1989; Main 1994; Thurow 1992; Womack, Jones, and Roos 1990). Japanese companies provided the stimulus for this revolution when, after World War II, they emphasized quality in production. Womack, Jones, and Roos (1990), based on their multiyear study of the automobile industry, stated,

Today, Toyota assembly plants have practically no rework areas and perform almost no rework. . . . American buyers report that Toyota's vehicles have among the lowest number of defects of any in the world, comparable to the very best of the German luxury car producers, who devote many hours of assembly-plant effort to rectification. (Pp. 57–58)

American companies were forced to change their operations, adapt to the new production standards, or go out of business.

Workplace Democracy

As U.S. industrial organizations struggled with the challenges of the Quality Revolution and with the negative consequences of Taylor's Scientific Management, many analysts concluded that the power and authority that were once restricted to management should be redistributed throughout the organization (Blumberg 1968; Fantasia, Clawson, and Graham 1988; Grenier 1988; Guest 1957, 1987; Hodson 1996; Hodson et al. 1993; Kanter 1995; Knights and Collinson 1985; Kornbluh, 1984; Parker 1985; Parker and Slaughter 1988; Peters 1987; Ramsay 1977; Safizadeh 1991; Sorge 1976; Thomas 1985; Turner 1991). Efforts to redistribute this power have various labels—Workplace Democracy, Worker Participation, Participative Management. These efforts range from moderate “fine-tuning” of the traditional worker-management relationships to radical revisions of them. This range can be categorized into four major groupings: (1) humanization of work, (2) labor-management quality-of-work-life (QWL) committees, (3) worker-owned companies, and (4) worker-owned/worker-managed companies (Zwerdling 1978a).

Humanization of work experiments are explicit attempts to improve productivity by improving the workers' QWL. Their underlying assumption is that by improving the QWL, the worker will feel better about work, and if the worker feels better about work, he or she will be a more productive worker.

Labor-management QWL committees experiments represent a more radical step in that they involve significant changes in the power relationships between labor and management because the worker has meaningful power over his or her working conditions. The basic assumption of these experiments is that improving the QWL is a worthy goal in and of itself and that one of the best ways to improve the worker's QWL is to give him or her real power.

Worker-owned company experiments are those in which workers actually own but do not manage the company. The workers own all or part of the company; that ownership may involve a coequal share of the company or may involve unequal ownership. Worker-owned company experiments are particularly important for labor-management relations for two reasons. First, they change the workers' attitudes toward the company because the company belongs to them, and they know their economic future is tied to that of the company. Second, with ownership, workers can have a meaningful say in both the policy and the production decisions that affect their lives. In other words, such experiments have the potential of bringing democracy to the workplace.

Worker-owned/worker-managed companies are obviously the most radical of the workplace democracy experiments and are, therefore, the most infrequently tried. Zwerdling (1978a) suggests that a “true” worker-owned/worker-managed company has the following characteristics. First, it is owned and operated by the people who work in it: Only the workers have control. Second, there is no stock, since stock implies that control is turned over to someone else. If capital is needed, the company uses debt financing. Third, all profits, in excess of operating expenses and investments in productivity enhancement, are divided equally among all workers. Fourth, it is run democratically. All workers regardless of skill and experience make decisions on how the business is run. Each worker has one and only one vote. Fifth, although workers can loan money to the company, their loan will be treated like any other loan and will not entitle them to any special privileges because those special privileges would conflict with the democratic principles on which the organization is based. The Mondragon system discussed earlier is an example of such an organization (for American examples, see Pencavel 2001; Perry 1978; Zwerdling 1978b).

NEEDED INVESTIGATIONS

There are several industrial sociological topics that deserve thorough investigations. Among them are a sociology-based explanation for the British Industrial Revolution, a sociological understanding of the great depressions, and an exploration of the impacts of globalization.

A Sociology-Based Explanation for the British Industrial Revolution

Given the profound consequences of industrialization for the organization not only of work but also of society itself, it is surprising that relatively little sociological effort has been invested in explaining why the first Industrial Revolution—the one that occurred in Great Britain approximately in 1750 to 1850—occurred (for two such sociological explanations, see Brown 1966; Campbell

194 • SOCIAL AGGREGATIONS

1987). To date, the best explanation is an ecological one (Charlton 1986; Wilkinson 1973). In an important study dealing explicitly with ecological analysis and cultural evolution, Wilkinson (1973) argues that the underlying explanation for the Industrial Revolution can be found in ecological factors. He states,

The ecological roots of the English industrial revolution are not difficult to find. The initial stimulus to change came directly from resource shortages and other ecological effects of an economic system expanding to meet the needs of a population growing within a limited area. (P. 112)

He illustrates the process by describing how the timber shortage caused by the cutting down of the forests of England resulted in the shift to coal as the country's principal energy source. That shift, in turn, led to the invention of Newcomen's atmospheric engine (which was eventually modified by James Watt into a steam engine) because of the need to pump water out of the flooded coal mines. In effect, he argues that Great Britain's Industrial Revolution was a series of necessary adaptations resulting from the degradation of an environment whose carrying capacity had been exceeded.

Although there is convincing evidence that environmental changes played an important role in the British Industrial Revolution, single-factor explanations for such an historical event should be considered suspect. The driving force in Wilkinson's theory is population increase. Yet for the century preceding the Industrial Revolution, the population of England was relatively stable (Deane 1965:11; Wilkinson 1973:71). Why, starting at about 1750, did the population of England dramatically increase? It is reasonable to assume that social factors played a part.

A Sociological Understanding of the Great Depressions

Industrial societies endure depressions—severe economic downturns characterized by drastic declines in production and extremely high levels of unemployment. There have been three economic depressions so far. While there is widespread acknowledgement of the Great Depression of the 1930s, there is little acknowledgement of the two prior depressions endured by industrial societies. The United States was not industrialized enough to be severely affected by the first depression—the one that devastated England from roughly 1820 to the mid-1840s (Gordon 1978). However, the industrial boom that the United States experienced after the American Civil War resulted in an industrial nation susceptible to economic fluctuations, and it was hard-hit by the second depression. For almost 20 years, starting in 1873, the economies of the United States and other industrialized nations endured what economic analysts at that time called the “Great Depression” (Gordon 1978; for a good summary of that depression, see Parshall 1992). In the United States, that depression

resulted in such a massive concentration of business power that an alarmed federal government was forced to intervene as “trust busters” during the first two decades of the twentieth century. The Great Depression of the 1930s changed the United States in even more fundamental ways than had the second depression. In response to the collapse of the American economy, the National Industrial Recovery Act was passed to give the federal government extraordinary powers to intervene in the economy. The federal government was also forced to provide massive support to the U.S. economy (Watkins 1993). That support continues today: the housing industry is supported by legislation that allows homeowners to claim as tax deductions interest paid on home mortgages, the agricultural industry is supported by a multi-billion-dollar farm subsidy program, and numerous businesses are protected from international competition by high import tariff and import quotas. Given the enormous social organization consequences of depressions, it is curious that industrial sociologists have not devoted more time and effort to describe the depressions and their consequences and understand why they occur.

Understanding the Implications of Globalization

Markets were once primarily restricted to small geographic areas because of the limitations of transportation systems. As transportation systems developed, markets became regional and then national. Today, neither consumer nor labor markets are national. Consumers have access to products and services from a world market. And those customers are increasingly taking advantage of that world market. They demand quality products and services, and they use that world market in their search for those products and services. Consumers now have access to a world economy. Furthermore, labor markets are becoming international because companies can now “source” their production worldwide (Friedman 2005). That is, they can shift their jobs to whatever location they decide is best for their company, irrespective of the effects of these shifts for the workers, communities, and countries they leave.

The potential consequences of changes in both these markets for the status of industrial organizations and their workers are profound. As Kanter (1995) notes, “Globalization is surely one of the most powerful and pervasive influences on nations, businesses, workplaces, communities, and lives at the end of the twentieth century” (p. 11). There is currently great concern and divergence of opinion about globalization. There are those who focus on the potential of globalization for all societies, not just industrial ones (Friedman 2005). There are others who describe the tremendous costs of globalization. The opposition to the North American Free Trade Agreement and the often violent protests whenever the World Trade Organization meets illustrate their concern (see also Gern 1995; Kamala 1998; Lewis 2002; Michalowski

and Kramer 1987 for other expressions of concern). Investigations into globalization have documented benefits (Firebaugh and Goesling 2004) and costs (Horn 1993; Sass 2000; Storm and Rao 2004). Further investigations by industrial sociologists into the implications of globalization seem warranted (for examples of such investigations, see Ciccantell and Bunker 2004; Howes 1993; Johnson 1991, 2002; Kanter 1991, 1995; Kanter and Corn 1994; Kappel 1995; Perrucci 1994; Reich 1991; Ross and Trachte 1990; Sallaz 2004; Wolf 2005).

THE FUTURE OF INDUSTRIAL SOCIETIES

The social sciences have documented numerous instances of societal collapse (Catton 1993; Diamond 2005; Tainter 1988). Investigators are intrigued by the survival potential of industrial societies. What are the possibilities?

Every production system negatively affects the environment in some way. The degree and permanence of that environmental degradation, however, varies tremendously. In some cases, it is very limited and short term, whereas in others it is extensive and long term. As societies become larger and more complex, their environmental degradation becomes more pervasive and more permanent.

The degradation is a threat to both individuals and society. In the 1960s, the USSR dumped huge quantities of highly radioactive waste into Lake Karachay. The lake is now so radioactive that anyone standing on its shore for an hour or two will receive a lethal dose of radiation (Lenssen 1992:53). In the early 1980s, the town of Times Beach, Missouri, suffered severe, widespread chemical contamination. Rather than attempt the very costly procedure of rectifying the environmental damage, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency bought out the residents and declared the town off-limits for humans (Boraiko 1985).

The threat of environmental degradation also extends to the actual survival of society itself. There are numerous instances of societies that have overexploited their resources and degraded their environment to such an extent that the society collapsed. Three of the most well-known examples are Easter Island, the Classic Maya, and the Anasazi of the U.S. Desert Southwest (Catton 1993; Diamond 2005, chap. 4; Pennsylvania State University and WQED 1993; Thorne 1989). (For other examples of societal collapse, see Chedd 1980; Diamond 2005; Tainter 1988.)

What, then, can be said about the future of industrial society? After all, industrial societies are among the largest and most complex of all societies and create some of the most pervasive and permanent environmental degradation. Predictions of the future of industrial society differ greatly. This range of alternatives can be collapsed into three major categories: pessimistic, moderate, and optimistic.

Pessimists point out that industrial societies are complex, resource-consuming, and environmentally degrading

societies. The dismal history of other such societies suggests that industrial societies have a limited life span. Societal complexity, high rates of resource consumption, and extensive environmental degradation all seem incompatible with societal longevity. Few, if any, complex societies have survived for even a thousand years. Some analysts (Daily, Ehrlich, and Ehrlich 1994; Pimentel et al. 1994) claim that the world community has already exceeded the world's carrying capacity and the resultant environment degradation will inevitably lead to the collapse of society. An early investigation into the consequences of human population growth was conducted by researchers at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (Meadows et al. 1974). They conducted a series of computer simulations focusing on "the five basic factors that determine, and, therefore, ultimately limit, growth on this planet—population, agricultural production, natural resources, industrial production, and pollution" (Meadows et al. 1974:xi). In the course of their investigation, they systematically varied the value of each of the crucial factors. Despite changing the assumptions, the end result was almost always the same. The system continued to grow beyond what could be sustained and collapsed within a hundred years. Their computer models indicated that there was only one possible set of conditions that would stabilize the system and that was to simultaneously control population and industrial output. In other words, industrial societies had to be radically redesigned. Two decades later, the team updated their original study (Meadows et al. 1992). They discovered that their original time frame was wrong. Their analyses suggested that without substantial change—not just minor "fine-tuning"—industrial society would collapse in as little as 20 years. Pessimists, then, argue that industrial societies as they currently operate cannot survive, and that without substantial change, industrial society as we know it will collapse. In fact, some argue that the negative impacts of such societies are so severe that they should not survive (Lewis 2002).

Proponents of moderate scenarios share with the pessimists the common theme that industrial society is sustainable indefinitely only if changes are made in its basic operating assumptions (Dobkowski and Wallimann 2002). Whether they argue for developing a "steady-state economy" (Daly 1973; Postel and Flavin 1991), or for the importance of building a "sustainable society" (Brown 1981), or for the value that "small is beautiful" (Schumacher 1973), they insist that industrial societies can survive long term only if the premises on which they are based are substantially changed. And the core change centers on the concept of sustainability. In a sustainable society, renewable resources are used at a rate that ensures the indefinite survival of the resource, while the use of nonrenewable resources is de-emphasized or even abandoned. In sum, proponents of moderate scenarios are optimistic about the future of industrial societies. They argue that moderate, not radical, changes in the operation of industrial societies will allow industrial societies to survive.

196 • SOCIAL AGGREGATIONS

Optimists insist that despite all the problems facing industrial societies, the future is not bleak but is instead filled with possibilities. They suggest that not only are industrial societies not threatened by the problems that have been documented but also that the problems may ultimately disappear as pressing human concerns (Budiansky 1994; Simon 1981). The optimists focus their attention on what they believe to be a misplaced emphasis on the problems of overpopulation and resource limits. They argue that even if the pessimists are right about resource limits, technological innovations will overcome any problems created by the limits. They note, for example, that as copper has become more expensive, fiber-optic cable has been used in its place (Simon 1981). According to the optimists, then, the future of industrial society is bright. The creativity and innovation

of people in industrial societies and the productivity of industrial production systems will yield increased wealth and a better quality of life for all. Population growth will cease to be a problem, and resources will become more abundant and less expensive (Simon 1981).

SUMMARY

There is little reason to believe that the subdiscipline of industrial sociology will ever attain its former prominence. However, given the importance of work in industrial societies, there is little doubt that there will continue to be theoretically and practically important investigations into industrial sociology topics.

19

THE SOCIOLOGY OF VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATIONS

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Voluntary associations, understood as “formally organized named groups, most of whose members—whether persons or organizations—are not financially recompensed for their participation” (Knoke 1986:2), have been both hailed as the building blocks of American democracy and disparaged as instruments of social exclusion that reproduce racial and ethnic conflict. Similarly, individuals’ membership in voluntary associations has been found to have important benefits for their economic, emotional, and mental well-being but also to reaffirm their negative social stereotypes. Regardless of which characteristics of voluntary associations one chooses to emphasize, one thing is certain: The United States has long been and continues to be a “nation of joiners” (Tocqueville [1835] 2000). The voluntary associations that operate in the United States serve a myriad of purposes, many of which supplement functions offered by the state and the private sector. These associations cover the full gamut of human activity, from economic cooperation to emotional support, from professional development to philanthropy, and from religion to recreation.

Given the prevalence of associations in the United States and the fact that they lend themselves well to the study of social interaction, it is not surprising that sociologists have been interested in voluntarism since the earliest

days of their discipline. The body of research motivated by this interest spans nearly 10 decades and includes thousands of articles and books from such diverse subfields as the sociology of religion and demography. Our brief review will outline a history of this rich field of inquiry, delineate its major intellectual currents, summarize its most important empirical findings, and offer some new directions for future research.

HISTORY OF VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATION RESEARCH

Alexis de Tocqueville occupies a central position in the origin story of voluntary association research. His rich observations of nineteenth-century American life (Tocqueville [1835] 2000) helped shape an emerging liberal paradigm in political theory, which treated voluntary associations as the building blocks of civil society—the intermediary between the family, political institutions, and the market. Previously, classical political theorists, from Aristotle to Hobbes and Hegel, had viewed civil society as the commonwealth of elites protected by the state, which shared in “the virtuous tasks of ruling and being ruled” (Edwards 2004:6). In contrast, the liberal democratic

framework developed by Madison, Tocqueville, and other Enlightenment thinkers defined civil society as the aggregate of voluntary associations whose primary role was the protection of local interests from the intrusion of government authority. In addition to “curbing the power of centralized institutions, protecting pluralism and nurturing constructive social norms” (Edwards 2004:7), voluntary associations enabled the mobilization of resources toward common goals, increased social cohesion within communities, and supported political debate. This liberal understanding of civil society became fundamental to the pluralistic school of thought in American political theory.

The civil society approach championed by pluralist theorists dominated voluntary association research in the first decades of the twentieth century. However, beginning in the 1920s, its hegemony became increasingly challenged by a newly emergent discipline of sociology. The highly theoretical and abstract arguments that characterized the civil society literature gradually gave way to grounded empirical research pioneered by the Chicago School of urban sociology. Its members systematically studied community life from an ecological perspective, treating neighborhoods as systems of interrelated institutions and practices. The importance of voluntary associations in community life was captured in such sociological classics as Thomas and Znaniecki’s (1927) *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America*, Lynd and Lynd’s (1929) *Middletown*, and Whyte’s (1943) *Street Corner Society*.

While the first wave of the Chicago School was still in its heyday, a number of sociologists began advocating a more generalizable approach to sociological research, one based on quantitative analysis of survey data. While their methodological perspective made considerable inroads into American sociology during the interwar years, it experienced a veritable explosion after World War II. Generous government funding facilitated the collection of unprecedented volumes of survey data on virtually every topic of interest to social scientists, shifting the methodological balance decisively in favor of large-sample quantitative research. This survey revolution produced much of the foundational research in social stratification, sociology of education, demography, and many other core subfields of sociology. Its impact on the study of voluntary associations was no less groundbreaking.

The availability of nationally representative survey data allowed scholars of volunteerism to explore two fundamental questions: Who joins voluntary organizations, and what are the consequences of their membership? To answer the former question, researchers correlated countless sociodemographic variables with voluntary association membership. Race, gender, income, education, geographic location, religious preference, and many other individual-level characteristics were shown to significantly affect the likelihood of affiliation. Some studies introduced more nuanced understandings of the dependent variable by distinguishing between various types of voluntary associations. The most recent additions to this research tradition

have reproduced the older participation models in a comparative context, usually at the international level.

Research on the consequences of voluntary association membership has been similarly affected by the proliferation of survey data: Researchers have correlated membership with such diverse outcomes as mental health, life satisfaction, social mobility, and political participation. Since the typical level of analysis in these studies has been the individual, survey research on the consequences of voluntary participation can be seen as a counterpart to the civil society perspective, which has theorized the effects of participation on the political system as a whole.

A handful of researchers have recently begun using survey data to study the dynamic processes that shape the life cycles of voluntary associations. Treating associations themselves as the units of analysis, they have examined the effects of administrative structures, political and economic conditions, and interorganizational competition on the associations’ size, composition, and stability. Institutional studies have focused on the first two factors, arguing that associations must be nimble enough to adjust to a continually changing social environment. Structural-ecological studies have built on structuralist theory, social-evolutionary logic, and social network analysis to emphasize the third *explanans*—interorganizational competition—as the fundamental mechanism that drives associational change.

Both the institutional and structural-ecological approaches have two important characteristics that set them apart from the majority of previous research: (1) They strive to develop a general theory of voluntary associations, and (2) they view voluntary associations as collective phenomena rather than mere aggregates of individual behaviors. To examine these properties, researchers have developed new methods for measuring system-level variables, such as organizational size and density, with traditional survey data.

In addition to the growth of structural approaches, the 1990s were characterized by a powerful revival of the civil society tradition in political science, sociology, and international relations. This neo-Tocquevillian phase reached its height in the early 2000s, with the publication of Putnam’s (2000) enormously popular treatise on the decline of American volunteerism, which combined traditional pluralist arguments with social capital theory. Although Putnam’s work has been widely critiqued, it continues to define much of the contemporary discourse on volunteerism.

TYOLOGIES OF VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATIONS

Researchers of voluntary associations have developed a number of classificatory schemes based on the defining features of associations, such as the associations’ size, internal structure, level of outside control, social function,

source of support, geographic location, and membership characteristics (Smith and Freedman 1972). Since all these criteria have proved useful for the study of various aspects of voluntarism, none of them can be viewed as definitive.

Perhaps due to its simplicity and flexibility, the most enduring and widely employed typology is Gordon and Babchuk's (1959) distinction between expressive and instrumental associations. The primary function of expressive organizations is the facilitation of interaction between members. Hence, participation in such organizations is an end in itself. In contrast, the primary manifest function of instrumental associations is the exertion of influence over specific social conditions. Thus, participation in these organizations is a means to particular extraorganizational ends. Since many associations do not fit neatly into either of these two categories, Gordon and Babchuk (1959) combined them to form a third association type: Instrumental-expressive associations place equal priority on both these dimensions.

Many typologies developed over the past three decades have built on Gordon and Babchuk's original scheme. For instance, DeVall and Harry (1975) distinguish between utilitarian, normative, and normative-utilitarian associations; Palisi and Korn (1989) employ the categories of total voluntary, instrumental, and expressive associations, while Wilson and Janoski (1995) classify voluntary action as self-oriented or community oriented.

The other common approach to classifying associations focuses on their substantive sphere of activity. For example, McPherson and Smith-Lovin (1982) distinguish organizations related to economic activities from those related to community or domestic affairs, while Knoke (1986) lists 14 "functionally specialized" types: "labor unions, churches and sects, social movement organizations, political parties, professional societies, business and trade associations, fraternal and sororal organizations, recreational clubs, civic service associations, philanthropies, social welfare councils, communes, cooperatives, and neighborhood" (p. 2). This approach closely resembles industry classifications used by economists and policymakers. In fact, Knoke's (1986) categories overlap with Salamon's (2002) typology of the nonprofit sector, which includes the following fields of activity: culture, education, health, social services, environment, development, civic and advocacy, philanthropy, international, religious, business and professional, unions, and others.

None of the above classificatory approaches provide a perfect representation of the functioning of actual voluntary associations; each one reduces these complex social phenomena to simplistic and often overlapping ideal types. Nevertheless, these typologies provide convenient and useful conceptual tools for examining various properties of a myriad of diverse organizations. Hence, each typology must be evaluated in light of specific research questions and appropriate empirical evidence. For instance, Richmond (2003) divides voluntary associations into local and cosmopolitan, regardless of their function or purpose.

This is an entirely reasonable decision in the context of his study, which examines the relationship between association membership and geographical mobility.

MEMBERSHIP STUDIES

In response to the widespread availability of individual-level data and dedicated survey analysis techniques, researchers have produced hundreds of studies correlating voluntary association membership with sociodemographic variables. Since a complete bibliography of this body of research would occupy far more space than is available in this volume (see Pugliese 1986), we will limit our overview to the most significant determinants of participation. In each section, we will outline the conclusions reached by previous literature reviews and supplement them with more recent findings.

Age and the Life Course

In their 1972 review of voluntary association research, Constance Smith and Anne Freedman conclude that voluntary participation declines with age due to a variety of psychological and structural factors. In a subsequent review, David Smith (1975) concurs but adds that the pattern is actually curvilinear, with the youngest and oldest persons participating less than those in their middle age. The decline in participation in the latter stages of the life course is more "pronounced for instrumental (e.g., occupation-related) [associations] than for expressive ones" (Smith 1975:253). Similarly, Janoski and Wilson (1995) find that as people age their interests shift from "self-oriented" to "community-oriented" associations.

Reviewing the literature on volunteering, Wilson (2000) acknowledges the curvilinear age pattern but notes that participation is actually higher in adolescence than in young adulthood and that its overall decline in old age is accompanied by an increase in the hours of commitment among those already volunteering. In addition, young people participate predominantly in associations related to "self- and career-oriented activism," and middle-age people prefer "more community-oriented work," while older volunteers "turn away from youth-related, political and ethnic groups and toward service organizations, recreational clubs and agencies to help the elderly" (Wilson 2000:227). Other evidence suggests that between 1974 and 1994, age became a less important determinant of the types of voluntary associations people joined (Monti et al. 2003).

In contrast to the above findings, Hendricks and Cutler (2001) demonstrate that the curvilinear pattern of membership disappears once cohort composition is taken into consideration. They argue that after controlling for compositional factors, the rate of volunteerism peaks in late middle age and remains stable thereafter, regardless of whether unions and religious organizations are included in the analysis. This conclusion is consistent with Cutler's (1976)

200 • SOCIAL AGGREGATIONS

study, which finds no independent drop in participation after the age of 44.

All the above studies agree on one fact: People volunteer substantially in middle age. To help explain this phenomenon, some researchers have turned to the life-course perspective. Using event-history analysis, Rotolo (2000) demonstrates that changes in participation rates are a result of important role transitions that occur at particular points in the life cycle. For instance, marriage and child-rearing increase rates of participation. Furthermore, Rotolo distinguishes between rates of joining and leaving associations, arguing that transition out of work and marriage, which occurs in old age, results both in fewer new memberships and in fewer terminations of existing memberships. Other explanations for the curvilinear effect of age on voluntarism have emphasized changes in people's attitudes, human capital, and psychological needs.

Gender

Studies conducted in the early 1970s found that men participated in more voluntary associations than did women (Smith and Freedman 1972; Smith 1975) but that this difference narrowed when the level of commitment was taken into account (Smith 1975). By the mid-1980s, most of the difference in overall participation rates had disappeared (Knoke 1986; Monti et al. 2003), and by the 1990s, women were volunteering more than men (Wilson 2000). Although some explanations for the high overall participation rate among women rely on essentialist cultural arguments (Wilson 2000), the long-term shift in the effect of gender on volunteering suggests that structural factors, such as the entry of women into the labor force, play a more important role (Gustafson, Booth, and Johnson 1979; Knoke 1986).

Despite the equalization of overall participation rates between men and women, important differences persist in the type and quality of their respective memberships. Analyses of the sex composition of voluntary associations reveal striking patterns of segregation, which are exacerbated by the tendency of women to participate in smaller associations (McPherson and Smith-Lovin 1982, 1986). This pattern does not seem to diminish over time (Popielarz 1999). Furthermore, women's groups are far more homogeneous with respect to age, education, and occupational status than are men's groups (Popielarz 1999).

Gender also functions as a mediating variable for other determinants of volunteering. For instance, while work instability has a general negative effect on rates of voluntary participation, this effect is more pronounced for women than for men (Rotolo and Wilson 2003). Unstable work histories decrease women's participation in all associations other than unions and farm organizations, while for men, they only decrease membership in job-related associations. Gender also shapes the effects of life-course transitions on joining and leaving voluntary associations,

with marriage disproportionately increasing the likelihood of women leaving job-related organizations (Rotolo 2000:1152).

Race

According to Smith (1975), research from the 1970s demonstrates that blacks exhibit lower rates of participation in voluntary associations than do whites, though this difference disappears once socioeconomic status (SES) is taken into consideration (Smith 1975). In contrast, Smith and Freedman (1972) report higher overall rates of participation among blacks, regardless of SES, especially in expressive organizations (Smith and Freedman 1972; cf. London 1975). More recently, researchers have found that once SES is controlled for, blacks consistently volunteer more than whites (Wilson 2000; Stoll 2001).

The relatively high rates of volunteering among African Americans are often attributed to ostensibly higher levels of cohesion in black communities, driven by strong racial identification and shared perceptions of social injustice (Knoke 1986; Ellison and London 1992). This argument is supported by evidence that black volunteers show a strong preference for organizations that serve the needs of the African American community (Wilson 2000). However, research on blacks' general attitudes toward altruism and volunteering is inconclusive, calling into question affective explanations of racial differences in participation rates (Wilson 2000).

Studies of the role of social context on volunteering have demonstrated a tendency toward higher participation in ethnically homogeneous neighborhoods (Rotolo 2000; Stoll 2001). Since African Americans continue to experience acute residential segregation, this finding partly explains the relatively high propensity for voluntarism among members of this group.

Like gender, race is also a strong predictor of the internal composition of voluntary associations. Researchers have consistently found that most associations in the United States are racially homogeneous (Christerson and Emerson 2003; Dougherty 2003); for instance, Dougherty (2003) reports that only 8 percent of Christian organizations are racially diverse. The homogeneity of voluntary associations may be a result of the sociodemographic properties of social networks through which members are recruited (Popielarz and McPherson 1995). Because social ties tend to be homophilous, meaning that individuals interact most often with people similar to themselves, the social groups that form at the intersections of these ties tend to be composed of similar members. Structural-ecological theory suggests that new members who are dissimilar from current members are unlikely to remain in the group for a lengthy period of time, while those who are similar have a higher probability of retaining their memberships. A recent study of racially and ethnically heterogeneous religious organizations (Christerson and Emerson 2003) supports this argument, demonstrating that ethnic

and racial minority members incur higher social costs of membership than do majority members.

Socioeconomic Status and Labor Market Variables

Most SES indicators are found to positively affect rates of voluntary participation. This is particularly true for occupational status and education (Smith 1975). Some researchers have also observed that specific job characteristics and not just occupational status have an effect on participation. For instance, individuals with a high degree of control over their jobs tend to volunteer more hours and do so for a wider range of organizations. Although education has been consistently found to positively influence rates of voluntary participation, its effect varies by organization type. For example, the effect is consistent for political groups but not for informal community associations or emergency service organizations (Wilson 2000).

The evidence for the effect of income on volunteering is mixed. Some studies find that wages are negatively associated with volunteering; others suggest that higher overall income increases the propensity to volunteer, while others argue that higher wages increase voluntary activity but higher levels of wealth decrease it. Furthermore, income may be linked to the type of associations joined, with higher-income individuals volunteering more for health- and education-related associations but not for religious and informal ones.

Childhood Socialization

A number of studies point to the importance of socialization in promoting voluntary association membership. Researchers have found strong evidence for the positive effect of parents' participation in voluntary associations on the participation of their offspring, net of SES factors (Smith 1975). Similarly, volunteering during high school years has been found to positively affect the propensity to join voluntary associations later in life (Wilson 2000). It is unclear whether values and attitudes play a mediating role in the transmission of voluntaristic behavior or whether the phenomenon is a result of structural factors, such as social networks and social roles.

Social Context

Although social context has been an underemphasized correlate of voluntary participation, a few studies in the 1970s did examine the role of social networks, work environments, and neighborhood characteristics on volunteering (Smith 1975). They demonstrated that coworkers, family members, and other personal contacts, especially those of high status, have an important impact on voluntarism. A positive effect was also found for SES-homogeneous neighborhoods, longer residential tenure in

a community, and communities with less than 50,000 inhabitants (Smith 1975).

Attention to social networks and structural explanations increased significantly in the 1980s and 1990s, giving rise to new traditions of voluntary association research, many of which treat organizations as units of analysis. Social networks have been found to play a crucial role in disseminating information, mobilizing resources, and creating opportunity structures for voluntary participation. Similarly, demographic characteristics of communities have been shown to affect the composition of voluntary associations. For instance, McPherson (1982) demonstrates that the number and size of associations found in a community, as well as the density of interorganizational and interpersonal links, is strongly affected by the size of the community's population (McPherson 1982). Rotolo (2000) argues that neighborhood heterogeneity has a negative effect on participation since it lowers the probability of homophilous social ties through which association memberships are transmitted. This effect is particularly strong for racially heterogeneous neighborhoods. Stoll (2001) finds that neighborhood poverty also decreases the number of memberships present. Finally, Richmond (2003) demonstrates that geographic mobility differentially affects individuals' propensity to join local and cosmopolitan associations.

Cross-National Differences

As outlined above, the growing interest in organization-level analyses has led many researchers to shift their attention from simple correlation studies to more theoretically sophisticated analyses that examine the impact of contextual factors on voluntary association membership. Despite this considerable progress, traditional survey studies of participation still constitute a considerable portion of the field. This is in no small part due to the growing volume of cross-national research conducted by James Curtis and his associates. Initially inspired by Lipset's (1989) theory of cultural differences between Canada and the United States and later by Putnam's (2000) thesis on the contemporary decline of social capital, these researchers have devoted the past decade and a half to comparing the overall membership rates of industrialized nations using data from the World Values Survey.

In contrast to Lipset's (1989) thesis, their findings demonstrate that, with the exception of religious organizations, Americans are no more likely to join voluntary associations than are Canadians (Curtis et al. 1989; Grabb and Curtis 1992). Similar results are found when the participation in the United States is compared with that of other countries, such as Australia, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, and Northern Ireland (Curtis, Grabb, and Baer 1992). According to Curtis, Baer, and Grabb (2001), high national rates of participation are correlated with "multidenominational Christian or predominantly Protestant religious compositions" (p. 783), longer

202 • SOCIAL AGGREGATIONS

traditions of democratic governance, social or liberal democratic systems, and high levels of economic development. Finally, in response to Putnam (2000), Baer, Curtis, and Grabb (2001) argue that the overall levels of participation have not declined in 12 of the 13 countries examined, including the United States and Canada (but see McPherson, Smith-Lovin, and Brashears 2006).

Correlation studies of the determinants of membership have made many contributions to our descriptive understanding of voluntary associations. However, with some important exceptions (e.g., Knoke 1981; Rotolo 2000), most of them have failed to formulate systematic theoretical explanations for the links between sociodemographic variables and volunteering. As prime examples of abstracted empiricism (Mills 1959), these studies place far more emphasis on the presentation of raw empirical findings than on uncovering the mechanisms that shape voluntary associations.

The few studies that have made educated guesses about the causes of the observed correlations have typically relied on individualistic conceptions of social action, emphasizing the role of attitudes, norms, affects, and cost-benefit calculations in decision-making processes. This framework is questionable because its conclusions are based on loose assumptions that are not grounded in systematic empirical research. Even Wilson (2000), who is generally sympathetic to motive-based explanations, concludes in his review of the literature that “overall, the relation between values and volunteering is weak and inconsistent” (p. 219). Since few researchers of voluntary associations have access to data on people’s motivations, individualistic explanations of voluntary participation seem to be granted validity solely because they echo commonsensical understandings of human behavior.

In contrast, recent research on organizational dynamics has demonstrated that patterns of voluntary participation can be better explained using structural arguments that treat associations themselves as units of analysis. Since these arguments are based on measurable properties of social systems rather than imputed motives of individuals, they offer a more reliable and general explanatory framework for the study of voluntary associations. Where appropriate, in the preceding section, we have used explanations generated by this research tradition to supplement the findings of conventional correlation studies.

CONSEQUENCES OF MEMBERSHIP

Research on the consequences of voluntary association membership mirrors the study of participation, since it too is based on the correlation of membership with various individual-level variables. Although this tradition has also been facilitated by the proliferation of survey data and analysis techniques, its scope is considerably smaller than that of participation research. The two areas that have gained the most attention in studies of outcomes are

political mobilization and psychological well-being. Others include demographic variables, geographical mobility, physical health, and socioeconomic status. Overwhelmingly, these studies demonstrate that membership in voluntary associations results in numerous material, emotional, and political benefits for individuals. This reinforces the need for continued examination of the unequal distribution of memberships across social groups. In the following sections, we outline some of the important findings for each of the categories of outcomes.

Political Mobilization

One of the most frequently studied outcomes of voluntary participation is individual political action, particularly voting behavior. There is a high level of consensus among researchers about the positive effect of membership on political participation, although explanations of this phenomenon vary. Knoke (1986) concludes that “associations act as mobilizing mechanisms in democratic societies, transforming nonpolitical organizational involvements into political participation” (p. 8) by broadening individuals’ interests, expanding their social networks, exposing them to social interaction and leadership, and creating channels for effecting political change (see also Olsen 1982). Other possible reasons for this correlation include sharing of information, development of organizational skills (Schulman 1978), fostering of generalized trust, political socialization (Wilson 2000), and the creation of a sense of community (Cassel 1999). Some studies have found that the level of mobilization is positively influenced by members’ commitment to their organizations, while others find no such effect (Knoke 1986).

Psychological Well-Being

The effects of membership in voluntary associations on various psychological outcomes have also attracted considerable research attention. Most studies have found that membership has positive effects on various mental health variables (Wilson 2000), including self-validation, self-confidence, and life satisfaction. Membership has also been found to lower the risk of depression (Rietschlin 1998) and protect the elderly from “hazards of retirement, physical decline and inactivity” (Fischer and Schaffer 1993:9). There is some evidence that the subjective benefits of membership vary by geographical location, SES, age, and marital status (Cutler 1981; Palisi 1985), as well as by type of organization and the salience of participation for the individual (Houglund 1982).

A few studies have examined the negative outcomes of voluntarism. Christerson and Emerson (2003) find that minorities bear relatively high personal costs of membership in ethnically diverse religious organizations, while Erickson and Nosanchuk (1998) argue that membership increases the likelihood of individuals holding negative ethnic and racial stereotypes. Whether this is a selection

effect or causal effect is unclear—for instance, Betz and Judkins (1975) have argued that voluntary associations are more likely to reinforce members' prior attitudes than to alter them or cause the development of new ones.

ORGANIZATIONAL DYNAMICS

Since most of the participation studies described above rely on cross-sectional data, they rarely pay serious attention to the inherently dynamic processes that affect the composition of voluntary associations. By failing to formulate convincing theoretical accounts of the formation, persistence, and dissolution of associations, these studies tend to make simplistic assumptions about their subject matter, akin to Rose's (1956) textbook truism, "a voluntary association develops when a small group of people, finding they have a certain interest (or purpose) in common, agree to meet and to act together in order to try to satisfy that interest or achieve that purpose" (p. 305). Such nonexplanations of the origins of voluntary associations are variants of what Mayhew (1980) once described as the central tenet of individualistic sociology: "people do things because they want to" (p. 354).

The investigation of organizational dynamics treats associations themselves as the primary objects of analysis. Scholars in this tradition seek to explain the rise, growth, transformation, and decline of voluntary associations using such explanatory factors as organizational structure, environmental conditions, and ecological competition (Knoke 1986). Although the methods used in this research program range from ethnography to computer simulation, they all share a commitment to examining voluntary associations from a diachronic perspective.

As in most sociological subfields, the methodological approaches used to study organizational dynamics reflect researchers' epistemological convictions, with some committed to the formulation of complex, particularistic explanations and others to the development of cumulative, parsimonious general theory. The former category includes many of the historical analyses and case studies of voluntary associations, while the latter consists predominantly of statistical treatments of survey data obtained through random-sampling techniques.

Historical Studies

In contrast to case studies of particular organizations, analyses of organizational dynamics that employ historical methods examine changes in overall patterns of voluntary association activity in particular time periods and geographical locations. Although their findings may generate theoretical insights, they are rarely directly generalizable to other spatiotemporal settings.

Two paradigmatic examples of this genre are Brown's (1973) study of colonial New England and Eisenstadt's (1972) analyses of the Yishuv (Jewish Palestine) and the

nascent state of Israel. Brown (1973) is concerned with explaining the historical roots of secular voluntary associations in post-Revolutionary Massachusetts. Although religious associations had existed in the region since the time of European settlement, their secular counterparts did not gain popularity until the latter half of the eighteenth century. The activities of the secular associations were initially confined to the Boston area, but at the turn of the century, they gradually expanded to other urban centers. Yet even after this period, most associations continued to draw their membership from local populations, operating largely through face-to-face interaction. Brown attributes the rise and expansion of secular associations to three primary causes: the emergence of a new republican ideal of citizenship after the American Revolution, individuals' recognition of emotional rewards stemming from membership, and the increasing density of New England communities. Thus, his explanation relies on a historically conditioned combination of cultural, psychological, and structural factors.

Eisenstadt's (1972) study seeks to explain the transformation of voluntary associations during the political transition from Jewish Palestine (the Yishuv) to the nascent state of Israel. He argues that associations in the Yishuv consisted primarily of primary groups closely related to social movements and political parties, which performed vital community services and were strongly committed to the dominant Zionist value orientation of the community. After the transition, purely social groups multiplied; associations that performed civic duties became less prevalent, giving way to purely philanthropic organizations, and the political functions of voluntary associations became confined to special interest groups that exerted direct pressure on the government. The value system of the new organizations separated social activities from political participation, placed little emphasis on civic duties, and did not encourage political change. Furthermore, the status structure shifted from one that rewarded political and intellectual involvement to one that valued economic and occupational success.

Eisenstadt attributes the changes in the voluntary system to the reconfiguration of power relations in the new Israeli state. The creation of a complex government and military bureaucracy led to "an immense increase in the political power available for allocation and distribution" (Eisenstadt 1972:6). This shifted many functions away from the voluntary sector, changed status evaluation criteria, and increased the social distance between elite and nonelite social groups. As a result, associations became increasingly stratified and specialized, moving away from the pursuit of communal well-being and toward the production of social advancement for individuals and groups.

In Eisenstadt's (1972) study, a crucial factor in the transformation of the voluntary sector was the tension between individuals' status positions and aspirations, both of which were altered by the new political system. In general, each voluntary association "developed its activities in

204 • SOCIAL AGGREGATIONS

the direction and social sphere in which its members felt that their status-aspirations and references were not affirmed" (p. 11). Thus, for instance, highest-status individuals did not join many organizations, while those in relatively high economic positions mainly joined cultural and social groups.

The findings from both the above studies contribute to our understanding of the organizational dynamics of voluntary associations in specific historical contexts. They suggest that associations develop at the complex intersection of cultural values, demographic and political changes, status group struggles, and individual motivations. As such, this form of research is quite useful for the construction of more general theories of voluntary association dynamics. However, due to its particularistic focus, it is less well suited for the rigorous testing of existing theoretical models.

Institutional Analyses

A number of researchers have stressed the internal structure of associations and their embeddedness in the broader social environment as factors that influence associational lifestyles. This tradition treats the shifting objectives of particular associations, and their ability to fulfill these objectives, as functions of the configurations of decision-making responsibilities within the associations and of the constraints and enablements imposed on them by external institutions. Hence, an association's survival is dependent on its ability to fulfill its objectives, provide sufficient incentives to retain its members, and adapt to a changing political and economic environment.

One way of addressing these questions is to conduct detailed case studies of the development of specific associations. This is the approach taken by Watson (1982), who analyzes a Canadian health advocacy association in an attempt to explain its gradually declining membership and efficacy. He argues that the association's hierarchical administrative structure precluded it from adapting to a changing environment of health-care provision. As shifts in government policy and advances in scientific knowledge made the association's goals increasingly outdated, a number of members advocated a transition to a federative administrative structure with independently managed local chapters. However, those in leadership positions used their control of the association's communication channels and policy-making capabilities to strongly resist the proposed changes. The resulting internal conflict debilitated the association and prevented it from making the changes necessary for its continued operation in a shifting context.

Mead (2000) also analyzes the decline of a specific voluntary association, in this case, an elite Argentinean women's organization focused on delivering assistance to poor women and children. The study is both historical and comparative since it examines the association's transformation during a 40-year period from 1880 to 1920 and generates explanations based on a comparison of the

Argentinean social context with that of France and the United States. Mead cites three reasons for the initial success of the organization: the support of the federal government, Catholic values, and an anti-immigration rhetoric that resonated with the public. Conversely, the Beneficent Society's ultimate decline was a result of its failure to cooperate with newly emerging women's organizations, as well as the professionalization of male-dominated medical care in Argentina, which restricted the association's ability to continue its role as a primary provider of health services to the poor.

The above case studies point to similar determinants of associational well-being. First, internal cohesion is essential for the association's ability to carry out its objectives and to adapt to a changing environment. An excessively rigid administrative structure and high membership heterogeneity can negatively affect this ability by exacerbating conflict between competing interest groups within the association. Second, the actions of external institutions can hinder the association's efficacy by withdrawing financial or political support, exerting pressure over the association's actions, or drastically altering the policy landscape in which the association functions. Both these explanations rest on the underlying assumption that associations must adapt to a changing context by continually adjusting their objectives and administrative structures.

Case studies of voluntary associations tend to focus almost exclusively on advocacy groups, ignoring less instrumental associations (Gordon and Babchuk 1959), such as churches, fraternal organizations, sport clubs, and youth groups. Since instrumental groups tend to formulate more explicit goals, which often focus on the social environment external to the association, it seems reasonable to evaluate their well-being on the basis of their ability to satisfy these goals. However, this is more difficult for expressive organizations, whose goals are often more implicit. Furthermore, it is entirely possible for an association, whether instrumental or expressive, to thrive without fulfilling its overt objectives. Members may continue to participate in the group for reasons that differ from its initial purpose. Consequently, efficacy is a tenuous measure of associational success.

To deal with the above problem, a number of researchers have used a simpler and more reliable indicator of associational well-being: the rate and strength of membership. Since membership levels are relatively easy to measure, they are well suited for survey research, which enables the estimation of trends across a wide population of voluntary associations. This is the strategy used by Knoke (1981) in his study of the effect of associations' political structure on the strength of membership commitment.

Structural Ecology

One approach to the study of organizational dynamics was initiated by McPherson's (1983) article on the ecology of affiliation. Drawing heavily on the evolutionary logic in

bioecology, McPherson argues for a general theory of voluntary association that does not rely on assumptions about individual or group motivations. Building on the work of human ecologists, he instead seeks to capture the system-level processes that shape the behavior of voluntary associations. This inherently relational and dynamic approach views associations as interdependent entities that compete with one another for members. The characteristics of the ecological system have important implications for the growth, persistence, transformation, and decline of individual associations.

The structural-ecological model of voluntary affiliation rests on a few simple assumptions about the nature of the social world. First, social entities are primarily transmitted through social networks; that is, people acquire their behaviors and attitudes from those with whom they interact. Second, social ties are homophilous. Since individuals occupying similar social positions are more likely to interact with one another, entities transmitted through networks tend to be clustered in particular regions of social space. Third, individuals have finite resources, including time and energy. Since each social entity, such as a voluntary association or a cultural preference, consumes a portion of those resources, there is a limit to the number of entities with which each individual can affiliate. Hence, social entities must continually compete with one another for individuals' resources.

McPherson argues that the behavior of voluntary associations is analogous to that of biological species in natural ecosystems. The transmission of memberships across homophilous social ties, which occurs within an inherently competitive ecological system, causes associations to cluster into finite social niches. As memberships are gained and lost at the niche edges, niches gradually shift their position in social space. This process is a direct result of niche competition—members are lost in areas of high competition, characterized by high niche overlap, and gained in areas of low competition, characterized by low niche overlap, causing the niche center to move away from the former and toward the latter.

The same mechanism causes associations to become more or less diverse. An association surrounded by areas of low competition, namely, an association whose niche does not overlap with the niches of other associations, will gain members in all directions of social space, thus becoming more generalist. Conversely, an association surrounded by regions of high competition will lose members in all directions of social space, thus becoming more specialized. In these cases, the standard deviation of the association's membership will change, while its mean, which defines its position in social space, will remain constant.

In addition to its theoretical interest, McPherson's model has a practical advantage for sociologists of voluntary associations: It allows them to explore the effect of social networks on organizational dynamics with conventional survey data. Traditional approaches to network analysis depend on specialized data sets that completely

describe the relationships between the nodes of specific networks. Data of this sort are in short supply, restricting the types of research questions that can be addressed using network logic. In contrast, structural ecology incorporates network mechanisms into its model of social space, making it possible to analyze the behavior of voluntary associations using standard sociodemographic variables.

CIVIL SOCIETY

One of the overarching questions that have occupied political theorists since times of antiquity is what constitutes the "good society." The philosophical and pragmatic challenge presented by this question has been taken up by some of the greatest minds in human intellectual history, including Plato, Aristotle, Hobbes, Locke, Montesquieu, Hegel, Tocqueville, and Marx. In its modern incarnation, the debate over the best way to organize the political structure of society has increasingly emphasized the notion of civil society, understood as "a sphere of social interaction between economy and state, composed above all of the intimate sphere (especially the family), the sphere of associations (especially voluntary associations), social movements, and forms of public communication" (Cohen and Arato 1992:ix).

Philosophers of the early Enlightenment, such as Hobbes and Rousseau, argued that associations were a necessary evil—they were important for democratic rule but had to be closely regulated by the state. In contrast, liberal democrats such as Tocqueville, Locke, and Mill, as well as their pluralist successors, claimed that democratic systems depended on the existence of independent and unregulated associations. They argued that associations maximized the capacities of individuals, kept government power in check, and socialized the polity (Smith and Freedman 1972). Contemporary pluralists expanded this list of functions to include the role of voluntary associations in distributing power in society, leading to satisfaction with the democratic process, providing mechanisms for change, increasing social cohesion, giving people a sense of efficacy and identification, and enabling individual advancement (Smith and Freedman 1972).

Over the past few decades, pluralist thought rooted in Tocquevillian liberal democratic theory has come under severe criticism. Mills and Marcuse argued that pluralism is a mere façade for elite rule, Barber claimed that it necessarily leads to the development of bureaucratic oligarchies, Pinard and Gusfield questioned its ability to prevent totalitarian rule, and Lowi critiqued it for leading to pathological interest group politics (Smith and Freedman 1972). Others have charged that pluralism relegates political action to the private sphere, thereby "deflect[ing] from political participation or activism on the part of citizens" (Cohen and Arato 1992:18).

Although the basic tenets of pluralist theory, with its focus on voluntary associations, have been successfully

206 • SOCIAL AGGREGATIONS

challenged by many of its critics, its idealistic spirit remains dominant in contemporary political theories as diverse as communitarianism and neoconservative anti-statism. This spirit is particularly palpable in Robert Putnam's (1995, 2000) work on social capital and community, which has contributed to a powerful revival of the civil society debate among scholars of voluntary associations (see Edwards and Foley 1998; Ladd 1999; Paxton 1999; Rotolo 1999; Shapiro 2000/2001; Edwards and Foley 2001; Etzioni 2001; Wilson 2001).

Putnam (1995, 2000) argues that social capital rooted in voluntary association membership has been declining steadily in America as a result of generational changes in social values. As baby boomers have allegedly abandoned the voluntaristic ethic of the Great Depression and World War II generations, they have contributed to the rapid deterioration of associationalism in the United States, which, in turn, has depleted overall stocks of social capital among its citizens. After demonstrating myriad correlations between social capital and various social and economic outcomes, Putnam concludes that the ostensible decline in the former may have devastating consequences for American society. He goes on to recommend a number of measures for addressing this dire situation.

Aside from its interpretive conclusions, *Bowling Alone* (Putnam 2000) makes a number of empirical claims that have inspired a wealth of subsequent empirical research. The two most crucial of these are that (1) voluntary association memberships in America have declined systematically over the past few decades and (2) social capital embedded in voluntary associations is an inherently beneficial social phenomenon.

The first claim has led a number of scholars to examine trends in membership rates in American voluntary associations and compare them with those in other countries. Rotolo's (1999) analysis challenges Putnam's conclusions by demonstrating that while overall voluntary association participation decreased briefly after 1974, it increased substantially in the early 1980s (but see McPherson et al. 2006). Similarly, Baer et al. (2001) find that between the early 1980s and 1990s, voluntary association activity in the United States, as well as in Canada, Germany, and the Netherlands, has been increasing steadily. Monti et al. (2003) concur, stating that between 1974 and 1994, "Americans have managed the tension between their private lives and broader public duties better and more creatively than we could have imagined" (p. 143). Finally, Warde et al. (2003) corroborate these findings in the British context, arguing that the volume of social capital in Great Britain has not declined in the past decades.

The second empirical claim made in *Bowling Alone* is that voluntary association membership (cum social capital) is an inherently beneficial social phenomenon. This suggestion has inspired a number of studies that present evidence for the insidious aspects of voluntarism. One of the most influential of these is Kaufman's (2002) *For the Common Good? American Civic Life and the Golden Age*

of Fraternity. Kaufman does not challenge the argument that participation in voluntary associations has declined in the twentieth century. However, unlike Putnam, he sees this decline not as a sign of the unraveling of American democracy but as a mark of a progression toward a more open and inclusive society. At the core of this normative evaluation lies Kaufman's belief that American associationalism has always been a tool of social exclusion, whose legacies include

a long-standing tradition of racial prejudice and interethnic hostility; a pernicious political system dominated by special-interest groups; an ominous love for guns, accompanied by a menacing fear of government; a weak and subservient labor movement; and a half-hearted tradition of public social service provision, capped by the repeated failure to pass even the most rudimentary universal health insurance legislation. (P. 10)

Kaufman's findings provide a significant challenge to Putnam's view of civic participation. This challenge is bolstered by past studies, which have demonstrated the tendency of voluntary associations to be internally homogeneous along various sociodemographic dimensions (McPherson, Smith-Lovin, and Cook 2001) and hence to reproduce structural inequalities in American society (McPherson and Smith-Lovin 1982; Popielarz 1999; Christerson and Emerson 2003; Dougherty 2003). These findings demonstrate the need for a more cautious normative interpretation of empirical data on voluntary participation.

One lesson we may be wise to draw from the civil society debate is that complex social phenomena are often morally ambiguous. Since normative arguments that lament social change and warn of impending social crises often reduce this ambiguity to simple predictive and prescriptive judgments, they should be viewed with a degree of skepticism. Associations can play positive roles, such as when they champion the political claims of marginalized groups or provide material and emotional support for the disadvantaged, as well as profoundly negative ones, such as when they contribute to gender, racial, and economic segregation and perpetuate stereotypical conceptions of social others.

THE FUTURE OF VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATION RESEARCH

Each of the approaches discussed has contributed important elements to our understanding of voluntary associations. The civil society literature was the first to alert scholars to the vital role played by volunteerism in American democracy. Tocqueville's insightful work, along with that of other prominent political theorists of the Enlightenment, helped reshape the perennial discussion about the nature of the "good society," shifting its emphasis from the state's control of the polity to the protection of

communities from abuses of state power. As a result, voluntary associations became revered in public discourse as symbols of American entrepreneurship, compassionate individualism, and traditional community life. This perspective continues to characterize civil society research today, as is evidenced by the discussion surrounding Putnam's work.

The tone of the civil society debate has been predominantly normative, as is the case for most work in political theory. Considering the central problem of this research tradition—the achievement of the good society—such a normative outlook is legitimate and understandable. However, the fundamental questions that have concerned most sociologists of voluntary associations, beginning with the Chicago School, were of a different nature. Rather than trying to place volunteerism in the context of idealized political systems, sociologists have sought to understand the functioning of voluntary associations—who joins them, at what rate, and why it matters. The result has been an accumulation of a vast volume of information about the determinants and consequences of membership.

An important limitation of sociological research on voluntary associations has stemmed from its inability to develop coherent theoretical explanations of its subject matter. This shortcoming has led a number of researchers to turn their attention to what we have termed *organizational dynamics*. However, their efforts have been substantially constrained by the inadequacy of available data. With a few exceptions, most sociological surveys of voluntarism have been cross-sectional and individualistic. As such, they have failed to capture the dynamic relationships between members, organizations, and the broader social context.

The challenge for future research is to overcome the limitations presented by traditional survey data. Nationally

representative longitudinal or panel data that track the creation and dissolution of both individual memberships and entire associations are essential for shedding theoretical light on the empirical observations gathered by correlation studies. Such data would allow researchers to disentangle the causal relationships between membership changes, social networks, organizational dynamics, and large-scale historical developments. They would also enable the investigation of general trends, such as the alleged national decline in voluntary association memberships (Putnam 2000). Furthermore, researchers could map the distribution of memberships by social characteristics over time to disaggregate general trends and test theories about underlying causal mechanisms.

In the past, the complex data sets necessary for such research were beyond the reach of sociologists. However, due to advances in survey research methodology and data collection technology, as well as to the growing theoretical sophistication of the field, funding agencies are becoming increasingly willing to support these new lines of inquiry. These changes have the capacity to significantly alter the way sociologists study voluntarism, just as was the case with the survey revolution of the 1950s.

Voluntary association research is entering an exciting stage of development. Combining new theoretical frameworks, such as structural ecology and life-course analysis, with sophisticated multilevel dynamic data promises to significantly improve our understanding of the creation, transformation, and dissolution of voluntary associations. If researchers capitalize on this potential, the field will progress far beyond the correlation paradigm that has defined it over the past few decades. As evidenced by existing studies that incorporate voluntary association research and social network analysis (e.g., Mark 1998; McPherson et al. 2006), the progress is well under way.

20

THE SOCIOLOGY OF SOCIAL NETWORKS

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Social networks have come to take on prominence in sociology, other academic disciplines, many policy areas, and even in the public discourse in recent years. “Networking,” “six degrees of separation,” “social support,” and “social capital” have been adopted in the business world, among poets and playwrights, and among friends. Yet the diffusion of the underlying terms and concepts from a social network perspective has produced both acceptance and confusion in academic and community circles. Simply stated, a social network is a “structure of relationships linking social actors” (Marsden 2000:2727) or “the set of actors and the ties among them” (Wasserman and Faust 1994). Relationships or ties are the basic building blocks of human experience, mapping the connections that individuals have to one another (Pescosolido 1991). As network theorists claim, the structure of these relationships among actors has important consequences for individuals and for whole systems (Knoke 1990).

Some sociologists see social networks as the essence of social structure (Burt 1980); others see social structure governing these networks (Blau 1974); still others see networks as the mechanism that connects micro and macro levels of social life (Coleman 1990; Pescosolido 1992). To many, the power of network explanations lies in changing the focus of social structure from static categories such as age, gender, and race to the actual nature of the social contacts that individuals have and their impact on life chances (White 1992; Wilson 1987, 1996). In any case, there is a clear link between networks and sociology’s central concerns with social structures and social interaction.

THE ROOTS OF A SOCIAL NETWORK PERSPECTIVE IN SOCIOLOGY

Despite the many varieties of “sociology” in contemporary theory, the role of social interactions may be the single commonality (Pescosolido 1992). Social relationships have always been at the heart of sociological understandings of the world. Many sociologists trace the introduction of the structural approach to social interactions to Georg Simmel (1955) in *Conflict and the Web of Group Affiliations* (Pescosolido and Rubin 2000; White, Boorman, and Brieger 1976). In this work, Simmel (1955) began with the classic statement, “Society arises from the individual and the individual arises out of association” (p. 163). Like the founding sociologist, social interaction was the currency that set Simmel’s work apart from other social sciences and philosophies. In Durkheim’s (1951) *Suicide*, for example, two types of social interaction (integration and regulation) were seen as combining to create four distinct types of social structures (anomic, fatalistic, altruistic, and egoistic), which shaped the behavior of individuals who lived within them. To map these social structures, Durkheim referred to different kinds of “societies,” social groups or institutions such as the family, polity, or religions. While consistent with a network approach, Durkheim’s approach was more implicit than explicit on social ties (Pescosolido 1994).

Simmel suggested that it was the nature of *ties* themselves rather than the social group per se that lay at the center of many human behaviors. In his attempt to

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understand the transition from agrarian to industrial society, Simmel discussed two ideal configurations of social networks, commonly referred to as the “premodern” form of concentric social circles and the “modern” form of the intersection of social circles. For each, Simmel described and considered their effect on individuals, including the way personality and belief structures are formed. Briefly, social networks in premodern society were encapsulating and comforting but often intolerant of outsiders (Blau 1993; Giddens 1990). They provided a sense of security and solidarity, which minimized psychological “tensions” for the majority of individuals. Yet such a structure, as Simmel noted, limited freedom, individuality, and diversity. These networks were, as Suchman (1964) was later to call them, “parochial.”

Modern society brought “cosmopolitan” networks characterized by intersecting circles. The transition to modern society allowed individuals to increasingly participate in a greater number of networks with more numerous, but fewer multistranded, ties (Blau 1977). Individuals craft unique personalities that stand at the intersection of all the social networks they have inherited and built (Burt 1976). Individuals are more unique and tolerant.¹ But with greater choices possible, individuals deal with greater uncertainty and less support (Giddens 1990; Maryanski and Turner 1992).

Sociological research continued to develop, making heavy use of Durkheim and referring less often to Simmel’s network perspective. However, in the 1930s, J. L. Moreno (1934), a psychiatrist and a prolific writer, published *Who Shall Survive? Foundations of Sociometry, Group Psychotherapy, and Sociodrama*. This work marked the major reemergence of the social network metaphor into sociology and, equally important, across the social sciences and into social policy. Working within the context of a girls’ school of the time, Moreno and his colleagues developed sociometric techniques that mapped the relationships among individuals (e.g., Jennings 1943; Moreno and Jennings 1938). The goal was not only scientific but pragmatic, with Moreno (1934) using network data to develop “interpersonal therapy,” discussing its use with national leaders, including then president Franklin D. Roosevelt.

Moreno laid out a dictionary of network terms, many still used in the same way today (see the next section). More important, the sociogram, a visual technique that graphed the ties between social actors, became the main analytical tool of sociometry. For the first time, these pictures of social relationships made clear the structure of friendships, leadership, and classrooms (Jennings 1943; Northway 1940). Each individual was represented by a circle with lines showing connections and arrowheads indicating whether the tie was sent or received (see Figure 20.1).

As the number of cases increased, and the technique was applied to housing units and communities as well as individuals, the sociograms became increasingly difficult

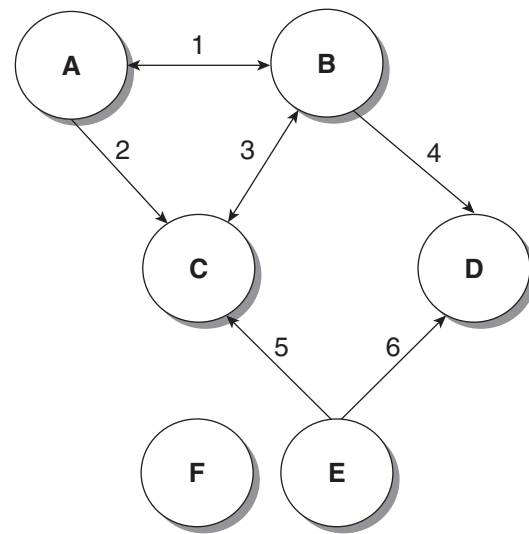


Figure 20.1 Representation of Network Ties in a Sociogram

to read and understand (e.g., see Barnland and Harlund 1963). This was complicated by attempts to introduce other factors, such as sociodemographics or tie intensity, into the graphs. While sociograms continued to appear, these limits saw the graphic approach fall into disuse, and with it, much of the intellectual force that the network approach had brought to sociology. The introduction of graph theory in the 1940s led to the development of mathematical techniques to deal with large networks (Harary, Norman, and Cartwright 1965) and forced Moreno to the sidelines. While Freeman (2004) refers to this period through the 1960s as the “Dark Ages,” balance theory formalized the study of network influences and dramatically influenced theory and data collection in social psychology (e.g., Newcomb 1961).

The next important break came in the 1970s, when Harrison White and colleagues developed new principles to rethink the analysis of network data. Using matrix algebra and clustering techniques, block modeling (White et al. 1976), the essential insight of their approach, rested on five basic ideas.²

But the development of the Harvard School represented more than an answer to an analytical problem. It began a resurgence of theoretical interest in sociology that was limited to neither the kinds of data nor the analytical techniques developed by White and his colleagues. For example, both Granovetter’s (1982) strength-of-weak-ties concept and Fischer’s (1982) documentation that urban alienation was thwarted because people live their lives in small worlds, had roots in this environment. Such a review is not meant to imply that other important work across the social sciences was lacking or should be dismissed. In England, Bott’s (1957) work on social networks in the family was seminal; in psychology, Milgram (1967) traced chains of connection in “small worlds”; in medical

210 • SOCIAL AGGREGATIONS

sociology, Kadushin's (1966) "friends and supporters of psychotherapy," Suchman's (1965) "parochial versus cosmopolitan" network distinction, and Rogers's (1971) similar distinction between "localities" and "cosmopolities" became the mainstays of theoretical development and research agendas.

Nonetheless, the developments at Harvard under Harrison White revived interest in social networks, stemming from the realization that the magnitude of social structural problems could now be matched with adequate theoretical and analytical tools. Carrington, Scott, and Wasserman (2005) saw another recent but unexplained spike in network research and interest beginning in the 1990s. This resurgence captured not only the social sciences but also epidemiology, administrative science and management, physics, communications, and politics. Barabasi (2003) contends that the increased emphasis on networks reflects a broad-based realization that research, traditionally (and successfully) searching for "pieces" of social and physical life, could not consider these pieces in isolation. This recognition, he argues, comes in the wake of the emergence of the Internet with its focus on networks (see also Wasserman 2003; Wellman and Gulia 1999). Paralleling these efforts is the development of a wide range of network analytical techniques catalogued in *Network Analysis* (Wasserman and Faust 1994) and recent additions in *Models and Methods in Social Network Analysis* (Carrington et al. 2005).

MAIN CONTRIBUTIONS: PRINCIPLES UNDERLYING THE SOCIAL NETWORK PERSPECTIVE

There is no single network "theory"; in fact, Knoke (1990) sees this as unlikely and even inappropriate. The network approach is considered by most, who use it as more of a perspective or frame that can be used to develop specific theories. Yet sociologists share, across studies, basic principles that often underlie much research using a network frame and guide the development of specific investigations and analyses.³

1. Social actors, whether individuals, organizations, or nations, shape their everyday lives through consultation, information and resource sharing, suggestion, support, and nagging from others (White et al. 1976). Network interactions influence beliefs and attitudes as well as behavior, action, and outcomes.

2. Individuals are neither puppets of the social structure nor purely rational, calculating individuals. Individuals are "sociosyncratic," both acting and reacting to the social networks in their environment (Elder 1998a, 1998b; Pescosolido 1992). They are, however, always seen as interdependent rather than independent (Wasserman and Faust 1994). Some theorists (e.g., Coleman 1990) see

networks in the purposive action, rational actor tradition, but this represents only one view that can be subsumed within a network perspective (Pescosolido 1992).

3. Important but often daunting and abstract influences such as "society," "institution," "culture," the "community," and the "system" can be understood by looking to the set of social interactions that occur within them (Tilly 1984). Networks set a context within groups, formal organizations, and institutions for those who work in or are served by them, which, in turn, affects what people do, how they feel, and what happens to them (Wright 1997).

4. Three characteristics of social networks are distinct—structure, content, and function. *Structure* targets the architectural aspect of network ties (e.g., size, density, or types of relationships). *Content* taps what flows across the network ties. They are "channels for transfers of material or non-material resources" (Wasserman and Faust 1994). That is, attitudes and opinions, as well as more tangible experiences and collective memory, are held within networks (Emirbayer and Goodwin 1994; Erikson 1996; Stryker 1980). Finally, networks serve a variety of *functions*, including emotional support, instrumental aid, appraisal, and monitoring (Pearlin and Aneshensel 1986).

5. Network influence requires the consideration of interactions among these three aspects. Structural elements (e.g., size) of a network may tap the amount of potential influence that can be exerted by the network (i.e., the "push"). However, only the content of the network can provide an indication of the direction of that influence (i.e., the "trajectory"). For example, large networks can influence individuals on the Upper West Side of Manhattan to seek out medical professionals (Kadushin 1966) while keeping individuals in Puerto Rico out of the medical system (Pescosolido, Wright, et al. 1998). The intersection of the structure and content of social networks together calibrates whether and how much individuals will be pushed toward or away from doctors and alternative healers or even rely only on family for assistance (Freidson 1970; Pescosolido 1991).

6. Networks may be in sync or in conflict with one another. Different contexts can circumscribe different sets of networks (Simmel 1955). Family, peer, and official school-based networks, for example, may reinforce messages or clash in priorities for teenagers. The level of discordance in the "culture" of networks and the *interface* of social circles may be critical to understanding the behavior of social actors (Pescosolido, Wright, and Sullivan 1995). They may also be different from the perspective of interacting parties in ways that provide insight into social action and outcomes (Pescosolido and Wright 2002).

7. Social interactions can be positive or negative, helpful or harmful. They can integrate individuals into a community and, just as powerfully, place stringent isolating regulations on behavior. The little research that has

explored negative ties in people's lives has found them to have powerful effects (Berkman 1986; Pagel, Erdly, and Becker 1987). Portes (1998), Rumbaut (1977), and Waldinger (1995) all document how tight social interactions within ethnic groups lead to restricted job opportunities for those inside and outside of the ethnic networks.

8. "More" is not necessarily better with regard to social ties. As Durkheim (1951) pointed out, too much oversight (regulation) or support (integration) can be stifling and repressive (Pescosolido 1994). Further, "strong" ties are not necessarily optimal because "weak" ties often act as a bridge to different information and resources (Granovetter 1982), and holes in network structures (Burt 1980) provide opportunities that can be exploited. The focus on social support, and now social capital, may have obfuscated the focus on the "dark" aspects of social networks (see below).

9. Networks across all levels are dynamic, not static, structures and processes.⁴ The ability to form and maintain social ties may be just as important as their state at one point in time. There may be changes in the structure of networks or changes in membership. In fact, early work on this topic suggests that turnover rates may hover around 50%, while the structure (e.g., size) tends to remain stable (Perry 2005a). As Moody, McFarland, and Bender-deMoll (2005) note, "An apparently static network pattern *emerges* through a set of temporal interactions" (p. 1209). Further, the underlying reasons for changing networks may mark important insights into the influence of networks (Perry 2005a; Pescosolido and Wright 2004; Sutor, Wellman, and Morgan 1996; Wellman, Wong, Tindall, and Nazer 1996). This focus represents some of the newest work in sociology and some of the greatest theoretical, methodological, and analytical challenges (Bearman, Moody, and Stovel 2004; Snijders 1998). In fact, Carrington et al. (2005) refer to the analysis of social networks over time as the "Holy Grail" of network research. New analytical methods and visualization approaches are becoming available to see how social networks look and trace how they change (Bearman et al. 2004; Freeman 2004).

10. A network perspective allows for, and even calls for, multimethod approaches. Jinnett, Coulter, and Koegel (2002) conclude that quantitative research is powerful in documenting the effects of social networks but only when accompanied by qualitative research that describes why they operate and look the way they do. There is no standard way to chart network relationships—they may be derived from a list on a survey where individuals are asked to name people they trust, admire, or dislike or with whom they share information. Alternatively, the information may come from observing the behavior of individuals (e.g., who they talk to in their work group; Homans 1951, 1961). Network information can be collected through archival sources such as citation records (Hargens 2000) or by documenting the behavior of organizations or countries (e.g., trade agreements; Alderson and Beckfield 2004). Even

simulated data can be and have been used to examine network processes (Cederman 2005; Eguiluz et al. 2005; Moss and Edmonds 2005).⁵ In sum, deciding which kinds of social networks are of interest, how to elicit the ties, and how to track their dynamics remain critical issues (Berkman 1986; House, Robbins, and Metzner 1982; Leik and Chalkey 1996; O'Reilly 1998; Sutor et al. 1996; Wellman et al. 1996).

11. Sociodemographic characteristics are potential factors shaping the boundaries of social networks but provide, at best, poor measures of social interaction (Collins 1988; Morgan, Patrick, and Charlton 1984; White et al. 1976). Originally, networks were circumscribed by the place where people lived and their customs (Fischer 1982; Pescosolido and Rubin 2000; Simmel 1955; Wellman 1982). But a process of "disembedding" (Giddens 1990) from local places has been replaced by a "re-embedding" at the global level. While we may continue to see gross differences in, for example, the number of network ties by these "actor attributes" (Monge and Contractor 2003) or "composition variables" (Wasserman and Faust 1994), these static characteristics only indirectly tap the real underlying social forces at work—the content, structure, and function of social interactions.

Used in combination with social network factors, these characteristics offer two possibilities. First, complicated issues—for example, that men tend to report more networks but that women's networks are more intimate (Campbell and Rosenfeld 1985; Moore 1992)—can now be more readily examined with analytical techniques (Carrington et al. 2005; Freeman 2004; Koehly and Pattison 2005). Second, networks may operate differently for different groups. That is, considered as potential interactive factors, rather than simply shaping ones, attribute variables may provide insights into how social network processes create different pathways of beliefs and behaviors for social actors.

12. Individuals form ties under contextual constraints and interact given social psychological and neurological capacities. Thus, social networks exist in a multilevel environment. Some of these levels (e.g., organizations) may also be conceptualized in network terms. For example, an individual's network ties within the religious sphere exist within geographic areas that themselves have a structure of religious network types and a more general social capital profile (e.g., areas where the religion is dominant or in a minority; Pescosolido 1990). Such a view leads to additional research questions about whether network structures operate in the same way in different contexts (Pescosolido 1994). Similarly, other factors (e.g., laws) may set structural conditions on relationships (e.g., within organizational or business organization fields).

Further, individuals' social networks are not divorced from the body and the physical/mental capacities that individuals bring to them (Leventhal, Leventhal, and Contrada 1997; Orlinsky and Howard 1987; Rosenfield

212 • SOCIAL AGGREGATIONS

and Wenzel 1997). As Fremont and Bird (2000) report, when social interactions are the source of social stress, the impact appears to be more devastating in magnitude (see also Perry 2005b). Social psychological characteristics (e.g., self-reliance) may also influence the effect of network ties. Biological challenges may lie at the heart of dramatic changes in individuals' social network systems both for those affected directly and for caregivers (Dozier 1993; Dozier, Cue, and Barnett 1994; Lysaker et al. 1994; Rosenfield and Wenzel 1997; Suito and Pillemer 2002). It has long been known that children with physiological or neurological deficits have difficulties in establishing social relationships (Perry 2005b). Sociologists know that these early social relationships affect adult educational outcomes (Entwisle, Alexander, and Olson 2005).

Networks may also affect biology. In trying to understand why social networks matter—for example, in cardiac health—researchers have linked constellations of social networks to biological processes (e.g., plasma fibrinogen levels; Helminen et al. 1997). Furthermore, social support has been shown to influence the phenotypic expression of genetic predispositions (Caspi et al. 2002).

NETWORK BASICS

Even with some agreement on network foundations, a myriad of concepts and approaches confront the network approach with the necessity of clarifying terms (see also Monge and Contractor 2003). The most frequently referenced terms are briefly described below. This is neither an exhaustive nor a technical lexicon of network terminology; rather, the goal is to provide an orientation to network language and its basic variants.

- *Node, social atom, actor*: These terms refer to the central “units” that have networks. Social actors often refer to individuals; however, actors may also be families (Padgett and Ansell 1993), organizations (Galaskiewicz 1985), nations (Alderson and Beckfield 2004; Snyder and Kick 1979), or any other entity that can form or maintain formal (e.g., legal, economic) or informal (friendship, gossip) relationships (Figure 20.1: A, B, D through F represented as circles are “actors”).

- *Ties, links, relationships, edges*: The network connections between and among actors are referred to as ties. Ties can be directed (sent or received) or not directed (joint organizational memberships). In Figure 20.1, a tie is sent from B to D (out-degree); D receives a tie from E (in-degree). A and B send and receive ties to each other. Double-headed arrows indicate “mutual,” “bidirectional,” “symmetrical,” or “reciprocal” ties. They may map the existence of a relationship or have an intensity (ties in Figure 20.1 are lines 1 through 6). The two-actor connectors are dyads; three-actor connections are triads.

- *Subgroups*: When the focus is on some subset of actors and their linkages, the search is for subgroups.

- *Sociogram*: This is a picture of the relationships among members in a social network (Figure 20.1).

- *Sociomatrix/adjacency matrix*: Network ties can also be recorded and depicted as a set of numbers in a square table that consists of rows (recording ties sent) and columns (ties received) (see Figure 20.2).

- *Type of tie*: Networks can depict or illustrate different kinds of relationships called “types.” For example, Padgett and Ansell’s (1993) study of a Florentine family included both marriage and business ties.

- *Sociometric star*: In a social network, an actor(s) receiving a relatively high degree or number of ties is considered to be a “star.” In Figure 20.1, C is a sociometric star with four in-degrees, more than any other actor.

- *Isolate*: An ego or node receiving no ties is an isolate (F in Figure 20.1, Actor 6 in Figure 20.2).

- *Network path*: Paths are determined by tracing ties to determine the number of degrees of separation between two actors. If two actors are directly connected, the value of the path is 1 (Figure 20.1, the path between A and B). The path value between E and A is 3 since E can be connected to A by tracing the path from E to C, C to B, and B to A.

- *Size*: In a network, the number of social actors constitutes the network size (in Figure 20.1, $n = 6$; in Figure 20.2, $N = 100$). In ego-based networks (see the next section), size refers to the number of ties listed for each social actor (e.g., How many confidants do you have?).

- *Density*: The “tightness” or “connectedness” of ties among actors in a network is calculated by the proportion of ties existing in a network divided by the possible number of ties that could be sent and received. Density

	1	2	3	4	5	6...	...100
1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1
2	1	0	1	1	0	0	1
3	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
4	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
5	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
⋮							
100	1	2	0	1	0	0	

Figure 20.2 Representation of Network Ties with a Sociomatrix

answers the question of how well all the members of a network are connected to one another (Figure 20.2: 30 possible ties, 9 ties sent, yielding a density of 9/30 or 0.33).

- *Content/function*: Both describe the meaning or nature of the tie.

- *Strength*: This is a measure of intensity or potency of a tie. It may indicate frequency (e.g., how many trading agreements countries share), closeness (How close do you feel to X?), or another relevant quality that offers a value to the tie or defines a name generator (How many close business associates do you have in this firm?).
- *Multiplexity*: When ties are based on more than one relationship, entail more than one type of social activity or social role, or serve more than one purpose, they are thought to be multiplex, “many stranded,” or “multipurpose” (Barnes 1972). Multiplex ties tend to be more durable and deeper than those based on only one connection (Holschuh and Segal 2002; Morin and Seidman 1986; Tolsdorf 1976).
- *Instrumental support*: Ties that offer practical resources or assistance are said to deliver instrumental support.
- *Emotional support*: Ties that provide love, caring, and nurturing offer emotional support (Thoits 1995).
- *Appraisal*: This targets network assistance in evaluating a problem or a source of aid (Pearlin and Aneshensel 1986).
- *Monitoring*: When network ties watch, discipline, or regulate the behavior of other social actors, the monitoring function is fulfilled (Pearlin and Aneshensel 1986).

- *Latent versus activated ties*: Latent ties represent the number, structure, or resources of those ties on which actors expect to rely on a regular basis (Knoke 1990; Who can you rely on generally?). Activated ties represent a list of those persons, organizations, and so on that actors actually contacted in the face of a specific problem or task (e.g., Who did you consult?).

- *Network “holes”/network “bridges”*: *Holes* refers to places in a network structure where social actors are unconnected (Burt 1992, 2001). These holes afford opportunities to build bridges where social actors can connect different subgroups or cliques, bringing new information to each (Granovetter 1982).

- *Binary/valued data*: These terms differentiate between the reporting of whether a tie exists or not and reporting ties where there is some sort of assessment (How close are you to X? Rate from 1 to 4).

- *Diffusion*: This type of network analysis focuses on the flow of information through a network—for example, why some social actors adopt a new idea and others do not (Deffuant, Huet, and Amblard 2005; Valente 2005).

FOUR TRADITIONS OR APPROACHES

Part of the complexity of understanding the contributions and future directions of social network research in sociology lies in the different ways in which the idea of network ties has been incorporated in research. The approaches have also been characterized by differences in theoretical starting points, data requirements, and methods of data collection. In this sense, they are not strictly different traditions but nonetheless represent different strands of research. They continue to use different terms and draw only sporadically from one another (Thoits 1995).

The first two represent quantitative traditions. The *complete or full* network approach attempts to describe and analyze whole network system. The *local or ego-centered approach* targets the ties surrounding particular individual actors. The *social support* perspective is more general and theory oriented, often using network imagery but tending to focus on the overall state of an individual’s social relationships and summary measures of networks. The *social capital* perspective is the most recent, focusing on the “good” things that flow along network ties (i.e., trust, solidarity), which are complementary to the more economically focused human capital (e.g., education; Lin 2000).

As Wasserman and Faust (1994) note, the first question to ask and the one most relevant to distinguish many of these traditions is “What is your population?”

The Whole, Complete, or Full Network Approach

This tradition, in many ways, represents the “purest” approach. Here, all network ties among members of a population are considered. This allows for a mapping of the overall social network structure. And the most advanced techniques have been developed to determine and describe that structure. Full networks have been described in hospitals (Barley 1986), elite or ruling families (Padgett and Ansell 1993), laboratory groups and other scientific collaboration (Breiger 1976; Powell et al. 2005), business structures (Galaskiewicz et al. 1985), world trading partners and global economic systems (Alderson and Beckfield 2004; Snyder and Kick 1979), policy-making systems (Laumann and Knoke 1987; Laumann and Pappi 1976), and schools (Bearman et al. 2004).

In keeping with Wasserman and Faust’s (1994) questions, this approach requires that the universe of network members can, in fact, be delineated. That is, it must first be possible to list all the members of the social structure in question and to elicit, in some way, the ties or bonds that exist among them. To make the analysis effective, data must be collected from all members of the population. While assumptions can be made to fill in missing data (e.g., assume that ties are reciprocal), this solution becomes more questionable as the response rate decreases even to levels considered acceptable for nonresponse in surveys. Furthermore, unlike regression techniques, there

214 • SOCIAL AGGREGATIONS

are no well-established and tested options to deal with missing data. These requirements for defining the population and having nearly 100% response or completion rates make this approach unfeasible for many questions.

However, problems that can be matched to these stringent data requirements have at their disposal a rich range of possibilities for analysis. This analysis of complete network data begins with the construction of the sociomatrix or adjacency matrix of the type depicted in Figure 20.2, which lays out all ties. The data can be summarized across rows and columns in a number of ways, and individuals can be clustered together to examine clique structures or blocks. For example, in the block model approach (White et al. 1976), the assumption of structural equivalence is used to bring together columns of data that share *both* a similarity of ties and an absence of ties. As an illustration, in Figure 20.3, Panel A, an original matrix of zeros and ones for 100 actors has been clustered into four blocks of structurally equivalent social actors. Essentially, in this reordered matrix, the rows and columns have simply been reassigned from their original position in Figure 20.2 into blocks that reflect groupings (e.g., within the first block, the social actors with original IDs 1, 10, 11, 14, 77, and 81 have been grouped together based on the similarity of ties). Within each block of this new matrix, called the density matrix, the percentage or proportion of ones (indicating the presence of ties of the number possible) has been computed. So, for example, among the social actors in Block 1, 60% of the possible ties that can exist do exist. This indicates that this block may, in fact, be a clique or subgroup. However, only 10% of the ties that can exist between Block 1 and Block 3 have actually been recorded, indicating that those actors in Block 1 *do not* tend to be connected to those in Block 3.

The interpretation of the block structure begins with a conversion of the block proportions into ones and zeros. In the most stringent analysis, the cutting point between ties and no ties is a pure zero block (no ties). However, as can be seen in this more typical result, there are no such blocks (though Blocks 3 and 4 come close). The conversion from a density matrix to an image matrix, in most cases, requires a decision about an acceptable cutting point, which is often facilitated by having a good knowledge of the data collection setting. In the absence of that information (and often when the site is familiar), the conversion depends on the analyst's decision. Here, one choice might be to use a cutting point of 0.4 or above. A more stringent choice might be 0.6 or above. Figure 20.3, Panel B, uses the less stringent 0.4 criteria to represent the image matrix. There is no statistic that can determine either the proper number of blocks or the density cutting point, making the decision making relatively arbitrary.

To this point, then, actors were partitioned into structurally equivalent sets with the density of ties computed, and the structure of relationships was mapped into a set of images indicating whether subgroups exist and how they related to other blocks. To get a better sense of the

Panel A

	1	2	3	4
1 10 11 14 77 81	.60	.40	.10	.06
2	.80	.90	.14	.21
3	.65	.87	.11	.67
4	.18	.51	.01	.48

Panel B

	1	2	3	4
1	1	1	0	0
2	1	1	0	0
3	1	1	0	1
4	0	1	0	1

Panel C

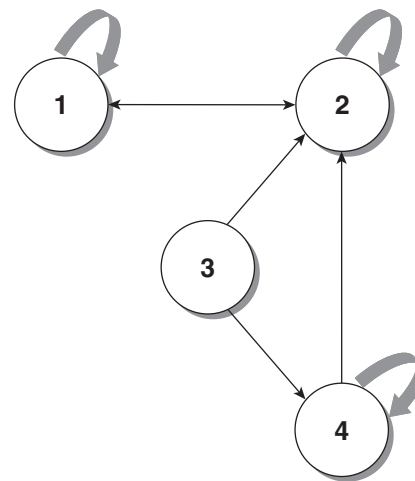


Figure 20.3 Hypothetical Density, Image, and Socio-Matrix from a Block Model Analysis of a Complete Network

structure of relationships, a sociogram can be constructed using the blocks, not actors, as nodes in the diagram (Figure 20.3, Panel C). The actors in Blocks 1, 2, and 4 appear to form subgroups because they send and receive ties to each other. Note, however, that the individuals in Block 4 are similar only in the patterns of their ties to other actors but do not in themselves form a subgroup. This also suggests that this group may be of lower prestige since they send ties to all other groups but do not receive ties in return (i.e., asymmetry). Furthermore, only the actors in Blocks 1 and 2 have a mutual relationship.

In sum, the complete network tradition is concerned with the structural properties of networks at a global or whole level (Doreian, Batagelj, and Ferligoj 2005). The primary issue in taking this approach is the identification of the boundaries of the network, which requires answering the question “Who are the relevant actors?” (Marsden 2005; Wasserman and Faust 1994).

The Local or Ego-Centered Approach

If the first approach is the purest, then this approach is the most typical. While data requirements may be less strict, there are more limits to what can be done analytically. Here, the focus is on a set of social actors who are defined as a sample. The effort centers on gathering information about the network from the standpoint of the social actors situated within it (Marsden 2005). Since it is impossible to include, for example, all individuals in a large community, each social actor is asked about his or her own ties. In Figure 20.4, each social actor (A, B, C through E of a small to very large N) was selected under some purposive sampling plan, whether a random sample, deliberate sample, or convenience sample. Here, each selected social actor (A through E) is typically asked to list other social actors in response to a name generator. This list may record all the individuals with whom a respondent is friends, loans money to, receives money from, and so on. The first case (Ego A) names three alters, Ego D names seven, and Ego B lists only one. In some cases, the individuals who are named may also be contacted using a snowball sampling technique (see Figure 20.4, Egos A or E). The original respondents may be called egos or focal respondents (FRs), while those they name, who are followed up, may be called alters or network respondents (NRs) (Figure 20.4).

The NRs may be asked about the networks that the original FR has, perhaps for

corroboration or theoretical purposes (Pescosolido and Wright 2002). In this case, the dashed line indicates that Alter A1 does, in fact, have a relationship with the FR or ego, as does Alter A2. However, Alter 3 indicates no such tie to FR A. Finally, the alters may also be asked about their *own* ties. In caregiver research, it is a typical strategy to ask “Who cares for the caregivers?” Here, as indicated by the dotted lines, Ego E reports two network ties (Alters E2 and E1). They, in turn, have reported their ties. E1 mentions two actors, including the original person (Ego E). However, Alter E2 mentions five supporters but does not include Ego E among them. Such relationships have theoretical implications for both the stability and the durability of each ego’s network support system as well as for the ability of each caregiver to experience “burnout” (e.g., Suito and Pillemer 2002).

While more limited network mapping can be done compared with complete network data, factors such as the size

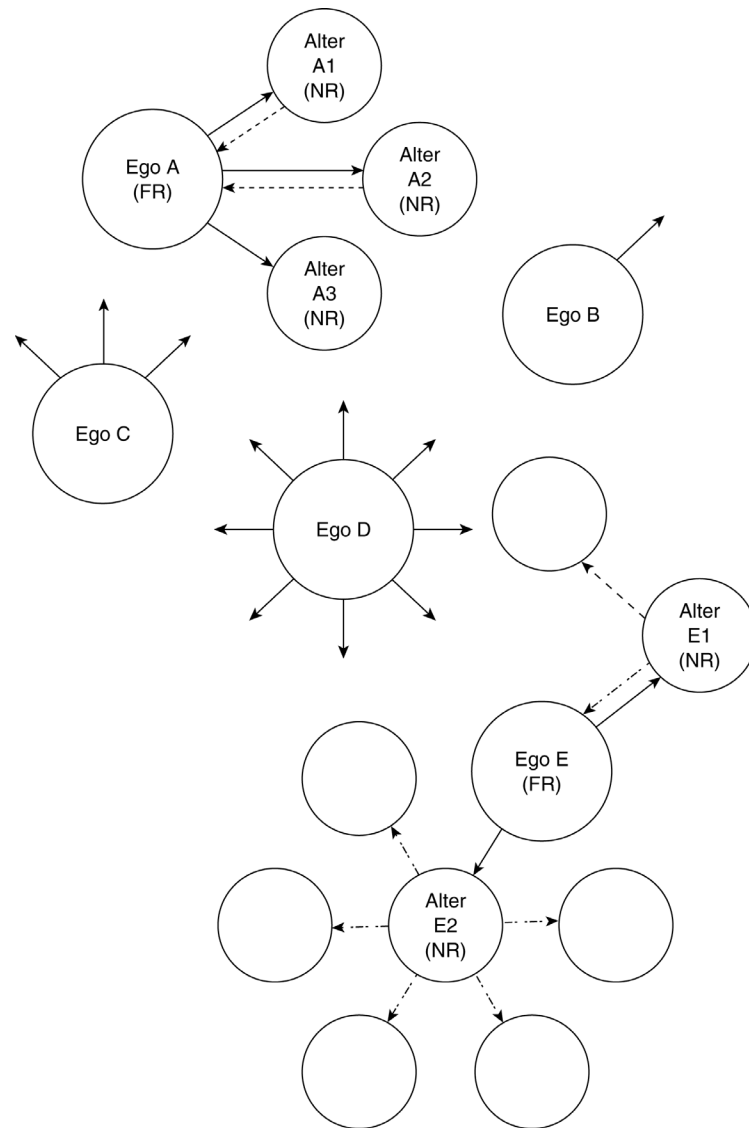


Figure 20.4 Local or Ego-Centered Structures

216 • SOCIAL AGGREGATIONS

(as a count of mentions), density (by asking the FRs to indicate whether each NR they mention as a tie knows each other tie), or reciprocity (by asking the FRs if they also provide friendship, assistance, etc., or by asking the NRs in a first-stage snowball) can be constructed and used to test theoretical ideas about the influence of social networks. Attribute information can be collected on each tie (e.g., gender, age, ethnicity, attitudes), which can be used to examine, for example, the influence of network homogeneity on structural and context issues. Even the interaction of network size and content, noted earlier (Principle 5), can be operationalized, though recent methodological concerns surround the appropriate construction of such interactions (Allison 1978; Long 1997; for substantive examples of different approaches, see Pescosolido, Brooks-Gardner, and Lubell 1998; Pescosolido, Wright, et al. 1998).

The Social Support Approach

This tradition, unlike the two described above, comes primarily from a social psychological, rather than a structural, perspective. As Thoits (1995) notes, social support is the most frequently studied psychosocial resource and has been documented to be a powerful influence, for example, in occurrence of and recovery from life problems. While social support is seen similarly as resources available from family, friends, organizations, and other actors, researchers here tend to use a summary social integration strategy, looking less to network structures (Barrera 1986). Emanating from a concern with actors' responses to stressful situations, social support is considered a social reserve that may either prevent or buffer adverse events that occur in people's lives (Pearlin and Aneshensel 1986).

Social networks represent one component of social support (House, Landis, and Umberson 1988), in contrast to the structural perspective that tends to see social support, conversely, as a possible type of tie, a resource that flows over ties, or content that may or may not occur (Faber and Wasserman 2002; Wellman 1981). However, the social support tradition does not ignore structure altogether, noting that indicators of structural support (i.e., the organization of an individual's ties in terms of size, density, multiplexity) are important (Barrera 1986). Yet the focus in this approach is on the sustaining qualities of social relationships (Haines, Beggs, and Hurlbert 2002). Researchers tend to ask study respondents whether they have/had enough support in everyday life issues or critical events. Questions may target either perceived social support (i.e., the belief that love, caring, and assistance are potentially available from others; latent networks in the structural tradition) or received support (i.e., the actual use of others for caring, assistance, appraisal [Thoits 1995], activated networks in the structural tradition). In fact, social support research has documented that perceived support is more important than actual support received (House 1981; Turner and Marino 1994). Even more surprising, Cohen

and Wills (1985) suggest that the simplest and most potent indicator is whether individuals report that they have a single intimate tie in which they can confide.

The Social Capital Tradition

According to Monge and Contractor (2003), the ideas underlying the investigation of social capital were introduced in the 1980s to refer to resources that accrue to social actors from individuals to nations as a result of networks (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992; Coleman 1990; Lin 2000)—that is, because individuals participate in social groups, there are benefits to be had. Individuals invest in and use the resources embedded in social networks because they expect returns of some sort (Lin 2000). Resources are not equally available to all individuals but are differentially distributed across groups in society (Lin 2000). Thus, social capital in the form of trust, social norms of reciprocity, cooperation, and participation resides in relationships, not individuals, and therefore shares roots with many aspects of classical sociology and other network traditions (Paxton 2002; Portes 1998).

Although some contend that the social capital approach brings no novel ideas to network perspective, offering only a "more appealing conceptual garb" (Portes 1998; see also Etzioni 2001; Wilson 2001), three unique aspects of this approach are notable. First, more than the other traditions, social capital research has been popularized to describe the state of civil society (e.g., Putnam's [1995] concept of "bowling alone") or differing geographical areas (e.g., neighborhoods, Rahn 2004) and to relate to large public policy issues. For example, Wilson (2001) suggests that social networks constitute social capital to the extent that they contribute to civic engagement. As such, these resources can be measured at multiple levels (the individual, the neighborhood, the nation), a measurement task difficult under the other traditions. Social capital data have been collected in a variety of ways, from the number of positive networks or connections that individuals have to overall geographical characteristics (e.g., migration rates, voting rates). Second, social capital focuses attention on the positive qualities (though not necessarily consequences) of social ties, downplaying the potential "dark side" of networks. As Edwards and Foley (2001:230) note, social capital comes in three "flavors"—good, better, and best. From a social network perspective, this aspect is perhaps the most troubling. Like the social support tradition, this emphasis on positive contents limits the theoretical import of ties. Third, the social capital approach has broadened the appeal of a network perspective to those in other social science disciplines outside sociology. By providing sociability that is parallel to "human capital" and "fiscal capital," the introduction of social capital reinforced the sociological thesis that social interaction can have powerful effects on actors.

These unique contributions produce other curious corollaries. Because of its affiliation with other forms of

“capital,” the social capital tradition has been more likely to adopt a rational choice foundation. Social capital theorists often talk about the costs and benefits of establishing ties, as well as how and why actors deliberately construct or maintain ties in the service of creating opportunities and resources. This discussion of “investment strategies” or “fungibility,” “opportunity costs” or “resources to pursue interests” (Baker 1990), does not question the self-interested and antisocial nature of individuals, a debate in sociology still not settled by those who see an inherent sociability. By basing the perspective in the notion of purposive action (Lin 1999), the roles of “habitus” and emotions are underplayed, if not absent, in the rational choice perspective that undergirds most social capital research (Pescosolido 1992).

THE FUTURE OF SOCIAL NETWORKS: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The network perspective poses many challenges to routine ways of doing sociological research. Two seem to be most pressing. The first entails questions about social networks themselves, their dynamics, and how the network approach might be integrated into the life-course approach. Such questions include the following: To what extent do ties persist? Why do some persist more than others? How do changes affect actors’ networks and intersect with larger changes in society? How are network dynamics intertwined with change in other life arenas? (Pescosolido and Wright 2002; Sutor et al. 1996). The second topic addresses the interplay of social and biological forces. The biological and social network interaction across the life course represents some of the most recent considerations that have been posited (Elder 1998b; Giele 2002; Klovdahl, Graviss, and Musser 2002; Shonkoff and Phillips 2000). Relevant questions include the following: How are social networks shaped by and shape lives through psychological and biological processes? Can we understand what happens in social life by reference to the limits that social networks, genetics, personality, and biology set for one another?

Patterns, Pathways, and Trajectories of Networks and Their Influence

The life-course perspective views lives as organized socially across both biological and historical time (Elder 1998b; see also Werner 2002). The social network perspective suggests that what links the lives of individuals to the

time and place in which they live are their connections to others (Kahn and Antonucci 1980). However, these interactions can exist at many levels—individuals interacting with other individuals, individuals interacting within large social groups or organizations, and individuals interacting in larger climates or contexts that may differentially affect outcomes. Simultaneously embracing the dynamics and multiple levels of the life course—that is, understanding social networks as attached to time and place—reveals a complex interplay of forces to be examined. If social networks mark the social interdependence that continuously shapes and redirects lives, then exploring how they play a role in pathways, trajectories, and transitions becomes critical (Elder 1985; Moen, Robison, and Dempster-McClain 1995; Pavalko 1997; Werner 2002).

The Multidisciplinary Evolution and Prominence of Social Networks

From its beginning, the network approach has been embraced by a variety of social science disciplines, particularly anthropology (e.g., Barnes 1954; Bott 1957; Mitchell 1969). The network approach has come to be a major force in the areas of health and medicine (Levy and Pescosolido 2002); communications research (Monge and Contractor 2003); mathematics, physics, and other sciences (Barabasi 2003; Watts 2003); and political science (Fowler and Smirnov 2005; Huckfeldt and Sprague 1987; Rahn 2004). Yet these areas remain unconnected. Taking seriously the life-course perspective’s principle of “linked lives” (Elder and Pellerin 1998; Werner 2002), the network perspective offers a way to synthesize disciplinary insights.

While network theory may reject focusing on individuals alone, mental events, cognitive maps, or technological determinism (White 1992), identity, cognition, technology, and biology may be intertwined in complex ways. Agenda-setting reports on health and medicine, for example, have embraced this possibility. In an Institute of Medicine report, *From Neurons to Neighborhoods* (Shonkoff and Phillips 2000), social network relationships are viewed as the “fundamental mediators of human adaptations” and the “active ingredients of environmental influence.” Yet the response of sociology in leading the theoretical agenda has been slow. If we see, as Castells (2000) suggests, that social structure is made up of networks in interactions that are constantly on the move, similar to self-generating process images in molecular biology, sociologists’ familiarity with conceptualizing multilevel, dynamic processes becomes essential to understanding social life.

21

WORK AND OCCUPATIONS

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The study of work has been part of sociology since its beginning. Karl Marx described how capitalist relations of production transformed work from the creative matter of subsistence to the alienated activity of mass production manufacture. Max Weber also studied work: the emergence of capitalism via the culture of Calvinism, and, later, the dehumanization of work in bureaucracies. Émile Durkheim approached work as part of the study of the division of labor. In prior societies (which he referred to as having mechanical solidarity), work was an expression of one's sameness to others; in the modern societies (which Durkheim referred to as having organic solidarity), specialization led to evermore differentiated divisions of labor and job specialization. The study of work (as an extension of identity) locates most naturally in societies that are organically organized, while occupations belong to societies characterized by mechanical solidarity.

While work (and, by implication, occupations) compelled these and other sociologists' writing in the first decades of our discipline, almost no sociologist studied the cultural definition of work; none entered the factory, farm, or firm to understand how work was defined and managed by those who work. The closest thing to an ethnography of work was Frederick Engels's ([1845] 1973) *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, written when the author was 24 years old.

Engels describes how machines have simplified work and changed its social character:

The human labour, involved in both spinning and weaving, consists chiefly in piercing broken threads, as the machine does all the rest. This work requires no muscular strength, but

only flexibility of finger. Men are, therefore, not only not needed for it, but actually, by reason of the greater muscular development of the hand, less fit for it than women and children, and are, therefore naturally superceded by them. Hence, the more the use of the arms, the expenditure of strength can be transferred to steam or water power, the fewer men need be employed; and as women and children work more cheaply, and in these branches better than men, they take their places. (P. 179)

From this passage, it is clear that these revolutionary changes altered working-class family life as work replaced work previously based on skill and strength with the repetitive movement of the assembly line.

For the child workers, the conditions in the factory were horrific. Engels described narcotics use among children. The repetitive work produced physical deformity. Children were punished for minor infractions and suffered work-related injury, stunted growth and imagination, as well as the decline of home life. The culture of early industrialized work was a kids' world of full-fledged exploitation.

One of the strongest themes in the book concerns the impact of industrial life on family culture: Roles were reversed as women were forced into the workforce. These themes would be returned to 100 years hence.

This book was based on field research in the working-class slums and factories of industrial England. What is not generally remembered is that Engels, the privileged son of a factory owner, was guided into the dark neighborhoods and oppressive factories by his working-class Irish girlfriend, Mary Burns. All fieldworkers need an entry to the field!

WORK AND OCCUPATIONS IN AMERICAN SOCIOLOGY

The study of work and occupations began during the 1920s at the University of Chicago, as an aspect of the Chicago School of sociology. University of Chicago sociologists, under the tutelage and theoretical guidance of W. I. Thomas and Robert Park, applied an ecological orientation to the study of urban institutions, including work and occupations. One of first graduate students to focus on work was Everett Hughes, who earned his Ph.D. in 1927 for a study of the Chicago Real Estate Board. Hughes was especially interested in the contested steps in the process of how occupations claimed the designation of “profession.” These themes would reemerge as the subfield developed, especially during the 1950s.

A competing, yet largely mutually exclusive trend in the study of work and occupations during the formative era was “industrial sociology,” that is, a sociology applied to the problems of management. Frederick Winslow Taylor (1911), the chief intellectual figure in what was also referred to as the “human relations school of industrial management,” argued that “scientific management” would locate the control of work squarely in the hands of management, thus displacing the oppositional cultures that emerge in all work settings. One of the most famous applications of Taylor’s theories is found in Elton Mayo’s (1945) “Hawthorne Experiments,” in which workers were experimented on to measure the conditions under which their work became more efficient. These fascinating experiments, which would be unlikely to pass Institutional Review in today’s world, showed that workers’ productivity improved under several imposed changes. It is now commonly accepted that the improvements in production were the result of the selected workers becoming a mini-culture of their own. Industrial sociology has developed as an aspect of applied sociology rather than as the sociology of work and occupations per se.

The sociological study of work and occupations, outside of the research done in the service of management, is attributed to Everett Hughes. In 1952, Hughes became editor of the *American Journal of Sociology* and devoted his first issue to the study of work. Hughes ([1952] 1971) wrote in the editorial Foreword to that issue,

Why give a large part of an issue of this Journal over to such whimsys [sic] as the special culture of the few professional boxers who fly up like moths from the morass of the slums and drop back again in a little while and as the disappearing breed of small custom-furriers; to such oddities as janitors and schoolteachers? (P. 299)

By way of answer, Hughes cited the “double burden” of sociologists to analyze the processes of human behavior free of time and place, while also becoming “ethnologist of his own time and place” (p. 299). Finding variety and contrast in case studies would allow sociologists to study

similar sociological processes from the vantage points of occupations.

The study of work and occupations had begun to adopt the case studies approach. Prior to Hughes’s work in the 1950s (as researcher, graduate professor, chair of the Department of Sociology at the University of Chicago, and editor of important sociology journals), Stone (1946) studied the social construction of status and leadership in an aircraft fighter squadron; William Foote Whyte (1949) studied the social structure of the occupational worlds of the restaurant; and Oswald Hall (1948) had analyzed the subjective dimensions of medical doctors’ careers. Themes found in this research, including understanding the coordinated lines of work that constitute the social structure of a work environment, and study of the career as defined inwardly as well as by the calendar, became important themes in the study of work and occupations. Similarly, these studies showed the usefulness of examining what Hughes (1970) called “the humble and the proud,” that is, the cultures of the most highly trained professionals and the most mundane of service jobs.

The ethnographically oriented studies of work and occupations during the 1950s were dominated by Hughes and his students, while the macro, functionalist orientation otherwise dominant in American sociology was represented in Caplow’s (1954) influential text on the sociology of work, republished several times, and translated. Several texts subsequently followed Caplow’s example.

Among Hughes’s insights was an interpretation of Taylor’s understanding that in all work settings there was an ongoing struggle over who would control the productive output. For Taylor, this amounted to a problem for management. Hughes ([1952] 1971) saw it as a generic sociological principle:

Restriction of production . . . is generally defined [as] . . . the willful refusal by workers in industry to do as much work as their employer believes they can and ought to do. The latter, having hired a man’s [woman’s] time, expects some large power over its disposition. It is assumed by the employer that his will—enlightened, informed, and reasonable—should determine how hard a man should work. (P. 301)

Sociologists have continued to identify these patterns in virtually all work settings. Two examples are Donald Roy’s (1952) study of “goldbricking” (the hidden cultural processes through which workers organized their activities to restrict production in the machine shop) and Burawoy’s (1984) study of worker resistance in the assembly line world.

Becker (1952) was the first to study the occupational culture of artistic workers, which introduced the importance of worker interaction with their publics. The jazz musicians Becker studied, for example, had conflictual relationships with their audiences. Their decisions about what to play, how to play the songs, and even how to occupy the stage reflected how musicians collectively

220 • SOCIAL AGGREGATIONS

managed their relationships with audiences they largely disdained. Sanders (1974) examined the folk singers' performance strategies from this perspective, and Stebbins (1969) updated Becker's argument to the then contemporary jazz scene. Becker's (1982) tour de force, *Art Worlds*, continued to define art as a negotiated process between audience and producer.

The early sociology of work and occupations also included several studies of work as coordinated activity. Robert Wilson (1954) applied Whyte's perspective on teamwork in the restaurant to the operating room; and Fred Davis (1959) offered the first of many studies of the client and provider in a fleeting relationship, here between the cabbie and his fare.

Finally, sociologists of the early era began to study work, or occupational socialization, a theme that has had an important role to this day. The seminal study was by Becker et al. (1961), a participant observation study of the informal aspects of medical school education. The study of the formation of a professional identity noted, for example, how the "precynical" attitudes of the young student were invariably replaced with the "cynical" (socialized for failure) attitudes of the doctor. Becker and Geer's (1958) excerpt from that study went further, labeling this the "fate of idealism" in medical school. In the 1980s, Haas and Shaffir (1982, 1984) restudied the ideological conversion of medical training in a Canadian medical school with specific reference to Becker and Hughes's pioneering study.

By the 1950s, the study of work and occupations had gained a strong foothold in American sociology. These close-up case studies (ethnographies in the modern parlance, though not called that at the time) served as an alternative to American sociology dominated by survey research and a methodological concern with scientific rigor, what Gouldner and others referred to as "positivist grand theory." It was largely through the study of work and occupations that fieldwork, during these decades of methodological and theoretical hegemony, remained viable as a method.

The 1960s and 1970s saw the application of previously introduced themes to new subject areas. The most significant was work socialization, but now focused across the full range of occupations and sociological themes. For example, Blanch Geer and Howard Becker studied occupational socialization in a five-year research project, "Educational Experiences for Non-College Youth," which led to Geer's (1972) edited volume on trade work socialization. Sociologists studied how violence and abusive socialization integrated workers into dangerous work roles in the coal mine (Fitzpatrick 1980; Vaught and Smith 1980) and how hip seminaries socialized ministers to the political correctness of the day (Kleinman 1984). Others studied military socialization and the normalization of deviance (Bryant 1974a) and the process through which workers internalized values and norms in the skilled trades (Riemer 1977). The challenge of these studies remains in

the development of truly comparative analyses of similar social processes in different settings.

During the 1960s, the study of work and occupations became more critical and phenomenological. For example, Egon Bittner's (1967) ethnomethodological study of peacekeeping on skid row described the "practical accomplishment of police work"; Jerry Jacobs's (1969) study of a social welfare agency applied Weber's understanding of rationalization to the crushing irrationalities of bureaucratic life. Critical studies of industrial work, recalling Marxian themes of alienation and control, were developed in Eli Chinoy's (1964) study of assembly line workers. Zucher's study of Hughes's (1959, 1960, 1965) several papers on the relationship between occupations and professions captured the interest of scholars studying law, medicine, funeral directors, and others.

The study of people involved in so-called deviant occupations, such as strippers and prostitutes, became common during the 1970s (e.g., Heyl 1977), and others studied how deviant activity such as theft or drug use was integrated into nondeviant work roles. For example, Ditton (1977) showed how delivery workers in the United Kingdom learned to cheat customers. Bryant (1974b) detailed the routines of deviant use of drugs and alcohol in the military. I (Harper 1982) studied how railroad tramps cycled through identities that cast them as homeless alcoholics, masters of the complex railroad migration, and fruit harvesters in the Pacific Northwest. Habenstein's (1962) study of funeral directors showed how an occupation can be both professional and deviant.

Hochschild's (1979) study of the emotion work of airline stewardesses was the seminal study of emotion work. Subsequent studies of emotions on the job focused on how workers managed boredom, fear, anger, and love as part of the cultural mastery of work. One of the most compelling is Haas's (1977) study of techniques for mastering fear as part of the emotional socialization of high steelworkers.

Several scholars who subsequently became major contributors to the subfield first published in the 1970s. These included John Van Maanen (1973, 1976), who contributed several important books and papers on police socialization and occupational phenomenology, and Robert Faulkner (1973a, 1973b), who described the contingencies of the career of musicians in a low-prestige orchestra. Robert Bogdan (1972) studied the interactive milieu of face-to-face sales; Jack Haas and William Shaffir (1982, 1984) returned to the subject of the professional socialization of medical doctors; and Gary Fine (1985) studied trade school students learning to cook for a social class above their own.

During the 1980s, sociologists began to study the impact of increasing gender equality in the workforce. Many studies showed the problematical aspects of female socialization into previously male occupational worlds. For example, Vaught and Smith (1980) examined women's experience of degrading initiation rituals in an underground coal mine, Lembright and Riemer (1982) studied the socialization of women truckers via the apprenticeship

system, and Jurik (1988) was but one of several sociologists to study the socialization of female corrections officers. Many of these studies documented the pervasive effect of male occupational cultures that remained resistant to gender integration of previously male work worlds.

I identified, in the past 15 years (1990–2005), 93 article- or chapter-length studies of work and occupations. This compares to 65 during the 1980s, 52 during the 1970s, 20 during the 1960s, 18 during the 1950s, and a handful before that time. In fact, for the past four decades there has been, curiously, about the same number of published studies, between 50 and 60 per decade. The subject matter of the recent scholarship has reflected earlier preoccupations (the professions, with 24 studies during the 1990s and 10 in the past five years, have outnumbered all other job classifications), but the specifics of these studies have changed. Garot's (2004) ethnomethodological study of bureaucratic emotions may be at one extreme; Groce and Cooper's (1990) study of women in rock and roll bands, a study of gender and artistic division of labor, at the other. An important direction, represented by Macias's (2003) study of the role of informal networks among Mexican-American professionals, combines the study of ethnicity with job culture. Several studies of professions are located outside the United States, notably Lewis's (1997) study of female judges in Korea and Alvesson's (1998) study of gender dynamics in a Swedish advertising firm.¹

Studies of the working class (nine) were internationally and topically eclectic, including studies of the phenomenology of Icelandic fishing (Thorlindsson 1994), the work ethic of Mexican brewery workers (Firestone et al. 2005), and Dant's (2004) visual study of the garage mechanic. What were largely absent were studies on previous themes of worker resistance on the assembly line, arguably because most assembly lines had migrated to areas of the world where few sociologists plied their trade.

All seven studies of deviant work focused on prostitution, exotic dancing, or stripping for a living (this does not include the study of deviant activities in nondeviant occupations, such as Dabney and Hollinger's [1999] study of illicit prescription use among pharmacists). Indeed, one can draw many conclusions from this one-dimensional focus, but likely the most reasonable is that the area is dominated by a handful of scholars who publish on different aspects of their primary research interests.

Finally, there were two significant additions to the canon. The most important were several studies that explored work in the caring professions, including Isaksen's (2002) study of body and disgust among female caregivers, Murray's several studies of family care work (notably Murray 2000), and Perakyla's (1991) study of what she calls "hope work" by caregivers for the terminally ill. These and several similar studies have given the studies of work and occupations a place in the "caring service work" studies that are increasingly relevant.

The other new addition to the canon has been the study of welfare reform work, the experience of unemployment,

and the shift of work from the workplace to the family. These studies have demonstrated the relevance for sociologies of work that abandon the old settings of an economy that is rapidly changing.

WORK CULTURES AND SOCIAL STRUCTURES

Blue Collar Work

We now approach the sociology of work and occupations from the vantage point of job type. We define blue-collar workers as workers who make things, typically using their hands, tools, and machines. Through history these workers would have included skilled castes such as blacksmiths, who had special status and privilege in their communities because their skill was so esoteric and important.

We are interested in how craft work evolved to factory work, and what happened to the culture of work in the meantime. This historical frame of reference necessarily addresses the matter of skill. The craft workers, whether making a wooden wagon wheel (which is very hard to make) in the fourteenth century or fabricating a repair by welding steel in the twentieth century, share a grounding in human mastery that involves both the body and the mind.

On the matter of work culture, we can imagine, largely through historical novels and some fine arts records, the culture of the shop. Here, skilled craftspeople form raw materials into objects that are used by their local communities. The shop of guild members makes everything from stained glass windows and iron latches for a 100-year job building a local cathedral to the beer the workers drink. In the guild, one attains membership by being born into a guild member's family. The first stages of training are marked by the formal status as apprentice, followed by the middle stages as journeyman, and after long years of development, one becomes a master. Thus, the skill one develops in a guild or similar shop circumstance is melded into one's aging. As one gets older, the body deteriorates, but lack of strength and dexterity is balanced against increasing knowledge and ability to apply it.

The skill of modern blue-collar workers is found in the trades such as the high steelworkers studied by Applebaum (1981). In these occupations, self-esteem comes from shared mastery of dangerous work, where small mistakes lead to death. The cultures of unions and union shops, barely studied by sociologists, have declined with the precipitous drop in unionized work in the United States, where most of this sociology is written. Thus, the cultures of skilled workers have declined as work has transformed.

Thus, we turn briefly to the transformation of work via industrialization and its impact on work cultures. The story is a common sociological theme. A craftsman works on a single work process and applies a complex combination of hand, body, and intuitive knowledge to an ever-evolving set of tasks. The things a craftsperson makes are all slightly

222 • SOCIAL AGGREGATIONS

different, and thus they embody the mind and body of the worker. Industrialization included elements such as knowledge of metallurgy sufficient to make machines that could withstand the rigor of massive pounding and snapping and engineering skill that led to machines of previously unimagined complexity. But separating the skill in manufacturing out of the manufacturing process itself meant that the actual human actions involved in manufacture would be repetitive and endless actions connected to the unvarying rhythms of the machine, typically as manifested on the assembly line. The computer I type on was made on an assembly line. The automobile I drive home was, as well. The food I eat, whether fast food, fresh, or packaged, was at least partially processed and assembled on assembly lines.

Humans, however, do not adapt well to unvarying actions that have no intrinsic meaning. Karl Marx described the dehumanization of the industrial process as alienation/separation of the worker from the product, from other workers, and from what Marx called the worker's "species being," that is, the qualities that make a human a human.

Sociologists have entered the workplace as participants (meaning, they take the jobs and report on their experiences) and hence became observers. Others have reported on jobs they had in industrial settings prior to becoming professional sociologists. For example, Donald Roy worked in a machine shop in 1944–1945 in which one was paid "piecemeal" for what one accomplished. Roy discovered that counter to what one would expect, workers did not work as fast as they could to increase their salaries, for if they did, the time-motion experts would adjust the rate of their pay downward. Their hourly pay would not increase with greater effort; working harder would only produce harder work. So the workers found ways to restrict their production and to hide this from management. This, indeed, was work culture: workers, often implicitly, creating networks of culture in which the shared interests of workers prevailed against management (Roy 1952, 1953).

Several sociologists studied how shop settings, background cultures, and forms of work influenced the cultures of alienated, industrial work. Molstad (1986), who studied and worked in a brewery, hypothesized that workers chose boring tasks in the factory over work in which they might have greater responsibility, but less control. Molstad theorized that the uncertainty posed by more interesting work was the dominant factor. In other words, the workers Molstad studied (and worked with) preferred to be alienated rather than challenged.

Degraded work, however, does not necessarily lead to alienation, as shown by Bryant and Perkins's (1982) study of poultry butchers:

Workers must snatch live birds from cages unloaded from tractor trailer trucks and hang them, upside down, on shackles attached to moving conveyor lines. The hanging job may involve 30–40 pound turkeys. The hangers are subjected to wing battering by the dirty, squawking birds who infrequently

urinate and/or defecate on the workers handling them. As the flopping, noisy birds move down the line, they undergo an electric shock intended to relax all muscles for a thorough bleeding after the throat is cut. This step also results in additional excretory discharges from the birds. All five senses of the workers are assaulted. One hanger who was interviewed revealed that, on weekends, he took six to eight showers trying to rid himself of the stench. (P. 203)

Yet the authors noted that "poultry processing employees managed to accommodate themselves; they were pretty satisfied and sustained morale through widespread network of social interaction both on and off the job" (p. 200). They liked chicken work. They bought the results of their work in chicken sales and feasted on the product of their hard work. Why? The workers were from a regional culture in which options were limited. They were uneducated and unexposed to opportunities elsewhere. The wages in the poultry-processing factory were above average. But, most tellingly, the workers found ways to connect on and off the job to form a culture, a collective that gave their lives meaning. One worker, ill with cancer, lovingly told of how her coworkers arranged a bake sale that produced several hundreds of dollars for her (and some great cake!). The hard and unpleasant work of the poultry factory was part of a culture in which a lot of life was rather hard and unpleasant, but a life in which people stood together.

The boredom of assembly line work, that is, the challenge to make one's mind minimally engaged, that is, sufficient to the task, but otherwise available to daydreams, fantasies, and sabotage, is a central theme of working-class life. Perhaps the best article on this subject was written by Roy (1959–1960), where he describes how a stupendously monotonous job with a small coterie of "old-timers" is endured and even enjoyed. "Banana time" has come to stand for the phenomenon in which factory workers create routines of mirth and playfulness to make the time go by. But these rituals, as Roy learned, are fragile. A misstated joke, in Roy's case, wrecked havoc on his ephemeral work culture.

Many sociologists find that the circumstances of a job work against the formation of a job culture. For example, Susan Mulcahy and Robert Faulkner (1977) studied how the physical organization of machines in a shop eliminated the possibility of collective work experience, and thus work culture. Many sociologists and philosophers have addressed the matter of work alienation in the abstract, but few have studied it in the concrete. Those who have discover that in the most unlikely circumstances, workers find richness and meaning in human connection. The sad fact remains unchallenged: Alienated industrial work, begun in England in the 1830s, continues. Our factories are now largely in countries far from our shores (and thus purview), and the workers are likely to be women and children as well as adult men. The work, however, is dehumanizing because of its organization.

The Professions

The study of work and occupations has long focused on the professions. Much of what we say draws heavily on Hughes's several essays on professions and occupations. But Hughes ([1952] 1971) pointed out that the topic of professionalization was of interest to the founding figures of sociology: Comte observed that the "same engineer had kept the waterworks of Paris going before, during and after the Revolution" (p. 365). For Herbert Spencer, the professions all "elaborated, extended or elevated life . . . part of the development of society" (p. 365). And Durkheim noted the propensity of professional groups to generate social rules and to become "impermeable to attempts of outsiders to control them." Durkheim also imagined that occupational groups would provide the basis for social solidarity in an increasingly individualized world.

The earliest professional was a person who took religious vows. By the late seventeenth century, the meaning had become secularized and had come to indicate a special degree of qualification necessary for a category of occupation. Hughes defined it as "the occupation which one professes to be skilled in and to follow . . . A vocation in which professed knowledge is used in the affairs of others" (Hughes [1952] 1971: 375).

The modern professions developed during the early eras of capitalism in Europe, but they were distinctive in societies increasingly dominated by the logic and spirit of the market. Hughes summed this up by comparing the familiar theme of a capitalist world, *caveat emptor* ("let the buyer beware"), with that of the professional, *credat emptor* ("let the taker believe in us").

Hughes took a special interest in the license and mandate of the professions. The occupations claimed license to act and justified actions with mandates for special status, autonomy, and privilege. The license to touch, cut into, or dispose of bodies was granted to the medical and funeral professions. The license to instill ideas and values into the minds of children were assumed by the educational professionals. Religious professionals claim the license to judge our sins and to arrange for their forgiveness, and accounting professionals assume the license to learn and manipulate our finances. Hughes pointed out, however, that with the license to cross these boundaries comes the mandate not to use the knowledge gained by privileged access to further ones' own interests, be they prurient or legitimate. The doctor is not supposed to be ghoulish or sexually aroused by his or her work. The priest is not supposed to become titillated on hearing the sins of others. Educators are not supposed to preach their private orthodoxy (a theme that, incidentally, traces to Max Weber). Of course, professionals and professions are rife with conflict over precisely the forgotten or ignored mandates and misused license.

In exchange for providing these services, professional occupations expect to be self-regulated. They previously defined the schooling necessary to prepare for the profession and determine what tests and examinations will

certify the successful aspirant. They also fight for, and usually win, the right to judge and punish themselves. For example, only a university awards or terminates tenure. In some professions, the autonomy has eroded: For example, individuals have won the right to pit one set of professionals—lawyers—against another—medical doctors—in malpractice suits. The state has initiated the process of accreditation, which has radically diminished the independence of professions.

In essence, the concepts of license and mandate indicate that the professional asks to be trusted to act in the good faith of his or her client. This trust is effected within the reality—perceived more fully by the professional than the client—that not all problems are solvable; only some diseases may be cured and one side loses every law case.

Professional knowledge is assumed to have such depth that it can be mastered by only the brightest and the most dedicated. The knowledge is also distinctive due to its intellectual abstraction: Professionals think objectively about matters that are generally in the realm of the sacred, passionate, or personal spheres of life. This translates to many as irreverence or, ironically, as greater-than-life and creates a distance that sets the professional apart.

Of course, there are those within the professions who deal with the individual and thus use the most concrete forms of professional knowledge (the lawyer who tries cases) and others in the profession who develop professional knowledge itself (those who study law for their entire career, teach in law schools, and write philosophically and analytically about the law). As professions become more powerful, their mandate also expands: Doctors not only become more skilled and knowledgeable about treating disease, but they are called on to define the nature of health, and, by extension, the nature of the good, or most desired life. Politicians are largely recruited from lawyers, who in that role assume the responsibility to organize society legally.

The independence of thought connected to professional life was once reflected in the social independence of the professional. The archetypical professional was contracted individually for services rendered. Hughes reminds us that the original professor of the European university earned the right to teach by gaining the doctoral degree and used the university as a forum and form of validation: His fees were earned directly from students. Indeed, due to the anti-Semitism of the German university system in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Georg Simmel, one of the most important first-generation sociologists, never attained a university position in his home city of Berlin, yet his lectures (his identity was as a "free-floating intellectual") were highly popular and his earnings were lucrative.

The professional ideal type is barely recognizable in modern society. Most professions and professionals have become socially, economically, and politically powerful and are viewed as primarily serving their own interests. The term *professional* has attained a folk definition that indicates those who earn a living doing only one activity,

224 • SOCIAL AGGREGATIONS

such as the professional athlete, who are extravagantly paid, and who seldom demonstrate any meaningful social altruism. Even the expectation of service among professions such as the clergy and teachers and professors has eroded by scandals in the church and political maneuvering among the teaching professions. The ease with which people leave the professions, such as university teaching for more lucrative occupations, confirms the decline of professional calling in modern life and the blurring between the professions and the business world.

Finally, we continue to interpret the category of profession as socially constructed rather than as a description of intrinsic qualities of special occupations. Hughes ([1952] 1971) notes that occupational social mobility was described as early as 1933 in the United Kingdom and in 1939 in America. Professionalization as a process involves extending the educational preparation required for the profession and often the creation of special degrees to certify professional standing, establishing professional societies and licensing boards, establishing a research tradition within the profession that defines its special characteristics, and organizing politically to gain legal power.

Hughes also recognized that the category of “semiprofessional” indicated those occupations that had made a successful claim to full professional status, rather than an indication of the occupation’s intrinsic quality. Lively’s (2001) study of the professionalization of paralegals demonstrates the continuing vitality of this line of thought.

The sociological study of professions includes relationship with clients. Behind the scenes of professional routine, sociologists see the client/professional relationship as negotiated and constructed, often emerging from norms that seem inconsistent with the service ethic that is argued to characterize professional ideology. Sander’s (1994) study of how veterinarians deal with what they term “annoying customers” is one example of studies that document this phenomenon.

Professionalization and Bureaucratization

The single most powerful force affecting professionalization is bureaucratization. As noted, the professional originally was an autonomous provider of services. As these services became more available, it became necessary to regularize fees and to spread the paying of fees in such arrangements as insurance arrangements or state funding.

Bureaucratization has been an inevitable consequence because it provides the most efficient means to organize the increasingly complex process through which professional services are allocated and funded. Further, bureaucracies, such as townships, purchase professional services (such as from engineers) that are often embedded in other bureaucracies. Simply managing the interactions of complex bureaucracies becomes the specialty of yet another branch of a profession of law and civil administration. The spreading of costs through medical insurance allowed doctors to

vastly increase their fees (most are startled to realize that before World War II medical doctors and professors made equivalent salaries), but it has robbed the medical doctors of their autonomy. Doctors are often employees of bureaucracies as varied as hospitals and health maintenance organizations (Hoff 1999); while they are still well rewarded financially, their work has been routinized and can be as controlled as are the tasks of an assembly line worker (though they are not). The relationship between the client and the professional is eroded in the bureaucratized professional environment: Both parties see each other as dehumanized agents rather than as individuals.

The study of the self and the professional identity has been expressed as role closeness, neutrality, or distance in a study of classroom teachers (Khleif 1985). The matter of the professional in organizations has been examined critically in studies of proletarianization or the routinization of professional work and gender inequality within professions such as law (Podmore and Spencer 1982).

Finally, however, the matter of professional culture remains enigmatic. Lines between professions and other occupations are increasingly blurred. Society’s appreciation of professional distinctiveness is vastly diminished, even as the economic inequality that follows the professional fault line increases. The tendency of sociologists to “study down” the social ladder and ability of professions to avoid the gaze of inquiry makes case studies of professional worlds rare. The blurring between the world of commerce and the previous professions also influences this matter. Jackall’s (1988) study of corporate culture (to be distinguished by the spate of books by apologists of the corporate world) is a rare exception.

Service Occupations

We are well used to the idea that our society has moved from a productive economy to a service economy. This means, at the most simple level, that in the late twentieth century, the suddenly prosperous working class (at least in the case of unionized work, such as the steel industry of the American Northeast) priced itself out of existence in a global economy, and as their jobs moved to countries with less well-paid labor forces, the economy has restructured partly around the delivery of services. Professions, of course, deliver services, but we are speaking of service jobs as the doing of tasks or the servicing of people’s needs at the other end of the economic and social spectrum. We might speak of the service occupations as “degraded professions” in that they do not require esoteric knowledge or long periods of training; they do not assume that the practitioners internalize a sense of license or mandate.

It is in the beginning of the twenty-first century that service jobs that depend on telephone service have migrated to the cheaper labor of the less-developed world. The work cultures of the corporate “campuses” of India, where much of our phone-based service work is now performed, have

received attention in the popular press but not yet sustained sociological study.

Still, the world of service occupations close to home is sociologically varied and rich for study. At one end of the sociological spectrum are jobs in child care and elder care (Applegate 1993) and other examples of caregiving that are not strictly in the medical profession. In the United States, these are often poorly paying and carry an ambiguous social status. These workers are expected to be motivated by professional ethics but carry few if any of the rewards. The jobs of family domestics and au pair girls—family servants by another name—have special characteristics that have gained sociological attention. They are “paid in smiles” (Murray 2000) and often they compete with natural mothers for the love of their children (Murray 1998). The focus on the sociology of emotions in the cultural study of work has led to several studies of the emotional labor, and often the emotional rewards, of these semiprofessional service jobs.

However, the primary focus on the service world concentrates on the exploitation of service workers in highly rationalized work environments. This is the core of the McDonalized world: human robots delivering poor-quality products or automatic services to customers who pass by in a blur. These jobs, which do not involve selling, but rather servicing customers, are automated out of existence as grocery and other stores find ways to have customers do the work that was previously performed by this sector of the service economy.

However, the matter of selling, that is, making a pitch and trying to snag a buyer, has been much studied, going back to the beginning of the specialty. Sales involve manipulating the client’s view of her or his needs, and the most successful sales personnel do exactly that. Of course, the more expensive the product, the heavier the game and the bigger the bet. But the matter of interactive manipulation is the same, no matter the level.

Finally, there are a small number of studies of the “craft” of service work, especially in the semiskilled occupations. Lawson’s (1999) study of barbering shows the skill and interactive context in which it is played out. Bell’s (1976) study of bartending is one of a few studies of the aesthetic character of a service occupation. The one study of the small-shop mechanic (Harper 1987) uses photographs in interviews that probe the meaning of a bricoleur’s work: his skill, tools, materials, and social life that emerged from his work. The project was the first to integrate visual sociology methods to the cultural study of work.

We conclude this section with Everett Hughes:

Persons and organizations have problems; they want things done for them—for their bodies and souls, for their social and financial relations, for their cars, houses, bridges, sewage systems; they want things done to the people they consider their competitors or their enemies . . . it is in the course of interaction with one another and with the professionals that the problems of people are given definition. (Hughes 1994:72)

Seen this way, the professions and their related poor cousins, the service occupations, remain essential to the cultural study of work.

The Future of Work and Occupations

What are the most important trends in the study of work and occupations? How should the subdiscipline develop? Looking at about 400 studies published in the past 50 years, I note the persistence of the case study method. Recent years have brought new research in gendered work, work and welfare policy, and work at home. What was once a branch of American sociology has seen increasing contributions from sociologists abroad, especially from the United Kingdom and France, where Hughes and Becker remain figures of importance. The setting of the case studies was once the factory or the boardroom; now it is increasingly the global system.

This being said, there is vastly unrealized potential in the sociology of work and occupations. Sociologists have focused increasingly on the professions, with 34 of 93 article-length publications in the past 15 years, leaving the remaining two-thirds of the canon to address issues relating to proletarian work, welfare reform work, theory, service work, semiprofessional work, and deviant work. Within the professions, sociologists disproportionately study the medical field, which partly reflects the specialist journals in specialized medical areas (nursing, physiotherapy) that have encouraged the development of occupational ethnography. Many professions are glaringly missing (or nearly) from sociological scrutiny: the political world (at all levels), professional sports, the legal world (lawyers, judges, and others), the clergy, and university work cultures. The question of access is undoubtedly responsible for some of this missing research, but since sociologists successfully find their way into medical work settings, this cannot be the whole problem.

The cultures of the corporate world have also largely escaped sociological study. Robert Jackall’s (1988) study of the culture of the corporate world, penetrating and highly critical, is the single thick description of arguably the most influential form of work in the modern world. The corporate world produces its own canon of ideological and self-congratulatory books about what they describe as “corporate culture,” and the corporate world aggressively protects itself from sociological scrutiny. Jackall got access to his research sites almost by accident, and it is likely true that the firms he studied never really understood what he was doing there. The corporate world continues to suffer crises of legitimacy due to “Enron”-type scandals and will likely remain wary of ethnographic investigation.

Studies of working-class labor have moved from the factory to fishing boats, meatpacking plants, and, significantly, the world of day labor. While the broadening of topics is welcome, the final work on assembly line work has certainly not been written. The study of work in the

226 • SOCIAL AGGREGATIONS

factories of the Third World is indeed a gaping hole in the literature.

This brings me to my final point. The sociology of work and occupations has begun to embrace the globalized work worlds. Two studies deserve special mention. One is Collins's (2003) study of the global apparel industry. Collins shows how contemporary manufacture of thread, cloth, and clothes evolved from the paternalistic mill towns of the American Southeast, first to factories in Mexico that were tied to specific manufacturing firms and, most recently, to the "just-in-time" manufacturing strategies of firms like Liz Clairborne. Collins calls her work a "multi-sited" work ethnography and, indeed, applies her sociological lens to the corporate boardrooms of Liz Clairborne (admittedly, more could be done in that setting), to the Mexican factories, and to the international middlemen who increasingly shift orders from one factory to another; from Thailand to Hong Kong; from China to India, depending on the fraction-of-a-cent difference on an estimate. Collins has successfully married the microanalysis of work ethnography (and, in the case of Mexican workers, the ethnography of home and work in combination) with the largest patterns of industrial structure.

The globalization of work is but an aspect of the separation of work from its immediate context. The teaching profession clings to the idea that their presence in the classroom is an important aspect of their work; increasingly

sophisticated computer systems create distanced learning processes in which the teacher is disembodied and otherwise separated from the objects of their labor.

The second project that examines micro and macro aspects of globalized work (though not as thoroughly) is Brandt's (2002) study of the "trail of the tomato." Brandt has long worked as a sociologist, as well as an activist, and was able, like Collins, to do meaningful fieldwork among the migrant Mexican tomato harvesters. Her book weaves the family and work stories of these workers into a global context, which places their work systems into the work worlds of single-mother cashiers in the Canadian supermarkets where the tomatoes are eventually sold. The sinew holding these stories together is a worldwide system of food production characterized by high transportation costs, genetic engineering, and environmental irrationalities. Like Collins, Brandt reveals systems in which specific work cultures unfold.

The future study of work and occupations will depend on a continuing supply of sociologists trained in the intensive field methods tradition. Luckily there remain important graduate centers where field methods and ethnography balance the dominant methodological paradigms. Certainly, one can easily see that many of the most important questions in sociology have been approached by the subdiscipline, while, at the same time, it is clear that much remains to be done.